9pm Compilation

17th to 23rd August, 2020

9 PM Compilation for the Month of August (Third week), 2020

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General Studies Paper - 1

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General Studies – 1

Syllabus: GS-1- Society
1. Age at Marriage
Source: The Hindu
Context: Indian Prime Minister recently declared that the government is considering raising the legal age of marriage for girls.
Current age of Marriage: At present, the t minimum age of marriage is 21 and 18 years for men and women, respectively.

Impact of Early Marriage on Health
- Maternal Mortality: Women attain maximum height during adolescence (10-19 years). Entering pregnancy at this stage obstructs attaining optimum height. It also prevents full growth of reproductive organs resulting in higher chances of obstructed labour and mortality.
- Child Malnutrition: Poor maternal height (<145 cms) is reported to be one of the highest risk factors associated with chronic child undernutrition. According to data, prevalence of malnutrition among children born to adolescent mothers is 11% higher than among the others.

Interrelation between Poverty, age at marriage and health
- Poverty and marriage expenses such as dowry often lead a family to marry off their daughter at a young age to reduce these costs.
- According to a study published in Lancet, poverty of the mother plays the greatest role in undernourishment of her and the children. It concluded that instead of early pregnancy causing malnourishment, they may both be the consequences of poverty.

Negative impact of raising age of marriage for women
It may leave the vast majority of Indian women who marry before they are 21 without the legal protections that the institution of marriage otherwise provides, and make their families criminalizable.

Way Forward:
- Efforts need to be made to delay the age of conception. Schemes such as universal registration of marriage can help in providing newly married couples with information on family planning and family care.
- India could also make legal age of marriage for both men and women 18 years- as per the global norms.

2. Social impact of Covid-19
Source: The Hindu
Context: The resultant distress in India due to the on-going pandemic has intensified pre-existing structures of disadvantage based on social identity.
- The pandemic has been described as a leveller more loosely, both because the disease can strike anyone, and also because the resultant lockdowns have led to widespread job losses and economic hardships across the range of the income and occupational distribution.

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The marginalised at risk
- Poorer and economically vulnerable populations are more likely to contract the virus as well as to die from it and therefore **socially marginalised groups would be at higher risk of mortality due to COVID-19.**
- The low wage earners, and less educated workers, segments of the labour force where racial and ethnic minorities are over-represented will be at a **higher risk of unemployment**.
  - ➢ Evidence from the United Kingdom and the United States reveals that racial and ethnic minorities are indeed the ones most likely at the risk of unemployment.

The Indian lockdown
- India's lockdown, imposed in the last week of March 2020, was among the most rigid and because of the first month of the severe lockdown**, April 2020, witnessed a sharp rise in unemployment.**
- The proportion of employed upper castes dropped from 39% to 32% between December 2019 and April 2020, a fall of seven percentage points where as fall for Scheduled Castes (SCs) was from 44% to 24%, i.e. a fall of 20 percentage points according to **data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE)'s Consumer Pyramids Household Survey (CPHS) database.**
  - ➢ Other Backward Classes and Scheduled Tribes (STs) the fall was from 42% to 34%, 40% to 26% and 48% to 33%.

Education as factor
- Job losses associated with COVID-19 are much more concentrated among individuals with low levels of education and those with vulnerable jobs with no tenure or security and so **education did act as a protective factor for job security**.
- **The India Human Development Survey for 2011-12 (IHDS-II)** show that 51% of SC households have adult women who have zero years of education and are illiterate, and 27% have an illiterate adult male member.
  - ➢ In Upper Caste (UC) households, the corresponding proportions are 11% and 24%, respectively.
- **Currently the education of SC children would be affected** because of educational differences among parents as well as due to other significant differences in material conditions living.

Issue of technology
- There are a lot of factors which will affect the ability of Dalit and Adivasi families to access online education as there is **disparity between caste groups**.
- The proportion of households with **access to the Internet is 20% for the upper caste and 10% for the SC households.**
  - ➢ Only 49% of SCs have bank savings, as compared to 62% of UC households.
- Differential access to information technology, as well as **disparities in the ability to invest in technology** will be critical in shaping access to online education.

Way forward
Investments in education and health that close gaps between social groups would be essential to build suppleness in the face of future tremors.

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Syllabus: GS-1- women
3. Women Issues – age of marriage
Source: The Indian Express
Context: Efforts to address child marriage in India should be in harmony with the socio-economic realities that demand investment in education, welfare, and opportunities for women.

Introduction
- Raising the legal age of marriage for women to 21 years would have a disproportionate impact on marginalised rural communities.
- The change in the law could end up criminalising and worsening the existing vulnerabilities of Dalit and Adivasi communities in rural India, instead of empowering its women.
- Rural women are likely to marry earlier than their urban counterparts and that higher are the chances of woman marrying later in life if she's already well off according to **The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) data 2015-16.**
  - Education levels have direct impact on delayed age of marriage as women with 12 years or more of schooling are most likely to marry later.

Marriages in India and the data
- The poor people are most likely to marry off their girls early out of socio-economic necessities, have 45 per cent of the Scheduled Tribe (ST) and 25.9 per cent Scheduled Caste (SC) households, as compared to only 9 per cent of the general "Others" category, according to the **wealth quintile data**.
- By number of years of schooling completed 42 per cent ST women and 33 per cent SC women have received no schooling according to the **NFHS-4 data on women aged 15-49.**
- **Only 8 per cent rural girls who drop out in the age group 6 to 17 years cite marriage as the reason**, other reasons being loss of interest in studies, prohibitive cost of education, burden of household work, and schools located far away.
- **The National Human Rights Commission in 2018** strongly recommended that the **Right to Education Act, 2009 should be amended** to make it applicable up to the age of 18 years as higher education levels lead to a lower likelihood of women being married early.
- **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, and the NGO Young Lives**, which also showed how between 2005-06 and 2015-16, child marriage in 15-19 age group for girls has decreased from 26.5 per cent to 11.9 per cent.
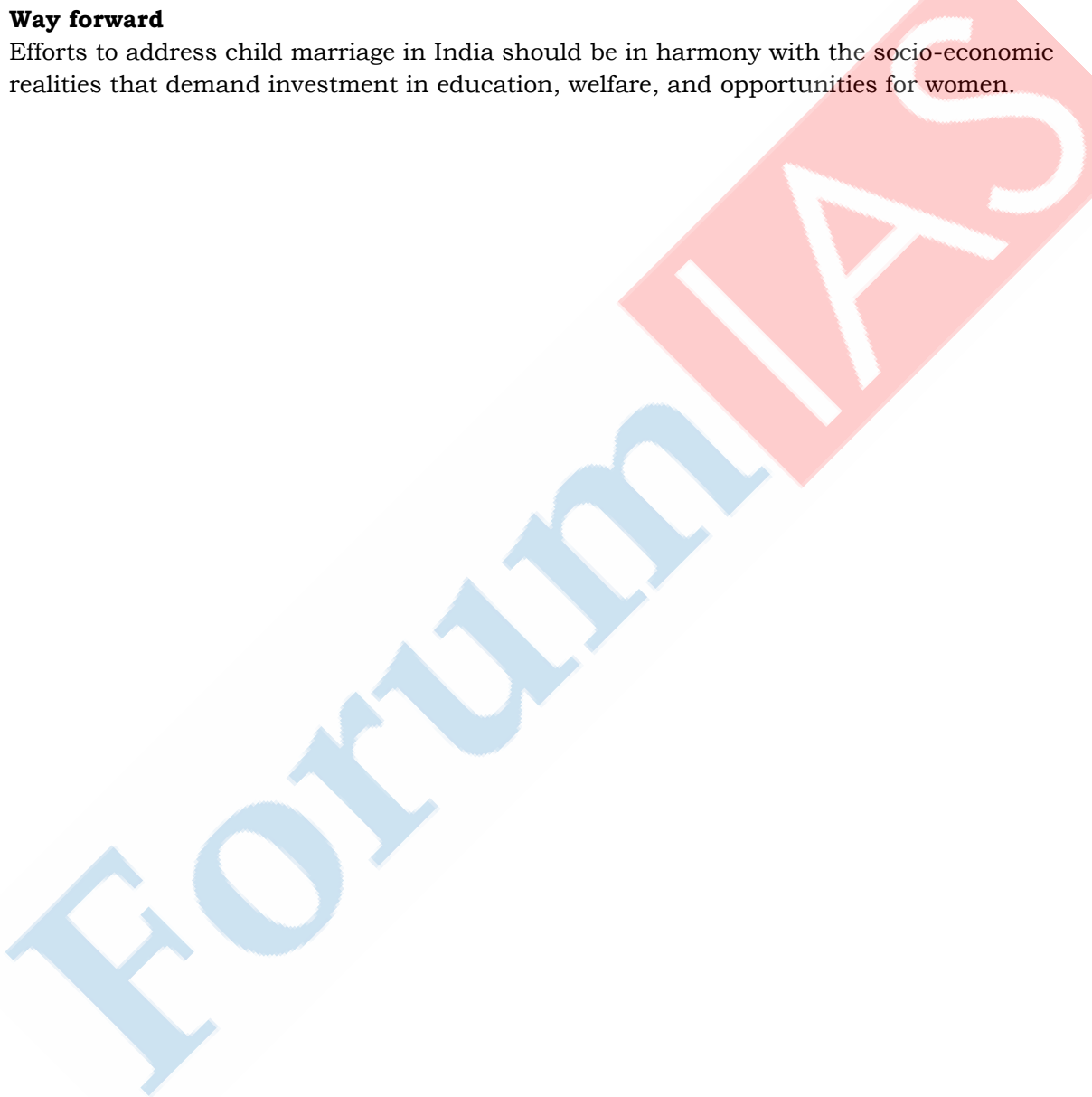
Laws for marriages in India
- **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), 2006**, states the minimum age to get married for girls is 18 years and a boy is 21 years.
- Any man, above the age of 18 who marries a woman under 18 years, as well as the parents of minors who abet the act can be imprisoned for up to two years under the prohibition of child marriage act.
- **The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012** increased the age of consent, from 16 years to 18 years.
- POCSO also requires healthcare providers to mandatorily report to the police any cases of under 18-year-olds who are found to be sexually active with those older.

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Issues with increasing the legal age

- Increasing the legal age of marriage to 21 years will **add to these existing hurdles for young women's access to reproductive and sexual healthcare.**
- **The 18th Law Commission report (2008) asked for uniformity in the age of marriage at 18 years for both men and women** and lowering the age of consent to 16 years, this was also recommended in the Justice Verma Committee.
- Any attempt to jump through quick-fix and ill-conceived disciplinary measures will only considerably reverse the already improved data on people marrying later in life.

