

**9pm**

# **Compilation**

**20<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2020**

**General Studies - 1**

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1. Urban-Rural India – The false division
2. Impact of Covid-19 on Women

**General Studies - 2**

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# General Studies Paper - 1

## General Studies – 1

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### Syllabus – GS 1 – Urbanization - problems and their remedies

#### 1. Urban-Rural India – The false division

Source – [Indian Express](#)

**Context** – In contrast to the imagination of the city as a hub of social and economic activity, it is now perceived as the center of disease and distress.

#### Challenges in Urban areas

**1. Over- Congestion in cities**–The 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.

**For instance** - Many slums in Mumbai and Delhi have become COVID-19 containment zones.

**2. Over-burdened health systems** - The health systems in megacities like Delhi and Mumbai are also overburdened and face a shortage of hospital staff and beds. The urban support under the National Health Mission is just three per cent of the total allocation, while 97 per cent of the funds are set aside for rural areas.

**3. Biased policies favoring large cities only** - Current infrastructure development schemes, including the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) and the Smart Cities Mission, focus on Class I cities. Both these schemes focus on development projects and provide funds for the more developed cities that already have relatively better infrastructure and overlook the nearly seven crore people who live in smaller towns (population between 20,000 and one lakh).

**4. Lack of employment opportunities** - While the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) provides employment opportunities to rural households, there is no equivalent scheme for the poor in urban areas.

**5. Environmental challenge** - According to the report published by IQAir AirVisual, 21 of the world's 30 most polluted cities are in India. This pollution challenge will be exacerbated by the waste created for tackling Covid which includes bio-medical and solid waste.

**Way Forward** - Small towns that are urban in nature but rural in character are the most neglected in the current policy environment. They are forced to exist with poorer services and policy neglect while having to meet the demands of a large population. Thus, policy orientation toward the binary of rural-urban classification needs to include the smaller town for inclusive development of all.

**Syllabus: GS-1 Role of women and women's organisations, population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues, urbanisation, their problems and remedies.**

#### 2. Impact of Covid-19 on Women

Source: [Indian Express](#)

**Context:** Women have been disproportionately affected by Covid-19 pandemic

#### Impact of Covid-19 on women:

**Domestic Violence:** Domestic violence cases have increased exponentially during the pandemic due to the following reasons:

- Tension and strain created by security, health, and financial worries
- Confinement and lack of access to alcohol leading to interpersonal violence and abuse.

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- Domestic labour becomes taxing during a lockdown if not distributed equally.
- Lack of institutional support, inability to complain during lockdown.

**Increase in burden of work:** With pandemic induced lockdown, family members are constantly at home and children are being educated online. This has increased the number of hours of unpaid work and enhanced the burden on women.

**Sexual Harassment:** There are concerns around abduction, wrongful confinement, molestation and harassment even in homes.

**Shrinking Livelihood Opportunities:** There has been a disproportionate economic exclusion of women both in rural and urban areas. The covid-19 pandemic has aggravated the declining female participation in the labour force and many women might not be able to get back to work again.

**Impact on Health:** grass roots health workers such as anganwadi and ASHA workers who provide reproductive and maternal services to millions of poor women are overburdened. As a result, women have poor access to family planning services, to institutional support for deliveries, natal and neonatal support or adequate access to hygiene and sanitary items.

**Conclusion:** The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 seeks to “eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women in the public and private spheres, and to undertake reforms to give them the same rights to economic resources and access to property by 2030”. India needs to address the issue of domestic violence, economic exclusion, and health issues of women to fulfil its commitment towards gender equity.

# General Studies Paper - 2

## General Studies - 2

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**Syllabus: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.**

### 1. Make the right call on 'Malabar' going Quad

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Context:** Analyzing the speculation that India could soon invite Australia to join the Malabar naval exercises to be held later this year.

#### **Background:**

- **Reports:** A key meeting of India's Ministry of Defense discussed the issue of adding Australia to the trilateral Malabar naval exercise with Japan and the United States in the Bay of Bengal.
- **Quad participation:** If Australia participates, it will make it the first time since 2007 that all members of Quad will participate in a joint military drill aimed ostensibly at China.

**Quad:** The grouping of four democracies –India, Australia, US and Japan– known as the quadrilateral security dialogue or quad, was first mooted by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007.

#### **Points of conflict:**

- **Opposition by China for this coalition in the Indo-Pacific region:**
  - **Containing China rise:** The Chinese leadership sees the maritime Quadrilateral as an Asian-NATO.
  - **Move directed against China:** Due to current strained bilateral ties of India with China. It will have harsh consequences by putting more pressure on China and moving to expand its sphere of influence into the entire Indian Ocean and the South Pacific.
- **Overdue movement by India:**
  - **To shed its traditional defensiveness:** In the maritime domain following the stand-off in Ladakh.
  - **Realist view:** This alliance will be used to counter Chinese moves in the Indian Ocean.
- **Need of caution by India:**
  - **Sending contrary signals to China:** Invitation to Australia to participate in the Malabar exercise at a time when India and China are negotiating a truce on the border in Eastern Ladakh.
  - **Needlessly open a new front:** If China responded churlishly through aggressive posturing in the Eastern Indian Ocean

#### **The prospect of modest gains for India:**

- **Strategic rationale of the military Quad:** India's priority is to acquire strategic capabilities to counter a Chinese naval presence in the Indian Ocean.
- **Anti-submarine warfare tech in exchange for signing up the 'military-quad':**
  - **To deter Chinese submarines:** The Indian Navy is yet to develop the undersea capability to deter Chinese submarines in the eastern Indian Ocean.
  - **To improve Indian Navy's deterrence potential:** Cooperation with the U.S. and Japan without attendant benefits of strategic technology transfers will not improve it in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

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- **In operational terms:** It might be premature for Delhi to initiate multilateral engagement with Quad partners.
  - **To be used to draw India into the security dynamics of the Asia-Pacific:** As the strategic contest between the U.S. and China in East Asia and Southeast Asia are growing up.
  - **Expectation by the US to assist the US Navy in the South China Sea:** By its Indo-Pacific partners including India as China has stepped up its naval presence.
  - The U.S. and Japanese navies have little spare capacity for sustained surveillance and deterrence operations in the IOR. Australia is the only one ready and able to partner India in securing the Eastern Indian Ocean.

The China has been cautious so far in the ocean region.

### Cautious approach by China:

- **Question of timing:**
  - A balancing coalition must come together when the nature and magnitude of the threat is wholly manifest.
  - **Challenge by China:**
    - Despite a growing presence in the Indian Ocean, the PLAN is yet to physically threaten Indian interests at sea.
    - **Not challenged Indian sovereignty:** Chinese warships in its territorial waters or ventured close to Indian islands with malign intent.
- **Avoided entanglement with Indian naval ships:**
  - In the subcontinental littorals, Chinese Navy has limited its ventures to friendly countries in the region, many of which are happy to benefit from Beijing's economic and military power.
  - **Cautious approach by Chinese maritime agencies:** Chinese research and intelligence ships have ensured that operations do not cross the threshold of conflict with India.

### Need for careful thought and Way Forward:

- For India, naval coalition building alone will not credibly deter Chinese naval power in the Indian Ocean.
- **Upgrading the trilateral Malabar to a quadrilateral:** This without acquiring the requisite combat and deterrence capability could yield gains for India in the short term but would prove ineffective in the long run.
- New Delhi should not sign up to quadrilateral engagement without a cost-benefit exercise and commensurate gains in the strategic-operational realm. What might appear politically sensible could be operationally imprudent.

## 2. Importance of new Arabian business for India

Source: [The Indian Express](#)

**Context:** Analyzing the costs of neglecting the new possibilities for wide-ranging Arabian business are far higher than a lost railway contract in Iran for India.

### Background:

- India's extra-special relationship with Iran:** It rests on a number of claims:
  - a. Historical connections
  - b. Civilizational bonds
  - c. Energy supplies
  - d. Regional security.
- With Arabian Peninsula:**



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- a. All above factors are of far greater import in India's engagement.
- b. Outweighing relationship with Iran:
  - i. Millions of Indian immigrants in the Arab nations
  - ii. Massive hard currency remittances from them
  - iii. The density of commercial engagement with the Arab Gulf.
- c. In recent years, the UAE and Saudi Arabia have extended invaluable support in countering terrorism and blocked attempts to condemn India in the Muslim world

### **Curious inversion in India's intellectual imagination:**

#### **1. Latest anxiety:** Delhi lost a railway contract in Iran.

Large countries with major foreign investments and projects win some and lose some. That is part of doing business in other countries. Then there is no escaping the political risk associated with foreign projects.

#### **Dealing of India with Iran:**

##### **a. Sanctions imposed by the US have crippled the Iranian economy:**

- It also targets third countries that do business with certain Iranian entities.
- **India gained exemption from sanctions:** For its participation in the Chabahar port project in Iran but they don't apply to some of the partners suggested by Iran in the railway project.
- **Iran would like India to break the US sanctions regime:** A prudent Delhi is resisting that temptation and would rather lose the railway contract than get into the raging crossfire between the US and Iran.

##### **b. India's Iran policy as a continuous purity test for Delhi's "strategic autonomy":**

- Some foreign policy experts expect Delhi to conduct its relationship with Iran without a reference to either a cost-benefit calculus or Iran's troubled relationship with others with whom India has important partnerships.

##### **c. On Iran's covert nuclear programme:**

- As the US mounted pressure on Iran to come clean 15 years ago, there was a strong view in Delhi that India should cast its lot with Tehran.
- **View of pragmatics:** They pointed to one of the preconditions for the India-US nuclear deal — Delhi's strong commitment to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.
- **Confrontation of backing Iran in its nuclear confrontation with NPT:** It would mean killing support in the US Congress for the historic civil nuclear initiative signed by India in July 2005.
- **Delhi's voted against Iran in the IAEA:** The pragmatists were vindicated when Iran concluded a nuclear deal of its own with the US and major powers a decade later.

### **2. Importance of Iran for India's foreign policy:**

- a. Iran is one of the the most important nations of the world based on:
  - Geographic and demographic size
  - The geopolitical location next door
  - Natural resources
  - The extraordinary talents of its people
- b. Most of those fabulous assets have been, unfortunately, neutralized by Iran's prolonged confrontation with the US.

For both internal and external reasons, Iran will remain a difficult place to do business. Delhi must advance ties with it within the confines of that unfortunate but real constraint.

**Opportunity for India in Arab:**

- a. The Arab world has had its doors open for political, economic and technological cooperation with India.
- b. Three moderate Arab nations — Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE — are confronting radical forces in the region and are valuable partners for India in countering forces of destabilization.
- c. **Scale of Beijing's economic advances in the Arab world:** The talk of a spectacular deal between China and Iran is just talk for now but there is real Chinese economic action in the Arab world as the region embraces China's Belt and Road Initiative. China's Digital Silk Road too is gaining ground in the Arab world.
- d. **India is no minor economic force in the Arab world:** It is having had a much longer engagement with the region than China. Instead of defining an unrealistic competition with Beijing, Delhi must up its own commercial game in the Arab world. One of the new possibilities for India lies in the domain of new technologies.

