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7 PM COMPILATION

27th July - 1st August, 2020

Features of 7 PM compilation

- ❖ **Comprehensive coverage of a given current topic**
- ❖ **Provide you all the information you need to frame a good answer**
- ❖ **Critical analysis, comparative analysis, legal/constitutional provisions, current issues and challenges and best practices around the world**
- ❖ **Written in lucid language and point format**
- ❖ **Wide use of charts, diagrams and info graphics**
- ❖ **Best-in class coverage, critically acclaimed by aspirants**
- ❖ **Out of the box thinking for value edition**
- ❖ **Best cost-benefit ratio according to successful aspirants**

COVID 19 Exacerbating Patriarchal Stereotypes
Topics: Salient features of Indian Society
Subtopics: Indian Society

Factors Responsible for Troubled Neighbourhood Relations
Topics: India and its Neighbourhood- Relations
Subtopics: India and Neighbouring countries

Need to Reform Contempt Jurisdiction of Judiciary
Topics: Structure, Organization and Functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary
Subtopics: Contempt of Court

FPO's Can Revitalize Indian Agriculture Using New Agri Reforms
Topics: Storage, Transport and Marketing of Agricultural Produce and Issues and Related Constraints
Subtopics: Farmers Processing Organisation

National Education Policy, 2020 – Provisions and Significance
Topics: Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.
Subtopics: National Education Policy

Transformational Policy Mindset Needed to Achieve SDG's
Topics: Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation.
Subtopics: Sustainable Development Goals

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COVID 19 Exacerbating Patriarchal Stereotypes
Source: https://indianexpress.com

Introduction:

COVID 19 pandemic has brought great disruptions in multiple sectors. Economy, healthcare, working patterns, education etc are adapting to movement restrictions and lockdowns. This disruption induced adaptations have a great impact on women.

Evidence shows that patriarchal gender roles are deepening due to disruptions. This is resulting in setbacks to progress made in gender equality.

Deepening patriarchal stereotypes:

Unpaid care work is predominantly done by women in patriarchal societies. Globally, women and girls perform 75% of unpaid care and domestic work and in India this is 91%. Such work is not seen with respect and instead shown disdain as per stereotypes. COVID 19 is exacerbating this.

Additional burden on women for unpaid care work is being imposed due to following COVID responses:

- Lockdowns, school closures and presence of more family members at home increases domestic work.
- Home based personal healthcare for home quarantined family members, need constant monitoring and care.
- Online education needs parents to aid children in children with classes and assignments.
- Work from home increases the need for domestic care work.
- Avoidance of external domestic workers due to fear of infections. Resident Welfare organizations stopping them is an example. This prevents help to handle extra care burden.
- Elderly are most vulnerable to pandemic and need greater monitoring and care.

This reduces leisure time and personal care of women, resulting in reduced well-being of women.

In addition, economic independence is negatively impacted due to pandemic:

- Sectors like tourism, hospitality, retail are large employers for women. But they are the most impacted by COVID with potential long term closures.
- Domestic work is a major employment source for urban women. Yet movement restrictions and infection fears have reduced this sector substantially

This leads to layoffs and reduction of opportunities. As a result, it pushes women back into domestic care work where they are financially dependent on men.

Declining incomes of households combined with patriarchal attitudes will impact women substantially:

- Reduction in investment of girl child education, nutrition, due to views that girl child education is not important.
- Reduction in spending on menstrual health, sexual and reproductive services, due to less priority given to such needs of women. This impacts the health of women.
- Increase in child marriages when girls are seen as a burden on incomes.

Hence COVID 19 can deepen gender inequalities.

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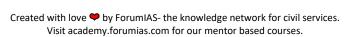
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Conclusion:

Disruptions induced by COVID 19 have long term consequences for gender equality and well-being of women. State response must be cognizant of this phenomena and take steps to promote gender equality.

Expansion of economic activities where women are predominant (healthcare services, textiles etc) must be undertaken. Further, health services must be delivered to women on priority basis. In addition, communities must be sensitized on the principle of sharing of domestic work. Only by taking such steps can we maintain the progress in achieving SDG (Sustainable Development Goal) – 5 of gender equality.