Way forward

Efforts to address child marriage in India should be in harmony with the socio-economic realities that demand investment in education, welfare, and opportunities for women.

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General Studies

Studies

Paper - 2

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General Studies - 2

Syllabus: GS-2- Health
1. On National Digital Health Mission (NDHM)
Source: The Indian Express and Livemint
Context: Indian Prime Minister announced National Digital Health Mission (NDHM) on Independence Day.
About National Digital Health Mission (NDHM)
- It aims to liberates citizens from the challenges of finding the right doctors, payment of consultation fee, making several rounds of hospitals for prescription sheets.

Features:
- It would be a voluntary healthcare programme that would reduce the gap among stakeholders such as doctors, hospitals and other healthcare providers, pharmacies, insurance companies and citizens by connecting them in an integrated digital health infrastructure.
- It comprises six key building blocks or digital systems:
  - Health ID,
  - Digi Doctor,
  - Health Facility Registry,
  - Personal Health Records,
  - e-Pharmacy
  - Telemedicine.
- Health ID and Health Facility Registry shall be owned, operated and maintained by the government. However, private operators will have equal opportunities to integrate with these systems and create products for the market
- The National Health Authority design, build, roll-out and implement the National Digital Health Mission.

Privacy concerns over National Digital Health Mission:
- Critics have raised concerns about the extent to which a government should have access to personal information.
- There are also concerns over the risk of data leaks from a widely-linked central database.

Way Forward:
- There is an urgent need for a robust data protection law which will give legal control over our data stored anywhere on our behalf. Also, the citizens the right to be forgotten should be ensured.
- The government and India's legal, IT and medical systems need to come together to translate the NDHM's patient-centric vision into reality.

Syllabus: GS 2- Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary
2. Contempt of court: The ultimate power of the Judiciary
Source: Indian Express , The Hindu
Context: Judgement against Prashant Bhushan in Contempt of Court case has opened the pandora's box regarding unbridled power of Court.
Contempt of Court:
According to **Section 2** of the **Contempt of Courts Act, 1971-**

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a) **"Contempt of court"** means civil contempt or criminal contempt;

b) **"Civil contempt"** means willful disobedience to any judgment, decree, direction, order, writ or other process of a court or willful breach of an undertaking given to a court;

c) **"Criminal contempt"** means the publication (whether by words, spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise) of any matter or the doing of any other act whatsoever which—

i. scandalises or tends to scandalise, or lowers or tends to lower the authority of, any court; or

ii. prejudices, or interferes or tends to interfere with, the due course of any judicial proceeding; or

iii. interferes or tends to interfere with, or obstructs or tends to obstruct, the administration of justice in any other manner.

Article 129 of the Constitution of India:
It provides that the Supreme Court of is a "court of record" and it has all the powers of such a court including power to punish for contempt of itself. Therefore, it is a constitutional power which cannot be taken away. Even the constituent power of judiciary itself may not do so otherwise basic structure of constitution will be offended.

Defense available against Contempt of Court

1. **Fair criticism**- If a person publishes any fair comment on the merits of any case which has been heard and finally decided then it does not amount to contempt of court.

2. **Accurate report**- If a person publishes a fair and accurate report of a judicial proceeding or any stage thereof then it does not amount to contempt of court..

Raising voice against the Judiciary: Criticism or Contempt
People believe that the right to free speech is near absolute. However, there is a thin line separating criticism and contempt. **Freedom of speech** is a fundamental right guaranteed to every Indian citizen under **Article 19(1) (a)** of the Constitution which is also subject to reasonable restrictions under Article 19(2).

Supreme Court's Judgement

- The Supreme Court has held that if a comment is made against the functioning of a judge, it would have to be seen whether the comment is fair or malicious.

- If the comment is made against the judge as an individual, the Court would consider whether the comment seeks to interfere with the judge's administration or is simply in the nature of libel or defamation.

- The Court would have to determine whether the statement is fair, bona fide, defamatory or contemptuous. If statements which affect the functioning of courts amount to criminal contempt since public perception of the judiciary plays a vital role in the rule of law.

Landmark Judgments-

1. **S Mugolkar v. Unknown (1978)**
   The Supreme Court held that the judiciary cannot be immune from fair criticism and contempt action is to be used only when an obvious misstatement with malicious intent seeks to bring down public confidence in the courts or seeks to influence the courts.

2. **Justice Sabyasachi Mukherjee (1988)**

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Speaking for the Supreme Court, Justice Sabyasachi Mukherjee said if antisocial elements and criminals have benefited by decisions of the Supreme Court, the fault rests with the laws and the loopholes in the legislation. The Courts are not deterred by such criticisms.

3. **Indirect Tax Practitioners Association v. R.K. Jain (2010)**
   The Supreme Court held that truth is also a defense in matters of criminal contempt if is bona fide and made in public interest.
4. **Arundhati Roy vs. Unknown (2002)**
   The Supreme Court held that a statement that the court willingly issued notice on an unsubstantiated petition affected the reputation and credibility of the court before the public and therefore held her guilty of contempt.

Way Forward:

Judiciary should consider the contempt proceedings carefully and only conclude after examining its facts and the circumstances.

Syllabus: Gs2: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.
3. India's geopolitical interests in Arab
Source: Indian Express
Context: Recently, UAE and Israel made an agreement on the normalisation of relations.

Current Scenario:

- **Deterioration of Arab and Pakistan relations:**
  - However, the last six there is significant deterioration of Pakistan's relations with the region, especially with the UAE and Saudi Arabia.
  - Pakistan has been angry with UAE's invitation to India to address the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in early 2019 and the reluctance of Saudi Arabia to convene a meeting to condemn Indian actions in Kashmir.
  - Pakistan's foreign minister threatened to convene a meeting of foreign ministers of Islamic nations, outside of the OIC, to attack India's Kashmir policy.
  - Saudi Arabia called back part of its generous recent loan to Pakistan and threatened to suspend the credit facility for oil purchases.
- **Instability in the region:**
  - There is emerging contradiction between Saudi Arabia and the UAE on the one hand and Pakistan on the other.
  - Sharpening existential threats to UAE and Saudi from both the Sunni Muslim brotherhood backed by Turkey and Shiite Iran's regional expansionism.
- **Formation of new alliance:**
  - Pakistan is trying to form a new regional alliance with Turkey and Iran.
  - **Involvement of outside powers:** rising China and an assertive Russia will both support this new geopolitical formation as part of their own efforts to oust America from the Middle East.
  - **Idea of Non-Arab Alliance is not new**: For instance, Pakistan enthusiastically embraced the Baghdad Pact that the British stitched together with Iran, Iraq and Turkey in 1955.
  - It was named CENTO after Iraq walked out and later it was wound up after Islamic revolution.

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- **Significance of new alliance**:
  - For Turkey and Iran, the new non-Arab alliance backed by Russia and China is an instrument to advance their role in the Arab world.
  - **For Turkey**: restoring the Ottoman domination over the Arab world.
  - **For Iran:** It wants to wrest the mantle of Islamic leadership from Saudi Arabia.
  - **For Pakistan:** America is on its way out of the Middle East, and that its all-weather strategic partnership with a rising China would give Pakistan new leverage in the changing Middle East.

Way forward: India needs to renew its relation with Arab region:

- **Push for moderate Arab**: India's geopolitical interests are in close alignment with those in the moderate Arab Centre — including Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Oman.
- **Play active role:** India needs to play active role in the unfolding geopolitical realignment in West Asia.
  - the incipient alliance — Turkey, Malaysia and China — have challenged India's territorial sovereignty in Kashmir.
  - The Qatar-based Al Jazeera spews more poison against India than Pakistani media outlets.
- **Engage with middle east:** India needs to stand up for Arab sovereignty and oppose the forces of regional destabilisation
  - Make efforts to reconcile with non-Arab neighbours, including Israel, Turkey and Iran.
  - Oppose foreign interventions in the Arab world.
  - Extend support to Arab economic integration, intra-Arab political reconciliation and the strengthening of regional institutions.

Syllabus: GS2: Issues and Challenges Pertaining to the Federal Structure
4. Jurisdictional conflict in Delhi
Source: The Hindu
Context: Recently, Delhi government objected to LG's 'intervention' in appointment of special public prosecutors in Delhi riot cases.

Difference of opinion between LG and State Government:

- **Rationale behind objection:** Government has stated that only a panel of lawyers selected by its government should be appointed and not the one recommended by the police or the Centre as the force has faced "serious allegations" on its response to the riots.
- **Bone of contention:**
  - As per the High Court and the Supreme Court, the appointment of prosecutors is exclusively within the purview of the State government.
  - Using Article 239AA(4) Lt. Governor appointed all the prosecutors whose names were submitted by the Delhi Police and thus the State government's list was rejected.
- **Constitutional provisions for Union Territory of Delhi:** Delhi's democratic and representative form of government is established through articles 239AA and 239AB.

Articles 239 to 241 in Part VIII of the Constitution deal with the union territories. Even though all the union territories belong to one category, there is no uniformity in their administrative system.

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Issues involved:

- **Supreme Court guidelines in Government of NCT of Delhi vs. Union of India (2018):** SC directed the Lt. Governor **not to refer to the President normal administrative matters** as that would disturb the concept of **Constitutional governance, principles of collaborative federalism and the standards of Constitutional morality.**
  - SC clarified that there is no requirement of the concurrence of the Lt. Governor and that he has no power to overrule the decisions of the State government.
  - **Faultline**: the Court did not specify the matters which can be referred by the Lt. Governor to the President in the event of a difference of opinion between the Lt. Governor and the State government.
  - **For State Government**: SC said, Delhi is a special category Union Territory and lays down the parameters to enabling the harmonious functioning of the government and the Lt. Governor.

Article 239AA (4): It says that in the case of a difference of opinion between the Lt. Governor and his Ministers on any matter, the Lt. Governor shall refer it to the President for decision and act according to that decision.

- The Union Government is not empowered to exercise executive authority on a matter which comes within the exclusive jurisdiction of the State government like the appointment of Prosecutors.
- **LG's interference in daily administrative matter against SC judgement:** SC stated, the words 'any matter' employed in the proviso to Article 239AA (4) cannot be inferred to mean 'every matter'.
  - **Only exceptional Circumstances**: The only occasion when the Union Government can overrule the decision of the State government is when the Lt. Governor refers a matter to the President under the proviso to clause (4).

Way forward:

- Need to pay attention that, the executive power of the Union does not extend to any of the matters which come within the jurisdiction of the Delhi Assembly.
  - Parliament can **legislate** for Delhi on any **matter in the State List and the Concurrent List** but the executive power in relation to Delhi except the 'Police', 'Land' and 'Public Orders' vests only in the State government headed by the Chief Minister.
  - clause (4) explicitly grants to the Government of Delhi executive powers.
- **Act as a facilitator:** Governor should not emerge as an adversary having a hostile attitude towards the Council of Ministers of Delhi.