**Way Forward**

- The UAE launched the first home-grown Arab space mission from a Japanese rocket. The UAE's space programme is only a reflection of the emerging sentiment among the Gulf Arabs to reduce the over-dependence on oil, promote alternative energy sources, invest in higher education, and develop technology hubs.
- This provides a solid basis for elevating India's economic partnership with the Arab world to the next level.

**3. Calibrated balance: On India and non-alignment**

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Context:** Analyzing the separate statements of the External Affairs Minister which laid out India's world view in the face of global challenges.

**Background:**

- **Contention of External Affairs Minister:**
  - Non-alignment as a concept belonged to a bygone era.
  - Multipolarity in the world necessitated that India would have to take a definite stand and even take "risks" on issues such as connectivity, maritime security, terrorism and climate change.
- **Not rejecting Non-Alignment in its entirety:**
  - While it would no longer remain disentangled from difficult decisions but it would not compromise on its independence.
  - **Not part of any alliance:** India has never been part of an alliance system nor looking at now. Even the U.S. must look beyond its present alliances and engage with more multilateral arrangements.

**Non-alignment:**

- Non-alignment worked for India during the Cold War between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.
- Land boundary between India and China would always be a factor in a "new cold war" between the U.S and China.
- **Indo-U.S. cooperation:** In many fields such as the growing maritime collaboration like QUAD.
- **Hard reality:** Military collaboration with US on land would prove problematic given India's disputed boundary with China.

**Assessment of India's constraints and avenues for its potential growth:**

- **Assertion of India's strategic independence:** India's resistance to joining any alliance comes as a timely reminder amid speculation that tensions with China will push India into a stronger friendship with US.
- **Raising the land issue only bilaterally:** This despite multiple references by the U.S. Secretary of State to the India-China clashes. He has called for jointly countering China.
- **Outreach to Moscow:** Including a visit by Defence Minister and the participation of Mr. Jaishankar in the Russia-India-China trilateral last month and the External Affairs Minister's comments that India should also seek to build coalitions with "middle powers" such as the EU and Japan.

**Way Forward**

- At a time of a double crisis for India — battling the novel coronavirus pandemic in the country and Chinese aggression at the border — the message from New Delhi is one of a carefully calibrated balance.

**4. Deepening India-South Korea ties**

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Context:** Analyzing the relationship between India and South Korea who have signed numerous bilateral agreements with the aim of taking their ties to the next level.

**Background:**

- **Economic partnership:** It is struck at \$22 billion annually.
- **Defence partnership:** It appears to have receded from great all-round promise to the mere sale and purchase of weapon systems.
- **People to people:** Indians and South Koreans are failing to touch a mutually meaningful chord of empathy. This is at least in part due to cultural prejudices on both sides which stands in the way of a relationship based on openness, curiosity and warmth.
- **Not sufficient momentum:** Whatever bilateral progress has been made in the realm of trade and investment has not let people start building bridges in other areas.
- **For example-**
  - **For South Koreans:** There may be a widespread perception of India as a third world country rife with poverty and hunger. While it is true that India is far from eradicating these deprivations, their extent may be exaggerated in the minds of some.
  - **For Indian:** Indians are unable to distinguish between the cultural and social characteristics of South Koreans and people of other East Asian nations.

**Indians in South Korea:**

- **Racial prejudice:**
  - Within South Korea, the integration of Indians in the local population is far from complete.
  - There have been some instances of what appears to be racial discrimination including toward Indians in work settings in South Korea.
- **Mutual respect regarding cultural values:**
  - It is the key to build a robust partnership between two countries.
  - This would help in filling the information gap that exists between the two countries.
  - **Information of Korean Culture:** The defining traits of Japan's and China's cultures are better identified than those of Korean culture.

• **Indian Culture Centre in Seoul:**

- **India's engagement with a strategically important Asian nation:** The establishment of the Indian Culture Centre (ICC) in Seoul 10 years ago was a step in the right direction.
- **Mission:** To promote people-to-people contacts.
- The current focus is on diplomatic initiatives. Though it is an important but not the only component of a potentially rich bilateral space. It can sometimes be complicated for the average South Korean to access its offices and services.
- The ICC's attempts to broad-base an appreciation of Indian culture by for example teaching south Indian dances to elementary school students in South Korea or organizing experiential sessions centered on Indian cuisine are commendable.
- **Need focus of the common man of South Korea:** Then only it may reach an exponentially wider audience beyond the urban, English-speaking elite of Seoul. The same may be applicable to South Korean culture centers in India.

**Way Forward**

- **Shifting Balance of power in the region:** India and South Korea may need each like never before to protect their ways of life.
- Both countries will be able to help each other only if they can fill the cultural gaps.
- People from the two countries need to overcome cultural biases and move closer to each other

**Syllabus: GS-2 Human Rights**

**5. Why a separate anti-torture law?**

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Context:** The alleged torture of a father-son duo in Sattankulam town in Tamil Nadu has once again given rise to the demand for a separate law against torture.

**Existing Law against Torture:**

- Torture is not defined in the Indian Penal Code, but the definitions of 'hurt' and 'grievous hurt' are clearly laid down.
- Definition of 'hurt' includes psychic torture, environmental coercion, tiring interrogative prolixity, and overbearing and intimidatory methods, among others. However, it does not include mental torture.
- Under the Code of Criminal Procedure, a judicial magistrate inquires into every custodial death.
- The National Human Rights Commission has laid down specific guidelines for conducting autopsy under the eyes of the camera.

**Important Supreme Court Judgements:**

1. The Supreme Court judgment in *DK Basu v. State of West Bengal* was a turning point in the evolving jurisprudence on custodial torture. The Court laid down certain basic "requirements" to be followed in all cases of arrest or detention till legal provisions are made in that behalf as a measure to prevent custodial violence.
2. The SC in *Nilabati Behera v. State of Orissa* made sure that the state could no longer escape liability in public law and had to be compelled to pay compensation.
3. The Court has held in many cases that policemen found guilty of custodial death should be given the death penalty.

**Draft Prevention of Torture Bill, 2017:** The Bill seeks to provide for punishment for torture committed by government officials. It provided death penalty for custodial deaths. The bill has been criticised on many grounds such as:

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- a. It is very harsh for the police to discharge its responsibilities without fear of prosecution and persecution.
- b. It was inconsistent with the existing provisions of law.
- c. It included 'severe or prolonged pain or suffering' as a form of torture but that was not defined.

- The 273rd Report of the Law Commission recommended ratification of the U.N. Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment (CAT).
- CAT aims to prevent torture and other acts of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment around the world

### Way Forward:

The prevalent law in India is adequate and well in tune with the provisions of CAT. Thus, it is important to properly implement existing laws to deal with police torture and custodial deaths

The investigations, the prosecutions are not fair and these must be rectified at first.

The temptation to use third-degree methods must be replaced with scientific skills.

Implement recommendations of various commissions to bring in necessary reforms.

### Syllabus: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

#### 6. More than a crisis, a chance to rebuild health care

Source: [The Hindu](#)

**Context:** The Director-General of World Health Organization (WHO) acknowledged the success of Mumbai's densely populated Dharavi slum in containing the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Background:

- **Current foci of the pandemic:** Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Ahmedabad and Bengaluru are among India's major metropolitan agglomerations.
- This points to both the speed and the scale of the epidemic moving within densely populated areas.
- **Dharavi case success:** Sustained municipal efforts and community participation.

#### Opportunity to act

##### Cases:

- After nearly 100 days of the first 14-hour janata curfew, the Minister of Health highlighted how 49 districts out of the 733 in India accounted for 80% of the nearly eight lakh cases with eight States accounting for 90% of all the incident cases.
- Numbers have moved steadily past the million mark and India is now third in global case standings.

##### Numbers at face value:

- There are on average roughly 250 cases per district in about 700 districts
- Many of these districts may be closer to having no cases.
- Others may be at a significantly higher incidence.

The low numbers in a large number of districts present officials the opportunity of stemming the epidemic and preventing morbidity, mortality and economic distress in a significant way.

**Need of Key steps at ground level:**

**To disaggregate the COVID-19 tracking mechanisms and the national level tables and graphs that are updated daily:**

- There should be 733 district-level versions where each one is updated and reported on a daily basis at the district level.
- The accuracy and timeliness of district-level tracking should be ensured.
- **Retain their low incidence status:** Such districts should be supported with all comprehensive testing kits and contact tracing know-how.
- The earlier scheme of designating districts as green, yellow and red will be strengthened with this disaggregated reporting.

**To encourage District Magistrates:**

- To use the full range of social support schemes available in support of the District Health Officer and team.
- To be able to prevent anyone from facing situations of hunger or economic distress.
- **Addressing the epidemic:** By better household nutrition and income outcomes.

**Scaling up the testing capacity in the district:**

- **By coopting science departments of college and university:** Chemistry and zoology-allied departments such as microbiology and biochemistry can lend their laboratory services to carry out basic polymerase chain reaction (PCR)-based tests.
- This will require administrative imagination and collaboration from the ICMR, the Department of Biotechnology as well as the UGC.
- **Health as a reliable career opportunity:** From the laboratory to the bedside and not using emerging talents in educational institutions in tier 2 and tier 3 towns in many districts in India would be a wasted opportunity both in terms of training and nurturing ambitions.

**Testing:**

- It would be good to look at rapid innovations that have been surfacing within the past 12 weeks globally. Testing could become a self-administered process.
- One has to look at recent insights into using saliva as the start point for testing rather than using a nasopharyngeal swab for sampling.
- **Increased testing stems the tide of morbidity and mortality:**
  - Incidence rates have risen wherever testing has been constrained.
  - Epidemics are not to be treated as law and order situations with policing. Lockdowns can have multiple collateral damage at the community and economy levels.
    - **Inspiring confidence among the population:** By freely available, quality assured testing and even without lockdowns

**Chance for biotech:**

- **Without compromising the standards or rigor of evidence needed for regulatory and manufacturing approval:** The emphasis should be to encourage innovators and entrepreneurs to bring out and scale up their products.
- The world is increasingly looking at personalised diagnostics and therapeutics.

**Expanding the network of monitoring exponentially and addressing morbidity earlier in its course:**

- If with a positive test report, COVID-19 positive individuals were able to:
  - Monitor their own oxygenation status at home

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- Along with basic fever management medicines and based on predetermined cutoffs
- Able to seek and obtain care at oxygen equipped care facilities.
  - **This requires two bold administrative leaps:**
    - Ensure every positive diagnosis report is also delivered along with a pulse oximeter and phone number to call and report status on.
    - Ensure that there would be enough oxygen-equipped beds in every part of the country.

### **For roughly 3% to 5% of people who need more than oxygen support:**

- We need to ensure that our doctors, nurses, laboratory personnel and floor workers in hospitals are protected with PPE kits to safety at home and salaries on time.
- Critical engagement from Indian biopharmaceutical and biotech companies should be encouraged to produce validated and affordable antiviral drugs and monoclonal antibodies.

