

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 1st April-2021

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Q) “Examine the components of social forestry. Discuss the problems faced by social forestry in India.”

Answer :

Social forestry means the management and protection of forests and afforestation on barren lands with the purpose of helping in the environmental, social and rural development.

Social forestry also refers to the management of forests for the benefits of local communities. It includes aspects such as forest management, forest protection, and afforestation of deforested lands with the objective of improving the rural, environmental, and social development. Unlike other forestry projects, in the setting of social forestry, the needs of local communities come first.

Components of social forestry

There were 5 components of Social forestry -Urban forestry, Rural forestry, Agro forestry, Community Forestry and Farm forestry

- Urban forestry pertains to the raising and management of trees on public and privately owned lands in and around urban centres such as green belts, parks, roadside avenues, industrial and commercial green belts, etc.
- Rural forestry lays emphasis on promotion of agro-forestry and community-forestry.
- Agro-forestry is the raising of trees and agriculture crops on the same land inclusive of the waste patches. It combines forestry with agriculture, thus, altering the simultaneous production of food, fodder, fuel, timber and fruit. Community forestry involves the raising of trees on public or community land such as the village pasture and temple land, roadside, canal bank, strips along railway lines, and schools etc.
- Community forestry programme aims at providing benefits to the community as a whole. Community forestry provides a means under which the people of landless classes can associate themselves in treeraising and thus, get those benefits which otherwise are restricted for landowners.
- Farm Forestry – Farm forestry is a term applied to the process under which farmers grow trees for commercial and non-commercial purposes on their farm lands. Forest departments of various states distribute seedlings of trees free of cost to small and medium farmers. Several lands such as the margins of agricultural fields, grasslands and pastures, land around homes and cow sheds may be used for raising trees under noncommercial farm forestry

Problems faced by the social forestry in India

Although social forestry as a concept was revolutionary but in India, it was not too much success. Primarily because of the wrong implementation under the incentive given to farmers & villagers to encourage Social forestry.

- ‘Farm Forestry’ was driven by big farmers who were encouraged by the supply of free saplings by the government.

- Trees were grown for investment purpose and not for needs of rural and tribal folks which led to deforestation as usual
- No real attempt was made to involve the landless in the social forestry program and both women and tribal –who could have been big contributors – were left out.
- There was poor ecological focus. It is a general feeling that trees like eucalyptus and poplar depleted soil nutrients in states of Haryana and Punjab.
- Low coverage – Village needs are far from being satisfied from the community forestry program
- Encroachment of Community Land
- Low incentives for villagers to take pains on plantation
- Most social forestry programmes are undertaken on community wastelands, roadside and canal margins where it is very difficult to grow and protect the saplings.
- Rules and regulations regarding the harvesting, transport and marketing have to be simplified so as to eliminate hurdles in obtaining permission.
- Absence of requirement and resource survey
- Lack of awareness
- Improper method of planting and caring
- Indiscriminate grazing

Social forestry is supposed to diversify non-farm options or non-crop income options for poor farmers & landless labourers. Through the social forestry scheme, the government has involved community participation, as part of a drive towards afforestation, and rehabilitating the degraded forest and common lands. If implementation challenges are overcome the aim of social forestry can be achieved.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 27th April-2021

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Q) “The deficiencies in the current laws showed the need for a comprehensive law to tackle epidemics.” Is it true? Elucidate the importance of protection of basic civil rights in the recent covid-19 posed lockdown.

Answer:

Covid-19 pandemic has raised a number of challenges across the globe; practically in different spheres of administration, border crossings, health services, civic behaviour, technology’ diplomacy and so on. Country after country is struggling with the tough choice between saving lives vs saving livelihoods. In a large and diverse country such as India, the challenges are even more complicated, particularly when public health is not a central or even a concurrent subject but purely a state subject.

Importance of protection of basic civil rights amidst the present lockdown scenario:

- The post covid-19 world will not be same again.
- Further evidences show that due to increased climate change effects, epidemics and pandemics through various means like Zoonotic diseases is a reality.
- The lockdown, however, does not come without a fair share of problems of its own, the most pertinent is centered around the protection of basic civil rights in this lockdown.
- People at the bottom of the socio-economic pyramid, especially migrant workers have been the worst hit by the lockdown.
- India, with its vast territory, large but extremely diverse population, and low literacy levels, poses a special kind of challenge to a government trying to develop a nationwide solution to tackle the epidemic.
- The reckless disregard to the lockdown by some people and the numerous instances of rumour mongering have been extremely problematic for the administration to maintain law and order across the country.
- This presents an extremely peculiar position where the government, on the one hand, has to ensure the basic civil rights of people, and on the other, has to curb the outbreak of the disease.
- Though it might be too early to call, but from the data available, one can easily deduce that countries which have opted for 'slightly authoritarian measures', like Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan, despite their proximity to China have prevailed, while countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy either due to their lax or vacillated approach have succumbed to the virus.
- A cursory inference of this data easily invokes the dogma of whether "desperate times require desperate measures", meaning whether and to what extent should the government impose restrictions on civil rights to curb the pandemic.
- In such testing times, where the entire scenario can be narrowed down to the equation of liberties vs lives, a hybrid approach that encompasses the spirit of both sides should be applied.
- Drawing the line in such cases, however, becomes an arduous task.
- This implies that while certain fundamental rights, such as the right to religion or the right to expression can be restricted, the restriction in all such cases shall be reasonable and open to judicial scrutiny.
- The recent case of T. Ganesh Kumar vs Union of India captures the essence of this quandary, where the Madras High Court rightly dismissed a petition that sought a ban on newspapers.
- The current law governing during epidemics is the colonial-era Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, which leaves much to be desired. The four-page long law is dotted with ambiguous and opened wording.

The best remedy to successfully tackle the current epidemic and prepare for the future lies in modifying or rather creating a comprehensive legislation that specializes in dealing with such cases

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 2nd April-2021

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Q) "Due to the single party rule at the centre, there are arguments to strengthen Inter-state council (ISC)." Do you agree? Suggest measures to strengthen ISC

Answer:

The Inter-State Council is a **constitutional body** to facilitate coordination between states and the centre. It is set up on the basis of provisions in **Article 263** of the Constitution of India by the Presidential Order, 1990 based on the recommendation of Sarkaria Commissions.

The Inter-state council is **not a permanent constitutional body** for coordination between the states and Central government. Rather, President can establish it at any time if it appears to him that the public interests would be served by the establishment of such a council.

In the modern Indian history single party rule at the centre induced many regional disparities in terms of resource sharing between the centre and states. In addition, single party rule also blamed for constitutional breakdown and wide spread misuse of article 356. Strengthening of ISC will ensure accountability, transparency and co- operation between the states and centre.

Measures to strengthen the ISC

- **Sarkaria Commission** recommended that it needs to be given all the **powers contemplated in the Constitution** like **Art 263(a)** which gives it the power to investigate issues of inter-state conflict but was dropped in the Presidential order of 1990.
- Moreover, it should provide some **greater opportunities to civil society** institutions and also the corporate sector to make their representations.
- Further, its **secretariat may be shifted** from the Union Home Ministry to the Rajya Sabha secretariat so that it would be under the direction of a neutral federal functionary, the vice-president of our India rather than the Union home minister.
- It should be strengthened as a forum for not just administrative but also **political and legislative give and take between centre and states**. For instance, while legislating on subjects that have been transferred from the state list to the concurrent list such as education and Forests, the centre must consult states more extensively and offer them greater flexibility.
- **Punchhi commission** recommended that the Inter-State Council must meet at least thrice in a year on an agenda evolved after proper consultation with States.
- The Council should have experts in its organizational set up drawn from the disciplines of Laws, Management and also political Science besides the All India Services.
- The Council should have the functional independence with a professional Secretariat constituted with experts on relevant fields of knowledge which is supported by the Central and also State officials on deputation for limited periods.
- After ISC is made a vibrant, negotiating forum for policy development and conflict resolution, the Government may consider the functions for the National Development Council also being transferred to the ISC.

Though, there are other bodies such as the NITI Aayog's Governing Council with similar composition, including the prime minister, chosen cabinet ministers and also chief ministers that could address centre-state issues. But, the ISC has constitutional backing, as against the NITI Aayog which only has an executive mandate. This puts the states on more solid footing in building the atmosphere of cooperation needed for calibrating centre-state relations.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 12th April-2021

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Q) “Though India has ensured adequate production of electricity in the country, the DisComs continue to perform badly. “Examine the challenges in India’s discom sector. What measures can be taken to strengthen discoms?”

Answer:

Distribution Companies (DisComs) play a critical role in the electricity supply chain. These utilities typically buy power from generators and retail these to consumers. India has done well in ensuring the adequate production of electricity in the country. However, the DisComs continue to perform badly because of following **challenges** in it

Financial position of DisComs:

- The financial position of DisComs is very grave in that they owe large sums to generators and also have high short-term dues apart from the long-term debt owed by them.

Inefficiency:

- The DisComs are blamed for inefficiency, including high losses, called Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses.

* Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses include everything from theft to lack of collection from consumers.

Lack of cost-reflective tariff structure:

- The regulators have failed to fix cost-reflective tariffs. This has resulted in high debts for the DisComs.

* Despite the acceptance of inefficiency in the name of the poor, yet still, they too do not get quality supply. The political dole out of free electricity even for those who may not deserve such support is a drain on the scant resources of the state.

- There are also extensive cross-subsidies between consumer categories which is not exactly the optimal way forward.

Default of payments to DisComs:

- DisComs face severe challenges of payables.

* Consumers owed DisComs over Rs. 1.8 lakh crore in FY 2018-19.

* State governments are the biggest defaulters, responsible for an estimated a third of trade receivables, besides not paying subsidies in full or on time.

* About a seventh of DisCom cost structures is meant to be covered through explicit subsidies by State governments.

Increasing competition:

- The growing easing of regulations in the sector allowing for third party suppliers under competitive models would result in increased competition in the business of electricity supply.
- The DisComs due to their inefficient functioning and large financial debt are ill-equipped to take on the competition offered by the new entrants.

Disruption caused by pandemic:

- COVID-19 has completely shattered incoming cash flows to utilities due to the multi-month dip in demand.
- The reduced demand for electricity did not save as much costs for the DisComs because a large fraction of DisCom cost structures is locked in through Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) that obligate capital cost payments, leaving only fuel savings with lower offtake.

Measures to strengthen discoms

There is a need for a much larger liquidity infusion than has been announced thus far.

- The growing debt has to be paid down to manageable levels. This calls for a haircut in DisComs' debt obligations.
- In the long term, all the risk and future obligations should not be placed on DisComs alone. Generators, transmission companies, and lending institutions must all chip in.
- Need to reduce AT&C losses through appropriate technical and regulatory practices.
- Need a complete overhaul of the regulation of electricity companies and their deliverables. The regulators must allow cost-covering tariffs. The regulation should meet the national needs of quality, affordable, and sustainable power.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 13th April-2021

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Q) “Critically examine the virtual judiciary concept in India”. What steps can be taken to make it more meaningful?

Answer:

e-Courts project as part of virtual judiciary was conceptualized on the basis of the “National Policy and Action Plan for Implementation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the Indian Judiciary – 2005” submitted by eCommittee, Supreme Court of India with a vision to transform the Indian Judiciary by ICT enablement of Courts.

Advantages of virtual judiciary:

- The key advantages of establishment of Electronic Courts in India is bringing in a justice serving mechanism that is transparent, efficient, affordable, time saving, protects the interests of

witnesses, reduces the backlog of pending cases and most importantly reduces the number of unscrupulous activities.

- Entire information related to a particular case would be available online. It would be available to the attorneys, parties and the general public through the help of internet.
- Registered attorneys can file their case document directly from their home or office. They do not have to worry about postage, traffic congestion or messenger services. They can create a docket sheet and update it immediately, when the documents are filed.
- With the help of internet, the documents of a case can be accessed easily from anywhere at any time. § E-courts would help in the computerization of work flow management in courts. Thus, it would help to create a better court and case management. Video conferencing facilities would be installed in every court complex. Evidence of eyewitness, who are unable to attend the court can be recorded through this method.
- The information would not be misplaced as all the information regarding the case would be carefully recorded and stored. Data keeping would include maintaining the records of e-file minute entries, bail orders, warrants etc.
- In many cases, the witnesses are not able to come to the court and make their statement as the other party is too strong and scares them of the consequences. e-Courts can help in dealing with such cases.

Limitations of virtual judiciary:

- E-courts in India is an endless and complicating process. The process of e-filing a document is a difficult process. All the evidence cannot be produced in a digital format.
- Lack of techno legal expertise is the main reason for the poor status of e-courts in India. With the absence of techno legal expertise, electronic courts cannot be established in India. The country requires more techno legal e-court centers so that the project of e-court can achieve success.
- The project of e-court involves a lot of expenditure. It involves the use of a lot of computers and infrastructures. In the long run, e-courts may face the issue of lack of funds.
- Hackers are getting stronger with every passing day. The possibility of e-Courts getting hacked in such a case cannot be denied.

Measures to make it more meaningful

- It is critical to draw up a well-defined and pre-decided framework as it can help in laying a concrete roadmap and direction to the e-courts scheme of India.
- To achieve this, the government must establish an effective task force consisting of judges, technologists, court administrators, skill developers and system analysts to draw up a blueprint for institutionalizing online access to justice.
- Such a task force must be charged with the responsibility of establishing hardware, software and IT systems for courts; examining application of artificial intelligence benefiting from the data base generated through e-courts projects; establishing appropriate e-filing systems and procedures.
- Creating skill training and recognition for paralegals to understand and to help advocates and others to access the system to file their cases and add to their pleadings and documents as the case moves along. § Once the blueprint is ready, the High Courts across the country may refer the same to the Rule Committee of the High Court to frame appropriate rules to operationalise the e-court system.
- One aspect that needs to be focused on is the deployment of a robust security system that provides secure access to case information for appropriate parties. The security of e-courts infrastructure and system is of paramount importance.
- Also, user friendly e-courts mechanism, which is simple and easily accessible by the common public will encourage litigants to use such facilities in India.
- The government must also make dedicated efforts in the training of personnel to maintain all the e-data.
- Also, conducting training sessions to familiarize the Judges with the e-courts framework and procedure can give a huge impetus to the successful running of e-courts.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 14th April-2021

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Q) “Indian dairies have been facing many challenges and the recent pandemic has further affected its business”. Do you agree? Comment.

Answer:

Dairy industries and infrastructures modernized and expanded. After white revolution in India the main

Challenges faced by Indian dairies:

Shortage of feed/fodder:

o There are an excessive number of unproductive animals, which compete with productive dairy animals in the utilization of available feeds and fodder.

o The grazing area is being reduced markedly every year due to industrial development resulting in shortage of supply of feeds and fodder to the total requirement.

o The low capability of purchasing feeds and fodder by the small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers engaged in dairy development result in inadequate feeding.

o Non-supplementation of mineral mixture results in mineral deficiency diseases. High-cost Feeding reduces the profits of the dairy industry.

Breeding system:

o Late maturity, in most of the Indian cattle breeds, is a common problem.

o There is no effective detection of heat symptoms during oestrus cycle by the cattle owners.

o The calving interval is on the increase resulting in a reduction in efficiency of animal performance.

o Diseases causing abortion leads to economic loss to the industry. Mineral, hormone and vitamin deficiencies lead to fertility problems.

Education and Training:

- o A vigorous education and training programmes on good dairy practices could result in the production of safe dairy products, but to succeed they have to be participative in nature.
- o In this regard, education and training of all the employees is essential to develop a sense of ownership.
- o However, developing and implementing such programs in the dairy sector requires a strong commitment from the management, which at times, is a stumbling block.

Health:

- o Veterinary health care centers are located in far off places.
- o The ratio between cattle population and veterinary institutions is wider, resulting in inadequate health services to animals.
- o No regular and periodical vaccination schedule is followed; regular deworming programme is not done as per schedule, resulting in heavy mortality in calves, especially in buffalo.
- o No adequate immunity is established against various cattle diseases.

Hygiene Conditions:

- o Many cattle owners do not provide proper shelter to their cattles leaving them exposed to extreme climatic conditions.
- o Unsanitary conditions of cattle shed and milking yards, leads to mastitis conditions.
- o Unhygienic milk production leads to a reduction in storing quality and spoilage of milk and other products.

Marketing and Pricing:

- o Dairy farmers are not getting remunerative prices for milk supply.
- o Due to the adoption of an extensive cross breeding programme with Holstein Friesian breed, the fat content of crossbreed cow's milk is on the declining condition and low price is offered as the milk price is estimated on the basis of fat and solid nonfat milk content.
- o There is also a poor perception of the farmers, due to lack of marketing facilities and extension services, towards commercial dairy enterprise as an alternative to other occupations.

Measures that can be taken

Need of developing linkages between production centers and market

o Public spending in the livestock sector as a proportion of the value of the sector's output needs to be increased to re-energize the sector.

o The strengthening of linkages between production and markets through institutions such as co-operatives, producers' associations, and contract farming is the need of the hour.

o Institutional support in terms of credit and insurance is meager and needs to be strengthened. Further, the governments and industry should prepare producers for a quality-driven competition in the domestic as well as global market.

- Eradication of Infectious diseases

o Infectious diseases are a major burden on the farmers' economy. The recently launched National Animal Disease Control Programme (NADCP) aims at eradicating Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and brucellosis in livestock.

- AI and Automation Systems in livestock farm

o A lot of progress has been made in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation systems. The livestock farm automation system is the opportunity to tailor operations to the needs of each animal.

o This saves time, requires less labor and improves product quality, increases production, efficiency, accuracy, and safety.

o As automation demands high installation and repair costs; hence is more suitable for commercial & institutional farms.

o But with increased usage, the prices will be driven down. With the automation of farms, livestock management is shifting from being an art to an application on a mobile device.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 15th April-2021

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Q) "Discuss different kinds of aptitude for a civil servant. Also examine the relationship of aptitude with other qualities."

Answer:

Aptitude is the combination of abilities and other characteristics, whether native or acquired, known to be indicative of an individual's ability to develop proficiency in certain particular area. It refers to the capacity

or ability to acquire skill or knowledge in a particular area, on basis of which future performances can be predicted.

