

CIVIL SERVICES EXAMINATION focus

ITIOFITHLY GOTES BY ROU'S

EMOTIONS AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE 104

SIMPLICITY IS ULTIMATE SOPHISTICATION 111

REALITY DOES NOT CONFIRM TO THE IDEAL, BUT CONFIRMS IT 113

CONSERVATION IS A STATE OF HARMONY BETWEEN
MEN AND LAND 114

CURRENT AFFAIRS
ANALYSIS

logical . simple . targeted
analysis & explanation
of relevant news

ETHICS, INTEGRITY
AND VIRTUE

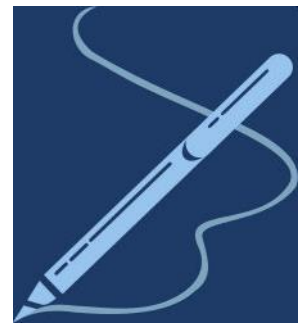
Coverage from
varied
sources

ESSAYS OF
THE MONTH

Selected essays
from Rau's
GSI students

OCTOBER
2022

Rau's IAS
Study Circle
Since 1953



GS MAINS & ESSAY

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2

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FLTs Essay - 3



3

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one of the TOP scorer in Mains 2020, was a
student of Rau's IAS QIP Mains.





Note to Mains Aspirants

Mains exam is the real exam which decides the rank you will get, which will be instrumental in what services you will get from a bouquet of 23/24 services offered through the UPSC Civil Services Exam. It decides whether you get the service of our dreams, some other service or no service at all.

The Preliminary exam of the UPSC exam is little vague in approach and may surprise aspirants in more ways than one. This randomness of this exam induces fear in students. However, mains exam has well-delineated syllabus. The new syllabus for General Studies, introduced in 2013, has matured. Eight cycles of Mains Exam have been conducted. The experience and insight gained by an analysis of these papers reveals that excelling in Mains can be assured with thorough preparation and practice.

If we closely analyse the past mains papers, following highlights emerge out:

1. The papers largely follow the syllabus: Barring few years, when random questions have appeared, most of the mains papers have been in accordance with the syllabus prescribed by the UPSC.
2. The papers of mains follow themes and can be predicted: Paper of the UPSC mains follow a pattern and we can predict broad themes that will be there in the mains paper. If somebody has prepared for exam with smartly, he/she should be knowing the topics. Given no constraint of time, he/she will be able to write a good answer for the questions asked.
3. Preparation and Practice cause the difference: What

brings the difference in the marks of aspirants in the Mains exam is the hard work and preparation they have put in. Since the paper is predictable and sticks to mostly current issues, it is the preparation and practice of answer writing that brings about the difference in the marks fetched by aspirants.

So, what should the aspirants do?

1. **Analyse the past trends of GS Mains Paper** while preparing any of the subjects of GS Mains. For example, the history syllabus of the exam is very large. It is actually similar to the History Optional syllabus. However, the number of questions asked from say world history and post-independence history topics have been very limited. Students should therefore spend time while preparing for the Mains exam according to the respective weightage of topics in the exam.
2. **Prepare important themes:** Without memorization & quick recall getting good marks in the exam is very difficult. Analysis of the past papers will give us an idea of the important themes, that we have to prepare for the coming exam. We need to prepare the comprehensive analysis, points and examples on these topics and memorise them, to produce best answers on the topics. For example, farm laws are an important topic for the coming exam, students should prepare, salient features of the farm laws and prepare the advantages, disadvantages and suggestions of how

to improve these laws. This will do the job.

3. **Do smart work along with hard work:** The main point that all of us should understand that examiner only expects us to produce 150 or 250 words answers. Aspirants are not expected to produce a thesis on the particular topic, most relevant 150/250 words will do the job. Many students while preparing for the exam, tend to think that they will become scholars of the subject while preparing for the GS syllabus. This, often leads them to waste their time and effort, with the result that they neither become scholars nor do they achieve their goal of getting into Civil Services. Our target while preparing for this exam, that we are here to qualify for civil services and we need to prepare according to the demand of the exam.
4. **Answer Writing Practice:** Practice makes the perfect answers and hence maximum marks, this is the mantra of success in the mains exam. In the Mains Exam on an average, aspirants are expected to attempt 20 questions on disparate topics in 180 minutes. This is a very demanding task. Students in order to write this quantum, should have a habit of writing this amount. Regular answer writing on its own or under the guidance of a coaching institution is advisable. Also, answer writing will expose us to the shortcomings in our preparation.
5. **Write after preparation:** In order to get maximum benefit of answer writing, start writing answers after reading the material for the subject. For example,

before writing a test, try and revise the topic from the study materials you have collected. This will give you confidence while writing the test. Also, howsoever, marks you score in the tests, ask your examiner for what more could have been done by you in the answer, so that you get those one or two extra marks. These one or two extra marks in each question will make all the difference in you being in the list or not.

6. **Prepare for Essay and Ethics:** The Essay paper and Ethics paper together account for 500 marks. If we analyse the actual and maximum marks fetched by students in these papers, we will find that top rankers tend to score much higher in these papers. However, average aspirants tend to discount these paper and do not accord enough time in preparing for them. Ethics & Essay papers are very predictable and doable, if we put in effort the reward will be very high. Therefore, Aspirants should focus on them.

The things that we have mentioned above is something that we all know. UPSC teachers and toppers both talk about these. The real problem is proper execution as this exam is focused at selecting aspirants who are the right fit to become a part of the permanent executive of India. So, work on your strategy, work double hard on your execution and ensure that your name is the list of people who clear the exam.

All the best!!!

focus

CRITICAL NOTES FOR THE PREPARATION OF GENERAL STUDIES PAPERS

Chairperson and Managing Director (CMD) :

Mr. V.P. Gupta

Chief Executive Officer : Abhishek Gupta

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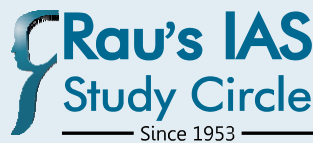
Editorial Team : Naweed Akhter, Sanjeev Kumar Pandey, Vrinda Gupta, Mangal Singh, Nagendra Pratap, Basava Uppin, Jaikrit Vatsal, Pallavi Sarada, Vaibhav Mishra, Faizan, Michael Suren, Vidushi Tyagi, Rajakumar, Abhishek Pratap, Jatin Bharadwaj

Design and Production : Rohit Rajput, Deepti Gupta, Khurshid Alam

The purpose of Focus is to expound the applied nature of General Studies to Civil Services aspirants thereby making them aware of the real demand of UPSC exam.

The sources relied for selection and analysis of issues are:

1. The Hindu, The Hindu (Sunday)
2. The Indian Express
3. The Times of India
4. Asian Age
5. The Tribune
6. The Economic Times
7. Hindu Business Line
8. Frontline
9. Economic and Political Weekly
10. IDSA
11. BBC
12. Yojana
13. Kurukshetra
14. Down to Earth



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JAIPUR CAMPUS

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Tel : 0141 - 4106050/57, 2722050

email : contact@rauias.com

website : www.rauias.com

connect : www.facebook.com/rauias

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Dear Students,

FOCUS is the Study Circle's monthly publication of contemporary issues and current affairs analysis. It is in fact a collective effort, by experienced educators in varied themes, of identifying current affairs in light of the UPSC syllabus, supplementing them with background information, explaining their related dimensions, lending them a generalist viewpoint and thus producing critical notes for the preparation of General Studies' syllabus.

The publication, as the name suggests, focuses solely on issues which are relevant to the **factual** as well as **applied** aspects of the General Studies' syllabus. That is how Focus covers all anticipated issues and themes for the upcoming Civil Services Examination (CSE).

Features

PART ONE | CURRENT AFFAIRS ANALYSIS

- This month edition covers analysis of news from the immediately preceding month.
- All news/issues are categorized and clubbed syllabus-wise (International Relations, Polity & Governance, Science & Technology, Ethics, Integrity & Aptitude and so on) for efficient study.
- Background information has been added to provide context.
- Related and Additional information-dimensions have been explained to add depth to your understanding.
- Maps and figures have been provided for associative and retentive learning.
- Practice Questions

PART TWO | ETHICS, INTEGRITY & APTITUDE

- Coverage from varied sources

PART THREE | ESSAYS FOR YOU

- Selected essays from Rau's GSI students

For further understanding or discussion in any topic, please consult your respective professors.

Good Luck!
RAU'S IAS STUDY CIRCLE

CONTENTS

PART ONE CURRENT AFFAIRS ANALYSIS

02

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GS Paper (Prelims) & GS Paper III (Main)

NATIONAL MONETISATION PIPELINE

#Infrastructure #Government Policies 02

BAD BANK-BENEFITS & CHALLENGES

#Banking 05

ACCOUNT AGGREGATOR FRAMEWORK

#Banking 07

SURETY BONDS: FILLIP TO INFRASTRUCTURE CREATION

#Banking 09

EXPORT-LED MODEL FOR INDIA

#External Sector 10

AGREEMENT ON AGRICULTURE (AoA)

#External Sector 12

EVERGRANDE CRISIS: CHINA'S LEHMAN MOMENT??

#External Sector 13

IMF APPROVES SDR ALLOCATION

#External Sector 14

DECISIONS OF GST COUNCIL

#GST 16

EXTENSION IN TENURE OF NAA

#GST 17

LEGALIZATION OF MSP- PROS AND CONS

#Agriculture 17

FPO: POTENTIAL, BENEFITS & CHALLENGES

#Agriculture 18

REGISTRATION OF CATTLE BREEDS

#Agriculture 20

E-SHRAMPORTAL

#Labour 21

TELECOM REFORMS PACKAGE

#Telecom 21

PRACTICE QUESTIONS 23

25

CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

GS Paper (Prelims) & GS Paper II (Main)

CCI PENALISES BEER COMPANIES FOR COLLUDING

#Regulatory Bodies #Competition Commission of India 25

INCREASING INTERNET SHUTDOWN IN INDIA

#Governance #Internet Shutdown Impacts 26

JAMMU AND KASHMIR IMPLEMENTS FOREST RIGHTS ACT

#Local Governance #Forest Rights Act 28

JUDICIAL CUSTODY AND POLICE CUSTODY

#Governance #Police Custody #Judicial Custody 29

RIGHT TO HEALTH

#Rights Issues #Right to Health 31

SPIRIT OF FEDERALISM LIES IN CONSULTATION

#Federalism #Centre-State Relations 32

STRENGTHENING LOCAL INSTITUTIONS TO TACKLE

DISASTERS #Federalism #Centre-State Relations 34

RESERVATION FOR WOMEN IN JUDICIARY

#Reservation #Judiciary 35

JUDICIAL PENDENCY

#Pendency #Judiciary 36

NEED TO REFORM POLITICAL PARTIES

#Election #Political Party 37

DELHI GOVT MOVES SUPREME COURT OVER LG'S POWER

#Union Territory #Delhi #LG-CM Power Balance 39

PM-CARES NOT UNDER RTI

#PM-CARES #RTI #Governance 42

NITI AAYOG'S REPORT ON URBAN PLANNING

#Governance #Urban Planning 43

PRACTICE QUESTIONS 46

48

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & SECURITY

GS Paper (Prelims) & GS Paper II & III (Main)

AUKUS SECURITY PARTNERSHIP

#Geopolitics 48

INDIA-FRANCE RELATIONS

#Bilateral 50

BRICS

#International Organisation 51

SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION

#Groupings 52

INDIA AND AUSTRALIA

#Groupings 55

LEFT WING EXTREMISM

#Security 57

GREEN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP 60

MARIB 60

CAMRANH BAY BASE 61

KUNDUZ 61

PEACEFUL MISSION 61

SURYAKIRAN 61

ZAPAD 61

KAZIND 61

SIMBEX 61

Air launched unmanned aerial vehicle (ALUAV) 61

PRACTICE QUESTIONS 62

63

SOCIETY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

GS Paper I & GS Paper II (Main)

RECOGNISING THE CONTRIBUTION OF HOMEMAKER

#Social Justice # Empowerment 63

LACK OF WOMEN JUDGES IN JUDICIARY

#Social Justice # Empowerment # Judiciary 64

DEATH BY ACCIDENTS

#Social Issue #Data 65

GENDER SELF-IDENTIFICATION

#Social Justice # Empowerment 65

UNDERSTANDING LAWS ON RAPE AND SEXUAL CRIMES

Legislation #Social Justice 66

CHALLENGES FOR THE DIFFERENTLY ABLED

Social Issue #Empowerment 67

AYUSHMAN BHARAT DIGITAL MISSION

#Government schemes 69

NATIONAL SCHEME FOR PM POSHAN IN SCHOOLS

#Government schemes 70

PRACTICE QUESTIONS 70

72

GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT, BIODIVERSITY & DISASTER MANAGEMENT

GS Paper (Prelims) and GS Paper I & III (Main)

MARINE PROTECTED AREAS IN ANTARCTIC

#Conservation #Biodiversity 72

NET-ZERO EMISSION

#Climate change #Sustainable Development 73

ONE SUN ONE WORLD ONE GRID (OSOWOG)

#Renewable Energy #Sustainable Development 77

ACTION PLANS TO DEAL WITH STUBBLE BURNING

#Pollution #Sustainable Development 78

CLIMATE INDICATORS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: DEMONSTRATING THE INTERCONNECTIONS

#Report #Climate change 79

BLUE FLAG CERTIFICATION

#Coastal #Conservation 79

PRANA PORTAL

#Pollution 80

STROPHODUS JAISALMERENSIS

#Biodiversity 80

DEEPOOR BEEL WETLAND

#Biodiversity #Wetlands 80

BHITARKANIKA NATIONAL PARK

#Wildlife #Biodiversity 81

AIR QUALITY 'IMPROVED' IN 104 CITIES IN 2020

#Pollution 81

ORIENTAL WHITE-BACKED VULTURES

#Wildlife #Biodiversity 82

PRACTICE QUESTIONS 83

84

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

GS Paper (Prelims) & GS Paper I I I (Main)

POLLEN CALENDAR

#Health #Biodiversity 84

ENVIRONMENTAL DNA (e-DNA)

#Biotechnology 85

TECH BASED ON CRISPR TO CONTROL GROWTH OF MOSQUITOES #Biotechnology 85

REVOLUTION UNFOLDING IN DATA REGULATION

#IT #Technology#Policy 87

UN CALLS FOR MORATORIUM ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) THAT THREATENS HUMAN RIGHTS

#IT #Technology#Policy 88

CHANDRAYAAN-2

#Space #Technology 89

SOLAR STORM

#Space #Science 91

INSPIRATION4

#Space #Science 91

Blue Straggler

#Space #Science 92

BERESHEET 2 PROJECT

#Space 94

TRANSPARENT CERAMICS

#Materials 94

GLOBAL INNOVATION INDEX (GII)

#Reports #Index 94

ARMED ROBOT REX MKII

#Technology #Robotics 95

AKASH PRIME MISSILE

#Defence 96

PRACTICE QUESTIONS 96

98

HISTORY, HERITAGE & CULTURE

GS Paper (Prelims) & GS Paper I (Main)

BATTLE OF SARAGARHI

#Modern History 98

SHANKAR SHAH & RAGHUNATH SHAH

#Modern History #Personalities 98

CULTURAL MAPPING OF 75 VILLAGES

#Culture #Heritage 99

DANCE OF LAMAS

#Culture #Buddhism 99

SUBRAMANIA BHARATI

#Personalities #Modern History 100

JALLIANWALA BAGH

#Modern History 100

THAMIRABARANI CIVILIZATION

#Ancient History #Locations 101

PRACTICE QUESTIONS 101

PART TWO

ETHICS, INTEGRITY AND APTITUDE

104

EMOTIONS AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

#Ethics #Integrity #Aptitude 104

CASE STUDIES for Practice

MAINS GS PAPER IV 108

PART THREE

ESSAYS OF THE MONTH

110

SIMPLICITY IS ULTIMATE SOPHISTICATION #Philosophical

SUBMITTED BY: MUSKAN ARYA 111

REALITY DOES NOT CONFIRM TO THE IDEAL, BUT CONFIRMS IT #Philosophical

SUBMITTED BY: ANKUR PANDEY 113

CONSERVATION IS A STATE OF HARMONY BETWEEN MEN AND LAND #Environment #Sustainable Development

SUBMITTED BY: PRIYANKA 114

PART ONE

CURRENT AFFAIRS ANALYSIS

**logical .simple .targeted
analysis & explanation
of all relevant news of the month**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GS PAPER (PRELIMS) & GS PAPER III (MAIN)

INFRASTRUCTURE

NATIONAL MONETISATION PIPELINE

#INFRASTRUCTURE #GOVERNMENT POLICIES

PRIMARY SOURCE: NITI Aayog, SECONDARY SOURCE: pib, THE HINDU

The Budget 2021-22 has laid out a three-pronged strategy for infrastructure financing in the country. This includes:

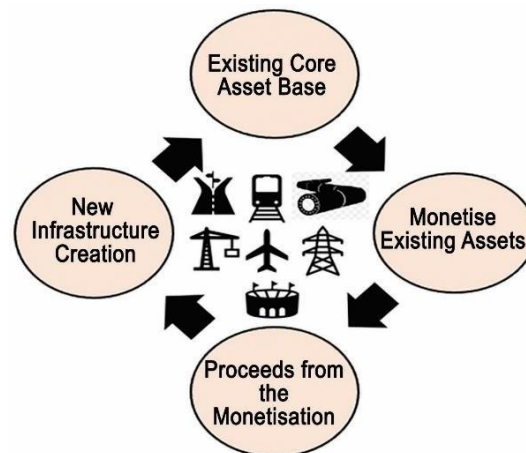
- Creation of institutional structures in the form of Development Bank (National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID)).
- Increase in allocation of capital expenditure
- National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP)

Government has recently launched the National Monetization Pipeline to raise around Rs 6 lakh crores during the next 4 years (2022-25). This would help us meet our investment needs for the National Infrastructure Pipeline. One of the critical factors for ensuring the success of NMP is to attract more investors- both domestic as well as institutional.

Concept of National Monetization Pipeline: Asset monetisation is defined as transfer of core assets owned by Government to private sector for a limited period. The core infrastructure assets include roads, ports, airports, telecom, railways, warehousing, energy pipelines, power generation, power transmission, hospitality & sports stadiums. NMP does not include monetization of non-core assets (such as land, buildings etc).

NMP is not privatisation since the ownership of the assets would continue to remain with the Government. The assets would be only transferred to the private sector for limited duration of time based upon the contract.

Note: Assets which are central to the business objectives of the Government have been categorised as Core Assets for the purposes of monetisation.



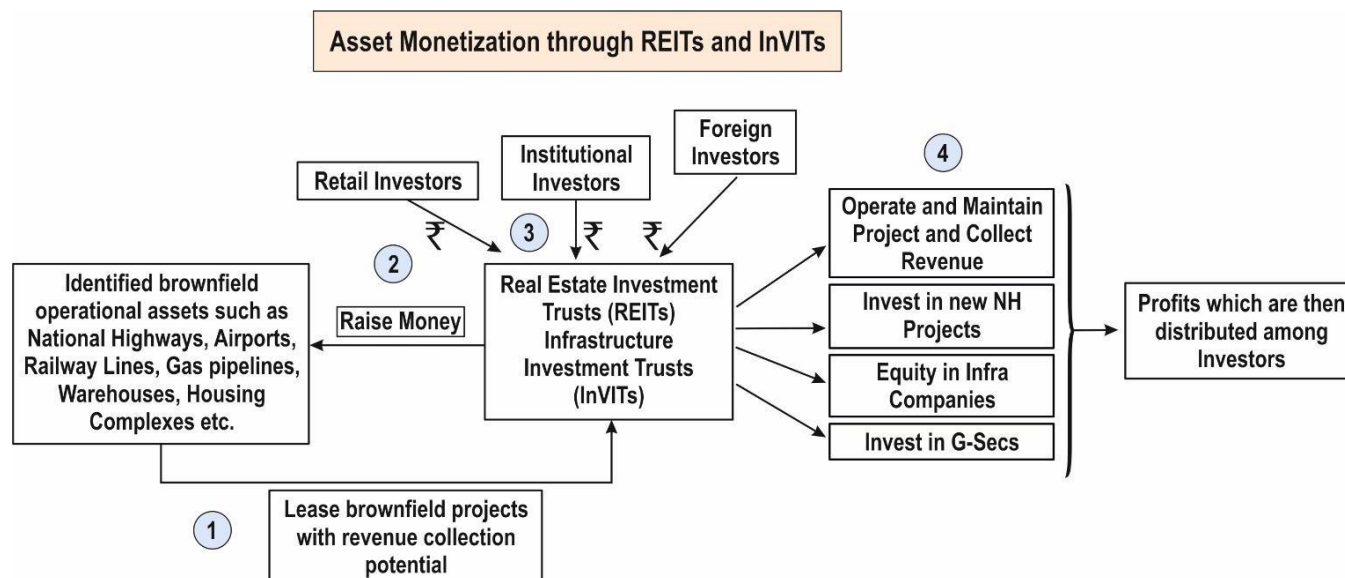
Global Examples: Asset Recycling Initiative (ARI) in Australia helped in raising over \$ 17 billion for funding infrastructure. Similarly, Indonesia's Limited Concession Scheme (LCS) was also hugely successful.

Need for National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP): NMP would help us meet the financing for National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP). As estimated by the Task Force for NIP, traditional sources of capital are expected to finance 85% of the capital expenditure under NIP. Remaining 15% is expected to be met through innovative mechanisms such as Asset Monetisation and NaBFID.

Asset Monetization Models	
Direct Contractual Models	Structured Financing Models
1. Operate-Maintain-Transfer (OMT) Model: Used as Toll-Operate-	1. Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Transfer (ToT) Model in National Highways 2. Operate Maintain Develop (OMD): Used as Operation Management Development Agreement (OMDA) in Airports 3. Long term lease Agreements: Used for leasing of Telecom Towers, Bus Terminals, Stadiums etc.	2. Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InVITs)
--	--



BENEFITS

- **Unlock the value:** The NMP would help us unlock the value of existing public assets such as Roads, Railways, ports etc. It would reduce the burden on the government owned agencies for operation and maintenance of assets.
- **Raise finances:** The Covid-19 pandemic has led to decrease in revenue collection, while at the same time calls for enhanced public expenditure on capital assets. NMP would enable the Government to raise finances by monetising its existing assets to spend on creation of new infrastructure.
- **Experience with disinvestment:** In the past, disinvestment proceeds from the PSUs have not necessarily been invested in new infrastructure creation. NMP enables the government to raise revenue without losing ownership of the assets.
- **Risk averse private sector:** Private sector has been reluctant to undertake investment due to economic slowdown. Under NMP, the Government would raise revenue to create new assets and then transfer such

assets to the Private sector. This is less risky for the private sector and hence attract greater investment.

- **Lead role for government:** Presently, creation of new infrastructure assets is saddled with multi-faceted challenges such as delays in land acquisition, environmental clearances etc. If the Govt. takes lead in creation of infrastructure, the Government can easily address these challenges.
- **Better operation & maintenance of assets:** Private sector would be involved in operation & maintenance of assets which is expected to improve service delivery and efficiency in management of public assets.
- **Better targeted:** Taxpayers' money would not be utilised for the maintenance of the assets. Rather, only those people who use such assets will be required to pay user charges.

CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS

- **Enhanced Role of Government:** Under NMP, Government would continue to build and own capital assets. Presently, there are many of problems in creation of infrastructure: time & cost overruns, delays in land acquisition, poor quality of

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

infrastructure etc. This needs to be addressed to ensure success of NMP.

- **Impact on the people:** People may be required to pay higher user charges to private sector.
- **Lack of independent regulatory authority** in some of the sectors such as Roads, Railways etc. may discourage the private sector investment. An Independent regulatory authority would (a) Make rules and regulations for PPP agreements (b) Ensure that user charges are market determined (c) Adjudicate on disputes between Government and private sector. This would create atmosphere of trust, confidence and fairness and encourage private sector investment.

DESIGNING PPP AGREEMENT

- Contracts must provide flexibility for addressing unforeseen developments (such as climate-related disasters, for example).
- Clear quality benchmarks must be set for the assets that are handed over by the government.
- Limit arbitrary actions by the Government such as Cancellation of projects
- Need to set up a robust mechanism for dispute resolution relating to PPP contracts.

Ability to realise fair value: Presently, economy is facing slowdown and the private sector is highly averse to taking risk. Hence, the Government may not be able to realise fair value from the assets due to poor participation of the private entities.

FINANCING PROBLEMS

- Success of NMP depends upon structured financing models such as REITs and InVITs. Poor awareness among the investors may make it difficult for REITs/InVITs to raise money.
- Banks may be unwilling to lend money to the private sector to lease assets.
- Under-developed corporate bond market may make it difficult for the private sector to raise revenues

Encourage Crony Capitalism: Only few large business houses can end up leasing the assets leading to monopolisation.

STRATEGIES NEEDED (NITI AAYOG'S RECOMMENDATIONS)

Streamlining Investment Guidelines: Presently, the SEBI has laid down certain restrictions on Insurance, Pension fund and Mutual fund companies with respect to how much money can be invested in REITs and InVITs. For ex, insurance fund companies cannot invest more than 3% of the money raised by REITs/InVITs. Such lower limits would make it difficult for the REITs/InVITs from tapping long term finances from the institutional investors. Hence, there is a need to enhance the investment limit to mobilize more money from the institutional investors.

Tax benefits: To encourage the participation of the retail investors, the Government should consider providing income tax benefits for the investment in REITs/InVITs.

REITs/InVITs under IBC: The REITs/InVITs can issue bonds to raise money from the market. However, as of now, the REITs/InVITs do not come under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy code. Hence, in case of default by the REIT/InVIT, the lenders cannot take recourse under IBC. Such a restriction may discourage investments in REIT/InVITs. Hence, to encourage investment, there is a need to bring REITs/InVITs under the IBC.

Need for standard agreements: There is a need to develop model PPP concession frameworks for various brownfield asset classes for quicker adoption.

Creating institutional structures for fast tracking asset identification and monetisation transaction: Each ministry should establish suitably empowered working group with the sole mandate to identify assets, method of monetisation and handhold in the transactions process.

User charges by private sector: Develop mechanism to ensure that private sector set user charges by considering the investment and risks involved. User charges should not be too high as it would impact common people.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

BANKING AND FINANCE

BAD BANK- BENEFITS & CHALLENGES

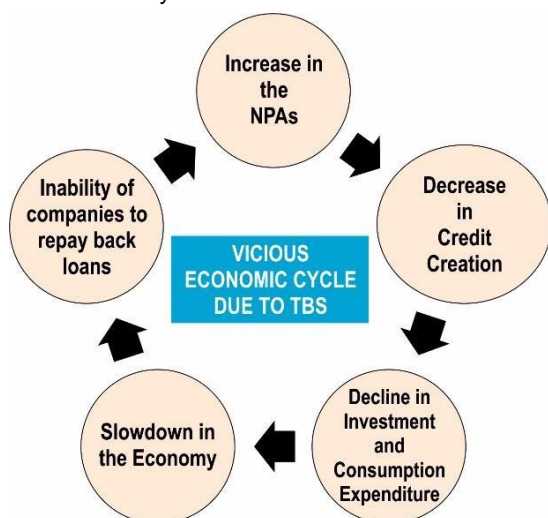
#BANKING



The Union Budget 2021-22 had proposed to set up a Bad Bank in the form of Asset Reconstruction company (ARC) and Asset management Company (AMC) to solve the twin balance sheet problem of the Indian banks and kick start the credit creation in the Indian Economy. Recently, the Government has announced the formation of "National Asset Reconstruction Company Limited (NARCL)" and "India Debt Resolution Company Ltd. (IDRCL)" to deal with the problem of NPAs.

ABOUT TWIN BALANCE SHEET PROBLEM (TBS)

The Twin Balance sheet problem highlights that the balance sheets of the banks as well as companies are in bad shape. While, balance sheet of Banks is dominated by the higher NPAs, on the other hand, balance sheet of companies is dominated by higher debt levels and their inability to repay back loans. Such a TBS problem puts the economy into vicious economic cycle as seen below.



ABOUT BAD BANK

Bad Bank is a bank which takes over the NPAs of other banks and leads to improvement in their financial position. For ex, let's say a Bank XYZ has total NPAs of

around Rs 1000 crores. In accordance with RBI's norms, the Bank here would be required to set aside certain percentage of its profits to cover the loss arising from such NPAs. This is referred to as provisioning norms. Hence, increase in the NPAs accompanied by higher provisioning requirements would severely constraint ability of the Bank to lend loans and hence affects its overall financial position. That is where, a Bad Bank comes into picture.

In this case, the Bad bank can take over NPAs worth Rs 1000 crores from Bank XYZ at say Rs 800 crores. Now, the Bad Bank can undertake restructuring of such loans or undertake any other mechanism to recover the NPA amount. As far as Bank XYZ is concerned, it is at least able to get Rs 800 crores. (In the absence of Bad Bank, the Bank XYZ would not even recovered that much amount).

IDEA OF BAD BANK

Global Examples: Early adopter in 1990s- US (Melon Bank) and Sweden (Securum). Similarly, other countries such as Malaysia, Finland, Belgium, Indonesia etc. have set up Bad Banks.

India: The Economic Survey 2016-17 had proposed to set up Bad Bank, which should be called as Public Asset Rehabilitation Agency (PARA). The PARA should be funded and owned by the Government of India. Such a proposal was also put forward by the Indian Banks Association (IBA) recently in June 2020.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BAD BANK AND NATIONAL ASSET RECONSTRUCTION COMPANY LIMITED (NARCL):

The Bad Bank, initially proposed by the Economic Survey 2016-17 was to be set and owned by the Government. However, NARCL has been set up by banks themselves. So, one major difference is in nature of ownership. However, since the nature of role performed by them is same, the terms "Bad Bank" and "ARC" can be used interchangeably.

Note: Asset Reconstruction Companies are registered with the RBI under the of SARFAESI Act. The NARCL has been incorporated under the Companies Act and has applied to Reserve Bank of India for license as an Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC). Apart from NARCL, India

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Debt Resolution Company Ltd. (IDRCL) has been set up as Asset Management Company (AMC) to deal with NPAs.

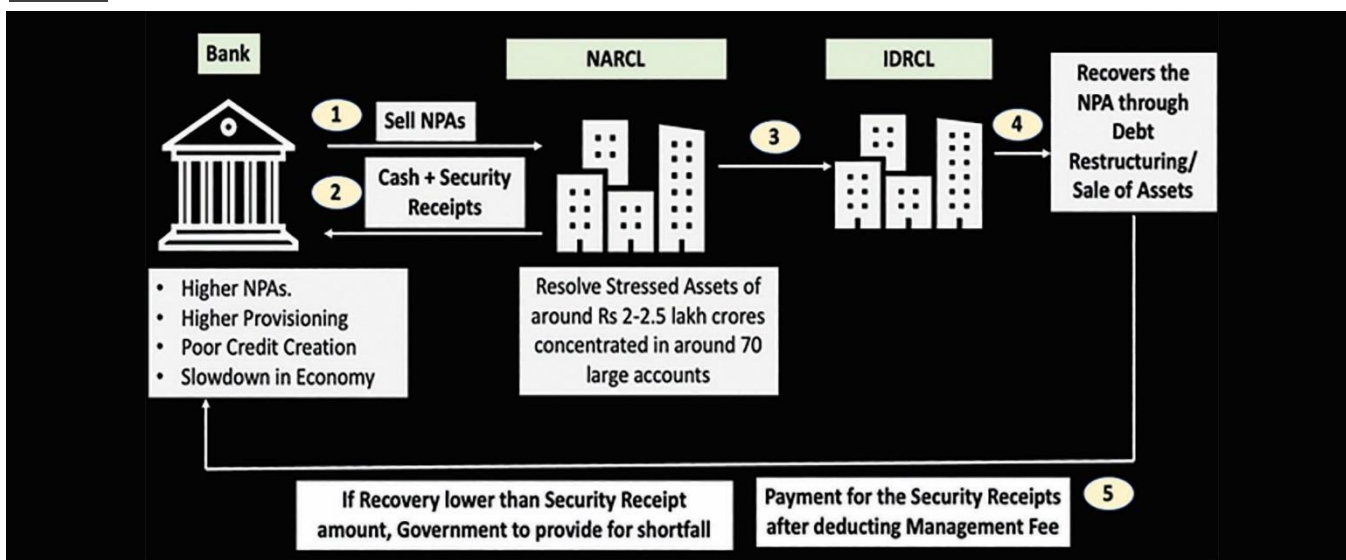
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ARC AND AMC:

The ARC buys the Bad loans from the Banks and then transfers them to the AMC. The AMC would then carry out restructuring to recover the bad loans. The AMC would be manned by professionals who have necessary expertise in recovering the Bad loans. For example, they

may have requisite capability to take over the management of the company (which has defaulted), revive the company, make it profitable and then sell it off to recover the NPAs.

In case of India, India Debt Resolution Company Ltd. (IDRCL) has been set up as AMC which will manage the asset and engage market professionals and turnaround experts.

HOW BAD LOANS WILL BE RESOLVED THROUGH NARCL?



Step 1: The NARCL would buy NPAs from the Banks. The Money is paid to the Banks in the form of Cash and Security Receipts. 15% of money is paid in form of Cash and 85% in form of Security Receipts (SR). The SARFAESI Act provides for the issuance of Security Receipts.

Step 2: Decrease in NPAs on Banks' Balance Sheets--> Lower Provisioning--> Capital gets unlocked--> Increase in Credit Creation--> Economic growth.

Step 3: The NARCL-IDRCL recovers the NPA either through Debt restructuring or sale of mortgaged assets.

Step 4: The NARCL makes the payment for the security receipts after deducting its management fee.

ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT

The Government has decided to give guarantee worth Rs 30,000 crores on the payment of security receipts by the

PROS AND CONS OF BAD BANK

Bad Bank- Pros and Cons	
Arguments in favour	Arguments against
Improvement in the balance Sheet of the Banks due to decrease in the NPAs.	The Bad Bank stands ready to buy NPAs from the Banks. Hence, this would discourage the Banks from exercising due caution in lending loans (Moral Hazard).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Unlocking of the capital that was earlier locked up as provisioning requirements. This would lead to increase in the credit creation.	According to Ex-RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan, the Setting up of Bad Bank would merely lead to transfer of Assets from one entity to another
Enable the Bank to focus on their core areas of accepting deposits and lending loans. The function of recovery of bad loans gets transferred to the specialist Bad Bank.	The NPAs of Banks has increased on account of number of reasons such as Political interference in working of Banks, Increase in willful defaulters, poor recovery process etc. Hence, Bad Bank does not solve the core underlying reasons which led to increase in NPAs in the first instance. The Bad Bank is thus considered to be superficial solution to the underlying problem of NPAs.
Most of the NPAs are concentrated in the larger borrowers who have taken loans from multiple banks. Presently, such Banks come together to form Committee of Creditors (CoC) and formulate a resolution plan to recover the NPAs. However, such a mechanism is presently facing problem of coordination and delays in the recovery of NPAs. Setting up of Bad Bank would enable the multiple Banks to transfer their NPAs simultaneously to Bad Bank and improve their balance sheets	Dilemma over pricing of NPAs Higher pricing of Loans → Loss to ARC Lower pricing of Loans → Loss to Banks
	Delays in recovery of NPAs by the ARCs.

WAY FORWARD

Based upon the Global experiences in countries such as US, China, Sweden etc., we need to adopt following strategies to ensure success of NARCL:

Well-Capitalised NARCL: Successful Bad Banks across the world were well-capitalised, which in turn enabled them to take up on the NPAs. Hence, NARCL needs to be well-capitalised to take over NPAs worth Rs 2 lakh crores.

Finite Tenure: Once it is set up, bad bank should have finite tenure within which it should be able to resolve the NPAs. If it continues to exist in perpetuity, it would discourage Banks from exercising due caution in giving loans (Moral Hazard).

Realistic valuation of NPAs: Usually, Banks recover only around 10-15% of the fully provisioned loans and haircuts is as high as 85-90%. Hence, Banks should transfer NPAs to NARCL at realistic value.

Time Bound Resolution of NPAs: Delays in recovery of NPAs would lead to delay in payment of Security Receipts to the Banks and hence adversely affect their financial position.

Professional Expertise: Considering the fact that most of the private ARCs have remained unsuccessful, the NARCL and IDRCL need to have highest level of

professional expertise and calibre to solve NPA mess in a time bound and efficient manner.

Reforms in PSBs: The setting up of Bad Bank without focussing on reforms in PSBs would mean that the fundamental problems that led to NPAs in first place continue to remain. Hence, recommendations of P.J. Nayak Committee on setting up of Banking Investment Committee must be expedited. Similarly, as rightly pointed out by Economic Survey 2016-17, there is need to focus on 4 R's of PSBs: Reform, Recognition, Recapitalization, and Resolution

ACCOUNT AGGREGATOR FRAMEWORK

#BANKING



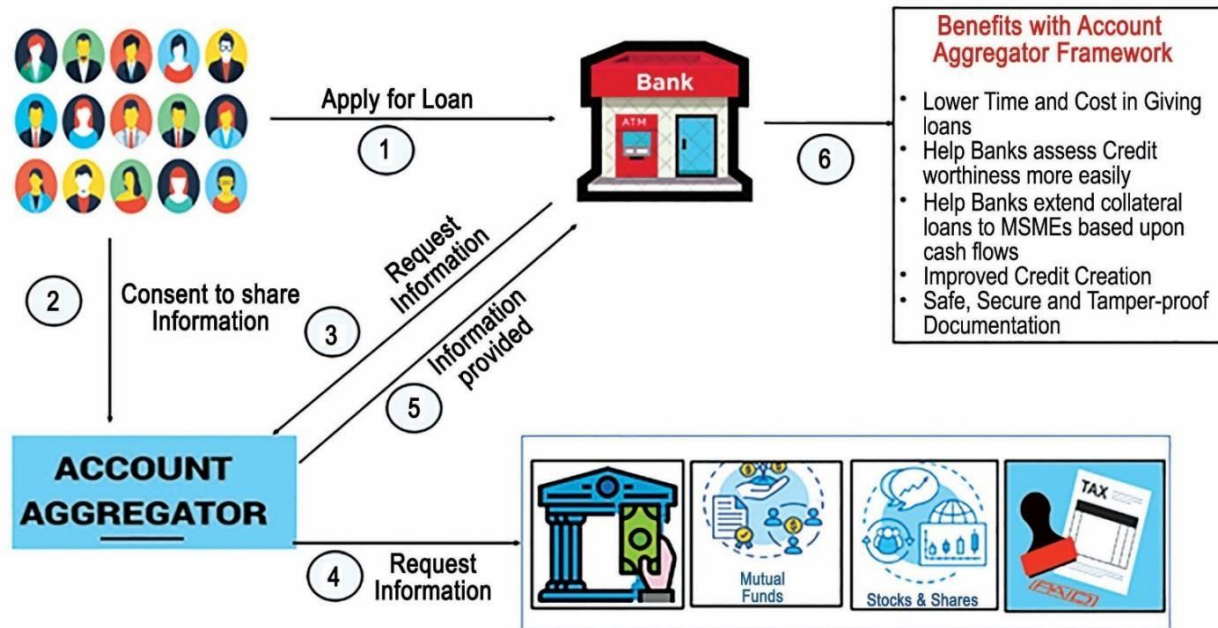
Recently, around 8 major Banks in India came together to join Account Aggregator (AA) network. The new network is considered as the "UPI" moment for the Banks. Just as the Unified Payment Interface (UPI) has increased the financial inclusion, the Account aggregator network would streamline the flow of financial information and enhance credit creation in the economy.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

UNDERSTANDING CONCEPT OF ACCOUNT AGGREGATOR

Let's say, a person "X" wants to avail loan from a Bank. Presently, the person must provide all the necessary financial information such as investment in equities, mutual funds, pension fund, fixed deposits, tax paid etc. to show his credit worthiness to the Bank. Quite often,

the person must go to multiple financial institutions to avail physical copy of his financial position. Further, the Bank also looks at the credit score of a person before deciding on giving loans. This is a time-consuming exercise and tedious exercise. That's where the account aggregators come into picture.



In this case, person "X" can authorise an account aggregator to gather all his financial information from various financial institutions and share this information with a particular bank. So, basically Account aggregators act as intermediaries which collect data from one financial entity and exchange it with another. For example, a bank which is processing a loan application can access details of the borrower's savings, past loan repayment record, mutual fund holdings and insurance holdings through an account aggregator.

ACCOUNT AGGREGATORS IN INDIA

The account aggregators are registered as NBFCs and are regulated by RBI. Some of the account aggregators which are presently registered with the RBI include Cookiejar, Cams financial information services etc. Account Aggregators cannot see the data; they merely take it from one financial institution to another based on an individual's direction and consent. The data AAs share is encrypted by the sender and can be decrypted only by the recipient. The end-to-end encryption and use of technology like the 'digital signature' makes the process much more secure than sharing paper documents.

ACCOUNT AGGREGATOR NETWORK

Recently, Eight Indian Banks decided to join account aggregator framework to share financial information with account aggregators. The network could revolutionize lending and give consumers greater access and control over their financial records. Benefits of network:

1. Reduce the time and efforts in giving loans by the Banks
2. Help the Banks to assess credit worthiness of the borrower more efficiently
3. Help the Banks to extend loans to MSMEs without collateral (i.e., banks can extend loans by taking a holistic look at the finances of MSMEs such as tax paid, total financial assets etc.)
4. Improve the Credit creation
5. Safe, secure and tamper-proof documentation due to digitisation.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SURETY BONDS: FILLIP TO INFRASTRUCTURE CREATION

#BANKING

PRIMARY SOURCE Business Standard

Recently, the IRDAI has issued draft guidelines for the issuance of Surety Bonds. These Bonds are set to provide fillip to the National Infrastructure Pipeline.