Syllabus- GS 2 - Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.
5. New NEP 2020-Re-Defining teaching structure
Source- Indian Express
Context – Despite the best efforts of educationists, governments and other stakeholders, schools are struggling to meet the evolving needs of students and their future employers. New National Education Policy 2020 [NEP] can restructure higher education system with focus on delivering better education, nurturing student's skill and preparing them for the future.

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New National Education Policy 2020–Recently cabinet approved a new national education policy which will refine and re-engineer classroom transactions with an aim to:

1. **To reduce the curriculum content** – It will enhance essential learning, critical thinking and more holistic experiential, discussion and analysis-based learning.
2. **New pedagogical structure -** It also talks about a revision of the curriculum and the pedagogical structure from a 10+2 system to a **5+3+3+4** system design in an effort to optimize learning for students based on cognitive development of children. The new model likely look like this-
   a) **Foundational stage -** Students in the age group of 3-8 years will be part of the foundational stage. This stage will be split into two parts, Three years of playschool/anganwadi and two years in primary school.
   b) **Preparatory Schooling Stage- For** children between 8-11 years of age in grades 3 to 5. There will be a greater emphasis on experiential learning across the sciences, mathematics, arts, social sciences, and humanities.
   c) **Middle school-** For students between 11-14 years in grades 6 to 8. The thrust for this level will be to have a subject-oriented pedagogical learning style.
   d) **Secondary level-** The final stage is for students between 14-18 years. This stage is again split into two sub-stages: covering grades 9 and 10 in one cohort and grades 11 and 12 in another.
3. **New assessment pattern** – It will compel educators to make pedagogical practices more child-centered. Such an approach will allow students to make mistakes, take risks, be creative and move away from rote learning.
4. **Building soft skills-** Envisaging more towards empathy, resilience, conflict resolution and relationship building skills, which offer the key to success in a rapidly changing world.

Challenges to implement NEP

1. **Teacher's training-** Teachers need to have an understanding of the method in which this extremely creative curriculum has to be transacted. A large number of teachers and principals, even in the urban areas do not have the skills required for such changes.
2. **Lack of Resources -** This will require heavy infrastructure coupled with a large teaching faculty and a lot of funds. Partial privatization of this sector as private players are better equipped in terms of resources to cater to the ever-varying needs of the education sector.

Pilot programme

- The Central board of secondary education [CBSE] can start with pilot programmes to ensure the efficacy of this policy.
- It already has integrated many of the concepts mentioned in the NEP ,had conducted programmes and launched initiatives on competency-based education, joyful and experiential learning, art education, school quality assessments and a variety of other innovative pedagogies

Way Forward

We need to first put in place a system that will equip knowledge facilitators to understand the nuances of this novel system. Mapping of resources and skillsets of teachers before the policy is actually rolled out.Consistent inter and intra school training is needed.

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Syllabus: GS2- Bilateral relations-India Nepal.
6. Time for India and Nepal to make up
Source: <u>The Hindu</u>
Context: Nepal-India dispute over the Himalayan territory of Limpiyadhura was revived recently after India published a revised political map showing the newly created Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

Present Scenario:
- Nepal has published a revised official **map incorporating the territory from the Limpiyadhura** source of the Kali to Kalapani and Lipulekh pass.
- **Cause of dispute:** disputed ownership of the triangle north of Kumaon, including the Limpiyadhura ridgeline, the high pass into Tibet at Lipu Lek, and the Kalapani area hosting an Indian Army garrison.
- There has been much blood-letting over the past four months and India has pointedly said it will sit for talks only after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Nepal's Prime Minister abandoned diplomatic decorum to question India's commitment to 'satyameva jayate'.
- **The China card:** It has provided Nepal the leverage to practise their version of non-alignment. China is pursuing a more **assertive foreign policy** and considers Nepal an important element in its growing South Asian footprint.

Different perspectives:
- **India's view:** Administrative records dating back to the 1830s show that the Kalapani area had been administered as part of the Pithoragarh district (then Almora district).
  - The Kali River **begins only after Lipu Gad** is joined by other streams arising from the Kalapani springs. Therefore, the Indian border leaves the midstream of the river near Kalapani and follows the high watershed of the streams that join it.
- **Nepal's view:**
  - Nepal's claim is centred on the Treaty of Sugauli (1815), whose language reads the "Rajah of Nipal renounces all claim to the countries lying to the west of the River Kali".
  - Nepali authorities claim that people living in the low-density area were included in the Census of Nepal until 58 years ago.
  - Kathmandu responded with sensitivity **to Indian strategic concerns** before and after the **1962 China-India** war by allowing the Indian army post to be stationed within what was clearly its territory at Kalapani.

Steps taken to resolve disputes:
- **Joint communiqué**: It was issued in **1997 during I.K. Gujral's prime ministership** down to the present time of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
  - The two governments have agreed that a territorial dispute exists on upstream Kali and have assigned negotiators.
  - **A border demarcation team** was able to delineate 98% of the 1,751 km Nepal-India frontier, but not Susta along the Gandaki flats and the upper tracts of the Kali.
- In 2014, India's External Affairs Minister agreed to the establishment of a **Border Working Group.**

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- In 2019, India's Minister for External Affairs and Nepal's Minister of Foreign Affairs assigned the task to the two Foreign Secretaries.

Way forward:
- De-escalation must happen before the social, cultural and economic flows across the open border suffer long-term damage.
- **Enhance understanding with respect to Nepal:** Nepal does not have an 'independence day'. It would help them in unravelling the Limpiyadhura tangle and accepting the need to go back to the archival papers (and misdemeanours) of the East India Company.
  - **For Nepal:** Indian diplomacy seems increasingly unresponsive under the centralised control of the Prime Minister's Office.
- **Talks must be held**: for which the video conference facility that has existed between the two Foreign Secretaries must be re-activated.
- **Build consensus and enhance bilateral engagement**: India have experience of successfully resolving territorial disputes with Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and even Pakistan bilaterally.
- **Backchannel diplomacy**: It helped in ending 2015 blockade.
- **Declare the disputed area a 'zone of peace and pilgrimage'**: to ensure security for while the Kailash-Manasarovar route is kept open for pilgrims.

Syllabus: GS-2- Education
7. Gaps in National Education Policy 2020
Source: Livemint
Context: Recently cabinet approved a new national education policy 2020
Issues with the National Education Policy 2020
- **Ignorant to socio-political context**: The economic, social and political contexts that have shaped educational outcomes have been ignored by the NEP 2020.
- **Issues with recommendations for undergraduate degree**s: The flexibility in length and structure of undergraduate degrees proposed by the NEP is problematic. If Bachelor's and Master's programmes can be either 3+2 or 4+1, the incompatibility will stop the mobility of students between universities. Further, an exit option at the end of every year, in every institution, will make design of curriculum difficult.
- **Removing MPhil**: The end of MPhil programmes could stifle research capabilities and motivation in universities where research is already poor.
- **Regulatory framework: T**he NEP proposes the Higher Education Commission of India, with four separate verticals for regulation, accreditation, funding and standards. Given the bureaucratic culture of intervention and control in government, such centralization will make regulation rigid.
- **No due importance to character building:**
  - It does not focus enough on character building. Much of its attention is on experiential learning, multi-disciplinary courses, critical thinking, and so on.
  - NEP 2020 aims to bring pre-school education for children of ages 3 to 5 under the ambit of formal schooling as this age group is recognised as crucial for the development of a child's mental faculties. However, the policies do not adequately take advantage of it.

Examples of Character Building through schooling:
- **Military academie**s: These perfectly combine the character-building and learning aspects of education

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- **Preventive system of schooling of Salesian Don Bosc**o: They do not use punishments at all in their educational methodology. The supervisor lovingly corrects students when they make mistakes, and thus manages to reduce wrongdoing.

Way Forward: Mere introduction of few courses on ethics, culture or values, as will not achieve character-building. The whole process will have to be institutionalized.

Syllabus: GS 2 - Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation
8. COVID-19- India's approach for an inclusive future
Source: The Indian Express
Context: COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the fragility of India's urban system like never before. The urgency to revisit and adapt city planning principles and approaches cannot be emphasized more.

Challenges
- **Poor Healthcare system**- The healthcare system is grossly inadequate and lacks the capacity and power to provide quality infrastructure and facilities to the citizens.
- **Population density**- India is one of the densest countries in the world; two-thirds of COVID-19 cases are in Mumbai, Delhi and Chennai. The population density makes the spread of the virus difficult to control as physical distancing is hard to mandates.
- **Lack of water resources**- India having large number of people living in the dense informal housing slums, where access to piped water is often restricted, this makes self-isolation and hand-washing very difficult.
- **Food and Nutrition**- The rapid increase in the number of COVID-19 cases, as well as the measures adopted to contain its spread have put many families at risk by impacting their food supply, livelihoods and household incomes.
- **Unemployment**- In the digital age, daily wage workers becomes a distinct group of people who do not have an occupational identity. The pandemic provides a glimpse into the uncertainty, exploitation and lawlessness prevalent in the job market which over 42 crore unorganized workers in the country are being subjected to.
- **Polluted Environment**- The constant need of building infrastructure leads to carbon emission and research suggests that exposure to pollution increases the susceptibility and severity of COVID-19 infection.

Ways to battle against the challenges
- **Strengthening the social infrastructure** - The urgent need to **invest in public health to strengthen our health systems** for rapid response while ensuring long-term preparedness.
- **WASH for vulnerable sections** - Government must prioritize the basic needs of the most vulnerable, including **improving drinking water and sanitation services** and also need to decongest slums to protect people's health and wellbeing.
- **Ensuring food security** - Center should continue to provide legal entitlements for **food and nutritional security** and expand efforts to ensure food is available at affordable prices (or even free) for poorer families.
- **Employment opportunities**- Local authority and city administration need to **generate employment** for migrant workers who have gone back to their villages.

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- **Going Carbon neutral** - Requires **innovation to reduce the carbon content** and enhance the use of green building materials.
  Example - Invest in public and non-motorized transportation (for example, bicycle) which significantly create more jobs than the same level of investment in roads and motorways.
- **New working environment** - Stepping up **digital infrastructure** will help make the work-from-home trend permanent

Way forward
Urban governance challenge at the local level becomes very crucial to create enabling conditions which continue to attract economic activity, maintain competitiveness, and ensure equitable access, while balancing negative impacts on the environment.