Different kinds of aptitude for a civil servant

- **Leadership:**
- Holders of public office should promote and support the principles of public life by leadership and example.
- For eg. Lal Bahadur Shastri used to fast every Monday to save grains for poor people of the country and he gave a call for the nation to follow it. Thus exhibiting a true example of how leaders should lead from the front.
- **Maxim of integrity**
- While undertaking any administrative action, an administrator practices utmost honesty and never uses his power, position and discretion to serve his personal interest. It ensures that public servants work with the honesty of highest standards.
- **Maxim of compassion**
- Compassion for the poor, the disabled and the weaker segment of the society is the highest virtue. It actually determines how successful you are as an administrator. In fact, all great administrators and leaders of society have been a compassionate person which is why they could connect to the masses.
- **Transparency and Accountability**
- Civil servants make all their decisions in a transparent manner. Transparency leaves no room for ambiguity. Civil services aspirants show utmost transparency in all their deeds. this increases the credibility and public trust on the public services.
- For eg. Vikram Sarabhai accepted the failure of ISRO first mission without actually putting it on the mission head (APJ Abdul Kalam). Thus taking full accountability for the failure of his team.
- **Objectivity**
- A nation having law-abidance citizens always grow and prosper so it becomes utmost essential for law enforcers to follow the law and rules to govern and guide. A civil servant has deepest respect for the law and its enforcement.
- **Principle of Justice**
- Administrators must observe principles of equity, equality, impartiality, fairness and objectivity.
- **Humility**
- the actions must not be high-handed and should be free of any vanity
- **Responsiveness and resilience**
- Responsiveness and resilience are among the most sought-after and must-have skills. Responsiveness helps you connect with people and pare down communication gap, the right response at the time, sometimes, can help avert awkward situations. Likewise, being resilient means you are ready to face down all the challenges of future with great finesse.
- Commitment for work
- A committed and a dedicated person excel and bring incredibly noticeable results wherever he puts his efforts. There is no substitute of hard and committed work. So an aspirant of UPSC examination must be a committed worker.
- **Ensuing excellence in the work**
- Determination to give nothing but the best instils in our heart courage to get the better of all agonies and problems and taste success. While striving for excellence, many seen and unseen problems are wiped out and we are on the way of giving optimal performance.
- **Principle of utilitarianism**
- An administrator counts on the principle that all his decisions should lead to the greatest good of the greatest number. Relying on the principle means that an administrator's reach is to most powerful as well as underprivileged classes of the society as well. After deciding to do maximum good for the society, all the decisions already become rational.
- **National Interest**

- A nation's prestige comes first and is above everything. A civil servant like a selfless soldier always measures the impact of his action on his nation's strength and prestige.

Relationship of aptitude and other qualities

Aptitude and Interest

- People have interests in many things, but this does not imply they have the aptitude for that. One may like cricket very much – but playing it on field is much different than watching it on television. One may have the aptitude for good commentary or writing skills and then one may choose a profession where his/her interests and aptitude match- such as becoming a commentator or a sports journalist.

Aptitude & Ability

- Aptitude is often considered to represent specific subsets of mental ability which provides useful information on an individual's potential, particularly with regards to education and employment. Ability is much closer to intelligence. It is concerned with present. It is the combination of skills, habits and powers that an individual now has which enable him to do something. Aptitude indicates what an individual will be able to learn/do and ability presents evidence of what the individual is able to do now (or in future without additional training). From a practical standpoint, it is impossible to measure aptitude without the degree of training which an individual has already had. It is assumed that individuals have been exposed to certain experiences which enhance their aptitude when it is measured.

Aptitude and Intelligence

- Aptitude is innate potential to do certain task in future, provided appropriate training is provided to the person. Intelligence's key component is the ability to think rationally, act purposefully and deal effectively in one's present environment. Intelligence has a wider scope as in it refers to general mental ability. Aptitude on the other hand has narrow scope- it is specific to work. It breaks down intelligence into several characteristics, referring to a specific ability of a person to do a task in future. Thus, aptitude is not same as intelligence. Two people with same intelligence quotient (IQ) may have different aptitudes e.g. one to become scientist and another novelist.

Aptitude and Attitude

- Aptitude is innate potential to do certain task in future, provided appropriate training is provided to the person. An attitude is a lasting, general evaluation of people (including oneself), objects or issues. It is a predisposition to behave in certain ways i.e. a tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain idea, object, person, or situation. Attitude can be changed in certain ways, but aptitude can't be developed if it is not there, because it is innate potential.

Aptitude and Values

- Values are different from aptitude in that, value denotes the degree of importance of some thing or action, with the aim of determining what actions are best to do or what way is best to live. Though values may be "positive" or "negative", like empathy towards weaker section is positive while regarding one's own caste to be highest is negative. But generally, they are taken for positive and desirable values. Thus, they deal with right conduct and living a good life, in the sense that a highly, or at least relatively highly, valuable action may be regarded as ethically "good", and an action of low in value, or somewhat relatively low in value, may be regarded as "bad". Hence, values can be defined as broad preferences concerning appropriate courses of action or outcomes. As such, values reflect a person's sense of right and wrong or what "ought" to be. "Equal rights for all", "Excellence deserves admiration", and "People should be treated with respect and dignity" are representative of values.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 16th April-2021

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Q) “India is far behind some developing countries where digital education is getting increased attention.” Discuss the potential for digital education in India. Also examine the challenges in strengthening e-learning in India.

Answer :

The coronavirus pandemic has shuttered educational institutions across the globe. Closure of schools, colleges and universities, shutdown of routine life of students and teachers, disruptions in education and the education ministry remaining incommunicado, have created an unprecedented situation and thrown many unexpected challenges to administrators, educators, teachers, parents and students.

Potential of digital education in India

This is an ideal time to experiment and deploy new tools to make education delivery meaningful to students who can't go to campuses.

- It's a chance to be more efficient and productive while developing new and improved professional skills/knowledge through online learning and assessment.
- The use of technology in education is resulting in different concepts in the system, for instance the move from teacher-centric education to student-centric education.
- Virtual classrooms and various online tools today allow us to make the engagement between the teacher and students as close to a real, in classroom type experience, as possible.
- These tools can also make the teachers and parent meetings as well as staff/management meetings more time and cost saving while providing the necessary interactivity.
- It is also a fact that technology-based education is more transparent and does not make difference in front vs back benchers or girls vs boys.
- State governments and private players have regularly been publishing information on various initiatives undertaken by ministries like MHRD, Department of Technical Education, NCERT and others to support and benefit youth/students.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 17th April-2021

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Q) “Examine why palm cultivation is seen mostly in North east India.” What measures are taken by the government in stabilizing palm cultivation in that region?

Answer:

India is one of the major oilseed’s growers and importer of edible oils. India’s vegetable oil economy is world’s fourth largest after USA, China & Brazil. Palm oil is a major edible oil now and total potential area for oil palm cultivation in India is 1.9 million hectares. Area under oil palm is about 3 lakh hectares. Andhra Pradesh accounts for more than 55 per cent of the total coverage.

Reasons why North Eastern states are being pushed for palm cultivation are:

Geographical factors:

Suitable climate: Best growing conditions for palm trees exist in a small band around the equator, limiting the number of places the crop can be successfully farmed. These regions coincide with the rainforest zones. Palm requires humid weather throughout the year which might be provided by India’s north east naturally unlike the irrigated cultivation in AP.

Fertile land, abundant water resources, dependable rainfall and vast biodiversity the northeastern region holds tremendous potential on the agricultural front.

Not only is palm oil the cheapest vegetable oil in the world, but from a farmer’s perspective, it is also perhaps the most rewarding, with yields of four to six tonnes of crude palm oil per hectare

- **Policy and government’s push:**

Government support Mizoram, the government has instituted a New Land Use Policy (NLUP) vowing to stamp out “wasteful shifting cultivation” and replace it with settled agriculture, especially oil palm monocultures.

In palm cultivation harvesting occurs all the year-round, producing a continuous supply of oil that can provide an alternate source of employment in these states.

- **Economic reasons:**

With rising competition over finite agricultural land among different crops, only higher productivity can bridge the demand-supply gap. The answer is oil palm that produces 4- 6 tons of crude palm oil and 0. 4- 0. 6 tons of palm kernel oil per hectare during its productive lifespan of 20 years, compared to a yield of less than 1 ton per hectare from other oilseeds. This also gives palm oil a distinct price advantage

Government measures:

The government is seriously concerned about stagnant oilseeds production and the rising import of edible oils to the tune of 15 million tons per annum, costing the exchequer over Rs 75,000 crore. To increase production of oilseeds from the current 30 million tons to over 47 million tons by 2024-25, the government plans to launch the national mission on edible oil programme in the next three months. The Budget for 2020-21 may allocate funds for this mission.

Earlier government initiatives

- Although India's Oil Palm Development Programme (OPDP) dates back to 1991, it is only recently (2011) that the government has begun to seriously view oil palm as important to India's edible oil security and is aggressively pushing for increased cultivation under the **Special Programme on Oil Palm Area Expansion (OPAE)**.
 - The OPAE has budgeted Rs 300 crore to expand oil palm cultivation by 600 km² in 12 states over five years.
- The government has announced a package of 10, 000 crore over three years, which is intended to support farmers until the trees begin to yield. The government has identified nine States with suitable climatic conditions including north east.
- The government also allowed 100 per cent FDI in palm oil plantations
- In a relatively recent development, Rs 3, 507 crores were sanctioned to **National Mission on Oilseeds and Oil Palm in 2014**.
 - One of the aims of this scheme is bring 125, 000 hectares of area under oil palm cultivation through area expansion.
 - Nineteen states are a part of oil palm expansion plan, of these seven Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura are from India's northeast.
- Most recently, Ruchi Soya Industries Ltd signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with Arunachal Pradesh government to development oil palm in 25, 000 hectares in four districts of the state.

Way forward:

- Globally, many countries have allowed use of GM oilseeds and oil made from them are finding their way into India.
- Soyabean oil imported from Argentina and rapeseed oil from Canada also include oil made from GM seeds.
- Even without government permission, Indians consume edible oil made from GM seeds.
- Tax concessions for companies supporting oilseeds farming and promoting oil palm cultivation are some major recommendations.
- India must insist that all oil palm cultivation conforms at least to Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) standards.
- The need is to establish appropriate checks, balances and punitive measures for socially disruptive and ecologically destructive practices. In this process, consultations with local communities, state governments and social and environmental scientists is essential, rather than limiting policy formulation simply to the central agricultural ministry.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 18th April-2021

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Q) "There has been an increase in the usage of Single use plastic after the corona outbreak." In this light, illustrate the adverse impact of single use plastic and approach to treat this issue.

Answer:

Single-use plastic is a form of plastic that is disposable, which is only used once and then has to be thrown away or recycled. The single-use plastic items include plastic bags, water bottles, soda bottles, straws, plastic plates, cups, most food packaging and coffee stirrers.

Impact of Single Use Plastic

- Environment:

It can take thousands of years for plastic bags to decompose, thus contaminating our soil and water in the process. The noxious chemicals used to produce plastic get transmitted to animal tissue, and finally, enter the human food chain.

- Biodiversity:

Birds usually confuse shreds of plastic bags for food and end up eating the toxic debris. Fish consume thousands of tons of plastic in a year, ultimately transferring it up the food chain to marine mammals.

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) claims that a person could be consuming 5 grams of plastic a week. Plastic kills an estimated 1 million seabirds every year and affects around 700 species, which get infected by ingesting plastics.

- Land:

According to the Un-Plastic Collective Report, an estimated 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic has been produced since the early 1950s, about 60% of which has ended up either in a landfill or the natural environment.

- Climate:

In 2019, a new report "Plastic and Climate" was published. According to the report, in 2019, production and incineration of plastic will contribute greenhouse gases in the equivalent of 850 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) to the atmosphere.

In current trend, annual emissions from these sources will grow to 1.34 billion tonnes by 2030.

By 2050, plastic could emit 56 billion tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions, as much as 14 percent of the earth's remaining carbon budget.

- Water:

Chlorinated plastic can release harmful chemicals into the surrounding soil, which can then seep into groundwater or other surrounding water sources and also the ecosystem of the world. This can cause serious harm to the species that drink the water.

- **Marine life:**

Entanglement in plastic debris has been responsible for the deaths of many marine organisms, such as fish, seals, turtles, and birds.

These animals get caught in the debris and end up suffocating or drowning. Because they are unable to untangle themselves, they also die from starvation or from their inability to escape predators.

- **Humans:**

Some compounds that are used in plastics, such as phthalates, Bisphenol A (BRA), Poly Brominated Diphenyl Ether (PBDE), are under close statute and might be very hurtful.

The large dosage of these compounds is hazardous to humans, destroying the endocrine system.

BRA imitates the female's hormone called estrogen. PBDE destroys and causes damage to thyroid hormones, which are vital hormone glands that play a major role in the metabolism, growth and development of the human body.

Approach to treat this issue include

One way to approach the issue is to treat it not just as an environmental problem but also as an economic opportunity.

In Uganda, they are melting plastic waste to make face shields, which are being sold for just a dollar each.

In Singapore, start-ups are using stainless steel cups and bamboo boxes, which can be returned and reused after being washed and sanitised.

Village communities are setting up the waste collection and segregation systems, with material recovery facilities at the block-level under phase 2 of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen).

- It will require considerable nudging and support from the government to push manufacturers to develop products and packaging with use-for-use alternative materials.

The government may also have to provide support by enabling market access for such products, which if left to their own will face tough competition from cheaper plastic counterparts.

Furthermore, retail units will need to pitch in by using price incentives to encourage consumers to reduce demand for plastic packaging.

- Finally, it will boil down to consumer participation. People will have to adopt more responsible consumption choices even if it entails inconvenience.

- Recycling and reusing plastic needs to be strengthened to bring back used plastic into the manufacturing cycle. This strategy will achieve the twin goal of reducing entry of virgin plastics into the market, as well as reducing plastic waste burden in waste dumps, landfills, and oceans.
- It's a responsibility they are advised to share with consumers by empowering them with choices and knowledge, perhaps by investing in improved packaging design and labeling.
- A recent push by NITI Aayog to make use of 25 per cent recycled materials in large construction projects compulsory comes at an opportune time.
- Coupled with the recommendation of designating one nodal ministry for the hitherto neglected recycling sector, this promises to be a significant step in the right direction.

True change is only possible when each one of us takes responsibility for the environment around us and takes necessary steps to Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and, when all else fails, Remove, or dispose of plastic waste safely and effectively.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 19th April-2021

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Q) "Is oil spill an environmental hazard?" Elucidate. Also explain how oil spills can be cleaned.

Answer:

OECD defines an oil spill as oil, discharged accidentally or intentionally, that floats on the surface of water bodies as a discrete mass and is carried by the wind, currents and tides. Oil spills can pollute land, air, or water, though it is mostly used for oceanic oil spills.

Environmental impact of Oil spills

When an oil spill occurs, many elements of the environment may be affected. Depending on the magnitude of the spill and its location, the effects can vary, ranging from minimal to serious ones.

- **Ecosystem Destruction:** Oil spills can have a major impact on the temporary animal and fish loss of habitat. Heavy oils may affect several organism functions like respiration, feeding, and thermo-regulation. § At the same time, the entire ecosystem can change temporarily because of the chemical components and elements of the spilled oil that are toxic to the environment.
- If an aquatic oil spill is substantial enough (such as in the case of Exxon Valdez 1989 spill or the April 2010 BP spill in the Gulf of Mexico from offshore drilling) then the effects on marine life, birds, humans and ecosystems (including marshes and wetlands, as well as shorelines or gulf coasts) could be serious.
- There are immediate effects on humans, fish, animals, birds and wildlife in general, mainly due to:

- direct contact with the spilled oil including breathing of volatilized oil components (hydrocarbons) from the spill;
- direct contact with the environment polluted with spilled oil components (some of which may persist a long time), such as drinking polluted water or breathing polluted dust particles;
- consumption of polluted food – at any level within the food chain, with a higher risk for food pollution at the higher levels of the food chain, i.e. humans and animals.

If the oil washes into coastal marshes, mangrove forests, or other wetlands, fibrous plants and grasses absorb oil, which can damage plants and make the area unsuitable as wildlife habitat.

- Despite massive clean-up efforts following the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, a 2007 study conducted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) found that 26,000 gallons of oil were still trapped in the sand along the Alaska shoreline.

Although some organisms may be seriously injured or killed very soon after contact with the oil in a spill, other effects are more subtle and often longer lasting.

- For example, freshwater organisms are at risk of being smothered by oil that is carried by the current, or of being slowly poisoned by long-term exposure to oil trapped in shallow water or stream beds.

On Marine Organisms: Oil spills frequently kill marine mammals such as whales, dolphins, seals, and sea otters.

- Oil can clog blowholes of whales and dolphins, making it impossible for them to breathe properly and disrupting their ability to communicate.
- Oil coats fur of otters and seals, leaving them vulnerable to hypothermia.
- Marine mammals that eat fish or other food exposed to an oil spill may be poisoned by oil and die or experience other problems.
- Oil spills often take a deadly toll on fish, shellfish, and other marine life, particularly if many fish eggs or larvae are exposed to oil.
- Eg: Fisheries impacted by the Exxon Valdez took over three decades to recover.

On Birds: Oil spills also damage nesting grounds, potentially causing serious long-term effects on entire species.

- The 2010 BP Deepwater Horizon offshore oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, for example, occurred during prime mating and nesting season for many bird and marine species, and long-term environmental consequences of that spill won't be known for years.
- Oil spills can disrupt migratory patterns by contaminating areas where migrating birds normally stop.
- By coating feathers, oil not only makes flying impossible but also destroys birds' natural waterproofing and insulation, leaving them vulnerable to hypothermia or overheating.
- As birds frantically preen their feathers to restore their natural protections, they often swallow oil, which can severely damage their internal organs and lead to death.

Methods through which oil spill can be cleaned:

- Oil spills can be partially controlled by chemical dispersion, combustion, mechanical containment and adsorption.
- Containment Booms: Floating barriers, called booms are used to restrict the spread of oil and to allow for its recovery, removal, or dispersal.
- Skimmers: are devices used for physically separating spilled oil from the water's surface.