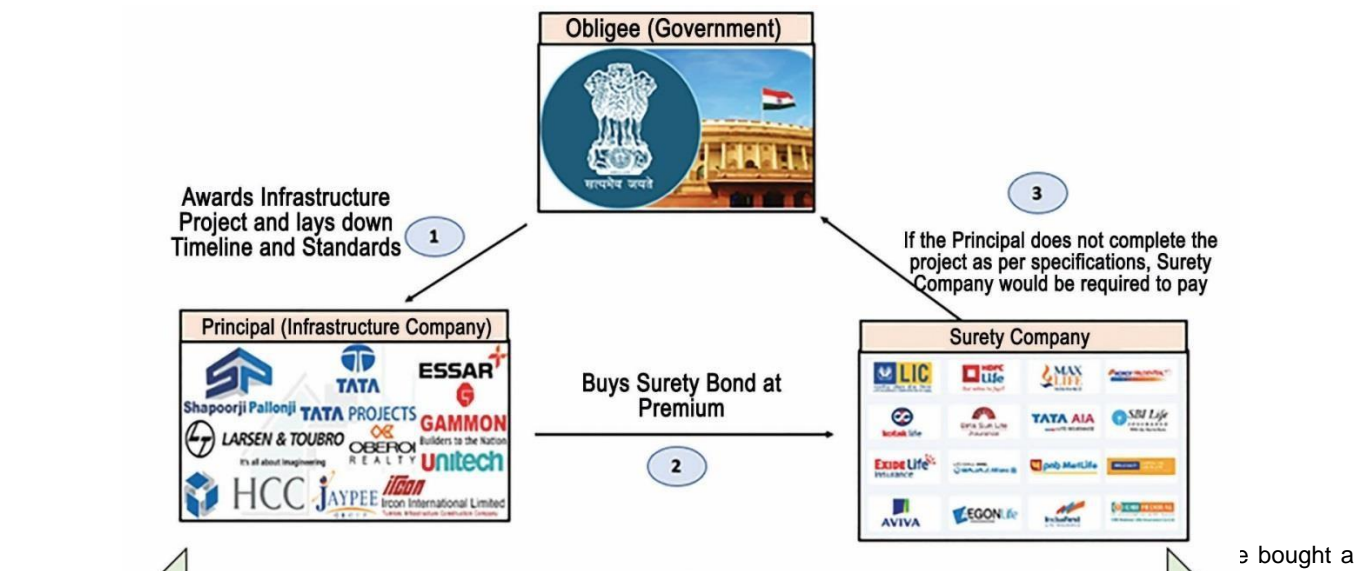
WHAT ARE SURETY BONDS?

- The Surety Bond is form of contractual agreement between 3 parties- Principal (Contractor), Obligee (Government) and the Surety company. As part of

WORKING MECHANISM OF SURETY BONDS

such an agreement, the surety company gives an undertaking that the Principal (contractor) would complete the project as per the timeline keeping in mind all the specifications laid down by the Government.

- If the Contractor fails to complete the project on time or if the contractor does not fulfil any requirement laid down by the Government, then Surety company comes into picture and is required to compensate the Obligee (Government) for the loss.
- Presently, these surety Bonds are commonly used in countries such as US, UK, Australia etc. Now, we are trying to create an enabling framework which would enable the Insurance companies to act as surety companies.



- For ex. For construction private specifications and timeline for the completion of the project. The NHAI would want the particular private company ABC to adhere to these timelines and specifications. Hence, NHAI may insist the private company ABC to provide Surety Bond worth Rs 100 crores.
- Now, the private sector company may buy this Bond from the Insurance Company. Usually, such bonds are

benefits: Ensure Timely Completion of Projects + Encourage efficient Infrastructure Firms + Boost Insurance Sector

is bought a upon the experience vate sector of 2%. This means that the company has paid Rs 2 crores to get the surety from the Insurance Company.

- This surety bond would then be presented before the NHAI leading to the award of the highway project. In future, if the private sector company ABC fails to

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

adhere to the timelines or the specifications, the Insurance company would be required to pay Rs 100 crores to the NHAI.

BENEFITS

- Presently, the NHAI requires the Contractors to furnish Bank guarantees for awarding Highway projects. In case of failure of the contractor to adhere to the contract, the Banks would be required to

compensate the Government for the loss. This puts higher burden on the Banking sector. Creation of enabling framework for surety bonds would reduce the burden on the Banks and help contractors to avail surety from insurance companies.

- Provide Fillip to the Insurance Sector
- Ensure Completion of Highway projects without any delays and cost escalations.

EXTERNAL SECTOR

EXPORT-LED MODEL FOR INDIA

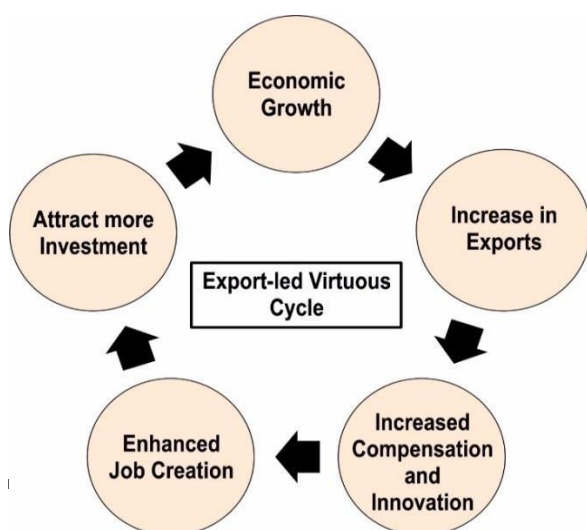
#EXTERNAL SECTOR

PRIMARY SOURCE BusinessLine

India's vision of becoming a \$ 5 trillion economy by 2024 is intricately linked with an export-oriented approach. An Export-led model would help us attract foreign investments, integrate into global value chains (GVCs), enhance job creation and thus sustain virtuous economic cycle. In this regard, let us look into the following dimensions:

1. Important aspects about India's Trade
2. Need for Export-led Model
3. Constraints and Challenges
4. Strategies needed.

NEED FOR EXPORT-LED MODEL



India's Experience during 1947-91: Inward-oriented and protectionist policies followed prior to LPG reforms affected the economy in terms of lower exports, lower foreign investment, poor competitiveness of industries and overall reduced GDP growth rate. Need to learn from the past mistakes and adopt outward-oriented policies which focusses on boosting exports.

Empirical Evidence: Countries such as Japan, China, Vietnam etc. have been able to sustain higher economic growth by integrating with the global economy. In the recent times, such an export-led strategy has benefitted both bigger economies such as China as well as smaller economies such as Vietnam.

Shift from Consumption-led to Investment and Export driven Model: To ensure \$ 5 trillion economy, we cannot rely only on domestic demand. Like China, we need to cater to global demand by boosting our exports.

Conducive environment in terms of US-China Trade war, rising Labour costs in China, growing anti-china sentiment etc. India needs to fill up the vacuum which is slowly left by China.

Boost Make in India and Assemble in India: By integrating "Assemble in India for the world" into Make in India, India can raise its export market share to about 3.5 percent by 2025 and 6 per cent by 2030. India would create about 4 crore well-paid jobs by 2025 and about 8 crores by 2030 (Eco Survey 2019-20)

Innovation and Efficiency: The export-led model would force domestic Industries to innovate and adapt to boost exports.

CHALLENGES IN BOOSTING EXPORTS

Supply-side:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **Dominance of Dwarf Firms in MSME Sector:** MSMEs account for around 40% of the exports and 45% of manufacturing output. However, these MSMEs face problems with respect to factors of production such as Land, labour and capital. Plus, most of the MSMEs use obsolete technology which leads to poor efficiency and competitiveness.
- **Higher Logistics Cost:** India's logistics cost as a share of GDP is 14 percent, which is high when compared to developed nations, where it ranges between eight and ten percent. Higher logistics cost in turn reduces the overall competitiveness of Indian economy.
- **Trade facilitation:** involves reducing the number of documents needed for trade. Trade facilitation reduces the time to export and cost of exports. In India, trade facilitation, as measured by "Trading Across Borders" is quite poor, which is one of the parameters for measuring World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index.
- **Poor Innovation:** India spends hardly around 0.7% of its GDP on R&D, which is quite lower in comparison to USA (2.1%), China (2.8%), Israel (4.3%) etc. Improvement in innovation ecosystem would help us improve manufacturing competitiveness and help us manufacture high quality goods for the global market.
- **Lack of Market Intelligence** related to consumer preference in export markets. For example, higher sweetness in Indian mangoes is not necessarily in demand in many countries.
- **Identification Challenges:** Each district of a country has a potential equivalent to that of a small country in boosting exports. However, there is lack of focus on identifying potential export clusters within a state.
- **Lack of coordination** among multiple government ministries involved in boosting exports.
- **Adverse Impact of FTAs:** Some of the FTAs with countries such as Japan, South Korea etc. has led to **inverted duty structure** which has in turn encouraged import of finished goods and discouraged domestic manufacturing.
- **Policy Instability:** Delay in announcement of incentives under RoDTEP scheme. Even though, this scheme was announced on 1st Jan 2021. The Government has notified the guidelines in Aug 2021. Similarly, whenever there is increase in prices of agricultural commodities such as Onions, Potato etc.,

the Government imposes ad-hoc ban on export of such commodities. This affects India's image as a reliable supplier of agricultural commodities.

DEMAND-SIDE

- **Rising Protectionist Policies in importing countries:** High import duties and Quota limits in export markets
- **Easier market access to India's competitors:** Goods from countries such as Bangladesh, Vietnam etc. enter into export markets such as EU, USA etc. at almost zero customs duty. However, Indian goods enter such markets with comparatively higher customs duty and thus our goods become uncompetitive. India's exports of Textiles and Leather to USA and EU have been declining on account of this.
- **WTO Norms:** Indiscriminate application of sanitary and phytosanitary measures by other countries against Indian products. For example, basmati and non-basmati rice exports to the US have been rejected multiple times on the grounds of low hygiene standards. Similarly, the issue of pesticides residues is frequently raised by the EU and Japan

WAY FORWARD

Improve Trade Competitiveness by improving access to factors of production (Land, Labour, Capital), Reduce Logistics costs (14% of GDP) to global benchmarks (8% of GDP), improving Ease of Doing Business etc.

Protect the domestic Market from the import cheap foreign goods through (a) strong and effective technical regulations (b) trade safeguards such as Anti-dumping duties and safeguard duties.

Better Inter-Ministerial Coordination: The ministry of Commerce and Industry must hold regular Inter- ministerial meetings. Further, regular Interactions with the State Governments is also crucial so that trade facilitation takes place under cooperative federalism.

Handholding support to MSMEs The MSMEs need to be provided handholding support to have access to factors of factors and use appropriate technology to boost exports.

Increase access to formal finance: Less than 4 per cent of small firms in India have access to formal finance. The figure for the US, China, Vietnam and Sri Lanka is 21 per cent.

Reorient SEZs (Baba Kalyani Committee): The SEZs should be renamed as 3 E's- Employment and Economic

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Enclaves. Focus should not only be on boosting exports, but also on employment creation and GDP growth rate. Incentives given to companies in SEZs should depend upon factors such as Value addition, Technology adoption etc. This would encourage the companies to innovate and compete at the global level.

Integration into Global value chains (GVCs): Invite large anchor firms in critical products to set up operations in India. Government initiatives like simplified labour laws, PLI incentives, low corporate tax on new manufacturing operations and scrapping of retrospective tax would encourage many firms searching for China plus-one location to shift base to India.

AGREEMENT ON AGRICULTURE (AoA)

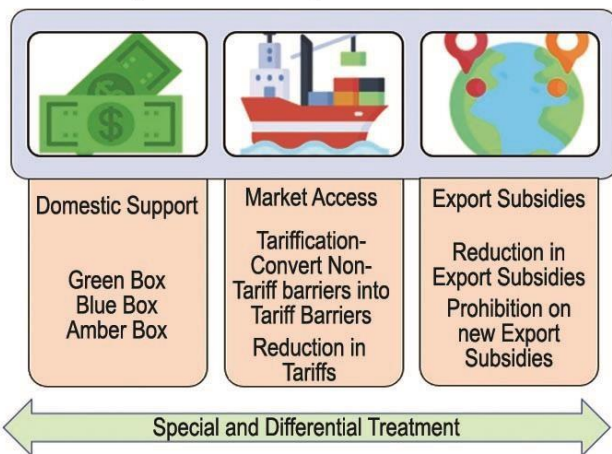
#EXTERNAL SECTOR

PRIMARY SOURCE BusinessLine

Recently, Union minister for Commerce and Industry has highlighted that WTO Agreement on Agriculture is riddled with deep imbalances and favours developed economies.

The Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) basically aims to facilitate international trade in agricultural goods by putting a cap on the agricultural subsidies given by the member countries. This agreement stands on 3 pillars viz. Domestic Support, Market Access, and Export Subsidies.

Agreement on Agriculture-3 Pillars



DOMESTIC SUPPORT

Green Box Subsidies: It include subsidies such as R&D, Expansion of Irrigation Facilities, Income support to the

Farmers (which is not product specific) etc. These subsidies are non-distortionary in terms of international trade. In order to qualify, green box subsidies must not distort trade, or at most cause minimal distortion. They must be government-funded and must not involve price support. There is no limit on Green Box Subsidies.

Blue Box Subsidies: Blue box supports are subsidies that are tied to programmes that limit production. Hence it is an exception to the general rule related to agricultural support. The Blue box subsidies aim to limit production by imposing production quotas or requiring farmers to set aside part of their land. Currently only few countries like Norway and Iceland provide such subsidies. There is no limit on Blue Box Subsidies.

Amber Box Subsidies: Nearly all domestic support measures which distort production as well as international trade. These include subsidies such as Electricity, Fertilisers, Seeds, Water, MSP etc.

Limit on Amber Box Subsidies

- Developing countries: 10% of the domestic agricultural value production in 1986-88.
- Developed countries: 5% of the domestic agricultural value production in 1986-88

Development Box: Developmental measures (Special and Differential Treatment for Developing Countries)

Article 6 of the Agreement excludes from the reduction commitment some support measures that fit into the developmental category and are designed to encourage agricultural and rural development in the developing and poor countries. They include:

- Investment subsidies which are generally available to agriculture in developing countries.
- Agricultural input subsidies generally available to low-income producers in developing countries
- Domestic support to producers in developing countries to encourage diversification from growing illicit narcotic crops.

ISSUES WITH THE AoA

- Stockholding is a kind of policy instrument used by a government to procure, stock and distribute the food. Minimum Support Price (MSP) is one of the instruments of Public Stockholding.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- To implement National Food Security Act (NFSA), the Government is required to procure more food grains by announcing MSP. On account of this, Government would be required to declare subsidies over and above the limit specified under AoA. This was being challenged by the developed countries such as USA, which wanted India to stick to subsidy limit imposed under AoA.
- At the Bali ministerial conference in December 2013, India secured a "peace clause". Under it, if India breaches the 10% limit on subsidy under AoA, other member countries will not take legal action under the WTO dispute settlement mechanism.
- Further, in 2014, India forced developed countries to clarify that the peace clause will continue indefinitely until a permanent solution is found. Presently, India has been demanding a permanent solution on public stockholding in order to implement National Food Security Act.

INDIA'S ARGUMENT AGAINST SUBSIDIES UNDER AoA

- The percentage limit on the Subsidies is quite deceptive. In terms of absolute value, the developed economies have been providing subsidies far higher than India.
- The limit on the subsidy does not factor in the Inflation. It is calculated as the value of production in 1986-88. Since then, the prices of agricultural commodities have increased.
- Under the Green Box Subsidies, direct income support to the farmers (not linked to specific product) is allowed. This has been misused by countries such as USA. The direct cash transfers to the farmers in USA account for almost 50% of its agricultural value production.
- Procurement of the Commodities under MSP regime is not for boosting agricultural exports, rather it is for meeting food security needs of Indian Citizens. Hence, procurement of commodities for ensuring food security should not be included in the Amber Box, rather it should be included in the Green Box.

EVERGRANDE CRISIS: CHINA'S LEHMAN MOMENT??

#EXTERNAL SECTOR

PRIMARY SOURCE 

Recently, China's Real Estate Company, Evergrande defaulted on its debt obligations and spooked investors across the world, including India. This crisis has been highlighted as China's Lehman Moment. It is comparable to India's IL&FS crisis, which took place in 2018-19. Recent development in China becomes important for 2 reasons (a) Raises concerns over Chinese Debt-fueled Model of Development (b) Showcases as to how economic shocks can easily spread from one country to another.

WHAT IS EVERGRANDE?

Evergrande is China's second-largest real estate developer. It is China's poster boy of Real estate sector, which accounts for 30% of Chinese GDP. The Evergrande owns more than 2% of the real estate projects in China and has presence in more than 230 cities.

GENESIS OF CRISIS

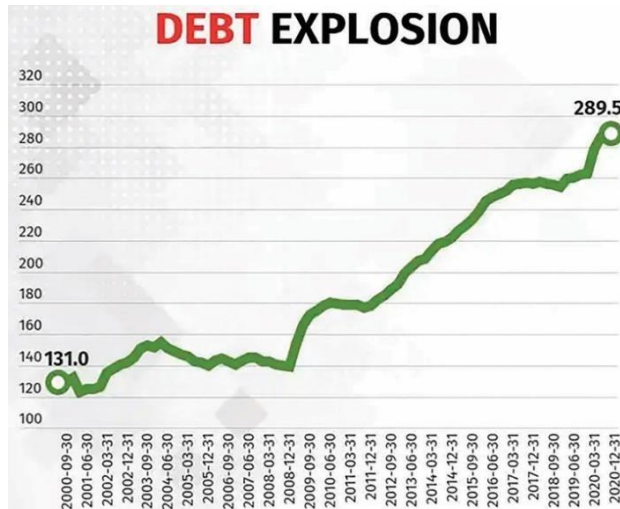
China's Quest for Alternative Model: Post the Global financial crisis in 2008, China felt that it cannot rely solely on export-led model to sustain higher GDP growth rate. Accordingly, it started focussing on Real Estate Sector, which has strong backward and forward linkages. The fillip to Real estate sector can increase demand for core industries such as Iron and Steel, Cement, Electricity etc. Similarly, growth in real estate sector can increase standard of living.

Policy Initiatives: To facilitate development of Real estate sector, number of policy initiatives were taken. In particular, rate of interest on construction as well as buying of homes was substantially reduced. Real Estate companies such as Evergrande borrowed huge amount of money from Banks and Financial institutions to construct real estate projects. Initially, because of higher demand, real estate companies made huge profits and become conglomerates.

Credit Boom in China: Ultra-loose monetary policy led to credit boom in China. The Credit-to-GDP ratio for the non-financial sector increased to around 290% of

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Chinese GDP, which basically highlights debt-fuelled growth.



China - Credit to Non financial sector from All sectors at Market value - Percentage of GDP - Adjusted for breaks

Glut in the Market: The debt fuelled growth led to oversupply of real estate projects. According to some estimates, entire population of France, Germany, Italy, UK and Canada can be fitted into empty Chinese apartments. This highlights the intensity of the problem in China.

Poor Financial position of Real Estate Companies: Companies such as Evergrande which had borrowed huge amount of money were unable to sell their real estate projects and hence started facing huge losses. This in turn reduced their ability to repay loans. For example, Evergrande has borrowed \$ 500 bn from around 170 Banks and 120 financial institutions across the world. It has also raised dollar denominated debt by issuing bonds in US market. Now, this company is not in a position to repay the loans.

Final Nail in the Coffin: Companies such as Evergrande would have borrowed money from other sources to fulfil their debt obligations. However, Chinese Government has recently come up with the new policy to limit borrowings of Real estate companies. Such a new policy has proved to be final nail in the coffin and made it even more difficult for the real estate companies to fulfil their debt obligations.

LIKELY IMPACT OF EVERGRANDE CRISIS

Slowdown in Chinese Economy: Real estate sector in China accounts for 30% of its GDP and is also one of the biggest sources of employment creation. Hence, bursting

of real estate bubble in China may lead to slowdown in the short and medium run.

Impact on the Global Economy: China is well integrated into Global economy and hence slowdown in Chinese economy may well spread to the other countries. For example, recent default by Evergrande may affect the balance sheet of the Banks and financial institutions across the world.

IMF APPROVES SDR ALLOCATION

#EXTERNAL SECTOR

PRIMARY SOURCE BusinessLine

Board of Governors of IMF has recently approved a general allocation of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) equivalent to US\$650 billion (about SDR 456 billion). This is the largest SDR allocation in the history of IMF and a shot in the arm for the global economy at a time of unprecedented crisis.

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND (IMF)

Multilateral institution which came into being in 1945 after the Bretton Woods Conference (1944). Three main roles of IMF are:

- Economic surveillance of member countries to achieve macroeconomic stability.
- Lending to member countries facing BoP crisis.
- Capacity development of the member countries.

STRUCTURE OF IMF

Board of Governors: Representatives of 189 Member countries. Consists of one governor and one alternate governor for each member country. Governor is usually the minister of finance or the head of the central bank. Meets once in a year and take broad policy decisions.

Executive Board: Responsible for conducting the day-to-day; Composed of 24 directors elected by member countries.

President: Appointed by the Executive Board for a period of 5 years. The President of IMF has always been a European since its inception.

International Monetary and Finance Committee (IMFC): Advises and reports to the IMF Board of Governors on the supervision and management of the international monetary and financial system. A number

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

of international institutions, including the World Bank, participate as observers in the IMFC's meetings.

Reports published by IMF: World Economic Outlook, Global Financial Stability Report, Fiscal Monitor Report

SOURCES OF THE IMF'S FUNDS

Presently, the lending capacity of the IMF is around \$ 1 trillion. The IMF raises money in the following manner:

- Quota: Financial Contribution made by the member countries.
- New Arrangements to Borrow (NAB): Number of member countries and institutions stand ready to lend additional resources to the IMF; second line of defence to supplement IMF resources.
- Bilateral Borrowing Agreements: Third line of defence; IMF has entered into bilateral borrowing agreements with certain member countries to ensure that it could meet the financing needs of its members.

QUOTAS IN THE IMF

Quotas determine the maximum number of financial resources a member is obliged to provide to the IMF.

Determined based on 4 indicators- Size of GDP (50%),

Openness (30%), Economic Variability (15%) and International Reserves (5%). The Quotas are denominated in Special Drawing rights (SDRs) The Quotas also determine:

- Voting Power
- Borrowing Limit: Presently the member countries are allowed to borrow up to 145% of its quota on annual basis and 435% cumulatively.
- SDR allocations to member countries.

SPECIAL DRAWING RIGHTS (SDR)

Interest bearing international reserve asset to supplement its member countries' official reserves. Allocated to member countries in proportion to their IMF quotas.

The value of the SDR is based on a basket of five currencies—the U.S. dollar, the Euro, the Chinese Renminbi, the Japanese Yen, and the British Pound Sterling.

(Criteria to be included in the basket- (a) Export Criteria- Among Top 5 Exporters (b) Freely convertible currency)

The value of SDR is set daily by the IMF on the basis of exchange rates between the currencies included in SDR. The value of SDR is denominated in terms of dollars.

Uses of SDRs (also called as Paper Gold)

- Held as part of Forex Reserves
- SDRs can be exchanged into other freely usable currencies among themselves. (This signifies that SDR is neither claim nor currency of IMF Rather, it is potential claim on freely usable currencies of IMF members)
- Use SDRs in their transactions with IMF such as repayment of loans, payment of interest, payment for increasing their IMF quota and so on.
- Members can sell a part or all their SDR allocations.

Reserve Position in the IMF: Subscription of the quota consists of two components: (i) foreign exchange component and (ii) domestic currency component. Under the foreign exchange component, a member is required to pay 25% of its quota in SDRs or in foreign currencies. This is termed as "reserve position in the IMF or reserve tranche" and is part of the member country's reserve assets.

RECENT DECISION OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The IMF has decided to increase the general allocation of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) equivalent to US\$650 billion (about SDR 456 billion). The recent allocation takes the total SDRs issued by the IMF to \$ 940 bn (about SDR 650 billion).

Principle of allocation of SDRs: The newly created SDRs will be credited to IMF member countries in proportion to their existing quotas in the Fund. Out of US \$650 billion SDR allocation, \$274 billion would go to emerging and developing countries.

How much did India get? Special Drawing Rights (SDR) of 12.5 billion (equivalent to around \$ 18 billion). The total SDR holdings of India now stands at SDR 13.66 billion.

Rationale for increasing SDR Allocation: Help economies affected by Covid-19 pandemic + Enable poor countries to import vaccines + Enhance global liquidity.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

TAXATION

DECISIONS OF GST COUNCIL

#GST

PRIMARY SOURCE

pib

GST Council recently held its 45th meeting and took some important decisions. In this regard, let us have a look at important highlights of the meeting.

BASICS ABOUT GST COUNCIL

Constitutional body (Article 279A) for making recommendations to the Union and State Government on issues related to Goods and Service Tax.

Composition: Chaired by the Union Finance Minister and other members are the Union State Minister of Revenue or Finance and Ministers in-charge of Finance or Taxation of all the States.

Decision Making: Voting Weightage- Centre (1/3) and all States (2/3). Decision shall be taken by a majority of not less than three-fourths of the weighted votes of the members present and voting. Thus, Central Government has an effective veto on all decisions of the GST Council.

Quorum: ½ of the total members

RECENT DECISION ABOUT GST COMPENSATION MECHANISM

GST Compensation Mechanism: Compensation cess is levied on luxury and sin goods, and the proceeds are used to compensate states for any loss they incur within the first five years of GST implementation. According to the GST Compensation Act, States and UTs with Assemblies are guaranteed compensation if the GST revenue growth is less than 14 per cent. The amount is paid bi-monthly.

Shortfall in GST Compensation: CoVID-19 pandemic has led to decline in the GST collections. The amount of revenue collected under GST compensation fund has been insufficient to compensate states for the revenue loss. Hence, Central Government had to borrow money to compensate the states for revenue loss in 2020-21. Even in the year 2021-22, the Centre is required to borrow around Rs 1.5 lakh crores. The total money

borrowed for a period of 2 years along with the interest would be repaid by extending the GST Compensation Cess beyond 2022. The centre expects that the GST compensation cess would have to be extended up to the end of 2026.

Recent Demand of the States: As highlighted, States are assured of compensation in their revenue shortfall for a period of 5 years i.e., until end of 2022. However, Some of the State Governments wanted that this assured compensation should extend beyond 2022. That means, if the states' revenues do not increase by 14% year-on-year beyond 2022, they need to be compensated.

Centre's stand: Centre has rejected the demands of the States. As of now, the states will get compensation for the shortfall in their revenue between the years 2017- 2022.

Response of Centre: Centre has rejected the demands of States and has said that the compensation mechanism would be applicable only for a period of 5 years. So, as of now, the states will get compensation for the shortfall in their revenue only between the years 2017-2022 and not beyond 2022. However, to meet this shortfall for 5 years (2017-2022), the Centre has already borrowed money. Hence, GST compensation cess would have to be extended up to the end of 2026 to meet the shortfall.

E-COMMERCE FOOD OPERATORS UNDER GST

Present Status: Currently, online bills generated by food aggregators (Zomato, Swiggy etc.) already have a GST component in it. However, this GST amount is paid back to the restaurant partners who are then expected to pay this amount to the government.

Problems: Presently, a large number of Hotels and Restaurants are not registered with the GST. So, GST collected by such restaurants does not get paid to the Government. The Government estimates the GST revenue loss of around Rs 2000 crores.

New Decision: Henceforth, e-commerce food operators will have to collect GST from the customer and pay it directly to the government instead of paying it to the Hotels and Restaurants.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

EXTENSION IN TENURE OF NAA

#GST



GST Council has decided to extend the tenure of the National Anti-Profiteering Authority (NAA) for one more year up to November 30, 2022.

WHAT IS PROFITEERING?

Reduction in GST rate or the benefit of input tax credit should be passed on to the consumer through commensurate reduction in prices. However, it has been seen that when the GST rates are cut, the firms do not pass on this benefit to the consumers by reducing the prices and instead continue to make higher profits. Thus, there is a need for an institutional mechanism to ensure that the firms do not earn such profits illegally and benefits of the GST get passed on to the consumers.

ABOUT NATIONAL ANTI-PROFITEERING AUTHORITY

Establishment: Section 171 of the CGST act deals with profiteering. It empowers the central Government to constitute authority to check illegal profiteering. Accordingly, the Union Cabinet has constituted National Anti-Profiteering Authority in 2017.

Composition: The NAA is headed by a senior officer of the level of Secretary to the Government of India and comprises of four Technical Members from the Centre and the States.

Tenure: Due to end by 30 November 2019. Initially, it got extension of 2 years until end of November 2021. Now, it has got extension of another year.

MECHANISM OF WORKING

When the NAA certify that there is anti-profiteering in a specific case, it can order the concerned firm to reduce

its prices or return the undue benefit availed by it along with interest to the recipient of the goods or services. If the undue benefit cannot be passed on to the consumer, it can be ordered to be deposited in the Consumer Welfare Fund. In extreme cases, the NAA can impose a penalty on the defaulting business entity and even order the cancellation of its registration under GST.

ISSUES WITH CURRENT ANTI-PROFITEERING FRAMEWORK

Absence of Methodology to ascertain Profiteering: Rule 126 of the Central Goods and Services Tax Rules, 2017, mandates that National Anti-profiteering Authority (NAA) must evolve a methodology to deal with anti- profiteering issues. However, the NAA has failed to prescribe the methodology leading to arbitrariness and contradictions in Anti-Profiteering Framework.

Mode prescribed for passing the Benefit: Present, the companies are compulsorily required to reduce the prices of their products whenever the GST rates are reduced. If the companies use any other mode to pass on the benefit of reduced GST rates, it still is considered as Profiteering. Now, for example, the companies can decide to pass on the benefit in the form of increased grammage i.e., providing higher quantity of commodity at the same price.

Other factors not considered: Despite reduction in the GST rates, cost of manufacturing of commodities (Raw materials, Labour Cost etc) may have been increased. However, these factors are not taken into account to ascertain profiteering.

Absence of Appellate Body: There is no appellate mechanism or authority prescribed against the order of National Anti-profiteering Authority (NAA). Thus, only remedy for a person dissatisfied with the NAA order is to approach the High Court through writ petition.

AGRICULTURE

LEGALIZATION OF MSP- PROS AND CONS

#AGRICULTURE



Recently passed farm acts has ignited the debate about Legalization of MSP. The farmer groups have been demanding for the legal sanctity of the MSP to prevent

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

exploitation by private sector. The Government has assured the farmers that MSP would continue but it is not ready to provide legal status to MSP.

Present Status of MSP: Presently, MSP does not enjoy statutory recognition. This means that, there is no onus on the private sector to buy at MSP. Legalization of MSP would ensure that private sector would buy commodities at MSP. Failure to do so would attract penalty.

NEED FOR LEGALIZATION OF MSP

Enhancement in Income Levels: Even through the Government declares MSP; procurement is quite limited to certain crops and certain regions. Most of the farmers sell commodities below MSP in the open market to the traders and middlemen.

Address challenges due to Farm Acts: The recent passed farm acts may lead to the exploitation of the farmers, wherein companies may procure commodities from them below MSP.

CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS

Goes against Interest of Farmers:

- In the event of bumper harvest, prices of the commodities would fall below MSP. During such times, private sector may not procure the commodities fearing penalty.
- Higher procurement of Food grains by FCI → Surplus stock → Dumping of surplus in open market → Decrease in prices → Traders would buy commodities from FCI and not farmers.
- Legalization of MSP → Encourage over-production of Rice and Wheat → Environmental cost (such as Decline in Soil fertility, depletion of ground water etc) → Decline in income levels of farmers.

Adverse Impact on Economy:

- Higher costs of procurement due to a statutory MSP will increase the food prices, leading to inflation in the economy
- Higher prices of commodities would adversely affect exports of agricultural commodities

Financing needs: According to some estimates, if the Government were to procure all the 23 crops at MSP, it would amount to half of the Government's Budget.

Unsustainable Food grain Management Policy: The Food subsidy bill has already become quite unsustainable at around Rs 2 lakh crores. The excess procurement of food grains by the FCI has led to surplus

buffer stocks leading to higher storage costs and wastages. Legalization of MSP would further worsen the scenario.

Administrative Challenge lack of government machinery to procure all crops that are under MSP system.

Violation of WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA): Legalization of MSP would further violate the limit on the subsidies under AoA and it can be challenged by other countries. India's quest for Permanent solution on public stockholding could be in jeopardy.

Promote Inequality: Only 6% of farmers are able to benefit from the MSP. Similarly, most Rice and Wheat are procured from states such as Punjab, Haryana, MP etc. Hence, legalisation of MSP could worsen socio-economic inequality and promote regional disparity.

Environmental cost: Encourages farmers to grow more rice and wheat leading to environmental problems.

Adverse Impact of Government's Intervention: In any free-market economy, the price of any goods and services produced in the country must be decided by market forces and not by the state. As highlighted by Eco Survey 2019-20, Government's intervention, sometimes though well intended, often ends up adversely affecting the market. For example, the regulation of prices of drugs through the DPCO 2013, has led to increase in the price of a regulated pharmaceutical drug vis-à-vis that of a similar drug whose price is not regulated.

FPO: POTENTIAL, BENEFITS & CHALLENGES

#AGRICULTURE

PRIMARY SOURCE BusinessLine

Indian agriculture is dominated by small and marginal farmers who account for almost 86% of the farming community. These small and marginal farmers are at great disadvantage as compared to large farmers with respect to access to inputs and marketing of their agricultural produce. Banks are usually reluctant to give loans to small and marginal farmers due to their small land holdings. The efficiency of the smaller agricultural lands also tends to be lower. These farmers also have lower marketable surplus and hence are usually exploited by middlemen and intermediaries in the APMCs. Government has sought to

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

organize these farmers into 10,000 FPOs to solve multi-faceted problems. In this regard, let us have a look at "Potential, benefits and Challenges of FPOs".

ABOUT FARMERS PRODUCER ORGANISATION (FPO)

A Producer Organisation (PO) is a legal entity formed by primary producers such as farmers, milk producers, fishermen, weavers, rural artisans, craftsmen etc. FPO is a type of PO where the members are farmers.

The FPOs can be registered as Cooperatives (under Cooperative Societies Act of the respective State), Farmer Producer Company (Under Companies Act, 2013) or Societies (under Society Registration Act, 1860).

HOW FPC BENEFIT SMALL AND MARGINAL FARMERS?

- Facilitate land pooling and address problems associated with fragmented landholdings
- Reap economies of scale for buying of inputs and selling the agricultural produce
- Enable sharing of services such as knowledge input, production supervision, storage, transportation, etc. and hence reduce the transaction costs
- Create opportunities for farmers to get more involved in value addition activities such as input supply, credit, processing, marketing and distribution.
- Provide interface between the farmer and global market enabling them to export commodities
- Provide access to capital for farmers and manage risk for farmers through diversification
- Promote economic democracy at the grass root level.

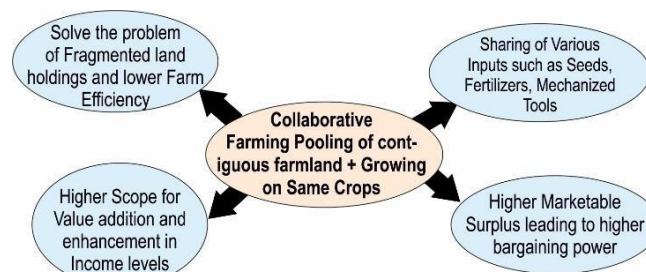
Initiatives for promotion of FPOs: SFAC is the nodal agency at the national level for the creation of FPOs. SFAC operates a Credit Guarantee Fund to mitigate credit risks of financial institutions which lend to FPCs without collateral. It also provides matching equity grant up to Rs. 10 lakhs to double the share capital of FPCs. NABARD also provides financial support to FPOs through two dedicated funds - "Producers Organization Development Fund (PODF)" and PRODUCE Fund (Producers' Organization Development and Upliftment Corpus) to promote new FPOs and support their initial financial requirements.

CHALLENGES AND ISSUES IN BUILDING ROBUST FPOs

In last 8-10 years, 5000 FPOs have been formed through initiatives of SFAC (Nodal Agency), NABARD, Government etc. without much success. Hence, to ensure success of new initiative, the Government needs to acknowledge

present weaknesses, analyse their reasons and then take outcome-oriented actions.

Promote Collaborative farming: The FPOs need to be formed on basis of adjoining land holdings and common produce to ensure higher economies of scale and undertake value addition.



Finances: The reluctance of Banks to give loans must be countered through enhanced credit support from Government agencies. Further, just like cooperatives, the FPOs also must be given income tax exemption.

Handholding: Need to provide regular training and business level handholding.

Professional Management: It can be improved by enabling the Private sector to invest in FPOs. This will need amendment of Companies Act which currently allows only farmers to be producer members.

Market Linkages: Direct procurement by Government; freight subsidy to wholesale buyers; connecting FPOs to online platforms etc.

Village Producer Organisations (VPOs): VPOs can be developed as a joint venture of FPOs such that an entire village region is developed for a predetermined set of agricultural produce with post-production activities. For example, a region having strength in producing fibre crops can be developed as a VPO to include small handloom weavers.

WAY FORWARD

The promotion of FPCs should not to be seen as a one-time exercise. Though there is sufficient focus on providing financial assistance to FPCs, there is limited hand-holding subsequent to their formation. In this regard, the Government must provide for sustained and continuous support until the time the FPCs become financially viable and independent.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

REGISTRATION OF CATTLE BREEDS

#AGRICULTURE

PRIMARY SOURCE

THE HINDU

ICAR-National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resource has recently decided to register two new breeds of Buffalo- Dharwadi and Manda.

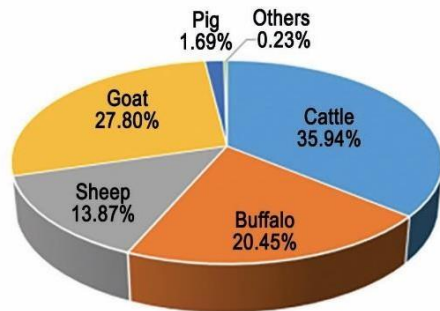
ICAR-National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources, Karnal (ICAR-NBAGR) is the nodal agency for the registration of newly identified breeds of livestock and poultry in the country. Recently, it has decided to register two new breeds of Buffalo- Dharwadi and Manda.

The total number of indigenous breeds now in the country is 202, which include 50 for cattle and 19 for buffalo. Remaining indigenous breeds include goat, sheep, horses & ponies, camel, pig, donkey etc.

Dharwari Buffalo: Mainly found in northern part of Karnataka particularly in districts such as Dharwad, Belgaum and Bijapur.

Manda Buffalo: Mainly found in Koraput region of Odisha. Body colour of these buffaloes is ash grey with copper-coloured hairs.

Graph: Livestock Population 2019 - Share of Major Species



Livestock Population-Major States: UP, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and Bihar

IMPORTANT INDIGENOUS CATTLE BREEDS IN INDIA

Cattle Name	Type	Description
Gir	Milch	Originated in Gir forests of South Kathiawar in Gujarat also found in Maharashtra and adjacent Rajasthan. Horns are peculiarly curved,

		giving a 'half-moon' appearance.
Red Sindhi	Milch	Originated in Karachi and Hyderabad (Pakistan) regions of undivided India and also reared in certain organized farms in our country.
Sahiwal	Milch	Originated in Montgomery region of undivided India. Heavy breed with symmetrical body having loose skin.
Hallikar	Draught	Originated from the former princely state of Vijayanagar, presently part of Karnataka.
Amritmahal	Draught	Originated in Hassan, Chikmagalur and Chitradurga district of Karnataka.
Khillari	Draught	Originated from Sholapur and Sitapur districts of Maharashtra. Closely resembles Hallikar breed.
Kangayam	Draught	Originated from Tamil Nadu. The horns are spread apart, nearly straight with a slight curve backwards.
Bargur	Draught	Found around Bargur hills in Bhavani taluk of Erode district in Tamil Nadu.
Umblachery	Draught	Originated from Thanjavur District of TN.
Pulikulam	Draught	Originated from Madurai District of TN.
Alambadi	Draught	Originated from Dharmapuri District of TN.
Thaparkar	Dual Purpose	Originated in Tharparkar district (Pakistan) of undivided India and also found in Rajasthan.
Hariana	Dual Purpose	Originated from Rohtak, Hisar, Jind and Gurgaon districts of Haryana
Kankrej	Dual Purpose	Originated from Southeast Rann of Kutch of Gujarat and adjoining Rajasthan (Barmer and Jodhpur district).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ongole	Dual Purpose	Found in Guntur District of AP
Krishna Valley	Dual Purpose	Originated from Krishna River valley in Karnataka and also found in border districts of Maharashtra.
Deoni	Dual Purpose	Originated in Western Andhra Pradesh and also found in Marathwada region of Maharashtra state and adjoining part of Karnataka.

IMPORTANT INDIGENOUS BUFFALO BREEDS IN INDIA

Buffalo Breed	Description
Murrah	Found in Rohtak, Hisar districts of Haryana, Patiala district of Punjab.
Surti	Found in Kaira and Baroda district of

	Gujarat.
Jaffrabadi	Found in Gir forests, Kutch and Jamnagar districts of Gujarat.
Bhadawari	Found in Agra and Etawah district of Uttar Pradesh and Gwalior district of Madhya Pradesh.
Nili Ravi	Found in Sutlej valley in Ferozpur district of Punjab and in the Sahiwal (Pakistan) of undivided India.
Mehsana	Found in Mehsana and Banaskanta districts in Gujarat and adjoining Maharashtra state.
Nagpuri	Found in Nagpur, Akola and Amravati districts of Maharashtra.
Toda	Named after Toda Tribes of Nilgiris Hills in south India

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

E-SHRAM PORTAL

#LABOUR

PRIMARY SOURCE | pib

The Ministry of Labour & Employment has developed eSHRAM portal for the benefit of Unorganised workers.

The eSHRAM portal is the first-ever National Database of Unorganized Workers. The database will have details of name, Aadhaar ID, occupation, address, educational qualification, skill types and family details etc.

Unorganized sector comprises of establishment/ units which are engaged in the production/sale of goods/services and employs less than 10 workers. So, the unorganised workers would include migrant workers, construction workers, gig and platform workers etc.

Universal Account Number (UAN): It is a 12 digit number uniquely assigned to each unorganized worker after registration on eSHRAM portal. UAN number will be a permanent number i.e., once assigned, it will remain unchanged for the worker's lifetime.

Benefits: After registering, the unorganised will get an Accidental Insurance cover of 2 Lacs under Pradhan

Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana. In future, all the social security benefits of unorganized workers will be delivered through this portal. In emergency and national pandemic like situations, this database may be utilized to provide necessary assistance to the eligible unorganized workers.

Note: Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana is an accidental Insurance scheme for people between 18- 70 years of age group. It provides benefit of Rs. 2 Lacs at the time of accidental death and permanent disability & Rs. 1 Lac in case of partial disability.