### **Way Forward**

- COVID-19 is both a crisis and an opportunity for health-care reform as well as understanding the interplay of health outcomes with social and economic support interventions and limitations of law enforcement in managing epidemics.
- Innovations in managing the COVID-19 pandemic can help India revolutionize care delivery and related outcomes

## **7. Issues with School Education System in India**

**Source:** [Indian Express](#)

**Context:** CBSE has declared Class X and XII Board results. Its evaluation system shows that the goal is that maximum students pass and large number of students score high marks.

- **Funding:** Total money allocated to school education reduced from Rs 38,600 crore in 2014-15 to Rs 37,100 crore in 2018-19.
- **Gross Enrolment Ratio and Retention in School:** The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in 2016-17 for Grades 1-5 was at 95.1%. However, the GER for Grades 6-8 was 90.7%, while for Grades 9-10 and 11-12 it was only 79.3% and 51.3%, respectively. This indicates that a significant proportion of enrolled students begin to drop out after Grade 5 and especially after Grade 8.
- **Access to Education:** The RTE Act provides for free and compulsory education to all children from the age of six to 14 years. Despite advances in expanding access to education, participation rates are still not universal, particularly in rural regions and among lower castes and other disadvantaged groups.
- **Rote learning:** The K. Kasturirangan committee observed that the current education system solely focuses on rote learning of facts and procedures. According to Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), 2018, only 16% of children in Class 1 in rural areas can read the text at the prescribed level, while almost 40% cannot even recognize letters.
- **Outdated and Incoherent curriculum:** The curriculum in school education remains outdated and largely theoretical.
- **Evaluation system:** Marks play the most important role in deciding the future of children and this often comes down upon students as a burdening factor and often leads to students underperforming.
- **Quality of Teachers:** The school education system faces issues of low teacher to student ratio and quality of teachers. Teachers are often unequipped with modern pedagogical methods of teaching.

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- **Infrastructural Issues:** establishing primary schools in every habitation across India has helped increase access to education. However, it has led to the development of very small schools which makes it operationally complex to deploy teachers and critical physical resources. The lack of proper physical infrastructure and human resource in schools is a major hinderance in imparting quality education.

### Suggested Reforms:

**Funding:** As suggested by NITI Ayog in its Strategy Paper for New India @75, Government spending on education as a whole should be increased to at least 6% of GDP by 2022

**Curriculum:** School education curriculum should focus on interconnectedness of the natural world with everyday lives in order to equip students with rising environmental challenges including climate change. Further, the curriculum load in each subject should be reduced to its essential core content. This would make space for holistic, discussion and analysis-based learning.

**Learning.** there should be an increased focus on foundational literacy and numeracy. Further, schools should introduce conceptual learning rather than focusing on rote learning. An electronic national educational registry may be conceptualised for tracking each child's learning outcomes.

**Evaluation system:** The focus of evaluation should be classroom participation by a student, projects, communication and leadership skills and extra-curricular activities.

- Further, checks and balances should be there so as to not provide inflating marks (as in case of CBSE). The goal to pass maximum students only hampers learning outcomes as evaluation becomes flawed.

**Teacher's Training:** The recommendations of National educational Policy 2019 should be followed-

- The practice of 'para-teachers' (unqualified, contract teachers) should stopped across the country by 2022.
- All teachers should be able to move into either educational administration or teacher education after a minimum number of years of teaching experience.
- Merit-based scholarships to be instituted to undertake the four-year integrated B.Ed. program.

## 8. Transforming Higher Education

**Source** – [The Hindu](#)

**Context** - In normal times, maintaining the status quo or implementing incremental and marginal reforms was all one could hope for. The pandemic has opened the doors for ushering in massive, bold and transformational reforms in higher Education.

### Ideal learning outcomes of higher education

**1. Knowledge** - The first **ideal learning outcome** is to provide knowledge in the relevant discipline to the students.

**2. Skill development** - Second, since higher education students are on the verge of joining the workforce, it is expected that their education will also impart them with the skills needed for their jobs/enterprises.

**3. Value-based learning** - Students are expected to play a constructive role in shaping the society and the world at large using the values and ideals of a modern, progressive society; the teaching-learning process is expected to mould their character accordingly.



### Issue with India's higher learning institutions

**1. Students focus on acquisition of degree not skills-** The reality is that part from a handful of institutions in the technology, management and liberal arts streams, and a small number of extremely self-motivated students, a vast majority of other students just meander through college and acquire a degree.

**2. Curriculum's relation with employability skills** - That there is a huge gulf between the curriculums taught in the colleges and actual job requirements are universally known.

### Suggested solutions for Higher Education Reformation

1. Completely re-evaluating the syllabus periodically.

2. Introducing substantive industrial internships.

3. Evaluation can be a mix of regular assignments, performance in the internship as rated both by the industry and the college, and a light, home-based proctored exam.

**4. Utilization of time for learning values** - The time saved in attending regular classes in the institution can be compensated for by spending time on the development of skills and prosocial attitudes and values that will help the student lead an enriching life.

**Way Forward** - India is uniquely positioned in the world today to benefit from its demographic dividend. Yet, in many contexts, it has been pointed out that this dividend can actually turn into a liability since those in the population bracket that are ready to join the workforce have practically no skills or knowledge that add to their employability. Thus, need is to utilize this big opportunity for country's growth and to accommodate aspirations of youth.

### Syllabus – Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation

#### 9. Privatization of Indian Railways

Source – [The Hindu](#)

**Context** - The planned privatization of some services of the Indian Railways could impact maintenance, operations and welfare.

**Selection of private parties** – It is done using the tendering process and proposes two-stage competitive bidding.

These parties have to pay fixed haulage charges, energy charges based on actual consumption, and a share in gross revenue through the bidding process.

#### Issues Associated with privatization

**1. Fixing responsibility in accidents, derailments** - The responsibility of the private investor ends with investment in the procurement and maintenance of coaches. While, train operation, safety and dealing with everyday problems rest with the Railways.

- In case of an unfortunate event, the question would be how to fix responsibility when the coaches are owned by the investor but operated by the Railways and its staff.

**2. Fixing passenger fares** - Full liberty is being given to the private party to unilaterally fix fares for these proposed trains that are on a par with air and air-conditioned bus fares. It will be beyond the common man's reach. Fare concessions extended to several categories of people will not be made available by the private investor.

**3. Marginalizing the vulnerable sections** - The private investor is not bound to follow reservation regulations in employment, in turn depriving employment opportunities for those who are on the margins of society.

### Suggested solutions

**1. Considering IRCTC as an alternative partner** - Instead of a private entrepreneur, entrusting this task to the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation, a government undertaking which has gained experience in running the Tejas Express trains, will lead to 'unity of command' in maintenance, operation and passenger services under the single administration of the Railways and its undertaking.

**2. Hyderabad Metro Model** - In the case of the metro railway services (Hyderabad, for example), an ideal PPP project, the private sector is solely responsible for daily maintenance, operation, passenger amenities and staff issues. The State government steps in when it comes to land, power, permissions, law and order, etc. Fare determination is in consultation with the government.

**Way Forward** - The Indian Railways is a strategic resource for the nation and provides a vital public good. Hence, it should not be judged solely on its profit-generating capability or market-based return on investment rather it needs to be considered as a social welfare organization.

### 10. Data governance for non-personal data

**Source** - [The Hindu](#)

**Context** - The non-personal data committee's data governance framework raises many questions.

To enable a robust regulation of Non-Personal Data, the report by a committee defines key stakeholders for the ecosystem. Following are the challenges associated with the report and its key stakeholders -

**1. Absence of Personal Data protection** - For a country that does not have a personal data protection bill, the setting up of a committee to regulate non-personal data seems premature.

**2. Participatory approach in data management** - There is recognition that data, in many cases, are not just a subject of individual decision-making but that of communities, such as in the case of ecological information. Therefore, it is critical that communities are empowered to exercise some control over how the data are used.

**3. Data principals** - They are those who/ which can be individuals, companies or communities. The roles and rights of individuals and companies in the context of data governance are well understood.

- **Lack of clarity on community as stakeholder**- The idea of communities as data principals is introduced ambiguously by the report. While it provides examples of what might constitute a community, e.g. citizen groups in neighborhoods, there is little clarity on the rights and functions of the community.

**4. Data custodians** - They are those who undertake collection, storage, processing, and use of data in a manner that is in the best interest of the data principal.

- **Fuzzy definition** - It is not specified if the data custodian can be the government or just private companies, or what best interest is, especially when several already vague and possibly conflicting principal communities are involved.
- **Conflict of interest** - The suggestion that data custodians can potentially monetize the data they hold is especially problematic as this presents a conflict of interest with those of the data principal communities.

**5. Data trustees and Data Principals** - Being data trustee is a method through which communities can exercise data rights. Trustees can be governments, citizen groups, or universities. However, the relationship between the data principal communities and the trustees is not clear.

**6. Data trusts** - The report explains data trusts comprising specific rules and protocols for containing and sharing a given set of data. Trusts can hold data from multiple custodians and will be managed by public authority.

- The power, composition and functions of the trust are not established.

**Way Forward** - The committee can organize broader consultations to ensure that the objective of unlocking data in public interest does not end up creating confusing structures that exacerbate the problems of the data economy rather than solving the arising issues in digital age.

## 11. Right to Internet – Needed for inclusive development

**Source** – [The Hindu](#)

**Context** – Across the world, despite the structural hurdles to access, the Internet has become indispensable to human freedom.

### Internet Ban in Jammu and Kashmir

#### Reason for suspension of Internet

**National security** - To limit communications and movement internet was suspended with the aim of thwarting terrorism.

#### Arguments given against such ban in *Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India* (2020)

**1. Order not made public** - The government had refused to make public its orders blocking the Internet which violated a basic tenet of the rule of law: that people have a right to know why their freedoms have been constrained.

**2. Link between ban on internet and security** - The empirical evidence demonstrated that there was no link between shutting down the Internet and the state's objective of protecting security. Indeed, available materials pointed the other way: that the Internet was a valuable tool that could be used to counter the spread of incendiary rumors and fake news.

**3. Use of alternative options** - The government had at its disposal less restrictive options, such as the blacklisting of specific websites and targeted surveillance measures. It is unclear if these alternatives were even considered.

**4. Affected entire population** - There was no justification for a blanket Internet shutdown that impacted a territory of eight million people, a vast majority of whom had nothing to do with terrorism.

#### Supreme Court's ruling in *Anuradha Bhasin Case*

**1. Right to Internet linked with other rights** - The Court held that the ability to access the web had an instrumental bearing on a number of other fundamental rights, including the rights to free speech and freedom of business; and that therefore any limitation placed on the web must be necessary and proportionate to the goal that the State seeks to achieve.