Mains question:

Q.1) Discuss the impact of COVID 19 on women? What steps must be taken to prevent the negative impact of pandemic on women and promote gender equality?

[15 marks, 250 words]

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Factors Responsiblefor Troubled Neighbourhood Relations
Source: https://www.thehindu.com

Introduction:

India's relations within its immediate and extended neighbourhood are seeing a downturn. Following recent events show evidence for the same:

- Ongoing standoff between armies along LAC with China.
- Nepal's constitution amendment to update maps in the border row and increased political rhetoric against India.
- Afghanistan peace talks have seen minimal role for India despite billions of dollars of development contribution since the early 2000's.
- Iran going ahead with Chabahar – Zahedan railway without Indian collaboration by citing delays and also excluding Indian PSU from Farzad B gas field development.
- Increased Chinese infrastructure activities in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Latter has conveyed displeasure against India's CAA – Citizenship amendment act.
- SAARC has not been functional since 2016

This is in contrast to vibrant ties prior to 2013 where India was seen as a natural leader in the South Asia and Indian ocean region.

Global geopolitics and policies adopted have an impact on regional ties which results in ups and downs. But the downturn in India's soft power in the neighbourhood is a serious concern. Hence it has to be examined to understand the underlying factors for decline.

India-US partnership and impact on other relations:

India has deepened cooperation with the USA since the early 2000's.

- Civil nuclear agreement
- Defense and military cooperation:
  - Signing foundational agreements like LEMOA(logistics agreement)
  - Increased military exercise on large scale like Malabar exercise
  - DTTI – Defence Technology and Trade Agreement; Defense framework agreement
- Strategic cooperation in multilateral fora like FATF, UN, Quadrilateral grouping
- People to people ties(students, immigrants)

While deepening this partnership, India has maintained that it pursues strategic autonomy and will not be part of any alliance system.

Yet US policies and Indian response to them are one of the factors in the downturn of relations with Indian neighbours. Following are cases of such:

- **Iran**: Chabahar port and central asian connectivity has Iran as a pivotal partner for India. Despite agreement for chabahar development in 2003, it got delayed initially due to US sanctions on Iran till P5+1 deal in 2015. After the P5+1 deal India has accelerated the work through tripartite agreement with Iran and afghanistan. But USA has exited the P5+1 deal and reimposed sanctions. Under these sanctions, India has reduced oil imports from Iran to zero. This has been criticized as loss of strategic autonomy and severely impacting traditional ties with Iran. Temporary exclusion from the railway line and Farzad B gas field is seen as Iran's response to India adopting the US line.
- **China**: Chinese are perceiving that Indian defense and military cooperation with US is to contain and counter China. This has resulted in Chinese adopting a more aggressive attitude towards India to signal its displeasure. This is reflected in Doklam, 2017; Galwan clashes of 2020.

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Domestic politics impacting relations:

CAA (Citizenship amendment act) has offered faster citizenship to persecuted minorities in muslim majority Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh. By doing so, it has regionalized domestic problems of countries. Due to this ties with Afghanistan and Bangladesh are impacted directly. In addition, countries with Muslism majority nations like Malaysia, Iran have voiced concerns. Bangladesh in particular has protested CAA and National Register of Citizens (NRC) as well as extreme political rhetoric against Bangladeshis in India.

Abrogation of special status to J&K (Jammu and Kashmir) and bifurcation of state into two UT (Union territories) has impacted India's relationship with China. Chinese view this as a change in status quo. Chinese aggressive moves in Ladakh can be seen in this context. In addition, prolonged imposition of restrictions on fundamental rights (movement etc) has given propaganda tool for Pakistan.

Perceived highhandedness:

Nepal's nationalism has become synonymous to anti Indianism. Political rhetoric and perceptions are that India behaved high handedly during its constitutional crisis in 2015. Further, an updated map of India released in 2020 is shown as evidence of this.

