

**9pm**

# **Compilation**

**10<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> August, 2020**

**General Studies - 1**

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1. Setback to the Constitutional Secularism
2. India's Demographic future

**General Studies - 2**

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1. Perspectives in India – US relations
2. Rising China – Options for India
3. India: Mastering the real political game
4. India-U. K relations
5. Changing geopolitics in West Asia
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**General Studies - 3**

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1. Equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccine
2. Civil services examination – Steel frame of India

# General Studies Paper - 1

## General Studies – 1

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### Syllabus: GS 1 - Secularism

#### 1. Setback to the Constitutional Secularism

Source: [The Hindu](#)

**Context:** Indian constitutional secularism is swallowed up by the party-political secularism.

#### Secularism:

- **‘Secular’** - The word ‘Secular’ was added in the Constitution of India by 42<sup>nd</sup> Constitution Amendment Act 1976. It has not been defined in the Constitution.
- **‘Secularism’** – A system of social or political philosophy that rejects all forms of religious faiths. Or in other words, liberation of Politics from the hegemony of religion.

#### Features of the Constitutional Secularism:

**Principled distance from all religions** - It means that the State must respectfully leave religion alone. However, it should intervene in following cases :

**A. Inter-religious issue** - Whenever religious groups promote communal disharmony and discrimination on grounds of religion.

**B. Intra- religious issue** - Whenever religious groups are unable to protect their own members from the oppressions they perpetuate. For instance – practice of untouchability within Hinduism.

#### Party- Political Secularism:

**1. Definition of Party- Political Secularism** - It encourages opportunistic alliance with the religious communities, particularly for the sake of immediate electoral benefit which sometimes even leads to igniting communal violence.

**2. Against secularism** - This party-political secularism has dispelled all the values from the core idea given in constitution and replaced them with opportunism.

#### Ways to revive practice of secularism:

**1. A shift of emphasis from inter-religious to intra-religious issues-** As the focus shifts from the religion of others to religion of oneself, it allows deeper introspection within, multiple dissenting voices resurface, create conditions to root out intra-religious injustices and make its members free and equal.

**2. By revitalizing the social project of secularism:** As State has failed to support victims of oppressions promoted by religion, a peaceful and democratic secularism from masses and grass root movements provides a platform to install constitutional meaning of secularism.

**3. Critical analysis of religious doctrines** - **Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** observed that every aspect of religious doctrine or practice cannot be respected. Respect for religion must be accompanied by critique for fair analysis.

#### Way Forward:

To promote secularism the needs of the day are new forms of socio-religious reciprocity and novel ways of reducing the political alienation of citizens. It cannot be done by the Governments alone but requires collective commitment from impartial judiciary, scrupulous media, civil society activists and an alert citizenry.

### Syllabus: Gs1: Population and Associated Issues,

#### 2. India’s Demographic future

**Source:** [THE HINDU](#)

**Context:** India's sharp decline in fertility rate is largely attributed to the change in socio-economic conditions

#### **India's demography transition outlook**

- **Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) findings:** A new study published in the journal, **The Lancet**, argues that while India's population set to be the largest in the world by the mid-century thereafter it will witness a sharp decline by the end of 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- **Basis:** The prediction is based on the assumption that on average, Indian women will have fertility rate of 1.29 by the year 2100 which will be below the replacement level and hence there will be a sharp decline.
- **Anomaly:** Though the population estimates for India by 2050 of both the UN and the IHME are similar (UN-1.64 billion by 2050, IHME projects 1.61 billion by 2048) there is a sharp contrast between their prediction on India's population growth by the year 2100 (UN predicts 1.45 billion by 2100, and the IHME, 1.09 billion).
- **Reason For the anomaly:** IHME models relies excessively on National Family Health Survey (NFHS) data regarding current contraceptive use. It is observed that contraceptive use in the NFHS is poorly estimated, and as a result, IHME model, generating remarkably low fertility projections for 2100.
- **Demographic Future:** Considering both the findings it can be said with certainty that, India's demographic future will peak till mid-21<sup>st</sup> century and subsequently declining population driven by a sharp reduction in fertility.

#### **Understanding India's success in lowering fertility rate**

- India's total fertility rate has fallen to 2.2 from 6 during 1950's. However, the policy of family planning and forced sterilisation accounted for mere 17% decline in TFR from 5.9 in 1960 to 4.9 in 1980.
- Also, the target set by these policies were abandoned after **Cairo conference** on Population and Development in 1994 as these targets led to explicit or implicit coercion.
- In addition, the Punitive policies such as denial of maternity leave for third and subsequent births, limiting benefits of maternity schemes and ineligibility to contest in local body elections for individuals with large families has remained largely ineffective.

#### **Significant Contributor for India's Low fertility rate**

- The **socioeconomic transformation of India** since the 1990s has contributed an important role. With the growth in schools and education resulted in more lucrative jobs that aided contraction in agricultural sector.
- Parents began to rethink their family-building strategies. The new aspirational parents saw education as a livelihood opportunity. Smaller families helped the parents to invest more money in their children's education which has also guided the decline in fertility rate.
- India's story of low fertility rate is in contrast to western countries, where the western countries attributes the decline in fertility to retreat from the family system although in India it can be attributed to the increased commitment of Indian parents to family by reducing the number of children and investing more in each child.

**Conclusion:** While the aspirational revolution has already started to hasten the fertility decline our health system should aid the process by providing basic contraception and sexual and reproductive health services that allow individuals to have only as many children as they want.

# General Studies Paper - 2

## General Studies - 2

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### Syllabus: GS2- Bilateral relations (India-US)

#### 1. Perspectives in India – US relations

Source: [The Hindu](#)

**Context:** How to structure India-U.S. relations in sync with common India-U.S. perspectives

#### Historical Significance:

- **Voiced for India's independence:** The then U.S President Franklin D. Roosevelt compelled his Britain counterpart PM Winston Churchill to free India and accept India as a formal ally in World War II.
- **Supported for India's permanent membership in U.N Security Council:** With India's commitment to democracy, fundamental rights, free press and non-violence in a written Constitution under the leadership of Nehru, India appeared to the U.S. as worthy of replacing communist China. Under this circumstances U.S.'s offered for India to join the UN Security Council.

#### Shift in India-US relation

- **India's Refusal and Generosity:** Nehru's government was not ready to take any measures that would provoke china. Nehru not only declined the U.S. offer to India but instead campaigned for China to take up that seat.
- **U.S – Pakistan partnership and Ind-Pak wars:** With India's increasing partnership towards Russia, the U.S saw Pakistan as a counterweight in south Asia to counter growing Russia and china. U.S unconditional support to Pakistan with liberal aid and armaments, strengthened them politically, economically and in military space that resulted in India Pakistan wars during 1965, 1971 and 1999.

#### Mutual areas of cooperation:

- India-U.S. relations require give and take on both sides. For example, During Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar period, IMF (U.S holds large size of voting power) agreed for a \$2 billion loan only when India accepted to refuel their air force planes flying from the Philippines to Saudi Arabia for the first Gulf War during Iraq occupation of Kuwait.
- Similarly, for India to counter china India needs arms from U.S, subsequently to get support from U.S India should be willing to send troops to Afghanistan to fight U.S enemies.
- India can seek support from U.S to develop naval air base in Andaman and Nicobar island in return allowing U.S to share the naval base with its allies
- Tariffs should be lowered from both sides thereby facilitating trade

#### India's Dependence on U.S

- To develop in cyber space, India needs the support of the U.S. in cyberwarfare, satellite mappings of China and Pakistan, intercepts of electronic communication, hard intelligence on terrorists.
- India looks up to U.S for technology know how on thorium utilisation, desalination of sea water, and hydrogen fuel cells
- U.S. must allow India's exports of agricultural products including Bos indicus milk, which are of highly competitive prices in the world.

**Irritants in India- U.S relations:** U.S has actively raised concern against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, Purchase of Russia's S-400 air defence missile system and India's denial to America's request to send Indian troops to Afghanistan.

**Need for Cautious approach**

- Free, indiscriminate flow of U.S. FDI is not in India's national interest. India's Economic relations should be based on strong macroeconomic principles should be allowed based on the economic theory of comparative advantage.
- India should not be involved in sending troops to Tibet, Hong Kong or Taiwan issues if mandated by U.S. because there is always a possibility of China's policy favouring towards India.

**Syllabus: GS 2 - Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests**

**2. Rising China – Options for India**

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

**Context** – At a time when the struggle for supremacy between Washington and Beijing is intensifying, numerous countries are finding themselves in an awkward position to take sides.

**Global backlash against China-**

1. **New cold war** – The relationship between US and China are at their lowest point in decades where both countries are engaged in confrontation on multiple fronts including ongoing trade-war.
2. **Economic embargo** - United Kingdom took decision to end reliance on Chinese imports and call off its Huawei 5G projects.

**Asian Countries in conflict with China-**

1. **Hong-Kong** – Beijing has disturbed its ties with Hong Kong, paying scant regard to the concept of 'one country two systems'.
2. **Vietnam** - In the 1970s, China grabbed control over the Paracel Islands from Vietnam.
3. **Philippines-** In the 1990s, it occupied Mischief Reef in the Spratly Islands, an area of the South China Sea that the Philippines had always considered its territory.