TELECOM REFORMS PACKAGE

#TELECOM

PRIMARY SOURCE | BusinessLine | SECONDARY SOURCE | pib
SECONDARY SOURCE | Business Standard

In 2019, Supreme Court delivered a landmark judgement on what constitutes Adjusted Gross Revenue of Telecom operators. This SC Judgement imposed financial burden of

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

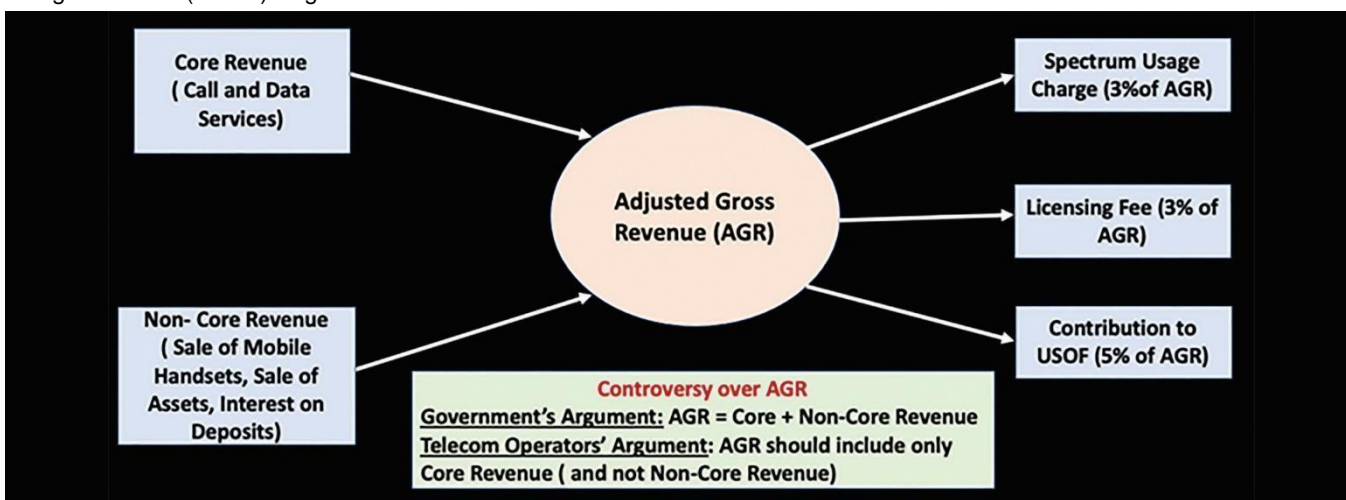
around 1.5 lakh crores on various telecom operators in India. The poor financial position of Telecom operators does not bode well for the Indian economy which aspires to focus on Industrial Revolution 4.0. Hence, to unshackle the Telecom companies from various regulatory burden, the Union Cabinet has recently announced the Reforms package.

Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR): AGR basically refers to the total revenue earned by Telecom companies in India. Calculation of AGR is considered to be significant because the AGR is used to calculate the license fee, Spectrum usage charges (SUC) and contribution to Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF). Higher the

AGR, higher would-be payment of these fees by the Telecom companies.

Note: Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) seeks to improve the telecom access to people in the remote and rural areas. It focusses on enhancing various telecom services such as telephone connection to households, Mobile services, Broadband connectivity through BharatNet project etc. This money in this fund is raised through Universal Service Levy of 5% of the Adjusted Gross Revenue of the Telecom Operators.

This fund has been given statutory status under Indian Telegraph Act, 1885.



CONTROVERSY OVER CALCULATION OF AGR

Presently, Telecom operators earn revenue from both core (Telecom Services) as well as non-core (Sale of Assets, Sale of Mobile Handsets, Interest earned from deposits)

Government's Argument: AGR should include both Core and Non-Core revenue.

Telecom Operators: AGR should include only revenue earned from core activities. If AGR is calculated as per Government's proposal, it would have led to higher license fee and SUC and hence opposed by Telecom Operators.

Supreme Court Verdict (Oct 2019): Ruled in the favor of Government and stated that AGR would include revenue earned from both Core and Non-Core Activities.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE SC VERDICT

Impact on Telecom Sector: Telecom Sector is already reeling under higher debt levels of almost around Rs 7 lakh crores and hence the recent SC Judgment has put further burden of Rs 1.5 lakh cores on Telecom Operators.

Impact on Banks: SC ruling would reduce the ability of the Telecom companies to repay their loans leading to increase in the NPA levels of the Banks.

Set back to Industrial Revolution 4.0: Lower finances of the Telecom operators would reduce their ability to undertake investment in new-age technologies such as 5G. This would make it difficult for us to focus on new age technologies such as Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things (IoT) etc.

Impact on Consumers: Telecom consumers in India have so far got immensely benefitted in the form of

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

reduced call and data rates. However, going forward, Telecom operators may pass on additional burden onto consumers by increasing the call and data charges leading to an adverse impact on the consumers. Also, Telecom sector may move towards Duopolistic market.

RECENT REFORMS PACKAGE FOR TELECOM SECTOR

Rationalization of Adjusted Gross Revenue: Henceforth, AGR would include only the core revenue. Non-Core Revenue will be excluded from the calculation of AGR. This is set to reduce the financial burden on the Telecom operators in future.

Moratorium on the payment of existing dues for a period of 4 years. This move is expected to ease liquidity

constraints of the Telecom Operators and would help them to undertake investment in new age technologies such as 5G.

Spectrum Tenure: In future Auctions, tenure of spectrum would be increased from 20 to 30 years.

No Spectrum Usage Charge (SUC) for spectrum acquired in future spectrum auctions.

Changes in FDI Norms for Telecom Sector: Presently, 49% FDI is allowed through the Automatic Route and up to 100% through the Approval Route. Now, the Government has decided to allow 100% FDI through the automatic route.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

MCQS

Q1. Which among the following agencies has launched the eSHRAM portal?

- (a) NITI Aayog
- (b) Ministry of Labour and Employment
- (c) Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
- (d) Labour Bureau

Q2. Which among the following statements related to Account Aggregators (AA) is incorrect?

- (a) AAs are registered as NBFCs with the RBI.
- (b) AAs act as intermediaries and provide necessary financial data of the prospective borrowers to the Banks.
- (c) AAs maintain centralized database of financial data of all the borrowers.
- (d) AAs can enable cash flow-based lending to MSMEs.

Q3. Which among the following states in India has the highest installed Solar Capacity?

- (a) Tamil Nadu
- (b) Karnataka
- (c) Andhra Pradesh

- (d) Rajasthan

Q4. Which among the following statements is incorrect with respect to Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs)?

- (a) All the FPCs are registered as Companies under the Companies Act.
- (b) FPCs allow registered and non-registered groups such as self-help groups (SHGs) to become members.
- (c) Unlike Cooperatives, the Government exercises veto power over the decisions of the FPCs.
- (d) Unlike Cooperatives, FPCs have much stronger regulation.

Q5. Consider the following statements related to Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF):

- 1. Financial resources for this fund are raised through Universal Service Levy (USL) on the Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) of Telecom Service Providers.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

2. This fund was established with the object of improving telecom services in the remote and rural areas of India.
- (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only

DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** Critically comment on the role of the Bad bank in improving the financial position of the Banks in India. (15 Marks, 250 Words)
- Q2.** The WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) is riddled with imbalances and tilted in the favour of developed economies. In the light of this statement, discuss the concerns raised by India with respect to this agreement. (10 Marks, 150 Words)

Answers: 1-b, 2-c, 3-b, 4-c, 5-c

CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

GS PAPER (PRELIMS) & GS PAPER II (MAIN)

CCI PENALISES BEER COMPANIES FOR COLLUDING

#REGULATORY BODIES #COMPETITION COMMISSION OF INDIA

PRIMARY SOURCE	The Indian EXPRESS	SECONDARY SOURCE	Competition Commission of India
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Competition Commission of India (CCI) has found that three beer companies had colluded to fix beer prices between 2009-2108. Consequently, CCI slapped a penalty of on the companies as well as the All-India Brewers Association (AIBA) and individuals for cartelisation in the sale and supply of beer. In this analysis let us understand about cartels and also the role of Competition Commission of India to regulate anti-competitive practices.

MANDATE OF COMPETITION LAW IN INDIA IS THREEFOLD NAMELY

1. To check anti-competitive agreements
2. Prohibit abuse of dominance by strong companies over weak organizations
3. To regulate mergers and acquisitions or takeovers taking place in the market.

COMPETITION ACT PROVIDES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMPETITION COMMISSION FOR THE FOLLOWING

1. To prevent practices having adverse effect on competition
2. To promote and sustain competition in markets
3. To protect the interests of consumers
4. To ensure freedom of trade carried on by other participants in Indian market.

COMPETITION ACT, 2002	
CARTE L	MONOPOLY
The act defines cartel as an association of producers, sellers, distributors, traders or service providers who, by agreement amongst themselves, limit, control or attempt to control the production, distribution, sale or price of, or, trade in goods or provision of services.	A market structure characterized by a single seller, selling a unique product in the market. In a monopoly market, the seller faces no competition, as he is the sole seller of goods with no close substitute. CCI views monopoly as a <u>dominant position</u> enjoyed in the market. Accordingly, CCI can inquire and investigate into such aspects of monopoly or dominant position as it distorts competition in the market.

UNDERSTANDING CARTELS & THE PROCESS OF CARTELIZATION

- According to International Competition Network (ICN), there are three components of Cartels: 1. An Agreement 2. Between Competitors & 3. Restrict Competition.
- Agreements forming cartel need not be formal or written and mostly involve secret conspiracies.
- According to ICN, four categories of conduct are commonly identified across jurisdictions (countries)
 1. Price Fixing
 2. Output Restrictions

CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

- 3. Market Allocation
- 4. Bid-rigging
- So, participants in hard-core cartels agree to insulate themselves from the rigors of a competitive marketplace and substitutes cooperation for competition.

WHAT CONSTITUTES ANTI-COMPETITIVE AGREEMENTS?

- Any association of enterprises, person or association of persons entering into any agreement in respect of production, supply, distribution, storage, acquisition or control of goods or provision of services, which causes or is likely to cause an appreciable adverse effect on competition within India.
- **Bid rigging** - means any agreement, between enterprises or engaged in identical or similar production or trading of goods or provision of services, which has the effect of eliminating or reducing competition for bids or adversely affecting or manipulating the process for bidding.
- **Predatory pricing** - means the sale of goods or provision of services, at price which is below the cost, as may be determined by regulations, of production of the goods or provision of services, with a view to reduce competition or eliminate the competitors.

UNDERSTANDING ABUSE OF DOMINANT POSITION

- India's Competition Act mentions that **no enterprise or group shall abuse its dominant position.**
- **Dominant Position** means a position of strength, enjoyed by an enterprise, in the relevant market, in India, which enables it to –
 - (i) operate independently of competitive forces prevailing in the relevant market
 - (ii) affect its competitors or consumers or the relevant market in its favour
- **Abuse of Dominant Position** – happens if an enterprise or group directly or indirectly, imposes unfair or discriminatory
 - condition in purchase or sale of goods or service; or
 - price in purchase or sale (including predatory price) of goods or service.

IMPACT OF ANTI-COMPETITIVE AGREEMENTS

- Can create artificial demand by holding supplies
- Raising prices in a collaborative manner.

- Impacts choices for consumers and distorts market conditions
- Consolidates positions of cartels in the market – at the cost of its competitors
- Cartels indirectly, undermine overall economic efficiency and innovations.

WHY IS CARTELIZATION CONSIDERED WORSE THAN MONOPOLIES?

- Cartels unlike monopolies neither have any incentive to invest in research aimed at improving their product nor do they see any reason why they should boost investments towards making the methods of production more efficient.
- Due to the explicit agreement of non-competition and profit guarantees among cartels, any incentive to improve one's product is removed.
- Cartels by synching their pricing or productive actions rule out the possibility of allowing some new firm from upstaging the whole arrangement.
- Cartels by eliminating competition.

INCREASING INTERNET SHUTDOWN IN INDIA

#GOVERNANCE #INTERNET SHUTDOWN IMPACTS

PRIMARY SOURCE
THE HINDU
SECONDARY SOURCE
Anuradha Bhasin Judgment

Despite Supreme Court's judgment in Anuradha Bhasin case, number of internet shutdowns in India has increased and in most of the cases, shutdown orders are not published by respective state governments. Increasing instances of internet shutdown has made India the Internet Shutdown Capital of the World.

INTERNET SHUTDOWN

According to Pulse Shutdown Tracker, an Internet shutdown is an intentional disruption of Internet-based communications, making them inaccessible or unavailable for a specific population, location, or type of access. It is often a state attempt to try to control the flow of information within a region by preventing people from accessing the global Internet.

HIGHLIGHTS OF ANURADHA BHASIN JUDGMENT

- **Freedom of speech and expression** through the medium of internet is a fundamental right under

CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. The restrictions on internet have to follow the principles of proportionality under Article 19(2).

- **Freedom of trade and commerce** through internet is also a constitutionally protected right under Article 19(1)(g).
- **Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Service) Rules, 2017** – are the only procedure to be followed to suspend Internet services in the occurrence of a “public emergency” or for it to be “in the interest of public safety”.
- As per 2017 Rules, the **competent authority** to issue an order to suspend internet are:
 - **Union Government** - in ordinary circumstances - **Secretary to the Ministry of Home Affairs** or
 - **Union Government** - in unavoidable circumstances, where obtaining of prior direction is not feasible - by an officer **not below the rank of a Joint Secretary to the Government of India**, who has been duly authorized by the Union Home Secretary or the State Home Secretary.
 - **State Government** - by the **Secretary to the State Government in-charge of the Home Department.**
- **The orders to suspend the internet must be forwarded to Review Committee of central and state government.**
- **Review Committee of Central Government consists of:**
 - Cabinet Secretary – Chairman
 - Secretary to the Government of India In-charge, Legal Affairs – Member
 - Secretary to the Government, Department of Telecommunications – Member
- **Review Committee of State Government consists of:**
 - Chief Secretary – Chairman
 - Secretary Law or Legal In-Charge, Legal Affairs – Member
 - Secretary to the State Government (other than the Home Secretary) –Member
- **Suspension of internet for indefinite period as per 2017 Telecom Suspension Rules not permissible** - It can only be for a reasonable duration and periodic review should be done.

- **Any orders suspending internet is subject to judicial review.**
- **Government should publish all orders of prohibition** to enable affected persons to challenge the same.

THEORY OF PROPORTIONALITY developed by GERMAN FEDERAL CONSTITUTIONAL COURT

It lays down a four-pronged test.

1. **Legitimate Goal Test** - Whether the measure restricting the rights serves a legitimate goal
2. **Rational Connection Stage** - Whether the measure is a suitable means of furthering this goal
3. **The Necessity Test** - Whether there existed an equally effective but lesser restrictive alternative remedy
4. **Balancing Stage** - If such a measure had a disproportionate impact on the right holder

- Thus, considering the test of reasonableness and Proportionality, Supreme Court did not accept government's contention of complete ban on telecommunication including internet. The Court held that government should consider other options or alternatives under Article 19(2) so that freedom of speech and expression is affected in the least possible manner.

IMPACT OF INTERNET SHUTDOWN

- **Impact Fundamental Rights** - Majority of Indians use internet on their mobile phone for daily activities and internet suspension also impact their fundamental right under Article 19(1)(g). Internet suspension is also used an administrative measure to prevent protest by section of the population thereby impacting fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression and also to gather peacefully.
- **Arbitrary Action and Non-compliance** - Internet Shutdown orders are not published by the government as mandated under Anuradha Bhasin Judgment. This not only ensures arbitrary action by the government but also results in non-compliance of Telecom Suspension Rules framed under the *Telegraph Act*.
- **Avoid Judicial Scrutiny** - Non-publication of internet suspension ensures freedom to the government from scrutiny of judicial review. Even if case is filed, the Court can ask for published order for internet

CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

suspension and this overall delays the process. This also allows the government to get away with illegal restrictions without any published order.

- **Contempt by Government** - Non-publication of internet suspension orders result in non-compliance of Supreme Court judgment leading to case of contempt.
- **Lack of Awareness on important SC Judgments** - Non-compliance of SC Judgments further breeds lack of awareness among employees of central and state governments. E.g.: Police repeatedly filed cases under Section 66A of IT Act despite it being declared unconstitutional by the Court. Even Meghalaya government in response to RTI said that it was not aware of guidelines issued under Anuradha Bhasin case.
- **Impact on Economy** - Repeated use of internet suspensions in India are on a rise and this has also impacted Indian economy. In 2020, the Indian economy suffered losses to the tune of \$2.8 billion due to 129 separate instances of Internet suspension.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

- There is a need for statutory recognition to important guidelines issued by Supreme Court from time to time.
- It will enforce compliance and increase awareness about important SC judgments impacting rights and livelihoods of citizens.
- Strict compliance of Supreme Court guidelines on the part of the government is needed to rid ourselves of the tag of the "internet shutdown capital" of the world and fulfil Digital India's potential.

JAMMU AND KASHMIR IMPLEMENTS FOREST RIGHTS ACT

#LOCAL GOVERNANCE #FOREST RIGHTS ACT

PRIMARY SOURCE

THE HINDU

SECONDARY SOURCE

Ministry of Tribal Affairs

After a long delay, the Jammu and Kashmir government has finally decided to implement the Forest Rights Act, 2006. Forest dwellers like Gujjars or Bakarwals have been demanding extension of Forest Rights Act to J&K against threat of eviction from forest land along with livelihood issues.

THREATS TO TRIBAL POPULATION OF J&K IN ABSENCE OF FRA

- Attempts have been made to evict Gujjars and Bakarwals from forest land in absence of implementation of Forests Rights Act in Jammu and Kashmir.
- The Gujjars, Bakarwals constitute around 15 percent population of Jammu and Kashmir and are largely nomadic Muslim groups and depend on forests for their livelihoods. They rear animals such as sheeps etc.
- Forest dwellers like Gujjars or Bakarwals have been demanding extension of Forest Rights Act to J&K so that they too can enjoy "rights" on the forest land.

Implementation of the Act will:

- Elevate the socio-economic status of a sizeable section of the 14-lakh population of tribals and nomadic communities, including Gujjar-Bakarwals and Gaddi-Sippis in the Union Territory.
- Empower the tribal community by restoring to them the rights for a better life, while fulfilling the primary needs of water, food, home and livelihood.
- Allow government to prevent illegal encroachment upon tribal's land and resources thereby reclaiming rights on forestland.

THE SCHEDULED TRIBES AND OTHER TRADITIONAL FOREST DWELLERS (RECOGNITION OF FOREST RIGHTS) ACT OF 2006 - AIMS & OBJECTIVE

- The Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006 recognizes the rights of the forest dwelling tribal communities and other traditional forest dwellers to forest resources, on which these communities were dependent for a variety of needs, including livelihood, habitation and other socio-cultural needs.
- It recognizes and vest the forest rights and occupation in forest land to such **Scheduled Tribes living in forest area** and **other traditional forest dwellers** who have been residing for generations but whose rights could not be recorded.
- It provides for a framework to record forests rights by having relevant evidence of such residence in forest lands.
- It provides such scheduled tribes living in forest area and other traditional forest dwellers responsibility and authority for sustainable use, conservation of biodiversity and maintenance of ecological balance.

CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

- It also ensures livelihood and food security of the forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers.
- The act grants legal recognition to the rights of traditional forest dwelling communities and makes a beginning towards giving communities and the public a voice in forest and wildlife conservation.

OBJECTIVES

- Undo the historical injustice occurred to the forest dwelling communities.
- Ensure land tenure, livelihood and food security of the forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers.
- Strengthen the conservation regime of the forests by including the responsibilities and authority on forest rights holders for sustainable use, conservation of biodiversity and maintenance of ecological balance.

RIGHTS GRANTED UNDER FRA, 2006

- The Act not only recognizes the rights to hold and live in the forest land under the individual or common occupation for habitation or for self-cultivation for livelihood, but also grants several other rights to ensure their control over forest resources which includes:
 - Right of ownership, access to collect.
 - Use and dispose of minor forest produce, community rights such as nistar.
 - Habitat rights for primitive tribal groups and pre-agricultural communities.
 - Right to protect, regenerate or conserve or manage any community forest resource which they have been traditionally protecting and conserving for sustainable use.
 - Rights to allocation of forest land for developmental purposes to fulfill basic infrastructural needs of the community.
- In conjunction with the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Settlement Act, 2013, FRA protects the tribal population from eviction without rehabilitation and settlement.

Section 6 of FRA - Authorities to vest forest rights in forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers and procedure thereof

- The **Gram Sabha** shall be the authority to initiate the process for determining the nature and extent of **individual or community forest rights or both** that may be given to the forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers within the local limits.
- Gram Sabha shall, then, pass a resolution to that effect and thereafter forward a copy of the same to the **Sub-Divisional Level Committee**.
- The Sub-Divisional Level Committee constituted by State Government shall examine the resolution passed by the Gram Sabha and prepare the record of forest rights and forward it through the **Sub-Divisional Officer** to the **District Level Committee** for their decision.
- So, the Act also provides for a **Procedure for Appeal**–
 - Any person aggrieved by the resolution of the **Gram Sabha** may prefer a petition to the **Sub-Divisional Level Committee**.
 - Any person aggrieved by the decision of the **Sub-Divisional Level Committee** may prefer a petition to the **District Level Committee** within sixty days from the date of decision of the Sub-Divisional Level Committee
- **District Level Committee** considers and finally approves the record of forest rights prepared by the Sub-Divisional Level Committee. **Section 6(6)** of FRA says that the decision of the District Level Committee on the record of forest rights shall be final and binding.
- **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** has the administrative control over the administration of this act.

JUDICIAL CUSTODY AND POLICE CUSTODY

#GOVERNANCE #POLICE CUSTODY #JUDICIAL CUSTODY



In the backdrop of increasing use arrest as a tool to suppress dissent and custodial death which happened in Tamil Nadu,

CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

let us understand about Police and Judicial Custody along with constitutional rights regarding arrest and detention.

UNDERSTANDING CUSTODY AND ARREST

- The word 'custody' means apprehending someone for protective care and words "custody" and "arrest" are not synonymous. So, in every arrest there is custody but every custody does not amount to arrest.
- Arrest, remand and bail are components related to investigation. Arrest directly curtails personal liberty of an individual affecting his/her freedom.
- Therefore, many times, unwarranted arrests have reached courts of law. There have been occasions when unlawful detention has been considered as a violation of fundamental right and compensation thereof has been paid.

CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL RIGHTS OF THE ACCUSED

- Protection of life and liberty have been given a pre-eminent position in our Constitution by enacting **Article 21** as a fundamental right and imposing a duty on the State to protect life and personal liberty of every citizen. Any deprivation or breach of this valuable right is not permissible unless the procedure established by law for that purpose is just, fair and reasonable.
- As per **Article 20**, a person shall be convicted only for violation of a law which is in force at the time of the commission of crime and penalized accordingly. Further, no person shall be prosecuted and punished for the same offence more than once and no person accused of any offence shall be compelled to be a witness against himself. **Article 20(3)** - *No person accused of any offence shall be compelled to be a witness against himself.*
- **Section 161(2) of Code of Criminal Procedure** - Implements the constitutional right against self-incrimination: *"Every person who the police are authorized to examine orally, is bound to answer truly all questions relating to such case put to him by the police officer legally authorized to examine him, other than questions the answers to which would have a tendency to expose him to a criminal charge or to a penalty or forfeiture."*
- Under **Article 22**, constitution also provides for protection against arrest and detention in certain cases. Every person who is arrested shall be informed

of the grounds of arrest and shall have a right to consult and to be defended by, a legal practitioner of his choice. Every person who is arrested and detained in custody shall be produced before the nearest magistrate within a period of twenty-four hours of such arrest. However, these provisions under Article 22 shall not be applicable to –

- any person who for the time being is an enemy alien
- any person who is arrested or detained under any law providing for preventive detention.

ABOUT POLICE CUSTODY

- When following the receipt of an information/ complaint/ report by police about a crime, an officer of police arrests the suspect involved in the crime reported, to prevent him from committing the offensive acts further, such officer brings that suspect to police station, it's called Police Custody.
- It is actually the custody of a suspect with the police in a jail at the police station, to detain the suspect. During this detention, the police officer in charge of the case, may interrogate the suspect and this detention is not supposed to be longer than 24 hours.
- The officer in charge of the case is required to produce the suspect before the appropriate judge within 24 hours, these 24 hours exclude the time of necessary journey from the police station to the Court. (Article 22)
- Police Custody means that police have the physical custody of the accused while Judicial Custody means an accused is in the custody of the concerned Magistrate.
- In Police Custody, the accused is locked in police station, while in judicial custody, the accused is sent to jail by an order of the Judicial Magistrate.
- Once the accused is presented before a Judicial Magistrate, then the Magistrate can either
 - release him on bail or
 - send the accused to judicial custody or
 - send the accused back to police custody.

ABOUT JUDICIAL CUSTODY

- During Judicial Custody, the police officer in charge of the case is not allowed to interrogate the suspect.

CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

- However, the court may allow the interrogations to be conducted if it is of the opinion that the interrogation is necessary for further investigation.
 - The provisions for holding a person in custody for the purpose of furthering investigation, in India are governed by Section 167 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (Cr.PC)
 - Section 167 of Cr.PC allows that a person may be held in the custody of the police for a period of 15 days on the orders of a Magistrate.
 - A person may be sent to judicial custody for a period of 90 days or 60 days.
 - **Crime for which an accused can be sent to judicial custody of 90 days** - crime which entails a punishment of death, life imprisonment or period of imprisonment exceeding 10 years and 60 days
 - **Crime for which an accused can be sent to judicial custody of 60 days** - all other crimes
 - **Release on Bail** - If the Magistrate is convinced that sufficient reasons exist, then the accused or suspect can be released on bail.
- **Article 39(e) - The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing** - that the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength.
- **Article 42 - Provision for just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief**
- **Article 47 - Duty of the State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living and to improve public health** - including endeavour by state to prohibit consumption of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health except for medicinal purposes.

IN 11TH & 12TH SCHEDULE

- Some other health-related provisions can be found in the 11th and 12th Schedules, as subjects within the jurisdictions of Panchayats and Municipalities, respectively. These include the duty to provide clean drinking water, adequate healthcare and sanitation (including hospitals, primary health care centers and dispensaries), promotion of family welfare, development of women and children, promotion of social welfare, etc.

SUPREME COURT ON RIGHT TO HEALTH AS PART OF ARTICLE 21

- The Constitution of India does not expressly recognize Right to Health as a fundamental right under Part III of the Constitution (Fundamental Rights). However, through judicial interpretation, this has been read into the fundamental right to life & personal liberty (Article 21) and is now considered an inseparable part of the Right to Life. Article 23 of the Constitution of India also indirectly contributes to protecting the Right to Health as it prohibits human trafficking and child labour.
- **Francis Coralie Mullin v The Administrator, UT of Delhi** - Right to life has a very broad scope which includes right to livelihood, better standard of life, hygienic conditions in the workplace & right to leisure. Right to Health is, therefore, an inherent and inescapable part of a dignified life. Article 21 should also be read in tandem with the directive principles of state policy, to truly understand the nature of the obligations of the state in this respect.
- **Bandhua Mukti Morcha vs Union of India** - Although the DPSP are non-binding obligations and hold only

RIGHT TO HEALTH

#RIGHTS ISSUES #RIGHT TO HEALTH

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

SECONDARY SOURCE SUPREME COURT JUDGEMENTS

Under Ayushman Bharat- Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) provides a cover of up to Rs. 5 lakhs per family per year, for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization. So, making "Right to Health" as part of fundamental rights will further strengthen the claim under PMJAY specially for farmers, unorganised workers, women & children.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS RELATED TO HEALTH

In the Fundamental Rights

- **Article 23 - Prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour** – indirectly protects physical and mental health of people trapped in trafficking
- **Article 24 - Prohibition of employment of children in factories, etc** - No child below the age of fourteen years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment – also protects health of children working in hazardous environment.

IN THE DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES OF STATE POLICY

CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

persuasive value, yet they should be duly implemented by the State. Further, the Court held that dignity and health fall within the ambit of life and liberty under Article 21.

- **Paschim Banga Khet Mazdoor Samity v State of West Bengal** - the scope of Article 21 was further widened, as the court held that it is the responsibility of the Government to provide adequate medical aid to every person and to strive for the welfare of the public at large.

IMPACT OF NOT INCLUDING "RIGHT TO HEALTH" UNDER PART III

- **On Farmers** – Majority of farmers remain at a loose end when it comes to their own rights and well-being. Without an anchor during times of severe illness or disease, small and landless farmers, and unorganized, migrant and seasonal workers are thrown into bondage and debt by having to pay for medical costs from their limited earnings.
- **On Women** - Women bear a disproportionate burden of the gaps in our health-care system. The taboos and patriarchal expectations surrounding their health led to immense avoidable suffering. In addition, social and economic challenges prevent them from freely and openly accessing the little care that is available. A 'Right to Health' would mean that services reach the woman where and when she needs them.
- **On Children** - A large number of children who belong to the poorest and most marginalized communities of our country grow up working in hazardous situations be it fields, mines, brick kilns or factories. They are either not enrolled in schools or are unable to attend it due to the pressing financial needs of the family — often because of unexpected out-of-pocket medical expenses.

WAY FORWARD

- Constitutional 'Right to Health' will transform not only the health and well-being of our people but will act as a leap for the economic and developmental progress of the nation.
- Vision for Ayushman Bharat will be further strengthened with a constitutional 'Right to Health'.
- Immediate financial security that will come with the constitutional 'Right to Health' will be seen as a measurable impact on family savings, greater investment, and jobs creation on the one hand, and in

the long-term emotional, psychological and social security of people.

- Thus, right to health can provide simple, transparent and quality health care to those who are most in need of such care.
- Provision of Right to Health under PART-III will ensure mandatory compliance by state, else writ petitions can be filed under Article 32 for its enforcement.
- Proper consultation with States and other stakeholders is required in this regard.
- Deepening of substantive democracy in India.

SPIRIT OF FEDERALISM LIES IN CONSULTATION

#FEDERALISM #CENTRE-STATE RELATIONS

PRIMARY SOURCE	THE HINDU	SECONDARY SOURCE	The Indian EXPRESS
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Unilateral legislation without taking States into confidence not only goes against the principle of federalism as envisaged in the Constitution but will also see more protests on the streets. Excessive centralization of power in the political decision making is one of the main problems of India's political culture.

CONCERNS OF STATES AGAINST CENTRE

- States are standing up for their rights assumes significance in the wake of the Union government introducing a number of laws without taking the States into confidence, thereby undermining the federal principles.
- It is not in the essence of federalism for the Union government to legislate unilaterally, avoiding discussions with the States on the subjects in the Concurrent List.
- Many state legislatures have passed resolutions against Centre usurping their powers. For ex. The Kerala Legislative Assembly unanimously passed a resolution against the Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2020 whereas the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly passed a resolution against the controversial farm laws.

FARM LAWS ENACTED UNDER CONCURRENT LIST

CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

- Parliament passed the farm laws without consulting the States. The laws, essentially related to Entry 14 (agriculture clause) belonging to the State List, were purportedly passed by Parliament citing Entry 33 (trade and commerce clause) in the Concurrent List.
- According to **State of Bombay vs F.N. Balsara** judgment, if an enactment falls within one of the matters assigned to the State List and reconciliation is not possible with any entry in the Concurrent or Union List after employing the doctrine of “pith and substance”, the legislative domain of the State Legislature must prevail.

NON-MAJOR PORTS ACT ENACTED UNDER CONCURRENT LIST

- According to the **Indian Ports Act, 1908**, which presently governs the field related to non-major ports, the power to regulate and control the minor ports remained with the State governments.
- However, the new **Draft Indian Ports Bill, 2021**, proposes to change the status quo by transferring the powers related to planning, developing and regulating the non-major ports to the Maritime State Development Council (MSDC), which is overwhelmingly controlled by the Union government.
- Coastal States like Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala have objected to the Bill that proposes to seize the power of the State government with respect to non-major ports.

ELECTRICITY ENACTED UNDER CONCURRENT LIST

- States like West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala have also come forward against the Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2020. The field related to electricity is traceable to Entry 38 of the Concurrent List.
- The power to regulate the sector was vested with the State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERCs), which were ostensibly manned by individuals appointed by the State government.
- However, the proposed amendment seeks to change the regulatory regime with the establishment of a **National Selection Committee**, dominated by

members nominated by the Union government that will make appointments to the SERCs.

- The amendment proposes the establishment of a centrally-appointed **Electricity Contract Enforcement Authority (ECEA)** as the sole authority having jurisdiction over matters regarding the performance of obligations under a contract related to the sale, purchase or transmission of electricity.
- The licensing regime to facilitate private sector entry without State government approval.
- In effect, the power to regulate the electricity sector would be taken away from the State government.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Implementing Sarkaria Commission Report** - specifically recommended that there should be a “coordination of policy and action in all areas of concurrent or overlapping jurisdiction through a process of mutual consultation and cooperation. This is a prerequisite for smooth and harmonious working of the dual system. The Union government, while exercising powers under the Concurrent List, must limit itself to the purpose of ensuring uniformity on basic issues of national policy and not more.
- **Recommendations of the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC)** – It had recommended that individual and collective consultation with the States should be undertaken through the Inter-State Council established under Article 263 of the Constitution.

CONCLUSION

- As the Supreme Court itself had held in the S.R. Bommai case, that the States are not mere appendages of the Union. The Union government should ensure that the power of the States is not trampled with.
- The essence of cooperative federalism lies in consultation and dialogue, and unilateral legislation without taking the States into confidence will lead to more strife and conflict.

CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

STRENGTHENING LOCAL INSTITUTIONS TO TACKLE DISASTERS

#FEDERALISM #CENTRE-STATE RELATIONS

PRIMARY SOURCE

THE HINDU

SECONDARY SOURCE

The Indian EXPRESS

responsibility for disaster preparedness, rescue, relief and reconstruction activities without providing adequate scope for local participation. Not only has this increased people's dependence on the government machinery but it has also diminished the capacity of local communities to cope with natural disasters. The lack of disaster preparedness and mitigation planning at the local level, especially at the Gram Panchayat level, gives rise to considerable problems in the management of disasters.

SIGNIFICANCE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN DISASTERS MANAGEMENT

- Gram Sabhas not only provide a platform to discuss ideas and opinions for grassroot development, but also engages with frontline workers (ASHA, MGNREGA etc.) to understand the problems at hand.
- During COVID pandemic, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) played a remarkable role in providing essential leadership to ensure welfare and regulatory functions at ground level with community partnership.
- For instance, during the nationwide lockdown, PRIs set up containment zones, arranged transport, identified buildings for quarantining people and provisioned food for the incoming migrants.
- PRIs organized community-based surveillance systems involving village elders, youth and self-help groups (SHGs) to keep a strict vigil in quarantine centers and monitor symptoms in households. Their role in mobilizing citizens for COVID-19 vaccination is also exemplary.
- PRIs also helped in effective implementation of welfare schemes like MGNREGA and the National Rural Livelihood Mission. This quickened the pace of recovery while ensuring support to the vulnerable population.
- Thus, local community is the **first line of defence against any disaster**. If empowered they can act as effective first responders.

- Empowering local communities and local governments can lead to better enforcement of building codes (earthquake resistant structures), river bed planning (flood resistant) etc.

FIFTEENTH FINANCE COMMISSION'S REPORT - EMPOWERING PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND MANAGEMENT

- **Role of panchayats is crucial in mobilising community participation in an institutionalised manner.** Involvement of Panchayats can benefit in the following way:
 - It can provide a quick response to disaster events – whether natural or man-made;
 - It can help in sensitizing people to deal with such disasters;
 - Minimize people's dependence on state and central government for rescue and relief operations.
- **Panchayats should be made the Nodal Agency for relief and rehabilitation to tackle disasters.** It will improve planning, coordination and monitoring thereby improving overall relief and rehabilitation interventions.
- **PRIs can play a pro-active role in all stages of disaster management** - covering prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, restoration, rehabilitation reconstruction work.
- **Involvement of panchayats will lead to enhanced effectiveness of disaster related activities** - rescue operations and arranging temporary shelters; distributing immediate relief in the form of money, food grains, medical care, clothes, tents, vessels, drinking water and other necessities; restoration, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts of damaged villages and towns; crop protection measures and livestock management; health and sanitation measures; organizing health camps and so on.
- **State Governments should allocate some reasonable amount out of the allocation made for STATE DISASTER RESPONSE FUND (SDRF) and STATE DISASTER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (SDMF) to districts** - for Panchayats to undertake several risk mitigation activities far more effectively.
- **Financial mechanisms would strengthen a decentralized approach to disaster management.**
- **It is crucial to include disaster management chapters in Panchayat Raj Acts** and make disaster planning and

CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

spending part of Panchayati Raj development plans and local-level committees. This will ensure citizen-centric mapping and planning of resources.

- **Conducting regular location-specific training programs for the community** and organizing platforms for sharing best practices will strengthen individual and institutional capacities.
- **Community based disaster management plans will help to tap traditional wisdom of local communities** which will complement modern practices.

CHALLENGES

- **Allocation of Fund** - Although the Disaster Management Act provides for District Disaster Response Fund and District Disaster Mitigation Fund, allocation and utilization of funds for each panchayat especially for disaster management will be difficult to achieve.
- **Amendment of Disaster Management Act** - To make Panchayats Nodal Agency for relief and rehabilitation to tackle disasters in an institutionalized manner, Disaster Management Act needs to be amended.

SUGGESTIONS

- Need to make disaster management a part of Panchayati Raj Act of respective states.
- Introducing "Disaster Management" in 11th Schedule of the Indian Constitution as part of Article 243G which empowers Panchayats to take initiatives for preparation of plans for economic development and social justice.
- While preparing the draft development plan by District Planning Committee under Article 243ZD (3), aspects of natural and man-made disasters must be included as part of plan. For this, there is a need to amend Article 243ZD (3).
- Disaster management to be made part of Gram Panchayat Development Plan, MGNREGA allowed works and relevant training of panchayat officials in disaster management.
- Disasters generally adversely affect the most vulnerable namely women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. It is hence ideal to have these sections of the community involved in the decision making at the pre-disaster phase and post-disaster phases of disaster management.
- The pre-disaster aspects would comprise prevention, mitigation and preparedness while the post-disaster

aspects would involve response, rehabilitation, reconstruction and recovery.

RESERVATION FOR WOMEN IN JUDICIARY

#RESERVATION #JUDICIARY



Chief Justice of India asked the women advocates to fight for their right of 50 per cent reservation in all levels of Judiciary to address the problem of gender gap in the legal field. CJI also favoured reservation for women across all law colleges in India.

RESERVATION IN JUDICIARY

- Judiciary is one of the three important pillars of democracy.
- It checks arbitrariness of the executive and legislature and also functions as a sentinel to safeguard constitutional rights – liberty, freedom, life, speech and expression etc.
- Higher Judiciary unlike Legislature and Executive does not follow the principle of reservation.
- Union Law Minister said that there was no provision for reservation in the higher judiciary and hence it is not envisaged. However, the government keeps sensitizing about the need for representation of minorities, SCs, STs and women.
- Thus, reservation in judiciary will -
 - Bring constitutional balance between the legislature, executive and judiciary.
 - Serve the cause of social justice and equity through equitable representation.
 - First-hand experience of the problems faced by backward members of judiciary will help in sensitizing the issue and dispensing justice.
- With the provision of reservation provided in National Law Schools and other law colleges, there are ample number of candidates to be selected for lower and higher judiciary.

Reservation for Women in Judiciary	
Merits	Demerits
• Ensure equitable	• Against the principle of

CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

representation in Courts and bridge gender gap. Make judiciary representative.

- Help in gender sensitization in judicial orders – specially for cases related to women – e.g.: domestic violence, women right over property etc.
- Improve gender specific infrastructure within Court premises – separate toilets for women.
- Improve gender sensitivity within Court premises
- Will lead to women empowerment in judicial field
- Encourage women to pursue law as a career choice – boost legal education
- Help to improve ratio of women law graduates to that of women.

SUGGESTIONS

- Providing reservation is a good move but should not be considered as the only move to improve women representation in Indian legal system.
- Women should be encouraged to take up law as a career choice and suitable reservation to women candidates must be provided at entry level.
- Further, within the set of reservation for women in higher judiciary, another subset of reservation must be provided to women from backward class including SC/ST women in higher judiciary.
- There is a need to bring at least one woman Judge in the Collegium of Supreme and High Court for equitable representation.
- State Governments must bring a law to provide reservation in lower judiciary to women and members of backward class.
- Create All India Judicial Service providing reservation to women, OBC, SC & ST Communities.

equality as prescribed in Article 14 without specific reasons.

- Chances of women reservation utilized mostly from upper caste women – may defeat the purpose of reservation.
- May impact efficiency of justice delivery as Judiciary is one of the most important pillars of democracy.
- Merit alone should be the metric for higher judicial appointments.

WAY FORWARD

Judiciary has been considered as 'state' as per Article 12 and accordingly it must provide reservation like the legislature and executive. Thus, there is a need for constitutional amendment to introduce reservation for women and members of backward class to ensure equitable gender and caste representation and sensitisation in lower and higher judiciary.

JUDICIAL PENDENCY

#PENDENCY #JUDICIARY

PRIMARY SOURCE	THE HINDU	SECONDARY SOURCE	National Judicial Data Grid
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COVID-19 has impacted the functioning of Courts including physical hearing and this has increased pendency. According to the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG), backlog of cases in district courts saw a sharp increase of 18.2 per cent between December 31, 2019 and December 31, 2020.

IMPORTANCE OF TIMELY JUSTICE

It has been universally recognized and iterated repeatedly by the Supreme Court that timely justice and speedy trial is a facet of the right to life under the Constitution. Ensuring equal access to justice is not only a constitutional mandate in terms of a fundamental right under Part III but also a good governance directive to provide equal justice and free legal aid under Part IV of the Constitution.

REASONS FOR INCREASING PENDENCY IN INDIA

"Subordinate Judiciary-Access to Justice 2016" Report of Supreme Court, capacity constraints are the main reasons for high level of increasing pendency of lower Courts.

- Subordinate judiciary works under a severe shortage of courtrooms, secretarial and support staff including Judges.
- The number of hearings and the time period taken to dispose of cases across the system suggest that there is a serious problem of cases management in procedure law in India.
- These infrastructural issues adversely affects the effective functioning of of Courts.
- Adjournments are granted too easily and freely and in the absence of a fixed time table to dispose of cases leads to delays in disposing the case.

CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

- Judicial manpower needs to be augmented according to increase in crime rate. (Low Judge to population ratio).
- Colonial laws and lack of judicial impact analysis before passing of laws.

CONSEQUENCES OF DELAY IN JUSTICE

Apart from the sufferings for citizenry, there are consequences of the delays for the justice system as well. In the words of South African Chief Justice Mogoeng, the undesirable consequences are:

- High cost of legal fees
- Loss of memory by witness, thereby affecting the quality of justice
- Disappearance of witnesses
- Justice system is held in disrepute
- Economic Loss for the accused and their family
- Chances of increased corruption within the justice system. Gives rise to culture of impunity.
- Waste of limited resources

STEPS TO REDUCE DELAY IN CASE DISPOSAL

- **Reducing judicial vacancies** – at all tiers of judiciary
- **Diverting cases from the courts to alternate dispute resolution forums** - such as Mediation, Lok Adalats and specialised Tribunals.
- **Introduction of Fast-track Courts, jail-adalats, prison court and plea-bargaining.**
- **Reducing Disposal Time for Cases** - Disposal time is measured as the time span between the date of filing and the date when the decision is passed.
- **Improve Case Clearance Rate (CCR)** - CCR is the ratio of the number of cases disposed of in a given year to the number of cases instituted in that year, expressed as a percentage. It is mainly used to understand the efficiency of the system in proportion to the inflow of cases. (*Both Disposal Time and CCR can be bettered by appointing more Judges in District & Subordinate Courts, High Courts and Supreme Court.*)
- **Short and Long Term Goals** - Reducing case pendency in the short term and achieving long term goal of reducing case life cycle between one and two years.
- **Appointing Retired Judges to High Court and Supreme Court** to reduce backlog. For this, Supreme Court has also altered the Memorandum of Procedure.