While domestic political considerations in Nepal do play important in rising anti India rhetoric, India must resolutely defend its interests in neighbourhood in a more effective manner. Perceptions of highhandedness must be countered else downturn in relations may ensue.

Use of any forceful methods must be carefully weighed upon. Rising powers must first establish themselves before using more forceful methods as is seen is Chinese strategy from 1970 to 2010.

Conclusion:

India has to address the current downturn in ties. Proactive diplomacy must be improved. Foreign policy trajectory must be evaluated continuously to ensure India achieves its strategic goals and autonomy. India's nuclear deterrence, large military force, naval dominance in Indian ocean region makes it a big power which can influence global events. This strength must be backed up by more strategic depth.

Mains question:

Q.1) Discuss the impact of US policies on Indian foreign policy interests?

[15 marks, 250 words]

Need to Reform Contempt Jurisdiction of Judiciary
Source: https://www.thehindu.com

Introduction:

SC (Supreme court) has initiated suo moto criminal contempt proceedings against Prashant Bhushan, an advocate and an activist. His tweets on Chief Justice of India(CJI) are cited as evidence of intention to scandalize the court and CJI's office.

Critics point out that this action by SC is being oversensitive to criticism and hence this is against freedom of speech. Let us examine the contempt powers of the judiciary and their critique.

Contempt powers of judiciary:

SC and HCs (High courts) are courts of record as per Articles 129 and 215 respectively. This provides them the powers of contempt. For subordinate courts, respective HCs will take up contempt proceedings. Courts can suo moto initiate contempt proceedings.

Contempt of court act, provides for:

- Civil contempt: When judicial orders are not followed wilfully or violation of undertaking given to court
- Criminal contempt: When there is obstruction to justice or scandalization of court or intention of scandalization of court.
- Truth and good faith is valid defense in contempt proceedings. This was added in 2006.

These contempt powers are given with the objective of safeguarding public confidence in administration of justice and thereby public interest.

Critique of criminal contempt in India:

Experts point out following problems in criminal contempt in India:

- Extremely wide jurisdictionwith broad definition. Terms like scandalizing the court can be interpreted very loosely to prevent valid criticism of conduct of judges and judiciary
- Against civil libertiesof freedom of speech and expression which is a fundamental right. While Article 19 provides contempt as a restriction on freedom of speech, a democracy does not prevent valid criticism. Reasonableness must be maintained even in restrictions. Oversensitiveness of courts to criticism will lead to loss of this right.
- While truth and good faith are added as valid defenses, in practice this is not being upheld.
- In times of social media, where unregulated commentary is seen, courts pursuing all comments will waste precious time.

Hence, suo moto powers in initiation of proceedings combined with broad definition of criminal contempt leads to chilling effect on free press and valid criticism of judicial functioning. Considering this there is a need to reform contempt jurisdiction in India.

In other countries, criminal contempt for scandalizing the court is being read down or discontinued:

- UK has abolished it in 2013
- Canada evolved contempt test as real, substantial and immediate threat to administration of justice
- US courts do not use contempt for comments on judges or legal matters

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Conclusion:

Judiciary must not be oversensitive in invoking contempt and should give broad scope for criticism of its functioning. Silencing criticism will not result in respect but rather in resentment and suspicion. Hence judiciary should move towards accountability and impartiality in receiving criticism.

Contempt powers are needed in genuine cases like civil contempt or real obstruction of justice(threats to the lives of judges etc). But criminal contempt for scandalizing the court has no relevance in contemporary democracies. It was evolved in monarchical times when royalty used to deliver judgments. In current times, principles of accountability and impartiality are important for institutions. Hence criminal contempt for scandalizing the court has to be removed and contempt laws must be reformed.

Mains Question:

Q.1) Critically comment on the need for contempt powers of the judiciary?

[15 marks, 250 words]

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FPO's Can RevitalizeIndian Agriculture Using New Agri Reforms
Source: https://www.financialexpress.com

Introduction:

Agricultural reforms have been a major focus area for economic revival in India post COVID pandemic induced slowdown. In particular, agricultural supply chain and marketing are the focus areas of these reforms.