**Foundation for Media Professionals Case (2020)** - This petition pointed out that it had been eight months since the web was restricted in J&K, and now the combination of the pandemic and a lockdown had made Internet deprivation even more unconscionable.

**Supreme Court's Ruling** - The court created a new three-member special committee headed by the Union Home Secretary — an exercise wholly outside the legal framework — to take stock of things.

**Issue with the judgment** - The executive that was responsible for restricting access to the Internet in the first place was now tasked with reviewing its own actions.

**Way Forward** - The Internet is known as a great equalizer. Its evolution was meant to herald a more equal society. However, blanket bans are still being imposed which deprive citizens of their basic rights and create unequal societies. The government needs to become the facilitator of rights for inclusive development of all.

**Syllabus –Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies**

**12. National Commission for Scheduled Castes – Agency for empowerment of Dalits**

**Source** – [Indian Express](#)

**Context** - In 2020, new thoughts and new actions are needed by citizens, civil society, and governments to advance the socio-economic empowerment of the Dalits.

Steps National Commission for Scheduled Castes can take for the socio-economic empowerment of the Dalits:

**1. Strengthen the Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act** - Need is to develop Standard Operating Procedures for filing and investigating cases under relevant laws and make them available in all languages at all police stations.

- **Successful prosecution vs case registration** - Rewarding prosecutors who succeed in getting convictions in cases charged under the SC/ST Act is important because successful prosecution is a true metric rather than the registration of a case at the police station.
- **Digitalization can ensure transparency** - Online reporting and tracking of crimes, irrespective of jurisdiction will make system more transparent and will ensure social justice.
- **Capacity Building** - Training and capacity building of judges, lawyers, and policemen is of prime importance in strengthening the law and its implementation.
- **In-house mechanisms** - The need is to create internal structures within organizations to respond to complaints — just like internal complaints committees for sexual harassment. This will minimize criminal procedures also and reduce burden on courts.

**2. Effective Governance** – Generally, each ministry is supposed to set aside 15 per cent of its spending in a Scheduled Caste Sub Plan, but often their outcomes are insignificant. The National Commission for Scheduled Castes should work with legislators to identify four or five priorities across all government schemes and reorient all spending (SCP) around those priorities.

- For example, these could be employment generation and self-employment, capacity building, including soft skills. The ministries of civil aviation and skill development, for instance, could combine their SCPs into one.
- **Tracking the output** – NCSC can track the output of SCPs every quarter and then every month through a dashboard, just as the Niti Aayog tracks development in the “Aspirational Districts”.

**3. Involving all stakeholders** – Need is to catalyze social change through 3C’s - civil society, corporations, and communities. For that the Commission can create a platform for structured engagement with civil society groups working on Dalit issues.

**4. Identifying key social practices** – All stakeholders can identify key social practices across the country that still segregate Dalits—whether in schools, homes, or workplaces —

and run targeted communication campaigns for students and teachers, villagers, companies, etc.

**5. Creating social capital** - Creating a network of Scheduled Caste alumni of IIMs and IITs and encouraging them to suggest and implement ideas within and around their own organizations that advance economic empowerment of Dalits will prove effective in long-term.

**6. Cultural advancement** - Funding and encouraging directors, film-makers, photographers for art work like film, periodic dramas on Dalits is important for bringing Dalit culture in light.

**Way Forward** - The Commission has a constitutional mandate to participate in the social and economic planning for SC welfare and it should use this mandate to guide such a group. Tasks of the National Commission for SCs, thus, needs to be reimagined to make it a transformative agency for the Dalit community.

**Syllabus: Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary—Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.**

### 13. Set up a High Court for Puducherry

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Context:** Analysing the need of setting up a High Court (HC) in Puducherry.

**Background:**

- **1962:** Puducherry was merged with India and the jurisdiction of the Madras HC was extended to it.
- **2017:** The Puducherry legislature unanimously resolved to have its own HC and the Madras HC was informed on July 7, 2017.
- **April 2017:** The Pondicherry Bar Association also passed a resolution seeking establishment of the HC.
- **August 2019:** Puducherry CM said that a Bench of the Madras HC at Puducherry on the lines of the one set up in Madurai was a felt need and sought the support of judges of the SC

**Why should there be the need for a High Court at Puducherry?**

#### 1. Cost cutting:

- a. The Puducherry government spends exorbitant sums of money towards expenses of the large HC.
- b. As its population is small, this amount can be reduced to less than a quarter of the amount spent with a much smaller HC.

#### 2. Breaching of constitutional provisions:

- a. **Administrative expenses:** According to the Constitution, when a common HC is established for more than one State, this has to be paid only from the consolidated fund of the 'State' in which the principal seat of the High Court is situated.
  - But Puducherry shares the disproportionately exorbitant expenses with Tamil Nadu.
  - Also, administrative expenses of a High Court at the UT shall be drawn from the 'Consolidated fund of India' under the Constitution.
- **For quick action on pendency:**

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- A Puducherry HC with four to five judges can ensure quick action on pendency of matters of the HC matters, at least at Puducherry.
- **All India Judges Association And Others vs Union Of India (Uoi) And Ors:** The Supreme Court observed that the time has now come for protecting one of the pillars of the Constitution, namely, the judicial system, by directing increase, in the first instance, in the Judge strength from the existing ratio of 10.5 or 13 per 10 lakhs people to 50 Judges for 10 lakh people.
- It was also discussed in the Law Commission of India Report titled '**Arrears and Backlog: Creating Additional Judicial (wo) manpower**', in 2014.
- **Increasing ratio of judges:**
  - As of 2016, the ratio is only 12 judges for one million population.
  - It can be increased if a separate High Court with four to five judges is established.

### A data comparison:

- **Size of population and territory is irrelevant:**
- The number of cases filed and disposed of at Puducherry in 2010 is four times higher than the numbers at Sikkim, Manipur and Goa (with High Courts) put together.
- Bigger States have more judges and staff whereas smaller States have lesser numbers of these.
- **The data collected by this writer show:**

	Sikkim	Manipur	Goa	Puducherry
<b>In terms of the number of cases filed in 2010</b>	3. (1,117)	4. (637)	5. (4,984)	6. (4,984)
<b>The number of cases decided</b>	7. (1,174)	8. (495),	9. (3,646)	10. (24336)

- **Memorandum provided by the All India Bar Association to the Chief Minister in 2017:** It shows that the number of cases disposed from Puducherry (28,631 cases) is three times more than the number of cases (9,031 cases) disposed by four High Courts (Tripura, Manipur, Meghalaya and Sikkim) put together in 2016.
- **Presence of the Constitutional Court in the capital city:** It acts as a check on the executive and legislature.
- **Has to travel long distances:** Even the exercise of safeguarding fundamental rights involves travel, time and expenses.
- The Constitution permits Puducherry to have its own High Court under Article 241.

A High Court for Puducherry will also strengthen voices seeking Statehood.

### Aiding Statehood demand:

- **Constitutional provision:** It enabled establishment of a legislature and Council of Ministers for certain Union Territories with the intent of providing them Statehood gradually.
- **Under Article 293A:**
  - a. Out of the seven UT originally placed all except Puducherry were granted Statehood by 1989.
  - Most UT under 239A at least had Benches of High Courts when they attained Statehood.
  - Tripura, Manipur, Meghalaya had Benches of the Gauhati High Court before they got their own High Courts.

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- Interestingly, the Delhi High Court was established in 1966 before Delhi got its legislature in 1993.

### Even a Bench of the Madras HC as against a separate HC at Puducherry is unfavorable:

- Puducherry will still have to share the expenses of such a large High Court
- Judges might not prefer shuttling between Benches at Chennai, Puducherry and Madurai frequently
- The protests against the setting up of the Madurai Bench a decade ago should be borne in mind.
- **Presidential order establishing the Bench was challenged before the Madras HC in 2004:** Its demand for a Bench of the High Court has always been met with stiff resistance from the Bar practicing in the Court having jurisdiction.
- The advantage that Puducherry enjoys is that the Constitution enables Parliament to establish separate High Courts in Union Territories.

### Way Forward

- In March 2016, the Government of India had suggested that the establishment of a High Court will be taken up if the Puducherry government proposes the idea. However, the decision of the Puducherry legislature has still not been conveyed to the Central government.
- The Puducherry government should now form a committee to prepare a comprehensive report and a draft Bill backing its proposal and forward it to the Central government.
- In this the nominated Lieutenant Governor and the elected Chief Minister must work in tandem.

### Syllabus: India and its neighborhood- relations.

#### 14. Another front: On India, Bhutan and China

Source: [The Hindu](#)

**Context:** China has repeated its claim that Bhutan's eastern boundary was a "disputed" area.

### Dividing line

A brief overview of the boundary dispute between China and Bhutan

- Bhutan and China have no formal diplomatic relations but have held 24 rounds of boundary talks between 1984 and 2016
- Talks concentrated on north and west Bhutan regions
- Eastern Bhutan not part of the talks

so far, say officials

- Sakteng sanctuary is situated close to the border with Arunachal Pradesh
- In June 2020, China attempted to stop UNDP-GEF funding for Sakteng by claiming it was disputed, but was overruled



The map shows the geographical context of the boundary dispute. It highlights Bhutan (in pink) and India (in light blue). The Sakteng wildlife sanctuary is marked with a red dot in Bhutan, near the border with Arunachal Pradesh. Other Indian states shown include Sikkim, Assam, and Meghalaya. Neighboring countries China (top) and Bangladesh (bottom) are also labeled. A caption at the bottom of the map states: 'Bhutan and India formally demarcated their 699 km boundary in 2006'. A note at the bottom right says 'Map not to scale'.

### Background:

1. **First claimed by china:** At a UNDP-led Global Environment Facility conference when the Chinese representative tried to stop funding for the Sakteng forest reserve in Bhutan's eastern district of Trashigang which abuts Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang district.

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## 2. Surprising claims:

- China has not objected earlier to funding provided to the sanctuary at the GEF.
- The Trashigang area does not share a boundary with China.
- Chinese officials have not raised the eastern boundary in 24 rounds of talks with Bhutan that began in 1984. Till now, talks have been only about the Pasamlung and Jakarlung valleys in Bhutan's north and Doklam and other pasturelands to the west.

### Current crisis:

- **Package solution by China:**
  - For the dispute that is believed to refer to an offer made in the 1990s to swap the northern and western areas. It was rejected by Bhutan due to India's concerns.
- **Bhutan's response:**
  - At the start was to reject China's claim at the GEF and it was able to secure the funding.
  - The Bhutanese Embassy in Delhi served a measure to the Chinese Embassy (Bhutan does not have diplomatic relations with China) but the Chinese MFA repeated the claim again and again.
- **Sober view by Bhutan:** To China's claims by saying that all disputes would be taken up in the next round of China-Bhutan talks. Talks. The last round was in 2016 that have been put off due to the Doklam stand-off in 2017, elections in 2018 and the pandemic this year.