- **Merge and rationalize tribunals to enhance efficiency**
- **Creating Indian Courts and Tribunal Services (ICTS)** – It will focus on the administrative aspects of the legal system. The major roles to be played by ICTS will be
 - provide administrative support functions needed by the judiciary
 - identify process inefficiencies and advise the judiciary on legal reforms
- **Increase number of working days for judiciary to increase productivity** – reducing length of summer and winter vacations in High Courts and Supreme Court.
- Rationalization of laws and Judicial impact analysis.
- Use of Informational and Communication Technologies and better case management system and e-courts infrastructure.

NEED TO REFORM POLITICAL PARTIES



As a part of political reform, political parties in India should be made part of the Indian Constitution on the lines of German Constitution to abide by constitutional principles.

POLITICAL PARTY

- A political party is a group of people who come together to contest elections and hold power in the government.
- They agree on some policies and programs for the society with a view to promote the collective good.
- Political parties try to persuade people because their policies are better than others.
- They seek to implement these policies by winning popular support through elections. Thus, parties reflect fundamental political divisions in a society.
- Parties are a part of the society.
- Thus, a party is known by which part it stands for, which policies it supports and whose interests it upholds.

CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

- A political party has three components: 1. Leaders 2. Active Members & 3. Followers

MAJOR FUNCTIONS OF POLITICAL PARTIES

- Contesting Elections
- Putting forward different policies and programs for the voters to choose
- Play important role in formulating laws for the country and respective states
- Political Parties with majority support from the voters run the government through its Council of Ministers headed by Prime Minister or Chief Ministers.
- Political parties losing elections play the constitutional role of the opposition and make the government accountable in sessions of Parliament and State Legislatures.
- Shape public opinion by forwarding its beliefs and ideologies.
- Helps the people at ground level to solve their problems and concerns through local cadres of political parties:
 - increases trusts or creates affiliation for citizens towards a particular political party
 - Helps the political party to increase their voter base

CHALLENGES FOR POLITICAL PARTIES

1. Lack of Inner-Party Democracy
2. Most political parties are family propriety and succession are often hereditary.
3. Growing muscle and money power in elections.
4. Growing criminalization of politics

RECOMMENDATIONS

NCRWC in its Report on Electoral Processes and Political Parties recognized that *“no electoral reforms can be effective without reforms in the political party system”* and it recognized the following areas of immediate concern:

1. **Structural and organizational reforms – party organizations** - National, State and local levels - inner party democracy - regular party elections, recruitment of party cadres, socialization, development and training, research, thinking and policy planning activities of the party.
2. **Party system and governance** – Mechanisms to make parties viable instruments of good governance
3. **Institutionalization of political parties** – need for a comprehensive legislation to regulate party activities,

criteria for registration as a national or State party - de-recognition of parties.

ISSUE OF OVER-CENTRALIZATION

- 170th Law Commission Report – suggested adding **Sections 11A-I** in the RPA, 1951 dealing with the *“Organization of Political Parties”* on the premise that political party “cannot be a dictatorship internally, and democratic in its functioning outside.”
- **2nd ARC on Ethics and Governance** highlighting the importance of inner party democracy noted that corruption is caused by over-centralization since “the more remotely power is exercised from the people, the greater is the distance between authority and accountability.”

REASONS & IMPACT OF LACK OF INNER PARTY DEMOCRACY

- Procedure for determining the leadership and composition of the parties is not completely open and inclusive.
 - Leadership is mostly decided by a coterie of party functionaries who holds sway over the party administration.
 - Elections to leadership positions are uncontested and unanimously decided.
 - Equal political opportunity to contest elections is denied to members of political party.
 - Favours candidate pouring money or having muscle power.
- Centralized mode of functioning coupled with strong anti-defection law compels individual party members to vote as per party lines.
 - It deters individual preferences in voting on national or regional issues
 - Party whips compel members to abide by party lines and restrict their freedom of speech in Parliament and State Legislature.
 - Results in shifting of electoral accountability from people to party high command.
 - There are many political parties in India which do not even contest elections. They have been created for extracting tax and other benefits accorded to political parties. These parties need to be recognized.

LEGAL POSITION OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN INDIA

CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

- **Power to register political parties** - Election Commission has the power under Representation of People Act, 1951 to register political parties.
- **Important Highlights - Section 29A (5)** – Memorandum of Rules and Association shall contain specific provisions that a political party shall bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India as by law established, and to the principles of socialism, secularism and democracy, and would uphold the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India.
- **Challenges**
 - **RPA, 1951 is silent on the role of Election Commission in regulating the internal functioning of political parties** to conduct their internal elections and provide criteria to select candidate.
 - **Consequently, there is no mechanism to review a party's practice against the principles enshrined in the Constitution** or against the requirements of the ECI's Guidelines and Application Format for the Registration of Political Parties under Section 29A.
 - **RPA does not allow Election Commission to deregister political parties.**
- The duties, functions and responsibilities of Political Parties of Germany have been provided in Article 21 of their Basic Law.
- The provision highlights that such parties which by reason of their aim or behaviour of their adherents, seek to impair or destroy the free democratic basic order or endanger the existence of Federal Republic of Germany shall be unconstitutional.
- Thus, the Parliamentary Council of Germany is empowered by its Constitution to fight such political parties which intends to subvert Germany's established political system.

WAY FORWARD

Article 21 of the German Law deals with status, rights, duties and functions of Political Parties. On similar lines, the provisions relating to regulation of political parties must be made part of Indian Constitution and Election Commission must be empowered to deal with such subversive behaviour of Political Parties in India which seeks to endanger the existence of Indian Republic as established by the Indian Constitution.

IMPORTANT RECOMMENDATIONS

- **The 170th Law Commission Report** – recommended introducing regulatory framework governing the internal structures and inner democracy of parties, financial transparency, and accountability before attempting state funding of elections.
- **Election Commission should be empowered to frame rules for inner party democracy and deregistration of political parties.**
- Also, RTI act should be enforced on both national and state parties, this will make them democratic and accountable.
- Political party financing should be made transparent and open to scrutiny.

ARTICLE 21 OF BASIC LAW, 1949 – GERMANY'S CONSTITUTION

- One of the unique features of constitutional order established by the Basic Law of 1949 is the importance given to political parties in their political set up.

DELHI GOVT MOVES SUPREME COURT OVER LG'S POWER

#UNION TERRITORY #DELHI #LG-CM POWER
BALANCE

PRIMARY SOURCE
The Indian EXPRESS
SECONDARY SOURCE
SUPREME COURT JUDGEMENTS

According to Delhi government, amendment to Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) Act violates the basic structure of the Constitution and alters the balance of power between LG and Council of Ministers as highlighted by Supreme Court in 2018 Judgment in "Government of NCT of Delhi vs Union of India".

ESSENTIALS OF CONSTITUTION 69TH AMENDMENT ACT

Article 239AA - Special provisions with respect to Delhi

- UT of Delhi shall be called the National Capital Territory of Delhi.
- Administrator appointed under Article 239 shall be designated as the Lieutenant Governor of NCT.
- NCT of Delhi shall have a Legislative Assembly (LA).

CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

- Seats in Delhi LA to be filled by direct election from territorial constituencies in the NCT.
- Delhi LA can legislate on any matters enumerated in State List or in the Concurrent List.
- However, Delhi LA cannot make laws on the following entries under the State List –
 - Entry 1: Public Order;
 - Entry 2: Police (including railway and village police);
 - Entry 18: Land, that is to say any right in or over land, land tenures including the relation of landlord and tenant, and the collection of rents, transfer and alienation of agricultural land, land improvement and agricultural loans and colonization.
- Delhi LA also cannot legislate on Entries 64, 65 and 66 of State List so far as they relate to the above entries – 1, 2 and 18 under State List.
- Thus, the government of Delhi does not enjoy all the powers with respect to law making which are enjoyed by other states.
- Moreover, NCT is primarily a Union Territory which has a legislative assembly.

ARTICLE 239AB - PROVISION IN CASE OF FAILURE OF CONSTITUTIONAL MACHINERY IN NCT OF DELHI

- President after receiving report of LG may suspend the operation of Article 239AA for one year.
- Any such Proclamation may be revoked or varied by a subsequent Proclamation.
- Such proclamation to be laid before each House of Parliament.
- Such proclamation shall cease to operate at the expiration of 2 months unless approved by resolutions of both Houses of Parliament.
- **The President may extend the duration of the order made under Article 239AB for a further period not exceeding two years** from the date of expiry of the earlier order.
- However, every extension of the order for any period beyond the expiration of one year shall be approved by resolutions of both Houses of Parliament.

SALIENT FEATURES – GOVT. OF NCT DELHI ACT, 1991

- **Legislative Assembly and its composition**
- **Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes**
- **Qualifications for membership of Legislative Assembly** – citizen of India, and not less than 25 years

of age and possess such other qualifications as required.

- **Duration of Legislative Assembly – 5 years, unless sooner dissolved.** Expiration of five years shall operate as dissolution of the Assembly.
- **Duration of Assembly can be extended in case of proclamation of Emergency under Article 352** for 1 year at a time and not extending in any case beyond a period of six months after the Proclamation has ceased to operate.
- **Summoning of Session of House by LG** - 6 months shall not intervene between its last sitting in one session and the date appointed for its first sitting in the next session.
- Legislative Assembly to choose Speaker and Deputy Speaker
- **Special address by Lieutenant Governor – (i)** commencement of first session after election of LA and (ii) at the commencement of first session of each year.
- **A member shall be disqualified on holding Office of Profit.**
- **The members shall be disqualified on grounds of defection under Tenth Schedule.**
- **Restriction on discussion in the Legislative Assembly** – conduct of Judges of SC or HC in discharge of duties
- **Courts not to inquire into proceedings of Legislative Assembly.**
- **Election Commission to delimit constituencies**
- **Matters in which Lieutenant Governor to act in his discretion** - which falls outside the purview of the powers of Legislative Assembly; matters in which powers or functions are entrusted or delegated to the LG by the President; where LG under any law is required to act in his discretion; where LG is to exercise any judicial or quasi-judicial functions.
- **Advice given by ministers to LG shall not be inquired into in any court**
- **Lieutenant Governor** to administer members of LA oaths of office and of secrecy.
- **President shall make rules for procedure to be adopted in the case of a difference of opinion** between the Lieutenant Governor and the Council of Ministers or a Minister.

CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

- **All executive action of the Lieutenant Governor** whether taken on the advice of his Ministers or otherwise shall be expressed to be taken in the name of the Lieutenant Governor.
- **Duties of the Chief Minister** - to communicate to the LG all decisions of the Council of Ministers relating to the administration of the affairs of the Capital and proposals for legislation, to furnish such information relating to the administration of the affairs of the Capital and proposals for legislation as LG may call for & if the Lieutenant Governor so requires, to submit for the consideration of the Council of Ministers any matter on which a decision has been taken by a Minister but which has not been considered by the Council.

DELHI HIGH COURT JUDGMENT - 2016

- LG is the administrative head of NCT of Delhi and not CM – as Delhi is a UT and not a full fledged state.
- LG enjoys discretionary power and has greater role in administration of NCT.
- The judgment tilted the balance in favour of Central Government by emphasising on the discretionary power of LG.

SC JUDGMENT – 2018 & IMPACT ON LG-CM RELATIONS

- Article 239AA has envisaged a REPRESENTATIVE FORM OF GOVERNMENT for Delhi.
- Article 239AA provides for legislative powers over matters falling within State and Concurrent List, (except police, land and public order).
- LG to act on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers except when he refers matter to the President.
- In case of difference of opinion, LG to immediately send file to the President without delay.
- LG must try to resolve the difference through dialogue and discussion with Council or CM.
- LG cannot refer every matter to the President as Article 239AA (4) mentions about “any matter”.
- LG must work harmoniously with Ministers to fulfil the mandate of collaborative federalism.
- In collaborative federalism, the Union and the State governments should express their readiness to achieve the common objective and work together for it.

Salient Features - Govt. of NCT Delhi Amendment - 2021

Amendment	Objections Raised
1. The term “government” referred in any law made by Legislative Assembly will imply LG of Delhi.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes LG as the “default administering authority” instead of elected Delhi Govt. • Disturbs balance – Delhi CM-LG, Central Govt. and elected Govt of Delhi – disturbs the federal polity. • Goes Against 2018 SC Judgment – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ against representative govt ○ curbs constitutionally provided legislative powers of Delhi; ○ Discretionary power of LG to be used only in exceptional cases and not in routine manner ○ In case of difference of opinion – matter was to be sent to the President. The amendment makes LG the final authority. ○ Constitutional post holders – LG & CM to work in a collaborative manner to strengthen “Collaborative Federalism”.
2. Rules regulating the procedure and conduct of business in Delhi Assembly to be consistent with the Rules of Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This affects the independent functioning and working style of Delhi Assembly.

CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

<p>and Conduct of Business in the Lok Sabha.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It increases supervision of the Central Government by making Delhi Assembly adhering to Lok Sabha Rules and Procedure.
<p>3. The Amendment prohibits Delhi Assembly from making any rule to enable itself or its committees to: (i) consider the matters of day-to-day administration of the NCT of Delhi and (ii) conduct any inquiry in relation to administrative decisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts the executive powers and autonomy of Delhi Government. • Taking away executive powers from Delhi Govt • Impact powers of Govt to form committee over any administrative issue happening within jurisdiction of Delhi.
<p>4. The 1991 Act specifies that all executive action by the government, whether taken on the advice of the Ministers or otherwise, must be taken in the name of the LG. The Amendment adds that on certain matters, as specified by the LG, his opinion must be obtained before taking any executive action on the decisions of the Minister/ Council of Ministers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase LG-CM conflict on routine matters • LG can block any welfare legislation due to tussle between centre and Delhi Assembly. • Might delay day-to-day administrative work of Delhi Government. • Empowers Central Govt through LG to decide policy matters independent of Council of Minister.

PM-CARES NOT UNDER RTI

#PM-CARES #RTI #GOVERNANCE



Government of India submitted in Delhi High Court that PM-CARES Fund is not a fund of Government of India. The submission was made in response to a petition seeking that PM-CARES Fund be declared as 'The State' under Article 12 of the Constitution.

SC JUDGMENT ON PM-CARES

Supreme Court has endorsed the PM CARES Fund as a "public charitable trust" to which donors contribute voluntarily. SC observed that there is "no occasion" for the CAG to audit a public charitable trust independent of budgetary support or government money. SC said that it is "not open" for a PIL petitioner to question the "wisdom" that created the fund in an hour of need. So, the Court held that no exception can be taken to the constitution of a public charitable trust, namely, PM CARES Fund.

PM-CARES

- **Type of Organization** - Created as a Public Charitable Trust where individuals and corporates can donate.
- **Purpose of creation** - undertake and support relief or financial assistance relating to a public health emergency other emergencies, calamity or distress - either man-made or natural, creation or upgradation

of healthcare or pharmaceutical facilities, other necessary infrastructure, funding relevant research or any other type of support.

- **Members of the Trust** - Prime Minister is the Chairman of the trust and its members include Defense Minister, Home Minister and Finance Minister.
- **Tax Exemption** - Donations to this fund has 100% exemption from income tax under section 80(G).
- **Part of Corporate Social Responsibility** - Donations made to PM-CARES counted as part of Corporate Social Responsibility.
- **Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) Exemption** - enables individuals and organizations based in foreign countries to donate to PM-CARES.

PUBLIC AUTHORITIES UNDER RTI

- **Private University receiving significant government funding** - State Information Commission in Odisha has declared Kalinga Institute of Industrial Training, a deemed to be university as a "public authority" under the Right to Information Act as it receives significant funds from state government as per CAG's Report.
- **NGOs Substantially Financed by Govt.** - Supreme Court has held that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) "substantially" financed by the government fall within the preview of Right to Information Act, 2005. The court defined "substantial" as a "large portion" of amount. SC held that NGOs which receive

CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

considerable finances from the government or are essentially dependent on the government fall under the category of “public authority” defined in Section 2(h) of the RTI Act.

- **Office of CJI under RTI** - Supreme Court has held that the office of Chief Justice of India is a public authority. The Court held that judicial independence and accountability goes hand in hand and transparency of office of CJI does not undermine judicial independence. The Court however held that RTI cannot be used as a tool of surveillance and information sought must not violate CJI's Right to privacy.
- **Political Parties** – Chief Information Commissioner has ascertained that Political Parties are also Public Authorities because they fulfil the criteria defined in the RTI Act for a body to be declared as public authority. However, political parties have refrained from providing information under RTI Act.

IMPACT OF SHIELDING AUTHORITIES FROM RTI

- Impacts the cause of transparency and accountability.
- Affects governance and citizens' right to engage in participative democracy
- Makes the government authoritarian and arbitrary
- Increases chances of corruption and red-tapism
- Prevents audit of such institutions by CVC, CAG, Lokpal etc.
- Results in judicial review of such actions of govt – may increase friction between executive and judiciary

Thus, PM-CARES fund should be declared a public office under the RTI Act. This will increase credibility and trust in the fund. Also, inform the stakeholders how money donated to the fund is being utilized.

NITI AAYOG'S REPORT ON URBAN PLANNING

#GOVERNANCE #URBAN PLANNING



NITI Aayog in its report on “Reforms in Urban Planning Capacity in India” has focused on challenges of growing urbanization. The report has suggested important reforms to strengthen urban planning capacity in India by focusing on

three pillars of Public Sector, Education or Research sector and Private Sector.

PROBLEMS WITH URBAN PLANNING

- **Increasing Population** - India is the second largest urban system in the world with almost 11% of the total global urban population living in Indian cities. Urban growth is expected to contribute to 73% of the total population increase by 2036.
- **Unplanned Urbanization** - Urban planning, which is the foundation for the integrated development of cities, citizens, and the environment, has not received adequate attention. Because of this, cities have expanded and become burdened by the stresses and strains of unplanned urbanization, the brunt of which is faced by the poor and the marginalized, the biodiversity and the economy. In fact, Covid-19 revealed the dire need for planning and management of our cities, with an emphasis on the health of citizens.
- **Infrastructural Shortcomings** - Issues like lack of availability of serviced land, traffic congestion, pressure on basic infrastructure, extreme air pollution, urban flooding, water scarcity and droughts are a reflection of infrastructural shortcomings in the cities. These issues also indicate a deep and substantial lack of adequate urban planning and governance frameworks.
- **Urbanization in the country is unacknowledged and unaddressed** - Almost half of 7933 'urban' settlements are census towns, that is, they continue to be governed as 'rural' entities. Small and medium towns face vulnerabilities due to rapid growth and inadequate planning. Moreover, studies have indicated that current definitions of 'urban' are not reflective of the extent of urbanization that India is witnessing.
- **Transfer of the urban planning function from States/UTs to elected urban local governments did not happen as was envisaged through Constitution 74th Amendment** – Consequently, the existing framework has become complex which often leads to overlapping of functions, lack of accountability and coordination, time delays, resource wastage, etc.
- **Lack of master plan for majority of Urban Settlements** - Master plans are statutory instruments to guide and regulate the development of cities and are critical for managing urbanization as well as 'spatial sustainability'. Lack of Master Plan leads to

CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

piecemeal interventions, haphazard constructions, urban sprawl, and environmental pollution, which can further aggravate issues such as traffic congestion, flooding etc.

- **Most of the Planning Regulations and Building Bye-laws used to regulate urban settlements are decade old** - Some of the amendments in the bye-laws have been done arbitrarily without sufficient empirical evidence and their impacts on governance.
- **Lack of accurate cadastral maps and clarity about property rights** become a potential cause of unnecessary and time-consuming disputes and litigations.
- **Lack of adequate human resources for town planning** – Study by NITI Aayog indicates that over 12,000 posts for town planners are required in the State town and country planning departments. However, this is in stark contrast to the present situation where fewer than 4000 sanctioned positions for 'town planners' exists and half of them are lying vacant.
- **Graduates and post-graduates having degrees of Bachelor and Masters of Planning not hired by prospective employers** – This effectively restrains the growth of urban-planning capacity in the country in terms of quantity of fresh graduates as well as the quality of work being delivered in the planning sector.
- **Lack of synergy between urban and rural planning and development** - State Town and country planning Acts need to be revisited to harmonize the two.
- **The platforms for citizen participation and their awareness about the process of urban planning and development are limited** - leading to a perceptible communication gap between planning agencies and the people, who are the ultimate beneficiaries.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF NITI AAYOG ON URBAN DEVELOPMENT

- **Programmatic intervention for planning of healthy cities**
 - Cities must aspire for 'healthy city for all' by 2030
 - Need for convergence of multi-sectoral efforts at the intersections of spatial planning, public health, and socio-economic development

- Focus on Planning and Urban development – not only for million-plus cities but also for hundreds of small- and medium-sized towns
- Proposed central sector scheme '500 Healthy Cities Program', for a period of 5 years - priority cities and towns to be selected jointly by States and local bodies.
- **Programmatic intervention for optimum utilization of urban land**
 - Cities & Towns under 'Healthy Cities Program' should strengthen development control regulations based on scientific evidence to maximize urban land's efficiency.
 - For this, sub-scheme 'Preparation/Revision of Development Control Regulations' has been proposed.
- **Ramping up of human resources**
 - States and UTs must
 - (a) expedite the filling up of vacant positions of town planners
 - (b) additionally sanction 8268 town planners' posts as lateral entry positions for a minimum period of 3 years and a maximum of 5 years to close the gaps.
- **Ensuring qualified professionals for undertaking urban planning**
 - The discipline of urban planning or town planning has dedicated course curriculum where graduates acquire a multi-sectoral overview and skillset to address challenges of urban planning.
 - The states should undertake requisite amendments in their recruitment rules to ensure entry of qualified candidates into town planning positions.
- **Mainstreaming capacity-building activities and rejuvenation of capacity building centers**
 - States/UTs to ensure regular capacity building of their town planning staff.
 - Existing centers of excellence established by MoHUA and State-level training institutions need to be further strengthened to regularly build the skills and expertise of urban functionaries.
- **Re-engineering of urban governance**
 - There is a need to constitute high powered committee to re-engineer the present urban- planning governance structure.

CONSTITUTION, POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

- Following efforts are needed:
 - (i) clear division of roles and responsibilities among various authorities, appropriate revision of rules and regulations etc.
 - (ii) creation of a more dynamic organizational structure, standardisation of the job descriptions of town planners and other experts
 - (iii) extensive adoption of technology for enabling public participation and inter-agency coordination
 - **Revision of Town and Country Planning Acts**
 - Committee must be constituted at State level to undertake a regular review of planning legislations including town and country planning or urban and regional development acts or other relevant acts.
 - **Enable citizens' participation in urban planning** at relevant stages through Citizens' Outreach Campaign
 - **Building local leadership through a 'short-term training program for city level elected officials** on the economic and social benefits of urban planning'.
 - **Strengthen the role of the private sector to improve the overall planning capacity** through
 - Adoption of fair processes for procuring technical consultancy services,
 - Strengthening project structuring and management skills in the public sector.
 - Empanelment of private sector consultancies.
 - **Steps for strengthening the urban planning education system by taking up important topics on urban planning such as:**
 - History of human settlements in the Indian subcontinent must be taught to all young planners in a more exhaustive and analytical manner.
 - Applications in urbanisation and urban development and policy should be taught as part of economics.
 - Universities in hill areas should establish a 'Department of Planning and Public Policy' and offer postgraduate program with specializations in 'hill area planning', 'environmental planning', 'regional planning', and 'rural area planning'.
 - Professional Institutions in planning should synergize with the Ministry of Rural Development,
- Ministry of Panchayati Raj and respective state rural development departments and develop demand-driven short-term programs on rural area planning.
- 'Planning' as an umbrella term, including all its specializations such as environment, housing, transportation, infrastructure, logistics, rural area, regional, etc., or any other nomenclature approved by AICTE, should be included as a discipline under the National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF) of Ministry of Education to encourage healthy competition among the institutions.
 - Names of the degrees should be limited to only two: Bachelor of Technology in Planning and Master of Technology in Planning, with their specialization in brackets.
 - Institutions in the domain of planning education may identify prominent international and national institutes, connect with them and sign MoUs for mentoring.
 - Faculty shortage in educational institutions conducting degree and PhD programs in planning needs to be resolved in a time-bound manner.
- **Measures for strengthening human resource and match demand-supply**
 - The profession needs more structuring, skill- mapping, and data-basing of the workforce to bridge the gap between demand and supply.
 - 'National Council of Town and Country Planners' as a statutory body should be constituted.
 - Also, a 'National Digital Platform of Town and Country Planners' is suggested to be created within the National Urban Innovation Stack of MoHUA.
 - This portal is expected to enable self-registration of all the planners and evolve as a marketplace for potential employers and urban planners.

WAY FORWARD

Urbanization is intrinsic to development and often serves as a major driver of economic growth. Thus, collaborative, concerted and cooperative efforts are required to strengthen the urban planning capacity of the country.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

MCQS

Q1. Competition Commission of India has been empowered to?

1. Prevent practices having adverse effect on competition
2. Protect the interests of consumers and to ensure freedom of trade carried on by other participants in markets
3. Penalise anti-competitive agreements such as bid rigging, collusive bidding or exclusive supply agreement.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 2 and 3 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 2 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q2. Which of the following is the objective for enactment of Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act of 2006?

1. Ensure land tenure, livelihood and food security of the forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers.
2. Providing framework to record forests rights by having relevant evidence of such residence in forest lands.
3. Empower state governments as an authority to initiate the process for determining the nature and extent of individual or community forestrights.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 2 and 3 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 2 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. There is no law or regulations in India for internet suspension and the step to suspend internet is mostly taken in routine manner by district officials to address law and order issue.
2. Suspension of Internet affects fundamental right to speech and trade and commerce according to recent Supreme Court judgment.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q4. Provisions relating to 'Right to Health' can be found in which of the following parts of Indian Constitution?

1. Fundamental Rights
2. Directive Principles of State Policy
3. 11th and 12th Schedule

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 2 and 3 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 2 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q5. Consider the following statements:

1. PM-CARES Fund has been constituted as a Public Charitable Trust where individuals and corporates can donate.
2. Prime Minister is the Chairman of the trust and its other members include Defence Minister, Home Minister and Finance Minister.
3. Donations made to PM-CARES Fund are exempted from Income Tax but are not counted part of Corporate Social Responsibility as per Companies Act.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 2 and 3 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only

- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS

- Q1.** "To strengthen urban governance, there is a need to focus on urban planning". In light of this statement, highlight the present challenges in urban planning and also suggest remedial measures to improve urban planning and governance in India. (15 Marks)
- Q2.** Unilateral legislation by the Centre without taking state governments into confidence goes against the principle of federalism as envisaged in the Constitution of India. Examine with the help of illustrations. (10 Marks)

Answers: 1 (d), 2 (c), 3 (b), 4(d), 5(b)

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & SECURITY

GS PAPER (PRELIMS) & GS PAPER II & III (MAIN)

AUKUS SECURITY PARTNERSHIP

#GEOPOLITICS

PRIMARY SOURCE

THE HINDU

USA, UK and Australia have formed a security partnership in the Indo-Pacific with an aim to counter Chinese aggression. This group has been created in addition to the already existing collaborations like QUAD, 5 eyes alliance etc. In this backdrop let us understand the various dimensions of AUKUS and its implications on the geopolitics of Indo-Pacific.

OBJECTIVES OF AUKUS

It aims to ensure that there will be enduring freedom and openness in the Indo-Pacific region.

SALIENT FEATURES

- It complements several pre-existing similar arrangements for the region, including the Five Eyes intelligence initiative, ASEAN, and the Quad.
- It proposes to transfer technology to build a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines for Australia within 18 months.
- Australia will become only the second nation, after the U.K., that the U.S. has ever shared its nuclear submarine technology with.

S. No.	AUKUS	Quad
1.	AUKUS is a military alliance	QUAD is not a military alliance; it is a diplomatic alliance
2.	AUKUS specifically will deal with the security and military situation in the	QUAD focuses on the affairs of the whole world

	Indo-Pacific region	
3.	It is a pact to protect the Indo-Pacific from China's dominance and shield the post-1945 global order	QUAD has an agenda of its own that suits shared interests of all the members.
4.	Both the groups have a common interest in protecting the Indo-Pacific region from China's dominance over other nations.	

- **AUKUS is a military alliance**, whereas **QUAD is not**, it is a diplomatic alliance. The QUAD discusses diplomatic and global issues along with a security dialogue. **AUKUS only focuses on the military developments**, as significant from their first project, where the UK & US are helping Australia to acquire a nuclear-powered conventionally armed submarine fleet. On the other hand, QUAD focuses on multilateral issues -- ranging from economic discussions, security affairs & global affairs, for e.g.: vaccines, Afghanistan situation etc.
- **AUKUS specifically will deal with the security and military situation in the Indo-Pacific region**, however, the **QUAD focuses on the multifaceted issues**, for instance in the 2021 meet -- they discussed the COVID-19 situation, vaccines, and climate change.
- The AUKUS trilateral military pact **to protect the Indo-Pacific from China's dominance and shield the post-1945 global order**. However, the QUAD has an agenda of its own that suits shared interests of all the members.

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN QUAD AND AUKUS

- Both the groups have a common interest in protecting the Indo-Pacific region from China's dominance over other nations. India, Japan, and the United States

FOCUS 1 OCTOBER 2021 | RAU'S IAS

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & SECURITY

continued holding joint naval and military exercises (MALABAR). Thereafter, the QUAD was revived with Australia re-joining the alliance to counter China militarily and diplomatically in the South China Sea. In 2021, the QUAD declared "a shared vision for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific", thus countering China's aggression in the region.

- Leaders of all four QUAD nations became more aligned in their common interests regarding China's assertive attitude in the Indo-Pacific in 2021 and are inclined to establish a productive collaboration.
- The first project of AUKUS will be to help Australia acquire a nuclear-powered conventionally armed submarine fleet. The three heads of state reaffirmed their intention to continue to work with their allies and groupings in tandem with AUKUS, with the QUAD being mentioned by Morrison and Biden, though they were not specific on details.

BENEFITS OF AUKUS FOR INDIA

1. Strengthens India-Australia relations

- It aims at improving defence capabilities of Australia which is a strategic partner of India.
- India and Australia recently held their first round of 2+2 dialogue in an effort to deepen their defence and strategic ties.
- In 2020, India and Australia had signed a defence pact — **the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement**.
- Besides, India is going to participate in Australia's biggest wargame, Talisman Sabre, in 2023. The US is already part of it.

2. Augments Quads capability

- It will augment the capacity of the Quad of which both the US and Australia are members.
- This is a first of its kind defence initiative of the US in the Indo - Pacific, since Quad has not clearly outlined its defence motives clearly.
- AUKUS is beneficial for India because it reflects continued and intensifying U.S. and Australian concerns about China.
- It will bolster both the Australian and the American ability to deter China or to respond in the event of a crisis. In this way, it supplements the Quad's efforts.

3. Clarifies the role of Big Powers in the Indo -Pacific

- Indian policymakers have gone from worrying about too much U.S. presence and interest in the Indian

Ocean to worrying about Washington paying too little attention to this region. AUKUS could ease this concern.

- AUKUS conveys the U.K.'s seriousness about its tilt to the Indo-Pacific.
- It also signals that the British view of the China challenge has evolved.
- AUKUS rollout gives India an opportunity to boost diplomatic, defence & trade ties, particularly with France. France will probably double down on its efforts to secure arms deals with India—for commercial and political economic reasons and maybe even to get one over on the U.S.
- France's reaction to AUKUS could make it more willing and able to help India attain nuclear-powered submarines in addition to or in place of Russia.

CHALLENGES FROM AUKUS FOR INDIA

- India is concerned that European countries including France have been less concerned about Chinese threat than it would like—and that has set limits to the depth of its own cooperation with them in certain sensitive realms.
- The tussle between AUKUS countries and the France discourages consensus on the larger issue of rise of China.
- France's discontent feeds China's narrative about U.S. unreliability and supports China's efforts to drive wedges between European and Indo-Pacific partners and forestall their collaborative efforts.
- Indian policymakers will be concerned about any adverse impact on U.S.-Europe cooperation on issues like technology or developing resilient supply chains.

ANALYSIS OF AUKUS

- The U.S. treatment of Afghanistan and France raises questions about American reliability as a partner.
- India not getting the offer that US has offered to Australia under the AUKUS has raised concerns of America's support to India's defences.
- AUKUS signals a dilution of interest in India or the Quad, particularly in USA's Indo-pacific strategy.
- AUKUS "might weaken strategic cooperation under the Quad and reduce the quadrilateral grouping to dealing with just climate change, COVID vaccines.
- India has itself been reluctant to securitize the Quad, particularly in a visible fashion. Quad has collectively

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & SECURITY

decided to focus on areas that help build resilience in the region and demonstrate that the grouping can deliver practical solutions to regional problems. Security dimension of Quad is clearly visible in the MALABAR naval exercise which has the same participants as the Quad.

- However, it has been argued that AUKUS could actually help the Quad. It could even take some of the pressure off the grouping, by attracting Chinese ire. It might make the four-country grouping relatively more palatable to ASEAN in comparison.
- As another non-Quad venue for security collaboration, AUKUS could also reduce the pressure on India and Japan to undertake commitments on the defence and security front that they are unable or unwilling to sign on to. This potentially increases the freedom of action—or strategic autonomy—of these members and other like-minded countries in the region.

INDIA-FRANCE RELATIONS

#BILATERAL

PRIMARY
SOURCE

THE HINDU

India and France have traditionally close and friendly relations. In 1998, the two countries entered Strategic Partnership which is emblematic of their convergence of views on a range of international issues apart from a close and growing bilateral relationship.

AREAS OF COOPERATION

- The areas of **defence cooperation, space cooperation and civil nuclear cooperation** constitute the three principal pillars of our Strategic Partnership.
- Apart from these traditional fields of cooperation, India and France are increasingly engaged in new areas of cooperation like **climate change, sustainable growth and development, the International Solar Alliance** etc.
- India and France support a **multi-polar world order**.
- France has continued to **support India's claim for permanent membership of the Security Council and the reforms of the United Nations**.
- France has provided consistent support to India's candidature for the membership of all the four Multilateral Export Control regimes, **viz. Nuclear**

Suppliers Group (NSG), the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) and the Australia Group (AG).

- France's support was vital in India's accession to MTCR, WA and AG while France continues to support India's bid for accession to the NSG.
- They have consistently condemned **terrorism** and have resolved to work together for adoption of the **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT)** in the UN.
- Both have signed provision of reciprocal logistics support between the respective Armed Forces.
- Both have declared Joint Statements - a "Joint Strategic Vision of India-France Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region" and the "India-France Joint Vision for Space Cooperation".
- France has emerged as a major source of FDI for India with more than 1,000 French establishments already present in India with a total turnover of US \$ 20 billion and employing around 300,000 persons.
- France is the 9th largest foreign investor in India with a cumulative investment of USD 6.59 billion from April 2000 to December 2018. There are more than 150 Indian companies operating in France (including sub-subsidiaries), employing more than 7,000 persons.

AUKUS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INDIA - FRANCE COLLABORATION

- USA providing of nuclear power submarines technology to Australia under the AUKUS has led to the cancellation of a submarine supply contract between Australia and France.
- This has considerably deteriorated relations between US and France which are both part of post-World War collective defence organisation NATO.
- France sharply reacted to AUKUS nuclear submarine deal. This will further impact relations between EU and the US. At the same time such differences ultimately weaken the international consensus on the Indo - Pacific.
- However, this event creates an opportunity for India to strengthen its relation with France, which has been a strategic partner of India.
- France is a permanent member of the UNSC and a leading country in European Union, the consolidation of the Indian French relationships will benefit more globally to India.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & SECURITY

- Both share a common vision on some of the crucial international issues like - stable multipolar order based on rights, free movement and fair, efficient and inclusive multilateralism with the Indo-Pacific region.
- France was looking towards security partnership with Australia before the AUKUS, is now finding itself turning to India to rework its Indo-Pacific strategy.
- Between these ongoing cross currents, India has a momentous opportunity to increase its strategic outreach, particularly with France.
- India's diverse relationships in the West must be deployed to prevent a split in the Indo-Pacific coalition against the rising China.

BRICS

#INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

Recently 13th BRICS summit took place virtually. The meeting was attended by India Prime Minister and the Presidents of China, Brazil, Russia and South Africa.

OUTCOME

- The theme of the Summit, chosen by India, was, BRICS@15: Intra-BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation and Consensus.
- PM Modi called for enhanced BRICS cooperation under the motto of '**Build-back Resiliently, Innovatively, Credibly and Sustainably**'.
- The leaders discussed important regional and global issues, including recent **developments in Afghanistan**.
- There was convergence of views on the threat posed by growth of terrorism and extremism, and all BRICS partners agreed to accelerate implementation of the **BRICS Action Plan on Counter-Terrorism**.

INITIATIVES UNDER INDIA'S CHAIRMANSHIP

- First BRICS Digital Health Summit
- First BRICS Ministerial Joint Statement on multilateral reforms
- BRICS Counter-Terrorism Action Plan
- Agreement on cooperation in field of remote-sensing satellites
- Virtual BRICS vaccine research & development centre; BRICS Alliance on Green Tourism etc.



About BRICS

- BRICS started in 2001 as BRIC, an acronym coined by Goldman Sachs analysts for Brazil, Russia, India, and China. South Africa was added in 2010.
- The notion behind the coinage was that the nations' economies would come to collectively dominate global growth by 2050.

SIGNIFICANCE OF BRICS GROUPING

- The dominance of any group across the world is judged on the basis of following parameters: Territory under control, Population, GDP and Trade. BRICS grouping has:
 - 42% of the global population,
 - 23% of the global GDP,
 - 30% of the global territory
 - 18% of the global trade.
 The BRICS members are also known for their significant influence on regional affairs; all are members of G20.
- **Contribution to global growth** - In terms of GDP, China occupies the second position; India the fifth; Brazil the ninth; Russia the 11th; and South Africa the 35th. In terms of growth rates, China grew at 6%; India at 4.5%, Russia 1.7%, Brazil 1.2% and South Africa 0.1%.
- **Collective strength of BRICS** by way of consultation and cooperation on issues of mutual interests, as well as topical global issues, such as, international terrorism, climate change, food and energy security, reforms of global governance institutions, etc. For example - An offshoot of the group, dealing with climate change, is BASIC (BRICS without Russia), which

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & SECURITY

met at the Spain conference in December 2019 and reiterated its support to the Paris Agreement.

IMPORTANCE FOR INDIA

- **Geo-politics:** BRICS platform provides an opportunity for India to balance deepening Russia-China closeness.
- **Global Economic Order:** BRICS countries shared a common objective of reforming the international financial and monetary system, with a strong desire to build a more just, and balanced international order.
- **Voice of Developing Nations:** BRICS has emerged as the voice of developing countries.
- **Terrorism:** BRICS also provides a platform for India to galvanize its efforts against terrorism and has worked within the grouping to take a strong stand against terrorism.
- **Global grouping:** India is actively pursuing its membership for UNSC and Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG). China forms the major roadblock in pursuing such goals. Therefore, BRICS provides an opportunity to actively engage with China and gain its support.
- **Institutional Successes:** New Development Bank is a multilateral development bank operated by the BRICS states. It approved its first set of loans, which included a loan of US\$ 250 million in respect of India for Multi-tranche Financing Facility for Renewable Energy Financing Scheme'.

CHALLENGES FACED BY BRICS

- **Geographical separation:** Members are fragmented along 4 different continents.
- **Political heterogeneity:** For a long-lasting strong group, there should be political homogeneity. (Ex: EU). But China and Russia have authoritative government and rest have democracy.
- **Dominance of China:** Chinese role in trade relations makes the BRICS much more a China-with-partners group than a union of equal members. China is floating its own organizations like One Belt One Road (OBOR), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).
- **Lack of mutual trust & interests:** China- India rivalry (Territorial as well as Quad); Russia and Brazil rivalry (Mining).

So, although BRICS has all necessary conditions (political, military and economic influence) to act like a global institution, but these conditions are not sufficient.

CONCLUSION

At a different level, BRICS membership elevates India's global profile. China may still not be interested in de-hyphenating India and Pakistan, but India's BRICS membership automatically de-hyphenates India and Pakistan, while it casts India and China as equals. So, even as challenges abound in the BRICS trajectory, the grouping will continue to be of some instrumental value to India in the years ahead.

SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION

#GROUPINGS

PRIMARY SOURCE | THE HINDU

Prime Minister participated virtually in the 21st Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and the Joint SCO-CSTO Outreach Session on Afghanistan.

ISSUES DISCUSSED

- Prime Minister highlighted the problems caused by growing radicalisation and extremism in the broader SCO region, which runs counter to the history of the region as a bastion of moderate and progressive cultures and values.
- Concern was raised that recent developments in Afghanistan could further exacerbate this trend towards extremism.
- India suggested that SCO could work on an agenda to promote moderation and scientific and rational thought, which would be especially relevant for the youth of the region.
- India suggested that SCO could develop a code of conduct on 'zero tolerance' towards terrorism in the region, and highlighted the risks of drugs, arms and human trafficking from Afghanistan.

ABOUT SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION

- The SCO is a China-led eight-member economic and security bloc, in which India and Pakistan were admitted as full members in 2017. Its founding

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & SECURITY

members included China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

- The main objective of SCO is to strengthen mutual trust and neighborliness among the member states, promote their effective cooperation in politics, trade, the economy, research, technology and culture, education, energy, transport, tourism, environmental protection, and other areas. Moreover, making joint efforts to maintain and ensure peace, security and stability in the region and moving towards the

establishment of a democratic, fair, and rational new international political and economic order.

- Afghanistan, Iran, Belarus and Mongolia have observer status in the SCO. Iran has become a permanent member of SCO recently.
- Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) of SCO is a permanent body based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Objective of RATS is based upon Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism.



IMPORTANCE FOR INDIA

India's security, geopolitical, strategic and economic interests are closely intertwined with developments in the Central Asian region.

- **Energy Security:** Central Asian region is richly endowed with energy resources which India is trying to gain access to through the Chabahar port construction in Iran and construction of the International North-South Transport Corridor.
- **Economic Growth:** SCO has high economic potential because 40% of the world's population lives in its countries, and they produce more than the 22% of the global GDP, that is by 2025, expected to reach 38-40%.
- **Security Cooperation:** RATS is viewed by India as a platform to access intelligence and information and as a solution to regional security cooperation as SCO

remains committed to countering international terrorism, drug trafficking and resolving the conflict in Afghanistan.