Major steps taken in this regard are:

- New features on e-NAMfor farm produce sales without visiting mandis
  - Warehouse based trading module using e-NWR(Negotiable Warehouse Receipts)
  - FPO(farmer producer organizations) trading module to enable them sell produce at their collection centres rather than going to APMC's
- Direct buying facility for bulk buyersoutside APMC's
- Farm ordinances:
  - Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce Ordinance: Enables freedom of marketing to farmers where they can sell their produce anywhere permitting interstate and intrastate trade.
  - Farmers Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance: To enable contract farming. This ensures predictable sale and incomes from produce.
- Scheme for setting up 10000 FPO's by 2023-24with motto of "One district, One product"(ODOP)

FPO as an enabler:

FPO's are registered cooperative institutions with farmers as shareholders. They have immense potential in Indian agricultural supply chain and marketing. Following trends in Indian agriculture shows need of FPO's

- Nearly 86% of Indian farms are small and marginal with average landholding of 0.58 hectares
- Small and marginal farmers face challenges of:
  - Access to inputs: Technology, finances, quality seed, fertilizers, pesticides
  - Marketing and supply chainas they have a small amount of produce. Transportation, grading, sorting etc will be more costly per unit of produce

In such a scenario, FPO can provide economies of scale by aggregating input purchases and farm produce collection supply chain. FPO can then become part of an integrated value chain that links small and marginal farmers to markets.

Recognizing this, there are about 7000 FPO's being promoted by various agencies like NABARD. Government has announced a new scheme to set up 10000 FPO's by 2023-24.

Operational guidelines under 10000 FPOs scheme are:

- Minimum of 300 farmer members and 50 percent of them should be small, marginal and landless tenant farmers with maximum possible representation from women farmers. In hilly areas and north eastern states, 100 members is the minimum limit.
- Financial grants for formation, equity and administrative expenses. Financial support till 2027-28.
- Credit Guarantee Funds(CGF) to be setup by NABARD and NCDC(National Cooperative Development Corporation)
- Agri-Market Infrastructure Fund can be used for assisting FPO's in creating marketing and farm level value addition infrastructure.

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- 10% limit on maximum shareholding by a single member to prevent capture of profits by rich farmers.

These guidelines can aid in formation of sustainable FPO's.

Other steps which can enable creation of sustainable FPO's:

- Linking FPO's to CBBO's(cluster based business organizations) and KVKs(Krishi Vikas Kendras). CBBOs can promote administrative expertise whereas KVK can provide technical assistance to FPO.
- FPO members from contiguous areas: This enables better cohesiveness and regular meetings which are important for success of FPO
- Federating FPO's: Creating umbrella institutions at district or mandal level ensures that scalability is achieved. Further it promotes backward and forward linkages as well as ODOP vision.
- Standardization of farm produce by FPOs: Uniform size, color, taste, quality is needed for better price realization in markets and exports. FPO's must evolve such standards for vegetables, fruits, cereals for better marketability.
- End to end supply chain managementby FPO for identified crops in their area.
- FPO's must be output centricfor identified crops in their area..
- Shareholding must be equitableto prevent cornering of profits by a few.
- Aggregation of inputs and farm produce: This is yet to be done by many existing FPO's. Support must be provided to enable aggregation and use of FPO trading module on e-NAM for price discovery.
- North eastern region(NER) must be developed as a single market to enable growth. Current production in NER is primarily for local demand. Hence FPOs there must focus on crops which are in demand in the region.

Conclusion:

FPOs have the potential to transform subsistence farming of small and marginal farmers into commercial farming. Implementation of FPO scheme must be effective to realize this objective. In addition, other reforms related to land and tenancy must be enacted to promote commercial agriculture.

Mains Question:

Q.1) FPO's are vital for Indian agri produce supply chain. Comment? What steps must be taken to enable FPO's in India?   [15 marks, 250 words]

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National Education Policy, 2020 – Provisions and Significance
Source: https://www.thehindu.com

Introduction:

The Union cabinet has approved the NEP (National Education Policy), 2020 recently. It is based on recommendations of Kasturirangan and T.S.R.Subramanian committees. NEP, 2020 lays emphasis on reforms in education at all levels from pre-primary to higher education. It aims to bring transformation in the education system of India in line with contemporary needs.