### Reasons for Beijing's repeated statements on the boundary issue:



- **Chinese claim seen as a pressure tactic:** An attempt to hurry the scheduling of the next meeting or to gain leverage in the boundary talks
- **Diversionary tactic or aimed at driving wedge between India and Bhutan:** Due to Saktenge claim as India is already dealing with Chinese aggression across the LAC
- By claiming Bhutan's eastern boundary, China is attempting to double down on its claims over Arunachal Pradesh, neither of which is under its control.

### Way Forward

- **Problem in China's package offer:** It implies that Beijing is not giving up its push for the Doklam plateau where it has consolidated its military infrastructure and would like to inch towards India's Chumbi valley which is a strategically sensitive location.
- **In order to respond purposively:** India and Bhutan must stay the course with the close cooperation and complete understanding they have shared for decades,



**Syllabus: GS 2- Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.**

**15. A case for Presidential system**

**Source:** [The Indian Express](#)

**Context:** Analysing the need to change the parliamentary system in the backdrop of disgraceful political situations in Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

**Background:**

- The horse-trading of MLAs has led to switch of allegiances for power.
- Pluralist democracy is India's greatest strength but its current manner of operation is the source of our major weaknesses.

**Issues of parliamentary system:**

- **Unqualified legislators:** The system has created them who sought election only in order to wield executive power.
- **Dependence on legislative majority:** They are obliged to focus more on politics than on policy or performance.
- **Distorted voting preference of an electorate:** They know which individuals it wants to vote but not necessarily which parties.
- **Shifting alliances:** The system led to changing sides by selfish individual interests and not guided by vehicles of coherent sets of ideas.
- **Focus to remain in power:** It has forced governments to concentrate less on governing and obliged them to cater to the lowest common denominator of their coalitions.

**The parliamentary system devised in Britain:**

- Which is a small island nation with electorates of less than a lakh voters per constituency and is based on traditions which simply do not exist in India.
- **Absence of a real party system:** In India a party is all-too-often a label of convenience which a politician adopts and changes easily.
- The voter chooses not between parties but between individuals usually on the basis of their caste, their public image or other personal qualities.

**Reason for entering Parliament is to attain governmental office creates specific problems:**

- **Limits executive posts to those who are electable than to those who are able:**
  - The PM cannot appoint a cabinet of his choice and he has to cater to the wishes of the political leaders of several parties.
  - **Talent pool has not been widened:** Though he can bring some members in through the Rajya Sabha but our upper house too has been largely the preserve of full-time politicians.
- **It puts a premium on defections and horse-trading:**
  - The anti-defection Act of 1985 has failed to cure the problem.
  - The bargaining has shifted to getting enough MLAs to resign to topple a government and promising them offices when they win the subsequent by-elections.
- **Legislation suffers:**
  - Most laws are drafted by the executive, in practice by the bureaucracy, and parliamentary input into their formulation and passage is minimal.
  - Many bills are passed after barely a few minutes of debate.
  - **MPs blindly vote as their party demands:** The ruling party inevitably issues a whip to its members in order to ensure smooth passage of a bill and since defiance of a whip itself attracts disqualification.

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- Accountability of the government to the people through their elected representatives is weakened.
- **Parliament or Assembly serves as a theatre for the demonstration of their power to disrupt:**
  - In India's Parliament, many opposition members feel that the best way to show the strength of their feelings is to disrupt law-making rather than debate the law.

### What our present system has not done?

- **To ensure effective performance:** India's many challenges require political arrangements that permit decisive action whereas ours increasingly promotes drift and indecision.
- **Government stability:** By holding the executive hostage to the agendas of a few legislators.

The case for a presidential system has never been clearer.

### Case for Presidential system:

- **Stability of tenure:** A directly elected chief executive in New Delhi and in each state instead of being vulnerable to the shifting coalition support politics.
- **Cabinet of talent:** The executive would have stability of tenure free and be able to devote his or her energies to governance and not just to government.
- **Will represent majority of Indians and not of MPs:** The Indian voter will be able to vote directly for the individual he or she wants to be ruled.
- **Judging performance:** At the end of a fixed period of time, the public would be able to judge the individual rather than on political skill at keeping a government in office.

**Issue to Presidential system: Risk of dictatorship:** It conjures up the image of an imperious president who is immune to parliamentary defeat and impervious to public opinion.

### Way Forward

- **Democracy is an end in itself:** With the needs and challenges of one-sixth of humanity before our leaders, we must have a democracy that delivers progress to our people.
- Changing to a presidential system is the best way of ensuring a democracy that works.

## Syllabus – GS 2 - Separation of powers between various organs dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions

### 16. Doctrine of Separation of power

**Source** – [The Hindu](#)

**Context** – Former Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot's rebellion against Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, has crash-landed in the Rajasthan High Court and the Supreme Court of India.

It has generally been a "hands-off" position as far as the courts interfering in the workings of legislative assemblies or Parliament is concerned. The sole exception is under the anti-defection law — after a final order of disqualification has been passed.

### Kihoto Hollohan's case

**1. Speaker's decision is under judicial review** - A Constitution bench of the Supreme Court in Kihoto Hollohan's case in 1992 held that the Speaker acting in a disqualification matter acts as a tribunal and is subject to judicial review.

**2. Non-interference by courts** - The judgment makes it clear that the Court will not intervene at an interim stage.

**3. Importance of speaker** - The same judgment holds that The Speakers/Chairmen hold a pivotal position in the scheme of Parliamentary democracy and are guardians of the rights and privileges of the House. They are expected to and do take far reaching decisions in a Parliamentary democracy.

#### **Issues with Sachin Pilot Case**

**1. Court intervened at an interim stage** - A mere issuance of a possible disqualification notice by the Speaker, has been contested in the constitutional courts, which have not rejected the challenge at the threshold.

**2. Court gave interim judgment** - The Rajasthan High Court reserved its judgment, requested the Speaker to defer further proceedings and proceeded to direct him to await judgment.

**Way forward – Constitutional Courts** are apolitical but keep getting pulled into political matters, especially in matters of mass defections resulting in regime change. They must therefore not turn of themselves into a third house of Parliament or legislature. The walls of separation between constitutional organs, once breached, cannot be then repaired against future intrusions. Even under a sovereign Constitution, parliamentary and legislative supremacy in their spheres of functioning should be respected.

**Syllabus: GS 2- Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.**

#### **17. The big fight**

**Source:** [The Indian Express](#)

**Context:** China has retaliated swiftly against US's decision earlier to close down the Chinese consulate in Houston by ordering the closure of the US consulate in Chengdu in China.

#### **Background:**

- China had rejected the Trump Administration's charge that its Houston consulate was engaged in espionage and theft of industrial secrets.
- **Downgrading diplomatic ties:** This is the first time since the US and China normalized relations in 1979.
- **Escalation of tensions:** By closure of consulates in Houston and Chengdu between the world's two most important powers and is bound to affect all major actors in the international system.

#### **Relations between China and US:**

##### **Trade war:**

- It had begun two years ago with both sides imposing punitive tariffs on imports from each other.

##### **Continuing negotiations on resolving the dispute:**

- The two sides had announced a phase one of the trade deal earlier this year.

##### **Rapid expansion of the scope and intensity of the conflict:**

- **By US:**
- The Trump Administration charged China with spreading the COVID-19 virus that has infected more than four million Americans and killed nearly 1,50,000.
- Now the Trump Administration accused Chinese hackers of trying to steal US research on anti-COVID vaccines.

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- The US stepped up its global campaign against China's telecom giant Huawei and pressed its allies and partners to reject its technology in rolling out the 5G mobile networks.
- **By China:**
- Beijing retaliated by alleging that the Trump Administration was blaming China for its own failures in dealing with the pandemic.
- It also floated the theory that the US Army might have been the original source of the deadly virus.

### **Their conflict enveloping other countries:**

- The US Secretary of State rejected Beijing's territorial claims in the disputed waters of the South China Sea as unlawful.
- **Sharpened the US tone on Chinese expansionism across Asia:** The US has put itself squarely on the Indian side in the unfolding military conflict between Delhi and Beijing in eastern Ladakh.
- **Deep concerns in India:** Due to the muscular approach of the Trump Administration's to Beijing about being drawn into the escalating US-China conflict.
- **Official response of India:** It has been more than careful in its responses to the new US-China dynamic.

### **Way Forward**

Even as India-China tensions on LAC continue, Delhi must also calibrate response to new edge of US-China dynamic.

# General Studies Paper - 3

## General Studies - 3

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### Syllabus – Effects of liberalization and other reforms on the economy

#### 1. Agricultural-Inputs – Privatization is the key

Source – [Indian Express](#)

**Context** – In agriculture-inputs, government should free private sector from unnecessary controls and regulation for market-led growth.

**1. Seeds** - Today, India exports seeds to its neighboring countries. Even during the lockdown period, hybrid rice seeds were exported through special trains to Bangladesh by the private sector.

**Actions against Private companies** – The continuous battle of government against large seed companies, especially multinationals and their Indian joint ventures, on issues such as trait fees has prevented companies from introducing new generation of seeds and “illegal” spread of Bt HT cotton in Maharashtra.

**Suggested solution – Privatization of seed production** - Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had taken a bold decision to allow Bt cotton in India in March 2002. That decision made India the largest producer of cotton in the world and the second largest exporter of cotton by 2013-14.

**2. Fertilizer** - In 2019-20, India imported fertilizers worth \$6.7 billion. Topping the list is urea (\$2.9 billion), followed by diammonium phosphate (DAP, \$2 billion) and muriate of potash (MOP, \$1.14 billion). We are totally dependent on imports in case of MOP and in case of DAP, we import the rock and the finished product.

**Favoring public sector companies-** The cost of many of new urea plants in the public sector is going to be more than \$400/tonne when the international price generally hovers between \$250-300/tons.

**Suggested solution** - Allowing the private sector plants to compete and expand urea production in a cost competitive manner. This is in addition to, depositing equivalent cash directly into farmers’ accounts, calculated on a per hectare basis, and freeing up fertilizer prices.

**3. Farm machinery** - In 1961-62, before the Green Revolution, India produced only 880 tractor units, which increased to about 9,00,000 units in 2018-19, making the country the largest tractor manufacturer as well as largest exporter in the south-Asian region.

**Issues for small farmers-** In an economy of small landholders, owning a tractor is a high cost proposition as it is not fully utilized. This needs to be made more efficient by creating a market for tractor services.

**Suggested solution** - The new class of entrepreneurs and start-ups are coming up with special apps for “**Uberisation of tractor services**” so that farmers can avail of these services at low cost, without owning a tractor.

**Way Forward** - The private sector is India’s strength which has been proved with 1991 reforms of privatization, liberalization and globalization and the consequences of same. The only thing the government has to do is to unshackle them from the chains of controls and webs of unnecessary regulations. They will make an Atmanirbhar Bharat.