- **Gateway to Eurasia:** India's membership in the SCO is an opportunity for India to engage the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) thereby Eurasian market.
- **Connect to Central Asia:** SCO is a potential platform to advance India's Connect Central Asia policy.
- **Enhanced status:** SCO membership also bolsters India's status as a major Pan-Asian player, which is boxed in the South Asian paradigm.
- **Value alignment:** "Shanghai spirit" emphasizes on harmony, non-interference in others' internal affairs, and non-alignment - values that India has always cherished and upheld.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & SECURITY

- **Forum for bilateral cooperation with China:** It is yet another opening, like the BRICS summit last year, to bring down tensions, and ahead of the next informal summit in October in India.
- **Platform for India to engage Pakistan:** In the absence of the SAARC summit, the SCO summit gives an opportunity for Indian and Pakistani leaders to meet informally, on the sidelines and to engage in anti-terrorism cooperation. Thus, SCO shall provide a platform to resolve their differences.

CHALLENGES FOR INDIA IN SCO

- **Dominance of China and Russia:** Russia and China as co-founders of the SCO are the dominant powers in the groupings, thus limiting India's ability to assert itself.
- **China's Belt and Road initiative:** All group members except India have endorsed China's BRI initiative. India on the other hand has opposed China's Belt & Road Initiative citing sovereignty issues arising out of CPEC.
- **India-Pakistan rivalry:** India and Pakistan are on continuous confrontation that makes it difficult to adhere to the idea of "good-neighborliness" prescribed in Article 1 of SCO charter. India recently walked out of a virtual meeting of National Security Advisors of the SCO after Pakistan presented a "fictitious" map of the country at the meet.
- **Definition of terrorism:** India's definition of terrorism is different from the definition of terrorism under SCO's RATS. For SCO, terrorism coincides with regime destabilization, whereas for India it is related to state-sponsored cross border terrorism.
- **India's growing closeness with US:** India is increasingly pursuing a closer partnership with the USA for curbing growing Chinese assertiveness. At the same time, SCO is positioned as an anti-USA platform. This creates conflicts of India's foreign policy.

Thus, it can be said that SCO is a part of India's stated policy of pursuing "multi-alignments". Hence, India must continue to look for positive engagement with the member nations of this organization.

INDIA'S MEMBERSHIP OF SCO AND QUAD - IS IT A GEOPOLITICAL CONTRADICTION?

India's membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue is seen as a geopolitical contradiction by various experts. SCO is a China led initiative, while Quad is a US led

initiative. India is a member of which has made some experts to call it contradiction. Questions have been raised as to how far India can walk the tightrope of Strategic autonomy by participating in the SCO and quad which seem to have opposite objectives.

SCO	QUAD
SCO with Russia and China is seen as a counter to the NATO	Quad with US allies is seen as a counter to the China and Russia
India Joined the SCO in 2017.	Quad began after 2004 but revived after 2017.
SCO deals with continental neighborhood.	Quad deals with Maritime neighborhood.
Except India the SCO members have taken a stand on Taliban.	Quad members have stayed distant.

CONTRADICTIONS WITHIN SCO

- **Afghan contact group** - India is not on the same page with other members of the SCO on the Afghanistan issue. While Taliban has been given red carpet by Pakistan, China and Russia, India has been skeptical in engaging with Taliban.
- **Connectivity** - India is not a part of China's BRI. It has different approach to connectivity. INSTC, TAPI, Chabahar Port etc. However, other members of SCO have actively participated in the BRI project.
- **Terrorism** - SCO RATS mechanism. India participates in the SCO RATS Military exercise. India blames Pakistan, but other countries are collaborating with Pakistan.

CONTRADICTIONS WITHIN QUAD

- **COVID-19 vaccine** - India is expected to supply vaccine to Indo-Pacific with the support of US. However, the contours are still not clear. There is lack of clarity on WTO waiver.
- **Climate Change** - India works with Solar alliance and Paris accord but has not yet signed the goals set by other members of the QUAD (Net-zero targets).
- **Supply Chains** - India is keen on building alternate supply chains from the ones dominated by China. It is part of Supply chain Resilience Initiative (SRI) of which US is not a part.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & SECURITY

- **AUKUS security Partnership** - India is not a member and there is lack of clarity on how it will engage with the QUAD.

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF INDIA'S POSITION

- India is not the only country in multiple multilateral groupings which conflict or compete.
 - US is a part of **QUAD** but has still announced **AUKUS** with UK and Australia.
 - US had also announced a **Connectivity Quad** with Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.
 - US Russia & China formed the **Troika** to discuss Afghanistan as well **Troika+** with Pakistan.
- Even within the groups **some contradictions are unavoidable**.
- World politics is no more Bipolar as it used to be during the cold war era. The present global order can be seen in **the paradigm of "complex interdependence"**. In such a world order contradiction are bound to happen.
- In hostile regions continuous engagement **creates possibilities for future leverage**. Engagement is natural corollary to India's principled stand of

Strategic autonomy, where India engages on multiple platforms to pursue its interest.

CONCLUSION

At a time when the role of US is unclear in the Indo-pacific because of the parallel Quad and the AUKUS and when the strategic leverage of India is decreasing in the central Asia, engagement with SCO and QUAD provides opportunity to India to raise its voice in a dynamic geopolitical space.

INDIA AND AUSTRALIA

#GROUPINGS

PRIMARY SOURCE | THE HINDU

India and Australia began the high-level 2+2 foreign and defence ministerial dialogue in New Delhi after one year of elevation of India-Australia ties to 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership'. The partnership is particularly crucial as both the countries are collaborating in the QUAD as well as MALABAR naval Exercise. Further role of Australia in countering Chinese influence in the Indo-pacific has got a boost by its membership in the AUKUS security partnership.

	Significance	Outcomes of Cooperation
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia is an important trade partner of India with bilateral trade is around \$25bn. • Australia can be key partner in India's "Make-in India" and Indian companies have ample amount of investment opportunities in mining and energy Industry of Australia. • India's infrastructure sector under the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) can offer investment opportunities to Australian investment funds like pension funds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DTAA was signed between the countries to avoid taxing of offshore income of Indian companies doing business in India • Jointly decided to explore the possibility of launching the Indian RuPay Card in Australia.
Maritime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both India and Australia share common vision of – "free, open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific region". • India and Australia have common concerns regarding the strategic, security and environmental challenges in the Indo-Pacific maritime domain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia welcomed and granted Rs 8 crore to India's Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative (IPOI). • Australian navy became an active participant of Indian ocean Naval symposium (IONS), which was started by India.
Defence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia is one of the key defence partners of India and increasing defence ties with Australia is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signed Mutual Logistic service agreement (MLSA) to facilitate reciprocal access to each

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & SECURITY

	important for India in the backdrop of Increasing expansionism of China both at land and maritime fronts.	<p>other military logistics facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 countries signed “White shipping agreement”. • Conducts bilateral maritime exercise- AUS-INDEX once in 2 years. • Australia participated in Malabar Naval exercise in 2020.
Energy	Australia is rich in coal, Uranium and Natural gas reserves and can play a key role in India’s energy security.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signed Civil nuclear cooperation agreement. • Australia explicitly supported India’s membership in nuclear suppliers’ group (NSG), though India is a non-signatory of NPT.
Strategic and Multilateral cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both share membership in QUAD grouping. • Both the countries are committed to Multilateralism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia is in favour of UNSC reforms and India’s candidature for permanent membership to UNSC.
People-to-people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of strong Indian Diaspora in Australia. • Indian diaspora is one of the largest sources of skilled migrants in Australia. • India is the 2nd largest source of international students in Australia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A “Migration and Mobility Partnership Arrangement” is being designed to prevent illegal migration, human trafficking and facilitate mobility of students and researchers & migration of professional for economic reasons.

Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA)

The agreement will facilitate reciprocal access to military logistics facilities and improve interoperability between the security forces of the two nations.

This will be useful during Bilateral naval exercises and Humanitarian, Disaster relief & rescue operation.

It refers to exchange of relevant advance information on the identity and movement of commercial non-military merchant vessels. Being aware of the identity of these vessels is imperative to preventing any potential threat from the sea from impinging on the coastal and offshore security of the country.

CHALLENGES IN THE RELATIONSHIP

• Dichotomous Australian foreign policy

There is some misalignment in Australia’s economic and political interests. Though Australia has been actively engaging with India and US as part of QUAD

grouping, its economy still depends on China owing to its huge share in bilateral trade and investment.

• Lingering CECA

Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) has not yet materialised though the negotiation started in 2011. This is a hindrance to the bilateral trade.

• Withdrawal from RCEP

One of the reasons for India’s withdrawal from RCEP was objection from farmer organisations and diary cooperatives due to fears of flooding of cheaper agricultural and dairy products from Australia.

Hopefully the Comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries will remove the hindrance/challenges to improve the bilateral relations across the fields.

INDO-PACIFIC GEOPOLITICS & INDIA – AUSTRALIA RELATIONSHIP

- India and Australia have had to bear the brunt of increasingly belligerent Chinese behaviour in Indo-

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & SECURITY

Pacific, pushing their bilateral relationship to new heights.

- Australia-India relations have been on an improving trajectory in recent years.
- After many years, Australia was finally invited back to the **Malabar naval exercise last year.**
- For Australia, even as the U.S. security alliance (AUKUS) remains central to their security, it has been expanding its Asian partnerships in the Indo-Pacific.
- India, for its part, long avoided taking sides between the U.S. and China.
- While Sino-Indian relations have been in trouble for several years, the Galwan confrontation in 2020 brought the relationship to an all-time low. As a result, India has decided to pursue **closer strategic engagements with a number of like-minded partners in the Indo-Pacific, especially Australia.**
- Australia has also seen more than its fair share of bullying behaviour from China, much of it because Australian PM asked for an independent inquiry into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Since then, **China has engaged in severe economic and trade coercive practices against Australia,** targeting everything from barley, beef, seafood, wheat, and wine to coal, cotton, copper, education and timber.
- Augmented Australia-India ties within bilateral, trilateral, quadrilateral, and other minilaterals and multilateral institutions are a reality that is unlikely to slow down for the foreseeable future.
- The convergence of strategic interests in ensuring an Indo-Pacific order that is free of hegemonic and muscular policies is a glue that will bind India and Australia further in the coming years. The two will likely also expand their partnership both in pursuing strategic partnerships and thematic ones like supply chain resilience initiative.

LEFT WING EXTREMISM

#SECURITY

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

According to Ministry of Home affairs, geographical influence of Maoists has contracted to only 41 districts in the

country, a sharp reduction from 96 such districts in 10 States in 2010.

ABOUT LEFT-WING EXTREMISM

- Left-wing extremists in India is known for resorting to violence in pursuance of their ideology of peoples' revolutionary movement.
- This movement was started in 1967 from Naxalbari, West Bengal. First flush of the Left extremist movement in the Naxalbari region was effectively controlled without much bloodshed and within a relatively short span of time.
- The movement spread beyond West Bengal and came to be known as Maoist movement since 2004 after the merger of various splinter groups into **CPI(Maoist).** This was followed by their increasing militarisation and simultaneous acquisition of sophisticated firearms and ammunitions.

AFFECTED AREAS

- The Naxalites operate in what is known as the **"Red Corridor"** "106 districts across 10 states in India, mainly in the states of Odisha (5 affected districts), Jharkhand (14 affected districts), Bihar (5 affected districts), Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh (ten affected districts), Madhya Pradesh (8 affected districts), Maharashtra (2 affected districts) and West Bengal (8 affected district).

CAUSES FOR SPREAD OF LWE

1. Land Related Factors

- Evasion of land ceiling laws.
- Existence of special land tenures (enjoying exemptions under ceiling laws).
- Encroachment and occupation of Government and community lands (even the waterbodies) by powerful sections of society.
- Lack of title to public land cultivated by landless poor.
- Poor implementation of laws prohibiting transfer of tribal land to non-tribals in the Fifth Schedule areas.
- Non-regularisation of traditional land rights.

2. Displacement and Forced Evictions

- Eviction from lands traditionally used by tribals.
- Displacements caused by irrigation and power projects without adequate arrangements for rehabilitation.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & SECURITY

- Large scale land acquisition for 'public purposes' without appropriate compensation or rehabilitation.

3. Livelihood Related Causes

- Lack of food security – corruption in the Public Distribution System (which are often non-functional).
- Disruption of traditional occupations and lack of alternative work opportunities.
- Deprivation of traditional rights in common property resources.

4. Social Exclusion

- Denial of dignity.
- Continued practice, in some areas, of untouchability in various forms.
- Poor implementation of special laws on prevention of atrocities, protection of civil rights and abolition of bonded labour etc.

5. Governance Related Factors

- Corruption and poor provision/non-provision of essential public services including primary health care and education.
- Incompetent, ill-trained and poorly motivated public personnel who are mostly absent from their place of posting.
- Misuse of powers by the police and violations of the norms of law.
- Perversion of electoral politics and unsatisfactory working of local government institutions.

These causes are most glaring in forest areas predominantly inhabited by tribal populations who thus become the main instruments and victims of left extremist violence.

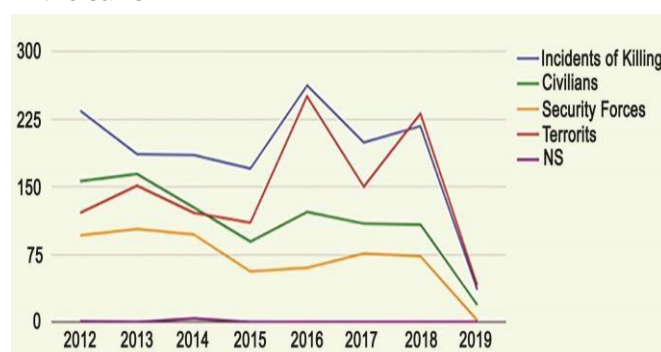
SOURCES OF FUNDING

- Financial mobilisation by Naxalites is in the form of extortion from local people and from contractors executing various projects in the affected areas. Funds are also raised through forest and mining operations.
- The extensive contractor-transporter-extremist nexus and its links with illegal mining and collection of forest produce in the entire region affected by left extremism yields a huge volume of funds for the extremists.

CURRENT STATUS & SPREAD OF LWE

- The decrease in instances of LWE activities started from 2011 and has continued till date.

- The number of districts affected by left-wing extremism (LWE) has declined sharply to 70 in 10 states for the first time in over three decades, with Bihar, Odisha and Jharkhand showing the biggest improvement.
- Only 25 districts in eight states are now categorised as "most affected".
- Overall, the incidents of LWE violence have reduced by 70% from an all-time high of 2,258 in 2009 to 665 in 2020. Similarly, the deaths of security forces and civilians have come down by 80% from all time high of 1,005 in 2010 to 183 in 2020
- Recruitment of Maoists has come down, their leadership is old, and party ideology is missing among young cadres due to which the pockets of their activities have been restricted enormously.
- There is better intelligence sharing between agencies, disruption of logistics chains like weapons, money and food items and they are not able to recruit cadres from any state other than Chhattisgarh.
- Bihar: Maoists once enjoyed widespread support among the poor, has shed the highest (six) number of districts in the latest list, with only 10 districts now affected by LWE.
- Odisha: State government has a formidable anti-Naxal force, Special Operations Group (SOG), districts affected by Maoism have come down from 15 to 10.
- Jharkhand: has shown significant improvement with only 16 districts now affected by LWE against 19.
- Chhattisgarh: Worst violence has been reported over the years, continues to have 14 affected districts.
- There is no change in the LWE situation in Kerala and West Bengal, where three districts and one district, respectively, are affected by LWE; while Madhya Pradesh now has three affected districts as compared to two earlier.



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & SECURITY

GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH AND ACTION PLAN

Government has adopted an integrated and holistic approach to deal with Left-Wing Extremism by simultaneously addressing areas of **security, development and promoting good governance**.

To achieve this, a **National Policy & Action Plan** has been put in place that adopts a multi-pronged strategy in the areas of security, development, ensuring rights & entitlements of Other Traditional Dwellers/Tribals etc with focused attention on 106 Districts in 10 States and particularly in 35 most affected LWE districts in 07 States.

SECURITY RELATED MEASURES

- 'Police' and 'public order' are state subjects. The Central Government, however, closely monitors the situation and coordinates and supplements their efforts in several ways to deal with the LWE problem.
- **Ban on CPI(Maoist):** This organisation is responsible for most incidents of violence/casualties.
- **Strengthening the Intelligence Mechanism:** This includes intelligence sharing through Multi-Agency Centre (MAC) at the Central level and State Multi Agency Centre (SMAC) at the State level on 24x7 basis.
- **Better Inter-State coordination:** The menace of Maoists is spread across various states. Thus, Government of India has taken a number of steps to improve Inter-State coordination through periodic Inter-State meetings and also facilitating interactions between the bordering districts of LWE affected States.
- **Tackling Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs):** Majority of casualties incurred by security forces are attributable to IEDs. Ministry of Home Affairs has formulated an SOP on 'Issues related to Explosives /IEDs/Landmines in Naxal Affected Areas'.
- **Deployment of Central Armed Police Forces to assist state forces.**
- **India reserve (IR)/Specialised India Reserve Battalion (SIRB):** Left-Wing Extremism affected states have been sanctioned India Reserve (IR) battalions mainly to strengthen security apparatus at their level and to enable States to provide gainful employment to youth, particularly in the LWE affected areas.

DEVELOPMENT RELATED MEASURES

Developmental deficit is one of the major reasons for support of LWE in the local population. In order to

address this, there is a push for development in this region. Monitoring and Implementation of Flagship Programmes:

- (a) Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)
- (b) National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)
- (c) Ashram School
- (d) Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)
- (e) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)
- (f) National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP)
- (g) Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)
- (h) Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY)
- (i) Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)
- (j) Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Right) Act, 2006.

OTHER MEASURES

- Effective Implementation of the **PESA and FRA** in the tribal dominated areas.
- **Road Connectivity Project** for LWE Affected Areas: The Government has approved a Centrally Sponsored Scheme to improve the rural road connectivity in the worst LWE affected districts from security angle.
- **LWE Mobile Tower Project:** To address connectivity issues in LWE affected areas.
- **Civic Action Programme (CAP):** Financial grants are allocated to the CAPFs to undertake various Civic Action Programs in the LWE affected areas.
- **Surrender & rehabilitation policy:** Rehabilitation package includes an immediate grant of Rs 2.5 lakh for higher ranked LWE cadres and Rs 1.5 lakh for middle/lower rank LWE cadres to be kept in their names as Fixed deposit which may be withdrawn after completion of 3 years subject to good behaviour. They are also imparted training in a vocation of their liking and paid a monthly stipend of Rs 4000 for three years.
- **SAMADHAN Strategy:** Solution to the LWE problem is not possible with any silver bullet. For this short term, medium term and long-term policies need to be formulated at different levels. Thus, 'SAMADHAN' stands for:

- S- Smart Leadership
- A - Aggressive Strategy
- M- Motivation and Training

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & SECURITY

A -Actionable Intelligence

D- Dashboard Based KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) and KRAs (Key Result Areas)

H- Harnessing Technology


A - Action plan for each Theatre

N- No access to Financing

WAY FORWARD

Left wing extremism feeds on persistent and serious shortcomings in the domain of general and development administration, resulting in the failure of government to address the needs of the poor in areas pertaining to land, food, water and personal security, equity, ethnic/cultural identity etc. The 'containment' of the problem may inter alia require consideration of the following:

- Most of the 'participants' in violence perpetrated under the banner of left extremist organisations are alienated sections of society rather than perpetrators of 'high treason' – they have to be treated as such.
- Police action over a long period is counter-productive; as it affects the innocent more than the extremists.
- Negotiations have a ameliorative role under the circumstances, this is the experience the world over.
- Faithful, fair and just implementation of laws and programmes for social justice will go a long way to remove the basic causes of resentment among aggrieved sections of society.
- Sustained, professionally sound and sincere development initiatives suitable to local conditions along with democratic methods of conflict resolution.

Locations/conventions/ Organisations / Agreements	In news	Pointers
GREEN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India and Denmark agreed on a 5-year action plan to take forward their unique "green strategic partnership" and signed agreements aimed at boosting cooperation in green technologies and management of natural resources such as groundwater. 	
MARIB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a town in Yemen, where a recent skirmish between the Houthi rebels and Yemen Government backed by Saudi Government led to loss of life of many fighters. Houthis are backed by Iran and are Shia. 	 <p>The map shows the Arabian Peninsula with Yemen highlighted in yellow. Neighboring countries include Saudi Arabia to the north, Oman to the northeast, Djibouti to the southwest, and Somalia to the south. The Red Sea is to the west and the Gulf of Aden to the south. Within Yemen, the capital Sanaa is marked with a red square, and Marib is marked with a red square and labeled as the Marib governorate.</p>

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & SECURITY

<p>CAM RANH BAY BASE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is naval and air force base in Vietnam. Under a security agreement with Vietnam, India has been given access to this base by Vietnam. Thus, this base gives a foothold to India in the strategic South China Sea. 	
<p>KUNDUZ</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 100 people have been killed and wounded after a suicide bomb attack tore through in Afghanistan's north-eastern Kunduz province 	

MILITARY EXERCISES IN NEWS

<p>PEACEFUL MISSION</p>	<p>Joint military training exercise of members of Shanghai Cooperation Agreement</p>	<p>India and Kazakhstan</p>
<p>SURYA KIRAN</p>	<p>Joint military training exercise between India and Nepal</p>	<p>SIMBEX Joint maritime bilateral exercise between Indian and Singaporean Navy</p>
<p>ZAPAD</p>	<p>It is multi-lateral military exercise being conducted in Russia. Over a dozen countries from Eurasia and South Asian region participated in the event. Indian Army participated in the exercise.</p>	<p>Air launched unmanned aerial vehicle (ALUAV) India's Ministry of Defence and US Department of Defence have signed a project agreement for co-development, research & development of ALUAV under the Defence Technology & Trade Initiative. It is significant step towards deepening defence technology cooperation between India & US.</p>
<p>KAZIND</p>	<p>Joint military training exercise between</p>	

SOCIETY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

GS PAPER I & GS PAPER II (MAIN)

RECOGNISING THE CONTRIBUTION OF HOMEMAKER

#SOCIAL JUSTICE #EMPOWERMENT

PRIMARY
SOURCE

THE HINDU

SECONDARY
SOURCE

The Indian
EXPRESS

Supreme Court has said the value of a woman's work at home must be placed at par with that of her office-going husband.

SCENARIO

- Women carry a disproportionately higher burden of unpaid work, namely, unpaid domestic services as well as unpaid care of children, the old and the disabled for their respective households.
- Though this work contributes to overall well-being at the household level and collectively at the national level, it is invisible in the national database and particularly in national policies.
- This work is repetitive, boring and akin to drudgery — a 24-hour job without remuneration, promotions or retirement benefits. It restricts opportunities for women in the economy and in life.
- Women do this job not necessarily because they like it or are efficient in it, but because it is imposed on them by patriarchal norms, which are the roots of all pervasive gender inequalities.
- This unequal division of unpaid work between women and men is unfair and unjust and it deprives women of equal opportunities as men.

ORIGINS OF THE DEMAND

- The demand for 'wages for housework' arose in the context of struggle and consciousness-raising associated with the 2nd Wave of the women's movement in North America and Europe.
- Alongside other demands for social and political equality, women's rights campaigners made visible

and also politicised women's everyday experience of housework and child care in the 'private' realm of the household.

- In doing this, they challenged the assumption that a 'natural' affinity for housework was rooted in the essential nature of women who were performing a 'labour of love'. For leading women's rights activists of the 1960s and 1970s, it was important to bust the myth that women's work at home was a personal service with no links to capitalist production. In a concrete sense, this meant linking the exploitation of the worker in the factory to women's work at home.
- Despite the links between the 'housewife' and the factory worker, the unwaged status of the former accounted for crucial differences between them.
- As feminist scholar **Silvia Federici wrote (in 1975)**, in "Wages against housework", it was possible for wage-earners to bargain around the terms of their paid work and the quantity of the wage. 'Housework, on the other hand, had come to define the very nature of a woman.
- This disallowed women from seeing it as 'real work' or as a social contract. And, therefore, the women who sought to negotiate housework with their partners were seen as 'nagging' and not as workers in struggle'.
- For the advocates of 'wages for housework', the wage that the state ought to pay women would make them autonomous of the men on whom they were dependent.
- More fundamentally, the very demand for a wage was a repudiation of housework as an expression of women's nature. It was a revolt against the assigned social role of women. Therein lay the radical nature of the demand for wages, not in the money itself.
- For political parties to recognise this work is a positive development, and the demand for wages for housewives has emerged from this concern. However, its implementation may create problems such as

SOCIETY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

affordability of the government and calculation of the amounts.

- Women may not be eager to enter the labour market. More important, these wages may confirm unpaid work as women's work only, which would deny opportunities to women in the wider world. Payment of pension to old women (60+ years) may be a better idea to compensate them for their unpaid work.

SUGGESTIONS

- **Recognise this unpaid work in the national database** by a sound time-use survey and use the data in national policies.
- They could **relieve women's burden of unpaid work by improving technology** (e.g., better fuel for cooking), better infrastructure (e.g., water at the doorstep), shifting some unpaid work to the mainstream economy (e.g., childcare, care of the disabled, and care of the chronically sick), and by making basic services (e.g., health and transportation) accessible to women.
- They could **redistribute the work between men and women by providing different incentives and disincentives** to men (e.g., mandatory training of men in housework, childcare, etc.) and financial incentives for sharing housework. These measures will give free time to women and open up new opportunities to them.

UNPAID WORK AND ECONOMY

- The household produces goods and services for its members, and if GDP is a measure of the total production and consumption of the economy, it has to incorporate this work by accepting the household as a sector of the economy.
- At the macro level, unpaid work subsidises the private sector by providing it a generation of workers (human capital) and takes care of wear and tear of labour who are family members.
- The private sector would have paid much higher wages and earned lower profits in the absence of unpaid work.
- Unpaid work also subsidises the government by taking care of the old, sick and the disabled. The state would have spent huge amounts in the absence of unpaid work.
- Unpaid work is a privately produced public good which is critical for the sustenance of the mainstream

economy. This work, therefore, needs to be integrated with the mainstream economy and policies. It will be up to public policies then to improve the productivity of unpaid workers, reduce their burden, and tap their potential in development, as the household could also be an important economic sector.

- By excluding this work from the economy, macroeconomics shows a clear male bias. There is an urgent need to expand the purview of economics not only for gender justice but mainly for moving towards a realistic economics.

LACK OF WOMEN JUDGES IN JUDICIARY

#SOCIAL JUSTICE #EMPOWERMENT #JUDICIARY

PRIMARY SOURCE | THE HINDU | SECONDARY SOURCE | The Indian EXPRESS

Recently, three of the nine new judges sworn into the Supreme Court (SC) of India are women. The elevation of the three women judges is significant as the share of women has always remained poor in the judiciary.

- Out of the sanctioned strength of 34 judges, the Supreme Court currently has four women judges — justices **Indira Banerjee, Hima Kohli, BV Nagarathna and Bela M Trivedi**, the highest ever number in its history.
- It was only in 1989, four decades after Independence, that the Supreme Court had its first woman judge.
- Justice Nagarathna is in line to become the first woman CJI in September 2027, and she will have a tenure of a little over a month.
- According to data from Union ministry of Law and Justice, out of 677 sitting judges in both the Supreme Court and high courts, only 81 are women. This makes out the representation of women judges in the total working strength to a mere 12%.
- Among the 25 high courts, only the Madras high court has women judges in double digits. Out of the working strength of 58 judges, the Madras HC has 13 women, which is more than 22% representation.
- At least five high courts — **Manipur, Meghalaya, Bihar, Tripura and Uttarakhand** do not have even a

SOCIETY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

single woman judge while seven other high courts have just one woman judge each.

- The sanctioned strength of judges across 25 high courts in India is 1,098. Of these, 465 posts (more than 42% of the total strength) were vacant, as of September 1.

CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA (CJI) ON LACK OF WOMEN JUDGES

- The Chief Justice of India (CJI) lamented that very few women find representation at the top in the judiciary.
- He said that, ideally, women should have got at least 50% representation at all levels after 75 years of Independence.
- CJI has backed 50% representation for women in judiciary.
- The reality remained that the legal professions are yet to whole-heartedly welcome women into its fold.
- The judiciary should be representative and conscious of issues of women and other vulnerable sections of society.

DEATH BY ACCIDENTS

#SOCIAL ISSUE #DATA

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU **SECONDARY SOURCE** The Indian EXPRESS

As many as 3.32 lakh lives have been lost in three years in deaths due to negligence related to road accidents, the National Crime Records Bureau revealed in its annual 'Crime India' report for 2020.

- Despite being under Covid-19 lockdown and curbs for most part, India logged **1.20 lakh deaths due to road accidents in 2020**. This means that 328 people lost their lives every day on an average in road accidents, according to government data.
- While 1.20 lakh such deaths were recorded in 2020, the figures stood at 1.36 lakh in 2019 and 1.35 lakh in 2018, the data showed.
- The country also logged 1.35 lakh cases of "hit and run" since 2018.
- In 2020 alone, there were 41,196 cases of "hit and run" while there were 47,504 such cases in 2019 and 47,028 in 2018, the report showed.

- On an average, there were 112 cases of "hit and run" reported across the country every day in the past year.

Rail accidents: 52 cases of deaths due to negligence related to rail accidents were recorded across the country in 2020; 55 such cases in 2019 and 35 in 2018.

GENDER SELF-IDENTIFICATION

#SOCIAL JUSTICE #EMPOWERMENT

PRIMARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS

The Spanish government approved the first draft of a bill that would allow anyone over the age of 14 to legally change gender without a medical diagnosis or hormone therapy.

WHAT IS GENDER SELF-IDENTIFICATION?

- Self-identification, or 'self-id', is the concept that a person should be allowed to legally identify with the gender of their choice by simply declaring so, and without facing any medical tests. This has been a long-held demand of trans-right groups around the world, including in India, as prejudice against trans people remains rampant.
- In Europe, this issue has remained divisive not only on liberal-conservative lines, but also within the LGBT community.
- While some believe that the current processes for declaring one's desired gender are lengthy, expensive, and degrading, some feminist and gay-rights groups insist that such a law could endanger women and cause more gay teenagers to be told that they might be trans and thus encouraged towards hormones and surgery.

WHERE IS SELF-ID LEGAL?

- As per the advocacy group ILGA (the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association), **15 countries around the world recognise self-ID**, including Denmark, Portugal, Norway, Malta, Argentina, Ireland, Luxembourg, Greece, Costa Rica, Mexico (only in Mexico City), Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Uruguay.

PROCESS IN INDIA

SOCIETY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

- In India, the rights of transgender persons are governed by the **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019** and the **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020**. Under the Rules, an application to declare gender is to be made to the District Magistrate. Parents can also make an application on behalf of their child.
- A much-criticised previous draft of regulations required transgender persons to go through a medical examination for declaring their desired sex. This requirement was omitted in the final Rules, which state that the District Magistrate will “subject to the correctness of the applicant’s particulars, get the application processed based on the affidavit submitted declaring the gender identity of any person, without any medical or physical examination, and thereafter, issue an identification number to the applicant, which may be quoted as proof of application.”
- As per the Rules, state governments have also been directed to constitute welfare boards for transgender persons to protect their rights and interests and facilitate access to schemes and welfare measures framed by the Centre.

UNDERSTANDING LAWS ON RAPE AND SEXUAL CRIMES

LEGISLATION # SOCIAL JUSTICE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

Rape, a heinous crime instead of declining has shown an upward trend despite stringent laws. On this note, let us understand about laws on rape and sexual crimes in our country.

BACKGROUND

- ‘Rape’ as a clearly defined offence was first introduced in the **Indian Penal Code in 1860**. Prior to this, there were often diverse and conflicting laws prevailing across India. The codification of Indian laws began with the **enactment of the Charter Act, 1833** by the British Parliament which led to the establishment of the first Law Commission under the chairmanship of Lord Macaulay.

- The Law Commissioners decided to put the criminal law of the land in two separate codes. The first to be placed on the statute book was the Indian Penal Code formulating the substantive law of crimes. This was enacted in October 1860 but brought into force in 1862.
- The **first Code of Criminal Procedure was enacted in 1861**, which consolidated the law relating to the set-up of criminal courts and the procedure to be followed in the investigation and trial of the offence.

IPC SECTIONS

- **Section 375** of the IPC made punishable the act of sex by a man with a woman if it was done against her will or without her consent. The definition of rape also included sex when her consent has been obtained by putting her or any person in whom she is interested, in fear of death or of hurt.
Also, sex with or without her consent when she is under 18 years is considered rape. However, under the exception, sexual intercourse, or sexual acts by a man with his wife, the wife not being under 15 years of age, is not rape.
- **Section 376** provided for seven years of jail term to life imprisonment to whoever commits the offence of rape.

CASE OF 1972

- For over a century after 1860, the criminal law relating to rape and sexual assault cases remained unchanged until the watershed incident of the Mathura custodial rape case. On March 26, 1972, a young Adivasi girl named Mathura was allegedly raped by policemen in the Desai Gunj Police Station in Maharashtra. In the trial that ensued, the sessions court came to the conclusion that she had sexual intercourse while at the police station, but rape had not been proved and that she was habituated to intercourse.
- While the sessions court acquitted both the policemen, the High Court reversed the order of acquittal. When the case reached the Supreme Court, it overturned the High Court verdict saying that “the intercourse in question is not proved to amount rape”.
- The top court, in its 1978, verdict, said no marks of injury were found on the girl after the incident and “their absence goes a long way to indicate that the alleged intercourse was consensual”.

SOCIETY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

WHY WAS THE CRIMINAL LAW ACT AMENDED?

- The controversial verdict sparked wide scale protests across the country seeking a change in existing rape laws. This culminated into the **Criminal Law (Second Amendment) Act of 1983**. A new Section 114A in the Indian Evidence Act of 1872 was inserted which presumed that there is absence of consent in certain prosecutions of rape if the victim says so. This applied to custodial rape cases.
- In the IPC, Section 228A was added which makes it punishable to disclose the identity of the victim of certain offences including rape.

ARE THE LAWS GENDER NEUTRAL?

- Following the direction of the Supreme Court in a public interest litigation (PIL) initiated by a non- governmental organisation to widen the definition of sexual intercourse in Section 375 of the IPC, the Law Commission in its 172nd report recommended widening the scope of rape law to make it gender neutral.
- While the rape law in India even today remains gender specific, as the perpetrator of the offence can only be a 'man', the 172nd report led to the amendments in the Indian Evidence Act in 2002.
- A new provision was inserted which barred putting questions in the cross-examination of the victim as to her general 'immoral character' in rape or attempt to rape cases.

ARE RAPE LAWS STRICTER NOW?

- The nationwide public outcry, in 2012, following the December 16 gang rape and murder in Delhi, led to the passing of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act in 2013 which widened the definition of rape and made punishment more stringent.
- Parliament made the amendments on the recommendation of the **Justice J.S. Verma Committee**, which was constituted to re-look the criminal laws in the country and recommend changes.
- The 2013 Act, which came into effect on April 2, 2013, **increased jail terms** in most sexual assault cases and also **provided for the death penalty** in rape cases that cause death of the victim or leaves her in a vegetative state.
- It also **created new offences**, such as use of criminal force on a woman with intent to disrobe, voyeurism and stalking.

- The **punishment for gang rape was increased to 20 years to life imprisonment** from the earlier 10 years to life imprisonment.
- Earlier, there was no specific provision in law for offences such as use of unwelcome physical contact, words or gestures, demand, or request for sexual favors, showing pornography against the will of a woman or making sexual remarks. But the 2013 Act clearly defined these offences and allocated punishment.
- Similarly, **stalking** was made punishable with up to three years in jail. The offence of acid attack was increased to 10 years of imprisonment.

WHAT ABOUT OFFENCES AGAINST MINORS?

- In 2018, an eight-year-old girl in Rasana village near Kathua in Jammu and Kashmir was abducted, raped, and murdered by a group of men. The news of the shocking act led to nationwide protests and calls for harsher punishment.
- This led to the passing of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018 which for the first time put death penalty as a possible punishment for rape of a girl under 12 years; the minimum punishment is 20 years in jail.
- Another new section was also inserted in the IPC to specifically deal with rape on a girl below 16 years. The provision made the offence punishable with minimum imprisonment of 20 years which may extend to imprisonment for life.
- The minimum jail term for rape, which has remained unchanged since the introduction of the IPC in 1860, was increased from seven to 10 years.

CHALLENGES FOR THE DIFFERENTLY ABLED

SOCIAL ISSUE #EMPOWERMENT

PRIMARY SOURCE **mint**

SECONDARY SOURCE **THE HINDU**

About 4-8% of the population in India are differently abled. One in every 10 children is born with or acquires a physical, mental or sensory disability. These translate into 40-90 million children's, which is a substantial number. Only 35.29% of all people living with disabilities have access to schools.

SOCIETY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Despite improvement in the health care system in the country, the situation of differently abled children remains deplorable, particularly in rural areas and among the lower socio-economic population. Differently abled children in India are subject to multiple deprivations and limited opportunities in several dimensions of their lives. Some of these include, not being enrolled to schools, lower employment rates, limited awareness of entitlements and services available and lack of social welfare support.

CHALLENGES

- 1. Differently abled children are subjected to ugly forms of discrimination:** Due to stigma associated with disabilities, families become victims of discrimination and human rights abuse. When poverty, physical neglect and social marginalization intersect, the impact on the disabled can be devastating. Differently abled children are kept hidden away at their home, denied basic rights of mobility, education, and employment. They are viewed as dependent persons. Such discrimination in some cases starts from the family members and spreads right up to the policy makers and state authorities. As a result of such discrimination the differently abled children face chronic ill health, socio-economic burden, and destitution. Sometimes it is so difficult to define the marginalization — they are outside the margin or within the community meaning, locked in the rooms, institutionalized, families isolating themselves.
- 2. Denial of disability:** Predominantly in the cases of mental or intellectual disability, the family members are reluctant to accept the disability or refer to it as a physical illness and treatable condition. The pseudo-stigma attached to such disabilities, makes them hide the fact of having a disabled or challenged member at home ultimately leading to social isolation and restrictive behaviors. There is a fear that they would be victims of disgrace and indignity and thereby family members lose the status or acceptance they enjoy in the community. This denial becomes a hurdle for early identification and treatment.
- 3. Physical restraints:** Superstitions prevailing in the communities also play a big role in subjecting the people with disabilities to various harmful treatments. The black-magicians and quacks physically hurt people, subject them to food restrictions etc. Claiming to cure the “disability” leading to acquiring disability. Families often lock or chain their children with intellectual disability having behavioral issues, due to helplessness, ignorance and/or under social pressure.
- 4. Social boycott:** Preventing of CWDs participating in any social events. Even the family members of the differently abled often tend to avoid such social gatherings in shame or fear that someone would ask about their family member with disability. Differently abled children's are not exposed to any social gathering, nor does our community recognize the need for children's participation. CWDs are not given opportunities in the areas of education, training, and employment. Under these circumstances it is natural that the CWDs feel rejected or unwanted in the society.
- 5. Denial of property rights:** As per the Indian laws, all kith and kin in the family are eligible to get their share of inherited property, but in reality, persons with disabilities are denied these rights. The siblings take responsibility of providing care and they would enjoy the property meant for the person with disability. Families perceive that CWD are incapable of managing their property, they are denied of their property rights and made dependent on the able-bodied siblings. Worst of all would be when family members ensure the chronic condition of the disability by denying treatment or other aids, so that the siblings enjoy the property.
- 6. Decreased marital life prospects:** In India the elders arrange majority of the marriages. If a family has person with disability, eligible boys and girls finding a prospective spouse is almost next to impossible because of the stigma and the disability being seen as a family illness. There are occasions where they hide the information and after marriage the problems erupts. It is also common a close relative getting pressurized to marry such a person.
- 7. Implications on sexuality of a person with disability:** Sexual identity is a critical component of overall personality development and self-esteem, which matures during adolescence. CWDs are at a particular disadvantage in this regard as well. There is a strong attitude of overprotection toward the disabled child. Parents infantilize disabled children and imply that sex is only for the able-bodied and of no relevance to the disabled. These parental

SOCIETY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

attitudes are transmitted to the child in subtle ways making him/her feel that she/he is inferior and unworthy of love. Parents of CWDs encourage dependence and share the general societal perception of disabled persons as essentially child-like, innocent, and asexual.

8. **Women with disabilities:** Due to differential gender-based role expectations, education is not considered a priority for disabled girls. Dropout rates for disabled girls are higher than for disabled boys. There is an over-representation of disabled boys in education, both in special and mainstream schools. Parents become more protective and restrictive, especially after a disabled girl reaches puberty. Travelling to school is a huge problem, since, besides transport difficulties, the danger of sexual abuse and violation looms large. There is also the reasoning that there's little point investing in a disabled girl's education as they will anyhow never be able to earn. Unfortunately, a girl child with disability is seen as a lifelong burden on the natal family because marriage is not a realistic option. Hence, it is concluded to be economically unsound to invest in her education or vocational training.

WAY FORWARD

There are several unmet challenges, which need to be addressed among disability sector in India.

1. Need for dignified life for children and people with disabilities.
2. Need to remove attitudinal barriers among communities and provide rehabilitation of CWDs.
3. Need to improve infrastructures in mainstream schools to make them disabled friendly and train teachers for optimal support.
4. Need to converge between various departments providing services for CWDs.
5. Need for national harmonization of disability welfare program.
6. Need to give executive powers and necessary resources to the commissioner of disabilities for effective implementation and safeguarding rights of PWD.
7. Need for promoting and monitoring mechanisms for service outreach below district level.
8. Need to improve effective collaborations between Government and NGO to avoid duplications.

9. Need to adopt a top to bottom approach in policy design.
10. Need to improve community participation programs.

AYUSHMAN BHARAT DIGITAL MISSION

#GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

PRIMARY
SOURCE

pib

The Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) aims to develop the backbone necessary to support the integrated digital health infrastructure of the country. It will bridge the existing gap amongst different stakeholders of healthcare ecosystem through digital highways.

SALIENT FEATURE

1. **Health ID for every citizen** that will also work as the citizen's health account, to which personal health records can be linked and viewed with the help of a mobile application.
2. A **Healthcare Professionals Registry (HPR)** and **Healthcare Facilities Registries (HFR)** that will act as a repository of all healthcare providers across both modern and traditional systems of medicine. This will ensure ease of doing business for doctors/hospitals and healthcare service providers.
3. **Digital health records:** A PHR is an electronic record of health-related information on an individual that conforms to nationally recognized interoperability standards and that can be drawn from multiple sources while being managed, shared, and controlled by the individual. The information contained in the PHR is under control of the individual.
4. **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission Sandbox** will act as a framework for technology and product testing that will help organisations, including private players, intending to be part of National Digital Health Ecosystem become a Health Information Provider or Health Information User or efficiently link with building blocks of Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission.
5. The implementation of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission will be done by National Health Authority (NHA) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. NHA is also responsible for the implementation of Ayushman Bharat.

