

**9pm**

# **Compilation**

**January, 2021**

### General Studies - 1

---

1. The proposal to demolish the Louis Kahn's IIMA building is an act of cultural vandalism
2. Reasons behind Sexual violence in rural India
3. Gender based inequality in agriculture sector in India
4. Should There Be Wages for Housework?
5. Laws against Inter-faith marriage and Fundamental rights
6. Flawed understanding of triple talaq law is leading to its misuse
7. Issues in wages against housework and alternatives to it
8. WEF's "Indian Cities in the Post-pandemic world" report mentions cities critical role in post-covid India
9. HC Ruling under the special marriage act
10. Trends in Housework valuation
11. Socio-Economic and Caste Census: A Need for reforms

### General Studies - 2

---

1. Implication of warming in Arctic region
2. India's foreign policy: Lessons from 2020 and challenges/opportunities in 2021
3. Concerns of hasty approval to COVID-19 vaccine
4. Government initiatives for welfare of Scheduled Castes (SC)
5. Way forward for India at UNSC
6. Rising vaccine hesitancy and its solution
7. A multi-dimensional approach to tackle malnutrition
8. Why central deputation to 3 Bengal police officers not right?
9. India-U.K. relations after Brexit
10. NFHS-5 data suggest improvement on various social indicators
11. UK-India Free Trade relations and Cairn Energy PLC issue
12. Dilemma of Reservation and merit system
13. How to deal with Avian influenza?
14. Preparing workforce for COVID vaccination
15. Flawed understanding of triple talaq law is leading to its misuse
16. India's counter-coercive strategy against China
17. Post-Central vista verdict: Need to improve process of developing Public project?
18. Re-imagining the school education in India
19. What are the issues in ailing American democracy?
20. Gulf reconciliation
21. Kenneth Arrow's paradox and why elections are flawed
22. Diplomatic practices
23. Dialogue and deliberation with beneficiaries are a prerequisite for Welfare Policymaking
24. Paying women for domestic and care work
25. Formalising the work of community workers
26. Reasons for frictions between Puducherry CM and LG
27. Issues in the process of COVID Vaccine trial
28. SC judgment on-farm laws: violation of separation of powers
29. Importance of Reviving SAARC
30. Allahabad HC judgment on Special Marriage Act
31. Strategic guidelines for COVID vaccine program: Challenges and suggestions
32. Issues in SC Mediation step on farm laws

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

33. New opportunities for India in Afghanistan
34. UK report classified India among 'difficult four' countries
35. Factsheet for administration of COVID-19 Vaccine released
36. Issues in Standardisation of research
37. 6th meeting of Nepal-India Joint Commission
38. Importance of nutritional security to improve immunity
39. Why Politicians should be given priority in Vaccination drive?
40. Need and ways of Decongesting Indian prisons
41. India-US relation under Joe Biden administration
42. RERA 2016 protects the interest of Homebuyers
43. Issue of Big Tech's increasing power
44. New transition in India-Nepal relations
45. Challenges to internationalisation of higher education
46. Vaccine diplomacy
47. Privacy and surveillance
48. Are courts encroaching on the powers of the executive?
49. Impacts of devaluing domestic work
50. World Economic Forum: Need for 'the Great Reset' of capitalism
51. Reasons for increasing Palk Bay fishing conflict
52. COVID Vaccine and Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy (STIP), 2020
53. Mandatory Minimum Sentencing under POCSO Act
54. SC Stay on Bombay HC judgment in POCSO case
55. Causes of Rising Inequality
56. GI tag for Basmati Rice to Pakistan: a cause of concern for India?
57. Procedure and importance of President's Address in Parliament
58. MEA's Eight broad principles to resolve conflict with China
59. Importance of Abiding by the Parliamentary Processes
60. Chasing National Interests at the UN high table
61. Improving public health by Budget 2021

### General Studies - 3

---

1. Farmer welfare in Kerala, in the absence of Mandi system
2. Impact of Diluting disclosure requirement in Patent Rules, 2003
3. Solving the issue of Urban employment through platform/gig economy
4. Increasing energy efficiency among consumer
5. Digital technology worsen financial exclusion in rural India
6. Why lightning kills so many Indians?
7. Issue of single law for different regions of agriculture
8. Issue of privacy and Personal Data Protection Bill 2019
9. How India is increasing its maritime domain awareness?
10. USTR slams India's Equalisation levy
11. RBI's expansionary policy and challenge of the impossible trinity
12. Efforts to increase Electric mobility in India
13. Issue of K-shaped recovery: How government budget can deal with it?
14. Reviving consumption demand for economic growth
15. Need for social media Policies on hate and incitement
16. Why caution is required in formation of Bank Investment Company (BIC)?

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](https://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

17. Ensuring Intergenerational Equity in Mining in India
18. Ensuring accountability in the new Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2020
19. Why Chinese forces are weakening?
20. SC ruling on Section 32A of IBC
21. WhatsApp Privacy Policy Issue: Need for Data Protection Law
22. The Cost of Guaranteed MSP
23. Need for New 4-tier Regulations for NBFCs
24. Feasibility of Remote Voting Project
25. Establishing thought partnerships between the government and private entities
26. Way forward for Taxing older vehicles
27. "STI policy 2020" emphasising self-reliance in science
28. How should India handle the new virus variants?
29. Reason behind Anthropocene epoch- Capitalism or Socialism?
30. Ways to control Monopolistic tendencies of Internet Giants
31. Why Farm laws must be redrafted?
32. Issues related to R&D in India
33. Lessons for India from one year of COVID Pandemic
34. India's Sovereign Ratings don't reflect its fundamentals
35. Focus areas of Economic Survey 2020-21
36. Contribution of Chidambaram Subramanian

### General Studies - 4

---

1. Teachings of Swami Vivekananda
2. Contributions of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

# General Studies Paper - 1

## General Studies - 1

---

### 1. The proposal to demolish the Louis Kahn's IIMA building is an act of cultural vandalism

Source- [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus- GS 1

**Synopsis-** IIMA decision to demolish historic dormitories designed by architect Louis Khan, this would constitute an act of cultural vandalism.