Syllabus: GS 2- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests
9. Sino- Russian Partnership - Recalculation
Source: The Hindu
Context: Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, leaders of China and Russia has been seen together in the public. It has sparked intense discussion on whether they are moving in the direction of a formal alliance and what that could mean for the rest of the world.

The key triangle
1. Since 1950's, global politics has been shaped by the triangular relationship between America, China and Russia.
2. Centrality of China –
- For the American cold warriors, the road of victory lay through Peking, China.
- Today, the Kremlin, Russia seems to believe that the road to revival of Russian power and prestige similarly runs through Peking, China.
- India is not a part of this triangle yet they represent our three most consequential relationship. Hence, a proper appraisal of the Sino- Russian relationship will be critical to our foreign policy calculus.

Pillars of the Sino- Russian partnership

- **Peaceful boundary-**
- The peaceful boundary of China and Russia intimate the positive relations between both the nations.
- The economic positives appear to enhance relation between Washington and European capitals.

- **Expanding trade-**
  Falling oil prices and fears of new sanctions on Russian gas supplies are demolishing the core of Russian exports to Europe, thus compelling them to depend to an even greater degree on the Chinese.
  For example-
- China- Russia trade has more than doubled to $108 billion.
- Russia's central bank has increased its Chinese current reserves from less than one per cent to over 13%.

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- China has surpassed Germany as the principal supplier of industrial plant and technology.
- Coordinated action in multilateral forums, increasingly sophisticated joint military exercises and including activities with third countries such as Iran.

- **Distrust of American intentions-**
  Western sanctions to punish Russia have tended to push the Russians closer to China. This automatically led to strengthen China's position in the strategic triangle.
- **Effect of growing power gap between China – Russia –**
  The growing power gap is threatening to further reduce Russian influence in their 'near-abroad' and to confine Russia to the periphery of global power.
- **Common Cause** - Russia considers U.S. led hegemony as the primary threat to its vision of world power, and this leads them on to make common cause with China.

Following are the issues in the China – Russia relationship:
1. **Chinese Revanchism** - The Chinese policy of **"rejuvenation of Chinese Nation"** has raised fears about "Chinese revanchism" which means regaining lost territory.
2. **Chinese migration** - Russian concerns over Chinese migration on the Russian Far East as China becoming a threat to Russia's territorial integrity.
3. **Energy dependency** - Russia remains careful about allowing any dominating role for China in oil and gas. As over the long term, their economic interests are divergent. Russia thinks to control China through its energy dependency.
4. **America as a boon to the Triangle -** Although, China and Russia both shared dislike for America still they hope to repair ties and therefore neither trust the other fully with respect to the third leg of the strategic triangle.

Way Forward
India's foreign policy needs strategic partnership with Russia based on the absence of fundamental conflicts of interest and a shared belief that some form of multipolarity is better than any sort of Sino- U.S. relation.
Syllabus: GS-2- Education

10. NEP 2020 and Autonomy of Higher Educational Institutions
Source: The Hindu
Context: Recently cabinet approved a new national education policy 2020.

NEP Provisions relating to Regulation of Higher Educational Institutions
Regulation
- Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) will be set up as a single overarching umbrella body the for entire higher education, excluding medical and legal education.
- HECI will have four independent verticals - National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) for regulation, General Education Council (GEC) for standard setting, Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) for funding, and National Accreditation Council (NAC) for accreditation.

Universities and Autonomous degree-granting Colleges.
- Affiliation of colleges is to be phased out in 15 years and a stage-wise mechanism is to be established for granting **graded autonomy** to colleges.

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- Over a period of time, it is envisaged that every college would develop into either an Autonomous degree-granting College, or a constituent college of a university.
- Under graded autonomy, academic, administrative and financial autonomy will be given to colleges on the basis of their accreditation status under the three categories, with top research universities having the highest levels of autonomy.

Why graded autonomy?
- politico-bureaucratic interference in the internal functioning of universities,
- The substantial burden on universities which have to regulate admissions, set curricula and conduct examinations for a large number of undergraduate colleges.
- Over-centralisation, namely, the constraints imposed on the potential for premium affiliated colleges to innovate and evolve

Issues with Providing Graded Autonomy:
1. **Increased Privatization:** It will allow greater penetration of private capital in higher education
2. **Enhance differences between college**s: It will perpetuate prevailing hierarchy that exists between different colleges within a public-funded university, and between different universities across the country. Best colleges will gain autonomy while it is estimated that affiliated colleges with lower rankings and less than 3,000 students may face the threat of mergers and closure.
3. **Inaccessibility of quality higher education**: There are concerns over enhanced inaccessibility of quality higher education as independent rules and regulations of autonomous colleges and universities shall curtail transparent admission procedures, which guarantee underprivileged students access to education in premium institutions.
4. **Increase in Self-financed courses**: graded autonomy can be expected to trigger increase in expensive self-financed courses as premium colleges, as well as struggling affiliated colleges.

GS2- Functioning of Judiciary
11. Contempt power and people's faith
Source: The Hindu
Context: Recent conviction of Prashant Bhushan for contempt of court has revived the debate on the relevance of contempt law in a modern liberal democracy.
More on news:
- The Supreme Court of India has said that his tweets have undermined the dignity and the authority of the most powerful court.
- It has effect of destabilising the very foundation of Indian democracy.

Basis of Judgement:
- **People's opinions:** The judgment has mentioned the word 'people' 27 times. It is to protect people at large as distrust in the popular mind does impair the confidence of people in courts.
- **To establish rule of Law:** object of contempt proceedings is not to afford protection to judges personally from the imputations. It is to uphold the rule of law as people's confidence is of huge importance for the protection of the rights and liberties of people.
- To uphold the majesty of the law and of the administration of justice.

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- Contempt of court power is exercised not to vindicate the dignity and honour of the individual judge who is personally attacked or scandalised.

Underlying issues:
- **People's confidence is strengthened not by the resort to contempt powers:** SC has stated itself to be the 'central pillar' of democracy but on the other hand said that the 'trust, faith and confidence of the citizens of the country in the judicial system is sine qua non for the existence of rule of law'.
  - o For instance, open court hearing in a review in 2019 of Sabarimala but no attention to examine the validity of controversial electoral bonds.

Brahma Prakash Sharma (1953) judgment:
- Contempt power is intended to be a protection to the public whose interests would be affected if by the act or conduct of any party, the authority of the court is lowered.

Hira Lal Dixit (1955):
- Court referred to the 'confidence of the people in the integrity of the judges.

- **"Res ipsa loquitur" the thing speaks for itself:** for instance, Court's reluctance in promptly hearing habeas corpus petitions, the CAA and 370 petitions.
- Judiciary is behaving more like executive courts. For instance, Court struck down the constitutional amendment and the NJAC Act, 2014.
- **Excessive use of contempt power:** According to the Indian Judiciary Report (2016-17) published by the Supreme Court, High Courts had 96,310 civil contempt cases. The number of criminal contempt cases stand at 586 cases.
- **Majority judgements do not always enhance people faith:** for instance, In ADM Jabalpur (1976), a majority, took the highly legalistic view and held that since Article 21 is under suspension due to Emergency, the writ of habeas corpus cannot be claimed. The Court overruled these two judgments in Maneka Gandhi(1978) and K.S. Puttaswamy (2018).

Way forward:
- Independence of the judiciary is indeed the right of people and not of judges.
- **Shiv Shankar (1988) and Rachapudi Subba Rao (2004):** the Supreme Court had held that criticism of the court that does not impair and hamper the administration of justice cannot be punished as contempt.
- **Lesson from Kedar Nath Singh (1962) case judgement:** according to the Supreme Court, mere "strong words used to express disapprobation of the measures of Government with a view to their improvement or alteration by lawful means" is not sedition.

Syllabus: GS2- Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors
12. Need for transparency: On PM CARES Fund
Source: The Hindu
Context: There is need to scrutinise Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (PM CARES) Fund.

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Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (PM CARES) Fund:
- It is **s**et up to support the government in its fight against the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.
- The fund **consists entirely of voluntary contributions** from individuals/organizations and **does not get any budgetary support.**
- Contributions will be an eligible expenditure under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) obligations.
- Donations are also exempted from the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010
- It has been set up as a public charitable trust.

Issues involved:
- **Lack of transparency:** a government panel had rightly suggested that the double benefit of tax exemption would be a "regressive incentive".
  - However, the Supreme Court has rejected the writ petition calling for a funds diversion from this fund to the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) and also denied the petitioners' demand that fund be audited by the CAG.
  - The SC dismissed the **idea that the PM CARES was constituted to "circumvent"** the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF).
  - **Rationale:** PM CARES Fund exists without budgetary support or government money.
- **Unavailability of Info under RTI:** Queries on the trust deed for the Fund, and its creation and operation have been dismissed.
  - **Rationale:** Fund is not a "public authority" even though the PM is its ex-officio chairman and three Cabinet ministers are its trustees.
- **No clarity:** need for a fresh trust when there is the PM's National Relief Fund (PMNRF) with a substantial corpus in place is not clear.

Way forward:
- **Address legitimate concerns**: RTI requests should be answered how funds are being received and how they are being disbursed as lakhs of public and private sector employees have donated their one day salary.
- Government needs to publicise donations to the more accountable NDRF which allows for a transfer of funds to States.

Syllabus: GS 2 -Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation
13. Facebook's favorable treatment to the Bhartiya Janata Party
Source: The Hindu
Context: Wall street journal article regarding Facebook India being partial to the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP).

The Wall Street Journal [WSJ] perspective
- **Allegation-** The paper alleged that the largest social media company kept allowing hate speech by BJP politicians on its platform.

  Example- the BJP's Telangana MLA, **T. Raja Singh**, has not been yet removed from Facebook despite his controversial posts about Muslims that were found to be in violation of its own rules and also deemed dangerous.

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- **Biased behavior-** Facebook wary that censoring members of the ruling party could hurt its business prospects in India.
- **Political influence-** Several networks, both official and unofficial affiliates of political parties have emerged in the last five years with the help of Social media largely Facebook.
- **Information sharing platform**- These groups have emerged as filter bubbles or spaces where information that only conforms to a set of beliefs or political ideology is shared, while also being closed spaces where misinformation and far-fetched conspiracy theories flourish.

Indian market value to Facebook

Number of users- With more than 340 million users, India is Facebook's biggest market.

Content creators- India offer the largest set of content creators for Facebook since China does not allow the platform to operate there. The more content creators Facebook can bring onboard, the better it is for the company's business prospects.

Thus, it would be in Facebook's business interests to maintain cordial relations with the current Indian government.

Opposition reaction to the story

1. **Leading Party controls facebook-** The leader of main opposition Congress party led the charge that BJP, and its ideological fountainhead, RSS, were controlling Facebook in India.
2. **Legal notice-** Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, who heads the Parliamentary panel on IT, has summoned Facebook.
3. **Demand of investigation-** Accusing Facebook India for interfering with electoral process, Congress demanded a joint parliamentary committee [JCP] to probe allegations.