SOCIETY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

SIGNIFICANCE

1. Create interoperability within digital health ecosystem, similar to the role played by the Unified Payments Interface in revolutionising payments.
2. Citizens will get to access healthcare facilities at a click.
3. Improve the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of health service delivery.
4. Provide choice to individuals to access both public and private health services, facilitate compliance with guidelines and protocols and ensure transparency in pricing.
5. Health care professionals will have better access to patient's medical records.

NATIONAL SCHEME FOR PM POSHAN IN SCHOOLS

#GOVERNMENT SCHEMES



The Mid Day Meal Scheme has been renamed and restructured as National Scheme for PM Poshan in Schools. Mid-Day Meal Scheme is a centrally sponsored scheme which aims to provide one hot cooked meal in Government and Government aided schools to children studying in Classes I-VIII. Currently, the scheme covers 11.8 crore children studying in 11.20 lakh schools across the country.

CHANGES INTRODUCED IN THE SCHEME

1. Students studying in pre-primary or Bal Vatikas of Government and Government aided primary schools will be covered.

2. Concept of Tithibhojan will be encouraged. TithiBhojan is a community participation program in which people provide special food to children on special occasions/festivals.
3. School Nutrition Gardens in schools will be promoted to give children first-hand experience with nature and gardening. The harvest of these gardens is used in the scheme providing additional micro-nutrients. School Nutrition Gardens have already been developed in more than 3 lakh schools.
4. Social Audit of the scheme has been made mandatory in all districts.
5. Special provision is made for providing supplementary nutrition items to children in aspirational districts and districts with high prevalence of Anaemia.
6. Cooking competitions will be encouraged from village level to national level to promote ethnic cuisine and innovative menus based on locally available ingredients and villages.
7. Vocal for local for Aatmanirbhar Bharat: Involvement of Farmers Producer Organisations (FPO) and Women Self Help Groups in implementation of the scheme will be encouraged. Use of locally grown traditional food items for a fillip to local economic growth will be encouraged.
8. Field visits for progress monitoring and inspections will be facilitated for students of eminent universities, trained teachers of regional institutes of educations and district institutes of education and training (DIET).

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

MCQS

Q.1) Consider the following statements about National Scheme for PM Poshan:

1. Under the school, mid-day meals will be provided to students from Class I to Class VIII only.

2. The scheme is operated by the Ministry of Education. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only

SOCIETY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

- (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.2) Consider the following statements about Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission:

1. The scheme is being implemented by the National Health Authority.
2. Under the scheme, unique Health ID is awarded to every citizen.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.3) Consider the following statements:

1. There is no capital punishment for Rape in India.
2. Rape laws in India are gender neutral.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.4) Consider the following statements about Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019:

1. Gender identity once issued to an individual cannot be changed under the Act.
2. District Magistrate is the authority to issue certificate of identity as transgender person.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.5) Consider the following statements:

1. No woman judge ever has become Chief Justice of India.
2. There is no reservation for SC or ST communities in High Courts and Supreme Courts.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

DESCRIPTIVE QUESTION

- Q1.** The assumption that a 'natural' affinity for housework is rooted in the essential nature of women is unfair and unjust and it deprives women of equal opportunities as men. Critically analyse.
- Q2.** An increased presence of women on the bench would definitely expand the jurisprudence to be more inclusive, equal, and just. Throw light on the statement with respect to the need of more women judges in the Indian Courts.
- Q3.** What is gender self-identification? What is the process of gender declaration followed for transgender persons in India?
- Q4.** Despite implementation of various laws with respect to rape and sexual crimes, such crimes are still wide spread. Explain by giving reasons.
- Q5.** What are the common challenges faced by differently abled in India? Highlight the collaborative role of state and non-state actors in extending support and empowerment to differently abled.

Answers: 1-b, 2-b, 3-d, 4-b, 5-c

GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT, BIODIVERSITY & DISASTER MANAGEMENT

GS PAPER (PRELIMS) AND GS PAPER I & III (MAIN)

MARINE PROTECTED AREAS IN ANTARCTIC

#CONSERVATION #BIODIVERSITY

PRIMARY
SOURCE | pib

India has supported the proposal of European Union for creation of two marine protected areas (MPAs) in the Antarctic for protecting the Antarctic environment.

The two proposed Marine Protected areas are:

1. East Antarctic
2. Weddell Sea

ABOUT MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

A Marine Protected Area is a marine area that provides protection for all or part of the natural resources it contains. Within an MPA certain activities are limited, or entirely prohibited, to meet specific conservation, habitat protection, ecosystem monitoring or fisheries management objectives.

MPAs do not necessarily exclude fishing, research or other human activities.

Already two MPAs have been agreed by CCAMLR members:

1. South Orkney Islands (World's first international MPA)
2. Ross Sea

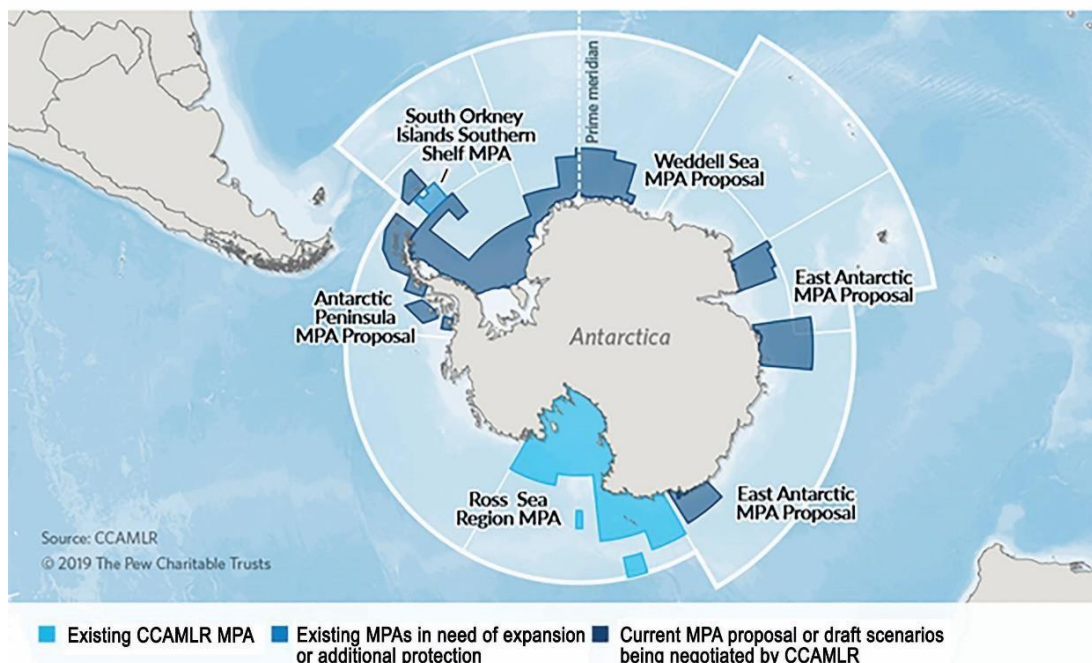
ABOUT COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ANTARCTIC MARINE LIVING RESOURCES (CCAMLR)

- The CCAMLR was established by international convention in 1982 with the objective of conserving Antarctic marine life. This was in response to increasing commercial interest in Antarctic krill resources, a keystone component of the Antarctic ecosystem and a history of over-exploitation of several other marine resources in the Southern Ocean.
- CCAMLR practices an ecosystem-based management approach. This does not exclude harvesting as long as such harvesting is carried out in a sustainable manner and takes account of the effects of fishing on other components of the ecosystem.
- Presently, the body has 26 members (25 countries and EU). India is a member of the organisation.
- CCAMLR is a key international instrument part of the Antarctic Treaty System that as a whole for 60 years has ensured peace, freedom of science and protection of the environment in the Antarctic region. The system consists of the Antarctic Treaty and its Environmental Protocol, the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels and the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Seals in addition to CCAMLR.
- The CCAMLR Secretariat is located in Hobart, Australia.

GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT, BIODIVERSITY & DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Southern Ocean Regions in Need of Protection

A network of MPAs would allow for conservation of distinct areas, each representing unique ecosystems



NET-ZERO EMISSION

#CLIMATE CHANGE #SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

PRIMARY SOURCE

World Resources Institute

SECONDARY SOURCE

DownToEarth

Special Representative for Climate Action, unveiled to India, in September, to launch the **U.S.-India Climate Action and Finance Mobilization Dialogue** and to engage with international counterparts on bilateral and multilateral efforts to raise climate ambition **ahead of the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26)** to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which will be held in Glasgow, United Kingdom later this year.

India has so far abstained from committing to a net zero goal but is on a climate pathway that is compatible with keeping global temperatures to below 2 degree Celsius by the end of the century.

ABOUT NET-ZERO EMISSIONS

- Net-zero emissions will be achieved when all GHG emissions released by humans are counterbalanced by removing GHGs from the atmosphere in a process known as carbon removal.
- First and foremost, human-caused emissions (such as those from fossil-fuelled vehicles and factories) should be reduced as close to zero as possible.

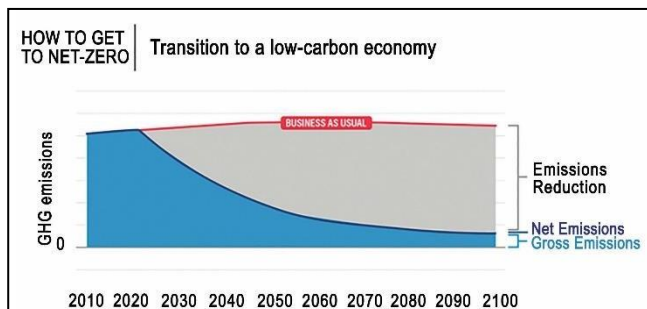
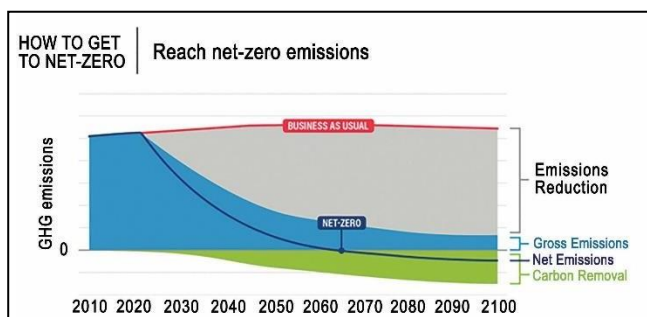
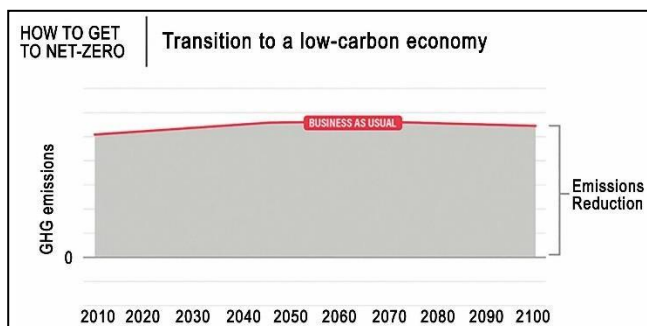
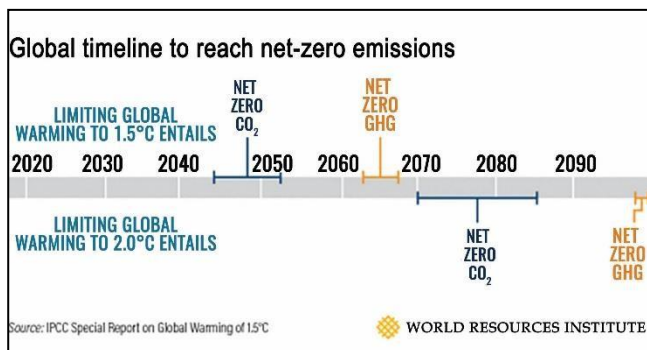
- Any remaining GHGs should then be balanced with an equivalent amount of carbon removal, which can happen through restoring forests or using direct air capture and storage (DACs) technology etc. Reaching net-zero emissions is akin to achieving "climate neutrality".

WHEN DOES THE WORLD NEED TO REACH NET-ZERO EMISSIONS?

- Under the Paris Agreement, countries agreed to limit warming well below 2 degrees, ideally to 1.5 degrees C. Global climate impacts that are already unfolding under today's 1.1 degrees C of warming — from melting ice to devastating heat waves and more intense storms — show the urgency of minimizing temperature increase.
- In scenarios limiting warming to 1.5 degrees C, carbon dioxide (CO2) needs to reach net-zero between 2044 and 2052, and total GHG emissions must reach net-zero between 2063 and 2068. Reaching net zero earlier in the range avoids a risk of temporarily overshooting 1.5 degrees C. Reaching the top of the range almost guarantees surpassing 1.5 degrees C for some time before it eventually drops down.
- In scenarios limiting warming to 2 degrees C, CO2 needs to reach net zero by 2070 (for a 66% likelihood of limiting warming to 2 degrees C) to 2085 (with a 50-

GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT, BIODIVERSITY & DISASTER MANAGEMENT

66% likelihood). Total GHG emissions must reach net-zero by the end of the century or beyond.



The Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), finds that if the world reaches net-zero emissions by 2040, the chance of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees C is considerably higher. The sooner emissions peak, and the lower they are at that point, the more realistic achieving net zero becomes. This would also create less reliance on carbon removal in the second half of the century.

This does not suggest that all countries need to reach net-zero emissions at the same time. The chances of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees C, however, depend significantly on how soon the highest emitters reach net-zero emissions. Equity-related considerations — including responsibility for past emissions, equality in per-capita emissions and capacity to act — also suggest earlier dates for wealthier, higher-emitting countries.

Importantly, the time frame for reaching net-zero emissions is different for CO₂ alone versus for CO₂ plus other GHGs like methane, nitrous oxide and fluorinated gases. For non-CO₂ emissions, the net zero date is later because models suggest that some of these emissions — such as methane from agricultural sources — are more difficult to phase out. However, these potent but short-lived gases will drive temperatures higher in the near-term, potentially pushing temperature change past the 1.5 degrees C threshold much earlier.

Because of this, it's important for countries to specify whether their net-zero targets cover CO₂ only or all GHGs. A comprehensive net-zero emissions target would include all GHGs, ensuring that non-CO₂ gases are also reduced.

POLICY FOR ACHIEVING NET-ZERO EMISSIONS

10 Key Solutions Needed to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- 1. PHASE OUT coal plants**
- 2. INVEST in clean energy & efficiency**
- 3. RETROFIT buildings**
- 4. DECARBONIZE cement, steel & plastics**
- 5. SHIFT to electric vehicles**
- 6. INCREASE public transport**
- 7. DECARBONIZE aviation and shipping**
- 8. HALT deforestation & RESTORE degraded lands**
- 9. REDUCE food loss and waste**
- 10. EAT more plants & less meat**

Source: WRI.

WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

Policy, technology and behaviour need to shift across the board. For example, in pathways to 1.5 degrees C, renewables are projected to supply 70-85% of electricity by 2050. Energy efficiency and fuel-switching measures are critical for transportation. Improving the efficiency of

GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT, BIODIVERSITY & DISASTER MANAGEMENT

food production, changing dietary choices, halting deforestation, restoring degraded lands and reducing food loss and waste also have significant potential to reduce emissions.

It is critical that the structural and economic transition necessary to limit warming to 1.5 degrees C is approached in a just manner, especially for workers tied to high-carbon industries. **The good news is that most of the necessary technologies are available and increasingly cost-competitive with high-carbon alternatives.** Solar and wind now provide the cheapest power available for 67% of the world. Markets are waking up to these opportunities and to the risks of a high-carbon economy, and shifting accordingly.

Investments in carbon removal are also necessary. The different pathways assessed by the IPCC to achieve 1.5 degrees C all rely on carbon removal to some extent. Removing CO2 from the atmosphere will compensate for emissions from sectors in which reaching net-zero emissions is more difficult, such as aviation. Carbon removal can be achieved by several means, including through land-based approaches and technological approaches.

IS THE WORLD ON TRACK TO REACH NET-ZERO EMISSIONS?

Despite the benefits of climate action, progress is happening far too slowly for the world to reach net-zero by mid-century or meet emissions reductions necessary by 2030.

CLIMATE ACTION MUST PROGRESS FAR FASTER TO KEEP 1.5C WITHIN REACH
 To help halve emissions by 2030, the world needs to:

- Ramp up renewables **6x FASTER**
- Transition to electric vehicles **22x FASTER**
- Increase tree cover **5x FASTER**
- Phase out coal power **5x FASTER**
- Increase use of low-carbon fuels **8x FASTER**
- Electrify industry **1.5x FASTER**

To learn more, read the State of Climate Action report

climatenetworks WORLD INTELLIGENCE | WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

To avoid the worst climate impacts, global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions will need to drop by half by 2030 and reach net-zero around mid-century.

Recognizing this urgency, **a rapidly growing number of national governments, local government and business leaders are making commitments to reach net-zero emissions within their jurisdictions or businesses.** To date, over fifty countries have communicated such "net-zero targets," including the world's largest emitters (China and the United States). On top of that, hundreds more regions, cities and businesses have set targets of their own.

These numbers are climbing quickly, particularly because the U.N. Secretary General asked countries to come forward with net-zero targets. The U.N. High Level Climate Champions' Race to Zero campaign also calls on regions, cities, businesses, investors and civil society to submit plans to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 in

advance of the United Nations climate negotiations (COP 26) in Glasgow in November 2021.

INDIA'S POLICY TO LOWER CARBON EMISSIONS

India is working to reduce its emissions, aligned with the goal of less than 2°C global temperature rise, seen in its headline pledge to cut the emissions intensity of GDP by 33%-35% by 2030 over the 2005 level. But it has not favoured a binding commitment towards carbon neutrality. It is also not aligned with the more ambitious goal of 1.5°C temperature rise. Among the contentious issues it faces is heavy reliance on coal.

Coal accounts for close to 70% of electricity generation in India. Cutting greenhouse gases which heat the atmosphere and contribute to climate change involves shifting power production away from coal, greater adoption of renewables, and transforming mobility through electric vehicles. India is praised by some for its

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renewables target: scaling up power from renewables such as solar and wind to 450 GW by 2030.

In recent comments, after the discussions with Mr. Kerry, Union Environment Minister said net zero was not the only goal of national policy. Moreover, domestic political opinion favours room for some growth in CO₂ emissions before peaking. UNFCCC provides for common, but differentiated, responsibilities of nations, favouring countries like India. Some politicians support a net zero target as it can put India on a green development trajectory, attracting investment in innovative technologies.

There is a debate whether to set a target for net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 for India. Doing so would mean an overhaul of a coal-reliant energy sector, transport, heavy industry and even the nation's sluggish bureaucracy.

CHALLENGES TO INDIA'S NET ZERO EMISSIONS

The problem with India is that the target of Net Zero emissions must be achieved while the world's third- biggest emitter also meets the aspirations of 1.4 billion people for faster economic development, which will only happen with an accelerated pace of industrialization and energy demand.

- **Current oil mix is Carbon intensive:**
 - Just three fuels meet about 80% of India's energy demand: coal, oil and solid biomass such as fuelwood, animal waste and charcoal. Changing that mix will require more than simply adding more renewables.
 - Oil and petroleum are used to power not only cars, trucks and railways, but also industrial machinery and even the pumps which deliver water for India's agricultural sector. Tens of millions of homes still rely on cheap biomass fuels for cooking, and subsidies to switch them to cleaner liquefied petroleum gas cylinders have been trimmed.
 - Freight vehicles also pose a challenge, and account for about 45% of the country's road transport emissions. It will be really difficult for India to replace oil as transportation fuel.
- **Usage of Coal is expected to increase:** Even if India stops building new power plants. That's because existing coal power plants are running far below capacity, which the country will look to maximize.

- **Rapid Energy Growth:** India's energy use doubled since 2000 as hundreds of millions of citizens added an electrical connection, and the nation's consumption is forecast to accelerate sharply. It'll be driven both by industry and households, which are adding appliances including air conditioners, refrigerators and space heaters.
- **Slow Adoption of e-Vehicles:** The global shift to electric vehicles is happening far more slowly in India, with the costs of battery powered-models too high, access to charging infrastructure limited and concerns over the reliability of power grids. By 2040, only about a third of new passenger cars sold will be battery-powered, compared with about 70% in China and Germany.
- **Energy needs of Industries:** As a still-industrializing economy, India's emissions from making steel, cement, chemicals and other carbon-intensive materials is set to rise regardless of a climate push. But the country could make a dent in those emissions by deploying more energy-efficient measures, switching to cleaner fuels and embracing carbon- capture technology.

One solution could be to set up a climate change commission, similar to bodies established in the U.K. and New Zealand, to monitor progress and help devise mechanisms to achieve long-term emission reductions. The U.K.'s Climate Change Committee has been credited with pushing the government to set the most ambitious goal among G-20 nations.

WAY FORWARD

- **Increasing incentives for electrification of Transport systems:** Although the sales of electric vehicles have gone up in past two years, they will still account for less than a per cent of new vehicle sales. The government can:
 - Establish a zero emission vehicles (ZEV) credit programme. This requires manufacturers of vehicles to ensure that either a certain fraction of their sales are ZEVs or that they purchase ZEV credits from manufacturers who have sold more ZEVs than required by the credit programme.

GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT, BIODIVERSITY & DISASTER MANAGEMENT

- The second is by putting in place a fuel efficiency/CO₂ emission standard stringent enough that it can best be met by making and selling ZEVs.
- Low carbon pathways for sustainable development should be explored.
- Focus should be mitigating the impact of climate change on the most vulnerable sections of society.
- Incentives to industries for cleaner fuels should be increased.
- At the international level, India should call for developed countries for negative net emissions even as India pushes towards the goals of net zero emissions.

ONE SUN ONE WORLD ONE GRID (OSOWOG)

#RENEWABLE ENERGY #SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT

PRIMARY
SOURCE

pib

OSOWOG is India's initiative to build a global ecosystem of interconnected renewable energy resources. The blueprint for the OSOWOG will be developed under the World Bank's technical assistance program. OSOWOG will be implemented to accelerate the deployment of grid connected rooftop solar installations.

OSOWOG is planned to be completed in three phases:

- Phase I: Will entail interconnectivity within the Asian continent
- Phase II: Will add Africa to the grid.
- Phase III: Internationalise the project.

BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAM

- Global project which aims to power the world with clean energy.
- Tackle access to energy for underserved people and communities. For ex. It will help people access to clean drinking water, access to clean cooking fuel and bring lighting to millions of homes.
- Exponential leap towards clean energy transition.
- It envisions transfer of surplus renewable electricity at near-zero cost. Thus, enable access to affordable solar energy.

- Will help countries like Singapore and Bangladesh which have very high population density to have access to renewable energy.
- Address the issue of intermittency of solar power. OSOWOG will employ battery storage to make round the clock solar energy dispatches at greatly cheaper rates.

ISSUES WITH THE PROJECT

- **Geopolitics:** The project is seen as an Indian endeavour for world leadership. The mechanism of cost-sharing will be challenging, given the varied priorities of participating countries depending on their socio-economic orders.
- **Globalisation vs de-globalisation:** The coronavirus pandemic has raised questions on the concept of globalisation. Dealing with different governments and market forces will be a dreadful experience for the developers that can be easily extrapolated from the experience of the renewable energy (RE) developers in India.
- **High transmission cost and large capital demand for the project:** Before thinking of a unified grid, let's think about point to point. The value of time-shifting could come from a place with large, cheap land, such as an enormous solar farm in North Africa for Europe. But the transmission costs will usually outweigh the benefits of land and solar radiation. Supply of energy through this grid, in a time zone with a six-hour difference will require thousands of kilometres of transmission of the electricity, which will add up a huge cost. A single 1,100 kilovolt high voltage direct current can't even go so far, and costs will be further compounded with high costs of capital. This is before we consider grid management and geopolitical issues for a truly integrated grid," he adds.
- **Centralised vs distributed generation:** There is a difference in voltage, frequency and specifications of the grid in most regions. Maintaining grid stability with just renewable generation would be technically difficult. OSOWOG does not take into account the overlaps with the solar generation across regions where transmission lines are passing through, which would mean that the actual transmission capacity would need to be much higher and thus have lower utilisation or there would be significant solar

GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT, BIODIVERSITY & DISASTER MANAGEMENT

curtailment. Aggregate technical and commercial losses in India are close to 20 per cent. Therefore, the distributed generation can be cheaper and directly serve the people in the hinterlands.

ACTION PLANS TO DEAL WITH STUBBLE BURNING

#POLLUTION #SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



To abate pollution due to stubble burning the **Commission for Air Quality in NCR** informed that Punjab, NCR states have prepared detailed action plans for the prevention and control of stubble burning. The plans have been formulated based on the framework made by CAQM and directions have been issued for strict implementation of the action plans.

The Commission for Air Quality in NCR has directed State Governments of Punjab, NCR States and GNCTD for implementation of the action, based on following components of the framework: -

- **In-situ Crop Residue Management**
 - Supported by CRM Scheme of Ministry of Agriculture
- **Recently developed microbial spray (IARI)**
 - The IARI has developed a microbial spray that can cause the decomposition of the harvested stubble. The intervention is being piloted this year and following trials it will be scaled up in 2021.
- **Ex-situ Crop Residue Management**
 - Prohibition of Stubble/Crop Residue Burning.
 - Effective monitoring/enforcement.
 - Plans / Schemes to reduce the generation of paddy straw.
 - IEC activities for the Plan of Action
 - Promoting utilization of Paddy Straw Pellets/Briquettes for Co-firing in Thermal Power Plants
- **Promotion of use of Bio-Decomposer technology** developed by IARI.

- **Abatement of dust from Roads / open areas** through a "Dust Control and Management Cell".
 - Activities identified for effective road dust management include optimum utilization of mechanized means of sweeping of roads,
 - Scientific disposal of dust collected in designated sites/landfills.
 - Sprinkling of dust suppressants and water on roads and open areas.
 - Proper maintenance of roads, paving/Greening of Non-paved road sides, greening of central verges.
 - Preference to cemented roads over bituminous roads especially in Industrial areas.
 - Monitoring and Compliance of dust control measures and plantation of Trees/Greening on a large scale.
- **Installation of Anti-smog guns**
- **For mitigating the Industrial Pollution**
 - Shifting of industries to PNG/cleaner fuels is a priority.
 - With a view to minimize coal in industries, Government of Haryana, UP and Rajasthan have been advised to prepare action plan for shifting of industries to cleaner fuels in the NCR districts, where gas infrastructure is already available.
 - Action plan is also being pursued for bringing in PNG infrastructure to those industrial areas in NCR districts where gas is not available and strict vigil on use of unapproved fuels in NCR by various enforcement agencies are some of the important measures.
- **Vehicular Pollution** is another major source of Air Pollution and the Commission has issued advisory for "Mandating procurement of zero emission and e-vehicles" to give a further push to clean technologies in transport sector and a gradual shift towards zero emission vehicles/ e-mobility and progress reviewed.

GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT, BIODIVERSITY & DISASTER MANAGEMENT

CLIMATE INDICATORS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: DEMONSTRATING THE INTERCONNECTIONS

#REPORT #CLIMATE CHANGE

PRIMARY SOURCE

World Meteorological Organization

It is a report published by World Meteorological Organisation.

SALIENT FEATURES

- The report posits that if the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are to be achieved by the 2030 target, the risks posed by human-induced climate change must be understood and addressed.
- The report demonstrates that connections between the global climate and the SDGs, go far beyond SDG 13 for climate action.
- It also champions the need for greater international collaboration, which is essential for achieving the SDGs, and for limiting global warming to less than 2 °C or even 1.5 °C by the end of this century
- The report is accompanied by a story map. It highlights seven climate indicators whose impacts span the SDGs:
 - Carbon dioxide concentration
 - Temperature
 - Ocean acidification
 - Ocean heat content
 - Sea-ice extent
 - Glacier mass balance
 - Sea-level rise.
- The interconnection between SDGs and Climate change is explicit as increasing temperatures will result in global and regional changes, leading to shifts in rainfall patterns and agricultural seasons. The intensification of El Niño events is also generating more droughts and floods.

BLUE FLAG CERTIFICATION

#COASTAL #CONSERVATION

PRIMARY SOURCE

pib

Two more beaches from India have been accorded Blue Flag Certification. Two beaches that received the certification in 2021 are Kovalam in Tamil Nadu and Eden in Puducherry.

ABOUT BLUE FLAG CERTIFICATION

Beaches with Blue Flag certification are considered as the cleanest beaches across the world. It is one of the world's most recognised **voluntary eco-labels that are awarded to beaches, marinas, as well as sustainable boating tourism operators**. Blue flag certification programme was launched in 1985 in France.

CRITERIA FOR BLUE FLAG CERTIFICATION

To certify a beach with blue flag certification, a series of stringent environmental, educational, accessibility & safety criteria is checked. There are 33 such criteria that are required to be met in a bid to qualify for a Blue Flag certification. Criteria include water meeting certain quality standards, being disabled- friendly, having waste disposal facilities, having first aid equipment etc. Some of these criteria are voluntary and some are compulsory.

WHO GIVES THIS CERTIFICATION?

The Blue Flag Certification Programme for beaches and marinas is run by the international, non-governmental & non-profit organisation called "**Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE)**".

LIST OF BEACHES WITH BLUE FLAG CERTIFICATION

IN INDIA

1. Kovalam Beach in Tamil Nadu
2. Eden Beach in Puducherry
3. Shivrajpur Beach in Gujarat
4. Ghogha Beach in Diu
5. Kasarkod Beach in Kerala
6. Rushikonda Beach in Andhra Pradesh
7. Golden Beach in Odisha
8. Radhanagar Beach in Andaman & Nicobar Islands
9. Kappad Beach in Kerala
10. Padubidri Beach in Karnataka.

GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT, BIODIVERSITY & DISASTER MANAGEMENT

PRANA PORTAL

#POLLUTION

PRIMARY SOURCE

THE HINDU

PRANA Portal will be used to track the progress of the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) in order to comply with India's commitment to ensure clean air and blue skies to everybody.

PRANA portal will help in tracking physical and financial status of city air action plan implementation. It will also disseminate information on air quality to the public.

This portal was launched on the occasion of 'International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies' in non- attainment cities (NAC).

Non-attainment cities are those cities that failed to meet the National air quality standards in a five-year period. With India's efforts, 86 cities showed a better air quality in 2019 and it increased to 104 cities in 2020.

NCAP TARGETS

Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) seeks to achieve 20-30 percent reduction in particulate matter (PM10 as well as PM2.5) concentrations in India by 2024 under the program.

In order to achieve the target, India has prepared and is implementing city-specific action plans to improve air quality in 132 NACs/Million Plus Cities.

It targets city-specific air polluting sources like soil & road dust, vehicles, MSW burning, domestic fuel, construction material and industries.

STROPHODUS JAISALMERENSIS

#BIODIVERSITY

PRIMARY SOURCE

THE HINDU

Researchers from the Geological Survey of India and the Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee have recently discovered a new extinct species of hybodont shark from the Jaisalmer Basin of Rajasthan.

ABOUT HYBODONT SHARKS

Hybodont Sharks dominated both marine and fluvial environments during the Triassic and early Jurassic times.

- Strophodus jaisalmerensis is a new species of Hybodont Shark (currently extinct) belonging to the Jurassic age.
- The recent discovery is the first record of Strophodus genus from the Indian subcontinent.
- It is speculated that hybodont sharks could have grown about 2-3 metres long.
- They became extinct about 65 million years ago, probably due to competition from other fishes including sharks.

DEEPOPOR BEEL WETLAND

#BIODIVERSITY #WETLANDS

PRIMARY SOURCE

THE HINDU

According to environmentalists the proposed realignment of a railway track will be catastrophic for ecology of Rani-Garbhanga Reserve Forest in Assam.

ABOUT DEEPOPOR BEEL

- Deepor Beel is one of the largest freshwater lakes in Assam and the State's only Ramsar Site, besides being been designated as an Important Bird Area by Birdlife International.
- The Rani and Garbhanga Reserved Forests are adjacent to the wetland, which altogether stands as a complete ecosystem providing environmental solutions, food security and different types of biodiversity to the city.
- The forest serves as an abode to the Northeastern region's Asiatic elephant which is an endangered species.
- The wetland receives the majority of its water content which from the River Basistha and the River Kalmani during the monsoons. It then flows down to the Brahmaputra, making Brahmaputra the natural storm runoff area for the city of Guwahati.
- Hoolock Gibbons (EN), the only ape species in Indian subcontinent is also found here.

RAMSAR CONVENTION

- The Convention came in to force in 1975.
- The Convention's mission is "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable

GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT, BIODIVERSITY & DISASTER MANAGEMENT

development throughout the world”.

THREE PILLARS OF THE CONVENTION

- Work towards the wise use of all their wetlands.
- Designate suitable wetlands for the list of Wetlands of International Importance (the “Ramsar List”) and ensure their effective management.
- Cooperate internationally on transboundary wetlands, shared wetland systems and shared species.
- India has 46 Ramsar Sites which are the Wetlands of International importance.

MONTREUX RECORD

- It is maintained as part of the Ramsar List.
- Montreux Record is a register of wetland sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or are likely to occur as a result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference.
- Two wetlands of India are in Montreux Record: Keoladeo National Park (Rajasthan) and Loktak Lake (Manipur). Chilika lake (Odisha) was placed in the record but was later removed from it.

BHITARKANIKA NATIONAL PARK

#WILDLIFE #BIODIVERSITY



Environmentalists recently expressed concern over the massive diversion of fresh water from the Brahmani river basin, which could pose a grave threat to the famous mangrove vegetation in Odisha.

ABOUT BHITARKANIKA NATIONAL PARK

- It has the second-largest mangrove forest in India and is a Ramsar site located in Odisha.
- Bhitarkanika is located in the estuary of Brahmani, Baitarani, Dhamra, and Mahanadi River systems.
- It is one of Odisha’s finest biodiversity hotspots and is famous for its mangroves, migratory birds, turtles, estuarine crocodiles, and countless creeks.
- It is said to house 70% of the country’s estuarine or saltwater crocodiles.

- It includes at present three protected areas namely Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary, Bhitarkanika National Park and the Gahirmatha Marine Wildlife Sanctuary.

BRAHMANI RIVER

- It is a river in north-eastern Odisha state, eastern India. Formed by the confluence of the Sankh and South Koel rivers in southern Bihar state, the Brahmani flows for 300 miles.
- It winds generally south-southeast past Bonaigarh and Talcher and then turns east to join northern branches of the Mahanadi River, which then empties into the Bay of Bengal at **Palmyras Point**.
- It is one of the few rivers that cut across the Eastern Ghats, and it has formed a **minor gorge at Rengali**, where a dam has been built.

AIR QUALITY ‘IMPROVED’ IN 104 CITIES IN 2020

#POLLUTION



Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, while speaking at the International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies, informed that the number of cities with improved air quality had increased to 104 in 2020 from 86 in 2018.

- Cities with improved air quality had increased to 104 in 2020 from 86 in 2018.
- 23 cities marking a “decreasing trend”, 239 cities a “fluctuating trend” & 38 cities an “increasing trend” in PM 10 levels.
- In the case of PM2.5 levels, 11 cities showed decreasing trend, 79 cities a fluctuating trend and 9 cities an increasing trend when pollution levels from 2015-2019 were averaged.

REASONS FOR IMPROVED AIR QUALITY

- Covid-19 related lockdown had resulted in a “temporary improvement” of air quality in many cities due to closure of industries, fewer vehicles plying, drop-in construction activities and absence of human activities.
- Increased consciousness among people of pollution issues.
- Introduction of BS VI fuels across the country.

GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT, BIODIVERSITY & DISASTER MANAGEMENT

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

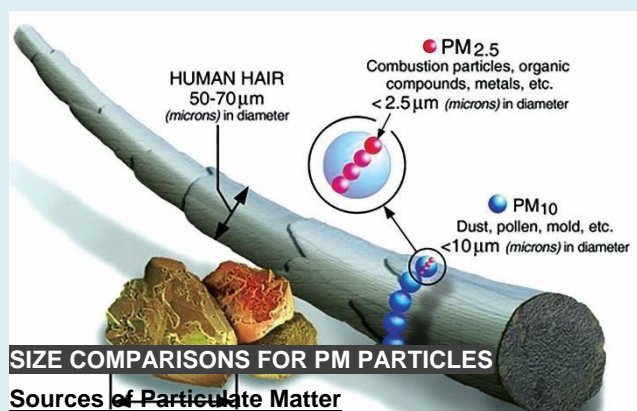
- The Centre via the National Clean Air Programme has set itself a target of reducing key air pollutants PM10 and PM2.5 by 20-30% by 2024 in 122 cities.
- PRANA portal for tracking of physical as well as financial status of city air action plan implementation for 132 cities has been launched.
- The first functional Smog Tower of India, situated at Anand Vihar in New Delhi. A smog tower is designed as a large/medium scale air purifier to reduce pollution, usually by forcing the air through filters.
- SAFAR is an indigenous technological initiative by the MoES for India's urban centres that combines the best of weather and air pollution research to generate air quality forecast leading to preventive action for better health.

PARTICULATE MATTER

- PM stands for particulate matter (also called particle pollution): the term for a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets found in the air. Some particles, such as dust, dirt, soot, or smoke, are large or dark enough to be seen with the naked eye

PARTICLE POLLUTION INCLUDES

- PM10: inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 10 micrometres and smaller.
- PM2.5: fine inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 2.5 micrometres and smaller.



- These particles come in many sizes and shapes and can be made up of hundreds of different chemicals.
- Some are emitted directly from a source, such as

construction sites, unpaved roads, fields, smokestacks or fires.

- Most particles form in the atmosphere as a result of complex reactions of chemicals such as sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, which are pollutants emitted from power plants, industries and automobiles.

ORIENTAL WHITE-BACKED VULTURES

#WILDLIFE #BIODIVERSITY

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

Eight critically endangered Oriental white-backed vultures were released into the wild for the first time in India from the Jatayu Conservation and Breeding Centre (JCBC) situated at the Bir Shikargah Wildlife Sanctuary in Shivalik ranges of the Himalayan foothills in Haryana's Pinjore. A year later, they have blended well into the untamed habitat outside the aviary, offering hope to conservationists.

DECLINING VULTURE POLLUTION

- Populations of three species of vultures — the Oriental white-backed vulture, the Long-billed vulture and the Slender-billed vulture — have declined by over 97% since the 1990s, and that of the Oriental white-backed vultures by a drastic 99.9%.
- Uncontrolled veterinary usage of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID), including Aceclofenac, Ketoprofen and Nimesulide, and the illegal use of the banned drug Diclofenac, are toxic to vultures if they feed on carcasses within 72 hours of the drugs' administration to such livestock.

IUCN STATUS VULTURES

- Indian vulture (also known as long-billed Vultures)- Critically Endangered
- Slender-billed vultures- Critically Endangered
- Himalayan Vultures (also known as Himalayan griffon vultures) – Near Threatened
- Oriental white-backed vultures– Critically Endangered

GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT, BIODIVERSITY & DISASTER MANAGEMENT**PRACTICE QUESTIONS****MCQS**

Q.1) Consider the following pairs about Beaches and its locations:

1. Eden Beach: Puducherry
2. Ghogha Beach: Diu
3. Kappad Beach: Karnataka

Which of the above is/are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q.2) Consider the following statements about Marine Protected Areas in Antarctic:

1. There are currently no marine protected areas in Antarctic.
2. Marine protected areas in the Antarctic region are notified by Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.3) Consider the following statements about Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR):

1. India is a member of this organisation.
2. The headquarters of the body is located in New York, at the UN Headquarters.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.4) PRAN Portal is related to, which of the following?

- (a) Monitoring and implementation of National Clean Air Program.
- (b) Monitoring of Poshan Mission.
- (c) Monitoring of illegal narcotics trade
- (d) Monitoring of wildlife crimes

Q.5) Consider the following statements:

1. Jatayu conservation centre: Vultures
2. Jersey Zoo: Pygmy hog
3. Saharan conservation centre: Western Tragopan

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

DESCRIPTIVE QUESTION

Q1. What is net-zero emissions? What are the challenges for India in attaining net-zero emission target?

Q2. What are the advantages and challenges of implementing One Sun One World One Grid project?

Answers: 1-a, 2-b, 3-a, 4-a, 5-b

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

GS PAPER (PRELIMS) & GS PAPER III (MAIN)

HEALTH & BIODIVERSITY

POLLEN CALENDAR

#HEALTH #BIODIVERSITY





PRIMARY SOURCE **pib** SECONDARY SOURCE **The Indian EXPRESS**

The city of Chandigarh now has its first pollen calendar, which may identify possible allergy triggers and offer physicians and allergy patients with a comprehensive understanding of their origins, allowing them to minimise their exposure during high pollen loads.

ABOUT POLLEN CALENDER

- Pollen calendars depict the temporal dynamics of pollen in the air in a certain geographic area.
- In a single image, they provide easily accessible visual data about diverse airborne pollen prevalent throughout the year.
- Pollen pollution is one of the most pressing environmental issues in Indian cities. Pollen have been linked to variety of allergies.

When does allergy season start?

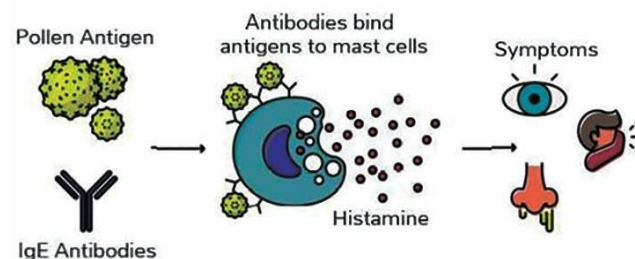
	Tree pollen	Early March
	Grass pollen	May
	Weed pollen	July
	Ragweed pollen	Late August

- Pollen concentrations are directly connected to regionally dispersed vegetation, hence such calendars are location-specific.
- Regional pollen calendars are widely used in Europe, the UK, and the USA to prevent and diagnose allergic rhinitis/hay fever, as well as anticipate the date and intensity of pollen season.

IMPORTANCE OF POLLEN GRAINS

- Pollen grains are male biological entities that serve primarily to fertilise, but when breathed by people, they can put a burden on the respiratory system and trigger allergies.
- Pollen in the air can induce upper respiratory tract and naso-bronchial allergies, resulting in asthma, seasonal rhinitis, and bronchial irritation, among other symptoms.
- In India, roughly 20-30% of the population suffers from allergic rhinitis/hay fever, and approximately 15% develop asthma.
- In humans, pollen is a significant outdoor airborne allergen that causes allergic rhinitis, asthma, and atopic dermatitis.
- Pollen is abundant in trees such as palms, nettle, safeda, white mulberry (shahtoot), congress grass, and pine.

What triggers a pollen allergy?



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

KEY FINDINGS OF POLLEN CALENDER

- Highlights the seasonal variation of important pollen kinds.
- Pollen grains in the air is most prevalent in spring and fall seasons.
- The findings will help people better understand pollen seasons, which will help them avoid pollen allergies.