#### Background-

- Louis Kahn, a world-famous architect, called in 1960s to Ahmedabad to design various buildings, and the IIMA was one of the iconic structures built by him.
- Works of this excellence belong to both national and universal heritage.
- However, the administration of the Indian Institute of Management decided to demolish 14 dormitories on the IIMA campus as they turn unsafe.
- It led to the protests in the campus and reconsideration of the decision.

#### Why the proposal to demolish the dorms of IIMA represent as cultural vandalism?

Having supported the restoration of the entire campus for years, the administration claimed that as this work was not 'satisfactory' the whole lot should be pulled down, which is an act of cultural vandalism against an architectural masterpiece which is not only of great importance to India but to the world.

- Current laws in India provide national heritage protection only to buildings and sites more than 100 years old. This leaves Kahn's IIM- Ahmedabad in extremely vulnerable positions.
- capitalism, political corruption and land speculation pose threats to ancient and modern works of quality.

Fortunately, many organizations and individuals both within the country and abroad have written to the institute, urging the management to reconsider the decision.

#### What is the significance of Louis Kahn Architecture?

Kahn built two projects on the Indian subcontinent, the Assembly Complex in Dhaka, Bangladesh and the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad (IIMA). Both reflect his response to the cultures, climates and traditions of their respective places.

#### Significance of IIMA building-

- The complex is built mainly in brick, with some interventions of concrete for lateral bracing and tie bars.
- With its interweaving of space and form, light and shade, orthogonal and diagonal geometries, the dormitory complex is a virtuoso demonstration of Kahn's immense skill as a designer.
- A citadel of learning, replete with cylindrical towers, shaded streets and squares, it is not unlike a tight-knit Indian fortified town.

#### Way forward-

- **First**, there is a need to reshape national heritage laws to protect 20th-century buildings.
- Heritage should be assessed on the basis of long-term quality rather than the cut-off date of a hundred years.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- **Second**, IIMA Director and Board need to live up to their responsibilities by restoring and protecting Kahn's work in its totality, so that the future generations may be inspired by it.

Thus, the leaders of IIMA should be persuaded to complete the restoration of Kahn's buildings at the highest possible level, and perhaps attain the same World Heritage status

### 2. Reasons behind Sexual violence in rural India

#### Source-Indian Express

Syllabus- GS Paper I – Society and social structure

**Synopsis**– Women of rural India are becoming victims of hierarchies of caste, class, and patriarchy. We need to form a suitable policy that will tackle gender-based sexual violence in rural India.

**Background**- The Bhanwari Devi rape case in 1992 and the Khairlanji rape and massacre in 2006 to the Hathras case in 2020 shows that sexual violence against women is multi-dimensional issue, root of which lies in the hierarchies of caste, class, and gender.

#### How the issues related to caste, class, and gender promotes sexual violence in rural India?

Sexual Violence against women in rural -India is linked with caste, caste and patriarchy in the following ways:

- **Firstly, Ancient social structure**– Since ancient times, many things have changed but what has remained constant is rural India's obsession with the caste order. The lower castes have served the upper castes while the upper castes work to keep the status quo. Violence becomes a tool of maintaining the status quo.
- **Secondly, Tilted land reforms**-In the political economy of post-Independence India, land is supreme. Land is class, power and honour. Its exclusive ownership is the basis of maintaining the caste order. Hence large landowners who were of dominant castes were the beneficiary and the landless labourers were of lower castes.
- **Third, Political rise of lower castes**– The Bahujan -Dalit political mobilization challenged this ancient hierarchy and with this, oppressed castes found themselves represented in positions of power.
- **Fourth, Political pressure on police** – Police officials mostly favour the dominant caste groups due to the pressure from the administration to not register sexual crimes under their jurisdiction, since these cases make them targets for transfers and dismissals.

In the societies riddled with caste structure and patriarchy, women are considered as a symbol of **family's, a community's, a caste's** honour. In these societies, sexual violence against the women of opposition becomes a tool of robbing them of their honour, to maintain the status quo of land and caste.

During land disputes between two caste groups with a large differential of power and influence, women's bodies become collateral damage.

In conflicts among caste groups who are relatively close together in the caste (and class) order, women are used as a tool to tactically use the Section 354 of the Indian Penal Code (outraging the modesty of a woman) to punish the other side.

#### What are the steps required to be taken?

To address the multi-dimensional issues related to sexual violence against women, we need to take the following actions.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](https://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- **First-** Along with police reform, caste discrimination, patriarchy and reforms in land ownership, we need to implement the policies related to women empowerment in both letter and spirit.
- **Second-** We must take an intersectional approach that targets all of the issues.
- **Third-** Land ownership reform must tackle the irregularities of demarcation and the lack of proper records.
- **Fourth-** Sound policy involving all stakeholders should also tackle the illegal constructions on abadi land and banjar zameen.
- **Fifth-** The goal of annihilating caste cannot be achieved without mammoth efforts in educational, professional, and social integration of lower castes into every field, be it healthcare, judiciary, education, entertainment, or sports.

### Way Forward

Along with the land and caste reforms, we must tackle the persistence of patriarchy in our society. “Women’s empowerment” has now become just a phrase for political and corporate organisations. We must demand more representation of women in positions of power through reserved seats in MP, MLA, and MLC elections, or the judiciary and corporate boards.

We need to work for quality sexual education and consent training for our youth, with the aim of preventing sexual assault and equalising and normalising healthy relations among members of different genders and sexes.

Lastly, we must bridge the gender divide in access to the transformative and emancipatory power of consumer technology.

### 3. Gender based inequality in agriculture sector in India

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

*Syllabus- GS 1- Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India. Role of women and women’s organization, population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues, urbanization, their problems and their remedies. Effects of globalization on Indian society. Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism.*

**Synopsis-** Women farmers fear that the farm laws will further deepen the existing gender-based inequality in the agriculture sector.

#### How Farming in India has strengthened gender-based inequality?

This gender discrimination is deeply rooted in society and deprives women farmers of some of the most basic facilities like access to loans and irrigation systems.