Way forward

Social media giants like Facebook needs to prohibit hate speech and moderate content that incites violence and enforce these policies globally without regard to anyone's political position or party affiliation.

Syllabus: GS-2- Polity

14. Elections during coronavirus

Source: The Indian Express

Context: The Election Commission of India has put its foot down and announced the timely conduct of elections to the 243-member legislative assembly, set to complete its tenure in November but it's a challenge to ensure level playing field in a mostly virtual campaign.

Elections during Covid-19 Crisis

- As many as **34 countries have conducted their national assembly or presidential elections** while fighting against COVID-19. The most successful examples have been of South Korea and, our immediate neighbour, Sri Lanka.
- The Election Commission has come up with its own **set of rules that would be implemented during the Bihar elections:**
- Reduction of the number of electors per polling booth to 1,000 from the current 1,500.
- Addition of 33,797 auxiliary polling stations to prevent over-crowding.
- To avoid crowding at the counting centres, the counting tables have been reduced to seven per assembly constituency from 14.

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- EC's **decision to extend the postal ballot option** to senior citizens over the age of 80, COVID-positive patients, persons with disabilities and voters in essential services.
- Making use of its now famous SVEEP (Systematic Voter Education for Electoral Participation) programme and technological facilities to ensure voter education and mobilisation.
- The political parties in Bihar are mostly likely to **resort to digital campaigning**, after Home Minister Amit Shah addressed the people of Bihar through a virtual rally.
- Besides social media, **virtual rallies** are going to be a dominant feature of digital campaigning.

Issues with digital campaigning

- Virtual rallies have their own limitations, like **inaccessibility to every nook and corner** of rural, hilly and forest areas, with the internet permeation in Bihar being an appalling 37 per cent.
- Online communication through smartphones is difficult as **usage of smartphones in Bihar is only 27 per cent.**
- The parties will go for expensive communication devices like projection screens, this is where **the issue of the level playing field** is being raised by the Opposition parties.
- The richer political parties will have a gala time in mobilising voters, putting small regional/local parties at a disadvantage.
- During the Lok Sabha elections in 2019, the BJP reportedly spent the highest amount of Rs 27 crore on Google, Facebook and their sister platforms for political ads, while the Congress was the distant second with Rs 5.6 crore.
- **The issue of fake news and hate propaganda** needs to be tackled in social media campaigning.
- For instance, Commission ordered Twitter to take down a communal post by a BJP leader and followed it up by asking the Delhi Police to file an FIR against him.
- The recent revelations of The Wall Street Journal regarding Facebook have cast a shadow over the platform's neutrality which in turn has questioned the **implementation of Voluntary Code of Ethics issued by the ECI.**
- According to the report, Facebook India, on several occasions, was unenthusiastic in removing derogatory posts uploaded by the ruling party's leader.

Way forward
By successful election management and efficient working of the election commission of India, Bihar could provide a leading example for conducting elections during a pandemic when all countries of the world are looking at each other for lessons.

Syllabus- GS 2- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources
15. India seizes control of its destiny
Source- The Hindu
Context - Even as the world is reeling from the impact of the pandemic, India is recovering with fresh energy and making bold plans for the future.

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Calibrated action taken during COVID-19

1. **National lockdown** – An emergency protocol that is implemented by the authorities to prevent people from leaving their homes or a particular area. Amid lockdown, plenty of positives have come to light.

   - **Common measures**- People learned the value of masks and mask wearing, social distancing, and hand washing.
   - **Strengthening Medical facilities** – COVID-19 care and quarantine centres were established. Medical equipments and necessities were also procured and supplied to every region.
   - **Testing rate**- The testing capacity increased from thousand per day to million per day.
   - **Medical advancement**- 3 COVID-19 vaccine candidates are at final stage of trial and many more in different stages of trial across the world.

2. **Relief packages to protect livelihoods**- To provide help to all the needy people whose livelihood have been hit hard due to the coronavirus lockdown following steps have been taken :

   - **PM Garib Kalyan Yojana**- 80 Crore citizens are being provided rations through the Public Distribution System.
   - **Jan Dhan scheme** - 20 Crore Jan Dhan women account holders have received ₹30,654 Crore directly into their bank accounts.
   - **National Social Assistance Programme** – 2.8 Crore beneficiaries have received ₹2,815 Crore.
   - **Ministry of labour and employment**- 2.3 Crore construction workers have got ₹4,313 Crore cash aid in lockdown.
   - **PM Kisan Samman Nidhi** - 10 Crore farmers have received ₹40,000 Crore as income support.
   - 4-crore households are benefiting from the expanded **Mahatma Gandhi Employment Guarantee Act scheme.**
   - Central government package**- The rural economy has received over ₹2 lakh C**rore of cash directly into the beneficiary accounts

3. **Revival packages for economy-**

   - **RBI to combat pandemic crisis** – The key steps that RBI has taken in the recent past to combat adverse impact of the COVID-19.
     - **Long term repo operation [LTRO]** - Targeted LTRO operations to bring down the yield curve by allowing further liquidity with the banks.
     - **Loan moratorium**- RBI announced loan moratorium to de-stress the country's financial ecosystem which simply meant deferral/postponement of loan repayment for 6 month from march 2020.
   - **Atmanirbhar bharat revival package-**
     - **Agriculture policy reform**- Farmers can now sell their crops to anyone anywhere, and contract farming has been allowed. Kisan credit cards are being provided to all fishermen, dairy farmers, and other agriculturists.
     - **Defence procurement reforms**- Centre's decision to impose restrictions on import of 101 weapons and military platforms to boost the domestic defence industry.

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- o **Commercial coal mining –** Government open up the coal sector fully for commercial mining by domestic and global companies as India will use its own natural reserves.
- o **Smartphone production-** Centre has worked out production linked incentive [PLI] package of nearly ₹42000 Crore to boost domestic manufacturing of mobile phones and their components.

Way forward-

The recent reforms have prompted domestic and foreign investors to start pouring in billions of dollars of investments into Indian economy and the rupee has strengthened against the dollar, the world's reserve currency. Many countries are stumbling through the pandemic. Meanwhile, India has seized control of its destiny and is marching resolutely toward the post-pandemic future.

Gs2: Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation.
16. India seizes control of its destiny
Source: Indian Express
Context: Thirty years ago, the then prime minister implemented the Mandal Commission report which was called a "silent revolution".
Mandal commission:
- The Mandal Commission, or the Socially and Educationally Backward Classes Commission (SEBC), was established in India on 1 January 1979.
- It was headed by the late B.P. Mandal an Indian parliamentarian, to consider the **question of reservations for people to redress caste discrimination**, and used eleven social, economic, and educational indicators to determine backwardness.
- The Commission's report recommended that members of Other Backward Classes (OBC) be granted reservations to 27% of jobs under the Central government and public sector undertakings.

Impact of acceptance of Mandal Commission report:
- It triggered a socio-political process that resulted social emancipation.
- It also led the rise of political power of plebeians at the expense of the upper and dominant castes.
- **Consolidation of OBCs**: The upper castes instantly mobilised to prevent the reform. Their resistance aroused indignation among the lower castes and resulted in a consolidation of OBC groups.
- **Change in political scenario**: Many OBCs stopped voting for upper-caste notables and preferred to elect representatives from their own social milieu to Parliament.
  - o The percentage of OBC MPs nearly doubled from 11 per cent in 1984 to more than 20 per cent in the 1990s.
  - o The proportion of upper-caste MPs dropped from 47 per cent in 1984 to below 40 in the 1990s.
  - o By 2004, upper-caste presence in the Lok Sabha had fallen to 33 per cent, while 25 per cent of MPs were OBCs.
  - o In 2004, the Congress set a quota of 27 per cent for OBCs in public universities.
- **Democratisation of the political parties:** Parties started fielding OBCs candidates.

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Current political scenario:
- **Share of OBC legislators dropped**: In 2014, according to the database SPINPER, the percentage of MPs from the upper castes rose to 44.5 per cent, on a par with its representation in the 1980s, whereas the share of OBC MPs dropped to 20 per cent.
- Submergence of caste politics in the name of development and class.
- **Rise of neo middle class**: OBCs who had benefited from the Mandal quotas and economic growth. Neo middle-class discourse is class-based but there is no affinity with socialism.

Issues with OBC's policies:
- **Saturation point:** judiciary has put limitation on reservation and parties representing the OBCs could no more say, "vote for me, you'll get more reservations".
- **Inequality in getting benefit of reservation:** According to Indian Human Development Survey that some castes have cornered more reservations than others.
  - **Yadavisation of UP and Bihar**: In UP, 14.5 per cent of the Yadavs occupied a salaried job in 2011-12 (the last round of the survey) against 5.8 per cent for the Kurmis, 5.7 per cent for the Telis, 6.7 per cent for the Kushwahas, 3.5 per cent for the Lodhs.
- **Impact on political scenario in hindi belt:** some jatis were alienated, to such an extent that they started not to vote along with the particular caste. For example, poor OBCs voted more for the BJP than for the BSP-SP alliance in 2019 elections.
  - Similarly, the non-Jatav SCs resent the socio-economic rise of the Jatavs and distance themselves from the BSP, which is seen as a Jatav party.

OBCs constitutes on an average 18 per cent of the total workforce among class A, B and C workers. It is less that what was promised in 1990s, which means the goal of Mandal Commission goals are not yet achieved.

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General

Studies

Paper - 3

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General Studies - 3

Syllabus: Gs3: Economic Development,
1. Global trade and India's geopolitical stature
Source: Live Mint
Context: India needs to focus one Self-reliance through robust economic expansion and not by shutting the world out and losing foreign support.

Economic slowdown impact negatively India's geopolitical standing:
- **Need to avoid past mistakes which undermined strategic interests:** Countries and companies are more interested in economic upside. For instance, during 1970s and 80s, due to import and foreign exchange restrictions, international sanctions and foreign sympathy for domestic insurgencies kept us on the back foot.
- **Current policy approach of India undermining geopolitical interest:**
  o Rising trade restrictions.
  o Reluctance to participate in a wider geopolitical contest against China.
  o **Undermining relevance as a world power**: China trying to box New Delhi into a sub-subcontinental role and push its hegemonic economic agenda.
- **If no fiscal stimulus provided**: According to Pronab Sen's estimates, it could take five years for India's gross domestic product to return to the 2019-20 levels.
  o Slow recovery and global growth.
  o **Slew of measures** introduced by the government in recently are useful but **inadequate** for a quick recovery
  o Rise in protectionism and raising taxes.