**Countries cooperating with China** - Despite the aggressive approach of China, few countries are still willing to cooperate with China due to strong economic ties that have been forged over the years. Instances of such are as following:

1. **Australia** made it clear that it would not do anything contrary to its interests and a strong economic engagement was an essential link in the Australia-China relationship.
2. **U.K.** also stated that it wants a positive relationship and would work with China.
3. China becoming a threat to the majority countries of **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)**, still they opt for not to take sides as China is one of the biggest trading partners with ASEAN.

**The Strain in Relations between India and neighborhood-**

1. **India- Pakistan** – Pakistan PM Imran Khan recently introduced a new political map, laying untenable claims to territories in the Indian state of Gujarat and Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and of Ladakh.
2. **India- Nepal** - India inaugurated the Darchula-Lipulekh pass link road recently, cutting across the disputed Kalapani area, which raised tension and Nepal has gone



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to the extent of publishing new maps which show the 'Kalapani area' as a part of Nepal.

- 3. India- Sri Lanka** – With the Rajapaksas back in office after the recent election held in Sri Lanka, this could be worrying sign for India as Rajapaksas seen to be close to China.
- 4. India- Bangladesh** - There is a constant strain in India-Bangladesh relations after the introduction of Indian Citizenship Amendment Act [CAA].

### Growing Chinese power in Asia-

- 1. New economic corridors** - China has proposed taking forward an economic corridor plan with Nepal, styled as the Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network, and expanding the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Afghanistan, touting benefits of new economic corridors on the lines of the CPEC.
- 2. China-India Competition** - China- Iran has made a deal which provides for China building expanding Iranian Railways and gives China access to Iranian oil for the next 25 years. Whereas India lost its terminal projects in Chabhar port due to delay in funding and implementation.

### Way Forward-

As India- China are destined to remain neighbors, it is imperative for the India to form long term strategies in the form of bilateral ties or by using socio-political relation to restore the friendly relations and to avoid any future conflict.

### 3. India: Mastering the real political game

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

**Context:** In the era of dense networks, India should reconfigure autonomy to power with others as to accomplish joint goals.

#### India's 74<sup>th</sup> Independence Day:

- India is going to celebrate its 74<sup>th</sup> Independence Day on 15 August, 2020 remembering the sacrifices made by the freedom fighters, political leaders and citizens in order to free the motherland from the Britishers.
- The theme for this year is Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

**Self-reliance:** The social and economic ability of an individual or a community or a nation to meet essentials needs which includes production of goods and services within the country in a sustainable manner. The main aim of this policy is to reduce reliance on external assistance or import.

**Foreign Policy:** It consists of self-interest strategies chosen by the State to safeguard its national interests and to achieve goals within its international relations milieu.

#### India's Foreign Policy since its independence:

- 1. Non Aligned Movement** - During the cold war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union in 1950's, India's Prime Minister Nehru adopted '**The Non Aligned Movement**' as their foreign policy with other several developing nations and decided not to join any specific group to maintain its independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and security from hegemony of great powers of the worlds .
- 2. India's strategic autonomy as per changing circumstances** - India did not become any less autonomous when geopolitical circumstances compelled it to enter into de facto alliance with major powers. India has reinterpreted freedom and shown flexibility for survival in the moments of crisis such as-

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- a) **India- China War-** In 1962, PM Nehru entered in a treaty with U.S. for emergency military aid to stave off the Chinese from taking over the whole of Eastern India.
- b) **India- Pakistan War-** In 1971, PM Indira Gandhi entered in a treaty of Peace, friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union to ward off China and the U.S.
- c) **India- Pakistan War-** In 1999, PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee welcomed a direct intervention by the U.S. to force Pakistan to back down.

### **Threat to India's strategic interest:**

**India- USA closeness** - Due to the China's expansion into the Indian Territory, India has to take the support from the U.S. This could be an error for India's freedom as this can restrict its options in other national interest such as its ties with Iran and Russia and efforts to speed up indigenous defence modernization.

### **Way Forward**

Diversification is the essence of self-reliance for India. It is no longer a question of picking one out of two titans or oscillating between them. India should form alliance with like-minded partners and maximize its potential and it is the only viable diplomatic solution in the current emerging multipolar world order.

## **4. India-U. K relations**

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

**Context:** Examining India's relation with Britain.

### **India's support to Britain in the Past**

- **India soldiers served as the Largest volunteer force** in the world, with over 2.5 million fighting in Europe, North Africa, Singapore, Hong Kong and, Burma
- **Source of Resources** India provided almost 200 million tonnes of coal, six million tonnes of iron ore and more than one million tonnes of steel to the Pacific war effort, with and countless Indian civilians securing the supply lines.
- **Demonstrated their Bravery:** At Kohima, an Indian-British force numbering 1,500 men fought against 15,000 enemy troops for two weeks resisting phosphorous bombardments and infantry attacks.
- **Sacrificed their lives:** The Indian Army were in continuous combat during the three-year long Burma Campaign that resulted in death of 87,000 Indian soldiers

### **India's present engagement with Britain**

- **Shared challenges:** Both India and U.K face challenges of combating the pandemics, piracy, extremism, Modern warfare different from conventional conflict etc.
- **Shared Values:** Like commitments to justice, stability and free markets with mutual interest in standing together and more importantly a common history.
- **India- UK partnership in Defence** Royal Navy vessels of Britain is already operating in the Western Indian Ocean. Biannual Bilateral Armed Forces exercise along with Defence and International Security Partnership

**Conclusion:** With India pursuing the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat the Global Britain can support India's "vocal for Local" in areas of defence modernisation to maritime technology.

## **5. Changing geopolitics in West Asia**

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

**Context:** Full normalisation of diplomatic relations between the UAE and Israel, brokered by the United States, marks an important moment in the volatile geopolitics of the Gulf and the Middle East.

### More in news

- Israel is Expanding its political, economic and strategic engagement with the Arab Gulf states
- Also, in recent years, the United Arab Emirates has been hosting Israelis from ministers to athletes and businessmen to artists
- The UAE will be the third Arab country to establish diplomatic relations with Israel, after Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994.

### Reasons for Arab-Israel hostile Relationship:

- Israel's unfriendly attitude towards the Palestinians and its continuing expansion in to the Palestinian territory were one factor that made it hard for Arab states to normalise ties with Israel.
- Other than the Palestinian issue, the rise of al Qaeda, the 9/11 attacks on the United States, the American invasion of Iraq, and the Arab Spring were some of the problems that deterred Arab-Israel friendly relationships.

### Reasons for new Arab – Israel ties

- Increasing conflict between the Arab Gulf Kingdoms and Iran in recent years.
- The Gulf monarchies were also threatened by the resurgent Muslim Brotherhood which tries to establish a new order in the region and being supported by Turkey.
- Dependence on U.S for their regional security. With Israel being the U.S close allies, Gulf countries are in a compulsion to maintain friendly relation with Israel.
- With the possibility of an end to the age of oil Gulf countries are reconsidering their Petro- their national strategies they have started looking for new partnerships, including with Israel, China and India.

**Conclusion:** Despite Palestinian objections, with more Gulf states expected to follow the UAE's lead on Israel, the gulf region will see some major realignment in their national strategies that is of special significance for India.

## 6. Foreign policy: Fairy Tales of Indian Government

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

**Context:** The danger of disillusionment when hopes are belied is greater than removing the cobwebs of fairy tales.

**India's prevailing International issues:** The issues which will influence the shape of the post COVID- 19 World-

1. **Chinese military** spreading on India's side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC).
2. **Pakistan military** shooting across the Line of Control (LOC).
3. **Cartography aggression** by the Government of Nepal.
4. **Iran** joining a virtual alliance with China.
5. **Russia's** increasing closeness with China.

**Level of India's Fairy Tales:** Many challenges of India have been taken by surprise by these new developing issues because of the numerous fairy tales which surround international issues. The understanding of every issue is at three different levels:

1. **Real Situation:** It is that situation where the issue is known correctly only to those at higher levels and the interlocutors in the government.
2. **Official Version:** It is properly calibrated for the guidance of spokespersons of the government.

**3. Rosy Version:** It is for the general public so they could feel comfortable that the government that they elected is doing well.

**Truth of India's Fairy Tales:** The fairy tales are created by the government officials and friendly press and commentators and embraced by the public opinion that all is well with the world and their elected government is doing well.

**India- China Relation's Truth:**

- 1. China's deceitful behavior-** After all the investments made by the Prime Minister and India's large galaxy of experts on China, India had no impression of the Chinese untrustworthiness as it had romanticized the 'Wuhan Spirit' and the 'Chennai Connect' in Tamil Nadu.
- 2. India's leader lie-** The Prime Minister who knew what transpired in the informal summits, said nothing, however his body language and enthusiasm fooled into thinking that these leaders would never fight a war.