- **First, non-recognition as farmers-** Female farmers are labeled as ‘cultivators’ or ‘agricultural laborer’s but not farmers. Without any recognition, they tend to get excluded from all the benefits of government schemes.
  - According to the agricultural census, 73.2 percent of rural women workers are engaged in agriculture, yet they own only 12.8 percent of the land.
- **Second, the lack of land ownership makes female farmers “invisible”.** Without land, they are not recognized as farmers despite their large contributions to the sector and this marginalization means they are especially vulnerable to exploitation by large corporation under the new laws.
  - 83% of agricultural land in India is inherited by male members of the family and less than 2% by their female counterparts, according to India Human Development Survey (2018).



### What are the implications of recently enacted farm law's on women a farmer?

Recently enacted farm laws will further deteriorate there already poor condition;

- **First, no mention on MSP-** Their main worry is about a possible withdrawal of the MSP and a dismantling of the public procurement. Without a guarantee of an MSP, they are vulnerable to corporate exploitation.
- **Second, bargaining power-**When selling their produce outside mandis, Women farmer's ability to understand and enter into a fair agreement with the corporate buyers is a cause of concern.
  - Without this safety net, Vulnerable farmers fear they will have to participate in contract farming with private corporations, where these companies determine the price with no adequate redressal mechanism.
  - They also fear that the **small marginal and medium farmers (mostly women led)** will be forced to do **sell their land to big agro-businesses and become wage laborer.**

Thus, the lack of safeguards from the government for pricing will widen the gender gap in farming as the premise of "increasing competition" assumes women are able to trade as easily as men when they are subject to greater limitations.

#### Way forward-

- Widen the definition of farmers which doesn't recognize women as farmer but as cultivators and agriculture laborer.
- Policy paralysis in granting entitlement to women agriculture needs to be focused.
- Grant property rights and tenure of security of agriculture land to women.

The empowerment of women farmers is important not only to achieve gender equality but improve nutritional security of the country.

### 4. Should There Be Wages for Housework?

Source- [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus- GS 1 – Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India. Role of women and women's organization

**Synopsis-** MNM led by Kamal Haasan promised to recognize HouseWorks. Efforts by historical movement to provide wages for HouseWorks, highlighted many challenges in doing that.

#### Background-

- Makkal Needhi Maiam MNM, led by its founder Kamal Haasan has promised that **homemakers' will get their due recognition through payment for their house works** which hitherto has been unrecognized and unmonitored.
- According to **International Labour Organization**, women perform **76.2 per cent of total hours of unpaid care work**, more than three times as much as men. This figure rises to 80% in Asia and the Pacific.
- The debate around wages for housework remained unresolved within the women's campaign- 'wages for housework movement'.

#### What is wages for housework movement?

The International Wages for Housework Campaign **started in Italy in 1972** as a **feminist movement** that highlighted the **role of gendered labour in the home** and its connection to the

production of surplus value under capitalism. The movement further spread to Britain and America.

Though women's work helps men to be productive, this contribution is largely unnoticed. It is extremely difficult to quantify how much women contribute to the economy with their unsung work but it would run into the billions or beyond.

### **What were the hurdles faced in demand of wages for housework?**

**'Wages for housework' would only imprison women** further within the household as-

- Paid housework would reinforce gendered division of roles, keeping women in their traditional role of wife and mother.
- A salary would isolate women from the community and prevent men from sharing housework.
- A salary would legitimize their oppression.

Thus, the idea behind women's movement should be made them free from daily domestic chores and allow them to participate in social sphere and further including paid employment outside the household.

### **What are the issues that need to resolve before providing wages for housework?**

Though MNM has made a promise, but there are few important questions or challenges that need to answered to make it look feasible;

- Once salaried, housework would be controlled in terms of number of hours, quality of work, and so on. **Who would exercise this control and under what terms?**
- Would it **include women only**, who are full-time homemakers?
- What about women workers who earn an income from home by **stitching clothes, selling cooked meals or are engaged in petty trade** and identified a 'Housewives'?

These issues cannot solve easily. Therefore, the idea of a **Universal Basic Income (UBI)** an unconditional cash payment to low-income households and should be transfer directly to women.

### **Way forward-**

Women constitute almost half the population and their needs and issues have to be addressed.

- **Paid domestic works** are done predominantly by women in other's houses. Thus, a **National legislation for domestic workers** containing guarantees for minimum wages, and the workers' status and rights should be enacted.
- The **demand of women domestic workers in Tamilnadu address** the issue of value of housework in their demands i.e. an hourly minimum wage, a weekly day-off, an annual bonus.
- Thus, all political parties must **seriously consider their demands** as will be **helpful in asserting the dignity of housework** and making it a visible and valued form of labour.

## **5. Laws against Inter-faith marriage and Fundamental rights**

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

*Syllabus- GS 1 – Indian Constitution—historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.*

**Synopsis-** Uttar Pradesh recently passed an ordinance which criminalizes interfaith marriages, which is against the exercise of the free will of individual citizens in India.

### Introduction-

- UP ordinance which criminalizes inter-faith marriages has set an extreme example, being followed by other states like MP.
- In these states' other laws on slaughter of cattle, marriage, and religious conversions have been enacted targeted at minorities of the state.
- In Uttarakhand, a recent divergent view attracted an enquiry over a press release by district social welfare department that highlighted a scheme incentivizing inter-faith and inter-caste marriages.

### How interfaith marriages were seen in the past

- **First, Nehru's view**– Chaudhary charan singh in 1994, Sends a proposal to Prime Minister Nehru to pass a law that would ensure only those youth who married outside, or were prepared to marry outside, their caste be recruited in gazetted government services.
- Charan singh believed the intractable issue of caste required drastic measures to start the process of its disintegration.
  - But Nehru disagrees with his proposal on account of freedom of choice of individuals to choose their life partner.
- **Second, Kusubh Chandra sen's view**– The very first debate for legal marriage in India dates back to the 1860s, when the colonial State received a petition signed by Keshub Chandra Sen of Brahmo Samaj, to legitimise marriages amongst the members of Brahmo Samaj. The motive was to provide the Samaj the right to freely marry as per their 'rites of conscience'.
- **Third, Special Marriage Act, 1954**– SMA is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted to provide a special form of marriage for the people of India and all Indian nationals in foreign countries, irrespective of the religion or faith followed by either party.