BENEFITS OF POLLEN CALENDER

- Helps physicians and allergy sufferers identify possible allergy triggers and minimise their exposure during high pollen load seasons.
- Early alerts may be created and communicated to citizens via media channels so that they can wear protective gear during periods when allergy pollen concentrations are high.

WAY TO ADDRESS POLLEN ALLERGIES

1. Scientific tree planning with the help of professionals
2. Focus on growing pollen-free or low-pollen trees and bushes.
3. **Monoecious plants** i.e., plants that have both male and female parts. They do not reproduce by pollen grains. Examples of Monoecious plants are corn, hibiscus, lilies and holly. These plants do not emit pollen and do not cause pollen allergies. These plants should be planted.
4. To create an allergen-free environment, non-allergic or **entomophilous plant species** should be used. Rose, jasmine, salvia, Bougainvillea, Raat Rani, and sunflower are examples of such plants. (Entomophily or insect pollination is a form of pollination whereby pollen of plants, especially but not only of flowering plants, is distributed by insects. These plants do not spread pollen by air).

ENVIRONMENTAL DNA

(e-DNA)

#BIOTECHNOLOGY

PRIMARY SOURCE

THE HINDU

Researchers in ecology are testing a new method that can vastly expand bio-monitoring using eDNA, in rivers to catalogue and count species.

- Biomonitoring is defined as the act of observing and assessing the state of and ongoing changes in

ecosystems, components of biodiversity and landscape, including the types of natural habitats, populations and species.

- Biomonitoring has become an indispensable tool for studying occupational and environmental exposure to chemicals, including persistent organic pollutants (POPs).
- eDNA is isolated from environmental samples, in contrast to genomic DNA that is extracted directly from specimens.
- It originates from cellular material shed by organisms (via skin, excrement, etc.) into aquatic or terrestrial environments that can be sampled and monitored using new molecular methods.

ADVANTAGES OF eDNA

- Collecting eDNA is easy. One 4-ounce water sample can capture remnant DNA from thousands of aquatic species.
- Traditional bio monitoring methods, scientists count individual species and their abundance at just a few sites. eDNA can give an estimation for all of ecosystem.
- eDNA doesn't require killing wildlife for identification.
- It is labour and cost effective. This process requires just a cheap filter, a syringe and vials, and anyone can do it.

TECHBASEDONCRISPR TO CONTROL GROWTH OF MOSQUITOES

#BIOTECHNOLOGY

PRIMARY SOURCE

The Indian EXPRESS

Using advances in Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats (CRISPR)-based genetic engineering, researchers recently developed a system that controls mosquito populations. Mosquitoes infect millions of people each year with illnesses including dengue fever and malaria.

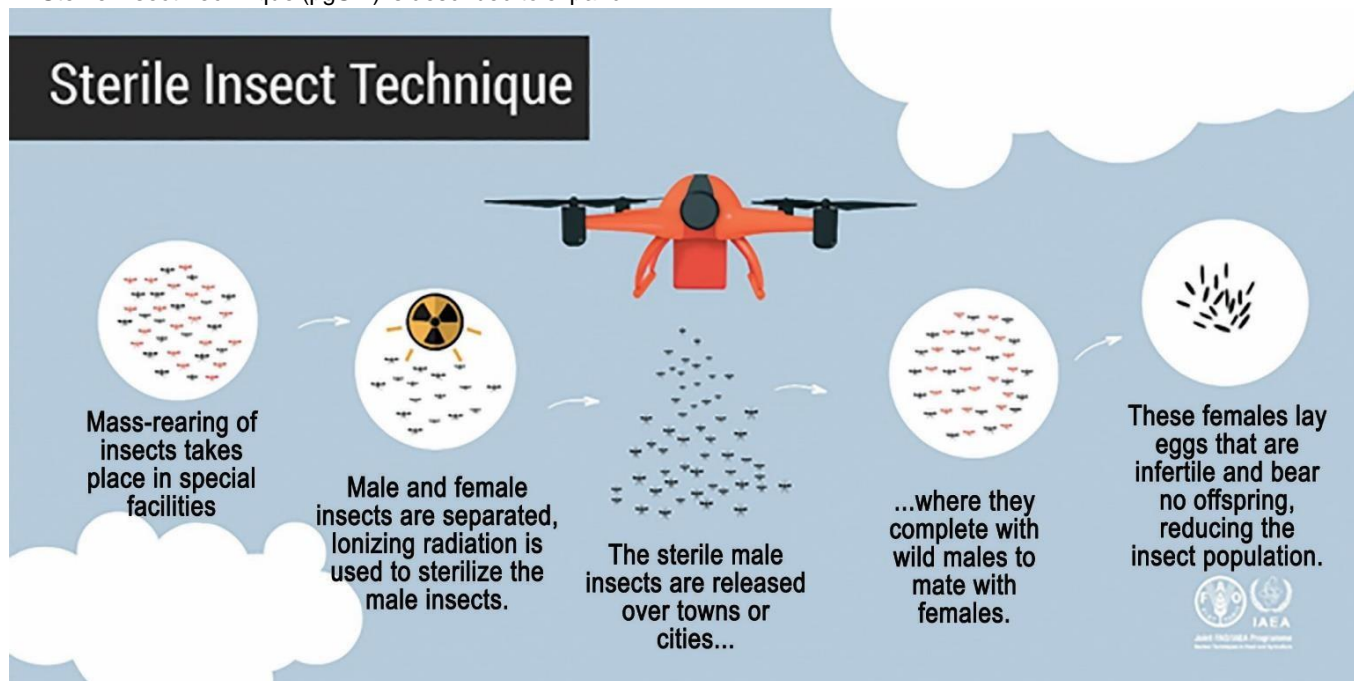
STERILE INSECT TECHNIQUE (SIT)

- SIT is a proven and ecologically friendly method of controlling wild populations.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- A novel CRISPR-based method called precision-guided Sterile Insect Technique (pgSIT) is described to expand

its applicability.



pgSIT

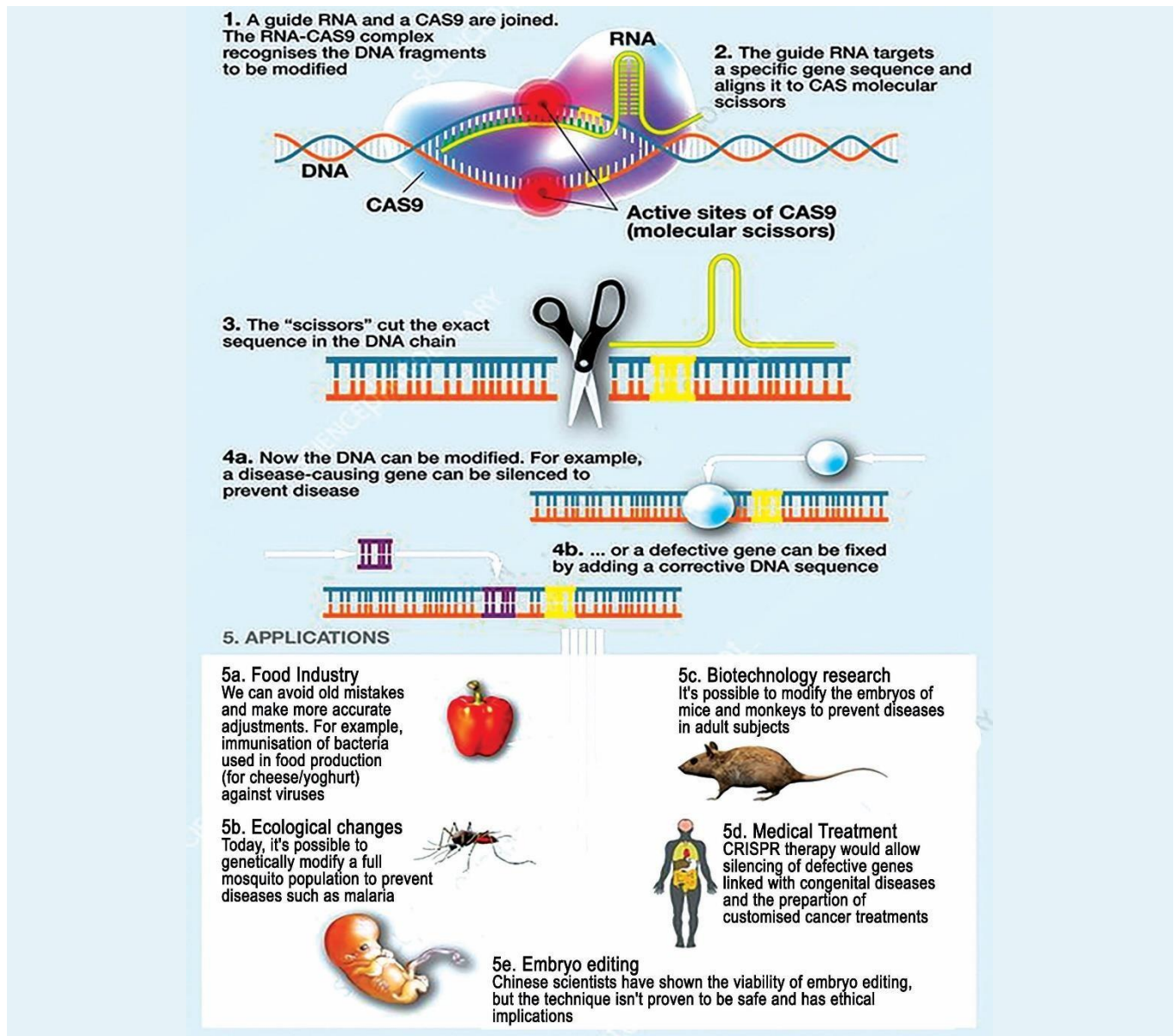
- It's a novel scalable genetic control technology that develops deployable mosquitoes that can reduce populations using a CRISPR-based technique.
- Because male mosquitos do not spread illnesses, the plan is to release an increasing number of sterile males.
- By this technique, mosquito populations can be controlled without the use of hazardous chemicals or pesticides.
- *Aedes aegypti* is the species of mosquito which spreads dengue fever, chikungunya, and Zika etc.
- pgSIT is based on a dominant genetic technique that allows for simultaneous sexing and sterilisation, allowing eggs to be released into the environment while guaranteeing only sterile adult males emerge. It changes genes associated to male fertility (resulting in sterile progeny) and female flight (resulting in sterile offspring).
- The system is self-contained and unlikely to persist or spread in the environment, two safety factors that should help this technology gain acceptance.
- pgSIT eggs can be delivered to an area where mosquito-borne illness is a problem, or they can be created on-site in a facility that can manufacture the eggs for immediate deployment.

- When pgSIT eggs are released in the wild, sterile pgSIT males emerge and mate with females, reducing the natural population as needed.

CRISPR

- It's a gene-editing technique that uses a protein called Cas9 to mimic natural defence systems in bacteria to combat viral assaults.
- CRISPR-Cas9 technology works like a cut-and-paste mechanism on the DNA. The exact region of the genetic codes that need to be altered, or edited, is located on the DNA strand, and then that spot is cut off from the strand using the Cas9 protein, which functions like a **pair of scissors**.
- When a DNA strand is damaged, it has a natural propensity to heal. During this self-healing process, scientists intervene by providing the desired sequence of genetic codes that attaches to the damaged DNA strand.
- CRISPR-Cas9 is a simple, precise, and effective technology that has the potential to revolutionise human life in the future.
- The Nobel Prize in Chemistry will be awarded in 2020 to Emmanuelle Charpentier of France and Jennifer A Doudna of the United States for inventing CRISPR/Cas9 genetic scissors.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY



INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

REVOLUTION UNFOLDING IN DATA REGULATION

#IT #TECHNOLOGY #POLICY

PRIMARY SOURCE | **mint**

A number of nations have sought to expand their existing data protection regimes in order to provide consumers more effective control over their data than their present legislation allow. These legislations plan to end the monopoly over data of certain companies and make the data accessible to wider group of enterprises that can mine the data for better public services. In all these planned legislations, consent of the data principal is given centrality.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Presently, only companies that generate data have a monopolistic right over it. They do not share the data with other companies. This creates data silos and hampers innovation. These laws highlight that protecting data isn't enough, we need to ensure that data is verified and used properly.

MEASURES TO UNLOCK DATA SILOS

- These data-silos-unlocking methods will make it simpler for data to flow from the organisation that now owns it to any other data business that wants to utilise it with the data subject's approval.
- Consumers in Australia will be able to demand that any business with whom they have a commercial connection transfer their data to any other business of their choice under the **Consumer Data Right framework**.
- The banking industry will be the first to implement this new data right, with power industry expected to follow.
- EU's planned Data Act aims to make the data economy more equitable by assuring better access and use of data. It will apply to both business-to-business and business-to-government data exchanges.
- EU has proposed a **Data Governance Act** to regulate data exchanges and platforms in a similar vein.
- As a result, it will enable and regulate new data-sharing agreements that will act as a middleman between data firms that now possess data and those who have been granted permission to use it.

ISSUES WITH REGULATORY MEASURES

- **Law and regulation are unable to keep up with technological advancements**
 - How data is gathered, processed, and used, as well as how it is transported, is determined by technology. Decades of attempting to control technology companies have shown that rules and regulations simply cannot keep up with technological advancements.
 - Laws and rules will always be behind the curve of technological advancement. These customer-centric regulations will fail to have a widespread impact.
- **In India, data transfers in the absence of a legal framework might create challenges**

- The Data Empowerment and Protection Architecture (DEPA), which India has embraced, is a somewhat different approach to data exchanges. DEPA provides a technology-based solution for consent-based data flows, allowing consumers to move their data from data companies to others who want to utilise it.
- The country's Account Aggregator framework, the country's first DEPA deployment, went live in the banking sector.
- India currently lacks a data protection law, and deploying a technology solution for data transfers in the absence of a legal framework may create additional issues.

WAY FORWARD

- **Use a techno-legal strategy to govern:** The most successful way to regulate technology firms is to use a judicious combination of law and technology, with strong, principle-based legislation as the regulatory basis and protocol-based guardrails to assure compliance.

UN CALLS FOR MORATORIUM ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) THAT THREATENS HUMAN RIGHTS

#IT #TECHNOLOGY #POLICY

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

UN human rights office released a report, **'The right to privacy in the digital age'** where it analysed how AI affects people's right to privacy and other rights.

- Artificial intelligence refers to systems or machines that mimic human intelligence to perform tasks and can iteratively improve themselves based on the information they collect.
 - This includes technologies like machine learning, enabling computers to make decisions and solve problems to complement or replace specific tasks otherwise performed by humans.

IMPORTANT FINDINGS

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- States and businesses often rushed to incorporate AI applications, failing to carry out due diligence.
- The data used to inform and guide AI systems can be faulty, discriminatory, out of date or irrelevant.
- Opaque decision making, undermining people's freedom of expression and State accountability.
- Long-term storage of data also poses particular risks, as data could in the future be exploited in as yet unknown ways.
- Unprecedented level of surveillance across the globe by state and private sector.
- Biased datasets relied on by AI systems can lead to discriminatory decisions, which poses acute risks for already marginalised groups.
- Biometric technologies, which include facial recognition, are increasingly used to identify people in real-time and from a distance, potentially allow unlimited tracking of individuals.
- Lack of international and global regulations for controlling and regulating AI.

IMPORTANT RECOMMENDATIONS

- Serious questions should be raised about the inferences, predictions and monitoring by AI tools, including seeking insights into patterns of human behaviour.
- AI applications that cannot be used in compliance with international human rights law, should be banned.
- There needs to be systematic assessment and monitoring of the effects of AI systems to identify and mitigate human rights risks.
- Greater transparency by companies and States in how they are developing and using AI.

CONCLUSIONS

The power of AI to serve people is undeniable, but so is AI's ability to feed human rights violations at an enormous scale with virtually no visibility. Action is needed now to put human rights guardrails on the use of AI, for the good of all of us.

SPACE

CHANDRAYAAN-2

#SPACE #TECHNOLOGY

PRIMARY SOURCE *The Indian EXPRESS*

Many people were disappointed when Chandrayaan-2, India's second mission to the Moon, failed to land softly on the lunar surface. That did not, however, imply that the entire mission had been in vain.

Chandrayaan 2

The mission will be India's first attempt to land a rover on the moon's south pole

APRIL 2018

Possible launch
GSLV-F10
Launch Vehicle

Cost ₹800 cr

Components

Orbiter: Will be launched into a 100-km lunar orbit

Scientific payloads: 6

Lander: Controlled descent and soft landing on lunar surface on designated site

Scientific payloads: 3

Rover: Rolls out of the lander

Scientific payloads: 2

PURPOSE: Collect data on lunar topography, mineralogy, elemental abundance, lunar exosphere and signatures of hydroxyl and water-ice



India's maiden lunar mission Chandrayaan 2 took off on October 22, 2018. AP PHOTO/SRD

ABOUT CHANDRAYAAN-2

- Chandrayaan-2 was made up of three parts: an Orbiter, a Lander, and a Rover, all of which were equipped with scientific instruments for studying the moon.
- The Orbiter would circle the moon at a distance of 100 kilometres, while the Lander and Rover modules would be detached and land softly on the moon's surface.
- The Lander module was called Vikram after Vikram Sarabhai, India's space pioneer, while the Rover module was named Pragyaan, which means knowledge.
- The Lander was unsuccessful. However, the Orbiter was orbiting the moon all this while and sending significant data, which has advanced the understanding of moon.

UTILITY OF THE ORBITER

- The Orbiter component of the mission has been performing well. It has eight instruments on board.

2021 | RAU'S IAS

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- Each of these sensors has generated a substantial quantity of data that throws fresh light on the moon and provides new insights that might be useful in future exploration.

SOME OF THE SIGNIFICANT RESULTS SO FAR

• Water

- Chandrayaan-1, India's first mission to the Moon, verified the existence of water on the Moon. However, the spectrographic signature for Water and Hydroxyl ions is same. Using data from Chandrayaan-1, it was not confirmed whether the signature was from water or hydroxyl ions (OH⁻ ions).
- The Imaging Infrared Spectrometer (IIRS) onboard Chandrayaan-2 was able to differentiate between hydroxyl and water molecules using considerably more sensitive equipment and discovered distinct signals for both.
- This is the most exact data on the existence of water molecules on the Moon that has been discovered so far.
- Water was formerly thought to be only found in the Moon's polar regions. Water signals have now been discovered by Chandrayaan-2 at all latitudes, albeit their quantity varies.

• Minor elements

- The Large Area Soft X-ray Spectrometer (CLASS) analyses the Moon's X-ray spectra to look for key elements including magnesium, aluminium, silica, calcium, titanium, iron, and others.
- This equipment has identified minor elements like chromium and manganese for the first time using remote sensing.
- The discovery might pave the way for a better understanding of magmatic development on the Moon, as well as deeper insights into nebular circumstances and planetary differentiation.
- For the first time, CLASS has mapped approximately 95% of the lunar surface in X-rays.
- For the first time, sodium, a minor element on the Moon's surface, was identified without ambiguity.

• Study of Sun

- One of the payloads, the Solar X-ray Monitor (XSM), has acquired data on solar flares in addition to monitoring the Moon through the Sun's radiation.
- For the first time, XSM has detected a substantial number of microflares outside the active area.
- This has huge ramifications for our knowledge of the process that causes the solar corona to heat up, which has been a long-standing mystery.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FINDINGS

- While the Orbiter payloads add to what we already know about the Moon's surface, subsurface, and exosphere, they also lay the way for future Moon missions.
- Future study will focus on four areas: lunar surface mineralogical and volatile mapping, surface and subsurface characteristics and processes, measuring water in various forms across the Moon surface, and maps of elements found on the moon.
- The investigation of permanently dark areas, as well as craters and boulders under the regolith, the loose deposit that makes up the top surface and extends up to 3-4m in depth, was a significant result of Chandrayaan-2. This should aid scientists in determining future landing and drilling locations, including those for human missions.

FUTURE MOON MISSIONS

- The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)-ISRO partnership Lunar Polar Exploration (LUPLEX) mission, slated to launch in 2023/2024, is one of the main prospective Moon missions that hopes to make use of such data. Its goal is to learn more about lunar water resources and determine if the lunar polar area is suitable for establishing a lunar colony.
- NASA's Artemis missions aim to enable human landing on the Moon in 2024, with long-term lunar exploration planned by 2028.
- The Chinese Lunar Exploration Program also intends to create a platform for large-scale scientific exploration at the lunar south pole, similar to the International Lunar Research Station (ILRS).

WAY FORWARD

1. ISRO should develop competence in developing soft landing capability, which will increase our knowledge of moon and other planets of solar system in future.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- 2 Chandrayaan-3 mission should be planned with a well functional rover and lander and take forward the findings of Chandrayaan-2 orbiter.

- The atmosphere of the Earth shields us, the humans, from these particles.

SOLAR STORM

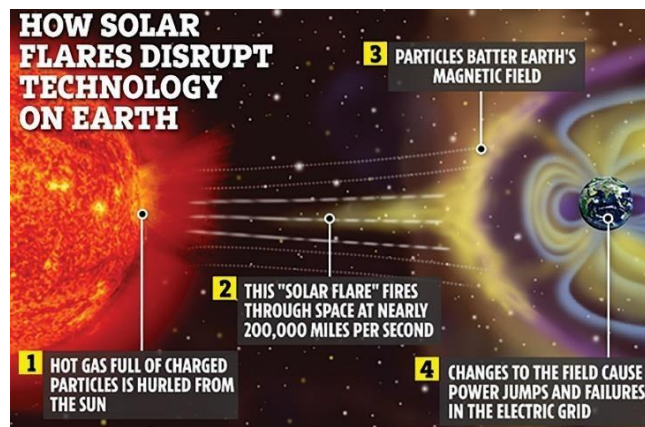
#SPACE #SCIENCE

PRIMARY SOURCE *The Indian EXPRESS*

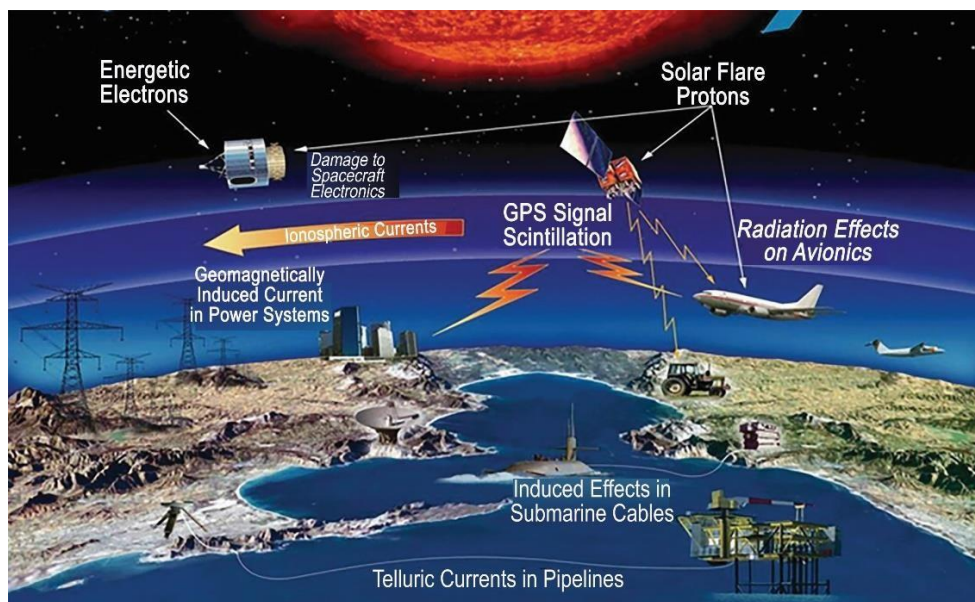
According to scientists, a strong solar storm has been shown to impair the internet, destroy undersea cables, and damage communication satellites.

ABOUT SOLAR STORMS

- A solar storm, also known as a **Coronal Mass Ejection**, is the ejection of strongly magnetised particles from the sun.
- These particles may travel at speeds of several million kilometres per hour and take between 13 and five days to reach Earth.



- However, the particles can interact with the magnetic field of our planet, causing powerful electric currents on the surface and affecting man-made buildings.



CONCERNS WITH SOLAR STORMS

- The Sun has an 11-year cycle, including periods of high and low activity.
- It also has a longer cycle of 100 years.
- It was a low solar activity time throughout the previous three decades, while the internet infrastructure was expanding. However, we are rapidly approaching the peaks of the 100-year cycle, whether in this cycle or the next.

- As a result, it's quite probable that we'll witness at least one major solar storm in our lifetime.

INSPIRATION4

#SPACE #SCIENCE

PRIMARY SOURCE *The Indian EXPRESS*

SpaceX has announced the launch of its 'Inspiration4' mission, which will be the first all-civilian, non-government spaceflight.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

THE FIRST MISSION OF ITS KIND
INSPIRATION-4

JARED ISAACMAN - SIAN PROCTOR - HAYLEY ARCENEUX - CHRISTOPHER SEMBROSKI



A MISSION OF MANY FIRSTS:
INSPIRATION-4 WILL BE THE FIRST MISSION WITH:

3 DRAGON CAPSULES IN SPACE

ALONGSIDE ENDEAVOUR (C208) AND CRS-23 (C208)

14 HUMANS IN EARTH ORBIT

ALONGSIDE SEVEN ISS AND THREE TIANHE CREW

FULLY PRIVATE SPACEFLIGHT

ALL FOUR CREWMEMBERS ARE AMATEUR CIVILIANS

THE LARGEST SINGLE WINDOW IN SPACE

WITH A CUSTOM DOME CUPOLA REPLACING DRAGON RESILIENCE'S DOCKING PORT

AND SOME RARITIES:

HIGHEST CREWED FLIGHT SINCE STS-103

FIRST FREE-FLYING CREWED MISSION SINCE STS-125

(STS-103: DEC. 1999, STS-125: MAY 2009)

CAPSULE:
C207 RESILIENCE

LIFTOFF:
8:02:56 p.m. ET (00:02 UTC)
2021.09.15

LAUNCHPAD:
LC-39A, KSC

TARGET ORBIT:
590 KM, 51.6°

SPLASHDOWN DATE:
2021.09.18
(-7 p.m. ET)

THE INSPIRATION-4 MISSION RAISED
\$180,114,840 FOR **ST. JUDE**
INCLUDING COPRAME-4 ISACMAN'S 100K DONATION



LAUNCH FORECAST:
80% GO
78° F, 26° C
10-15 MPH LIFTOFF WINDS

@WeAreSpaceScout
<https://spacescout.info>
Accurate as of 2021.09.14

INSPIRATION
SPACE SCOUT

ABOUT INSPIRATION4

- Inspiraton4 is a fundraiser for a paediatric treatment and research institution that specialises in children's catastrophic diseases, such as leukaemia and other malignancies.
- The mission entails three days of orbiting the Earth before plunging into the Atlantic Ocean.
- Inspiration4 will circle the Earth at a distance of 575 kilometres, exceeding the International Space Station (408 kilometres) and the Hubble Space Telescope (547km).
- This will be the longest journey by a crewed mission since 2009, when astronauts returned to repair the Hubble Space Telescope.
- The Dragon module that the group will be using for the mission has also been modified.
- The SpaceX module is often used to go to the International Space Station (ISS), where it must dock or join the floating laboratory.

DOMED WINDOW

- Since Inspiration4 will not be visiting the International Space Station, the docking port has been removed and replaced with a dome window.
- This dome window will provide breath-taking views of the Earth.

- The window was inspired by the Cupola, a module on the International Space Station that conducts studies of our world.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MISSION

- Provide an opportunity to collect significant quantities of health data that will assist in the design of future crewed space flights.
- Data would be gathered on ECG (electrocardiograph) activity, movement, sleep, heart rate and rhythm, blood oxygen saturation, cabin noise, and light intensity which will aid in analysing behavioural and cognitive changes throughout the course of the voyage.
- Before and after their voyage, the tourists will undertake balance and prescription tests to measure their reaction to the shift in gravity.
- Blood will also be collected to monitor the immune system's activity. An AI-powered ultrasound scanner will also monitor their organ systems.

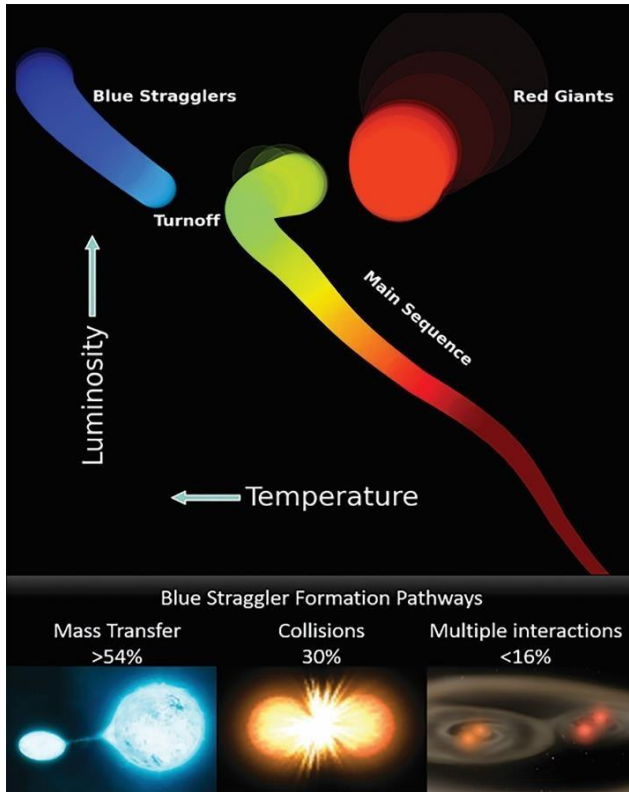
BLUE STRAGGLER

#SPACE #SCIENCE

PRIMARY SOURCE | pib

Indian researchers discovered that half of the blue stragglers in their sample are formed through mass transfer from a close binary companion star, in the first-ever comprehensive analysis of blue stragglers.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY



ABOUT BLUE STRAGGLER

- A blue straggler in an open or globular cluster is a main-sequence star that is brighter and bluer than the cluster's main sequence turnoff point.

- Blue stragglers are most likely the consequence of stars colliding with another star or comparable mass object when they get too close.
- As a result, the freshly created star has a greater mass and is located on the HR diagram in a region filled with truly young stars.
- One-third of them are most likely the result of two-star collisions, while the rest are the result of interactions between more than two stars.

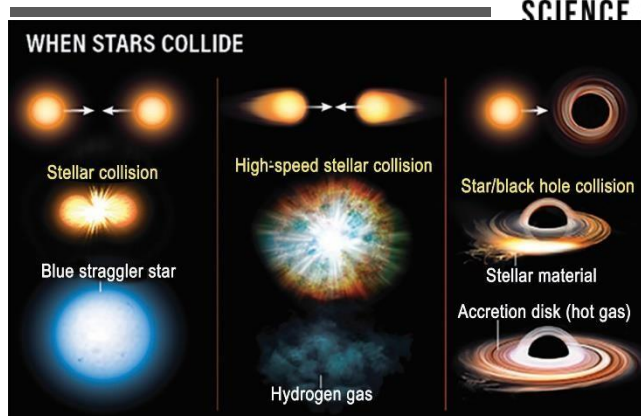
FORMATION OF BLUE STRAGGLERS

- A star cluster is a group of stars born at the same time from the same cloud.
- Each star grows differently throughout time, depending on its mass.
- The most massive and luminous stars develop and migrate away from the main sequence, producing a turnoff in their path.
- Above this bend, or brighter and hotter stars, are unlikely to be found in a cluster because they will depart the main sequence to become redgiants.
- However, Allan Sandage discovered in 1953 that certain stars appear to be hotter than the parent cluster's turnoff.

There's more than one way to make a Blue Straggler

The Collision Model			The Slow Coalescence Model	
<p>1 Low-mass stars collide.</p>	<p>3 The debris disperses, leaving behind a coalesced, massive, hot, rapidly rotating reborn star.</p>	<p>4 The merged star is heated and swells into a red giant star, where it can easily spin down through magnetic activity.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Rotates slowly down</p>	<p>1 In this model, two rapidly rotating stars in a celestial embrace slowly merge, forming one massive star.</p>	
<p>2 Stars begin to rotate and merge.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ejected debris</p>	<p>5 The star shrinks, heats up, and settles down as a blue straggler.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Rotates very slowly</p>	<p>2 The more massive star in this double-star system cannibalizes its partner, creating a single, even more massive star.</p>		
			<p>3 Scientists believe that this merger may create a massive star that rotates at least 75 times faster than our Sun.</p>	

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY



PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

- Expected to be launched in 2024, Beresheet 2 Project is the second lunar mission from Space X and Israel Aerospace Industries.
- The Beresheet 1 spacecraft crash landed on the moon after its launch in February 2019 on a used SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket.
- The mission aims to conduct **experiments and collect data** on behalf of school students.
- It will involve launching **two landing craft and an orbiter** that would circle the moon for years.

BERESHEET 2 PROJECT

#SPACE

MISCELLANEOUS

TRANSPARENT CERAMICS

#MATERIALS

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

- *Indian researchers have developed transparent ceramics (magnesium aluminate spinel ceramics), reaching theoretical transparency through a technique called **colloidal processing** for the first time in India.*
- Spinel is currently emerging as a transparent ceramic based on the outstanding optical properties of transmission (more than 75 % in the visible and more than 80% in the infrared range).
- The material can be used for thermal imaging applications, especially in harsh service conditions and personal protection systems such as helmets, face shields, and goggles.

- The report provides an annual ranking of innovation capabilities and performance of 131 countries and economies around the world.
 - Indicators: Innovation, including political environment, education, infrastructure and business sophistication.
 - Theme of GII 2021 is 'Tracking Innovation through the COVID-19 Crisis'
- **Important Points**
 - Switzerland topped the list, followed by Sweden, US and UK.
 - From 81 in 2015, India has improved its ranking to 46 in 2021 due to immense knowledge capital, vibrant start-up ecosystem, and amazing work done by public and private research organisations.
 - India ranks second among 34 lower middle-income group economies and first among the 10 economies in Central and Southern Asia.
- **India Innovation Index** is released by NITI Aayog with the Institute for Competitiveness.
 - Aims to create an extensive framework for continual evaluation of India's innovation environment and rank states and UTs based on their scores, recognize opportunities and challenges, and assist in tailoring government policies to foster innovation.

GLOBAL INNOVATION INDEX (GII)

#REPORTS #INDEX

PRIMARY SOURCE The Indian EXPRESS

- *Published by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), Cornell University and INSEAD.*

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- It measures innovation inputs through 'Enablers' and innovation output as 'Performance':
 - Enabler parameters: Human Capital, Investment, Knowledge, Workers Business Environment, Safety and Legal Environment.
 - Performance parameters: Knowledge Output, Knowledge Diffusion.



ARMED ROBOT REX MKII

#TECHNOLOGY #ROBOTICS

PRIMARY SOURCE

The Indian EXPRESS

Israel Aerospace Industries has debuted the 'REX MKII,' a remote-controlled armed robot that can patrol war zones, locate infiltrators, and open fire. Dealing with ethical problems while using robots in combat is a challenge. Proponents argue that such semi-autonomous devices help militaries to better safeguard their troops, while detractors worry that this is another hazardous step toward robots making life-or-death choices.



REX MKII

- The robot can gather intelligence for ground forces, transport injured soldiers and supplies into and out of battle, and strike targets nearby.

- The Israeli military is now patrolling the Gaza Strip's border using a smaller but comparable vehicle dubbed the Jaguar.
- Other militaries, like those of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Russia, are progressively employing unmanned ground vehicles.
- Their responsibilities include logistical assistance, mine clearing, and weapon firing.
- At the US-Mexico border, an alternative Smart Wall has been suggested to replace physical and armed patrolling with modern monitoring technology.

USE OF ROBOTS IN WAR

- Because autonomous robots are not physically restricted, they can function without sleep or food, sense things that humans cannot, and move in ways that humans cannot. The employment of a variety of robotic sensors, rather than human sensory talents, is better suited for combat inspections.
- **Military Operational Advantages:** The robots have the following advantages: they are faster, cheaper, and better at completing missions; they have a larger range, stronger persistence, longer endurance, and higher precision; they engage targets faster; and they are immune to chemical and biological weapons.
- **Ability to Act Conservatively:** In instances where target identification is uncertain, robots do not need to defend themselves. If at all, autonomous armed robotic vehicles do not need to prioritise self-preservation. If necessary and appropriate, they can be utilised in a self-sacrificing way by a commanding officer without hesitation.
- **Minimizing Human Life Loss:** One of the basic concepts of war ethics is to minimise human life loss, which may be done by the deployment of robots.

CONCERN OVER USE OF ROBOTS IN WAR

- **Lowering the Entry Barrier to War:** The deployment of robot troops will reduce the cost of war, increasing the likelihood of future conflicts. Because we will now be risking robots rather than human troops, the entry threshold into combat may be decreased. This might go against the rules of just warfare.
- **Targeting Mistakes:** Such weapons are dangerous because they can't tell the difference between fighters and civilians, or make accurate decisions about how much harm an assault would do to surrounding populations.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- **Ignoring War Conventions:** Machines are incapable of comprehending the worth of human life, therefore undermining human dignity and violating human rights legislation. As a result, robots are more likely to commit atrocities and break basic war laws such as the Hague Conventions and other declarations defining how a war should be conducted.
- **Persistent Threats:** There will always be threats such as technology spread to other countries and terrorism. Furthermore, robotic robots are vulnerable to cyber-security or hacking assaults, and they may be exploited against their own personnel.

AKASH PRIME MISSILE

#DEFENCE

PRIMARY SOURCE | pib

DRDO has successfully tested a new version of the Akash surface-to-air missile Akash Prime from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur, Odisha. It intercepted and destroyed an unmanned aerial target mimicking enemy aircraft, in its maiden flight.

Akash Prime is based on the existing Akash surface-to-air missile (SAM) system.

- It is equipped with an improved active radio- frequency (RF) seeker for improved accuracy.
- Missile has also been optimized for low temperature and high-altitude operations with the modified ground system.
- It can intercept aerial targets mimicking enemy aircraft.

ABOUT AKASH MISSILE SYSTEM

- Akash is a medium-range mobile surface-to-air missile (SAM) system.
- It was developed by DRDO. Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) has produced these missiles.
- It can target aircraft up to 50–80 km away, at altitudes up to 18,000 m.
- These missiles can also neutralise aerial targets such as fighter jets, cruise missiles, air-to-surface missiles as well as ballistic missiles.
- It is in operational service with the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force.
- **Akash-NG (new generation) missile:** It is a new variant of the Akash missile which has a better range (60kms) compared to the original version (25 kms).

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

MCQS

Q.1) Which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Monoecious plants are known as where male and female flowers present on the same plant.
2. Pollen grains are female biological entities that serve primarily to fertilise.
3. Cucumbers and squash are the example of monoecious plants.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q.2) Consider the following statements:

1. Sterile Insect Technique is an ecologically friendly method of controlling wild populations.
2. CRISPR is gene-editing technique that uses a protein called Cas9.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.3) Recently the report 'The right to privacy in the digital age' is released, which analysed how AI affects people's right to privacy and other rights. It is released by:

- (a) United Nations Human Rights Council

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- (b) International Association of Privacy Professionals
- (c) International Committee of the Red Cross
- (d) Privacy International

Q.4) Consider the following statements regarding Akash missile system:

- 1. It is a medium-range mobile surface-to-air missile (SAM) system.
- 2. It is jointly developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and France.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.5) Consider the following statements regarding Inspirat4:

1. It is a fundraiser space mission for a paediatric treatment and research institution that specialises in children's catastrophic diseases.

2. It will not visiting the International Space Station.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

DESCRIPTIVE QUESTION

Q1. In regulatory circles, there is a growing recognition that protecting data isn't enough if you can't simultaneously guarantee that it's used properly. In the light of given statement, examine the difficulties in data regulation while guaranteeing its secure transmission for use. (250 Words)

Q2. There has been an increase in militarization of robotic technology. In the light of given statement highlight the advantages and concerns with militarization of robotics.

Answers: 1-c, 2-c, 3-a, 4-a, 5-c

GS PAPER (PRELIMS) & GS PAPER I (MAIN)

BATTLE OF SARAGARHI

#MODERN HISTORY

PRIMARY SOURCE

The Indian EXPRESS

September 12 marks the 124th anniversary of the Battle of Saragarhi that has inspired a host of armies, books and films, both at home and abroad.

ABOUT BATTLE OF SARAGARHI

- The Battle of Saragarhi is considered one of the finest last stands in the military history of the world.
- The Battle of Saragarhi was a last stand battle fought before the Tirah Campaign between the British Raj and Afghan tribesman.
- Twenty-one sikh soldiers were pitted against over 8,000 Afridi and Orakzai tribals but they managed to hold the fort and later sacrificed their lives.
- The sikh soldiers were led by **Havildar Ishar Singh**.

IMPORTANCE OF SARAGARHI

- Saragarhi was the communication tower between Fort Lockhart and Fort Gulistan.
- The two forts in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), now in Pakistan. were built by Maharaja Ranjit Singh but renamed by the British.
- Saragarhi helped to link up the two important forts which housed a large number of British troops in the rugged terrain of NWFP. Fort Lockhart was also home to families of British officers.
- The tribals of NWFP wanted to isolate the two forts by cutting off the lines of communication between them.

SHANKAR SHAH & RAGHUNATH SHAH

#MODERN HISTORY #PERSONALITIES

PRIMARY SOURCE

pib

Homage was paid to the great King Shankar Shah who sacrificed his life and his son Kunwar Raghunath Shah in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh by home minister Amit Shah. This was organised on the side-lines of Azadi Ke Amrit Mahotsav.

- Shankar Shah and his son Raghunath Shah were two tribal leaders who revolted against the British during revolt of 1857 near Jabalpur and Mandla district of Madhya Pradesh.
- Shankar Shah Maravi was the **king of Garha Kingdom (Gondwana Rajya)**, which was situated in the region of Gondwana.
- He **led an uprising against the British colonial occupiers of India**, and was put to death along with his son, Kunwar Raghunath Shah.
- King Shankar Shah and his son Raghunath Shah, **both were good poets so they used their poetry to trigger a rebellion against the British in the state.**
- The hard-hitting poetry used by the two had struck a chord with the public and Indian soldiers in the British army as well.
- On September 18, 1857; the two (king and the prince) were tied to the cannons but the fearless father-son duo recited an inspirational poem even despite seeing their end in front of them in Jabalpur.

ABOUT GONDWANA RAJYA (GARHA

MANDLA KINGDOM)

- Capitals were: Garha, Singhorgarh, Chauragarh Ramnagar, Mandla.
- Language: Gondi language.
- Important ruler: The Garha-Mandla kingdom was earlier a small territory which witnessed rapid expansion under the rule of Sangram Shah, the 48th king, He captured territories like Narmada Valley, Bhopal, Sagar, Damoh and most of the Satpura hills.

HISTORY, HERITAGE & CULTURE

CULTURAL MAPPING OF 75 VILLAGES

#CULTURE #HERITAGE

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), which is gearing up for a trial run in 75 villages in October regarding the cultural mapping project.