**India- Russia Relation's Truth:**

1. War of 1962 - India was surprised when erstwhile Soviet Union refused to intervene in the India-China conflict in 1962 on the plea that "one was a brother and the other was a friend." Even this time India had taken the support of Russia for granted after the Prime Minister's visit to Russia.
2. India's perception of Russia has the veil of a fairy tale, even when Russia had the quasi- alliance with China.

**Mirage of United Nations Security Council and Nuclear Suppliers Group:**

- 1. India as Permanent Member-** It is to make public believe and maintain the myth that the India is likely to get a place on the high table with veto power. The reality is that the vast majority of the members of the UN would want to abolish the veto rather than give it to more countries.
- 2. India Joining Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) -** It is a mirage that public believes is a reality. India is joining nuclear supplier group. It is quite impossible as NSG was originally setup to deny India any nuclear material following India's nuclear tests in 1974. The best it could do was to grant an unconditional waiver, which India already has.

**India- U.S.A. Bilateral Relation's truth:**

It has been known that the America will set up six nuclear reactors in Andhra Pradesh. However, reality is that the U.S. was using the civil liability law as a tool not to transfer nuclear technology to India.

**Way Forward:**

The need of the time is that government should examine all the policies and other international developments consecutively. So that it can apply correctives wherever possible.

**Syllabus: GS-2- International Organizations**

**7. The WHO's relevance is fading**

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

**Context:** The WHO's role amidst the Covid-19 pandemic has been criticised.

**World Health Organization**

- It is a specialized agency of the United Nations that is concerned with international public health.

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- It was established on 7th April 1948, and headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
- The WHO is a member of the United Nations Development Group. It has 194 member states.

### Criticisms of WHO

- 1. Slow Response:** The WHO was expected to play the dual role of a think tank and oversee global responses to public health emergencies. However, WHO unnoticed the emergence of Covid-19 even when the first cases in China were supposedly reported in November 2019.
- 2. Delay in the declaration:** WHO delayed in declaring COVID-19 as a 'public health emergency of international concern' (PHEIC) and also as Pandemic, especially when the COVID 19 was exhibiting the characteristics of a pandemic, i.e. spreading rapidly around the world.
- 3. Mere Coordinating Body:** The WHO has been reduced to a coordinating body, beholden to the interests of rich member states.
- 4. Poor Functional Efficiency:** The functional efficiency of WHO has reduced due to organisational lethargy, absence of decisive leadership, bureaucratic indolence, underfunded programmes, and inability to evolve to meet the needs of the 21st century.
- 5. Poor leadership:** Director General Tedros Adhanom has been criticised for his leadership abilities during this pandemic. There have been allegations on current Director General that he has been generous in his approach towards China.
- 6. Donor Driven Agenda:** WHO is funded through assessed contributions made by the member states and voluntary contributions from member states and private donors. The assessed contributions can be spent as per the organisation's priorities approved at the World Health Assembly, while voluntary contributions are allocated in consultation with the donors. This has led to lack of financial autonomy and a donor-driven agenda.

**Conclusion:** The WHO has failed to handle the pandemic. However, governments across the globe are equally responsible for their poor handling and response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Syllabus:** GS-2- Education

### 8. Gender Equality Through Educational Interventions

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

**Context:** During the Covid-19 pandemic, the National Commission for Women has reported a surge in domestic violence and cybercrimes. Women and girls have become more vulnerable as they face violence and abuse inside their homes and online.

#### Various Initiatives for Achieving Gender Equality through Educational Interventions:

- 1. 'Safe online learning in times of COVID-19':** It is an information booklet developed by UNESCO in partnership with the National Council of Educational Research and Training. It seeks to the creation of safe digital spaces and addresses nuances of privacy, especially amidst Covid-19 pandemic.
- 2. 'Action for Equality' programme:**
  - It is a programme by Equal Community Foundation. It trains educators on how to engage boys to achieve gender equality through educational interventions.
  - The programme has a community-based behavioural change programme designed to provide young boys with the skills and knowledge they need to challenge existing gender norms.

**Way Forward:** It is important to impart value education and take up educational interventions for gender sensitization at a young age.

## 9. New Education Policy – Transforming Education

**Source – [Live Mint](#)**

**Context** – 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.

**New National Education Policy 2020**–Recently cabinet approved a new national education policy with an aim to:

1. **To reduce 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 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.

**Gross Enrolment Ratio [GER]** – A statistical measure used in the education sector, to determine the number of students enrolled in school at several different grade levels and show the ratio of the number of students who live in that country to those who qualify for the particular grade level.

- The current gross enrolment ratio percentage of India is at **26.3**.

**New National Education Policy's vision-**

1. **Doubling the Gross Enrolment Ratio** in higher education from 26.3 percent to 50 percent by 2035.
2. **Avoiding herd mentality** by cultural shift among faculty, students and parents to embrace critical thinking and holistic learning.
3. **Smart learning-** Classes could be online to save travel time, but the periodic physical interaction can be arranged to facilitate mutual learning.

**Proposed ways to implement National Education Policy effectively-**

1. **Collaboration among various institutes-** Creating multi-disciplinary experiences for students which will encourage collaborative programmes between the higher education institutions [HEIs] in the same city or region. Possible way to make it happen-
  - a. **Investment** – The constant need of the higher investment to understand how student learn in different context.
  - b. **Exchange of ideas** - An autonomous body, the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) must be created to provide a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance learning.
  - c. **Uniform definition of credits** - It would allow collaboration and facilitate giving students multi-disciplinary exposure and experience across institutions.
2. **Faculty training and their development -**
  - a. Numbers of PhD fellowship could be doubled particularly in the field of humanities and social science.
  - b. Enhancing the skill-sets of existing faculty.
  - c. Structured programme to attract Indian scholars teaching overseas.
3. **Software** – Adequate information technology system required for effective administration and governance of the large multi-disciplinary university envisaged by the national education policy.

**Way forward –**

Higher education institutes must be encouraged to experiment with technology and forums must be created to share outcomes and best practices.

**10. Digitising health records**

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

**Context:** Analysis on Digitising health records

**Background:**

- A team of experts from the academia, government, and the private published a roadmap for re-imagining India's health data ecosystem.
- It appealed for an API-enabled personal health record (PHR) principles that are reflective of NITI Aayog's National Health Stack Bluebook and the health ministry's National Digital Health Blueprint.
- The idea of personal health record is also in line with draft Personal Data Protection Bill which called for the portability of personal data in a structured format.

**Objective of Digitising health records:** Indian citizens should be able to access their lab reports, x-rays and prescriptions and be able to share them with doctors or family members irrespective of their destination.

**Significance of Digitising health records:**

- it increases accountability, improves patient outcomes, and ensures evidence-based policymaking.
- The portability of clinically-relevant data across states will cut down the costs and saves time.
- It has the ability to alter practice and improve the quality of care, and the ability to conduct timely institution-based syndromic surveillance by ensuring compliance through monitoring

**Challenges:**

- **Burden for documentation:** runs the risk of reducing highly-trained professionals to data-entry operators who must enter billing and legal information, that has little relevance for clinical care.
- **Misuse of sensitive personal health data while sharing with third party entities:** However, The NDHM architecture protect patient's privacy by mandating the sharing of their health information between entities only with requisite permission and with permanent record of the transaction.

**Way forward**

- To enable seamless data exchange, all stakeholders must be incentivised to adopt a standard language of communication. For this to happen, the GPs, pharmacists, laboratories, radiology clinics, insurers and hospitals have to lead from front
- To solve the burden of documentation, it is imperative that India should have a standardised universal procedure on what to document, when, why, and by whom that is in line with global standards.
- Should ensure upgradation in digital technology by harnessing advancements in voice recognition, natural language processing, and machine learning to further its health data ecosystem that would reduce the burden of documentation on physicians and community health workers.

**Conclusion:** There is an unlimited potential for changing how health data are utilised. Modernising healthcare delivery in India will advance medicine and health for all.

## 11. National Education Policy 2020 and Challenges Ahead

Source: [Livemint](https://www.livemint.com)

**Context:** The Ministry of Human Resource Development announced The National education policy 2020 with a goal of transforming the system to meet the needs of 21st century India.