However, States such as Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh framing laws that target inter-faith marriage.

The procedural requirements of the SMA such as the need to give prior notice, and allowance for objections, seem to be undermining its original intent by opening the doors to violent moral policing by vigilante groups.

### What are the issues related to these new laws?

Interference by the State in an adult's right to love and marry has a 'chilling effect' on freedoms

- **First, against personal liberty**- These new laws intervene in the citizens' personal liberty by interfering with the choice of their spouse.
- **Second, Against the Right to Privacy**– The level of state interference in a civil union, which is a solemnization of a relationship between two individuals, breaches the basic structure of the Constitution.
- **Third, Hinder the individual's Right to choose faith**– According to **Articles 25 to 28**, an Indian citizen is guaranteed the freedom to practice any religion of his or her choice. The ordinance is a conflict with these rights as it limits the choice of the religion of a prospective spouse.
- **Lastly, Patriarchal Roots**- This shows the law has deep-seated patriarchal roots, wherein women are infantilized, placed under parental and community control, and denied the right to take life decisions, should those decisions not be agreeable to their guardians.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

Constitution of India offers high principles for citizens to aspire for. Citizens may not have been lived up to these principles but it was the intent that individual try to achieve those principles by doing better to the society. Laws in questions are doing exact opposite by going against these principles.

### Way forward-

Based on the judicial pronouncements it is clear that the Right to marry a person belongs to another faith is a Fundamental Right

- It is for the court to suo motu strike these laws down if it wants to preserve the basic structure of the constitutional edifice.

### 6. Flawed understanding of triple talaq law is leading to its misuse

Source- [The IndianExpress](#)

Syllabus- GS Paper II (laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.)

**Synopsis- Faulty** understanding of the triple talaq law i.e., Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act of 2019, as well as the Islamic law on divorce is leading to misuse of the act.

**Introduction-** In the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act of 2019, a Supreme Court Bench led by Justice D Y Chandrachud observed that mother-in-law of the second respondent (wife) cannot be accused of the offence of pronouncement of triple talaq under the Act as the offence can only be committed by a Muslim man (husband). It clearly shows that the act is being misunderstood.

### Background of the anti-triple talaq law-

- Anti-women divorce **customs prevalent in pre-Islamic Arabia** had been given a severe blow by the teachings of great social reformer Prophet Muhammad.
- On the basis that “old habits die hard”, unscrupulous men innovated ways and means to circumvent the Prophet’s noble teachings.
- One of these was the practice of triple talaq — repeating the word “talaq” thrice — which was believed to effect instant dissolution of marriage leaving no room for any reconsideration or reconciliation.
- Instead of defeating this innovation, law men of the time called it talaq-ul-bidat and declared it to be “sinful but effective”.
- This concept remained in Muslim societies for centuries across the globe.
- But due to its devastating effects on families and societies, country after country in Asia and Africa gradually abolished by legislation the detestable practice of triple talaq.

### Situation in India-

India took a much longer time to follow suit. During British rule, courts kept this law alive as a “**sinful but effective**” form of divorce after calling it a concept “**bad in theology but good in law.**”

Post- Independence, some High Court judges like VR Krishna Iyer of Kerala and Baharul Islam of Assam tried to awaken the custodians of state authority to the need for its abolition.

Finally, the practice of triple talaq was outlawed in the **Shayara Bano case of 2017**. The **anti-triple talaq Act of 2019** was the outcome of this judicial reform.



### How provisions of Triple Talaq law are often misunderstood?

- **Misuse of Section 498A** of the Indian Penal Code (cruelty to a woman by her husband or his relatives) was once acknowledged by the apex court and formalized some measures. But under feminist pressure, the measures were withdrawn.
- **Anti-triple talaq law together with Section 498A** is proving destructive for the families.
  - For Instance, in one triple talaq case in Kerala, a lawyer of a woman **included her husband's mother in the FIR** filed against her husband in reference to the said IPC provision.
- Kerala High Court had refused bail to the accused husband's mother. The case went to SC where SC highlighted the faulty applications on the act, that
  - There is no specific provision in Section 7(c), or elsewhere in the Act, making Section 438 inapplicable to an offence punishable under the Act
- **Section 7 of the 2019 act is particularly misunderstood.** Many lawyer misbelief that it overrides the general provision for anticipatory bail under Section 438 of the Criminal Procedure Code.
  - For example, after enactment of the act, a man accused in the Triple talaq case **sought anticipatory bail in the Bombay High Court.** Lawyer argued that the non-obstante clause in Section 7, makes CrPC provision inapplicable.
  - However, Court rejected the argument and granted bail to the person.
- For understanding the common-sense fact that this Act is meant to discipline erring husbands only, the learned lawyers needed a learning session with the apex court.

### Conclusion

The verdict of SC is a significant step towards preventing the misuse of the anti-triple divorce law.

### 7. Issues in wages against housework and alternatives to it

Source- [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus- GS Paper I (Salient features of Indian Society, Role of women and women's organization)

**Synopsis-** It is important to recognise the value of unpaid domestic work. However, creating value isn't always about fair remuneration. A salary to women for domestic work will institutionalize the idea of men as 'providers.

**Introduction- Recently,** Kamal Hasan's party, Makkal Needhi Maiam, promised salaries to housewives as a part of its electoral campaign in Tamil Nadu.

Shashi Tharoor also said that monetising the services of women homemakers in society will enhance their power and autonomy and will lead to a recognition of the value of unpaid work. He also emphasised on creating near-universal basic income.