"self-reliance" should not be mistaken as "self-sufficiency".
- **Benefits of self-reliance:**
  o Helped with the demands of living during lockdown when global supply chains were in disarray.
  o To signal displeasure against Chinese aggression and to impose costs on Beijing.
- **Self-sufficiency**:
  o **Decrease competition:** for instance, a domestic purchase quota for defence equipment shields domestic producers from competition will eventually lead to **lower quality products.**
  o Restrict consumer choice.
  o Idea of self sufficiency is impractical and harmful to national interest.

Achieve Self-reliance by accelerating the recovery and regaining the path of high growth:
- Marshall Plan-like **public investment in infrastructure** is necessary to galvanize rapid post-pandemic growth.
- **Raise per capita income**: greater our per-capita income leads to the greater our self-reliance. For instance, the United States is self-reliant not because it makes everything within its borders, but because it can purchase or make everything that it wants.
- **Diversify the sources:** Reducing dependence on imports from China or fuel from West Asia doesn't mean trying to make everything in India.
- **Work with like-minded nations**: shape the international trading system in a manner that reduces catastrophic risks and geopolitical coercion. It will also strengthen India's hand in international relations.

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- **Maintain strategic autonomy**: justify reluctance to side with the United States in the Indo-Pacific theatre against China.
- **Resist the forces of de-globalization**: to build more balanced international economic order.

Syllabus: GS 3-Transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints
2. Agri- Markets: One Nation, One Market
Source: The Indian Express
Context: Agriculture Infrastructure Fund is a major step towards getting Agri- markets rights for farmers.

Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF):
1. A new pan India Central Sector Scheme which is also a part of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' to make farmers self- reliant.
2. It will provide a medium- long term debt financing facility for investments in viable projects for post- harvest management infrastructure and community farming assets through interest subvention and financial support, largely anchored at the Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and also availed by individual entrepreneurs.
3. Under this scheme, Rs one lakh crore will be provided by banks and financial institutions as loans, at concessional rates, to Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and other entrepreneurs through Primary Agriculture Credit Societies (PACs).

Government issued ordinance to liberate the legal framework of agri- market:
Government had issued three ordinances. These ordinances relate to the amendments in the Essential Commodities Act, APMC Act:
1. To **allow farmers** to sell their produce outside the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) mandis and
2. To **encourage farming contracts** between farmers, processors, exporters and retailers.

Role of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD):
It is responsible for the creation of 10,000 more Farmers Producer Organizations. Thus, it will create a package which will help these outfits realize better prices.

Absent elements of Agricultural Infrastructure Fund:
1. **Small Farmers-** It is known that better storage facilities can help farmers avoid distress selling immediately after the harvest, when prices are generally at their lowest.
- However, small farmers cannot hold stocks for long as they have urgent cash needs to meet family expenditures.
- Therefore, the value of storage facilities at the Farmer Producers Organizations (FPO) level could be enhanced by a negotiable warehouse receipt system.
2. **Agri futures markets-** Several countries such as China and The U.S. have agri-future markets that are multiple times the size of those in India. The value of traded contracts on agri- futures in the **National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange Limited (NCDEX)**, the latest agri- commodities derivatives exchange in India was Rs 18.3 lakh crore in 2012.
- It fell to Rs 4.5 lakh crore in 2019 and by July 2020 it reduced to Rs. 1.5 lakh crore.

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Action needed to minimize the market risk:

1. **FPOs Training-** NABARD should form a compulsory module that trains Farmer Producers Organizations (FPOs) to use the negotiable warehouse receipt system and navigate the realm of agri- futures to secure their market risks.

2. **Involvement of Government agencies-** Government agencies in commodity markets such as The Food Corporation of India (FCI), National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED), State Trading Corporation (STC), should increase their participation in agri- futures.

3. **Banks as re- insurers -** The banks which gives loans to Farmer Producers Organizations (FPOs) and traders should participate in commodity future as 're-insurers' of sorts for the healthy growth of agri- markets.

4. **Liberating and stable policies-** Government policies should be more stable and market friendly.

Way Forward:

India needs to secularly and geographically integrate its Agri- markets (one nation, one market), so that spot and future markets will unite in long term. Only then the Indian farmers will realize the best price for their produce and markets risks will be covered.

Syllabus-GS 3- Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment
3. A vision for progressive capitalism
Source- The Indian Express
Context- Production, devolution, universalism, and market-building can all be given higher specification in detailed policies. But policy without vision only leads to a permanent and pensioned Opposition.

Issues with current economic system:

Economic distribution system- Measurement of economic growth by gross domestic product (GDP), which is basically a measure of the goods and services produced in a certain period of time and a sign of the health — or lack thereof — of the economy.

Challenges associated with GDP

1. **Inequality** - Even when the GDP numbers are strong, the prosperity isn't being shared. Income inequality has exploded, wages have stagnated, and the richest are hoarding wealth while everyone else struggles to keep up.

2. **Multi-dimensional effect** - More power has been concentrated in the hands of fewer corporations, which result as weaker unions, wage stagnation, less innovation, and lower productivity.

To make the economy grow faster:

1. **Restructuring rigged markets** – This is to change how they work and who they reward, rather than simply redistributing their benefits after the fact.

2. **Deregulation of market** - The real prescription for growing the economy is deregulation, tax cuts, and a pro-market bent.

3. **Main principles** - Should focus on general principle such as **production, devolution, universalism, and market-building.**

a. **Production -** Focusing on cities and towns in poorer regions of India. Export route to prosperity is now closed with the end of hyper globalization. Poorer regions still

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have a shot to "export" their way to prosperity, with richer regions playing their consumers.

b. **Devolution-** Fiscal power must be transferred to the state and local level to get policies form-fit for specific markets and conditions to reverse our internal colonialism.

c. **Universalism-** Need of universal basic income and universal healthcare policies to cease inequality, instability, and ecological disaster.

d. **Market-building-** Markets are allocation mechanisms, information processors, ways of being social. Progressives have to stop thinking about "The Market" as a den of vice. Markets long predate capitalism; they will outlast it.

Way forward-

A progressive vision means finding out the difference between growth and redistribution — and finding where there's overlap. It has to be based on inclusive growth where interests of all sections are considered.

4. Current Economic Contraction

Source: Indian Express

Context: The current economic contraction is different from what India has experienced earlier, that's why government needs to borrow and spend more.

Economic contraction during past:

- **Fall in growth:** growth fell from 8 per cent in 1999-2000 to an average of 4.5 cent during the next three years.
- However, India has never experienced negative economic growth since 1979-80.
- 19957-58: Registered a significant balance of payments (BOP) deterioration.
- 1979-80: witnessed the second global oil shock following the Iranian Revolution.
- Economic contraction in past were due to "supply side" issues.

Current economic contraction is purely economic problem and different in following ways:

o As per various agencies, there will be real GDP decline of 5-10 per cent for 2020-21. It would be the country's **first ever not triggered/accompanied by an agricultural or a BOP crisis.**

- **Agriculture sector witnessing growth: no shortage today of food**
  o Rabi crop harvest improved and ongoing kharif season is expected to perform better.
  o Public cereal stocks increased at 94.42 million tonnes as on July 1 were also 2.3 times the required level.
- **Current account registered BOP surplus** in January-March 2020 quarter (first in 13 years).
- Merchandise trade account recorded surplus for the first time after January 2002.
- **Rise in savings:** Aggregate deposits with commercial banks as of July 31 were Rs 14.17 lakh crore or 11.1 per cent higher than last year.
- **Increase in Forex reserves:** Foreign exchange reserves were at an all-time high of $538.19 billion rising by $60.38 billion since end-March the lockdown.
- **Western style demand slowdown leading to recession**: due to decrease in consumption and investment demand.
- **Reasons for less demand:**
  o Decrease in household expenditure due to loss of income.

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- o Employed persons and businesses are saving more.
- o Businesses reducing capacity, investing less, reducing staff strength and conserving cash.
- o **Limited fiscal space:** government has limited fiscal space due to increase in fiscal deficit to 4.6 per cent in 2019-20
- o **Impact**: Decrease in consumption and investment will contract the economy further leading to reduction investment as well.
- **Crisis faced by banks due less credit demand**: deposits are increasing (11.1 per cent). However, the corresponding credit growth has been just Rs 5.37 lakh crore or 5.5 per cent.

Way forward:
- o **Government needs to increase public spending:**
  - o **Increase borrowing:** Fiscal deficit has increased but between 2007-08 and 2019-20, the Centre's outstanding debt-GDP ratio has come down from 56.9 to 49.25 per cent and liabilities of state also fell from 74.6 to 69.8 per cent. Governments can borrow at rates below nominal GDP growth.
  - o **Less cost of borrowing:** yields on 10-year Indian government bonds have softened from 6.5 to 5.9 per cent and even more for states — from 7.9 to 6.4 per cent — despite massive fiscal slippages.
  - o **Learning from past:** The weighted average cost of Central borrowings more than halved from 12.01 per cent in 1997-98 to 5.71 per cent in 2003-04 and the then government resorted to borrowing.

The need of the hour is that the government should focus more on GDP growth and reviving the economy.

5. A new social contract
Source: Indian Express
Context: According to CMIE reports, unemployment is now down to around 9 per cent, and as economic activity has restarted in cities, labour has begun returning from villages.

Need of new social contract:
- **Dominance of informal sector**: Over 85 per cent of employment in India is in the informal sector. India has stringent labour laws to protect workers, but this covers only the formal sector — under 15 per cent of employment.
  - o **Existence of labour aristocracy**: "labour aristocracy" has almost complete protection, and employers have almost no flexibility.
  - o **Minimum level of protection and minimum level of flexibility**: There need to address both formal and informal labour spectrum to get the **balance right between flexibility and protection for all labour.**
  - o **Need:** strong leadership by industry, labour and government and define a well-calibrated social security system.
- **Impact of pandemic:**
  - o An unplanned national lockdown halted economic activity and wiped out livelihoods, especially of informal workers.
  - o **Loss of jobs:** The Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy (CMIE) estimates that between mid-March and mid-April, 120 million people lost their jobs, with unemployment rising to an all-time high of 27 per cent.
  - o **Reverse migration:** some 10 million people abandoned cities to return to their native villages.

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- **Poor living conditions for migrant labour in cities:**
    o **Mushrooming of slums:** where some of the people who clean our homes, deliver our goods, and repair our equipment live in squalor.
- **Failed rural development**: India is unique in having 70 per cent of our population still residing in rural areas.