### NEP 2020- Brief Overview

Categories	Key policy Highlights
<b>School Education</b>	<p><b>New Curriculum:</b> The 10+2 structure of school curriculum is to be replaced by a 5+3+3+4 which includes 5 years of foundational education, 3 years of Preparatory, 3 of middle and 4 years of Secondary Schooling.</p> <p><b>Medium of Instruction:</b> Mother Tongue as medium of instruction till Class 5 wherever possible.</p> <p><b>Coding and Vocational Integration:</b> New Curriculum will include coding and Vocational Integration from Class 6.</p> <p><b>National Mission</b> to ensure Foundational Literacy and Numeracy skills by 2025.</p>
<b>Assessment Reforms</b>	<p><b>Examinations:</b> All students will take school examinations in Grades 3, 5, and 8 which will be conducted by the appropriate authority. Board exams for Grades 10 and 12 will be continued, but redesigned with holistic development.</p> <p><b>PARAKH:</b> A new National Assessment Centre, PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development) will be set up as a standard-setting body.</p>
<b>Equitable and Inclusive Education</b>	<p><b>Bal Bhavans:</b> Every state/district will be encouraged to establish Bal Bhavans as a special daytime boarding school to participate in art-related, career-related and play-related activities.</p> <p><b>Special Funds:</b> Government will set up a Gender Inclusion Fund and Special Education Zones for disadvantaged regions and groups.</p>
<b>Teachers</b>	<p><b>Professional Standards:</b> A common National Professional Standards for Teachers(NPST) will be developed by the National Council for Teacher Education by 2022.</p> <p><b>Qualifications:</b> By 2030, the minimum degree qualification for teaching will be a 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree.</p> <p><b>National Mission for Mentoring</b> will be established with a pool of outstanding senior/retired faculty who would be willing to provide short and long-term mentoring/professional support to university/college teachers.</p>
<b>Technology in Education</b>	<p><b>National Educational Technology Forum(NETF)</b> will be created to provide a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, administration.</p>



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<b>Higher Education</b>	<p><b>Increase GER to 50 % by 2035:</b> The policy aims to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio(GER) in higher education including vocational education from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035.</p> <p><b>Certification:</b> There will be Multiple entry and exit points with appropriate certification with the option of choosing a 1 year Diploma, a 3 year bachelor's degree or a 4 year bachelors' degree with research across disciplines.The M. Phil programme would be discontinued.</p> <p><b>Single Regulator:</b> Higher Education Commission of India(HECI) will be set up as a single overarching umbrella body for the entire higher education, excluding medical and legal education.</p> <p><b>Academic Bank of Credit:</b> An Academic Bank of Credit will be established for digitally storing academic credits.</p> <p><b>The National Research Foundation</b> will be created as an apex body for fostering a strong research culture and building research capacity across higher education.</p>
<b>Promotion of Indian Languages</b>	<p><b>Institutions:</b> The policy recommends setting up an Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation(IITI) and National Institute (or Institutes) for Pali, Persian and Prakrit to ensure the preservation, growth, and vibrancy of all Indian languages.</p>

### Issues and Challenges:

- 1. Coordination with States:** NEP 2020's implementation will depend largely on state governments, since education is a concurrent subject under the Constitution.
- 2. Ignorant to socio-political context:** The economic, social and political contexts that have shaped educational outcomes have been ignored by the NEP 2020.
- 3. Does not talk about implementation:** The NEP is clear on the targets but is silent on the course of action and implementation.
- 4. Issues with recommendations for undergraduate degrees:** 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.
- 5. Removing MPhil:** The end of MPhil programmes could stifle research capabilities and motivation in universities where research is already poor.
- 6. Regulatory framework:** The 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.

**Conclusion:** The vision of NEP 2020 can only be a success when equal socio-economic opportunities in terms of access to education, change in the culture of institutions in education, regulators and governments, and end the political intrusions in education is achieved.

## 12. State of Children's Education during COVID- 19

Source: [The Hindu](#)

**Context:** The danger of educational technology widely adopted in COVID induced online classes, is that it is leading to centralized decision-making.

### Working of Schools Education System without its own Functionaries:

Since British days, the bureaucracy views schools functionaries with deepest suspicion, both in their capacities and integrity.

#### 1. Government- run Schools-

Even now there is no provision in the rule book for freedom on any count that matters. Principals and teachers silently follow the orders and circulars issued by the directorate and the examination board.

#### 2. Privately- run Schools-

The school owners and managers are the one who keep principals and teachers under their thumb. For them the professional knowledge and experience count for little. Even the management committees and parents generally support the regimented approach of directorates and boards.

Thus, all major processes that affect life at school have stayed firmly under the centralized exercise of authority and the exam boards have tightened their grip further.

### Pandemic impact on education system-

**1. Temporary closed educational institution** - To contain the spread of covid-19 virus, all schools in urban and rural area have stayed closed since the last week of March which cause learning loss in lockdown.

**2. Hampered Midday meal-** Cooked mid-day meals served to children at school have been replaced in many states by the distribution of grain and money.

### Ways to overcome current rural education during Coronavirus:

**1. Smart learning-** Not all learning has to occur in the classroom, child psychology say that in its formative stages the human mind needs opportunities to observe natural phenomenon, represent it in different forms and analyze it. Village schools are in a far better position to do so than city schools.

**2. Teacher's attitude-** In village, teachers can bring great energy into their pedagogy by encouraging children to spend time outdoors for assigned observation.

**3. Educational technology-** Many urban located schools have opted for the online teaching to compensate for this loss for their students. However, in the village located schools due to lack of facilities such as smart phones, laptop, internet speed, electricity, etc the online teaching school is not a much better option for their students.

### Way Forward-

Decentralization should be favored so that the school could touch the core aspects of education as a system. Schools should be allowed to nurture a free, thoughtful mind among the young.

**Syllabus: Gs2: Parliament and State Legislatures—Structure, Functioning, Conduct of Business, Powers & Privileges and Issues Arising out of these.**

## 13. Loopholes in Anti defection law

Source: [Indian Express](#)

**Context:** The political crises in Manipur and Rajasthan has once again highlights the loopholes in Antidefection law

### Background

- In Manipur assembly, contrary to their party's stand six Congress MLAs defied their party's whip by absenting themselves from the confidence vote which led to the government surviving the confidence motion.
- In Rajasthan, Governor's disagreement with the Rajasthan cabinet's decision to summon the state assembly has been violated previous Supreme Court decisions.

**By passing Anti-defection law:** The main purpose of the law is to deter MLAs from defecting from their political parties. An MLA who has been declared a defector cannot become a minister in a government for six months. Yet, by winning a by-election to the assembly he can become a minister.

### Issues in Anti defection law:

- The law doesn't bar the defector from reelection to the assembly or the legislature.
- It only punishes MLAs for switching parties but it doesn't restrict Political parties that is often accused of alluring MLAs of rival parties to switch loyalties.

### Unaccountability of Political parties:

- The limits on electoral spending is only applicable to candidates and not to political parties as they are allowed to spend unlimited amount on behalf of their candidates.
- Similarly, with respect to criminalisation in politics there is no bar on political parties to restrict individuals who face criminal charges although there is a bar on elected Individuals convicted with a prison term of over two years cannot contest elections.

### Way forward

- Just as how penalising both the bribe giver and bribe taker is supposed to clamp down on corruption similarly, penalising both elected individuals as well as political parties will be an effective solution.
- However political parties have made deliberate attempts to flout laws that attempts to hold them accountable. Even the courts had limited success in this regard.
- Thereupon, as per the expert committee's suggestion, a lasting solution to the problem can only come from the adherence by political parties to a code of conduct or set of conventions that takes into account the fundamental priorities that govern the functioning of democratic institutions.

**Conclusion:** Political parties should refrain themselves from misusing the anti-defection law to fix their internal problems. Also, the menace of defection can be stopped only by enforcing accountability on both the individual MLA's as well as the political party.

**Syllabus – GS 2 - Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures.**

### 14. Transparent taxation- journey of direct tax reforms

**Source – [Indian Express](#)**

**Context –** Prime Minister recently introduced the 'Transparent taxation' platform which the government says is a means of honoring the honest and effort to make taxation system seamless, painless and faceless.

#### Need of taxation reform-

**1. Reduce the burden of cases from judiciary** - The success rate of the tax department in tax cases at all the lever which includes the appellate tribunal, the High Court and the Supreme Court is less than 30 percent.

**2. Increase tax base and revenue collection** – India's tax to Gross Domestic Product ratio stands at 12% which is abysmally low when compared to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries tax to Gross domestic product ratio -34%. Thus, transparent taxation will increase the tax base and tax collection which will give boost to the government's expenditure.

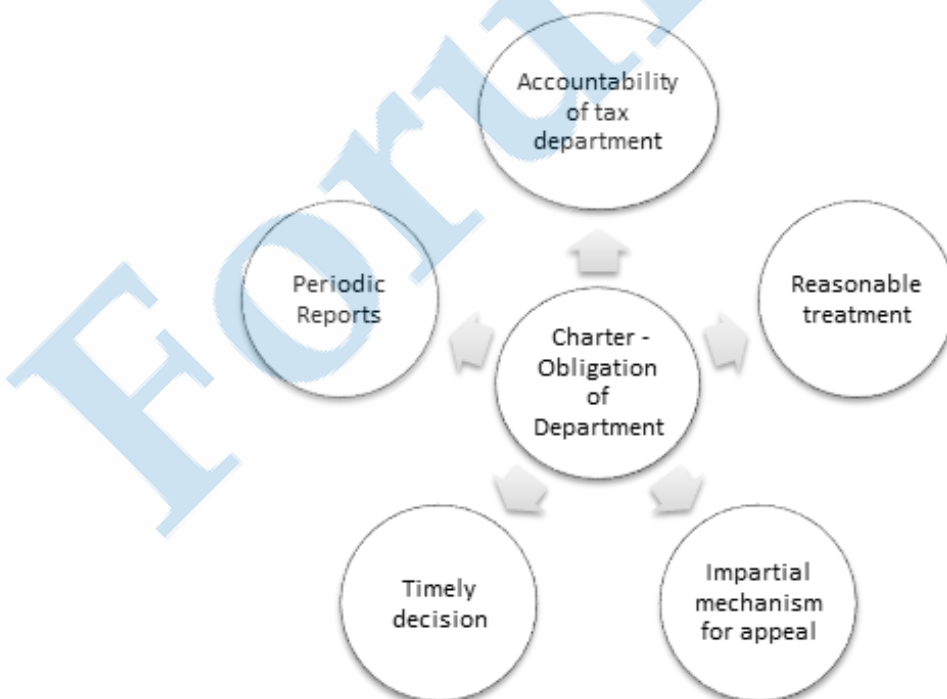
**3. Ensure accountability of tax officers** – Unethical practices by the tax department discourage the tax payer to file returns and lodge related complaint. Computer-generated allocation of such cases will avoid human-human interaction and increase accountability of officer to deal with case effectively.