- Sorbents: Various sorbents (e.g., straw, volcanic ash, and shavings of polyester-derived plastic) that absorb the oil from the water are used.
- Dispersing agents: These are chemicals that contain surfactants, or compounds that act to break liquid substances such as oil into small droplets. They accelerate its natural dispersion into the sea.
- Bio-agents: Nutrients, enzymes, or microorganisms such as *Alcanivorax* bacteria or *Methylocellasilvestris* that increase the rate at which natural biodegradation of oil occurs are added.

Ultimately, the severity of environmental damage caused by an oil spill depends on many factors, including the amount of oil spilled, type and weight of oil, location of the spill, species of wildlife in the area, timing of breeding cycles and seasonal migrations, and even the weather at sea during and after the oil spill.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 20th April-2021

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Q) “Ancient India is peaceful and united without communal feelings but presently Indian communalism has its influence from socio-economic and political infrastructure.” Examine

Answer :

It has been argued that communal consciousness arose as a result of the transformation of Indian society under the impact of colonialism and the need to struggle against it. The growing economic, political and administrative unification of regions and the country, the process of making India into a nation, the developing contradiction between colonialism and the Indian people and the formation of modern social classes and strata called for new ways of seeing one's common interests. They made it necessary to have wider links and loyalties among the people and to form new identities.

Thus, communalism emerged as a consequence of the emergence of modern politics, which marked a sharp break with the politics of the ancient or medieval or even pre-1857 periods.

Modern colonial socio-economic structure

- Communalism was one of the by-products of the colonial character of Indian economy, of colonial underdevelopment, of the incapacity of colonialism to develop the Indian economy. The resulting economic stagnation and its impact on the lives of the Indian people, especially the middle classes who could not fall back on land, produced conditions which were conducive to division and antagonism within Indian society as also to its radical transformation.
- There were some who lacked a wider social vision and political understanding and looked to their narrow immediate interests and short-term solutions to their personal or sectional problems such as communal, caste, or provincial reservation in jobs.

- Throughout the 20th century, in the absence of modern industrial development and development of education, health etc., unemployment was an acute problem in India. So, there was intense competition among the individuals for government jobs. In an attempt to get a larger share of existing economic opportunities, middle class individuals also began using group identities such as caste, province and religion to enhance their capacity to compete. Thus, some individuals from the middle classes did benefit, in the short run, from communalism, especially in the field of government employment. This gave an aura of validity to communal politics.

Modern colonial political structure

- Communalism emerged as politics and as an ideology only after politics based on the people, politics of popular participation, politics based on the creation and mobilization of public opinion had come into existence.
- The process of grasping the new, emerging political reality and social relations with the aid of new ideas and concepts was a difficult and gradual process. It required the spread of modern ideas of nationalism, cultural-linguistic development and class struggle. But wherever their growth was slow and partial, people inevitably used the old, familiar pre-modern categories of self-identity such as caste, locality, region, race, religion, sect and occupation to grasp the new reality, to make wider connections and to evolve new identities and ideologies. In particular, religious consciousness was transformed into communal consciousness in some parts of the country and among some sections of the people. This was because there were some factors in the Indian situation which favoured its growth, it served the needs of certain sections of society and certain social and political forces.
- Though communalism was not inherent or inevitable in the Indian situation, it was not a mere conspiracy of power-hungry politicians and crafty administrators either. It had socio-economic and political roots. There was a social situation which was funneling it and without which it could not have survived for long.

Thus, communalism was deeply rooted in and was an expression of the interests and aspirations of the middle classes in a social situation in which opportunities for them were grossly inadequate in the absence of openings in industry, commerce, education etc. and government service being the main avenue of employment for the middle classes.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 21st April-2021

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Q) “The deficiencies in the current laws showed the need for a comprehensive law to tackle epidemics. Is it true?” Elucidate the importance of protection of basic civil rights in the recent covid-19 posed lockdown.

Answer:

Covid-19 pandemic has raised a number of challenges across the globe; practically in different spheres of administration, border crossings, health services, civic behaviour, technology’ diplomacy and so on. Country after country is struggling with the tough choice between saving lives vs saving livelihoods. In a large and diverse country such as India, the challenges are even more complicated, particularly when public health is not a central or even a concurrent subject but purely a state subject.

Importance of protection of basic civil rights amidst the present lockdown scenario:

- The post covid-19 world will not be same again.
- Further evidences show that due to increased climate change effects, epidemics and pandemics through various means like Zoonotic diseases is a reality.
- The lockdown, however, does not come without a fair share of problems of its own, the most pertinent is centered around the protection of basic civil rights in this lockdown.
- People at the bottom of the socio-economic pyramid, especially migrant workers have been the worst hit by the lockdown.
- India, with its vast territory, large but extremely diverse population, and low literacy levels, poses a special kind of challenge to a government trying to develop a nationwide solution to tackle the epidemic.
- The reckless disregard to the lockdown by some people and the numerous instances of rumour mongering have been extremely problematic for the administration to maintain law and order across the country.
- This presents an extremely peculiar position where the government, on the one hand, has to ensure the basic civil rights of people, and on the other, has to curb the outbreak of the disease.
- Though it might be too early to call, but from the data available, one can easily deduce that countries which have opted for 'slightly authoritarian measures', like Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan, despite their proximity to China have prevailed, while countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy either due to their lax or vacillated approach have succumbed to the virus.
- A cursory inference of this data easily invokes the dogma of whether "desperate times require desperate measures", meaning whether and to what extent should the government impose restrictions on civil rights to curb the pandemic.
- In such testing times, where the entire scenario can be narrowed down to the equation of liberties vs lives, a hybrid approach that encompasses the spirit of both sides should be applied.
- Drawing the line in such cases, however, becomes an arduous task.
- This implies that while certain fundamental rights, such as the right to religion or the right to expression can be restricted, the restriction in all such cases shall be reasonable and open to judicial scrutiny.
- The recent case of T. Ganesh Kumar vs Union of India captures the essence of this quandary, where the Madras High Court rightly dismissed a petition that sought a ban on newspapers.
- The current law governing during epidemics is the colonial-era Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, which leaves much to be desired. The four-page long law is dotted with ambiguous and opened wording.

The best remedy to successfully tackle the current epidemic and prepare for the future lies in modifying or rather creating a comprehensive legislation that specializes in dealing with such cases.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 22nd April-2021

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Q) "Women is the main focus of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's social reforms, he spent his entire life in ending the practice of child marriage and initiating widow remarriage." Examine his contribution in energizing women.

Answer:

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891) was as one of the pillars of Bengal renaissance who managed to continue the social reforms movement that was started by Raja Rammohan Roy in the early 1800s. Vidyasagar was a well-known writer, intellectual and above all a staunch supporter of humanity. He had an imposing personality and was revered even by the British authorities of his time. He brought about a revolution in the Bengali education system and refined the way Bengali language was written and taught. His book, 'Borno Porichoy' (Introduction to the letter), is still used as the introductory text to learn Bengali alphabets. The title 'Vidyasagar' (ocean of knowledge) was given to him due to his vast knowledge in several subjects.

His contribution in energizing women

Widow Remarriage:

- The focus of his social reform was women — and he spent his life's energies trying to ensure an end to the practice of child marriage and initiate widow remarriage.
- He followed in the great reformist tradition of Raja Ram Mohun Roy (1772-1833), and argued, on the basis of scriptures and old commentaries, in favour of the remarriage of widows in the same way as Roy did for the abolition of Sati.
- Vidyasagar wrote two volumes on the mistreatment of widows, which set the tone for major social reform in the state.
- His earliest effort at social reform, however, came in the second half of 1850 when, in a paper on the evils of child marriage.
- He launched a powerful attack on the practice of marrying off girls aged 10 or even younger, pointing to social, ethical, and hygiene issues, and rejecting the validity of the Dharma Shastras that advocated it.
- He showed that there was no prohibition on widows remarrying in the entire body of 'Smriti' literature (the Sutras and the Shastras).

Educational Reforms:

- Vidyasagar is credited with the role of thoroughly remodelling medieval scholastic system prevailing in Sanskrit College and bring about modern insights into the education system.
- The first change that Vidyasagar made when he came back to the Sanskrit College as a Professor was to include English and Bengali as the medium of learning, besides Sanskrit.
- He introduced courses of European History, Philosophy and Science alongside of Vedic scriptures. He encouraged students to pursue these subjects and take away the best from both worlds.
- He also changed the rules of admission for students in Sanskrit College allowing non-Brahmin students to enrol in the prestigious institution.
- He wrote two books 'Upakramonika' and 'Byakaran Koumudi', interpreting complex notions of Sanskrit grammar in easy legible Bengali language.
- He introduced the concepts of Admission fee and tuition fee for the first time in Calcutta. He set up the Normal School for training teachers enabling uniformity in teaching methods. Through his contacts at the deputy magistrate's office, he would help his students get jobs in government offices.

Campaign against polygamy:

- Alongside the campaign for widow remarriage, he campaigned against polygamy.
- In 1857, a petition for the prohibition of polygamy among Kulin Brahmins was presented to the government with 25,000 signatures, led by the Maharaja of Burdwan.

- The mutiny of the sepoys resulted in the postponement of action on this petition, but in 1866, Vidyasagar inspired another petition, this time with 21,000 signatures.
- In the 1870s, the great rationalist, wrote two brilliant critiques of polygamy, arguing to the government that since polygamy was not sanctioned by the sacred texts, there could be no objection to suppressing it by legislation.

Women's education:

- He was a keen advocate of education for women. He rightly viewed education as the primary way for women to emancipate themselves from all the social oppression they had to face at the time.
- He went door to door, asking family heads to allow their daughters to be enrolled in schools. Across Bengal, he opened 35 women's schools and succeeded in enrolling 1300 students.
- To support women education, he organized a fund called Nari Shiksha Bhandar.
- He supported Drinkwater Bethune to establish the first permanent girls' school in India, the Bethune School.
- Vidyasagar spent the last 18 years of his life living among Santhal tribals in present day Jharkhand, where he started what is possibly India's first school for Santhal girls.
- He expressed his ideas through regular articles he wrote for periodicals and newspapers. He was associated with prestigious journalistic publications like 'Tattwabodhini Patrika', 'Somprakash', 'Sarbashubhankari Patrika' and 'Hindu Patriot'.

His literary works:

- Vidyasagar's **Barna Parichay**(an introduction to the Bengali alphabet) is still the first book a Bengali child is handed more than 160 years after it was written.
- His contribution to the alphabet, translation of several Sanskrit books, including Kalidas's Shankuntala, has helped Bengali literature.
- He wrote two books which interpreted complex notions of Sanskrit Grammar in Bengali language viz. **Upakaramonika and Byakaran Koumudi**.
- He established the Sanskrit Press with an aim to produce printed books at affordable prices so that common people could buy them

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 23rd April-2021

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Q) "From substantive defence engagement to regional questions in Central Asia, Afghanistan and West Asia, a conversation with Russia remains an important element of Indian foreign policy." Discuss the importance of multilateral forums. What are the challenges relating to it for India?

Answer:

In international relations, multilateralism refers to an alliance of multiple countries pursuing a common goal.

Importance of Multilateral Forums:

- From substantive defence engagement to regional questions in Central Asia, Afghanistan and West Asia, a conversation with Russia remains an important element of Indian foreign policy.
- The multilateral forums are important as they foster continued India-Russia cooperation at the bilateral and multilateral levels. * India and Russia, particularly since the 2018 Sochi informal summit have spent the past few years strengthening their partnership.
- India's External Affairs Minister has noted that we live in a 'curious world' where one cannot view engagement with different parties as a 'zero-sum game'. The zero-sum game essentially means gain for one of the players and loss for the other.
- As a result, worsening India-China ties or a growing China-Russia relationship would not automatically mean a breakdown of the India-Russia strategic partnership

Challenges for India

Both India and Russia recognize the value of having a diversified portfolio of ties.

- The combination of a changing regional order, closer Russia-China ties and India's alignment with the United States and other like-minded countries to manage China's rise has the potential to create hurdles for India-Russia cooperation in Asia.
- India would like to secure Russian support in this changing Asian regional order. However, Russia has seen China become its key partner as relations with the West have hit a new post-Cold War low since 2014.
- The U.S. policy towards Russia has further pushed it towards China. This has resulted in strengthening China's rising power, to the detriment of both Indian and western interests.
- India on its part has sought to include Russia in its vision of the Indo-Pacific that does not see the region as 'a strategy or as a club of limited members'.
- Russia has acknowledged that the Indo-Pacific does not include the aim of containment of another power, however, it has been critical of the American conception of the region that in its strategy classifies China as a revisionist power.

Education quality will be gauged not just by the quality of faculty but will also have quality of IT infrastructure and familiarization of the faculty will digitally teaching technologies as important parameters.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 24th April-2021

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Q) "The concept of civil servants being neutral to political dispensation has been debated in context of India." In this light highlight the conflict areas between political executives and civil servants.

Answer:

Demands of a committed bureaucracy have been implicit on change of governments, if not explicit. Further, what is the extent of neutrality that can be observed in practice. The reasons for a potential conflict between civil servants and political executive can arise because of the following reasons:

1. Societal consensus about the goals to be pursued varies among people. In West, there is a certain consensus on goals of development. There is also a certain degree of homogeneity in societal formation. Lack of consensus on the goals and path of development creates ambiguity in the policy preferences. This in turn leads to adhocism, which cannot provide clear direction to the permanent executive. On the contrary, political process start occupying the space (i.e. more interference) meant for civil servants. This can strain the relationship.
2. Political executive may pressurize the permanent executive to violate the very rules that they themselves formulated. Civil Services, being rooted in a rule-based system resist this pressure. This may again lead to conflicts between the two.
3. Presence of shared belief system: It means there is common belief system with respect to vital social issues. Belief system is a product of various factors, important amongst them the culture, society, surroundings that one has grown up in, the education system one was exposed to, etc. In India, the civil services have mostly come from a urban middle class where as political executive is more diverse. Although the character of bureaucracy is changing, it has been changing rather slowly. While a bulk of the members of the political executive, particularly at the state level, have been drawn from the rural and agricultural background, the top and middle level administrators are from the urban middle and upper middle classes- most that qualify for civil services are from urban towns, whereas political representation is spread equally, and since roughly only 32 percent of population is urban, the distribution of seats would also be similar. These differences are manifest in their style of living, mode of communication, ways of looking at things and their mannerisms. The relationship between the two is partly shaped by this factor of value system.

Further, it is argued that, in developing societies, there are weaker sections that must be supported by the administration if the devised policies are ill-suited to their needs. In this context, one of our former Prime Ministers said, "In developing countries, civil servants, to be genuinely neutral, has to take side of the poor."

However, it must be remembered that neutrality is an ideal, like any other ideal such as democracy, which can't exist in its perfect form, simply because it is an 'ideal'. But it doesn't mean that we should discard them for this reason only. Just as the absence of democracy would lead destruction of individual rights, similarly absence of neutrality would cause chaos in functioning of public administration. Therefore, this ideal is worth pursuing forever in the appropriate cultural context.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 25th April-2021

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Q) "Inadequate infrastructure in urban areas is making urban poor vulnerable." In this light, discuss the challenges posed by the urban infrastructure and condition of urban poor.

Answer:

The Covid-19 pandemic has upended the world as we know it. In the subsequent blame game, dense cities occupy pole position. Prima facie, this looks like a fair accusation given the extent of the outbreak in Mumbai, Delhi, New York and London.

Conditions of urban poor

- High vulnerability:
 - ♣ Indian cities are vulnerable to multiple disasters like urban floods, urban heat islands, air pollution, inaccessibility of potable water etc.
 - ♣ For instance, When the monsoon hits Mumbai this June, the city, which is already fighting the coronavirus pandemic, will be staring at another major challenge: vector-borne diseases.
 - ♣ People living in slum areas – ‘urban poor’ are also prone to suffer from waterborne diseases such as typhoid and cholera, as well as from more fatal ones like cancer and HIV/AIDS.
 - ♣ Also, women and children living in slums are prone to become victims of social evils like prostitution, beggary and child trafficking. Slum dwellers in general and regardless of gender, often become victims of such social evils.
- Proliferation of slums: – land to people ratio in cities has been exacerbated. Also there is lack of hygienic and sanitation in slums leading to various health problem living there.
- Non-inclusive development: Urban poor are not receiving the benefits of the development – rich are getting richer with development while poor are getting poorer. E.g. India is quite far behind in inclusivity index.
- Degradation of environment and habitat: Urban commons like lake, urban forests, green areas in Cities are adversely affected due to the need for development, for instance, Aarey forests in Mumbai.
- Development at the cost of poor: The peri-urban areas where tribes live are being occupied for establishments of industries without proper compensation and rehabilitation.
- Hectic life: as per a survey people in mega cities are spend more time in office than home. Family life has been affected adversely.
- Lastly, hunger, malnourishment, lack of quality education, high infant mortality, child marriage, child labour are some of the other social problems prevalent for urban poor.

Challenges of infrastructure in urban areas across India:

- Large cities control a significant share of the Indian economy, the propulsive industries, and new economic opportunities.

- A majority of cities in India face hard challenges related to housing, transport, electricity, water supply, pollution, and congestion.
- Internally, most cities are also marked by significant social exclusion, crime, and violence.
- The health systems in megacities like Delhi and Mumbai are also overburdened and face a shortage of hospital staff and beds.
- Class I cities (more than a lakh population) have 1.4 beds per 1,000 people. Delhi has 1.5 beds per 1,000 people whereas Mumbai has one bed per 1,000 people.
- This congestion is most evident in slums in large cities and poses a grave health and environmental challenge.
- The risk of contagious diseases is more potent in these areas as residents also suffer from a lack of basic services such as safe drinking water and sanitation.
- The low number of COVID-19 tests conducted in these towns reveals a lack of capacity, which, in turn, distorts the scale of the current crisis.
- The challenges of urban poverty and congestion cry for more attention, more government support. Further neglect will lead to grave health and environmental challenges.
- City infrastructure across India is in disrepair, and 2017 gave us a series of unfortunate examples in Mumbai: multiple building collapses, a stampede after a pedestrian bridge collapsed, lamentable monsoon floods, and a horrific fire in the Kamla Mills complex 'Housing for All' policy should be pursued with a vigorous annual review that ranks States on the basis of performance. The Centre should also take its own National Urban Transport Policy on developing cities around mobility networks seriously.
- Urban governance policies, although mainly in the domain of the States, must be aligned with national commitments on reduction of carbon emissions under the Paris Agreement, and to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 11.
- There is a need for a plan of action to achieve sustainable human settlements. It should ensure adequate shelter, water, energy, sanitation and solid waste management, along with other elements.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 26th April-2021

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Q) “Even though India has many dams, rivers to provide irrigation to the fields, farmer suicides are a never-ending problem especially in dry land farming areas.” Elucidate why water scarcity is high in India and the government steps toward it. (250 words)

Answer:

Water scarcity is the lack of sufficient available water resources to meet the demands of water usage within a region. The water scarcity is mostly man made due to excess population growth and mismanagement of water resources.