Way forward:
- **Liberal land use regulations**: our cities have among the least generous floor-space indices (FSI) in the world. New York, Hong Kong, and Tokyo have an FSI five times Mumbai's.
    o It will help to reduce rents for quality housing.
- **Collaboration:** state and city governments partnering with private developers in getting firms to invest in less-developed districts.
- Encourage the migration of people to higher productivity occupations in cities.
- Ensure clean, affordable and accessible housing is available for all in cities.
- **Atmanirbhar agricultural reforms:**
    o **Grow farmer incomes: by having** them grow more value-added and export-oriented crops.
    o **Import substitution**: for instance, the cultivation of palm plantations has the potential for huge import substitution.
    o **Medium term reforms:** permit contract farming, and open up agricultural markets.
    o Invest massively in rural connectivity and digital connectivity.
    o **Promote entrepreneurship:** create economic opportunities in rural India.

6. Domicile Quota: Reserved jobs for locals
Source- The Hindu Business Line
Syllabus- GS 3- Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.
Context- States playing 'sons of the soil' politics, by reserving government jobs for locals.

Sons of the soil-
- **Meaning-** It is an elemental concept tying people to their place of birth and confers some benefits, rights, roles and responsibilities on them, which may not apply to others.
- **Concept-** It underlies the view that a state specifically belongs to the main linguistic group inhabiting it or that the state constitutes the exclusive 'homeland' of its main language speakers who are the 'sons of the soil' or the 'local residents'.
- All others who live there or are settled there and whose mother tongue is not the state's main language are declared 'outsiders'.

States supporting the idea of nativism-
Many states have resolved to reserve jobs in both the government and private sectors such as **Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Madhya Pradesh.** While Karnataka has said that it is in the process of preparing law in this regard.
1. **Telangana-** Government has decided to reserve 80 per cent of semi- skilled jobs and 60 per cent of skilled jobs for locals.
2. **Andhra Pradesh-** Government has decided to reserve 75 per cent jobs.
3. **Haryana-** Government has also decided to reserve 75 per cent jobs.

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4. **Madhya Pradesh-** Government has decided to reserve 100 per cent of its government jobs prior for locals.

Issues associated with son of the soils politics -
1. **Against Constitution of India-**
   The law passed by the states could face a legal challenge for going against Article 16 and Article 19 of the Constitution.
   a. **Article 16 of the Constitution-**
      It guarantees equal treatment under law in matters of public employment, prohibits the state from discriminating on grounds of place of birth or residence.
   b. **Article 16 (2) of the Constitution-**
      It states that no citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them, be ineligible for, or discriminating against in respect or, any employment or office under the state.
   c. **Article 19 (d) of the Constitution-**
      It states that all citizens shall have the right to move freely throughout the territory of India.
   d. **Article 19 (e) of the Constitution-**
      It states that all citizens shall have the right to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India.
2. **Parochial politics-** Its **origin** can be traced back to the politics of the Shiv Sena in the 1960s, which initially targeted 'South Indians' for monopolising white- collar jobs and later the blue- collar workforce from northern states.
3. **Pressure on labour market-** Domicile quotas can raise costs and inefficiencies in labour- receiving states, exerting short- term pressure on labour- supplying states to create productive capacities.
4. **Way to divert attention from Government failure–** It presented to divert attention from the Covid failure. Both the labour- supplying states as well as the receiving ones have played the domicile card, responding to the unease over unemployment and a struggling economy.
5. **Political strategy-** The concept of 'outsiders snatching jobs from locals' is an easy political sell for electoral advantages.
6. **Against invisible hand of market** - According to Economic survey (2016-17) and other studies, migrants accounts for 20- 30 per cent of the workforce, or more than 100 million. The reality is workers go to where jobs are available and labour is needed because locals are either unavailable or unwilling to do these jobs.

Way Forward-
In the present COVID situation challenge of joblessness is highest in the last four decades. The need of the hour is a more inclusive, employment- centred model of growth. Also states need to nurture an education and skilling ecosystem which produces 'job- ready' workers.

Syllabus Gs3: Growth & Development- RBI's Monetary policy
7. Limitations of central banking framework
Source: Indian Express
Context: The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) actions over the past few months are guided by multiple considerations.
More on news:
- Slew of measures taken to arrest economic slowdown and address the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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- o Inflation and growth management
- o Debt management
- o Currency management
- These measures have exposed the limitations of and the inherent contradictions in the central banking framework in India.

Monetary policy function of RBI and the limitation:
- The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is guided by the goal of **maintaining inflation at 4 plus/minus 2 percent.**
- **Issue associated:** At the current juncture, should the MPC be driven by growth considerations or should short-term inflation concerns dominate?
- **Problem of Growth and inflation:**
  - Recently, the MPC has attached more importance to reviving growth and has lowered the benchmark repo rate by 250 basis points.
  - However, despite dire growth prospects, it chose to maintain the status quo, which was driven (in part) by elevated inflation which continues to average above the upper threshold of the inflation targeting framework.

Uncertainty over trajectory of inflation:
- **Uncertainty regarding impact of COVID-19:**
  - o Inflationary or disinflationary.
  - o Inflationary in the short run (retail inflation is elevated largely due to supply dislocations).
  - o Disinflationary over the medium term (with demand falling).
- **Supply dislocations and disruptions:** The current rise in inflation is mainly driven by supply-chain dislocations owing to the lockdowns.
  - o **Implication**: It means spurt in retail inflation will be temporary, and it will begin to trend lower as these disruptions ebb.
- **Disconnect between the wholesale and consumer price index:** Since April, while WPI has been in negative territory, CPI has been elevated, indicating excess supply or low demand at the producer or wholesale level but excess demand or low supply at the retail or consumer level.
- **No firm projection of future inflation by MPC**: Though the committee members are basing their decisions on some expectation of future inflation and growth, these should have been publicly disclosed.

Inherent contradictions between the MPC's operations, and the RBI's debt and currency management functions:
- **As manager of the government debt:** The RBI's debt management functions have run up against its currency management functions.
  - o **Responsibility:** RBI is tasked with ensuring that the government's borrowing programme sails through smoothly.
    - ▪ **Steps taken:** Operation twist, which involve the RBI buying longer-dated government bonds, while simultaneously selling an equivalent amount of shorter-dated securities — pushing down long-term Gsec yields, and exerting upward pressure on short-term yields as a consequence.
    - ▪ **Contradiction:** RBI ended up doing exactly the opposite of what the MPC was trying to achieve by cutting short term rates.

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- o **RBI's interventions in the currency market:**
  - ▪ **Responsibility:** To prevent the rupee from appreciating.
  - ▪ **Contradiction:** It constrained its ability to carry out open market operations as these would have led to further liquidity injections.

Way forward:

- Develop a clear strategy regarding its responsibilities.
- **Look beyond the current spurt in inflation**: test the limits of both conventional and unconventional monetary policy.

Need for a further Monetary policy easing: It will be helpful as uncertainty remains over whether Covid having a deflationary or inflationary impact on the Indian economy in the medium term.

Syllabus: GS-3 Science and Tech
8. Industry 4.0
Source: The Hindu Business Line
Context: India should blend its production processes with new technologies and develop dynamic capabilities in order to become competitive

Industry 4.0 and India

- Third-party manufacturers, component companies and a large number of MNC and Indian phone-makers are attracted for smartphone manufacturing in India ever since the first template has been established that is **the performance-linked initiative**.
- Samsung and Apple phones will now increase their manufacturing in India. These two companies together hold up to **30 per cent of the global market share** in smartphones.
- About 60 per cent by value is likely to be exported and the total value of mobile phones and **components manufactured is estimated to be at ₹11.5 trillion in next five years**.
- India should link incentives to the adoption of modern manufacturing practices as it will help Indian manufacturing be globally competitive in the long-term.
- Industry 4.0 began as a national strategic initiative from the German government through the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy about a decade ago.
- Industry 4.0 has now become an important aspect of national manufacturing technology policies in many countries, including those in Asia, for ex- China (Made in China 2025), Japan (Society 5.0), Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Dynamic technologies

- Internet of Things (IoT), high-speed data communications, the cloud, and data analytics including, those that influence artificial intelligence and machine learning are the **foundational technologies which need to be kept in place**.
- Companies can then build on top of this foundational layer and **adopt other digital technologies** like simulation, AR/VR, autonomous robots, etc.
- The superior performance of companies depends on integrating internal technological, organisational, and managerial processes to **address rapidly changing and demanding business environments.**

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Innovative work practices

1. **Counterfeit free market**: Drug control authorities to generate unique numbers securely and in real-time, and transmit them to the printing and packaging machines on the vaccine assembly line. This process is entirely automated and there is no human in the loop.

2. The unique number is used to track and trace the vaccine vial through the supply chain, from the manufacturer to the patient and real-time alerts are sent to all the constituents and the appropriate country's drug control authority if there is any duplicate number used.

3. **Correctly attuned medical devices**: Importance of good-quality medical devices like ventilators, pulse oximeters, non-contact thermometers, etc was highlighted during Covid-19 crisis.

4. These devices can connect to the Internet for correct calibration and they can be used to trigger a health helpline based on pre-set parameter limits. Such devices have significant export potential.

5. **Digital technologies:** An AR headset that resembles and feels like normal spectacles can make workers more productive by superimposing the details of a pallet in their field of vision.

6. The AR headset can also directly connect with stock-taking and replenishment systems in real time.

Up-skilling professionals

1. There should be a body of people who are proficient in the functional aspects of management, data analytics, industry domain dynamics, and digital technologies.

2. The body of people are being up skilled on the latest digital technologies that are useful in the Industry 4.0 context.

➢ Mid-career MBA programmes and focussed online programmes provide an opportunity for digital technology professionals to acquire proficiency in the functional aspects of management or in data analytics.

Way forward

In order to develop unique dynamic capabilities that can propel Indian companies to global leadership positions in the Industry 4.0 era, the manufacturing companies needs to synthesise their traditional strength in design and engineering at affordable cost, with strength in digital solutions and data analytics, and world-class managerial expertise.

Syllabus: Gs3: Growth and development
9. Targeted policy support towards the urban population
Source: Indian Express
Context: India has now become the third country to have more than a million of COVID-19 confirmed cases, together with the US and Brazil.

Factors strengthening rural economy:

- **Economic relief**: government's Rs 20-trillion economic package announced in May to mitigate the downside impact of the COVID-19 crisis.

- **Passing of long-pending reforms:** such as easing norms with regard to the Essential Commodities Act, the government also announced a 10 per cent hike in minimum wages for MGNREGA, a 65 per cent rise in spending on public work schemes.