#### Key features of new taxation system-

- 1. Random Allocation** - Appeals to be randomly allotted to any officer in the country through system using data analytics and artificial intelligence [AI].
- 2. Officer's anonymity**- The identity of officers deciding appeal will remain unknown.
- 3. Faceless** – No physical interface, there will be no need for tax payer to visit the officer/office.
- 4. Independent Review** -The appellate decision will be team based and will be reviewed by independent authorities.
- 5. Taxpayers' Charter**-The fundamental rights of tax payers and the basic standards of services that they should expect.
- 6. Tax department as facilitator of services** - This aims to change the relationship between tax payers and the tax department from being an enforcer to a facilitator.

India will be the 4<sup>th</sup> country to implement tax payer charter along with Canada, US and Australia.

#### Taxpayer charter - Commitment to tax payer-



### Taxpayer's charter - Expectation from the tax payers



#### Way forward-

The rights of the taxpayers need to be clearly defined. Moreover, there is a need to reassess and reconfigure the working of the tax department by building capabilities to check tax evasion, and widen the tax base, while at the same time discouraging the unreasonable tax demands, and curbing the litigation.

**Syllabus- GS 2- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.**

#### 15. Data privacy as a fundamental right

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

**Context-** In the world of internet and technology, it is important how government, political parties and citizens are responding to this new triangular interplay between data protection, privacy and a flow of information.

#### Data theft in India

Data is becoming more valuable day by day and information theft is the most expensive and fastest rising consequences of cybercrime. Personal and sensitive data of millions of people is compromised for the money. Here are some of the biggest data breaches of year 2019.

1. Malicious 3<sup>rd</sup> party app leaks personal data from Twitter and Facebook.
2. More than 1.3 million credit and debit card details from Indian banks were spotted for sale. A cyber security company found that the information was being sold for 130 million US dollars.
3. The data of 6.8 million users from an Indian health-care website were also stolen.

#### Potency of the data-

**Electoral process-** Data driven campaigning has been at the core of recent elections, many private enterprises routinely share the personal data of individuals with political organizations. Campaigns rely on the data to facilitate a number of decisions -

1. Where to hold the rallies, on which States or constituencies to focus.

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2. The campaign messages to promote in each area or to each constituency.
3. How to target supporters (and people 'like' them), undecided voters, and non-supporters.

**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 to grow. For example :

1. Delhi riots - The forwards that triggered the primitive “Us v/s Them” group mentality and is manifested in Delhi riots reports
2. COVID 19 - The forwards on the novel coronavirus which declare COVID-19 a bacteria and the World Health Organization stating that vegetarians cannot be infected with COVID-19.

### **Personal Data Protection Bill-**

**Justice B.N Srikrishna** submitted that draft bill which deals with the following guidelines

1. It recommended that critical personal data of the citizens be processed in centers located within the country.
2. It says that sensitive personal data can be processed only with the explicit consent of the person.

Sensitive personal data includes- password, financial and health data, sexual orientation, biometric data and religious or political belief.

However, the bill cleared by the cabinet is different which allows State and private parties to process personal data without obtaining consent.

### **Way forward-**

Government policy on national security should be based on advance strategic assessment rather than on a reactive basis. Internet ombudsman can be an effective antidote to unregulated technological disruptions.

### **Syllabus: Gs2: Issues relating to Poverty and Hunger.**

#### **16. Poverty Alleviation**

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

**Context:** Efforts to combat poverty in India and the recent setback

#### **Fight against Poverty in India**

- In 1877, Dadabhai Naoroji presented the first estimates of poverty in his paper 'Poverty in India', that subsequently published in his book **Poverty and Un-British Rule in India** in 1899.
- During the course of freedom struggle the idea of poverty got reflected in Mahatma Gandhi's speeches references to Antyodaya and later in the **National Planning Committee** reports of 1938.
- Many stalwarts, mainly **Babasaheb Ambedkar supported the** idea of **economic emancipation** as a precondition for a vibrant democracy.
- The constitution-makers were conscious that the task of a free India was to ensure freedom from exploitation, poverty and inequality. Our **Directive Principles of State Policy** lays out that it is the responsibility of the state in providing adequate means of livelihood and better provisions for ensuring equality in assets, opportunity and access for all citizens.
- During the late Sixties and early Seventies, with the call of “Garibi Hatao” by Indira Gandhi, poverty became an **issue of political mobilisation** and a priority for

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economic policy-making. It gave impetus for the initiation of poverty alleviation programmes of the central government as well as the states.

### Efforts paved off:

- Today, the average per capita income of Indians is 7.5 times compared to the 1950's.
- India has transformed from low growth rate economy of 3-4 per cent to a higher growth rate economy of 7 per cent per annum.
- According to 2011-12 official estimate of poverty only 22 per cent of the population were below the poverty line. Between 2005-2012, 110 million of rural poor and 27 million urban poor moved out of poverty.
- High growth rate accompanied by pro poor policies such as NREGA, Forest Rights Act, Right to Education, National Health Mission and the expansion in food programme paved way for the success in poverty reduction.
- However, the acceleration in growth after the economic reforms in 1991 has also been accompanied by increasing inequality.

### Recent Trends:

- As per the estimates of last consumption survey which got leaked without any formal publication revealed that there is a decline in consumption expenditure in rural areas while in urban areas it increased in urban areas indicating a rise in overall poverty.
- Other indicators such as unemployment, declining wages and incomes substantiate this.
- With growth likely to slow down, accompanied with severe economic disruption due to the pandemic the challenge to eradicate extreme poverty will only make become more difficult.

**Conclusion:** Freedom to participate meaningfully in the democratic process, free from discrimination based on caste, class, religion and regional considerations along with equality of access to education, employment, nutrition, health and a decent quality of life, all these are important for the success in poverty alleviation.

# General Studies Paper - 3



**General Studies - 3**

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**Syllabus: Gs3: Growth, Development and Employment.**

**1. Generating Demand will be the key to overcome disruption caused by the pandemic**

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

**Context:** Disruption brought by the pandemic and measures to revive the economy

**Disruption brought in by the pandemic**

- Decreased the purchasing power of people owing to loss of jobs and contraction in business cycle.
- Least attention towards luxury goods by shifting the emphasis towards basic necessities such as with food, shelter and safety.
- Marked shift towards saving culture from indiscriminate consumption.
- Largely impacted the aviation, tourism and hospitality sectors.
- Benefitted e-commerce with more and more Consumers resorting to purchase online.
- Highlighted the importance of local self-sufficiency which is witnessed through “Vocal for Local” slogans and huge increase in local apps, local kirana stores, local artisans and brands.
- Showcased the importance of psychological needs. While experiencing the frustration of being alone, People are urging to meet their dear ones.
- In education, e-learning and online courses are being preferred compared to the traditional physical education
- Mode of entertainment is gradually changing with consumers preferring to watch shows and movies at home.
- More Emphasis on health and immunity leading to increase in consumption of organic, ayurvedic, and immunity boosting products along with investments in financial and medical insurance.
- Contraction in real estate sector, as people are more inclined towards renting which will significantly impact long-term and high investment purchases.

**Measures needed to overcome the disruption**

- Ensure basic provision of essentials such as food, water, housing, and electricity.
- Creation of employment opportunities’ through development of infrastructure projects.
- Risk aversion of farmers through crop insurance and better price realisation.
- Generate demand for products through reduction in income taxes, incentivise spending by offering tax benefits which will also help to revive the economy.

**Conclusion:** The “New Normal” has brought in a new paradigm shift in the consumption pattern. Hence along with the opening of economy the government should equally focus on generating of basic demand

**Syllabus – GS 3 - Challenges to Internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges**

**2. Real nature of nuclear weapons**

**Source –**[The Hindu](#)

**Context:** On 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki Nuclear attack recalling the horrors to bring nuclear risks back into popular imagination and into the political agenda.

**Hiroshima and Nagasaki Nuclear attack:** On August 6 and 9, 1945, The U.S. detonated two nuclear weapons with the consent of United Kingdom. The two-bombing killed between 129,000 and 226,000 people, most of whom were civilians. However, others succumbed to burns, radiation sickness, and other ailments.