NEP, 2020 will replace existing education policy which was formulated in 1986. Considering vast changes in technology, demography and aspirations of people, this reform is the need of the day. It also aims to address current challenges Indian education system faces like lack of resources, capacity, mismatch between education and skills needed for jobs.

Major provisions of NEP, 2020:

School education:

- Universalization of education by 2030 through 100% GER(Gross Enrollment Ratio) from pre-primary to secondary.
- Open schooling system(no admission requirements, NIOS is example) for out of school children.
- 5+3+3+4 curriculum system replacing existing 10+2 system.
  - 3-8 years of age: 3 years pre-school education + Classes 1 and 2
  - 8-11 years of age: classes 3 to 5
  - 11-14 years of age: classes 6 to 8
  - 14-18 years of age: Classes 9-12
- Focus on foundational Literacy and Numeracy; extracurriculars; vocational education and multidisciplinary approach to arts, science and commerce in high school
  - Vocational education to start from class 6 with internships
  - Curriculum will include 21st century skills like coding.
- Teaching in mother tongue upto class 5 with no imposition of any language.
- 360 degree holistic progress card for tracking learning outcomes.
- Teacher education:
  - 4 year B.Ed qualification to be mandatory from 2030 for teachers
  - National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, NCFTE 2021 to be formulated

Higher education:

- GER to be raised to 50% by 2035.
- Broad based, multi-disciplinary, holistic UG(Undergraduate) education: Provisionsof flexible curriculum; integration of vocational education; multiple entry and exit points with respective degrees; UG education period between 3-4 years
- Academic bank of creditsto enable transfers of credits between institutions
- Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs)for global quality multidisciplinary education
- National Research Foundation(NRF)as an apex body for research capacity building.
- HECI (Higher education commission of India)as umbrella regulator except for legal and medical education. It will have four verticals of:
  - National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) for regulation
  - General Education Council (GEC) for standard setting

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- o Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) for funding
- o National Accreditation Council(NAC) for accreditation
- ▪ Phasing out affiliation system in 15 years
- ▪ Graded autonomy to collegeswill be provided as per a stage wise mechanism.

Other:
- ▪ Increasing public expenditure on education(centre and states) to 6% of GDP at the earliest
- ▪ National Educational Technology Forum (NETF)to promote use of tech in education – learning, assessment, planning and administration
- ▪ Gender Inclusion Fundfor advancing gender equality in education.
- ▪ Special education zonesfor disadvantaged regions and groups. Financial incentives will be given to SC,ST, OBC and other disadvantaged groups.
- ▪ Promotion of multilingualism in schools and colleges.
- ▪ National institutes for pali, Prakrit and Persian to be set up along with institutes for translation and interpretation, for knowledge creation in Indic systems and languages.
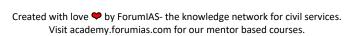
Significance of the policy:
- ▪ Recognition of the importance of preschool educationin the future of a child through 5+3+3+4 structure.
- ▪ Recognizing the importance of mother tongueupto class 5, which has an impact on learning outcomes for the child. In the context of increasing demand for English as a medium of instruction, this brings balance by not neglecting the mother tongue. This promotes multilingualism which is proven to have a positive impact on brain development.
- ▪ Emphasis on vocational educationsince class 6 is needed. With only 30% GER in higher education, the rest of the students need employable skills. Vocational education aids this. Hurdle of blue collaraization of vocations in India must be overcome for this to succeed.
- ▪ Reforming teacher educationis timely as multiple reports on education point to lack of quality in teacher education.
- ▪ Multidisciplinary and research approachesto education through MERU's and NRF are crucial for the 21st century. Areas like nano technology, bio technology, robotics, artificial intelligence all need this approach.
- ▪ Emphasis on technology can increase access to quality education.
- ▪ Recognizing the need for flexibility of education. This is important in the 21st century with high mobility and alternate ways of learning. Steps like Open schooling system, multiple entry and exit points in UG education, use of technological resources aid in this flexibility.
- ▪ Regulatory reformsby emphasis on transparency, quality, self assessment and voluntary declarations. This reduces the regulatory burden on education. A single regulatory body with 4 verticals will aid in this lean but effective regulation.
- ▪ No child left behindthrough focus on gender equality and disadvantaged groups. Gender Inclusion Fund and Special education zones aid in this.
- ▪ Focus on long neglected Indian languages and knowledge systems(tribals etc) will advance cultural and scientific knowledge.