#### 2. What India can learn from Korea’s economic boom?

Source: [Live Mint](#)

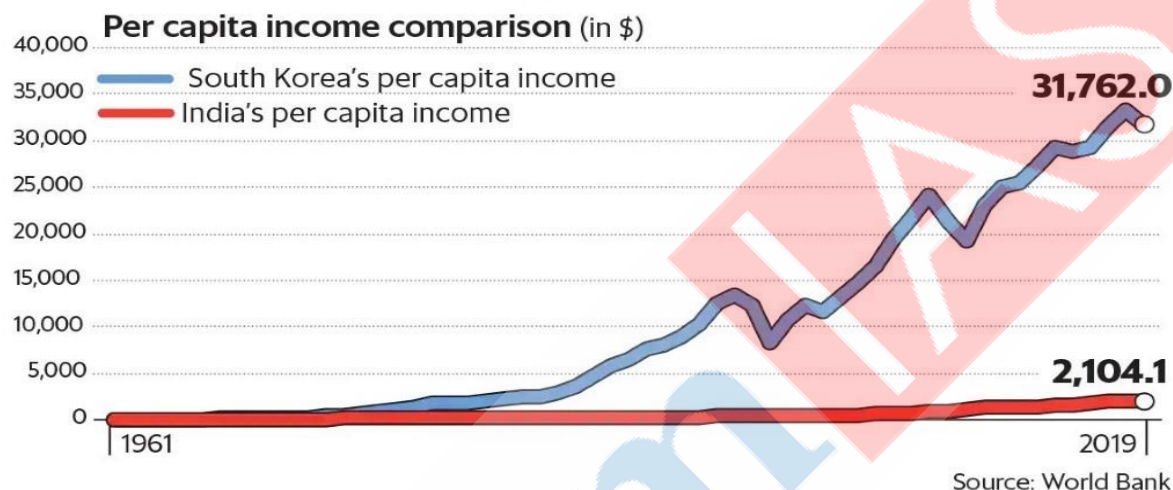
**Context:** Analyzing what has happened from 1961 when the per capita income (PCI) of India and South Korea was similar to 2019 when the difference has increased many folds in South Korea’s favor.

**Background:** In the early 1950s, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, China, and India had comparable PCI.

PCI	India	South Korea
1961	1. \$85.4	2. \$93.8
2019	3. \$2,104.1	4. \$31,762

## Trade miracle

In the early 1950s, South Korea and India had comparable per capita incomes. However, in the 1960s, South Korea switched to export-led policies, resulting in economic transformation and GDP growth of 8.97% per year from 1960 to 2000.



**What has happened between the 1950s to now for South Korea?**

### 1. Switched to Outward oriented policies in early mid 1960s:

- a. It resulted in wholesale economic transformation.
  - o Export oriented policies ensured that South Korea grew at 8.97% per year between 1960-2000 with the GDP (in constant 2010 US dollars) jumping from \$23.3 billion to \$724.6 billion.
- **Labour-intensive exports:**
  - o **Fast growth:** By 1972 it accounted for 72.5% of Korea's goods exports.
  - o **Labour-intensive exports:** Plywood, woven cotton fabrics, clothing, footwear and wigs. Then in the later years it only intensified with new unexpected items such as wigs and human hair.
  - o **People moving from agriculture towards the manufacturing sector:** Due to expansion of labour-intensive exports which led to the creation of jobs.
  - o This led to income levels rising and that created a demand for services. In the process, a large part of the economy was rapidly urbanized.
- **Other steps by Korea for fast growth:**
  - o The labour markets were flexible.
  - o Policy changes weren't random.
  - o Education was given the highest priority.
  - o An important reform in 1965 raised deposit interest rates to encourage savings. This change plus rising incomes contributed to increased savings.
  - o The higher savings were channelized to build more industry and raise incomes.

India lagged behind South Korea in the same period.

### Where did India go wrong vis-à-vis Korea?

- Until 1991, India had an inward-looking import substitution policy.
- Even after opening up, India hasn't been able to get labour intensive exports going.
- In the last 15 years, India's engineering exports have been more than labour-intensive exports of leather, textiles and readymade garments, put together.
- The situation changes only when we add agricultural and allied products exports to the labour intensive exports.
- In the last two years, engineering exports have been more even after adding agricultural exports.

### Lagging of India's export growth and Way Forward

- **Major reason:** Indian firms in manufacturing are small. As the Economic Survey of 2019-20 points out that Most firms face a complex architecture of the Indian governance framework.
- **Time consuming task:** Manufacturing units have to conform with 6,796 compliance items. Though, every unit does not have to conform to every item but this is a long list.
- This is an urgent need of economic reforms with focus on labour intensive exports.

**Syllabus: GS 3- : Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.**

### 3. The COVID-19 fiscal response and India's standing

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Context:** Analyzing India's fiscal response drawing on the IMF Policy Tracker, the COVID-19 Economic Stimulus Index (CESI) of Ceyhun Elgin at Columbia University and the World Bank.

**Background: India lagging behind:** Before the announcement of the Atmanirbhar Bharat package behind comparable developing countries that are similar in GDP per capita, state capacity and structure of the labour force.

### Challenges in distinction between fiscal and monetary components for accurate figures:

- **Atmanirbhar package:**
  - It is billed at 10% of GDP.
  - The India's fiscal response in international databases is around 4% of GDP.
  - According to estimation the new fiscal outlay including the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana, of March, the direct fiscal aspects of Atmanirbhar Bharat and the latest extension of free rations under the PDS is around 1.7% of GDP.
- **Significant demand-side intervention in the Atmanirbhar Bharat package:** For Rs. 40,000 crores of additional outlay for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).
- **Other demand-side measures:** It involves the frontloading, consolidation or rerouting of existing funds for example Rs. 50,000 crore Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyan.
- **India surpassing in the stringency of its containment measures:** The extent of relief measures does not seem to be commensurate with the economic disruption and dislocation caused by the severity of the lockdown.

Vietnam, Indonesia, Pakistan and Egypt averaging less stringent measures than those in India have announced stimulus measures that are as large or more substantial as a share of GDP.



**Lessons from other countries:**

**On cash transfers:**

- Cash transfers constitute the largest category of support.
- The World Bank reports that such transfers amount to 30% of monthly GDP per capita reaching 46% for lower-middle-income countries for an average of three months.
- Countries have also significantly expanded coverage of their cash transfer programmes from pre-COVID-19 levels such as Bangladesh and Indonesia have increased the number of beneficiaries by 163% and 111%, respectively.
- India could take these actions into account in decisions about expanding existing transfer programmes or even creating new ones.

**Enhance NREGA:**

- In the World Bank's list of 621 measures across 173 countries, half were cash-based.
- Most of the rest related to food assistance (23%) or waiver/postponement of financial obligations (25%).
- Only 2% related to public works which is a clear indication of the popularity of cash transfers over public works for income support.
- **One example:** Mexico announced an enlargement of its rural permanent employment scheme to 200,000 farmers and beneficiaries.
- Indonesia has directed village authorities to focus their budgets on a cash-for-work programme for day labourers and the unemployed.
- This is the right time to expand entitlements in MGNREGA as well as introduce an urban version of the programme, as many have called for.

**Steps in the developing world:** They are resorting to drastic means to finance COVID-19 responses.

- **Include:** The amendment of legal budget limits and the enhanced issuance of bonds — including a 'pandemic bond' by Indonesia.
- **Notable measure:** Central banks in many emerging economies are experimenting with purchases of public and private bonds in the secondary market (quantitative easing) or directly purchasing government bonds on the primary market (monetising the deficit).
- Although the RBI has been buying sovereign bonds on the secondary market in India, the debate continues over whether the Indian government should invoke the "escape cause" in the FRBM Act, to enable the central bank to directly finance the deficit.
- Indonesia and Brazil have both amended laws to allow their central banks to buy government bonds.

**Way Forward**

- **Reason for subdued fiscal response in India:** A concern with the debt-to-GDP ratio which is higher than for most countries in our set.
- Additional fiscal outlay in the form of cash and in-kind transfers and expanded public works schemes — would save lives and jobs today and might prevent a protracted slowdown

**4. Why it is the time to reskill India?**

**Source:** [Financial Express](#)

**Context:** The Covid-19 pandemic and resultant rise in unemployment has highlighted the importance of skill development in India.

### Impact of Covid-19 pandemic

- Travel and Tourism Industry The travel and tourism industry which accounted for 12.2% of employment opportunities generated in India in 2017, have been one of the worst hits by the Covid-19 pandemic.
  - As per initial estimates by the Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality (FAITH), losses could be in around Rs 5 lakh crore.
  - Since, 80% of travel & tourism industry is composed of SMEs, it is possible to have 25-75% employment loss in the short to medium term.
- 1. Reverse Migration: Due to Covid-19 pandemic induced lockdown, there has been reverse migration from urban centres to rural areas.
- 2. Impact on informal sector: Immediate burden of COVID19 lockdown in India has been on the informal sector and its workers. According to the Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy (CMIE), the unemployment rate in India is at its highest-27.1%, with millions of informal workers out of job.

### Which sectors can take up more jobs?

**Domestic consumption-facing sectors:** gig economy, healthcare sector, e-commerce, telecom, financial services.

### For reverse migrants:

- entrepreneurship, self-employment and opportunities arising out of more focus on rural economy such as in construction of rural roads, houses and light manufacturing.
- Also, reverse migrants can be reskilled in high-value agriculture such as horticulture, livestock, sericulture, aquaculture and plantations.

**Advanced vocational education and training (VET):** It can be used as a livelihood continuity plan for a short-term period. Focus should be on courses relevant to Industry 4.0, automation and additive manufacturing.

### Suggested Measures for Imparting Skill Education:

1. In imparting skill education, focus should be on remote counselling and a digital delivery of learning.
2. learning tools for feedback, self-monitoring, self-explanation should be integrated in online training.
3. Trainer capacity has to be enhanced to provide more online training.
4. There should be an overall change in the mindset at all levels of skill delivery, administration and governance

**Conclusion:** The Indian government should focus on reskilling programme to strengthen vocational education and address the issue of rising unemployment.

### 5. Organizing Rural Labor force

**Source** – [Financial Express](#)

**Context** – In order to help the rural economy get back to its feet, the government must provide structural reforms to the unorganized rural population.

**Unorganized rural population** - This comprises the unorganized labour in the industrial and service segments, the small and marginal landed and landless farmers.

### Steps to organize rural labor force

**1. Leasing out farm land** - Allowing farmers with small landholdings to lease out their lands to a consolidator or Farmer Producer Companies will lead to –

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- **Minimum wage for farmers** - Farmers would be entitled to a lease rental for their land and would get priority to work on the land for a monthly wage that should also be standardized under the minimum wages regime.
- **Scientific farming** - Consolidation of farm holdings would enable scientific farming and improve yields per acre of land as the consolidator can bring in modern agriculture techniques, plan their cropping cycle and use high-yielding seeds and fertilizers to maximize crop yields.
- **Objectivity in policy making**- The government can also work in coordination with the consolidators to plan the crop acreage and decide on the MSP based on the total planned output of various crops and also ensure that the cultivator gets a fair return for their investment.