**Damage which can be caused by Nuclear weapons:**

1. **Impacts all dimensions of life:** It is well known that even a fraction of the nuclear weapons held in medium-sized arsenals would cause a massive human tragedy and have long term repercussions for food and water availability, agricultural output, climate change, migration, etc.
2. **Possibilities of unintended use:** As capabilities grow and interstate trust diminishes, chances of stumbling into nuclear war increases-
  - a. Stress between inter-state relations.
  - b. Technological advancements – Chances of cyber-attack on nuclear command and control with advance hi-tech.
  - c. Artificial intelligence [AI] - Incorporation of AI in nuclear decision making are new developments that threaten to create unknown risks.

**Measures to reduce nuclear risk:**

1. **Awareness campaign:** Increasing the general awareness of the people by works such as novels, movies and TV Documentaries.
2. **Civil society movements:** The public pressure translated into civil society movements that demanded action from political leaders to engage with the subject of risk reduction through unilateral, bilateral, multilateral measures. This will result in:
  - a. Compelling leaders to rationalize their weapon requirements.
  - b. Force nations to find ways of reducing nuclear risks.
  - c. Gradually pave the path towards elimination of nuclear weapons.

**Way Forward:** It is necessary to expose leaders and societies to the full range of physical, economic, social, political, health, environmental and psychological effects of nuclear weapons. The most effective way to do this is by use of all platforms such as media, social media, national and international campaigns, etc.

**Syllabus: Gs-3- Disaster Management**

**3. Safety deficit: On Kozhikode air crash**

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

**Context:** Recently, an Air India Express 'Vande Bharat' relief flight crashed in Kozhikode, killing 18 people. The accident has once again turned the spotlight on operations of 'tabletop airports' in India.

**Tabletop airports:** It is an airport located and built on top of a plateau or hilly surface, with one or both ends of the runway overlooking a drop. The airplane accident in Mangalore airport in 2010 highlighted operational risks of such airports.

**Factors that might have contributed to Kozhikode crash**

- Poor visibility
- a far shorter safety area at the runway end than optimal
- absence of arrester systems that could stop an overshooting plane from falling off the edge
- Strong monsoon

**Disaster Management in Civil Aviation:**

- The Directorate General Civil Aviation (DGCA) has the regulatory responsibility for aviation safety. Its mandate is to ensure the highest level of safety in the Indian Aviation System by employing International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards and recommended practices.
- DGCA fosters and assists stakeholders in developing comprehensive Safety Management Systems (SMS) and develops preventive safety strategies for the aviation system
- The responsibility for coordination and search and rescue (SAR) with other agencies is, however vested with the Airports Authority of India (AAI) under the Airports Authority of India Act, 1944, as amended by AAI (Amendment) Rules, 2003
- The SSP is based on comprehensive analysis of the States Aviation System, safety policies, risk management, safety assurances and permission
- An appropriate legislative framework in safety management has been implemented in India in accordance with ICAO Standard and Recommended Practices (SARPs).
- For carrying out ICAO functions, India has three layers of legislation –
  1. The Aircraft Act 1934 which is the primary legislation,
  2. The secondary Aircraft Rules, 1937 and
  3. The tertiary Aircraft (Carriage of Dangerous Goods) Rules, 2003
- A series of Safety Management System-Civil Aviation Regulation (SMS-CARs) about operational regulations and implementation policies for the applicable service providers has been released by the DGCA.

**Conclusion:** After the Kozhikode air crash, the Civil aviation Ministry should examine all risky airports. Transparent remedial action must be taken immediately.

**Syllabus: GS3: Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.**

**4. Making up for shortfalls in GST collection**

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

**Context:** With slowing down of the economy and fall in growth rate, the centre is facing difficulty to mobilise resource for the GST compensation assured for states.

**Evolution of compensation mechanism to states**

- GST is a destination-based tax and it subsumed several taxes, including those of the States such as sales tax.
- Since it subsumed some taxes of states and negatively affected the taxes of manufacturing states many states were against the introduction of GST.
- To solve the issues of shortfall in revenue and to convince manufacturing States to agree to GST, a compensation formula was created.
- The Constitution Amendment Bill, introduced in 2014 had two provisions, First, it provided for a **1% tax on inter-State trade** which would be assigned to the supplying State. Second, it made provisions for a law to be passed by Parliament to provide **compensation to States for loss of revenue for a period up to five years.**
- However, the Select Committee of the Rajya Sabha recommended guaranteed compensation to states for a period of 5 years subsequently the **1% tax on inter-State trade was dropped** as tax receipts of manufacturing States had been protected by the guarantee.

**Compensation mechanism adopted in GST**

- With all taxes subsumed by the GST, the GST (Compensation to States) Act, 2017 assumed that the GST revenue of each State would grow at 14% every year as compared to year 2015-16.

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- Compensation will be provided for states if State collect tax less than this amount in any year and the compensation will be paid every two months based on provisional accounts.
- The compensation scheme will be valid for 5years (2017-2022).
- To mobilise resources to compensate for states shortfall in tax collection a compensation cess fund was created. The proceeds from additional cess imposed on items such as pan masala, cigarettes and tobacco products, aerated water, caffeinated beverages, coal and certain passenger motor vehicles will be channelised to the cess fund.

### Analysis:

- The cess collected in the first two years exceeded the shortfall of States but during the 3<sup>rd</sup> year owing to slowdown in tax collections, economic slowdown and negative growth in sectors such as motor vehicles the cess collected fell significantly short of the requirement.
- Considering this year, while most economist predict negative real GDP growth and reduced tax buoyancy along with the effect of pandemic on economy 14% tax growth rate looks ambitious.

### What can be done?

- With assumed rate of growth of a State's GST revenue is set at 14% by Parliament through the 2017 Act the Central government is constitutionally bound to compensate States for loss of revenue for five years.
- Amendment to the GST (Compensation to States) Act, 2017 to **reduce the period of guarantee to three years**. But this would be nearly impossible as states will be reluctant to this idea.
- Centre can fund this shortfall using its own revenue but shortfall in its own tax collection along with the burden of extra expenditure to manage the health and economic crisis centre may not be in a position to support states
- The Centre can borrow on behalf of the cess fund. Also, the tenure of the cess can be extended beyond five years until the cess collected is sufficient to pay off this debt and interest on it.
- The centre can negotiate with the states through GST Council and convince them that 14% growth target is unrealistic. With the consensus of states, they can work to reset the assured tax level.

**Conclusion:** The GST Council, which is a constitutional body should find a practical solution that would balance the interest of states as well as the centre.

### 5. India's taxation policy is more business-friendly than pro-poor

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

**Context:** The taxation policy of the Indian government has remained pro-rich (and anti-poor) and it has deprived the state of important fiscal resources.

#### Pro rich and Anti poor taxation policies

- Wealth tax was abolished in 2016 and it was replaced by a 2 per cent surcharge on super-rich individual.
- Corporate taxes were slashed from 30 per cent to 22 per cent to attract foreign investors and encourage companies to invest.

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- Parallely government has relied on hiking cesses and surcharges to mobilise resources. The share of indirect taxes has increased by up to 50 per cent of the gross tax revenue in FY2019.
- Similarly, there has been a steady increase in customs or excise duty on commonly used goods such as petroleum products, metals, sugar, automobiles and consumer durables.
- Even, the service tax has been hiked steadily to 18 per cent under GST, from 12.4 per cent.
- Another case point is, the imposition of fresh cesses such as the Swachh Bharat cess and Krishi Kalyan cess in addition to GST.

### Impact

- Increase in Indirect taxes often penalise the poor and the middle class more than the rich.
- Cuts in corporate tax have resulted in a revenue loss of Rs 1.5 lakh crore that have contributed to making the state poor.
- With decrease in direct tax collections and inadequacy of indirect taxes to make up for the loss in direct taxes fiscal deficit has increased to more than 4.5 per cent of GDP in 2019-20.
- As a consequence, **the capital expenditure decreased** this points to the reason why public spending on education and health has stagnated.
- During **COVID**, states Faced with increased expenditures and less resources to tackle health emergency they were forced to open liquor shops to earn tax revenues from alcohol at the cost of social wellbeing.
- Also, the pro-business policy has forced the centre to rely heavily on indirect tax-based revenues as evident from centre's decision to increase the duty on fuel by a record Rs 10 per litre on petrol when global crude prices have been falling
- India's tax-GDP ratio has remained low (10.9 per cent in 2019) as against the OECD average of 34 per cent.

### Way Forward:

- With increase in number of super rich in India and their profits amounting to 26 per cent of the country's GDP as per IIFL Wealth Hurun India Rich List a tax rate of 4 per cent on them will get the much-needed finance that could be **used for cash transfers and a fiscal stimulus**
- **Successful examples from Europe**, points out that high tax rates on the wealthy have played a key role in ensuring a **strong social security net for the poor**.
- A wealth tax, a COVID-19 cess on the super-rich and a surcharge on the super-rich for their income from listed equity shares will help in mitigating the current situation along with reducing both income and social inequalities.