Reasons behind water scarcity are: A deficiency in monsoon rainfall for two successive years resulted in serious water shortages in many states

Inefficient use of water for agriculture:

o Consumption of water for irrigation is amongst the highest.

o Traditional techniques of irrigation cause maximum water loss due to evaporation, drainage, percolation, water conveyance, and excess use of groundwater. As more areas come under traditional irrigation techniques, the stress for water available for other purposes will continue.

- Excessive cultivation of water-intensive crops such as rice, wheat and sugar cane has exacerbated the water scarcity. As much as 70% of water delivered through India's limited irrigation infrastructure goes to water sugar cane fields in some states.
- Massive deforestation since the 1990s has had a huge bearing on the South Asian monsoon, causing an 18% decline in precipitation over India.
- Rain water harvesting is patchy in India so much of the huge amount of water dumped on the country during the monsoon every year just dries up or flows into the ocean.
- Government's Policies are also to blame for the country's chronic water issues. Its subsidies and price supports encourage the overuse of water while it continues to fail to build the nationwide network needed to conserve and distribute water.
- Reduction in traditional water recharging areas. Rapid construction is ignoring traditional water bodies that have also acted as ground water recharging mechanisms.
- Sewage and wastewater drainage into traditional water bodies: Release of chemicals and effluents into rivers, streams and ponds.
- Lack of on-time de-silting operations in large water bodies that can enhance water storage capacity during monsoon.
- Lack of efficient water management and distribution of water between urban consumers, the agriculture sector and industry.
- The problem has been compounded with increased concretization due to urban development that has choked ground water resources.

Why are there more farmers' suicides in dry farming areas?

- Dependence of farmers in Marathwada and other areas on water-guzzling cash crops such as sugarcane has been cited as one of the reasons for the distress
- In Karnataka increased compensation to the next of kin of farmers who commit suicide have been cited as reasons for the spike in suicide rate in the state

- In places like Vidharbha which is home for approximately 3. 4 million cotton farmers and 95% of these are struggling with the massive debt.
- Majority of suicide cases are from cotton growing areas. The cotton farmers in India pay more prices for inputs like seeds, pesticides, fertilizers, electricity, water, and labor whereas the price of cotton has gone down along with decreased productivity.
- Absence of adequate social support infrastructure at the level of the village and district
- Since a long time, Indian farmers have been facing a number of socioeconomic problems, such as harassment by moneylenders, inability to repay debts following crop loss, inability to get medical treatment for the family, etc. The problem is compounded by lack of positive and cooperative support from banks especially in the face of inclement weather and market fluctuations.
- In Maharashtra the reasons for such a pathetic state of farmers include below average rainfall, heavy load-shedding, lack of small irrigation projects, poverty, pressure of private money lenders and banks.
- The promotion of Bt-cotton since 2006 has, however, increased the capital cost incurred on cotton production exponentially.
- Imbalance in water distribution is part of the policy neglect the region has been facing from the ruling political classes.
- The ground reality is that the majority of the farmers in India own as little as two acres of land. Cultivation in such a small area is not economically feasible. Such small farmers have become vulnerable.
- Inadequate storage facilities:
- ASSOCHAM estimates that each year 30-40% of the entire agricultural produce in India is damaged because there are not enough cold storages. In monetary terms, this translates to INR 35, 000 crore
- Most of the subsidies and welfare schemes announced by the Central and State governments do not reach the poor farmers. On the contrary, only big landlords are benefited by those schemes

Measures needed are:

- Urgent need for increased public awareness among farmers regarding agricultural policies both financial and those extended by the government.
- Marketing and storage infrastructure will have to be built.
- New crop patterns that answer to emerging needs will have to be introduced.
- Better rural credit delivery system will have to be evolved.
- Self-help groups need to be encouraged.
- The government should promote the plan called “ulavar santhai” (Farmers Market), where the farmers can directly sell their products at reasonable price to the consumers.
- Need to implement strict measures to prevent land grabbing.
- **Multiple crops**
- Cultivation of multi crops such as coconut, turmeric, pine apple, banana, apple, papaya, ginger will yield profitable results to the farmers.
- **Special agricultural zone**
- Just like industrial zone, there is an urgent need to establish special agricultural zones, where only farming and agriculture related activity should be allowed.
- **Need to modernize agriculture**
- By introducing farm techniques which guarantee a definite success, an increase in youth participation on agricultural fields is economically possible.

This can be attained only by implementing new technologies. Research efforts should continue for the production of crops with higher yield potential and better resistance to pests.

- Technological advancement in agriculture should be passed down to the small farmers.
- **Need for meaningful crop insurance policies**

o Crop insurance is must and the claim should be settled easily under the supervision of the district collectors.

- In most cases, it is not the lack of water but the lack of proper water management that causes water shortage. Improved modern methods of rain water harvesting should be developed.
- **Alternate source of income for farmers**
- Small farmers should be encouraged to develop alternative sources of income and the government should take up the responsibility for providing training to the farmers to acquire new skills.
- In drought affected areas, the government should start alternative employment generation programs to reduce the dependence on agriculture as the sole source of income. Such programs should be standardized.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 26th February-2021

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Q) "Trade protection is the deliberate attempt to limit imports or promote exports by putting up barriers to trade. In this light examine the effects of trade protectionism on global trade."

Answer

Trade protectionism and nationalism is defined as a nation, or sometimes a group of nations working in conjunction as a trade bloc, creating trade barriers with the specific goal of protecting its economy from the possible perils of international trading. This is the opposite of free trade in which a government allows its citizenry to purchase goods and services from other countries or to sell their goods and services to other markets without any governmental restrictions, interference, or hindrances. The objective of trade protectionism is to protect a nation's vital economic interests such as its key industries, commodities, and employment of workers.

Effects of trade protectionism on global trade

Consumers' limited choice and pay more for goods and services:

- A key effect of trade protectionism is that consumers will have a limited choice of products and goods since there may be quotas on how much may be imported. Due to these quotas, consumers will have a very limited choice as to the quantity, quality, and type of product that would otherwise be available to them without trade protectionism.
- Another problem that consumers will face is that they will have to pay more for the limited quantity of goods and products, thus causing inflation to possibly greatly increase.
- **Infant industries may never grow up due to government trade protection policies**
- A nation can use the policy of protecting its infant industry, but for how long is a key concern. The protection of an infant industry may actually end up costing a government a significant amount of money and financial resources in order to protect its infant industry.

- This may actually promote inefficiencies by the infant industry and have no incentive to make efficient, intelligent, long-term investments by borrowing funds or issuing common stock from the domestic international capital markets.
- This type of protectionism may hinder the growing pains and maturation process that are vital for an infant industry to experience in the short and long-term if it is to be successful and competitive in global markets and eventually have a comparative advantage.

Exchange rate controls that causes long-term inflation:

- Since the domestic nation has kept the value of its currency low. By having its currency decrease in value so that it can sell its products and goods at cheaper prices in foreign markets, any foreign products sold in its market will actually see prices increase.
- Consumers will be forced to pay higher prices for goods, products, and commodities they need to survive. The problem is that a nation may have a good intention of helping its industries be competitive abroad while its citizens pay higher prices at home.

Protecting jobs and industries:

- Is a political argument for trade protectionism from the viewpoint that protecting worker's livelihood and the industries and the firms that employ them are vital to a nation's economic growth and well-being.
- The premise is that without trade protectionism a nation could lose long-established industries and companies that first made a product in a particular nation. This will eventually result in the loss of jobs, rising unemployment, and eventual decrease of a nation's gross domestic product (GDP)

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 1st March-2021

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2020. **Q) To transform the agriculture sector and to raise the farmer's income the government has passed farm bills 2020. Critically analyse.**

Answer:

The farm bills introduced by the government envisage bringing change in some of the key aspects of the farm economy — trading in agricultural commodities, price assurance, farm services including contracts, and stock limits for essential commodities.

Provisions of the bill

The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020:

- **Key provision:**It allows for regulating the supply and stock limit of certain specified agricultural produce under extraordinary circumstances such as an extraordinary price rise and natural calamity of grave nature, etc.

The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020:

Key provisions:

- The Bill, through Clauses 3 & 4, gives freedom to the farmer to indulge in intra-state or inter-state trade in areas outside the APMC mandis.
- It also prohibits the collection of any market fee or cess under the state APMC Acts with respect to such trade outside the APMC market yards (Clause 6).
- A key provision of the Bill is Clause 14, which gives it an overriding effect over the inconsistent provisions of the State APMC Acts.
- Also, the Central Government has been given powers to frame rules and regulations under the Act.

Benefits of the bill

- This could ensure remunerative prices for the farmers through competitive alternative trading channels to promote efficient, transparent and barrier-free interstate and intra-State trade and commerce of farmers' produce.
- It will ensure freedom of choice of sale and purchase of agri-produce.

The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020:

- **Key provision:**It seeks to create a legal framework for contract farming in India.

Benefits of the bill

- The bill will empower farmers for engaging with processors, wholesalers, aggregators, wholesalers, large retailers, exporters, etc., on a level playing field without any fear of exploitation.
- This will also help transfer the risk of market unpredictability from the farmer to the sponsor.
- Enable the farmer to access modern technology and better inputs.
- Reduce the cost of marketing and improve the income of farmers.

Concerns over the farm bill 2020

- Since agriculture and markets are State subjects – entry 14 and 28 respectively in List II – the ordinances are being seen as a direct encroachment upon the functions of the States
- The provisions are viewed as against the spirit of cooperative federalism enshrined in the Constitution.
- Justification by Centre: The Centre, however, argues that trade and commerce in food items is part of the concurrent list, thus giving it constitutional propriety.
- Critics view the dismantling of the monopoly of the APMCs as a sign of ending the assured procurement of food grains at minimum support prices (MSP).
- The Price Assurance Bill, while offering protection to farmers against price exploitation, does not prescribe the mechanism for price fixation.
- There is apprehension that the free hand given to private corporate houses could lead to farmer exploitation.
- Easing of regulation of food items would lead to exporters, processors and traders hoarding farm produce during the harvest season, when prices are generally lower, and releasing it later when prices increase.
- This could undermine food security since the States would have no information about the availability of stocks within the State.

- Several reforms at the level of the central government as well as at the State level have been introduced and welcomed by farmers. However, in this particular case, the issue is not about the Bills; it is also about the process of their introduction.
- The government has failed to have or hold any discussion with the various stakeholders including farmers and middlemen.
- Other concerns include the upper hand of agri-businesses and big retailers in negotiations, thus putting farmers at a disadvantage.
- The benefits for small farmers from companies are likely to reduce the engagement of sponsors with them.
- The farmers also fear that the companies may dictate prices of the commodities.

The Centre should reach out to those opposing the Bills, including farmers, explain to them the need for reform, and get them on board.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 2nd March-2021

[Leave a Comment](#) / [Daily Mains Questions](#) / By

Q) “Discuss the criticism against National Education Policy 2020. Suggest measures to make NEP 2020 work effectively.”

Answer

Education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and promoting national development. Providing universal access to quality education is the key to India’s continued ascent, and leadership on the global stage in terms of economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, national integration, and cultural preservation.

Recently, the [National Education Policy \(NEP\) 2020](#) was announced by the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The policy is aimed at transforming the Indian education system to meet the needs of the 21st Century.

Critics on NEP 2020

- The policy is a vision document that fails to be inclusive of the bottom-most strata of society and provides little to no relief to the poor, women and caste and religious minorities, as it glosses over key concerns of access to education which have long prevailed.
- There is no comprehensive roadmap and coherent implementation strategy in place to execute this grand vision.
- Many milestones and a commitment to finances necessary to execute this plan aren’t clearly defined.
- There is no clear commitment that can hold the government accountable.
- Though the policy does not compel Three Language formula provision, it is crafted in a manner that leaves little choice and flexibility with the students/teachers/schools. It is also in direct contravention with a Supreme Court Judgement.

- [Despite the fact that the centre has clarified](#) that it will not impose any language on any state and the final decision on this will be left to the state itself.
- The [NEP 2020 is silent on the RTE Act](#) and universalisation of education will not be achieved without legal backing
- There is no mechanism to link primary and secondary education with the RTE. This is not binding on the centre/state legally.
- There is no commitment towards affirmative action for the socially and economically disadvantaged: The NEP 2020 omits mentioning any policy directive affirming the rights/reservation of SC,ST, OBCs in academic institutions- for students or teachers. It relies heavily on privatising education but there are no alternatives suggested as a way forward for the socially marginalised.
- Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) providing a much broader scope is a move towards a monolithic, homogenised and centralised education system.
- The NEP overall tilts towards centralisation, possibly because the policy is not a derivative of consultation with states, and repeatedly talks about “fragmentation in higher education” as a bad thing.
 - Paving the way for increased privatisation: It is argued that the term “[public-spirited philanthropic higher education institutes](#)” for private universities, which the NEP 2020 suggests have not been treated equally is infuriating for those who fight against the commodification of education.
 - The proposal is to set up HEIs in every district. However, modalities, functioning, operationalities have not been made clear.
 - As such institutes will require land and infrastructure and administrative resources to function, NEP 2020 is seen as a straight move towards increased privatisation.

Measures to make NEP 2020 work effectively

- NEP 2020 must consider linking the RTE to the goal of universalisation of education at pre-primary, middle and secondary level. Without this legal backing NEP 2020’s target will remain unmet.
- It must devise a collaborative strategy with states over the three-language formula, as education is a concurrent subject.
- It must make specific, time bound, measurable commitments linked with accountability about funding and expenditure with regard to the grand vision.
- It has to keep children and parents at the centre of implementation plans and provide “choice” not just in letter but also in spirit.
- The policy must also incorporate the Common School System which will ensure equal opportunities for all.
- Currently a robust framework for Foundational Learning has been laid out but metrics of evaluation are missing in the document. These have to be filled in. India can also learn from the examples of [Kenya, Brazil and South Africa](#).
- It has to devise a parallel strategy, relying on non-tech interventions, by leveraging existing networks of school leaders, social enterprises and educators.

The new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 make the education system holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary, aligned to the needs of the 21st century and the [2030 Sustainable Development Goals](#). The intent of policy seems to be ideal in many ways but it is the implementation where lies the key to success.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 3rd March-2021

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Q) “Trade protection is the deliberate attempt to limit imports or promote exports by putting up barriers to trade. In this light examine the effects of trade protectionism on global trade.” (150 words)

Answer

Trade protectionism and nationalism is defined as a nation, or sometimes a group of nations working in conjunction as a trade bloc, creating trade barriers with the specific goal of protecting its economy from the possible perils of international trading. This is the opposite of free trade in which a government allows its citizenry to purchase goods and services from other countries or to sell their goods and services to other markets without any governmental restrictions, interference, or hindrances. The objective of trade protectionism is to protect a nation’s vital economic interests such as its key industries, commodities, and employment of workers.

Effects of trade protectionism on global trade

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- Another problem that consumers will face is that they will have to pay more for the limited quantity of goods and products, thus causing inflation to possibly greatly increase.
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- This may actually promote inefficiencies by the infant industry and have no incentive to make efficient, intelligent, long-term investments by borrowing funds or issuing common stock from the domestic international capital markets.
- This type of protectionism may hinder the growing pains and maturation process that are vital for an infant industry to experience in the short and long-term if it is to be successful and competitive in global markets and eventually have a comparative advantage.

Exchange rate controls that causes long-term inflation:

- Since the domestic nation has kept the value of its currency low. By having its currency decrease in value so that it can sell its products and goods at cheaper prices in foreign markets, any foreign products sold in its market will actually see prices increase.
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Protecting jobs and industries:

- Is a political argument for trade protectionism from the viewpoint that protecting worker's livelihood and the industries and the firms that employ them are vital to a nation's economic growth and well-being.
- The premise is that without trade protectionism a nation could lose long-established industries and companies that first made a product in a particular nation. This will eventually result in the loss of jobs, rising unemployment, and eventual decrease of a nation's gross domestic product (GDP).

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 4th March-2021

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Q) "The recent Electricity amendment bill 2020 is to promote growth in line with the Gol vision of a \$5 trillion economy. Discuss the key provisions of and concerns raised over the bill."

Answer :

The Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2020 aims to reduce subsidies and push for privatisation, especially in the distribution segment of the power sector. Undertaking structural changes in a core sector at a time of crisis from the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic effects defies logic.

Key provisions of the bill

- **National Selection Committee:** Instead of the separate Selection Committee (for the appointment of Chairperson and members of State Electricity Regulatory Commissions-SERCs), the bill proposed to set up a National Selection Committee.
- **Direct Benefit Transfer:** The bill proposed Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) which will be beneficial for both the State Governments and as well as Distribution Companies.
- **National Renewable Energy Policy:** India is a signatory to the Paris Climate Agreement. It is therefore proposed to have a separate policy for the development and promotion of generation of electricity from renewable sources of energy. The policy in the Bill prescribes a minimum percentage of purchase of electricity from renewable sources of production. It also seeks to give special attention to hydro power.
- **Sustainability:** In the past, there have been issues of lazy attempts from the commissions in adopting the tariffs determined, causing cost escalation problem. To address this problem, the Amendment prescribes a period of 60 days to adopt the determined tariffs. Failing to do so would result in the tariff being deemed to be accepted.
- **Payment Security:** The Bill also proposes to empower Load Dispatch Centres to oversee the establishment of adequate payment security mechanisms before dispatch of electricity, as per contracts. This has been proposed keeping in view the case of late payment of dues of generating and transmission companies which have reached unsustainable levels as they not only impair the finances of the Gencos and Transcos but also increase the Non-Performing Assets of the Banks.
- **Ease of Doing Business:** The Bill also proposed the establishment of Electricity Contract Enforcement Authority (ECEA), an Authority headed by a retired Judge of the High Court with powers to execute their orders as decree of a civil court. The Authority will enforce performance

of contracts related to purchase or sale or transmission of power between a generating company, distribution licensee or transmission licensee.