#### Origin of demand for wages against housework-

- It was first raised at the **third National Women's Liberation conference in Manchester, England.** The International Wages for Housework Campaign (IWFHC) was formed by Selma James in 1972.
- In India, the **National Housewives Association, in 2010,** tried to seek recognition as a trade union. But it was rejected on the ground that housework is not a trade or an industry.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- To empower women financially and help them live with dignity, **in 2012**, the government announced that it was considering mandating a salary for housework to wives, from husbands. But it never came to force.

### Status of majority of women in their family-

- Household works require efforts and sacrifices throughout 24/7, 365 days a year, still they face domestic violence and cruelty due to their economic dependence on others, mainly their husbands.
- **As per the data of the NSSO, only about a quarter of men and boys above six years engaged in unpaid household chores, compared to over four-fifths of women.**
- Every day, an average Indian male spends 1.5 hours per day in unpaid domestic work, compared to about five hours by a female.

### Consequences of the paid domestic work

Recognising the value of unpaid domestic work is not always about fair remuneration. It may not lead to all positives;

- Men paying for wives' domestic work could further **enhance their sense of entitlement**. It may also put an additional onus on women to perform.
- Ethically, buying domestic labour from wife will **formalize the patriarchal Indian family** where the position of **men stems from their being "providers"** in the relationship.
- Moreover, **legal recognition does not always mean protection**. For instance, despite legal recognition of equal inheritance rights, the majority of women are not receiving that.

### What are the alternatives to wages for housework?

- **First-** Dowry can be converted to the policy as it shows some gains received by daughters from the parental property (equal inheritance rights). It would be more effective than salary for household work.
- **Second-** Rather than creating a new provision of salary for housework, we need to strengthen awareness, implementation, and utilization of other existing provisions like;
  - Right to reside in the marital home,
  - Streedhan and haq mehr,
  - Inheritance rights as daughters
  - Free legal aid and maintenance in instances of violence and divorce
- **Third-** Women should be encouraged to reach their potential through quality education, access and opportunities of work, gender-sensitive and harassment-free workplaces.
- **Fourth-** Husbands should support wives in their daily housework and should not burden their wives for the work which they can do by themselves.
- **Fifth-** We should raise our boys to be brothers, sons, husbands, and fathers who would respect the women and will fight for their rights.

### Way Forward

Just as we do not want women to commodify their reproductive services and we banned commercial surrogacy in the country. On similar lines, we should not allow the commodification of housework and personal care.

Once the above-given conditions are assured to the women, they will be able to exercise freedom for themselves and will be able to decide whether to work inside or outside of the home.

## 8. WEF's "Indian Cities in the Post-pandemic world" report mentions cities critical role in post-covid India

Source: [Click Here](#)

Syllabus: GS-1 urbanization, their problems and their remedies.

**News:** World Economic Forum (WEF) has released a report titled "Indian Cities in the Post-Pandemic World".

### Facts:

- **About the report:** The report has been produced in collaboration with IDFC Institute, Mumbai.
- It compiles insights from leading global and Indian urban experts across seven thematic pillars— planning, housing, transport, environment, public health, gender and vulnerable populations.
- **Purpose:** The report highlights the country's most pressing urban challenges that were exacerbated by the pandemic. It also provides insights for translating the lessons learned from the pandemic into an urban reform agenda.

### Key Takeaways from the report:

- **Impact on Cities:** Cities have borne the maximum brunt of the covid-19 outbreak, but they will also be key to India's post-pandemic growth. They account for nearly 70% of the country's GDP and an average of 25-30 people migrate to cities from rural areas every single minute.
- **Households:** About 25 million households in India—35% of all urban households cannot afford housing at market prices.
- **Impact on Different Population Groups:** The impact of the pandemic has been profoundly uneven on different population groups. Vulnerable populations, including low-income migrant workers have suffered the dual blows of lost income and weak social-protection.

### Recommendations:

- **Greater decentralization and empowerment of local governments**, which will allow for more proximate and responsive governance.
- **Collection of data to help cities** in managing and directing emergency operations during a crisis.
- Government have to **create a new urban paradigm** that enables cities to be healthier, more inclusive, and more resilient.
- **Ensure the infrastructure** that has adequate functional capacity, aligned with current and future demands.
- **Prioritise action** on environmental sustainability, air pollution and disaster management in urban rebuilding efforts.
- **Prioritising inclusivity** by addressing the biases and impediments faced by women and vulnerable populations in accessing urban opportunities.

## 9. HC Ruling under the special marriage act

Source: [Click here](#)

Syllabus: GS 1

**Synopsis:** Interfaith couples now have the option to not give public notice under Special Marriage Act. This comes as a sigh of relief for them.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](http://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

### Introduction

The Allahabad High Court ordered that those people marrying under the Special Marriage Act, 1954, **can choose not to publicize their union with a 30 days advance notice.**

Earlier, under section 5 of the special marriage act, the couple had to give notice to the marriage officer and the officer had to publicise it and call for objections under sections 6 and 7 of the act.

**Read more – [Importance of Allahabad HC judgment on Special Marriage Act \(forumias.com\)](#)**

### Important points from the judgment

- **The marriage officer can make the marriage official** if a couple gives it in writing that they do not want the notice publicised.
- The Act's understanding and interpretation should be in a way **that upholds fundamental rights and not violate them.**
- **Laws should not invade liberty and privacy**, "including within its sphere freedom to choose for marriage without interference from state and non-state actors, of the persons concerned".

### How would it impact the present anti-conversion ordinances?

Remarks on 'state and non-state actors' made by justice Chaudhary will certainly have an impact on the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance, 2020, that intends to target inter-faith marriages.

- The new ordinance states **conversion of religion for marriage to be unlawful.** It orders a 60-day notice to the District Magistrate and also requires the Magistrate to conduct a police inquiry to find out the categorical reason for the conversion of religion.
- The law was enacted in November 2020, since then **there have been 54 arrests by the U.P. police.**
- The HC ruling can now be quoted all over India to prevent public notices under the Special Marriage Act.

### Way forward

Inter-faith couples will hope that when the Supreme Court hears appeals on the U.P. conversion law, it will take inspiration from progressive verdicts, like the 2017 Aadhaar ruling, on the right to privacy as a basic right, and the 2018 judgment on Hadiya, upholding the student's right to choose a partner, a Muslim man in Kerala, as essential freedom.