**Conclusion:** Deferring tax payments, penalties on filing extensions and slashing corporate taxes is not the appropriate approach towards reviving the economy. India needs to reform its tax system to move towards inclusive growth and sustainable development rather than targeting only investment-led economic growth.

### Syllabus: GS-3- Environment- Environmental Impact Assessment

#### 6. Draft EIA notification dilutes environmental protections

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

**Context:** The draft Environmental impact assessment (EIA) notification 2020 has been criticised.

### Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

- EIA is a process which studies all aspects of the environment and seeks to anticipate the impact (positive and/or negative) of a proposed project or development on the environment.
- EIA is mandatory under the Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986 for 29 categories of developmental activities involving investments of Rs. 50 crores and above.

### Draft EIA Notification 2020

- It allows for post facto approval for projects. It has provisions to award clearances for projects even if they have started construction or have been running without securing environmental clearances.
- It has omitted prior screening requirements for Category B projects and expanded the list of projects categorised under B2
- It proposes to classify inland waterways as Category B2 projects and will not require public consultations irrespective of whether these projects are located in notified ecologically sensitive areas.
- It proposes to expand the list of projects that do not require public consultation before receiving Prior-EC. It confers absolute power to the central government to categorise projects as “strategic” and information related to these projects will not be put in public domain.
- New construction projects up to 1,50,000 square metres (instead of the existing 20,000 square metres) will not require detailed scrutiny by the Expert Committee, EIA studies and public consultation.
- It proposes an eased monitoring mechanism Under the draft, project owners are to submit environmental compliance reports (after getting clearance) every year in contrast to present 6 months.

### Issues with Draft EIA 2020

1. The draft notification is legally untenable as it does not conform to the Environment (Protection) Act 1986. The Act requires the Centre to take measures to protect and improve the environment. However, the draft EIA 2020, reduces the ambit and stringency of the scrutiny of impact assessment and thus is detrimental to the environment.
2. As the draft allows for post facto approval for projects, it is in violation of the “precautionary principle”-a principle of environmental sustainability. Further, any environmental damage caused by the project is likely to be waived off by only as the violations get legitimised.
3. There is no mention of climate change and related consideration. As India is a highly vulnerable to climate change impacts, the government should ensure that regulatory approvals do not regions in India more vulnerable or impact the adaptive capabilities of communities.
4. The Draft EIA completely dilutes public consultation process and there is a risk of states taking up development initiatives at the cost of environmental degradation
5. The draft notification reduces the time for appraisal from 60 days under the 2006 notification to 45 days. It also curtails the discretion of the expert appraisal committees by disallowing them from seeking fresh studies.

**Conclusion:** Dilution of EIA to boost economic growth is a flawed idea and it's high time for the government to address the increasing socio-economic and environmental challenges.

## 7. How the tiger can regain its stripes

Source: [The Hindu](#)

**Context:** On International Tiger Day, July 29, authorities declared that India should “celebrate” the increase in tigers from about 2,000 in 1970 to about 3,000 at present.

### Status of Tiger Population in India

#### According to All India Tiger Census 2018:

- The total count of tigers has risen to 2,967 in 2018 from 2,226 in 2014 — an increase of 741 individuals or 33% in four years. Tiger population within reserves is 1,923 (65% of the total tiger population of India) which means 35% of the tiger population still lives outside the reserves.
- Madhya Pradesh has maximum tigers at 526 followed by Karnataka at 524 and 442 in Uttarakhand.
- Corbett Tiger Reserve (Uttarakhand) has the highest tigers followed by Nagarhole tiger reserve (Karnataka) and Bandipur Tiger Reserve (Karnataka).

#### Steps taken by Government of India for Tiger Conservation:

1. **Project Tiger:** It was launched in 1973 by the government of India, based on the recommendations of a Special Task Force of the Indian Board for Wildlife. It aims at in-situ conservation of wild tigers in designated tiger reserves. The project is administered by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).
- The National Tiger Conservation Authority is a statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change constituted under enabling provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
2. **Tiger Reserves:** Tiger Reserves are protected areas established under the Project Tiger. The reserves aim at conserving the habitat to ensure a viable population of the tigers along with their prey base in their habitat. At present there are 50 Tiger Reserves in India.

#### Issues with Tiger Conservation in India

1. **No Pragmatic Plan:** India has the potential to hold 10,000 to 15,000 wild tigers. However, it does not have a pragmatic plan to achieve the goal.
2. **Low Political commitment:** Over the years there has been a decline in political commitment to conservation.
3. **Unnecessary Borrowings:** There has been unnecessary and massive borrowings from the Global Environment Facility-World Bank combine to create new models for tiger recovery.
4. **Poor Resource Allocation:** Excessive funding of a few reserves while neglecting large areas with greater recovery potential.
5. **Data and Monitoring:** lack of data transparency and rigorous, independent tiger monitoring is a major issue.
6. **Forest Conversion:** wildlife habitats have been converted for cultivation and exploitation by loosely defined “forest-dwellers” under Forest Rights Act, 2006.
7. **Issues with NTCA:** It has taken up schemes totally unrelated to tigers, such as the recovery of snow leopards and translocation of African cheetahs to India.

#### Way Forward:

- The role of the forest bureaucracy should be restricted to wildlife law enforcement.
- Project Tiger should be merged with other Central schemes for wildlife conservation
- Government monopoly over domains of tiger conservation such as tiger research, monitoring, nature education, tourism and conflict mitigation should be removed.

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- Private enterprises, local communities, NGOs and scientific institutions should be engaged in Tiger Conservation.

### 8. Dismantling of environmental rules

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

**Syllabus:** GS-3- Environment

**Context:** The Draft EIA Rules 2020 has been widely criticised for flouting environmental rules. In this article, the author puts forward other instances where environmental rules had been dismantled.

#### Recent Examples where Environmental Rules have been dismantled:

1. **Draft EIA 2020:** As the draft allows for post facto approval for projects, it is in violation of the “precautionary principle”-a principle of environmental sustainability.
2. **2018 CRZ Notification:** It defreezes CRZ II (Urban Area)-Floor Space Index (FSI) or the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) to allow construction projects. It also permits temporary tourism facilities in beaches and s in the “No Development Zone” (NDZ) of the CRZ-III areas.
  - It was rejected by the National Fish workers Forum and other stakeholders, for threatening the livelihoods of fishing communities and destroying coastal ecology along India’s 7,500-km long coastline
3. **Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016:** It has been criticised as it bypasses the FRA, 2006, and disempowers Adivasis, forest dwellers and gram sabhas.
4. **T.S.R. Subramanian Committee:** It was set up to review six major environmental laws. The TSR Committee Report was never released, but some of its recommendations were hastily implemented.
5. **Failure to address air pollution:** According to a study in the British journal, The Lancet, 12.4 lakh deaths i.e. 12.5% of all deaths in India in 2017, could be attributed to air pollution. However, the government has taken no concerted action to address the issue.

**Conclusion:** India ranked 177th out of 180 countries in the Environmental Performance Index 2018. It is high time for the government to bring forth stringent environmental regulations for the protection of the environment and strike a balance between economic growth and environmental sustainability.

### 9. Issues with Declaration of Critical Wildlife Habitat (CWH)

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

**Context:** A PIL has been filed in Bombay High Court seeking direction to the Forest Department to urgently notify Critical Wildlife Habitat.

#### Critical Wildlife Habitat (CWH)

It is a provision under the Forest Rights Act, 2006. It says that in protected areas (PAs) viz. wildlife sanctuaries and national parks, the forest rights could be reduced, and, if absolutely necessary (when there is an irreversible damage to wildlife), forest-dwellers could be relocated in the interest of wildlife conservation.

In 2018, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs issued guidelines on CWH. According to the guidelines, CWH is to be declared in the following way:

- The Chief Wildlife Warden of a state will notify an Expert Committee for the purpose of identification of critical wildlife habitats (CWH) in a national park or sanctuary.



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- The Expert Committee will identify areas within national parks and sanctuaries, based on scientific and objective criteria relevant to the protected area
- The Expert Committee will carry out open consultations with all stakeholders, and the proceedings of the consultations, especially the objections, will be documented appropriately.
- The committee will submit the CWH proposal to the Chief Wildlife Warden. The decision on the proposal will be taken by the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife.

### Issues in Declaration of Critical Wildlife Habitat

- The process of recognition of rights under the FRA is incomplete. For example, in case of Melghat Wildlife Sanctuary, a study found that many villages were resettled when they had rights claims pending.
- The constitution of the expert committees is faulty. They do not contain expert social scientists familiar with the area.
- The criteria being used by the committees to determine the threat of “irreversible damage” to wildlife are quite extreme and are not even supported by many ecologists.

**Conclusion:** The FRA recognises that forest dwellers “are integral to the very survival and sustainability of the forest ecosystem”. Therefore, peaceful coexistence between humans and animals should be acknowledged. A classic example, is that of BRT Tiger Reserve in Karnataka where number of tigers have increased steadily even as the Soligas continue to live inside and gather non-timber forest products.