- **Subsidy:**The Bill proposes for the SERCs to reduce cross subsidies as per the provisions of the Tariff Policy. Additionally, it also proposed strengthening of the Appellate Tribunal by increasing the strength to at least seven to facilitate quick disposal of cases.

Concerns over the bill

- the Telangana State Legislative Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution opposing the Bill, stating it is detrimental to State and farmers' interests.
- Cost reflective tariff has been a concern for states like Telangana which provide free electricity to the farming sector.
- Formation of ECEA has also been criticized as a move towards centralization of power.
- Recognition of franchisees and sub- licensees might open the sector to private players.

Since electricity is a Concurrent subject, States must not be deprived of their powers, through this Amendment.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 5th March-2021

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Q) "During the first half of 18th Century, Bengal was the only mine of silver left in the Mughal Empire. Highlight the important factors for such development." (150 words)

Answer :

Bengal including the present West Bengal in India and almost the whole of Bangladesh was their chest province of Mughal India. In the somber picture of decadence, prostration and bankruptcy which India presented in the first half of the 18th century. Bengal was the only bright spot where prosperity prevailed and which "was the only mine of silver left in the Mughal Empire."

The important factors responsible for Bengal being a bright spot during 18th century:

Good Government

1. Bengal had been lucky during the period in its rulers. MurshidQuli Khan, who was appointed the Diwan of Bengal in 1700, remained at the helm of affairs till his death in 1727. Then his son-in-law Shuja governed the province for fourteen years. Later, Alivardi Khan seized the reins of office and ruled till 1756. All the three were strong and competent administrators and under them Bengal greatly prospered.

Besides good government, Bengal also enjoyed certain other advantages.

Tranquility in Bengal:

1. While the rest of India was distracted by fratricidal wars, Maratha invasions and Jat uprisings and northern India was devastated by the invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali, Bengal on the whole, remained tranquil. As a result, trade, commerce, industries and agriculture- all prospered.

Growth of foreign trade

1. During this period there was phenomenal growth of foreign trade. During the first half of 18th century from 1706 to 1756, Bengal received in return for its exports nearly six and a half crore rupees worth of bullion and about Rs. 2.3 crores of merchandise. Decca alone exported nearly thirty lakh rupees worth of cloth to Asian countries. Qasim Bazar produced two and a half million pound of silk. The Murshidabad customs office registered an output of silk worth seventy lakh of rupees. Fifty thousand maunds of sugar and also considerable amount of jute were exported. There were a number of other commodities which were exported from Bengal viz., saltpetre, opium, indigo etc
2. Foreign trade stimulated industry and added to the prosperity of the country.

Growth of Urbanism

1. Bengal goods were in great demand in East and West Asian countries, in Africa and in Europe. The Dutch, the English and the French had a number of settlements and factories in different parts of Bengal. Progress in trade, industry and agriculture stimulated the growth of urban centers and banking, which is illustrated by the rise of the Jagath se the i.e., world bankers.
2. Hughli, which was the most important port of Bengal, grew into a great center of culture
3. The population of Calcutta rose from 15000 in 1704 to a lakh in 1750 and Decca and Murshidabad became populous cities.

But behind the face of facade of glittering affluence there lay a dilapidated structure. The wealth of the nawab and of his oppressive oligarchs was extracted out of the toil and misery of the impoverished peasants and wretched artisans. The upstart rulers and their long suffering subjects were bound together by mere ropes of sand.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 6th March-2021

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Q) “The Union government has decided to suspend operation of MPLADS for the next two financial years to address the financial crisis arising due to Covid-19. Discuss the possible effects of this step.”

Answer :

Issue in the news:

Local Area Development Scheme, also called ‘**Sansad Nidhi Yojana**’ has been suspended for two years (2020-2022) in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis. The funds under MPLADS will be directed to the

Consolidated Fund of India. Sum of Rs. 79000 crores are expected to be garnered by suspending the Local Area Development Scheme.

Introduction:

The Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) was launched in December, 1993, to provide a mechanism for the Members of Parliament to recommend works of developmental nature for creation of durable community assets and for provision of basic facilities including community infrastructure, based on locally felt needs. The MPLADS is a Central Sector Scheme which is fully funded by the Government of India. The annual MPLADS fund entitlement per MP constituency is Rs. 5 crore.

Objective of MPLADS:

- To enable MPs to recommend works of developmental nature with emphasis on the creation of durable community assets based on the locally felt needs to be taken up in their Constituencies.
- Lok Sabha Members can recommend works within their constituencies and elected Members of Rajya Sabha can recommend works within the State they are elected from.
- Nominated Members of both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha can recommend works anywhere in the country.
- To create durable assets of national priorities viz. drinking water, primary education, public health, sanitation and roads, etc.
- Recommendation by the MPs should be done annually with works costing at least 15 percent of the MPLADS entitlement for areas inhabited by Scheduled Caste population and 7.5 percent for areas inhabited by the ST population.

Guidelines on MPLADS:

In June 2016, the government came up with MP Local Area Development Scheme Guidelines. A few important details from these guidelines are mentioned below:

The guidelines mentioned to use the MPLAD funds for the implementation of the following:

- Swachh Bharat Mission
- Accessible India Campaign
- Water Conservation using rainwater harvesting systems
- Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana
- MPLADS funds could be converged with MNREGS and Khelo India Schemes for the formation of durable assets

Benefits of suspension of MPLAD:

- The cancellation of MPLADS for two years, on the other hand, is a welcome move. In financial terms, there are savings of nearly Rs.4,000 crore per year.
- In the short run, during the times of COVID-19 pandemic, MPLADS funds could have been used for procurement of such supplies that will help in fighting against the disease.
- While this is not insignificant, the larger benefit is that this will help Members of Parliament focus on their roles as national legislators.
- As the financial audit of MPLADS is done by the **CAG** and further examined by the **Public Accounts Committee** consisting of Members of Parliament, it adds another layer of conflict.
- The **NCRWC** recommended immediate discontinuation of the MPLAD scheme on the grounds that it was inconsistent with the spirit of federalism and distribution of powers between the centre and the state.

- The **2nd ARC report on Ethics in Governance** took a firm stand against the scheme arguing that it seriously erodes the notion of separation of powers, as the legislator directly becomes the executive.

Possible effects of the suspension of MPLADS:

- **Will adversely impact grass-root level work:** MPLADS is meant to execute development work in the constituency, suspending it is a huge disservice to the constituents and will undermine the role and functions of MP.
- **Impact efforts at state and local level:** As there is enough evidence that covid-19 is best fought at the state and local level, the step will take away expenditure to meet unique requirements of an area.
- **Against federalism:** As the decision is taken unilaterally by the central government without considering the development needs of the States facing covid-19 outbreak.
- Contrary to popular perception, MPLAD funds cannot be spent at the discretion of an MP in any manner he/she wants. There is a set of guidelines mandating the utilization of the funds. These diktats are updated regularly and are available on the website of the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation**.

Conclusion:

MPLADS is a very nimble and effective scalpel of targeted micro-level intervention. In the months and days ahead, when distress — medical and economic — will haunt the countryside, these discretionary interventions will help save lives. Despite above concerns, the decision will showcase a right signal and gesture of accountability as the government is readying to announce a second round of financial stimulus to deal with the covid-19 pandemic.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 8th March-2021

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Q) “The Electronics System Design and Manufacturing sector (ESDM) is the fastest growing sector in the world. Discuss the significance and challenges of electronic sector. Suggest measures to achieve NET ZERO Imports in electronics by 2020.” (250 words)

Answer :

Electronics System Design and Manufacturing sector continues to transform lives, businesses, and economies globally. The past five years have especially seen a significant gain in the ESDM sector as the global production has undergone a shift from the USA and Europe to Asia.

Presently, India is undergoing a digital revolution. With a growing middle-class population, rising disposable incomes and declining electronics prices, there has been a definite surge in the consumption

of electronics devices in India. Newer technologies like the rollout of 5G and IoT has ushered a new era for the 'New India'.

In order to support the ESDM sector and its growth path, the Government of India has made electronics production an important pillar of many initiatives such as 'Make in India', 'Digital India' and 'Startup India'.

Significance of ESDM Sector

- **Economic:** Electronics Industry is the world's largest and fastest growing Industry and is increasingly finding applications in all sectors of the economy. Electronics hardware manufacturing is one of the important pillars of both "Make in India" and "Digital India".
- **Security:** Focus on electronics hardware manufacturing up to the Chip level is required due to the growing security concerns associated with electronics hardware in critical sectors including cyberspace, communications networks etc.
- **Strategic:** India is a signatory to the Information Technology Agreement (ITA-1) of WTO and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with various countries/ trading blocs such as ASEAN, Korea and Japan. Lagging in this sector will see India overwhelmed by imports.

Challenges in the Electronics Sector:

- Lack of level playing field vis-a-vis competing nations due to several factors which render domestic manufacturing uncompetitive.
- Lack of adequate infrastructure
- High cost of finance
- Inadequate availability of quality power
- Inadequate components manufacturing base
- Limited focus on R&D by the industry etc.

Measures to make India a Hub of Electronics:

- Promoting Ease-of-doing Business- by facilitating a single window mechanism for global investors
- Encourage Industry-led R&D and Innovation- in all sub-sectors of electronics. This would encompass support for various initiatives in areas like 5G, IoT/ Sensors, Artificial Intelligence etc.
- Human Resource Development- by generating research base at Ph.D. level, opportunities for joint IPRs to Indian candidates at foreign institutions.
- Export Promotion- by providing attractive package of incentives so that exporters can compete in global markets
- Promote Cyber Security- by enhanced understanding of cyber security issues, risks; development of testing facilities etc by the start-ups.
- Mega Projects- by providing a special package which would invite extremely high-tech and huge investments in areas like semiconductor facilities, display fabrication etc.
- Promoting Eco-park for e-Waste processing
- Warehousing of raw materials
- Acquiring mines of Rare Earth Metals in foreign countries (Africa, Australia)
- Developing an index to assess the status of electronics manufacturing industry in the states.
- Encouraging FABS, Fabless design, Set top boxes, VSATs, Mobiles, Consumer & Medical Electronics, Smart Energy meters, Smart cards, micro-ATMs
- Encouraging National Award, Marketing, Brand Building

Successful implementation of the schemes introduced by the Government keeping challenges in mind can enable flow of investment and technology, leading to higher value addition in the domestically manufactured electronic products, increased electronics hardware manufacturing in the country and their export, while generating substantial employment opportunities.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 9th March-2021

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Q) “The trusteeship relationship between the public and the officials requires that the authority entrusted to the officials be exercised in the best interest of the people. Examine the statement with examples in the light of standards to be followed by public official with public interest as their top priority.”

Answer :

In a democracy, every holder of public office is accountable ultimately to the people. Our legal system emanates from a shared vision of what is good and just. Ethics provides the basis for the creation of such laws and rules. The public interest is about what matters to everyone in society. It is about the common good, the general welfare and the security and well-being of everyone in the community we serve.

Standards to be followed by public official with public interest as their top priority

- **Selflessness:** Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of public interest.
- **Integrity:** Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organizations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.
- **Objectivity:** In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
- **Accountability:** Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
- **Openness:** Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
- **Honesty:** Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- **Leadership:** Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Public interest plays an important role in designing rules and regulations for officials. These rules and regulations have to be kept in mind while carrying out functions as a public official. Sometimes public interest cannot be followed due to certain conditions. These have to be taken into consideration while designing rules and procedures.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 10th March-2021

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Q) “Examine various social challenges that adversely impact geriatric care in India. What Measures can be taken to change the life of senior citizens in India?”

Answer :

- Ageing is a continuous, irreversible, universal process, which starts from conception till the death of an individual.
- However, the age at which one’s productive contribution declines and one tends to be economically dependent can probably be treated as the onset of the aged stage of life.
- National Elderly Policy defines person of 60+ age group as elderly.

Population figures on ageing

- Age division of Indian population (0-14) is 30.8%, (15-59) is 60.3%, (60+) is 8.6%.
- According to Population Census 2011, there are nearly 104 million elderly persons in India.
- It has increased from 5.5% in 1951 to 8.6% in 2011.
- Projected a rise upto 19% in 2050.
- As regards rural and urban areas, more than 73 million persons i.e., 71% of elderly population resides in rural areas while 31 million or 29% of elderly population are in urban area.

Ageing in India is exponentially increasing due to the impressive gains that society has made in terms of increased life expectancy. With the rise in elderly population, the demand for holistic care tends to grow. By 2025, the geriatric population is expected to be 840 million in the developing countries

It is projected that the proportion of Indians aged 60 and older will rise from 7.5% in 2010 to 11.1% in 2025.

The needs and problems of the elderly significantly vary according to their age, socioeconomic status, health, living status and other such background characteristics. Their social rights are neglected, and they are profusely abused which goes unreported.

Challenges:

Lack of Infrastructure: With increasing longevity and debilitating chronic diseases, many elder citizens will need better access to physical infrastructure in the coming years. Lack of physical infrastructure is a major deterrent to providing comfort to the aged.

Changing Family Structure: The traditional Indian society with an age-old joint family system has been instrumental in safeguarding the social and economic security of the elderly people. With the emerging prevalence of nuclear family set-ups in recent years, the elderly is likely to be exposed to emotional, physical, and financial insecurity in the years to come.

Lack of Social Support: The elderly in India are much more vulnerable because of the less government spending on social security system. Insurance cover that is elderly sensitive is virtually non-existent in

India. Pension and social security are also restricted to those who have worked in the public sector or the organized sector of industry.

Social Inequality: Elderly are a heterogeneous section with an urban and rural divide. They are less vulnerable in rural areas as compared to their urban counterparts, due to the still holding values of the joint family system.

Availability, Accessibility and Affordability of Health Care: Due to the ever-increasing trend of nuclear families, elder care management is getting more difficult, especially for working adult children who find themselves responsible for their parents' well-being.

Economic Dependency: As per the 52nd round of National Sample Survey Organization, nearly half of the elderly are fully dependent on others, while another 20 percent are partially dependent for their economic needs. About 85% of the aged had to depend on others for their day-to-day maintenance. The situation was even worse for elderly females.

Recent initiatives by government:

Integrated Programme for Older Persons (IPOP):

- Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is a nodal agency for the welfare of elderly people. The main objective of the scheme is to improve the quality of life of older persons by providing basic amenities like shelter, food, medical care, and entertainment opportunities, etc.

Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY):

- This scheme is run by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. This is a central sector scheme funded from the Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund.
- Under the RVY scheme, aids and assistive living devices are provided to senior citizens belonging to BPL category who suffer from age-related disabilities such as low vision, hearing impairment, loss of teeth and locomotor disabilities. The aids and assistive devices, viz walking sticks, elbow crutches, walkers/crutches, tripods/quad pods, hearing aids, wheelchairs, artificial dentures, and spectacles are provided to eligible beneficiaries.
- The scheme is being implemented by Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO), which is a public sector undertaking under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS):

- The Ministry of Rural Development runs the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) that extends social assistance for poor households for the aged, widows, disabled, and in cases of death where the breadwinner has died.
- Under this scheme, financial assistance is provided to person of 60 years and above and belonging to family living below poverty line as per the criteria prescribed by Government of India. Central assistance of Rs 200 per month is provided to person in the age group of 60-79 years and Rs 500 per month to persons of 80 years and above.

Varishtha Pension Bima Yojana (VPBY):

- This scheme is run by the Ministry of Finance. The Varishtha Pension Bima Yojana (VPBY) was first launched in 2003 and then relaunched in 2014. Both are social security schemes for senior

citizens intended to give an assured minimum pension on a guaranteed minimum return on the subscription amount.

The Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana:

- The Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PNVVY) was launched in May 2017 to provide social security during old age. This is a simplified version of the VPBY and will be implemented by the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India.
- Under the scheme, on payment of an initial lump sum amount ranging from Rs 1,50,000 for a minimum pension of Rs 1000 per month to a maximum of Rs 7,50,000/- for a maximum pension of Rs 5,000 per month, subscribers will get an assured pension based on a guaranteed rate of return of 8% per annum payable monthly/quarterly/half-yearly/annually.
- The Centre will bear 75 percent of the total budget and the state government will contribute 25 percent of the budget, for activities up to district level.

Vayoshreshtha Samman:

- Conferred as a National award and given to eminent senior citizens & institutions under various categories for their contributions on International day of older persons on 1st October.

Measures:

- Increasing the monthly pension of elderly to minimum of Rs 2,000 per month.
- Under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Housing for the aged, particularly the aged poor, must be a priority.
- Assisted living facilities for indigent elderly, particularly those with age-related issues like dementia, needs policy focus.
- More tax benefits, or at least removing tax on deposit interest for seniors.
- Enhancing the geriatric care health infrastructure especially in rural area.
- Allocation of special budget for elderly population at both levels.
- Providing entertainment facilities like libraries and clubs at panchayat level.
- Appreciations for the contributions of elderlies at village level.

Conclusion:

- Social security is the concurrent responsibility of the central and state governments as, mandated under Indian constitution i.e., Well-being of senior citizens – Article 41 and 46 in general of Indian constitution. In this regard, National Policy on Senior Citizen, 2011 was framed.
- For the welfare and care for the older persons, we must focus on the protection of already existing social support systems/traditional social institutions such as family and kinship, neighbourhood bonding, community bonding and community participation must be revived and kins should show sensitivity towards elderly citizens.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 12th March-2021

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Q) “New India will have better living standards, prosperous economy and harmonious society. Discuss the role of civil society in making this new India.”

Answer :

India is a country that has historic past, eventful present and an aspiring future. The futuristic idea of new India is being marketed by the present government with a hope for better living standard, prosperous economy, powerful defence settlement, harmonious society in the years to come.