### 10. Trends in Housework valuation

**Source:** [Click here](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 1

**Synopsis:** The work women perform for the family should be given due recognition and valued at par with a men's work.

### Introduction

Kamal Haasan's Makkal Needhi Maiam party recently promised salaries for housewives as a part of the party's election manifesto, has invigorated the discussion on the acknowledgment of domestic work as work.

**Read more – [Wages for housework: An Analysis – ForumIAS Blog](#)**

### State of household work in India

159.85 million Women stated household work as their main occupation whereas only 5.79 men referred to it as their main occupation in the 2011 census.

- As per Time Use in India-2019 Report, **Indian women spend 299 minutes a day on unpaid domestic services** for household members. Whereas men spend just 97 minutes.
- The economic value of services provided by women is equivalent to making **\$612.8 billion** annually.

### Global trends on the recognition of housework

**Male and female domains** have been marked separately for centuries. Market is considered as a male domain whereas home is considered as a female domain. These segregations justified husband's control over family assets.

- Until 1851, Women had no right over their own earnings in or out of the home, all over the world. Their wages used to be collected by husband as it was considered his right back then.
- Shortly after 1850, laws in US started allowing **wives with property rights on earnings from their personal labour**.
- However, after civil war economic census in US, household worked were tagged as **unproductive. It also excluded earning of women engaged in income producing work**.

### Trends in India

- **The Married Women (Protection of Rights) Bill, 1994** provided that a married woman shall be authorised to have an equal share in the property of her husband. It also provided women with a right to dispose of her share in the property by way of sale, gift, debt, will or in any other manner.
- Census 2001 which had categorised those who provide household services i.e., about **36 crore women in India as non-workers**.
- **The United Progressive Alliance government** had suggested a monthly 'salary' for wife by her husband in 2012.
- Supreme Court in Rajendra Singh case, 2020 observed that the services **offered out of love cannot be calculated with money**.

### Way forward

- There should be measurement and quantification of unpaid domestic activities of women. Their calculation in GDP so that the actual economic contribution of women is highlighted. **the United Nations committee on elimination of discrimination against women**.

Women on one hand are denied equal rights and on the other hand are compared to goddesses in our country. **Matrimonial property laws** do give women their share but only when the marriage is broken and so there should be a bill to safeguard women's interest even during the marriage.

## 11. Socio-Economic and Caste Census: A Need for reforms

**Source:** [click here](#)

*Syllabus: GS 1 – population and associated issues*

**Synopsis:** Socio-Economic and Caste Census is suffering from many issues. All the issues must be removed before the next exercise is conducted.



### Introduction

The Census of India is one of the largest exercises which counts and collects demographic and socio-economic information on the Indian population. It has its own history, context, and purpose.

### About the Census

The census was a colonial exercise practiced since 1881. It has evolved with time. It is used by the government, policymakers, etc. to estimate the Indian population and its access to resources.

- Census Commissioner for India in 1941 had pointed out that the **census is a very powerful tool. But** it is not a suitable tool for detailed inquiry about the population.
- Later, many scholars also found census not useful enough for a **detailed and comprehensive understanding of a complex society.**

The Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) was conducted in 2011. It was the largest exercise of the listing of castes and has the potential of finding inequalities at a broader level.

However, there were many concerns associated with it.

### What are the main apprehensions with regard to the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC)?

**First,** This census has the potential to solidify the caste identities of individuals. It won't be helpful in eliminating discrimination from society.

**Second,** SECC has not been able to cover the effects of the caste system on social structure from the local, to the regional, and national scales.

**Third,** the data captured by the census is considered confidential under the census act of 1948. Whereas the personal data captured by SECC is open for use by Government departments. It makes the SECC data prone to use and for misuse by govt.

**Fourth** issue is the time **duration between each census** and the **delay in the release of data after it is done.** It makes the data obsolete and unusable to estimate the present status of issues. **For example,** a sizeable amount of data collected under SECC has not been released even a decade later.

### What can be done?

There should be transparency on the use of existing caste data by the government for granting or withdrawing benefits. Further, the following steps should be taken:

- **First, the collected census data should be linked with other databases** of national sample surveys or the National Family Health Surveys that cover issues such as maternal health. This will help in the utilization of this data for dealing with social issues in a better way.
  - Scholars like Mamta Murthi have suggested linking the data of surveys in the past.
- **Second,** This linking of data sources that involve the Census should be **inclusive and non-discriminatory.**
- **Fourth, there should be a closer and continuous engagement** between officials of the Census and SECC. It is because the Census and the SECC are projects of governance as well as of academic interest.
- **Fifth,** there should be an evaluation of the previous exercise before the next SECC is conducted.

### Way forward

Concerns regarding methodology, significance, rigidity, spreading, transparency, and privacy needs to be taken seriously.



# General Studies Paper – 2

## General Studies - 2

---

### 1. Implication of warming in Arctic region

Source- [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus- GS 2

**Synopsis-** Warming in the Arctic region has many implications and the geopolitics is also changing in the region.

#### Introduction-

- The Arctic has been warming twice as fast as the rest of the planet, with higher temperatures pushing sea ice into a loop of melting and thinning.
- Since 1980, the amount of summer ice in cubic kilometers has decreased by an estimated 75 percent.
- Climate change is increasingly opening up the Northwest Passage, an Arctic sea route north of the Canadian mainland.

These developments will have a critical impact in several sectors, most fundamentally on climate.

#### What are the adverse impacts of global warming?

A warming climate holds important implications for other aspects of the global environment.

- **First**, it had led to many changes on the planet, such as a rise in sea level, massive melting of snow and land ice, salinity levels, and current and precipitation patterns
  - Moreover, The Tundra is returning to the swamp, the permafrost is thawing, sudden storms are ravaging coastlines and wildfires are devastating interior Canada and Russia.
- **Second**, Arctic biodiversity under serious threat from climate change- The distribution of flora and fauna is shifting northwards as the Arctic continues to warm.
  - Increasing human encroachment with its attendant stresses will only aggravate this impact and upset a fragile balance.