### Syllabus – GS 3 - Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment

#### 10. Restructuring Global Supply Chain

Source- [Live Mint](#)

**Context-** Covid-19 has changed the collective and calculus of uncertainty in the global supply chain. The importance of supply chain resilience and risk management is more apparent than ever.

With COVID-19 disruptions in the economic space, there has been a shift from Just in time inventory to just in case inventory in countries across the globe -

##### 1. Just-in-time [JIT] inventory system

The JIT is a management strategy that aligns raw- material orders from suppliers directly with production schedules rather than having a stock of raw material. The system is no longer tenable, relies heavily on the exchange of information to forecast demand accurately.

##### 2. Just-in-case [JIC] inventory system

In JIC, producers hold sufficient inventories to have enough products to absorb maximum market demand. This management strategy provides sufficient response time to companies to configure their production process and possible mean to de-risking the business.

### Trends emerging from this shift

**1. Diversification of the supplier's bases** – It provides shield against geographical uncertainties.

**2. Reconfiguration** – Expansion of the ware house capacity to ensure uninterrupted supply even if few of the facilities end up in containment zone.

**3. Automation** – Increasing automation and technology in the bases to build more resilience.

### Issues with JIC tenets to the business strategies

- 1. Additional Cost-** Expansion of infrastructure will come at a significant additional cost.
- 2. Future disruption-** Companies need to analyze supply chain now to mitigate against future disruption caused by such pandemics.
- 3. Advancement-** Many warehouses are deeply manpower dependent using out dated technology. The labour crisis engendered by the pandemic has been toughest for them.

### Way forward

Investment in technology and consideration on sustainability in the supply chain will be a key for future economies. Just-in-CASE [JIC] marketing strategy could be an invaluable tool to keep supply chains running and reduce widespread suffering during global pandemics which disrupts supply-chain.

### Gs3: Science and Technology- Developments and their Applications and Effects in Everyday Life.

#### 11. Technology to ensure access to justice

Source: [LiveMint](#)

**Context:** India's approach to dispute resolution in the post-pandemic era needs to be changed.

#### Need of technology to ensure access to justice post-pandemic:

- **Increase in pendency of cases:** The pandemic has led to the closure of courts unless it is an 'urgent matter'.
- **To adapt to the "new normal":** there is need to adjust to the new situation by fast-tracking innovation led by technology.
- **To enhance flexibility:** The courts need to move to a **hybrid model involving virtual and in-court hearings and** frame a road map for courtroom resolution.
- **To increase efficiency:**
  - Efficient justice delivery will require the intervention of technology, and a **three-tiered approach** that stratifies **dispute avoidance, dispute containment, and dispute resolution.**
  - **Online dispute resolution (ODR):** For dispute avoidance and containment entailing low- and medium-value civil matters.
  - Need is to pre-empt disputes at an early stage.
- To make the delivery of justice **more affordable and convenient.**

#### Significance of Online Dispute Resolution (ODR):

- **Both transformative and disruptive:** ODR can help in reduce matters before the courts, through avoidance, containment and resolution.
- **Better use of data analytics:** Technology can aid the resolution of disputes by offering **analytical insights** for that purpose.
- **Technology as a "fourth party":** According to Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy's white paper titled ODR: The Future of Dispute Resolution in India, technology can play the role of fourth party.
  - **Help in asynchronous communication:** doing away with the need for parties to be present in person.
  - **More equitable access to justice mechanisms:** litigants and a neutral party do not have to depose simultaneously and can record their response at a time and place convenient to them.
  - **Cost-effective and easily accessible forum for dispute resolution:** Relying on video conferencing and technology to transmit information could reduce the expenses.

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- **Collaborative Resolution Mechanism:** ODR could potentially help solve small- and medium-value disputes at scale before they reach formal court processes.
- **Win-Win model:** ODR can increase ease-of-living and timely resolution of dispute for litigants and can reduce burden on courts.

### Implementation of Integration of technology and Justice delivery system:

- **Supreme Court** has made necessary changes and adjusted which shows a progressive vision.
  - The Court has also introduced **e-filing, and facilitated the creation of infrastructure** around the New Delhi district courts for lawyers and litigants to access hearings.
  - SC has exceeded the volume of online hearings conducted in other jurisdictions across the world.
- **The Lok Adalat mechanism:** pilot projects for the adoption of e-Lok Adalats.

### Global Best Practice:

- **Singapore International Arbitration Centre**, have released guidance documents for video-conferencing-led remote participation in hearings.
- **European Union:** an ODR platform provided by the European Commission helps make online shopping transactions fairer and safer.
  - EU has mandated all merchants in member countries to inform consumers of the availability of ODR systems.
- **The United States:** It has launched MI-Resolve in response to covid-19 to resolve small disputes.
- **United Kingdom:** online mechanism for the settlement of money claim disputes.
- **Canada:** online civil administrative tribunal for small-value disputes.

**Conclusion:** The need of the hour is to develop ODR collaboratively to enhance capacity, capability and efficiency. According to Justice Chandrachud, there needs to be a fundamental change in the mindset and we need to look upon dispute resolution as a service that is availed of.

# General Studies Paper - 4

**General Studies - 4**

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**Syllabus – GS 4 - Ethical issues in international relations and funding**

**1. Equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccine**

**Source – [Down to Earth](#)**

**Context–** Making human vaccine available on local as well as global scale requires an ethical and equitable distribution to ensure vaccines are potent and effective at their point of use.

**Challenges across global distribution of COVID-19 vaccine-**

- 1. Guideline** – The need of a policy regarding how much of the vaccine produced should go to other countries and at what cost. It must ensure whether agencies funding the research or the researchers or government authorities or citizens decide on a global policy of distribution.
- 2. Quantity of an export-** The increasing quantity of an export will increase the cost due to shortage in supply in home. People of that country must not bear the burden of the extra cost when their tax payer's money has already been used up in research.
- 3. Transportation-** The delay in transportation may result in vaccine losing its potency and increment in cost also.
- 4. Distributive hierarchy** – The cost of the vaccine and its possible loss will have to be borne by the last receiver which likely to be more needy people of the society.

**Challenges in the local distribution of COVID-19 vaccine-**

- 1. Priority** - Within the country, it is certainly not clear who should be treated first or it should be determined by need, affordability, vulnerability or some other criterion or a combination of all.
- 2. Cost-** If open market forces determine the cost of the vaccine and affordability then, the section of society most vulnerable to the disease would get left out.
- 3. Aspects of Distribution and supply of vaccine** - It includes economic, demographic, logistic, legal, socio-political aspects which are interlinked to each other and needs clear policy framework. There is the ethical aspect as well, which demands an equitable policy of distribution.

**Way forward**

It is, thus, imperative that a global policy of distribution must be in place so that all countries can receive the benefit almost simultaneously. Centre need to intervene to regulate and cap the price to avoid profiteering.

**Syllabus: GS 4 - Aptitude and foundational values for Civil Service, integrity, impartiality and non-partisanship, objectivity, dedication to public service, empathy, tolerance and compassion towards the weaker-sections**

**2. Civil services examination – Steel frame of India**

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

**Context:** Evaluating civil service recruits for their intelligence and integrity, for raising credible and well-performing civil servants.

**Civil Service Examination:** A nationwide competitive examination in India conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) for recruitment to various civil services of the Government of India including the Indian Administrative Service, Indian Foreign Service and Indian Police Service.

**UPSC' Performance as a selection authority:**

1. The UPSC has a **strenuous protocol**.
2. The process is **clinical and as objective** as possible. It is also well known for its intense and spectacular features.
3. It is an **honest organization** which allows **no unethical practices** in the various stages of the selection process.
4. **Reflects social diversity** as candidates from all sections such as other backward Castes, Scheduled Tribes and castes as well as women are being selected in the services.

**Selection process in 1960s and at present:**

1. **Number of candidates:** In 1960s, the number of candidates was about 15,000 to 20,000. However, at present the number of appearing candidates was around 8 lakh for same number of vacancies as of 1960's.
2. **Stages of Examination:** In 1960's, No preliminary examination was conducted. However, at present the preliminary examination eliminates a majority of applicants.

**Challenges towards transforming the image of the Civil Services:**

1. **High burden on administrators:** There are 739 districts in India but the number of District Collector and the District Superintendent of Police are much less. Thus, the sheer workload prevents them from finding time to interact with every citizen.
2. **Availability to the common man:** As the area of jurisdiction and the number of population of different districts vary each other it is hard to make officials more easily available to the common man in distress, who looks up to the officialdom for assistance almost on a daily basis.
3. **Lack of selfless leaders:** There are a few young officers who are different from the majority and put their heart and soul into the task of alleviating the miseries of the poor.
4. **Instances of corruption:** There are officials of the bureaucracy who demand illegal gratification to provide a service which is the fundamental right of every citizen.
5. **Biased behavior of the Police officials:** As there are more than 15,000 of police stations in India, Majority of them have blemished record of ill-treating the poor. They do not have readiness to serve the not-so literate and the poor.

**Way Forward:** It is very important that the large core of enlightened senior officers need to mould the character of the new entrants. Further, wherever new officers see injustice or violence against unsuspecting citizens, it will be for them to rise in protest.