Civil society is the society driven by people themselves has its origin in ancient times although the understanding and meaning have changed over a period of time. In a civil society people voluntarily come together to achieve the desired objective of welfare of the society or to raise the problems of people before the state. Basically, the voids of the state can be rightly filled by civil society.

Role of civil society in making this new India

India needs the effective role of civil society in the making of new India.

- All the new initiatives of the government require the participation and awareness of people and there is no better organisation than the civil society to achieve this objective.
- Involvement of civil society in the Swachha Bharat Mission has made it a huge success.
- Role of Swachhagrahis has a visible impact in changing the behaviour of people to stop open defecation practices in rural areas.
- Similarly, Swachha iconic places and Swachhata Pakwada are the instances of roles of civil society in bringing out transformation the society.
- Various NGOs working for the conservation of nature and biodiversity which are quite essential for a healthy, clean and biologically sound India.
- The civil society movements like the Chipko, Apiko movements of the past for the protection of tree to the present day Aravali Bachao and Narmada Bachao Abhiyan try to achieve a similar objective in sync with the idea of new India.
- It will protect the basic human needs against the tyranny of the state.
- The rights of the minority, depressed class along with individual rights of freedom, liberty are protected duly by civil society.
- Further, civil society has a great role in stopping the majoritarian tendencies and protecting the spirit of diversity in India.
- The role of civil society in a peaceful world is equally important and peace in the world will add to the prosperity of India.
- Anti-corruption movements and the changes in the outlook of people in India regarding this serious issue of corruption have impacts on the political structure of India. Although corruption has not died down completely the awareness due to the civil society movement has affected the corrupt structure greatly.
- Be it the movement for freedom of expression or be it for the fight of LGBT community against the decriminalisation under section -377 of IPC or be it the fight of women against instant triple talaq there is present the active contribution and wholehearted support of civil society.

In many instances, the role of civil society becomes a headache for the government and it tries to restrict it. This is altogether detrimental for society. The dream of new India cannot be fulfilled without a vibrant civil society and hence all of us should try to protect the civil societies for a brighter future tomorrow.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 15th March-2021

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Q) “The NITI Aayog has released Export Preparedness Index 2020 to examine the export preparedness and performance of Indian states. What are key findings of the report? What are the challenges in India’s export sector? How can these challenges be addressed?” (250 words)

Answer :

Export Preparedness Index helps examine the export preparedness and performance of Indian states. EPI intends to identify challenges and opportunities; enhance the effectiveness of government policies; and encourage a facilitative regulatory framework.

Key findings of the report:

- Gujarat has topped the Export Preparedness Index 2020 followed by Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.
- The other states that have made it to the top 10 include Rajasthan, Odisha, Telangana, Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka and Kerala.
- The coastal states have emerged as the best performers, with six out of eight coastal states featuring in the top 10 rankings.
- Among the Himalayan states, Uttarakhand is the highest, followed by Tripura and Himachal Pradesh.
- Across the Union Territories, Delhi has performed the best, followed by Goa and Chandigarh.
- The average score of Indian states in sub-pillars of Exports Diversification, Transport Connectivity, and Infrastructure (three sub-pillars) was above 50%.

Challenges faced by India’s Export Sector

- Based on the findings of the report, export promotion in India faces three fundamental challenges:
- To Intra- and inter-regional disparities in export infrastructure
- Poor trade support and growth orientation among states.
- Poor R&D infrastructure to promote complex and unique exports.

Measures to overcome challenges

- A joint development of export infrastructure, strengthening industry-academia linkages and creating state-level engagements for economic diplomacy is the way forward.
- These strategies could be supported by revamped designs and standards for local products.
- Innovating tendencies to provide new use cases for local products must be harnessed with adequate support from the Centre.

To achieve the target of making India a developed economy by focusing on ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’, there is a need to increase exports from all the states and union territories.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 16th March-2021

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Q) “Many telcos are on the verge of collapse due to the huge financial liability under AGR rules. In this light, explain the ramifications of AGR rules on various stakeholders? Mention various reforms needed to save the telecom sector from this crisis.” (250 words)

Answer :

Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) is the usage and licensing fee that telecom operators are charged by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT). It is divided into spectrum usage charges and licensing fees, pegged between 3-5 percent and 8 percent respectively.

Recent issue

- The SC bench observed that 15 or 20 years was not a reasonable time period and the telcos must come forward with an appropriate time frame.
- The Centre had earlier urged the court that up to 20 years be given to the firms for the payments.
- The telcos said they were in no position to give fresh bank guarantees for the payments.

AGR issue Impact on the various stakeholders

Telecom Sector

- At the current juncture, profits for telcos are under pressure from severe competition and the falling ARPUs (Average Revenue Per User). Given this, AGR due will seriously hurt financial stability of whatever telecom companies are doing business in the Indian market.
- Also, Telecom equipment suppliers may also go down as their dues will not be paid.

Indian Consumers

- The failure of a few large players could lead to one or two players emerging near-monopolies. This may leave the Indian consumer vulnerable to high pricing, sub-standard products and lack of options.

Banks

- The AGR issue has triggered panic in the banking industry, given that the telecom sector is highly leveraged.
- Failure of the cascading effect will be felt across the economy as banks face the consequences of the company going bankrupt (non-performing assets will rise).
- The AGR issue may add to the vulnerability of an already fragile banking system.

Indian Economy

- Apart from impacting the banking sector, the collapse of the telecom sector may increase unemployment, and reduce investment, adding to our economic and social problems.
- The Telecom industry is critical to the government's plans for a digital economy, including from the upcoming 5G spectrum auctions.
 - 5G forms the part of critical infrastructure.

Government

- On the positive note, If companies are ready to pay AGR dues, it will lead to a higher contribution to the public exchequer. This could help bridge gaps in the fiscal deficit and bolster government revenues to rescue the slowing economy.

Reforms to save the telecom sector

- The government should give up demanding AGR as a lump-sum amount, rather, it can be broken in instalments to be paid over the period.
- As this is a commercial matter, the government and telcos should also explore **Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)**
- Since the telecom industry is crucial to India's next wave of growth through digitalisation, the government should not be blinded by short-term revenue considerations that imperil long-term prospects.
- The Government should consider accepting the Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) ruling of 2015 on AGR.
- the government needs to actively facilitate shared infrastructure with policies and legislation. One way is through consortiums for network development and management, charging for usage by authorised operators.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 17th March-2021

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Q) "Discuss how human values are different from ethical values. what role do the educational institutions play in developing ethical behaviour in children?"

Answer :

Ethics is a branch of philosophy that "involves systematizing, defending and recommending concepts of right and wrong behaviour. Values tend to influence attitudes and behaviour. Values reflect a person's sense of right and wrong. Values are the guiding principles of our lives. They are essential for positive human behaviour and actions in our daily lives. They are formed on the basis of interests, choices, needs, desires and preferences.

Note: students can use below information to distinguish human values and ethical values

Human values Basic human values refer to those values which are at the core of being human. The values which are considered basic inherent values in humans include truth, honesty, loyalty, love, peace, etc. because they bring out the fundamental goodness of human beings and society at large. Human values are integral part of one's personality and affects employability quotient.

Importance of Human Values

- Provides understanding of the attitudes, motivation and behaviours
- Influences our perception of the world around us
- Represents interpretation of “right and wrong”
- Provides a way to understand humans and organisation.

The five human values which are expected in all human beings, irrespective of whether they are employees or not in whichever profession or service, are:

- Right Conduct – Contains values like self-help skills (modesty, self-reliance, hygiene etc.), social skills (good behavior, good manners, environment awareness etc.), ethical skills (courage, efficiency, initiative, punctuality etc.) and Ownership.
- Peace – Contains values like equality, focus, humility, optimism, patience, self-confidence, selfcontrol, self-esteem etc.
- Truth – Contains values like accuracy, fairness, honesty, justice, quest for knowledge, determination etc.
- Peaceful co-existence – Contains values like psychological (benevolence, compassion, consideration, morality, forgiveness etc.) and social (brotherhood, equality, perseverance, respect for others, environmental awareness etc.)
- Discipline – Contains values like regulation, direction, order etc. Ethical values
- Ethical values by definition are positive and they often require that we stretch outside of our own interests to respect, protect, serve and help others.
- Trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship — are six core ethical values.
- Ethical decision-making often involves weighing values against each other and choosing which values to elevate.

Role of educational institutions in developing ethical behaviour in children

In school, children are affiliates of a small society that exerts a great influence on their moral development. Teachers serve as role model to students in school. They play a major role in inculcating their ethical behaviour.

- As children are accountable for their own actions the learn to respect and treat others kindly.
- The teachers are the first role model to the children outside their family. When the children see the model showing concern for others, motivating them for their good deeds and cooperating and helpful with their academic issues, the children learn them by observing and imitate it with fellow peers.

- The children are taught basic morals and values in school.
- The teacher should appreciate the children for developing pro-social behaviour, especially for any specific action they have done to help others. It is appraised that human values enhance person's life.
- Values are those standards or code for conduct conditioned by one's cultural doctrines and guided by conscience, according to which human being is supposed to conduct himself and shape his life patterns by integrating his beliefs, ideas and attitudes to realize cherished ideas and aims of life.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 18th March-2021

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Q) "Indigenous defence manufacturing of India is fraught with several challenges. Discuss. Also suggest steps required to overcome them."

In order to promote self-reliance in defence production, the government has announced several measures under AtmaNirbhar Abhiyan. Though these steps are in the right direction, there are long-overdue reforms to make India truly self-reliant in defence manufacturing.

Challenges in Indigenous defence manufacturing:

- Most of the government defence acquisition proposals from the past five years are in beginning stages
- There has been a Poor design capability in critical technologies
- The investment in R&D is inadequate
- The inability to manufacture major subsystems and components hamper the indigenous manufacturing.
- The creation of a manufacturing base is capital and technology-intensive and has a long gestation period.
- Stringent labour laws and lack of skills affects the development process further.
- Overlapping jurisdiction of the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Industrial Promotion impair India's capability of defence manufacturing.

Measures to overcome challenges in defence manufacturing indigenously:

- To avoid delays and speed up the defence procurement process the chief of defence staff could examine the defence acquisitions from a tri-service angle.
- It is imperative that when India imports any weapon systems, there should be a plan for the ammunition and spares to be eventually manufactured in India so that we are not driven to seek urgent replenishments from abroad during crises.
- To promote forward-looking strategic partnerships between Indian and foreign companies, with a view to achieving indigenization over a period of time for even sophisticated platforms **the next Defence Procurement Procedure** should incorporate guidelines related to it.

- The role of DRDO should be revised, in order to give private industry a level playing field for developing defence technologies.

Self-reliance in defence manufacturing is a crucial component of effective defence capability and to maintain national sovereignty and achieve military superiority. The attainment of this will ensure strategic independence, cost-effective defence equipment and may lead to saving on defence import bill, which can subsequently finance the physical and social infrastructure.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 19th March-2021

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Q) “The National IPR Policy is a vision document that aims to create and exploit synergies between all forms of intellectual property (IP), concerned statutes and agencies. Why is the National IPR policy the need of the hour? Also discuss the salient features of this policy.”

Answer :

The National IPR Policy is a vision document that encompasses and brings to a single platform all IPRs.

The Policy recognizes that India has a well-established TRIPS-compliant legislative, administrative and judicial framework to safeguard IPRs, which meets its international obligations while utilizing the flexibilities provided in the international regime to address its developmental concerns. It reiterates India’s commitment to the Doha Development Agenda and the TRIPS agreement.

Need of the national IPR policy:

- Global drug brands led by US companies have been pushing for changes to India’s intellectual property rules for quite some time now. They have often complained about India’s price controls and marketing restrictions so a IPR policy should be brought into action.
- Also, an IPR policy is important for the government to formulate incentives in the form of tax concessions to encourage research and development (R&D). It is also critical to strengthen the Make In India, Startup and Digital India schemes.
- The IPR policy comes at a time when India and other emerging countries faces fresh challenges from the developed world and mega regional trade agreements such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

Salient Features:

1. **Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM):** A Cell CIPAM shall be created as a professional body under aegis of DIPP (now Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade) to address the 7 identified objectives of the Policy. It will coordinate with agencies at State level and with the various Ministries/ Departments of the Union Government. The data generated at CIPAM shall serve as a valuable resource for future policy.
2. **Awareness Campaign:** To be launched in schools, institutions of higher education like engineering colleges and law schools, centres of skill development, industry clusters etc, it aims

to foster an IP culture in the country by creating awareness about the economic, social and cultural benefits of IPRs among all sections and enabling people to realize the value of their IPs as also respect for other IPRs.

3. **IP Cells:** IP cells shall be created in key Ministries/ Departments of the Govt of India, which are vital the field of IPRs, as well as in State Governments, Industry associations and clusters and major academic institutions. CIPAM shall coordinate with the Cells.
4. **Generation, registration and commercialization:** The Policy aims to encourage creativity and innovation, leading to generation of IPs and their protection through IPRs. Registration of Geographical Indications (GIs) shall be encouraged through support institutions.
5. **Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL):** TKDL's ambit is to be expanded to include other fields besides Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani & Siddha. The possibility of using TKDL for furthering R&D by public research institutions and private sector will be explored.
6. The Policy recognizes the importance of effective **coordination between Patent office and National Biodiversity Authority** for speeding up the disposal of patent applications using biological resources and associated TK.
7. **Cadre Management in IP Offices:** The Policy recognizes the crucial role of a motivated work force in productivity enhancements. The organizational and cadre structure of the Indian IP Offices shall be studied and reviewed with a view to enhance efficiency and productivity.
8. **Access to Medicines:** Access to affordable medicines and other healthcare solutions is becoming a challenge for all countries. India too faces a growing challenge on this count. The Policy recognises this and aims to enhance this by (a) **encouraging cross-sector partnerships** between public sector, private sector, universities and NGOs; (b) **promoting novel licensing models**, and (c) **developing novel technology platforms**.
9. **Piracy/ Counterfeiting:** Offline and online piracy is a serious concern and needs to be combated through public awareness as also legal and enforcement mechanisms.
10. **Assistance to smaller firms:** Smaller firms need assistance for protection of their IPRs internationally. Schemes such as DeitY's Support for International Patent Protection in Electronics and IT (SIP-EIT) are to be enhanced.
11. **Judicial Awareness & Resolution of IP disputes:** Since IPRs are a specialised discipline, awareness amongst the judiciary is crucial since judicial precedents set the tone of the country's IP regime. For this, it is important that IP modules for judges be formulated, including regular IP workshops / colloquia at the judicial academies. Commercial Courts set up at appropriate levels will be responsible for adjudicating IP disputes.
 - Resolution of IP cases through Alternate Dispute Resolution methods shall reduce burden on judiciary and provide speed and inexpensive resolution of disputes. Mediation and conciliation centres need strengthening, and ADR capabilities and skills in the field of IP developed.

The Policy recognises the abundance of creative and innovative energies that flow in India, and the need to tap into and channelize these energies towards a better and brighter future for all.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 20th March-2021

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Q) "India has been facing a severe problem of land degradation. To curb this problem Indian government is committed to the target of UN land degradation neutrality (LDN) by 2030. In this light, explain the causes of land degradation. What measures to be followed to achieve LDN by 2030?"

Answer :

Human activities are reducing Earth's life-support capacity. The ecological imbalance is manifesting itself in the form of well-established trends of air pollution, falling water tables, shrinking forests, polluted rivers and climate change. These phenomena, besides affecting air and water quality, have rendered land degraded both for biotic and abiotic resources.

UNCCD and the UN Environment Programme (UN Environment) came together to mark the United Nations General Assembly adoption of the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"

- Land degradation neutrality (LDN) is a condition where further land degradation (loss of productivity caused by environmental or human factors) is prevented and already degraded land can be restored.
- LDN has been defined by the Parties to the Convention as:
 - A state whereby the amount and quality of land resources, necessary to support ecosystem functions and services and enhance food security, remains stable or increases within specified temporal and spatial scales and ecosystems.

Significance

- LDN represents a **paradigm shift in land management policies and practices.**
- It is a unique approach that counterbalances the expected loss of productive land with the recovery of degraded areas.
- It strategically places the measures to conserve, sustainably manage and restore land in the context of land use planning.
- As land is fixed in quantity, there is ever-increasing competition to control land resources and capitalize on the flows of goods and services from the land.
- LDN represents a paradigm shift in land management policies and practices.
- It is a unique approach that counterbalances the expected loss of productive land with the recovery of degraded areas.
- This has the potential to cause social and political instability, fuelling poverty, conflict and migration.

Causes of land degradation

Land degradation is caused by multiple forces

- including extreme weather conditions, particularly drought.
- It is also caused by human activities that pollute or degrade the quality of soils and land utility.
- It negatively affects food production, livelihoods, and the production and provision of other ecosystem goods and services.
- Desertification is a form of land degradation by which fertile land becomes desert.

Measures to be followed to achieve LDN by 2030

- Land restoration is one of the cheapest solutions to address the global crisis of climate change and biodiversity loss.

- The action programme in India for the achievement of LDN by 2030 must take into account transformative efforts to avoid, reduce and reverse land degradation through socially equitable means.
- The first step is to initiate action to avoid any activity or process leading to land degradation.
- Nature-based solutions such as conservation of forests, practicing organic agriculture, utilization of land as per land use delineation and conservation of water bodies should get priority as these are locally acceptable and adaptable.
- These measures need to be followed by the treatment of degraded areas by supporting plant life depending upon the use to which land can be put to, be it agriculture, horticulture, pasture/grassland or forestry.
- Increasing domestic public expenditure on protecting terrestrial ecosystems is important for tackling pressing social and economic challenges.

India's targets would be better achieved if schemes on integrated land and water management such as catchment area treatment, watershed management, soil and water conservation and river basin management are included as well. Implementation of such an integrated management would help in biodiversity conservation, livelihood generation, climate change mitigation and reclamation of land resources.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 21st March-2021

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Q) “Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool used to identify the environmental, social and economic impacts of a project prior to decision-making. Is the EIA beneficial? Examine the flaws in it.”