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- **Food security:** six-month programme that will distribute free rations to around half of the households in the country.
- **Organic farm growth:** raise the disposable income levels of rural households.
- **Good monsoon boosting rural economy:** a strong start to the monsoon, along with high availability of water in reservoirs and large fiscal transfers, is helping improve rural growth prospects.
- **Increase in rural consumer confidence**: early sowing cycle boost income perceptions for the farming sector.
- **Increased saving**: rural savings have still risen as evident from trends in Jan Dhan bank accounts.
- **Availability of cheap labour:** government-support programmes may lead to the movement of workers from urban to rural areas and provide for a cheaper alternative to farm labour during the peak season.
- **Twin-speed recovery track with increase in consumption:** sales of tractors, fertilisers, and two-wheelers are improving.

Need more targeted policy support towards the urban population:
- **Rural India is naturally distanced and less mobile**: COVID-19 remains largely an urban pandemic with large parts of rural India still mostly unscathed.
- **Decrease in demand**: urban signposts of demand, like automobile sales, aviation traffic and fuel consumption are lagging.
- **To recover overall economy:** Stronger rural sector will only be able to mitigate, not fully offset, the economic damage.
- **Localised lockdown:** localised lockdowns continue to weigh on activity in the urban areas. health care management in urban areas and disease resolution will help in economy revival.
- A more robust recovery cycle in the farm sector can help government in focussing on urban population, which has borne the brunt of the economic and the health crisis.

Way forward:
- Supporting discretionary for faster economic recovery.
- Improving fiscal finances to further boost the government's ability to spend in a pro-cyclical manner.

GS3-Internal security
10. Naga conflict
Source: Indian Express
Context: Recently, in a statement the NSCN-IM blamed the interlocutor for destroying the momentum of the peace talks.

Naga tribes:
- **Composition of Naga:** comprising over 25 tribes, each one is proud owner and inheritor of a distinct culture, language, tradition and geography, espousing a distinct world view, falling within the broad rubric of the Naga family.
- **Tribal solidarity:** Few tribes aspire to Naga unity, and they view tribal loyalties as residues of a premodern past.
- **Naga nationalism:** The idea of a Naga homeland includes contiguous areas in a number **of North-eastern states, and even parts of Myanmar.**

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- **Issue**: Naga conflict cannot be resolved without addressing the issue of integrating the Naga-inhabited areas is widely shared among Nagas. **However,** non-Nagas living in those areas do not generally share this goal.
- **Understanding of "Unique history"**: It is open to more than one interpretation.
    - The source of the phrase can be traced back to a joint communiqué of 2002.
    - 2003 PM's visit: It is true that Nagaland has a unique history.
    - In August 2015, Prime Minister wore a Tangkhul Naga shawl to the signing ceremony of the Framework Agreement.
- **Emergence of NSCN-IM**: the faction that declared the Shillong Accord of 1975 had emerged as a serious political force.

Fundamental issues involved:
- **Naga's perspective**
    - In 2014: the then newly elected Prime Minister Narendra Modi had named Ravindra Narayan Ravi as the government's new interlocutor to the Naga talks.
    - However, a number of groups such as the NSCN-IM raised objections.
    - R. N Ravi was well known for his antagonistic approach to the Naga issue. That's why, NSCN-IM casted doubts on the government's sincerity towards the talks.
    - It accused him of trying to turn the clock back by reframing the conflict as a **law and order issue, and not a political dispute.**
- **Interlocutor's perspective:**
    - Nagaland governor assured that as interlocutor he will implement the prime minister's vision and take the **peace process forward.**
    - **Criticism of the role of predecessors**: Current interlocutor called the predecessor as "rent seekers".
    - In his writing he also accused predecessors of acting as no more than the NSCN-IM's "marketing agents" and "selling its larger-than-life profile to Delhi".
    - **Treating all Naga as homogeneous group:**
        - As per R. N Ravi, predecessors treated Naga as homogenous collective with common aspirations" and set the Naga talks on "a perverse trajectory".
        - The UPA government was negotiating with only the NSCN-IM, which is an entity of Tangkhul tribes of Manipur, having little resonance with other Naga.
    - The Indian government acknowledges the unique history of the Nagas and their situation.

Way forward:
- Idea of Nagas having a "unique history" which was acknowledged should not be allowed to wither away.
- Characterisations of the Naga political struggle as a separatist insurgency or a terrorist movement are inaccurate.
- Negotiations should be based on mutual respect.

After years of negotiation, the risks of Nagaland and adjacent areas going back to a downward spiral of violence and counter-violence should not be underestimated.

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General Studies

Studies

Paper - 4

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General Studies - 4

Syllabus: GS 4 - Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of Ethics in-human actions
1. Social Media: A platform to change the work of Institution of powers
Source: The Hindu
Context: The very people, who legitimately critique a police force for being corrupt, incompetent or unaccountable, turn around and demand that any 'suspect', rounded by the same police force, should be encountered without proper legal trial.

Instance: Case of Journalist Vikram Joshi
- Journalist Vikram Joshi was shot dead in the head in Ghaziabad, presumably by men he had accused of molesting his niece. It was reported that the local police had ignored a complaint by Mr. Joshi about the molestation.
- The social media was on fire with righteousness over the crime.
- Soon, the same police announced that they had arrested the 'culprits' and the people who had been criticising the police force started tweeting about the pressing need to behead, grievously torture, execute or encounter the suspects.

Truth about the social media
- **Social base of people** - The people demanding the need of the illegal action and injustice on social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and the rest are those who are well educated and intelligent.
- **Inconsistent demands** - When they legitimately criticise a police force for corruption or incompetence but then want to execute any suspect arrested by the same force without due process of law, they are not motivated by the justice. This represents lack of integrity in these people.
- **Rise of Fascists** - The People, who put their absolute trust in any institution of power and support all the actions whatsoever done by these institution of power.

Factors affecting the understanding of Fascist people
1. **Impatience promoted by neoliberalism** - Farmers, who depend on agricultural seasons, are characteristically seen as patient people —compared to city dwellers. Neoliberalism, with its focus on short-term profit, arguably breeds an even more impatient lifestyle.
2. **Self- righteousness** – Fascist people tend to self-justify their own privileges to themselves in order to feel ethical and righteous.
3. **Getting it over with** - The withering away of human relations, the 'abandonment' of aged parents, the shrinking 'attention span' of younger people, etc are few of many instances where people judge others and consider themselves right.

Therefore, all three are 'human tendencies' which are all dominant ingredients of this age, particularly in circles with some degree of empowerment.

Way Forward
People need to understand that the institution of powers is only going to work arbitrarily when they will allow it. Social media is a great platform to curb the illegal and unethical actions of the Police force, not to encourage them to take action without completion of due process of law. The people arrested are never 'culprits'. They are only suspects, and their guilt needs to be proven by due process of law.

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2. Leader's Value – To lead the nation amidst challenges
Source – The Hindu
Context- Nation building requires a leader who is well read and capable of articulating a sustaining vision that empowers humanity.

Challenges today's leaders are witnessing

1. **Pro- Nationalism**- The rise of **'jingoistic nationalism'** across the globe pose a major challenge as the current pandemic requires collective cooperation of the leaders.
2. **Fake news and misinformation-** Social networks are amplifying some fake theories and helping them gain a foothold in the popular imagination. Fear and uncertainty also provide a fertile ground for disinformation.
3. **Financial crisis** - An unprecedented global financial crisis has weakened our collective capacity to rescue national economies. The current pandemic has caused loss of millions of jobs with an estimated $3.4 trillion lost in labour revenue and the resultant social distress.
4. **Geopolitical rivalries**- Nations are closing their borders to political, economic and environmental refugees even as the nuclear arms race threatens to escalate and environmental challenges threaten the lives and habitats of billions of people in this and future generations.
5. **Emerging digital divides -** The yawning gap between under-connected and hyper-digitalized countries will widen, thereby increasing existing inequalities.
6. **Millennium Development Goals [MDG]**–The MDGs are eight goals with measurable targets and clear deadline for improving the lives of the world's poorest people. One of the major MDG failures is the fact that the success of the goals was not experienced equally across the globe.

Defined qualities of effective leadership –

1. **Absolute vision**- The very essence of the leadership is to have a clear vision. Good leaders translate their personal perspective into the shared vision and goals of the group that they lead.
2. **Public sentiment -** Leaders who strive for a nation state that promises justice, equality, and social cohesion. Thus, the need of a 'Leader Statesmen' who thinks global, think humanity, think peace and co-existence as equals.
3. **Leadership attributes-** Integrity, consistency, empathy, relentless determination, self-effacing humility, a binding moral compass and the ability to motivate masses within the inviolate ethical and ideological framework of politics.

Way forward-
In the past, the global leaders who made a difference were liberal and their journey was based on the vision of collective social and economic upliftment. It's time to elect leaders that can think global and demonstrate true character. Nation building requires a leader who has intellectual depth to lead the people in the battle of ideas and values.

Syllabus- GS 4- Ethical concerns and dilemmas in government and private institutions; laws, rules, regulations and conscience as sources of ethical guidance
3. Global platforms giants- Shaping the global order
Source- The Hindu Business line
Context- Global platform giants such as Google, Twitter, Facebook-owned Instagram and WhatsApp are accused of being biased towards tackling hate speech.

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Allegations on Facebook –
1. **Unregulated Information sharing on platform-** As exposed in a report by an international media organisation, Facebook is symptomatic of a larger infection of unregulated information dissemination through social media.
2. **Hate speech against Rohingya minorities-** A Reuters investigation found that Facebook didn't appropriately moderate hate speech and genocide calls against Myanmar's Rohingya minorities.
3. **Placed business interest over common good-** It is even accused of conducting a psychological experiment on its user's emotions and more aspect of their personality.

Other Global Platform giants-
1. **Removal of Malicious content -** Not only Facebook, Google has been accused of delaying the removal of malicious content even after volunteer groups had reported it to the search giant.
2. **Spread of malicious content-** Social media spreads messages way faster than other forms of mass media.
- Nearly 60,000 posts are shared on Facebook in just one second across the globe.
- Nearly 8,00,000 messages are sent in just one second across WhatsApp.
- Almost 70,000 searches are made on Google in just one second.

Obstructions in making successful regulations-
1. **Freedom to speech-** Any regulations for social media content should follow globally accepted norms of freedom of speech and impartiality which is hard to apply with the restrictions on the content.
2. **Independent Regulator-** An independent regulator can be misused in geographies where the idea of impartiality is used to the wish of the ruling regimes.
3. **Privacy Regulation-** The introduction of privacy regulations such as the European Union's General data protection regulation (GDPR) signalled the fact that self-regulations of the platforms didn't work in the desired way.

Way Forward-
In a democracy like India, to handle the spread of malicious content- global platform giants, governments, civil society groups and technologists to representatives of vulnerable groups need to work together. It requires collaborative, independent and inclusive regulation that is customised to regional and cultural specifications while adhering to global best practices of content moderation and privacy rights.

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