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Conclusion:

Transformational vision proposed in NEP, 2020 requires huge resources in creation of infrastructure, personnel, institutions. NEP,2020 has set a target of 6% of GDP as target at the earliest. This is a challenge in the current fiscal position of states and centre due to COVID pandemic. But political will must be shown to realize the education transformation in NEP, 2020

Mains question:

Q.1) NEP, 2020 aims at transforming Indian education. What are its major provisions? Discuss its significance?   [15 marks, 250 words]

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Transformational Policy Mindset Needed to Achieve SDG's
Source: https://www.thehindu.com

Introduction:

Countries across the world are easing lockdowns and trying to normalize the ground situation. While policy focus is on immediate health crises, governments are also trying to address the socio-economic costs of the pandemic.

In doing so, nations must recognize and address the derailment of progress in achieving SDG's (Sustainable Development Goals). SDG's which are formulated to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development can be a guide to address the socio-economic effects of the pandemic. This requires a new policy mindset from nations.

This need was reflected in the recent High level political forum on Sustainable Development (subsidiary of UNGA and ECOSOC) emphasis on Build Back Better.

Socio-economic impact of pandemic:

Pandemic and its responses have exposed fragility and systemic gaps in many systems. It has exposed:

- Inadequacy of public health systems – Infrastructure, personnel, equipment etc
- Governance failures in providing social security(food, pensions, income support, insurance etc) and thus leading to hunger, reducing incomes and widening poverty.
- Economic inequalities leading to exclusion. Lack of access to digital education and safety equipment to prevent pandemic spread(masks etc) are examples.
- Precariousness of informal employment resulting in migrant crisis.
- Patriarchal norms resulting in derailing of progress in gender equality. Gender violence, reduced female labour force, increase in care responsibilities, reduced importance to women education and health are possible outcomes due to pandemic

All of these have resulted in increasing poverty and inequalities in society. This makes achieving SDG's a challenge.

Transformational policies needed:

To accelerate progress on SDG's, policy frameworks must focus on the well being of people by empowering them and reducing inequalities. Only by changing people-environment interactions and protecting the health of people and natural resources, can we avoid future crises.

Policies must focus on:

- Inclusive and accountable governance systems
- Adaptive institutions with resilience to future shocks
- Universal health insurance and social protection
- Stronger digital infrastructure

Countries are moving in the right direction in regards to this by adopting new strategies for green recovery and inclusive development. Some examples include:

- New deal of South Koreawith focus on decarbonization and digitalization
- Blue recoveryof pacific countries to make fisheries sustainable
- Largest solar power plant in South Asia inaugurated by India
- China creating more jobs in renewable sector than fossil fuel sector
- Countries are focusing on universal health care, food distribution, cash transfers and access to credit for MSME's and disadvantaged. These will improve social protection systems.

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- ▪ Comprehensive approaches to prevent discrimination, especillay of gender based violence.
- ▪ Partnerships with the private sector to provide innovative solutions. Vaccine development is an example for this

UN, ADB (Asian development bank) and other institutions are supporting the nations financially and otherwise.

Conclusion:

Post pandemic responses by nations to achieve progress in SDG's are required to tackle socio-economic effects. Policy framework must be transformational and efforts of nations must be supported. This requires global partnerships and local solutions.

Mains question:

Q.1) Transformational policies are needed to address the socio-economic impact of COVID 19 pandemic? Discuss.   [15 marks, 250 words]

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