**2. Skilling farm labor** - Excess farm labor should be identified, and skilling institutions be set up for their training, for jobs that are essential or are in demand. Initiatives should be taken for them to be able to join the MGNREGA with farm operations to provide more work.

**3. Using data for policy implementation** - A comprehensive database of farm and farm-less labour in terms of number and their skill sets is essential to put them to optimum and productive employment.

- **Better allocation of human resource** - This skilled labour can be used to expedite various infrastructure and capital development schemes of the government.
- **Preventing congestion in cities** - This will ensure that labour does not migrate to the cities unless they have the requisite skills and can be linked to any company in the manufacturing or services sector.

**Way Forward** - To give a fillip to the agriculture sector amid the gloom of the coronavirus-induced lockdown, the government has rightly announced a spree of reforms, including additional funds and loans for farming and allied activities and a proposed deregulation of the sector. However, in long term organizing farm labor will accrue multiple benefits for all the stakeholders and this require an array of structural reforms in post-corona India.

### 6. Why is integrating with global value chains crucial for India?

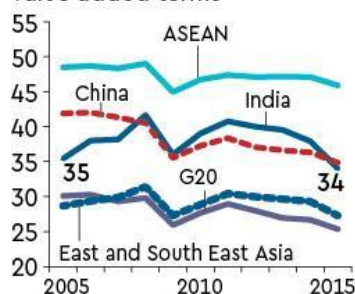
**Source:** [Financial Express](#)

**Context:** The pandemic has triggered a debate as to whether the global value chains (GVCs) may lead to increased fragility of economies actively participating in them.

**Background:**

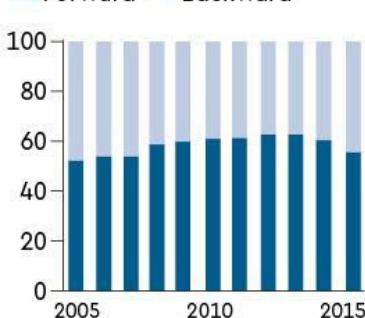
- **GVC:** They are production networks that seek to exploit gains from hyper-specialization across countries.
- **Experiences during the ongoing pandemic:** Major demand- and supply-side shocks to value chains and lack of redundancy planning in such networks.
- **Over the last decade:** The system of international production has been grappling with challenges arising from:
  - Industry 4.0.
  - Growing economic nationalism.
  - Sustainability concerns.
- The ongoing pandemic has fuelled calls for further de-globalization of such production networks to reduce industry- and economy-level vulnerabilities.

**Total GVC participation**  
(Forward+backward)  
% of gross exports in value added terms

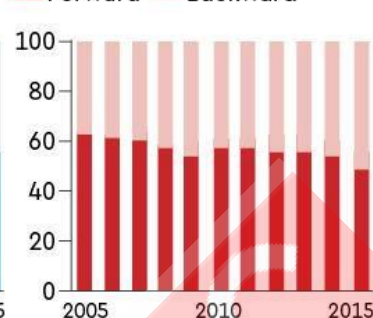


Source: OECD TiVA Database (2018)

**GVC profile - India**  
% of total GVC participation



**GVC profile - China**  
% of total GVC participation



**The graphic shows:**

- It is clear that between 2005 and 2015, there has been a steady decline in GVC intensity across all major economies.
- For India, GVC participation peaked at 41.6% in 2008, but has dropped ever since, hitting a low of around 34% in 2015.

The stagnation of GVC trade since the global financial crisis and the unfavorable impact of the ongoing pandemic on GVCs notwithstanding.

**There are substantial merits of widening and deepening links to GVCs:**

**GVCs can help reduce poverty and continue to augment growth and employment:**

- As suggested by the World Bank's World Development Report 2020 (WDR 20) contingent upon deeper reforms in developing countries and policy continuity in industrial economies.
- Cross-country estimates suggest that a 1% increase in GVC participation can boost per-capita income by more than 1% particularly when countries engage in limited and advanced manufacturing.

**GVC participation can precipitate significant firm-level productivity improvements:**

- WDR 20 suggests that GVC firms engaged in manufacturing activities show higher labour productivity than one-way traders or non-traders after controlling for firm-level capital intensity.
- In particular, firms that engage in both import and export are 76% more productive than non-trading firms as compared with a 42% difference for export-only firms and a 20% difference for import-only firms.

**Backward participation in GVCs can be particularly beneficial for economies:**

- A 10% increase in the level of GVC participation could increase average productivity by close to 1.6%.
- As the accompanying graphic shows while China has seen a rise in its forward GVC participation and a corresponding drop in the backward participation, the trend has been just the opposite for India.
- India's share of foreign value-added content in total GVC trade has steadily increased from 53% in 2005 to 61% in 2014.
- **It can capture much of the value addition at the midstream stages:** If India can seize FDI looking to relocate from China and create conditions for firms to leverage the labour-cost arbitrage opportunities.

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- **Deeper reforms:** Reforms are needed in labour markets, trade infrastructure and improvements in the overall business environment.
- Policies directed towards facilitating vertical GVC linkages between domestic SMEs and larger foreign and domestic firms can go a long way towards strengthening India's relative position in GVC trade.

### **Localized regimes are more vulnerable to shocks:**

- As shown by the OECD METRO Model localized are less reliant on foreign suppliers.
- It results in a significantly lower level of economic activity and fall in national incomes as compared to the interconnected regimes.
- While interconnected regimes build resilience, stability and flexibility in the production networks, localized regimes offer fewer channels for adjustment to shocks.
- Estimates for India suggest that a shift towards a localized regime can decrease real GDP by 1.1%, and reduce import and export demand by 11.4% and 14.8%, respectively.
- Recent policy pronouncement for an Atmanirbhar Bharat may be antithetical to the spirit of efficiency-seeking economic interdependence typified by GVCs in the long-term.

### **In the aftermath of the pandemic:**

- Regional value chains (RVCs) are expected to gain momentum to strike a balance between localization and globalization.
- However, if the recent RCEP experience is any indication, facilitating RVCs is difficult and requires intense regional coordination, geopolitical stability and conducive systemic conditions.
- **India may need to reassess its regionalization strategy:** To take advantage of the accelerated momentum towards RVCs. If India intends to strike a balance between managing vulnerabilities in GVCs (similar to those arising from the pandemic) and building resilience.

### **Way Forward**

- Long-term gains from globally connected value chains can far outweigh the benefits from RVCs.

Instead of a piecemeal approach, India needs to adopt a holistic perspective focused on the 'whole of the supply chain', by driving strategic changes in its investment-development paradigm, and through greater integration into the GVCs.

### **Syllabus – Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security**

#### **7. PDS Reforms – Ensuring Right to Food security**

**Source** – [Financial Express](#)

**Context** – A World Bank study states two-thirds of India's current workforce was stunted in childhood, resulting in reduction in GDP per capita income of 13%.

### **Challenges associated with PDS:**

**1. Rising Food subsidy-** It comprises of consumer subsidy and the cost of maintenance of buffer reserve.

1. Consumer subsidy = Economic cost - Central issue price (CIP).
2. Economic cost comprises of two elements:

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(a) cost of procurement, i.e. minimum support price (70%), and  
(b) FCI's cost of procurement incidentals & operations involving handling/ storage/ transportation (30%).

- The government makes grains available to states at CIP. States fix retail price to be charged at fair price shops.
- Reasons for ever-increasing food subsidy are rising economic costs (increase in MSP), accumulation of large stocks, increase in quantum of offtake, and unchanged CIP.

**2. Leakages** – They are food grains not reaching the intended beneficiaries, and are primarily from 'above the poverty line' (APL) and ad hoc quotas. All leakages (2011-12, IHDS) are estimated to be costing nearly Rs 50,000 crore annually in today's rates.

**3. Maintenance cost of excess buffer stocks**- By June 1, FCI grain stocks were about 97 MMT, against a buffer stock requirement of 41.12 MMT. Monetizing this 'excessive stock' of over 50 MMT will fetch an estimated Rs 1.5 lakh crore.

**4. Interest costs of storage** - The Centre's food budget ignores the off-budget financing of Rs 2.54 lakh crore of food subsidy financed through borrowings by FCI from the National Small Savings Fund (NSSF). Thus, carrying excess stocks would entail an additional interest cost of Rs 8,000-10,000 crore per annum.

**5. Post-harvest losses** – They are estimated by the Indian Grain Storage Management and Research Institute (IGMRI) to account for 10% of total food grains at Rs 7,000 crore.

### Policy implications of PDS Challenges

- **Absence of equitable distribution of food grain** – This is leading to 'stunting syndrome'. In 'stunting syndrome', linear growth retardation in early life is associated with increased morbidity and mortality, reduced physical and economic capacity, and an elevated risk of disease into adulthood.

### Suggested solution

- **Weekly DBT through biometric-enabled electronic debit cards** - The amount will be the difference between market rates and subsidized price of grains—adjusted for inflation—for the quantum of food grains supplied via PDS.

### Pros of weekly DBT –

**a. Right to demand quality** - The intended beneficiary decides what and how much food grains (nutrition) to buy to feed herself and her family from an authorized private retail shop or a PDS outlet.

**b. Prevent leakage and wastage** - Providing subsidies directly to the poor would bypass middlemen, reduce waste and storing costs of grain.

**c. No misuse** - As a weekly transfer, the amount would be too small to be misused.

**Way Forward** - It is not just the morally required equity that demands action for reforming PDS. It is in our 'enlightened self-interest' to take serious policy measures, as it impacts the nation's growth prospects.

### Syllabus – Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices

#### 8. Agriculture - State intervention vs Liberalization

Source – [Indian Express](#)

**Context** - While the reforms announced by the Modi government are not the right ones, Indian agriculture does need real reforms and better state intervention.

### APMC Act

Pro-liberalization	Pro-state intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It does not allow the free market to function due to government intervention, thereby denying farmers the opportunity to determine the prices of crops in the marketplace.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Reaching out to farmers</b> - Shanta Kumar observed in 2015, only 6 per cent of farmers get the Minimum Support Price (MSP) — 94 per cent already face the whims of the market. This is because of barriers to access for farmers as only 22 crops are procured under MSP.</li><li>• <b>No substantial increase in MSP</b> - The gradual increase of MSP is being eroded post-1991 reforms. Thus, denying farmers fair income.</li><li>• <b>Global food crisis</b> - India managed to weather the 2008 global food crisis only because it had enough food stocks as Indian agriculture was not linked to the international futures market. This was possible due to the procurement done through the APMC Act.</li><li>• <b>Liberalization in Bihar</b> - The APMC Act was revoked in 2006 with the same rationale that further deregulation will attract private investment in infrastructure. Not only has that not materialized, but the existing APMC market infrastructure was also dismantled.</li></ul>

**Suggested Reform** - Instead of further liberalization of agriculture, state intervention for better pricing, investments in water harvesting and an agro ecological transition could ensure a more resilient system to weather shocks like the current one.