Answer :

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a process of evaluating the likely environmental impacts of a proposed project or development, taking into account inter-related socio-economic, cultural and human-health impacts, both beneficial and adverse.

It aims to predict environmental impacts at an early stage in project planning and design, find ways and means to reduce adverse impacts, shape projects to suit the local environment and present the predictions and options to decision-makers.

EIA is beneficial because it

- Links environment with development for environmentally safe and sustainable development.
- Encourages the adaptation of mitigation strategies in the developmental plan.
- Provides a cost effective method to eliminate or minimize the adverse impact of developmental projects.

Flaws in EIA

- There are several projects with significant environmental impacts that are exempted from the notification either because they are not listed in schedule I, or their investments are less than what is provided for in the notification.
- Lack of expertise in various fields such as environmentalists, wildlife experts, Anthropologists and Social Scientists within the assessing team.
- A number of projects with significant environmental and social impacts have been excluded from the mandatory public hearing process.
- One of the biggest concerns with the environmental clearance process is related to the quality of the EIA report that is being carried out.
- Public comments are not considered at an early stage, which often leads to conflict at a later stage of project clearance.
- Emergency preparedness plans are not discussed in sufficient details and the information not disseminated to the communities.

We need much stronger laws to protect the environment and to ensure that natural resources are available to the poorest who need them the most. There are a large number of communities like Adivasis, peasants and coastal and fisher communities whose lives mainly depend on the state of the environment. Any drastic changes in EIA will have a direct impact on the living and working conditions of these people and the ecology.

The findings of EIA should be focused on the significant and essential issues. It is also required to provide a sufficient explanation on why they are important, and study its validity in order to facilitate a basis for policy decisions.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 22nd March-2021

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Q) "Landslides are seen in most of the North, North Eastern and South Western states of India. Illustrate. Also explain the causes and suggest measures of mitigation."

Answer :

India has the highest mountain chain on earth, the Himalayas, which are formed due to collision of Indian and Eurasian plate, the northward movement of the Indian plate towards China causes continuous stress on the rocks rendering them friable, weak and prone to landslides and earthquakes.

The slow-motion of the Indian crust, about 5 cm/year accumulates stress to which natural disasters are attributed. Some landslides make unique and unparalleled catastrophes. Landslides and avalanches are among the major hydro-geological hazards that affect large parts of India besides the Himalayas, the Northeastern hill ranges, the Western Ghats, the Nilgiris, the Eastern Ghats and the Vindhians.

Landslides in North, North Eastern and south western states in India:

- covering about 15 % of the landmass The Himalayas alone count for landslides of every fame, name and description- big and small, quick and creeping, ancient and new.
- The North-eastern region is badly affected by landslide problems of a bewildering variety. Landslides in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal as also those in Sikkim, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya, Assam, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh pose chronic problems, causing recurring economic losses worth billions of rupees.
- A different variety of landslides, characterized by a lateritic cap, pose a constant threat to the Western Ghats in the South, along the steep slopes overlooking the Konkan coast besides Nilgiris, which is highly landslide prone.

Landslides are frequent in Himalayas because:

- Heavy snowfall in winter and melting in summer.
- This induces debris flow, which is carried in large quantity by numerous streams and rivers.
- Himalayas are made of sedimentary rocks which can easily be eroded. These aids landslides.
- Drifting of Indian plate causes frequent earthquakes and resultant instability in the region.
- Man-made activities like grazing, construction and cultivation abet soil erosion and risks of landslides.
- Himalayas not yet reached its isocratic equilibrium which destabilizes the slopes. It leads to landslides.
- Diurnal changes of temperature are much more in northern India than in southern slopes. This weakens the rocks and aids mass wasting.

But landslides are less frequent in Western Ghats when compared to Himalayas

- Western Ghats are eroded, denuded, aged, mature and worn out by exogenic forces. Moreover, they are far less in height. Hence landslide occurrence is rare.
- Less occurrence of earthquakes because they're on more stable part of Indian plate.
- While steep slope on western side with high rainfall creates idea condition for landslide but gentle eastern slope with low rainfall and rivers in senile stage, counters the condition.
- W Ghats are older-block mountain therefore they are more stable now. Moving of Indian plates doesn't affect them.
- Small & swift flowing streams of western side and big matured rivers on eastern side (like Krishna, Godavari, etc) cannot carry large amount of debris.
- Western Ghats have lesser man-made interference as of now than what Himalayas have faced.

CAUSES:

NATURAL CAUSES:

- Himalayan landslides can be attributed to the fact that Himalayas lies at the convergence zone of two lithospheric plates, i.e., Indian plate in the south and Eurasian plate in the north. Thus geologically, it is considered very active.
- Himalayan regions are prone to frequent earthquakes leading to loosening of soils that further leads to landslides.
- Himalayas haven't yet reached its isostatic equilibrium and hence under constant influence of earthquake which can trigger landslides.
- Himalayas are mainly composed of sedimentary rocks which can get disturbed under slightest of stress and slide down.
- Himalayas are loftier than other mountain ranges and have greater slope due to which soil once loosened, triggers a full blown land or mud slide.

- Himalayas have numerous rivers and streams which can carry large amount of debris with them. Sometimes they loosen up big boulders and parts of mountains and bring them down with themselves.
- Himalayas have large amount of snow which can become unstable due to heat from sun and trigger landslides (avalanches).

ANTHROPOGENIC CAUSES:

- Construction activities like road and tunnel construction not only loosens the soil, but they also require blasting due to which the mountains become really fragile and prone to landslides.
- Global warming has led to quicker melting of snow and more percolation of water within the underlying surface of hill.
- Inappropriate agricultural practices like shifting or jhum cultivation, which require clearing of forests for agriculture, makes top soil prone to movement by removing the trees which bind them.
- Himalayas being source of many rivers has led to construction of multipurpose dam projects which has affected the already fragile Himalayas.
- Himalayan region is centre of huge diversity when it comes to trees & this diversity has led to discriminate chopping of trees leading to soil erosion which in turn leads to Landslides.
- Illegal mining & Industrial activities too have contributed a lot when it comes to reasons of landslides in the region.

Landslide mitigation can be done

- By restricting or even removing the population from landslides prone areas.
- By restricting certain types of land use where slopes are vulnerable.
- By installing early warning systems based on the monitoring of ground conditions such as strain in rocks and soils, slope displacement, and groundwater levels.
- Landslides pose a recurrent hazard to human life and livelihood in most parts of the world, especially in some regions that have experienced rapid population and economic growth.
- Hazards are mitigated mainly through precautionary means—for instance, by restricting or even removing populations from areas with a history of landslides, by restricting certain types of land use where slope stability is in question, and by installing early warning systems based on the monitoring of ground conditions such as strain in rocks and soils, slope displacement, and groundwater levels.
- There are also various direct methods of preventing landslides; these include modifying slope geometry, using chemical agents to reinforce slope material, installing structures such as piles and retaining walls, grouting rock joints and fissures, diverting debris pathways, and rerouting surface and underwater drainage. Such direct methods are constrained by cost, landslide magnitude and frequency, and the size of human settlements at risk.

Vulnerability to landslides can be evaluated only if we know the exposure to landslide hazard and our preparedness to face that hazard. Vulnerability will be close to nil in the case of well managed and protected slopes.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 23rd March-2021

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Q) “States cannot be reduced to mere rubber stamps enforcing the centre’s legislation.”

Critically analyse.

Approach to answer:

The answer must discuss the significance of evolving new measures to foster cooperation between Union and state government on crucial constitutional issues.

Remember the thing, if question demands you to critically analyse the statement given, you need to remember two components of the division i.e.,

1. Analyse means examine every component of the question given and
2. Critically means you should present both the support arguments and the arguments against it.

For every question given the structure of the answer should be in format that

1. Introduction
2. Body
3. Conclusion

Introduction:

Give a brief introduction about the recent events that affected the state’s will in Implementing Union laws as mentioned below.

India is a federal state where the Centre and the State are the Cooperating units of the polity. Yet India is an asymmetrical federalism, with the balance of power tilting in the favor of the Centre. **Article 256** deals with Union-state relation and State’s obligation while **Article 365** mandates the state governments to follow and implement the directions of the Central government. Changing dynamics of party system is shaping the trajectory of Federalism from cooperative to confrontationist.

Body:

Mention some relevant constitutional provisions in this regard. Define the pros and cons of implementing parliament laws by states uniformly. Suggest a suitable ways to overcome the issue, as given below.

Provisions that favor the Union Government

- **Article 355:** enjoins the Union “to ensure that the government of every State is carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution”. Example: When State governments raised concerns about the NPR, the Union insisted that States are under a constitutional duty to implement laws passed by Parliament.
- **Article 356 not a dead letter:** Centre has the power to impose President’s rule under Article 356 if its laws are not complied by states.
- **Centrally sponsored Schemes:** CSS is the biggest component of **Central Assistance to state plans (CA)**, where states don’t have much flexibility.

- **Enforcement of International Treaties and Agreements:** This provision enables the central government to fulfill its international obligations under **Article 253**. The **Lokpal and the Lokayuktas Bill, 2011** was introduced in the Parliament through the provisions of this particular article.
- **Article 200:** Reservation of state Bills by Governor for President's assent.
- **Article 256:** mentions that the executive power of every state shall be so exercised as to ensure compliance with laws made by Parliament and any existing laws, which apply in that state, and the executive power of the Union shall extend to the giving of such directions to a state as may appear to the Government of India to be necessary for that purpose.

However, States are NOT mere administrative agencies. In the landmark judgment i.e. S.R. Bommai case where Supreme Court said that States are not mere **"appendages"** of the Centre.

- **Legislative/Administrative related provisions:**
 - **Separation of Power: Schedule 7** of Constitution provides strict delineation of powers between center and state. (Except during emergencies which comes under judicial review)
 - **Article 131** of the Constitution, which gives the Supreme Court exclusive jurisdiction to hear cases between states and the Centre. Eg: Chhattisgarh moved SC against NIA Act in Jan 2020. Coalition governments: It has increased states' bargaining power.
- **Financial related Provisions:**
 - **GST Council:** Majority decisions have been based on consensus till now, while states gave 2/3rd of votes. Since 10th Finance Commission, state's share has been continuously increasing till 14th Finance Commission by devolving 42% of share to states.

Other Provisions:

- **NITI Aayog:** Replacing the erstwhile Planning Commission, the Aayog is promoting **bottom-up approach** to development planning.
- **Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas** involves State's as equal partners of development.
- There is a move towards competitive and cooperative federalism.

Measures need to be taken to improve federal spirit:

- **Strengthening of Inter-State Council:** Various committees have recommended strengthening of Interstate Council where the concurrent list subjects can be debated and discussed, balancing Centre state powers. There is far less institutional space to settle inter-state frictions therefore a constitutional institution like ISC can be a way forward.
- **Autonomy to states:** Centre should form model laws with enough space for states to maneuver. Centre should give enough budgetary support to states so as to avoid budgetary burden. There should be least interference in the state subjects.
- **Democratic Decentralization:** Decentralization of administration and strengthening governments at all levels in true spirit. Power should be decentralized based on the **principle of subsidiary**.

Conclusion:

Conclude that new measures should be evolved to foster cooperation between Union and state government on crucial constitutional issues. For sample the conclusion can be as given below:

While security concerns might warrant greater powers to the Union, on the development front (education, health etc.) the Centre should respect the autonomy of the other two levels of government and consciously avoid the tendency to centralize powers and functions. Its role should be limited in laying down policies, devolving funds and facilitating co-ordination leaving implementation entirely to States and Local Bodies. Implementation of **Punchii Commission** recommendations at the earliest is needed for unity of Centre and States.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 24th March-2021

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Q) “Providing affordable housing to all is a big challenge in India. Government has implemented several schemes in this direction. In this light, discuss how PMAY is different from previous housing schemes. Also suggest measures for effective working of the scheme”

Answer:

Affordable housing is fundamental to the health and well-being of people and to the smooth functioning of the economy. Against the backdrop of impending large scale urbanization in India over the next few decades, it is important to identify, evaluate the needs of, and address the challenges faced by the largest chunk of urban housing consumers with the most pressing needs.

PMAY is not the first one relating to the housing project implemented by the central government. Similar attempts were made by past governments as well. From Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) launched in 1990 to Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY) in 2009 and a host of different housing schemes in between this period, attempts were made by successive governments to improve basic services, provide tenure security, upgrade existing infrastructure and create new housing units with a vision of creating a ‘Slum Free India’.

Although similar in vision, the PMAY(U) adopted a much more decentralized system in financing the construction and development of housing. This generated a hope that the PMAY(U) would overcome the challenges of previous schemes with a new way of providing ‘affordable houses’.

However, the PMAY faces following challenges

Mismatch between people need and the mission offerings

- A YUVA and IHF report ‘Housing Needs of the Urban Poor in Nagpur’ discovered, ‘there is a glaring gap between people’s aspirations, their capabilities and state imagination of housing provision’. Therefore, there is a mismatch between the people’s needs and what the housing mission has to offer.

High land cost

- In spite of the availability of flexible and low-interest housing loans, people are not coming forward for housing projects due to the high costs of land, particularly in urban areas.

Land Ownership

- Ownership of land is a prerequisite for availing two of the four options (Beneficiary led construction (BLC) and Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS)), a majority of the urban slum households that do not own land are automatically excluded from availing the benefits under the scheme.

Concern over location

- In the AHP (Affordable Housing in Partnership) component of the scheme, in the bigger metros, it appears that affordable housing projects can only be built on the outskirts of the city, far away from people's workplaces.
- If location is not taken into account, there will be very few takers for these houses as some of the biggest factors influencing people's decision to purchase a home are based on travel time to workplace and affordability.

Delivery of the house in time

- Although affordable housing has been given infrastructure status (easing of governmental norms to promote the growth of infrastructural sector) in the National Budget of 2017, which gives housing developers additional benefits to boost their interest in these projects, the delivery of house construction has not moved at a fast pace as expected from these reforms.
- For a common man, the timely delivery of the house still remains a distant dream.

Measures for effective functioning of the scheme

Upgrade existing slums as a financially viable model

- The upgrading of existing slums by providing them with basic amenities and improving physical and social infrastructure such as roads, sewage and drainage systems, parks, waste disposal and management, hospitals, schools, etc. is critical as it would be the most economically viable option to improve the living conditions of over one crore households living in slums.

Encourage and promote the provision of land tenure rights among state governments

- State governments should promote the provision of land tenure rights.
- Most importantly tenure rights should preferably be given in the name of the women in the family to promote women's empowerment.

Enhance people's participation and implementation of the 74th Amendment Act

- People's participation in making an informed choice is pivotal, and under components such as ISSR it should be extended to ascertaining the design and size of the house as well.

Explore alternative options such as social rental housing

- Although the emphasis was on the construction of houses under PMAY(U), other potential housing solutions such as rental housing have not been included.
- In today's times, with high rates of migration to urban areas for work, the concept of large-scale rental housing equipped with basic amenities can come to the rescue.

Strengthen BLC by upgrading the overall settlement

- Households across the country are demanding support for self-construction and overall upgradation of the settlement.
- A fifth vertical for in-situ upgradation should be detailed outlining BLC with upgradation and provision of basic services such as water supply, sanitation, sewage, various social amenities etc.

Build greater synchronization between Mohua and other central ministries

Monitor qualitative aspects of new housing construction, not just the number of units constructed

Thus, if the Government take adequate measures to overcome challenges for effective implementation of scheme, the scheme would be beneficial and would create a new ways of providing 'affordable houses'.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 25th March-2021

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Q) "Indian economy is extremely susceptible to the global oil price and has always been uncomfortable with its predicament. Discuss."

Answer :

India imports nearly 84% of its domestic demand and it is one of the largest importers of oil in the world. Indian Oil imports account for nearly 27% of its total imports. India mainly export oils like groundnut oil, rice bran oil and also small quantities of sesame oil, sunflower oil and mustard oil to different countries including China, US, Japan, Malaysia. But Indian exports are very low compared to its imports so any Indian influence on oil demand will not have much impact globally.

Impact of fluctuation in global oil prices on India

Current Account Balance

- A rise in the prices of oil will increase the cost of importing oil from other countries. And this in turn has a direct impact on the current account deficit.
- In general, a 5 % increase in oil prices will impact the trade deficit by nearly \$4 billion.
- In the current crisis time (COVID-19 pandemic and economic slowdown), reduced crude oil prices have been a blessing in disguise to the Indian economy.

Fiscal Deficit

- The price of the oil is fixed by the government and it is at a subsidized rate. And then the government compensates the companies for selling the oil at lower prices. These losses are also called under-recoveries.
- Therefore, the losses incurred because of compensating the companies losses, adds to the Fiscal deficit of India.
- But with the reduced oil prices in these crisis times, the compensation to be paid to these companies also reduces and which in turn helps in narrowing the fiscal deficit.

Impact of Inflation

- India, being a vast country, the goods needs to be transported from one place to another. And oil is a very important catalyst in the movement of vehicles from one place to another.

- A rise in oil prices leads to a direct increase in the price of goods and services. And it has a direct bearing on the prices of petrol and diesel.
- And hence it contributes to the rise in inflation in the country.

Impact on Exchange rate

- Rupee, being a free currency (value of rupee depends on the demand in the currency market), its value depends on the current account deficit.
- Therefore, if the oil prices are high, then the country will have to sell rupees and buy dollars to pay for oil bills.
- Similarly, if the price of the oil is low, then the current account deficit is low and the amount of dollars required paying for oil bills are also low.

Impact on stock market

- There is an inverse relationship between the oil price and the Indian equity market. This is because the Indian oil industry is majorly an importer of oil.
- Therefore, industries like tyre, lubricants, logistics, refinery, airlines, paints, etc are directly affected by a change in oil prices.

India being an importer of crude oil, so higher oil prices implies, more payment needs to be made in foreign currency. And oil prices have a major say in the financial markets of our country. A weak oil price usually signals strength in the performance of the stock market. And a strong oil price has a negative impact on the performance of the stock market.

And similarly, if we were to take the example of oil-exporting nations, strong oil prices have a very positive effect on their incomes, balance of payments, and their financial markets.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 26th March-2021

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Q) “Due to the single party rule at the centre, there are arguments to strengthen Inter-state council (ISC).” Do you agree? Suggest measures to strengthen ISC.