#### What are the opportunities due to opening the Arctic region?

The opening of the Arctic presents huge commercial and economic opportunities such as shipping, energy, fisheries, and mineral resources.

- **First, new shipping route-** The shrinking of ice on The Northern Sea Route will open new possibilities for shipping companies.
  - The distance from Rotterdam to Yokohama will be cut by 40 percent compared to the Suez route.
- **Second, Raw materials underground-** The area above the Arctic Circle is underlain by sedimentary basins and continental shelves that hold enormous oil and natural gas resources.
  - The Arctic holds about 22 percent of the world's undiscovered conventional oil and natural gas resource base along with mineral deposits including 25 percent of the global reserves of rare earth, buried in Greenland.

#### What are the challenges in doing so?

- First, Navigation conditions are restrictive and dangerous due to-
  - extreme conditions: ice floes, fog, imprecise charts

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- Lack of search and rescue infrastructure and lack of deep-water ports.
- Second, added cost of navigation in polar waters –
  - more expensive shipbuilding and crew training requirements need for ice-breakers, high insurance costs
  - Mining and deep-sea drilling carry massive costs and environmental risks.

These difficulties may provide a crucial window to work out norms that are focused on balanced and sustainable development. However, the Arctic is not a global common and there is no overarching treaty that governs it.

### What are the impacts of Arctic warming on India?

The extensive coastline of India makes it most vulnerable to the impact of Arctic warming as-

- It is found that rising temperatures in the Arctic region is causing the sea-ice to melt faster than expected, impacting a major ocean current linked to extreme weather events.
- The global warming phenomena have resulted in a change in the monsoon onset time and pattern.

### How Russia and china using Arctic geopolitics as a strategic posture?

- **First**, Russian priority is to ensure the Northern Fleet's access to, and passage along, the Northern Sea Route (NSR) from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean.
- **Second**, Russia has deployed substantive force and capabilities along its northern border, including through an exercise with China in the eastern Arctic.
- **Third, China in the Arctic-** China's economic partnership with Russia in the Arctic with a focus on projecting the Polar Silk Road as an extension of the BRI, and has invested heavily in ports, energy, undersea infrastructure and mining projects.

Thus, an active China in the Arctic and its growing economic and strategic relationship with Russia need close monitoring.

## 2. India's foreign policy: Lessons from 2020 and challenges/opportunities in 2021

**Source:** [Click here](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – International Relations,

**Synopsis:** A quick flashback of 2020 suggested that India faced seven tough realities last year and has to deal with many possible challenges and opportunities in 2021.

### Introduction

Last year was quite difficult for India; it fought Covid-19 and Chinese hostility. Next year is going to be all about facing the challenge of firming ties and building new ones with the US, EU, Middle East countries, and its neighbours.

### What were the hard realities of 2020?

- **China's ambition to become the number one**
  - China's which was consolidating its power since, 2013, saw an opportunity in pandemic and started flexing its muscles.
  - Chinese naval forces hit a Vietnamese fishing boat, droned a Philippines naval vessel and agitated a Malaysian oil-drilling operation. It even put trade restrictions on Australia.
  - 20 Indian soldiers lost their lives in the border stand-off with China as they have changed the status quo along the border.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- **Trump Administration**
  - The Trump administration targeted China and the Communist Party of China for disturbing the global order and walked out of several multilateral bodies.
- **Approval for Taliban**
  - **India is planning to re-engage with the Taliban even** though it is controlled by the Pakistan military because the US has made peace with them.
- **Middle East calculations**
  - New Delhi has been nurturing ties with Israel as well as Saudi-UAE and the Iranians with clever diplomacy but India should be mindful as at home religious politics could hamper its gains.
- **Russia-China closeness**
  - The US's anti-Chinese public speaking, the downfall of oil prices and Russia's dependence on Chinese consumption is the reason of their bonding.
  - **Russia has a similar stance to china on the Quad and Indo-pacific** and India has taken note of it even though India shares strong ties with Russia.
- **Confident neighbours**
  - Bangladesh stressed on CAA-NRC, and then Nepal claimed territory followed by issuing a new map.
  - India seems to have accepted the participation of the US in Maldives and of Japan in Sri Lanka and Maldives.
- **Aspirational India**
  - During the pandemic, India supplied medicines and protective kits to more than 150 countries still it didn't manage to appear as the global leader the world needed; instead, it looked as an aspirational power because of lack of resources, a shrinking economy and its general politics.

### What are the challenges and opportunities in the upcoming year?

- **Firstly, India has to counter China.**
  - India will need persistent support from the US, Japan, Australia, in addition with the support of France, Germany and the UK because India requires external aid inadequate measure to counter China.
- **Secondly, India is set to enter the UN Security Council for the 8th time**
  - India will now have to take stands on several issues that it has avoided in the past such as the Iran-Saudi rivalry etc.
- **Thirdly, friendship with the US.**
  - India will try to deepen its strategic and defence ties with the US, and would want to resolve trade and visa issues.
- **Fourthly, India will try to win over Europe.**
  - There is a chance of an India-EU summit in the upcoming year and a potential European strategy. France and Germany have come up with their Indo-Pacific strategy.
- **Fifthly, India should engage with its neighbours.**
  - India could use vaccine diplomacy to its benefit by supplying vaccines at affordable costs to neighbours in 2021 as almost all south Asian countries have stable governments currently.
- **Lastly, India should appear Global not aspirational.**
  - New Delhi will host the BRICS summit in 2021.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](https://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- Begin preparations for the G-20 summit in 2023.
- The India-Africa Forum summit, which could not be held in 2020, could be held in 2021 or later.

India has opportunities to clear and be vocal on issues that matter to the world and be positive to promote its interests.

### 3. Concerns of hasty approval to COVID-19 vaccine

**Source-** [The Hindu](#), [The Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus-** **GS 2** – *Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.*

**Synopsis-** Concerns regarding hasty approval granted to the COVID-19 vaccines despite the lack of adequate efficacy data.