**Way Forward** - To make India's agriculture sustainable, the government could draw inspiration from the Andhra Pradesh Community Managed Farming model, which promotes agro-ecological principles with the use of locally-produced, ecologically-sustainable inputs focusing on soil health, instead of depending on chemical fertilizers.

### Syllabus: Food Security

#### 9. Community canteens 2.0

Source- [The Hindu](#)

**Context:** The Covid-19 pandemic and resultant food insecurity has highlighted the importance of community canteens

### Recent Initiatives to deal with food insecurity during Covid-19 pandemic

- **PM Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana:** Announced as a part of PM Garib Kalyan Yojana in March, 2020, five kilograms of Wheat or Rice is given to every member of the beneficiary poor family and one kilogram of Chana is given to each family.
- **One Nation One Ration Card (ONOR):** It introduces nation-wide portability of ration card holders under NFSA, 2013 which will enable them to lift their entitled food grains from any Fair Price Shop in the country without the need to obtain a new ration card.

### Issue with initiatives:

The initiatives fall short of reaching all sections of vulnerable population during Covid-19 pandemic. For example, most migrant workers rely on roadside vendors and dhabas for food. Without access to cooking arrangement or fuel, only subsidised grains are not a sufficient solution to ensure nourishment.

### Benefits of community Canteens

There are various state-funded community kitchens addressing the problem of hunger and malnutrition across India. Example: Amma Unavagam (Tamil Nadu), Annapurna Rasoi (Rajasthan), Indira Canteens (Karnataka), Ahaar Centre (Odisha) etc.

- **Nutritional Security:** With an initial social investment of ₹26,500 crore towards 60,000 canteens and about 8,200 kitchens, three nourishing meals a day could be served to the 30 million urban poor workers, primarily migrants.
- **Employment:** Community canteens could also contribute to jobs, growth and sustainability. The 60,000 canteens, each serving about 500 beneficiaries on average, would generate more than 1.2 million jobs to serve 90 million meals a day.
- **Saving Fiscal Resources:** If all urban migrant workers rely on community canteens instead of ONOR, it will help avoid the potential food subsidy outlay due to ONOR, leading to annual savings of about ₹4,500 crore after original investment towards community canteen pay backs in 6 years.

### Way forward:

- Central government should extend the initial capital support to establish community canteens. The implementation at the State level should be led by urban local bodies or municipal corporations, in collaboration with private entities as service providers.
- The government should leverage community canteens to shift diets and agriculture production towards more sustainable and sustainably harvested food crops.
- The canteens must incorporate low-cost yet nutritious and environmentally sustainable food items in plate.

## 10. Achieving Nutritional Self-reliance

Source: [Indian Express](#)

**Context:** India's approach towards "food security" should change from the narrow availability aspect to achieving "nutritional self-reliance."

### India's Approach to food security

#### 1. First Generation Approach to Food Security:

- Traditionally, India's approach to food security was based on the 'availability' dimension of food security- looking at only the quantitative aspect. Policies and programmes were designed to ensure "self-sufficiency" in food grains.
- The Green revolution which was launched after two consecutive droughts in mid 1960s increased the production of food grains (mostly rice and wheat) by providing



farmers an improved technology package consisting of high yielding seed varieties, modern farm inputs and credit, and assurance of a remunerative and fixed price

- The Green revolution though positively impacted the macro-level food security, had insignificant impact on ensuring access to food and hunger and malnutrition persisted.

## 2. Second Generation Approach to Food Security:

- Since 1980's there was an increasing acknowledgement that physical and financial access to food had a determining role in achieving food security in the country. The approach shifted from food production to access to food and from charity to a rights-based approach.
- The enacted of National Food Security Act, 2013 marked a shift in the right to food as a legal right rather than a general entitlement.

## Eight-fold steps to achieve Nutritional Self-reliance

- **Firstly**, it is important to forecast nutrition requirement for the year 2050.
- **Secondly**, agroecological zones and the changing climate should be taken into account and accordingly, the government should draw area production plans for animal husbandry and crop production.
- **Thirdly**, based on these area production plans, identified crops and practices should be incentivised. The government should incentivise a risk and price support strategy for such crops and the farmers should be given the freedom to what they want to grow.
- **Fourthly**, the farm input (fertiliser, power etc) subsidy regime that incentivises production should shift to one of payment for environmentally sustainable agriculture practices such as intercropping, rainwater harvesting etc,
- **Fifthly**, the government should formulate a strategy to secure farmers' interests and not only focus on providing cheap food to consumers.
- **Sixthly**, the government should invest in a robust market intelligence system to deal with production and abrupt price fluctuations. The system should also provide regular farm advisories to farmers
- **Seventhly**, the government needs to invest more in agriculture R&D. There should be collaboration with the private sector and extensive use of digital technologies.
- **Lastly**, there should be a twenty-year awareness campaign across India to inculcate healthier eating habits.

**Conclusion:** The major strength of the Indian food security system has been in achieving self-sufficiency in the production of cereals and public distribution system. However, it's high time that India focuses on a 'third generation' approach towards nutritional self-reliance given India's increased vulnerability to climate change.

## Syllabus: Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

### 11. Power sector under stress

**Source:** [The Indian Express](#)

**Context:** Analysing the deteriorating financial position of power distribution companies after the pandemic and lockdown.

#### Background:

1. **Aggregate level:** Electricity demand fell by 16% in the first quarter of the current financial year.
2. **Reasons for decline:** Due to a fall in demand from industrial and commercial users. These consumers account for a sizable portion of discom earnings.

- 3. Affect discoms financial position:** They help subsidise tariffs for other segments such as for farmers, domestic users etc.
- 4.** According to ICRA's estimate, discoms may be staring at a revenue gap of around Rs 42,000 to Rs 45,000 crore this year.
- 5.** Though the government had earlier announced liquidity support to the tune of Rs 90,000 crore to help discoms clear their obligations towards power generating companies but the off-take on these loans has been slow so far.

**Stress on discom finances:**

- 1. Audited losses closer at pre-UDAY levels:** Reports reveal that the audited book losses of discoms have been revised upwards to Rs 49,600 crore in FY2019 from the provisional estimate of Rs 28,000 crore.
- 2. Failure of UDAY scheme:** It is indicated by the mounting losses. (UDAY scheme was expected to engineer an operational and financial turnaround in the fortunes of the beleaguered discoms).
- 3. Hope:** The gap between average cost and realization per unit of power to be reduced.
- 4.** This continuing deterioration in their position stems from:
  - a. Inadequate and irregular tariff hikes
  - b. AT&C (aggregate technical and commercial) losses not declining to the levels envisage
  - c. Delays in disbursement of subsidy by state governments.

**Way Forward**

- 1.** The central government has proposed several amendments to the Electricity Act 2003 aimed at addressing some of these issues like from privatisation of discoms to moving towards DBT for subsidies.
- 2. To turnaround the sector:** The reforms need to be supplemented with the imposition of stiff penalties on states for failing to usher in the changes needed or meeting the targets laid out.

**Syllabus: Inclusive growth and associated issues/challenges**

**12. Covid-19 and Inequality**

**Source:** [Down to Earth](#)

**Context:** The COVID-19 pandemic and associated health and economic crises have revealed the loopholes in our economic and political systems and highlighted the inequality in the society.

**Covid-19 and Inequality**

- **Vertical Inequality:** The plight of persons living in poverty during the pandemic, such as those living in informal settlements, in over-crowded homes is a stark reminder of vertical inequality.
- Poor and marginalised communities are also more likely to live near polluting and extractive projects which cause respiratory health issues and make them more vulnerable to COVID-19.
- Oxfam has estimated that there are 121 million more people may face starvation due to mass unemployment, disruption to food production and supplies as a result of Covid-19 pandemic.
- Further, according to the World Food Programme, there will be an 82% increase in the number of hungry in the countries where it operates. The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted countries where food crisis is already prevalent. For example, there is 135a5 increase in the number of food insecure people in west and central Africa.

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- Economic growth has led to reduction in income inequality among countries. But within countries, inequality in income has, increased by 4% in Gini Coefficient. A Food and Agriculture Organization assessment reveals that COVID-19 may cause an increase in each country's Gini by 2%

### Suggested Reforms:

- It is important to invest in health, water, food, housing, social protection and education as rights, not commodities.
- It is important investing in inequality-busting public services; tackling systemic discrimination and taking ambitious rights-respecting climate action
- Transformative solutions based on rights and dignity to realise a just and equitable world for present and future generations should be built.

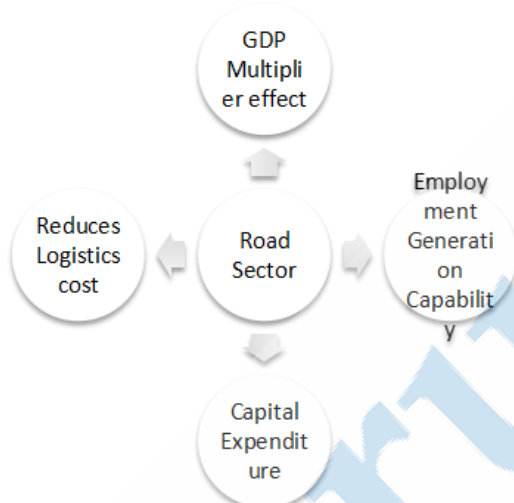
### Syllabus –Investment models

#### 13. Re-engineering BOT Model

Source – [The Hindu Businessline](#)

**Context** – Currently, the economic downturn, the Covid pandemic and stretched balance sheets of companies make BOT the least preferred option.

#### Focusing on Road Infrastructure



#### Reasons for inviting bids under Build –Operate-Transfer model

Among the PPP road construction models, the Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) model lays the least financial burden on the Centre, and therefore the focus is now on attracting bids for these projects.

#### Challenge in Build –Operate-Transfer model

1. **Initial cost** - Companies have to bear entire cost upfront.
2. **Absence of significant competition** - Fewer orders from government decreases the competition which in turn reduces the incentive for reducing cost and increasing revenue.
3. **Less revenue** - Decline in traffic due to economic slowdown and pandemic induced lockdown.
4. **Non-performing assets** - Banks have been wary of lending to road construction players for some time now, due to the higher re-payment risk.
5. **Preference to other models** - Companies instead prefer the Hybrid Annuity Model, wherein the NHAI bears 40 per cent of the initial construction cost; or the Engineering, Procurement and Construction model, where the NHAI bears the entire cost upfront.

**Steps taken by government**

1. **Assessment of revenue** - The most important step is to assess the revenue of the project every five years, instead of 10 years prescribed currently, so that the concession period can be adjusted if there is a significant decline in traffic.
2. **Land acquisition** - With many projects held up due to issues relating to land acquisition, the model agreement now lays down that the work order shall be issued only after procuring 90 per cent of the land.
3. **Dispute –resolution** -Setting up a dispute resolution mechanism and requiring the appointment of an independent engineer are other changes made to the agreement.

**Way Forward** - The Centre need to make other long-term financing options available to companies before making them take on more debt which involves reviving bond market and incentivizing mutual funds to invest in this sector.