Answer:

The Inter-State Council is a **constitutional body** to facilitate coordination between states and the centre. It is set up on the basis of provisions in **Article 263** of the Constitution of India by the Presidential Order, 1990 based on the recommendation of Sarkaria Commissions.

The Inter-state council is **not a permanent constitutional body** for coordination between the states and Central government. Rather, President can establish it at any time if it appears to him that the public interests would be served by the establishment of such a council.

In the modern Indian history single party rule at the centre induced many regional disparities in terms of resource sharing between the centre and states. In addition, single party rule also blamed for constitutional breakdown and wide spread misuse of article 356. Strengthening of ISC will ensure accountability, transparency and co- operation between the states and centre.

Measures to strengthen the ISC

- **Sarkaria Commission** recommended that it needs to be given all the **powers contemplated in the Constitution like Art 263(a) which gives it** the power to investigate issues of inter-state conflict but was dropped in the Presidential order of 1990.
- Moreover, it should provide some **greater opportunities to civil society** institutions and also the corporate sector to make their representations.
- Further, its **secretariat may be shifted** from the Union Home Ministry to the Rajya Sabha secretariat so that it would be under the direction of a neutral federal functionary, the vice-president of our India rather than the Union home minister.
- It should be strengthened as a forum for not just administrative but also **political and legislative give and take between centre and states**. For instance, while legislating on subjects that have been transferred from the state list to the concurrent list such as education and Forests, the centre must consult states more extensively and offer them greater flexibility.
- **Punchhi commission** recommended that the Inter-State Council must meet at least thrice in a year on an agenda evolved after proper consultation with States.
- The Council should have experts in its organizational set up drawn from the disciplines of Laws, Management and also political Science besides the All India Services.
- The Council should have the functional independence with a professional Secretariat constituted with experts on relevant fields of knowledge which is supported by the Central and also State officials on deputation for limited periods.
- After ISC is made a vibrant, negotiating forum for policy development and conflict resolution, the Government may consider the functions for the National Development Council also being transferred to the ISC.

Though, there are other bodies such as the NITI Aayog's Governing Council with similar composition, including the prime minister, chosen cabinet ministers and also chief ministers that could address centre-state issues. But, the ISC has constitutional backing, as against the NITI Aayog which only has an executive mandate. This puts the states on more solid footing in building the atmosphere of cooperation needed for calibrating centre-state relations.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 27th March-2021

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Q) "Despite social media playing a positive role on youth, the high use of social media and technology can have a negative impact on youth self-esteem. In this light, explain the precautions

to be taken by the society and the government to reduce the negative effects of the social media on youth without affecting the right to freedom.” (250words)

Answer:

Social media plays an integral role in our lives today and has huge bearing on society and individuals. Social media has revolutionized the way people communicate and socialize the web. There is a positive effect on business, politics, socialization as well as some negative effects such as cyber bullying, privacy, and fake news.

Social media is continuing to gain popularity every day. Impacts of Social Media on youth is also quite evident in different frames of our lives.

Here are some statistics that were done on social media.

- The average time spent by the people per day on the social network is 1.72 hours
- For the teenagers, the numbers are much higher which is up to 27 hours per week

Social media has become a very important part of life for many young generations in today's world. There are many young people who keep on engaging themselves with social media without even caring to think about what the impact of social media on youth would be. The effects can sometimes be positive and sometimes be negative but mostly they are negative if it is not integrated with a business or professional goal.

Positive Impact of Social Media on Youth

- It keeps connected to their friends when they are not able to see each other always when they want to
- Social media keeps you updates about the important things that are going across the globe currently or maybe in your locality. It is a great benefit to know about everything just by the simple click of your finger.
- The youths have the perfect place to express themselves in such a way in which they will not be allowed to do in public. This is something which makes the youth feel better about them and they hold some position in society.
- It helps you in developing social skills and the best part is that a few friendships can begin from the social website. Youths generally like make new friends and know about others as much as they can. All of this is possible with the social media platform
- One more interesting impact of social media on youth is that it feels fun to interact with peers rather than talking to them face to face.

Negative Impact of Social Media on Youth

- People of today's generation give so much importance to social media nowadays that it has become their priority. They love being in the social media sites and forget about all the things that should come first for them like family, sports, and schools
- In the platforms of social media, we can only see the virtual side of the person. This means we can only see the side which they want they want to show us. Many people try to portray themselves to others which they are not at all
- Young people have this habit of bullying their peers which is ok to some extent. But when it comes to cyberbullying, it affects a lot to the other peer as this can be on the newsfeed of any person and can go viral easily. Sometimes such things can lead to depression as well as suicidal thoughts

- There are some young people who are very easy to get influenced. They may feel the need to change their appearance physically and compare themselves to every next person they see in the social media
- There is a very strong temptation in social media. It can become an addiction for the youth and begin to side-track them

Recent campaigns by social media platforms:

1. WhatsApp has launched a nation-wide campaign called “Share Joy, Not Rumours” to help prevent the spread of rumours and fake news.
2. Facebook launched #socialforgood campaign to address issues like cyberbullying, mental well-being, and entrepreneurship was targeted primarily for young users.
3. Twitter launched #PowerOf18 to encourage youth to contribute to public debate and participates in civic engagement in election season.
4. These campaigns are a way to take ownership of what is happening on these platforms and find ways to weed out negative content.

Way Forward:

1. Increase the media literacy
2. Data leaks at Facebook and uber in the recent past have proven that encryption should be so high.
3. The government should bring out policy framework on the possible harm due to internet messaging platforms to engage at deeper level.
4. The need of the hour is to tackle the gendered aspect of online abuses and uphold the rights of women in India.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 29th March-2021

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Q) “Landslides are seen in most of the North, North Eastern and South Western states of India.” Illustrate. Also explain the causes and suggest measures of mitigation.

Answer:

India has the highest mountain chain on earth, the Himalayas, which are formed due to collision of Indian and Eurasian plate, the northward movement of the Indian plate towards China causes continuous stress on the rocks rendering them friable, weak and prone to landslides and earthquakes.

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- covering about 15 % of the landmass The Himalayas alone count for landslides of every fame, name and description- big and small, quick and creeping, ancient and new.
- The North-eastern region is badly affected by landslide problems of a bewildering variety. Landslides in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal as also those in Sikkim, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya, Assam, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh pose chronic problems, causing recurring economic losses worth billions of rupees.
- A different variety of landslides, characterized by a lateritic cap, pose a constant threat to the Western Ghats in the South, along the steep slopes overlooking the Konkan coast besides Nilgiris, which is highly landslide prone.

Landslides are frequent in Himalayas because:

- Heavy snowfall in winter and melting in summer.
- This induces debris flow, which is carried in large quantity by numerous streams and rivers.
- Himalayas are made of sedimentary rocks which can easily be eroded. These aids landslides.
- Drifting of Indian plate causes frequent earthquakes and resultant instability in the region.
- Man-made activities like grazing, construction and cultivation abet soil erosion and risks of landslides.
- Himalayas not yet reached its isocratic equilibrium which destabilizes the slopes. It leads to landslides.
- Diurnal changes of temperature are much more in northern India than in southern slopes. This weakens the rocks and aids mass wasting.

But landslides are less frequent in Western Ghats when compared to Himalayas

- Western Ghats are eroded, denuded, aged, mature and worn out by exogenic forces. Moreover, they are far less in height. Hence landslide occurrence is rare.
- Less occurrence of earthquakes because they're on more stable part of Indian plate.
- While steep slope on western side with high rainfall creates idea condition for landslide but gentle eastern slope with low rainfall and rivers in senile stage, counters the condition.
- W Ghats are older-block mountain therefore they are more stable now. Moving of Indian plates doesn't affect them.
- Small & swift flowing streams of western side and big matured rivers on eastern side (like Krishna, Godavari, etc) cannot carry large amount of debris.
- Western Ghats have lesser man-made interference as of now than what Himalayas have faced.

CAUSES:

NATURAL CAUSES:

- Himalayan landslides can be attributed to the fact that Himalayas lies at the convergence zone of two lithospheric plates, i.e., Indian plate in the south and Eurasian plate in the north. Thus geologically, it is considered very active.
- Himalayan regions are prone to frequent earthquakes leading to loosening of soils that further leads to landslides.
- Himalayas haven't yet reached its isostatic equilibrium and hence under constant influence of earthquake which can trigger landslides.
- Himalayas are mainly composed of sedimentary rocks which can get disturbed under slightest of stress and slide down.
- Himalayas are loftier than other mountain ranges and have greater slope due to which soil once loosened, triggers a full blown land or mud slide.
- Himalayas have numerous rivers and streams which can carry large amount of debris with them. Sometimes they loosen up big boulders and parts of mountains and bring them down with themselves.

- Himalayas have large amount of snow which can become unstable due to heat from sun and trigger landslides (avalanches).

ANTHROPOGENIC CAUSES:

- Construction activities like road and tunnel construction not only loosens the soil, but they also require blasting due to which the mountains become really fragile and prone to landslides.
- Global warming has led to quicker melting of snow and more percolation of water within the underlying surface of hill.
- Inappropriate agricultural practices like shifting or jhum cultivation, which require clearing of forests for agriculture, makes top soil prone to movement by removing the trees which bind them.
- Himalayas being source of many rivers has led to construction of multipurpose dam projects which has affected the already fragile Himalayas.
- Himalayan region is centre of huge diversity when it comes to trees & this diversity has led to discriminate chopping of trees leading to soil erosion which in turn leads to Landslides.
- Illegal mining & Industrial activities too have contributed a lot when it comes to reasons of landslides in the region.

Landslide mitigation can be done

- By restricting or even removing the population from landslides prone areas.
- By restricting certain types of land use where slopes are vulnerable.
- By installing early warning systems based on the monitoring of ground conditions such as strain in rocks and soils, slope displacement, and groundwater levels.
- Landslides pose a recurrent hazard to human life and livelihood in most parts of the world, especially in some regions that have experienced rapid population and economic growth.
- Hazards are mitigated mainly through precautionary means—for instance, by restricting or even removing populations from areas with a history of landslides, by restricting certain types of land use where slope stability is in question, and by installing early warning systems based on the monitoring of ground conditions such as strain in rocks and soils, slope displacement, and groundwater levels.
- There are also various direct methods of preventing landslides; these include modifying slope geometry, using chemical agents to reinforce slope material, installing structures such as piles and retaining walls, grouting rock joints and fissures, diverting debris pathways, and rerouting surface and underwater drainage. Such direct methods are constrained by cost, landslide magnitude and frequency, and the size of human settlements at risk.

Vulnerability to landslides can be evaluated only if we know the exposure to landslide hazard and our preparedness to face that hazard. Vulnerability will be close to nil in the case of well managed and protected slopes.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 30th March-2021

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Q) “Examine various social challenges that adversely impact geriatric care in India.” What Measures can be taken to change the life of senior citizens in India?

Answer :-

- Ageing is a continuous, irreversible, universal process, which starts from conception till the death of an individual.
- However, the age at which one's productive contribution declines and one tends to be economically dependent can probably be treated as the onset of the aged stage of life.
- National Elderly Policy defines person of 60+ age group as elderly.

Population figures on ageing

- Age division of Indian population (0-14) is 30.8%, (15-59) is 60.3%, (60+) is 8.6%.
- According to Population Census 2011, there are nearly 104 million elderly persons in India.
- It has increased from 5.5% in 1951 to 8.6% in 2011.
- Projected a rise up to 19% in 2050.
- As regards rural and urban areas, more than 73 million persons i.e., 71% of elderly population resides in rural areas while 31 million or 29% of elderly population are in urban area.

Ageing in India is exponentially increasing due to the impressive gains that society has made in terms of increased life expectancy. With the rise in elderly population, the demand for holistic care tends to grow. By 2025, the geriatric population is expected to be 840 million in the developing countries

It is projected that the proportion of Indians aged 60 and older will rise from 7.5% in 2010 to 11.1% in 2025.

The needs and problems of the elderly significantly vary according to their age, socioeconomic status, health, living status and other such background characteristics. Their social rights are neglected, and they are profusely abused which goes unreported.

Challenges:

Lack of Infrastructure: With increasing longevity and debilitating chronic diseases, many elder citizens will need better access to physical infrastructure in the coming years. Lack of physical infrastructure is a major deterrent to providing comfort to the aged.

Changing Family Structure: The traditional Indian society with an age-old joint family system has been instrumental in safeguarding the social and economic security of the elderly people. With the emerging prevalence of nuclear family set-ups in recent years, the elderly is likely to be exposed to emotional, physical, and financial insecurity in the years to come.

Lack of Social Support: The elderly in India are much more vulnerable because of the less government spending on social security system. Insurance cover that is elderly sensitive is virtually non-existent in India. Pension and social security are also restricted to those who have worked in the public sector or the organized sector of industry.

Social Inequality: Elderly are a heterogeneous section with an urban and rural divide. They are less vulnerable in rural areas as compared to their urban counterparts, due to the still holding values of the joint family system.

Availability, Accessibility and Affordability of Health Care: Due to the ever-increasing trend of nuclear families, elder care management is getting more difficult, especially for working adult children who find themselves responsible for their parents' well-being.

Economic Dependency: As per the 52nd round of National Sample Survey Organization, nearly half of the elderly are fully dependent on others, while another 20 percent are partially dependent for their economic needs. About 85% of the aged had to depend on others for their day-to-day maintenance. The situation was even worse for elderly females.

Recent initiatives by government:

Integrated Programme for Older Persons (IPOP):

- Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is a nodal agency for the welfare of elderly people. The main objective of the scheme is to improve the quality of life of older persons by providing basic amenities like shelter, food, medical care, and entertainment opportunities, etc.

Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY):

- This scheme is run by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. This is a central sector scheme funded from the Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund.
- Under the RVY scheme, aids and assistive living devices are provided to senior citizens belonging to BPL category who suffer from age-related disabilities such as low vision, hearing impairment, loss of teeth and locomotor disabilities. The aids and assistive devices, viz walking sticks, elbow crutches, walkers/crutches, tripods/quad pods, hearing aids, wheelchairs, artificial dentures, and spectacles are provided to eligible beneficiaries.
- The scheme is being implemented by Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO), which is a public sector undertaking under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS):

- The Ministry of Rural Development runs the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) that extends social assistance for poor households for the aged, widows, disabled, and in cases of death where the breadwinner has died.
- Under this scheme, financial assistance is provided to person of 60 years and above and belonging to family living below poverty line as per the criteria prescribed by Government of India. Central assistance of Rs 200 per month is provided to person in the age group of 60-79 years and Rs 500 per month to persons of 80 years and above.

Varishtha Pension Bima Yojana (VPBY):

- This scheme is run by the Ministry of Finance. The Varishtha Pension Bima Yojana (VPBY) was first launched in 2003 and then relaunched in 2014. Both are social security schemes for senior citizens intended to give an assured minimum pension on a guaranteed minimum return on the subscription amount.

The Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana:

- The Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PNVVY) was launched in May 2017 to provide social security during old age. This is a simplified version of the VPBY and will be implemented by the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India.
- Under the scheme, on payment of an initial lump sum amount ranging from Rs 1,50,000 for a minimum pension of Rs 1000 per month to a maximum of Rs 7,50,000/- for a maximum pension of Rs 5,000 per month, subscribers will get an assured pension based on a guaranteed rate of return of 8% per annum payable monthly/quarterly/half-yearly/annually.
- The Centre will bear 75 percent of the total budget and the state government will contribute 25 percent of the budget, for activities up to district level.

Vayoshreshtha Samman:

- Conferred as a National award and given to eminent senior citizens & institutions under various categories for their contributions on International day of older persons on 1st October.

Measures:

- Increasing the monthly pension of elderly to minimum of Rs 2,000 per month.
- Under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Housing for the aged, particularly the aged poor, must be a priority.
- Assisted living facilities for indigent elderly, particularly those with age-related issues like dementia, needs policy focus.
- More tax benefits, or at least removing tax on deposit interest for seniors.
- Enhancing the geriatric care health infrastructure especially in rural area.
- Allocation of special budget for elderly population at both levels.
- Providing entertainment facilities like libraries and clubs at panchayat level.
- Appreciations for the contributions of elderlies at village level.

Conclusion:

- Social security is the concurrent responsibility of the central and state governments as, mandated under Indian constitution i.e., Well-being of senior citizens – Article 41 and 46 in general of Indian constitution. In this regard, National Policy on Senior Citizen, 2011 was framed.
- For the welfare and care for the older persons, we must focus on the protection of already existing social support systems/traditional social institutions such as family and kinship, neighbourhood bonding, community bonding and community participation must be revived and kins should show sensitivity towards elderly citizens.

UPSC Civils Daily Mains Question 31st March-2021

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Discuss how Himalayan rivers are different from peninsular rivers?

Rivers are the lifelines of a country as they provide the most valuable thing required for the survival “the water”. The rivers in India can be categorized into two different categories based on their origin: The Himalayan Rivers and the Peninsular Rivers.

Peninsular rivers

Himalayan rivers

Himalayan rivers Vs Peninsular rivers

Himalayan Rivers	Peninsular Rivers
These rivers originate from the Himalayan mountain ranges.	These rivers originate from the peninsular plateaus in India.
They are longer and larger than the peninsular rivers.	They are comparatively smaller and shorter than the Himalayan Rivers.
They have larger basins and catchment areas.	They have smaller basins and catchment areas.
The bedrocks of these rivers are soft, sedimentary and easily erodible.	The bedrocks of these rivers are hard, and not easily erodible.
They are perennial in nature, flow throughout the year.	They are seasonal and non-perennial so may not flow throughout the year.
They are fed by the meltwater from glaciers and rains.	They are fed only by rains.
They form V-shaped valleys.	They form U-shaped valleys.
They form meanders.	They may not form meanders.
They form big deltas at their mouths where they meet the sea.	They form small rivers and estuaries.
They are antecedent rivers, i.e. they maintain their original course and pattern in spite of the changes in the rock topography.	They are consequent rivers, i.e. they flow in the direction of the slope.

These rivers flow across the young fold mountains and are still in a youthful stage.

These rivers have been flowing in one of the oldest plateaus of the world and have reached maturity.