This project is based on the 2017 National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM) under Ministry of Culture.

ABOUT NATIONAL MISSION ON CULTURAL MAPPING

- Objective: To build a comprehensive database of artists, art forms and other resources from organisations under the Ministry.
- Registration of artist/artisans on the NMCMportal.
- It encompasses data mapping, demography building, formalising the processes and bringing all cultural activities under one umbrella for better results.
- It would address the necessities of preserving the threads of rich Indian Art and Cultural Heritage.

ABOUT INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL CENTRE FOR ARTS

- This institution was established in 1987 as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Culture with an objective of research, academic pursuit and dissemination in the field of the arts.
- IGNCA aims to complete mapping in 5,000 villages by the end of financial year 2021-2022.

DANCE OF LAMAS

#CULTURE #BUDDHISM

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

Lamas are the priest in Buddhist religion.

- **Cham Dance:** It is performed by the Lamas as a mean to achieve meditation. The purpose of this meditation is for the Lama (priest) to be able to free himself entirely from his own ephemeral personality. "He selects a deity upon whom to meditate until the qualities of the deity grow within him and fill him completely. At that point, he is no longer the Lama ji, but has become the deity.
- Cham is one of the very few living examples of the role of dance in ancient India both from the point of view

of the practitioner and also the society for which it is performed.

- The costumes and masks are an integral part of the dance. "The masks are used to cover the ordinary, day-to-day nature of men and present qualities of divinity in them. So, there are masks with peaceful and evil expressions. Finally, both symbolise the emptiness of the ultimate nature of all appearances.
- Cham dance often offers moral instruction relating to karuna (compassion) for sentient beings and held to bring merit to all who perceive them.
- From Ladakh till Mongolia, the Cham is the deepest form of meditation of the Lamas.
- The leader of cham is typically a musician, keeping time using some percussion instrument like cymbals. The drum is a reminder of the deep sound at the beginning of creation and at the moment of the Buddha's enlightenment.
- Dramyin cham is an exceptional form of cham dance where cymbals are not used. In this form, dramyin, Himalayan folk music lute is used. Dramyin cham is performed in Bhutan, Sikkim, Himalayan West Bengal and Tibet. Dramyin is a form of string instrument.
- All sounds in the Cham are sacred mantras.
- **Tibetan Buddhism:** The **Yogachara School of Buddhism** was founded in Kashmir in the 4th century by **Asanga and Vasubandhu**. This developed into the sophisticated Vajrayana form of Buddhism, which incorporated the Cham dance.



HISTORY, HERITAGE & CULTURE



SUBRAMANIA BHARATI

#PERSONALITIES #MODERN HISTORY

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

The Vice-President paid tributes to Mahakavi Subramania Bharati on his 100th death centenary.

- Subramania Bharati was given the title of **Mahakavi Bharathiyar**.
- Born in December 1882, in Ettayapuram, Madras Presidency.
- He was a famous and influential Indian writer of the nationalist period (1885-1920) who is regarded as the father of the modern Tamil poetry.
- He joined the Tamil daily newspaper **Swadesamitran** (1904) which later helped him draw his involvement in the extremist wing of the Indian National Congress (INC) party.
- He got his paper India **printed in red colour** to symbolise his revolutionary ideas. The same newspaper published the first political cartoon in Tamil Nadu. His other journals included Vijaya.
- He was a regular attendee of INC in its extremist phase along with leaders like Bipin Chandra Pal, B.G. Tilak and V.V.S. Iyer.
- He later published the sensational **“Sudesa Geethangal”** in 1908.
- He was forced to flee to Pondicherry a French colony after the crackdown on INC by the British government.



JALLIANWALA BAGH

#MODERN HISTORY

PRIMARY SOURCE THE HINDU

Recently renovated Jallianwala Bagh has attracted criticism from many local people and historians about wrongful presentation of historical facts and figures.

ABOUT JALLIANWALA BAGH MASSACRE:

- The Jallianwala Bagh massacre marked a turning point in India’s struggle for Independence. A memorial was set up in 1951 at Jallianwala Bagh to commemorate the spirit of Indian revolutionaries and the people who lost their lives in the brutal massacre.
- It stands as a symbol of struggle and sacrifice and continues to instil patriotism amongst the youth. In March 2019, the Yaad-e-Jallian Museum was inaugurated showcasing an authentic account of the massacre.

EVENTS LED TO THE JALLIANWALA BAGH MASSACRE

- The Rowlatt Act (Black Act) was passed on March 10, 1919, authorizing the government to imprison or confine, without a trial, any person associated with seditious activities. This led to nationwide unrest.
- Gandhi initiated Satyagraha to protest against the Rowlatt Act. On April 7, 1919, Gandhi published an article called Satyagrahi, describing ways to oppose the Rowlatt Act.
- The British authorities discussed amongst themselves the actions to be taken against Gandhi and any other leaders who were participating in the Satyagraha.
- Orders were issued to prohibit Gandhi from entering Punjab and to arrest him if he disobeyed the orders.
- Sir Michael O’ Dwyer, the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab (1912-1919), suggested that Gandhi be deported to Burma but this was opposed by his fellow officials as they felt it might instigate the public.
- **Dr Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr Satyapal**, the two prominent leaders who were a symbol of Hindu- Muslim unity, organised a peaceful protest against the Rowlatt Act in Amritsar. On April 9, 1919, Ram Naumi was being celebrated when O’ Dwyer issued orders to the Deputy Commissioner, Mr Irving to arrest Dr Satyapal and Dr Kitchlew.
- On April 13, 1919, the public had gathered to celebrate Baisakhi. However, the British saw it as a

HISTORY, HERITAGE & CULTURE

political gathering. In spite of General Dyer's orders prohibiting unlawful assembly, people gathered at Jallianwala Bagh, where two resolutions were to be discussed, one condemning the firing on April 10 and the other requesting the authorities to release their leaders.

- When the news reached him, Brigadier-General Dyer entered the Bagh, deployed his troops and ordered them to open fire without giving any warning. People rushed to the exits but Dyer directed his soldiers to fire at the exit.
- The firing continued for 10-15 minutes. 1650 rounds were fired. The firing ceased only after the ammunition had run out. The total estimated figure of the dead as given by General Dyer and Mr Irving was 291. However, other reports including that of a committee headed by Madan Mohan Malviya put the figure of dead at over 500.
- As the news of the massacre spread across the nation, Tagore renounced his Knighthood.
- On October 14, 1919, the **Disorders Inquiry Committee** was formed to inquire about the massacre. It later came to be known as the **Hunter Commission**.
- Both Dyer and Dwyer faced violent criticism from various newspapers who gave their own accounts of the brutal massacre.

IMPACT ON STRUGGLE FOR INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

- Ignited a new wave of nationalism.
- Supported the cause for Non-cooperation movement and Khilafat movement.
- It supported the cause for revolutionary movement in Punjab such as rise of Hindustan republican association.

- Extremist wing of Indian national congress got mass support in order to go hard on British Policies.

THAMIRABARANI CIVILIZATION

#ANCIENT HISTORY #LOCATIONS

PRIMARY SOURCE *The Indian EXPRESS*

A US-based lab has carbon-dated the remaining discovered from this ancient civilization in Tamil Nadu to at least 3,200 years.



ABOUT THAMIRABARANI CIVILISATION

- Thamirabarani (Porunai) is a river that originates in the Western Ghats (from the Agastyarkoodam peak of Pothigai hills) in Tamil Nadu and empties into the sea at the Gulf of Mannar after passing through Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts.
- Rivers have a unique association with civilisations. Thamirabarani civilisation is believed to be one of the earliest in India.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

MCQS

Q.1) Consider the following statements in context of King Shankar Shah:

1. King Shankar Shah was a tribal leader who fought in the 1857 revolt.

2. He belonged to the Odisha.

Which of the statement given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

HISTORY, HERITAGE & CULTURE

Q.2) Ancient Thamirabarani civilisation belongs to which of the following state?

- (a) Tamil Nadu (b) Karnataka
(c) Kerala (d) Maharashtra

Q.3) Consider the following statements:

1. Cham dance is derived from the philosophy of Vajrayana Buddhism.
2. In India this dance form is practice in state of Karnataka.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.4) Consider the following statement about Subramania Bharati:

1. He belonged to the extremist ideology of Indian National congress.
 2. Swadeshmitran was a Tamil publication of Bharati.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.5) National Mission on Cultural Mapping focuses on the following objectives except:

- (a) Build comprehensive database of artists.
(b) Providing loan subsidy to musicians.
(c) Bringing cultural activities under one database.
(d) Preserve the cultural threads.

Answers to above MCQs: 1(a), 2(a), 3(a), 4(c), 5(a)

PART TWO

ETHICS, INTEGRITY

& APTITUDE

Coverage from varied sources

ETHICS, INTEGRITY & APTITUDE

EMOTIONS AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

#ETHICS #INTEGRITY #APTITUDE

► IMPORTANCE OF EMOTION

- Emotion derives charity. It is emotion that has lead Bill Gates, Azim Premji and others to give all their wealth for charity purpose.
- Nationalism, respect the national symbols of India, respect constitutional ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem, cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom.
- It is emotion only that derives civil servants to dedicate himself to the nation. Dedication is commitment with passion. It has emotion attached with it.
- Empathy and Compassion, Tolerance, Forgiveness
- Sensitivity - Respect for others religious believe, humble tradition of tribal folks.
- Food donation, Blood donation, being good Samaritan
- Gandhiji's talisman is based on emotion to understand the vulnerability of others.
- The idea of dharma is born in heart which is full of empathy and compassion.
- In matters where doubt intervenes, the natural inclination of the heart of good person becomes the authority or the decisive factor. - Kalidasa
- Emotion is an important component of Attitude.

- Concept of committed bureaucracy require emotion
- Charles Darwin said emotion helps in survival.
- Positive emotions lead to positive behavior – like after watching movies like Baghban one will start to respect parents even more.

EMOTION LEADS TO SOME UNDESIRABLE ACTIVITIES

- It is emotion only that drives a terrorist to do suicide bombing.
- It is emotion only which drives a civil servant towards nepotism and corruption.
- Suicide - Blue whale game
- Riots, Road rage, mob violence
- Drug addiction
- Domestic violence

WHAT ARE EMOTIONS?

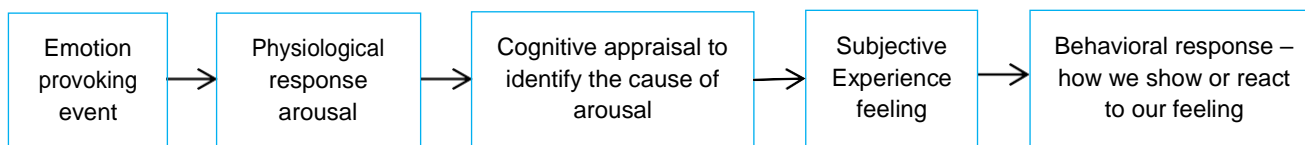
An emotion is a complex human state that involves three distinct components -

- A subjective experience
- A physiological response
- A behavioral or expressive response

SOME EMOTION - Sadness, anxiety, happiness, joy, love, fear, anger, adventure, excitement

Feeling is the name we give to emotion and feelings could be mixed different emotions.

HOW EMOTION OPERATES?



► FUNCTIONS OF EMOTIONS

- a) Emotion can motivate us to take actions. e.g. –
- Compassion is empathy in action

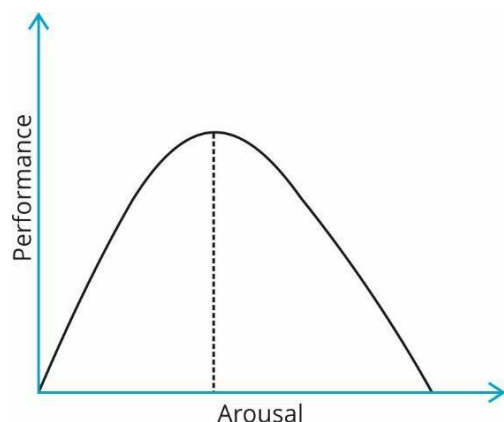
- Emotion derives charity. It is emotion that has lead Bill gates, Azim Premji and others to give all their wealth for charity purpose.
- Food donation, Blood donation, being good Samaritan
- Dedication in civil servants

ETHICS, INTEGRITY & APTITUDE

- Operation Raahat, Operation Insaniyat etc has been taken by India on compassionate ground.
- Photo of drowned Syrian child sparks outrage across Europe and European countries were forced to be more accommodative on refugee issue.

b) Emotion and performance

Yerkes Dodson Curve -



c) Emotion helps to survive, strive and avoid danger.

Charles Darwin has talked about importance of emotion evaluation of human race.

d) Emotions can help in decision making.

E.g. – Land acquisition, displacement, farm load waiver, Memory is also strongly linked to emotion. By learning to stay connected to the emotional part of our brain as well as the rational, we'll not only expand your range of choices when it comes to responding to a new event, but we'll also factor emotional memory into our decision-making process. This will help prevent us from continually repeating earlier mistakes

e) Emotional helps us to understand others and others to understand us. E.g. – understanding the advancement in tribal culture.

► EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EI)

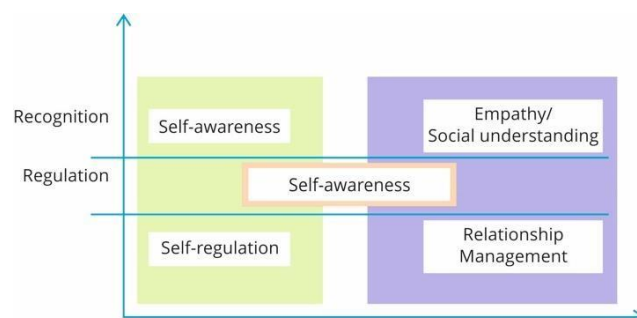
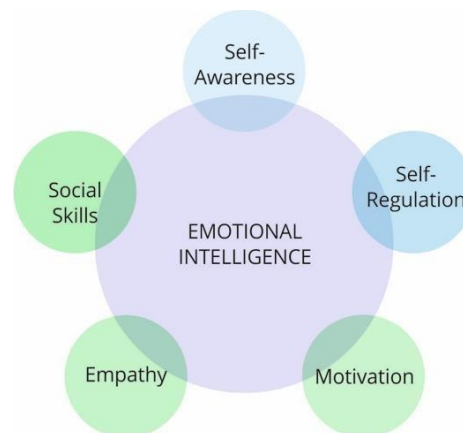
EI is the ability to sense, understand and effectively apply the power and acumen of emotions as a source of human energy, information, connection and influence. It

is the way of recognizing, understanding and choosing how we think, feel and act.

Simply put, Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the ability of a person to identify, understand and manage the emotions of oneself and that of others.

EI is not the opposite of intelligence. It is not the victory of heart over head. It is the unique intersection of both.

FRAMEWORK OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE



1. **Self-awareness** – to understand what emotion one is going through. Emotional awareness and self-confidence are two things which lead to self-awareness. People with self-awareness understand their emotions and don't let their feelings rule them. They are also willing to take an honest look at themselves.

Some techniques to become self-aware:

- Introspection: it is the examination of one's own conscious thought and feeling.
- Emotional literacy – knowing about different kind of emotion.
- Meta-cognition: introspection of our thinking process, if our thinking process is rational and objective or not.
- Talking to trusted friends

ETHICS, INTEGRITY & APTITUDE

- Regular feedback at workplace.
- Sensitivity training

2. **Self-regulation** – involves:

- Self-control – managing one's disruptive impulses
- Trustworthiness – maintaining standards of honesty and integrity
- Adaptability – handling change with flexibility
- Innovation – being open to new ideas
- Consciousness – being conscious.

Techniques to regulate emotion

- Engaging one's senses – listening to music, going to gym, reverse-counting
- Yoga and meditation – training the mind to connect with inner selves
- Laughing therapy
- Use of humour
- Feel energized, not angry: Use what others call "anger" to help feel energized to take productive action.
- Avoid people who invalidate you. While this is not always possible, at least try to spend less time with them, or try not to let them have psychological power over you.

3. **Motivation** is made up of commitment, initiative, optimism, achievement drive and ability to delay gratification.

Steps to stay motivated –

- Defining one's goal
- Having clear understanding of the ideas

4. **Social awareness** includes -

- Service orientation – anticipating, recognizing and meeting other people's need.
- Developing others – Understanding the needs of people to progress and cultivating their abilities
- Understanding opportunities through diverse people.

Steps to develop empathy

- Listening to others with patience instead of controlling, commanding, criticizing, judging or lecturing them.
- Role playing - put yourself their place and think from their perspective

- Challenging prejudice and stereotype.
- Meeting culturally diverse people.

5. **Social skill or relationship management** includes

- Communication –

"I feel impatient." vs "This is ridiculous." "I feel hurt and bitter". vs. "You are insensitive." "I feel afraid." vs. "You are driving like an idiot."

Validate other people's feelings: Show empathy, understanding, and acceptance of other people's feelings.

- Persuasion
- Leadership
- Cooperation
- Collaboration
- Developing team capability
- Conflict management

Steps to improve social skill or relationship management

- Use of non-verbal communication
- Use emotion to make decisions
- Respect others
- Unconditional regard to other people

ADVANTAGES OF BEING EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT

- Performance at workplace** – Daniel Goleman asserts that 80% of success at workplace is due to emotional quotient and 20% due to intelligence quotient.
- Physical and mental health** – inability to control stress level may lead to many serious health problems like high/low blood pressure, suppressed immune system, speed up the aging process, anxiety and depression.
- Relationship** – good relation in personal, social and professional sphere and also balance among them.
E.g. – Rancho, Beggars, Ragging, Marriage and divorce, India-Russia

APPLICATION OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

- Relationship between different entity of government**

ETHICS, INTEGRITY & APTITUDE

Governance is the manner in which resources are utilized for the development of people in the country.

Relationships are the DNA of governance and EI is at the core of any relation. Without people who can develop trusting relationships with other people, there is no governance.

ii. **Civil service values** – foundational values of empathy & Compassion, tolerance, impartiality etc requires EI.

iii. **Social capital** – It has been shown through many studies that building social capital may be even more valuable than investing merely in physical, financial and human capital. Physical capital comprises the machinery, tools and technology of production. Financial capital refers to money. The people who produce goods and services are human capital. Social capital refers to the bonds of mutual respect and care among members of a collective. Social capital allows for reducing the transaction costs of economic exchange.

When public administrators fail to invest in social capital, they lose legitimacy, add to cynicism, and reduce the willingness of citizens, businesses and interest groups to bear the costs of painful reforms.

The higher the level of group emotional intelligence, higher is the level of social capital. Social capital can be generated only if it has a strong backing of emotionally intelligent public servant

iv. **Good decision making** - “power with rather than power over”

According to Chris Argyris (American business theorist):

“How can a group where everyone has an individual IQ of 130 together and collectively end up with an IQ of 60?” IQ alone cannot build group intelligence. IQ has no heartbeat. Emotional intelligence, on the other hand, focuses like a laser beam what is important to us. Without the signals communicated by emotions, life would be drab, colourless and meaningless. I would care no more what happens to me or to you than does a machine. I would be interested in nothing. Without emotions we could not attach meaning to the word “interest” in the term “public interest.”

v. Leadership - manager relation

ETHICS, INTEGRITY & APTITUDE

CASE STUDIES FOR PRACTICE

MAINS GS PAPER IV

Case 1: You are a third-year student in Delhi University. You are very honest and sensitive person who enjoys trust and credibility of teachers. Last year, a case of ragging brought lot of bad publicity to your college. It also led to the death of a first year Dalit student who committed suicide after getting humiliated by his seniors. So, this year, the college is very serious to tackle this problem. Any act of ragging will lead to expulsion from college and even jail term for a student. You have been appointed as one of supervisors of anti-ragging campaign.

In the second week of new session, a first-year student approaches you and complaint about ragging by some seniors. He told that seniors humiliated him because of his caste. When you enquired deep you found that it is your best friend who is involved in ragging. You know that your friend is good in studies and a bright future awaits him.

Will you be a mute spectator and allow your friend to do ragging or will help the first-year student to get justice? Give reasons for your choice of action?

Approach

- **Introduction:** Identify the core ethical issue in the case. Also list the other important issues involved in the case.
- **Body:** Give ethical and philosophical basis of the decision and course of action.
- **Conclusion** – reinforce the importance/significance of justice.

The case presents an ethical dilemma to me. I have to choose between loyalty towards my friend, saving his bright future on one hand and justice to first-year student against caste-based humiliation and reputation of the college on the other hand.

Even though it is difficult to act against one's own friend, I will help the first-year student to take action rather than be mute spectator, due to following reasons –

- I have to fulfil my duty and responsibility as a supervisor for anti-ragging.

- I must respect the trust reposed on me by the college administration.
- Reputation of my college is also at stake.
- I have opportunity to give small contribution in fighting caste-based discrimination in society.
- Caste based humiliation in college will create fissure in socio-politico sphere in our country.
- Immense emotional and psychological suffering to students due to such kind of ragging.
- Apart from crisis of conscience he will also face legal action.
- To safeguard my virtues of honesty.
- Amicable academic environment, dignity to all students and social harmony & integrity should be my priority.
- According to the theory of Veil of Ignorance, I should take the decision devoid of cloud of personal biases. A wrong is a wrong, even if it committed by my friend.
- It will not be virtuous on my part to help my friend in his wrongs, as it will reflect on my character as well.

Following will be my course of action –

- Talk to my friend and inform him of the grave mistake he has done.
- Inform the college administration of my friend's involvement.
- Talk to my friend regarding the problem to caste-injustice in our society.
- Advise my friend to apologize to the first-year student to dispel any feeling of injustice.
- Leave the final decision to the college administration.

Aristotle has said, "It is in justice that the ordering of society is centered". We must inculcate and implement 'sense of justice' in us. It must also trump friendship.

Case 2: You are a responsible district level officer in Maharashtra who is known for his efficiency and innovations in resolving issues at district level. Region

ETHICS, INTEGRITY & APTITUDE

under you is a drought prone area where major occupation of people is agriculture. Central Water Commission (CWC) has recently issued drought advisory for your district. It has asked for judicious use of water as water level available in nearby reservoirs is reducing at a very fast rate.

In fact, this problem is reoccurring, and you want to have some long-term solution for it. Monsoon will take at least 50 days to reach your district and replenish water reservoirs. What strategy can be adopted by you to redress the immediate problem and steps that can be taken in long term to redress the issue permanently?

Approach

- **Introduction:** Identify the core ethical issue in the case. Also list the other important issues involved in the case.
- **Body:** Innovative short term and long-term solution with ethical considerations.
- **Conclusion** – Significance of good and ethical governance.

The case presents a challenge for me and for the district administration to deal with water crisis and usher in good governance. Since the major occupation of people in the district is agriculture, the issue must be looked into with empathy, compassion and urgency.

Following are important issues in the case –

- a) Test of my ability to solve the issue of water crisis.
- b) Responsibility of local administration to pre-empt any crisis.
- c) Inclusive morality of people to use water judiciously, taking care for the needs of others.

Strategy to redress the immediate problem –

- a) Wide scale dissemination of the CWC drought advisory.
- b) Persuading people to self-fix the daily water consumption target to an optimal level.
- c) Encouraging recycling of water. E.g. – kitchen refused water can be used in agricultural field.
- d) Value inculcation and engagement by local leader to avoid 'water-riot' like situation.
- e) A fund can be made to hedge the risk of farmers due to water scarcity. This may reduce economic burden, debt trap and social unrest.

Strategy for long term solution –

- a) Introduction of micro-irrigation and other water efficient technique in agriculture.
- b) Since water crisis is perennial problem, farmers may switch crop like pulses, bajra etc, which require less water.
- c) Use of new technologies like 'Oneer' developed by CSIR for water purification making available the ample amount of drinking water. Increasing the water storage capacity in reservoirs, farm ponds etc.
- d) Ground water recharge techniques to improve water table level.
- e) Developing 'conservation' as a value in our society will help in judicious use of water.
- f) Encourage farmers to build farm ponds which will store monsoon water and promote groundwater recharge.
- g) Ask village panchayats to discuss water issues and promote participatory water management in the district.

Crisis also creates opportunity for mutual cooperation and improvement and innovation. I must deal with the situation with positivity and look for short-term and long- term solution.

PART THREE

ESSAYS

of

THE MONTH

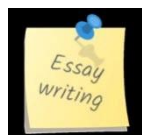
Selected essays from Rau's GSI students

ESSAYS OF THE MONTH

SIMPLICITY IS ULTIMATE SOPHISTICATION

#PHILOSOPHICAL

SUBMITTED BY: MUSKAN ARYA



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study circle neither endorses nor rejects any viewpoint in the submission. The purpose is only to showcase the manner of writing.

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Mahatma Gandhi, our father of nation, was the man who probably was endowed with the highest virtue of simplicity. He owned less than 10 possessions when he passed away and didn't even own a house yet he affected the lives of many, moreover he continues to do so. He was a dhoti clad person, living a minimalist life yet he gave a tough time to one of the strongest colonisers of the world. He truly lived by his saying of 'Let your life be your message'. Similarly, Mother Teresa impacted and touched the lives of many. She didn't advocate to give up the lifestyle and luxury that one has been bestowed with but sent a message to be generous enough to share it when time comes. She gave the message of spreading love and care, to go back home and love our family. Mother Teresa always emphasized to have faith in one's action.

Sophistication has a complex meaning yet one of its manifestation can be said to be that it is 'a measure of refinement.' It relates to the quality of displaying wisdom, good taste, being cultured and knowledgeable. In short, being made with great skill. In order to achieve this refinement, one doesn't need to be born in rich families or spend one's lifetime in universities or monasteries but need to adopt a simple yet fulfilling approach. Swami Vivekananda often stressed on the fact of invoking the power of inner self especially among the youth. He said, 'They alone live, who live for others.' When an individual realizes how impactful her life can be, the destiny takes a turn.

Education is one of the most enriching experiences of an individual's life. This comes with a caveat; education

should be imparted in right way to open the minds of people and to act as an agent of change. Therefore, it becomes important that students are taught in a right way to increase the retention. National Education Policy, 2020 emphasizes on early education in mother tongue and places the concept of every child is unique as a central theme. Instead of being taught about democracy and democratic values, students should be made to witness election procedures. Internal elections for a class monitor or framing basic rules of conduct in the classroom will have a powerful impact. Similarly, to teach about esprit de corps, teamwork, lessons on failures they should be made to participate in various sports. Aesthetic qualities in a child can be developed by exposing him/her to music, dance, drama and painting.

Agriculture chapter should be linked to farm visits, management of waste and teaching of 4R's should be accompanied by waste water treatment or energy plants visits. Heritage visits, nature walks, visit to defence establishments will motivate the child to learn more.

We, the people of India take pride in being the largest democracy of the world. But are we really democratic in our approach and conduct? Democracy is often attached with sophisticated words – inclusive, participative, representative etc. In order to be truly democratic, we just need to follow a simple formula. 'Of the people, by the people, for the people.' Of the people relates to we being a republic country by electing the head of our state. The society should inculcate values to make leaders display integrity and compassion. By the people relates to the society judiciously making an informed decision when asked to cast vote.

Nelson Mandela said that you cannot win a war but can win an election. This will help to take the country forward and in responsible hands. For the people relates to adopting a citizen-centric approach in policy making. It means that the country as a whole needs to be kept in mind and not a few factions which make up the voter base while designing public policy.

ESSAYS OF THE MONTH

The simplest way of being truly a democratic society is to inculcate our Preamble in our actions, to follow our constitution and be law abiding citizens. Preamble though a single page document reflects the values and vision of our forefathers. It points towards the destiny of the nation. Government has taken considerable steps to make the society progressive and participative. A major game changer is the vitality of e-governance as an enabler to get access and redressal of grievances of citizens. Judiciary has also done its bit by bringing the concept of online judicial proceedings and laying the e- courts roadmap. But the digital divide in the country is stark, therefore schemes of government like Bharat Net whereby Panchayats will be connected to internet; PMGDISHA which aims to make at least 40% of rural households digitally literate by training one from each family; common service centers; e-NAM should be implemented on a war-footing.

When talking about simplicity, we shouldn't forget to apply this principle in one of the major global crisis – Global warming and climate change. World, especially India, is filled with examples of how tribals and forest dwelling communities have been able to coexist peacefully with nature for centuries. The Rabari Tribe of Rajasthan is known for its unique and harmonious human-animal coexistence. Indian leopard - an elusive cat species shares its habitat with them. Furthermore, the concept of sacred groves adopted by tribals in India is so beautiful. It reflects the thankfulness of tribals for the resources they have been bestowed upon as they worship the deity that resides within. Similarly, tribal communities in northeast are known for their simple living. They use the local forest resources to make durable tools for themselves, conserve water and species to maintain balance. No wonder why we still find cleanest rivers, waterfalls and pristine rainforests there.

Humanity forgot the basic principle which Gandhiji gave there is enough for everybody's need but not for the greed. We all are witness to the devastating impact it has led – increased cyclones, drowning cities, melting glaciers, rising temperatures, extinction of species etc. Destruction of habitat has led to the world grapple under one of the longest and worst pandemics – Covid-19. Unfortunately, the impact of global warming doesn't stay in the boundary of a particular nation and therefore this calls for a collective action from the entire world.

The 17 illustrated goals termed as sustainable development goals provide a way forward. Though they

are defined in not more than 2-3 words yet are strong enough to guide our progress for decades to come. They come with a timeline of achieving in 2030 but a continuous effort will be required to reap its benefits.

Lastly, talking about what can be done at an individual level to lead a sophisticated life through simple actions, we need to change our attitude towards consumption. Hoarding things makes no sense as nobody carries it with themselves after death. This requires developing an attitude of mindful consumption – from the food we eat to clothes we wear to the cars we own and even the number of times we change our smartphones. According to an estimate, 67 million tonnes of food is wasted annually in India which adds up to being Rs. 92000 crores in value. For context, the food is sufficient to feed the population of Bihar for a year.

Adopting alternative ways of livelihood will take a meaningful impact. Bengaluru city started a #BYOC challenge. BYOC stands for bring your own cup where the residents were asked to bring their own cups, mugs, dishes, spoons when they step out to eat so as to limit use of single use plastics. Keeping cloth bags in your cars, two-wheelers or in bags will help you to limit use of plastic bags. Judicious use of water also holds special importance. Residents should avoid washing their cars or verandahs daily. Rainwater should be collected and used wherever feasible. Also, judicious use of medicines specially antibiotics holds a key. This is to prepare the world from Anti-microbial resistance which can lead to serious consequences in terms of health.

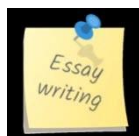
Simply following the laws and rules of one's country can help us to live a safe and comfortable life. In India, more than 1.5 lakh people were killed in road accidents in 2015, imagine what change by mere following of traffic rules can be brought about! Adopting a covid-19 appropriate behavior and abiding by the lockdown regulations is important to live our lives freely in the future. Lastly, judiciously casting your vote and making your voices heard in the election has major impact on the future of our nation. Citizens should vote for mindful manifestos, promising and accountable leaders, not only on basis of caste and be an active not a dormant voter. This is the way to be sophisticated citizen and make a sophisticated country through simple means.

ESSAYS OF THE MONTH

CONFIRMS IT

#PHILOSOPHICAL

SUBMITTED BY: ANKUR PANDEY



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The year 2020 will be remembered in the times to come, for all the negative reasons. There was large scale mortality, people's sufferings, job losses, economic recession etc. were the hallmarks of the year 2020. All of this was because of the COVID-19 virus induced worldwide pandemic.

Coronavirus induced pandemic has exposed the reality to the world. It has exposed the deep-rooted inequalities, defects in global and national health governance, excessive dependence on any one country, and lack of cooperation and collaboration among nations. The reality is far from ideal state. In the ideal world, the pandemic would not have been thought of, let alone its spread and resulting negative consequences.

In this essay, we will discuss the current face of society, reasons behind the importance of ideal society, source of ideal in the Indian and global context and some suggestions on how to bridge the divide between reality and ideal.

Let us see some examples from history to understand the importance of ideals. Ashoka was said to have killed his 99 brothers in order to become a king. Even after getting the throne, he pursued the policy of annexation. In the famous battle of Kalinga, he got enlightenment and understood that war and aggression cannot be the ideal state. Thereafter, he pursued the policy of Dhamma to win the hearts of people. For him, the source of ideal

was Dhamma. Throughout his life, he propagated the ideal of Dhamma by erecting stone pillars and appointing officials to propagate his message to the masses. Similarly, ideal life for Aryans was to follow Rigveda and its principles. They used to do yajnas and recite appropriate mantras mentioned in the Vedas.

What are the ideals of modern-day India? The ideals of modern India are mentioned in the Preamble of the Constitution – which call for establish a society which is rooted in the ideals of democracy, is secular in nature, has socialistic aspirations, where justice, liberty and equality are ensured for each and where the spirit of fraternity informs inter-personal and community relations. Our forefathers have visualized a modern-day Indian state in which every person has the liberty of thought, expression, belief and worship.

There have been specific and elaborate directions to achieve the ideal state in the form of Directive Principle of State Policy.

Now after understanding the ideals of India, let us discuss the current realities by some specific instances. As per Article 39(b) and 39(c), the state should take steps to ensure that wealth is not concentrated in the hands of few and the benefits of growth and development is equitably distributed.

However, the reality is far from the ideal. As per Oxfam Report, 70% of the wealth is concentrated in the hands of top 1% of the Indian population. Moreover, in 2018, the unemployment rate reached 6.1% (NSSO data), which was highest in the last 45 years. Clearly, the reality depicts joblessness and non-inclusive growth. Therefore, the Indian lived reality does not confirm to ideals enunciated in Indian constitution. The reality of this unsustainable growth clearly justifies the importance of economic justice mentioned in the Preamble. Thus, reality confirms the importance of ideal.

ESSAYS OF THE MONTH

The growing criminalization of politics is another grim reality. Nearly 43% of members of Parliament in the 17th Lok Sabha are facing criminal charges against them. This depicts a sad situation in which criminals have better chances of winning an election and have come to dominate public life. Consequently, there has been a decline in the quality of parliamentary proceedings and members often indulge in unethical practices like defecting due to influence of money. The ideal state (Political Justice) demands the highest – ethical behavior from the elected representative. The ideal demands good governance from the government which will bring a mammoth socio-economic transformation in the country.

Clearly the reality is far from ideal, but the ideal highlights the need to check the growing criminalization of politics, to reach the ideal state. Therefore, in a sense, ideals are the goals or values that guides and inspires the human behavior. They give a sense of purpose to life which brings satisfaction to the humans.

However, not all ideals are static. Some ideals keep on evolving as the society evolves. In ancient India, the king who upheld the social order was considered just. This essentially meant to uphold the Chatur Varma (4 Varna System). In modern day India, this may look regressive and unjust and against our ideals (social justice and equality).

India is on a path of transformation. We have conceptualized our ideals in the dream of New India. In

the past, we have taken several steps to reach and accomplish our dream of ideal Indian society which includes, Right to Education Act, MGNREGA, Right to Information, LPG reforms among others. We have brought a significant change from the past and modified the reality to the positive. Some examples include Swachh Bharat Abhiyan which have made India open defecation free, JAM trinity to reduce leakages and corruption to name a few.

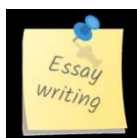
Ideals have the power to change reality. This requires an earnest resolve of all the stakeholders to work in synergy. The government should invest in capacity building of the people by improving education and health. Moreover, there is a need to bring behavioural and attitudinal change to bring a sustainable and long- term change.

Any change will come only with active participation of both state and non-state actors. The state should articulate a clear goal and act as a facilitator, while the non-state actors should identify the issues, make suitable suggestions and ensure citizen's participation in order to create a New India based on the foundation of social, economic and political justice. Although the goal may seem utopian, we should take the inspiration from following words of wisdom – **“ARISE, AWAKE AND STOP NOT UNTIL THE GOAL IS REACHED” - SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.**

MEN AND LAND

#ENVIRONMENT #SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

SUBMITTED BY: PRIYANKA



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114

ESSAYS OF THE MONTH

It was a very hot morning of 2031. Riya, a small kid was studying environment and ecology for the very first time. While studying she went through various strange words like forests, tiger, lion, leopard, etc. The curious kid, Riya, wanted to know more about these words so she went to her father and requested him that she wants to see these creatures. Her father was very helpless as there were no forest left. Tiger, lion, leopard, etc. were extinct. Her had no other option, but to show her the images by downloading it from internet. Riya was not satisfied by looking only at the image. She went back to her room thinking "what had happened that these creatures were extinct?"

Riya and many other kids will go through this scenario if we do not leave our earth as it is. It is high time that we realize the importance of our earth, environment and ecology and take steps to conserve it for sustainable development as well for our coming generation.

Conservation simply implies protection of flora and fauna from being extinct due to human activity. Article 48 and 48A (DPSP) and Article 51A (g) of our Indian constitution deals with protection of animals, environment including forest, lakes, etc.

Animals live in the environment by maintaining harmony with human. They do not try to encroach upon the area of man nor do they go and stay in man's house. Even if they encroach in the area outside forests, it is because they do not find forest where they can live.

Earlier, humans used to worship the environment. From the evidence of ancient history, it can be proven that they were living in with harmony nature. For example, edicts of Ashoka's pillar, Kautilya's Arthashastra etc. mention about protecting the environment. But modern human beings are completely opposite of their ancestors. They are greedy and treat earth not as their home but a resource pool that can be exploited endlessly. This culture of greed and human want has brutally destroyed earth to the point that human existence itself is in doubt.

"There is enough for human needs but not enough for human greed." This phrase by Mahatma Gandhi resembles the present scenario of man. In order to fulfill their greed, humans are continuously exploiting Earth without thinking of its consequences.

Modern men are exploiting the nature for a number of reasons. Our wish to have air conditions, leather clothes, synthetic material, plastics, fuel and furniture is root for this exploitative attitude.

From harmony to disharmony: Harmony means peaceful coexistence. Harmony is already inbuilt in nature. Man is a part of nature not apart from it. Man was meant for living by using natural food, natural material (just as build their nests). However, human started modifying the natural course for his/her benefit. Thus, humans are going towards disharmony.

Manifestation of Harmony:

Primary Sector: Agriculture being the primary sector of economy. Agriculture sector aims to produce food to meet the nutritional needs to human beings. However, increasing use of unnatural means to produce food has led to disharmonisation. Use of chemical fertilizer, pesticides, etc. are hampering with the natural cycle. This leads to killing of various organisms which directly or indirectly helps me in maintaining the balance in the nature. For example, if the complete population of honey bees gets extinct then a large variety of crops and vegetable will also extinct.

Secondary Sector: Secondary sectors deals with the manufacturing industries. In order to manufacture the products, humans are causing pollution in the environment, resource depletion especially of fuels and minerals. For example, in industries, untreated water is released into water bodies such as rivers and lakes, leading to water pollution. The smoke which is released from industries and vehicles leads to air pollution.

Tertiary Sector: Tertiary sector deals with the service sector of the economy. Disharmony with nature is the nature of the tertiary sector. For example, once the mobile or electronic items get old it leads to the creation of e-waste generation. Radiation released from these e- waste is very harmful for both the humans and nature.

The Reasons for increasing disharmony between human's needs and what nature can offer are the following.

Blind craving for wealth: Man in order to earn more and more money, is destroying the environment. Best example is killing animals for leather shoes, clothes,

ESSAYS OF THE MONTH

bags. Men want to earn huge amounts of money by selling these products.

Infrastructure Development: Humans are clearing the forests for development of infrastructure without even thinking twice. Many industries are built by removing forest and of course how can we forget urbanization. People are shifting towards urban areas from rural areas. Due to urbanization, population has increased in the urban areas. To cater to the increasing population of urban areas, sprawl of cities is increasing, resulting in deforestation of surrounding areas.

Dangers associated with disharmony

With the increase in disharmonisation, the balance between nature and humans has disturbed to a very large extent. With disharmony, many dangers are associated which will make human realize their mistakes.

Natural disaster: As per the IPCC 6th annual report, by 2100 most of the coastal cities will be submerged due to sea level rise. Many cities are facing situation of flood, drought, cyclones, desertification, etc.

Longer life, weaker body – Man by using various drugs and medication is successful in living a longer life but they live with weaker body. There is increasing incidence of lifestyle diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and cancer. Many of these diseases is the result of sedentary lifestyle and unsustainable consumption.

Viruses & diseases: The recent outbreak of covid 19 pandemic was a direct result of disharmonisation with nature. Increasing incidence of zoonotic diseases is the result of increasing exploitation of human beings on animal lives. For ex. Many of these novel viral diseases have been brought into human beings by their consumption of animals such as bats, pangolins etc.

Is disharmony that bad?

The answer of this question is that, disharmony is not bad provided man uses the nature in judicial and sustainable manner. For example: by using public- transport instead of private vehicle and by planting more and more trees.

In modern times, men cannot live without industries. So, to protect the environment and fulfilling their demands, men can manufacture products but in a sustainable and

least harming and polluting techniques. For ex. Use of renewable energy in industrial sector, treating of wastewater generated from industries etc.

Smart Solutions:

Primary Sector: Instead of using chemical fertilizers and pesticides, farmers can use organic farming techniques to promote the growth of agriculture, deal with pests and to solve other problems associated with agriculture. Some organic method could be Zero Budget Natural Farming, System of Rice Intensification, Zero tillage farming, happy seeder, etc.

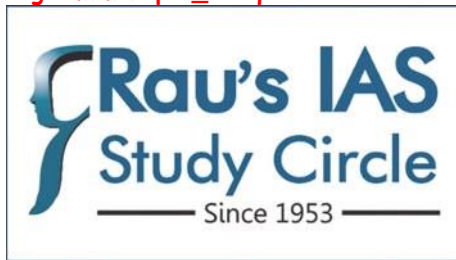
Secondary Sector: This sector can be made more environment friendly. For example, relying less on fossil fuels and more on sustainable fuels such as solar energy, wind energy and bio-energy. Before discharging untreated water and air in the environment, it must be treated very efficiently.

Tertiary Sector: Companies should invest more in increasing the life of product especially electronic materials so that less e-waste is generated when the e- waste is generated it should be disposed properly. Reuse, recycle and circular economy-based strategies should be promoted.

Policy interventions: Many countries have signed international agreements to protect environment such as Montreal Protocol, Kyoto Protocol, Paris agreement etc. India has come up with various initiatives for protecting the environment, such as carbon tax, clean Ganga program, clean energy mission, National Clean Air Program, Green Skill Development Program etc.

Conclusion:

Humans must see the relationship between human and nature as a mutually complementary relationship. Real & sustainable growth occurs, economic growth does not lead to irreparable damage to nature. Humans should not grow by damaging nature. Humans should always keep in mind that they are a part of nature and not apart from it. A proper harmony between nature and human will lead to the prosperous development of both man and nature and man will also achieve Sustainable Development Goals. Hence, conservation, judicial and sustainable use of nature is a state of harmony between men and land.



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