#### Background-

- The Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) approved the Subject Expert Committee's recommendation for emergency use of Serum Institute of India's Covishield and Bharat Biotech's **Covaxin**.
- Covishield is the same vaccine as developed by Oxford- AstraZeneca, which has got emergency use approval in the UK.
- In the case of Covaxin, concerns have been raised about the absence of efficacy data, which is generated during Phase 3 of human clinical trials.

However, experts have voiced their concerns on the approval process and the lack of publicly released efficacy data for Covaxin.

#### How India's credibility as manufacturer of vaccine is at stake?

The hasty nod for Covaxin has put India's credibility as a manufacturer of vaccines at a stake and has raised eyebrows in the scientific and healthcare communities about a "public rollout of an untested product.

- **First, Covaxin has no clinical efficacy data-** Bharat Biotech's Covaxin vaccine is still in stage 3 clinical trials in India and the final results are yet to be released. The recommendation comes despite the lack of efficacy data for Covaxin.
  - Efficacy data is an indication of how effective the vaccine is in preventing the virus attack.
  - Moreover, the decision is a violation of the criteria in the draft regulatory guidelines for the development of COVID-19 vaccines published by CDSCO, in which it is clear that safety and efficacy data is required for approval of vaccine, but the indigenous vaccine from Bharat Biotech does not have efficacy details because the trials are underway.
- **Second, credibility of regulator at stake-** This lack of transparency could lead to a lack of trust in the vaccine. There are several issues with the way the approval has been granted, which can lead to people losing confidence in the regulatory system.
- **Third,** approval of an untested vaccine makes it nearly impossible to conduct a proper phase-3 trial.
  - It will be unethical to expect volunteers to participate in a trial where there is only a 50% chance of being administered the actual vaccine, when they have the option of the real dose elsewhere.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- **Fourth**, Pharmaceutical giants like Pfizer, Moderna and AstraZeneca have given a go-ahead only after partial results of vaccine's abilities in their own populations.
- Whereas in India similar data for vaccine ability among Indian population has not been published. As it is a possibility that vaccine response among India population may not be the same as among the European Population.

The rush to approve COVID-19 vaccine without proper clinical trial may do more harm than good. So, it would be better to wait for the preliminary data from the phase-III trials to come in, and then grant the approval.

### What is the way forward?

- In light of the intense concerns arising from the absence of efficacy data, the Use of Covaxin should be treated as extended clinical trials.
- For the larger scale implementation of vaccines, Government needs to carefully monitor immune response to different vaccines and assess the efficacy across populations.

### 4. Government initiatives for welfare of Scheduled Castes (SC)

**Source:** [click here](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Social Justice – Schemes for vulnerable section

**Synopsis:** Government has recently launched post-matric scholarship scheme for SCs, apart from many other steps taken for the welfare of Scheduled Castes (SC) in India.

#### Post-matric scholarship scheme

- Government has recently passed an outlay of Rs 59,000 crore for the post-matric scholarship scheme for students from Scheduled Caste groups.
- Almost 60 percent of the cost of scheme will be borne by Central government and rest by the states.

#### How this scheme promotes welfare of Scheduled Castes (SC)?

- More than four crore SC students would benefit from this allocation in the next five years.
  - These students were facing challenges in pursuing higher education because of the financial constraints but this decision will provide them a sense of hope.
- The gross enrolment ratio of SC students in higher education will increase with the help of this scheme.
  - **Proper education** will provide the next generation of Dalits paths for upward mobility, dignity and recognition in society.

### Other Government initiatives for welfare of Scheduled Castes (SC)

#### Development of SC concentrated villages

- The Union government identified almost 27,000 such villages where a government programme will make sure the dedicated implementation of welfare schemes to improve infrastructure and reduce socio-economic gaps in 2019.

#### Political empowerment

- The current government has ensured meaningful representation for Dalits within the organisation and government.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- For example, the youngest woman MLA from Gujarat, Malti Maheshwari, and numerous other leaders, are now making themselves heard and are suitably voicing the concerns and aspirations of Dalits across the country.

### Promotion of entrepreneurship

- Schemes such as Stand-up India and MUDRA have significantly benefited young people from the community in the last 6 years.
- Milind Kamble, the chairperson of Dalit Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DICCI), has been working with the government to create opportunities for entrepreneurship and self-employment for Dalit youth.
  - “Be Job Givers and not Job Seekers” is a theme for the government.
  - Milind kamble has a team of more than 5,000 entrepreneurs from SC and ST groups.
- Several youngsters have benefitted from schemes like a venture capital fund for SCs and a credit enhancement guarantee plan.
- The youth who want to become entrepreneurs are being supported through a network of growth centres and aiding financial assistance architecture.

### Way forward

- India should become extremely inclusive in its foundation, review its approach and focus on making the country a leading light in the new world order.
- Sustained economic empowerment, political representation and educational opportunities like the boost in the post-matric scholarship for SC students should be provided so that Dalits become an inseparable part of the New India story.

## 5. Way forward for India at UNSC

Source: [Click Here](#)

Syllabus: GS -2, International Relations

**Synopsis:** As India assumes UNSC membership for the 8th time as one of the 10 non-permanent members, it should integrate UNSC functions with national objectives while adjusting to changed realities.

### Introduction

Dynamics at UNSC have changed completely since the cold war, while India's attitude has changed from the reactive to the proactive.

India needs to align its goals of national objectives at UNSC with the present dynamics at UNSC to achieve maximum gain.

- India's new term should be led by **purposeful and pragmatism**.
  - **Purposefulness** is about tightly incorporating UNSC meeting with India's broader national goals.
  - **Pragmatism** requires adapting to the changed conditions at the UNSC and avoiding overly ambitious goals.

### How UNSC and India evolved post-cold war?

- **During 1991-92**, India's term at UNSC was influenced by the collapse of the Soviet Union.
- Delhi was fixing its broken economy and was reorganising its foreign policy to survive in the post-Soviet world.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- Countries Like EU and US wanted to transform this “inter-national” forum into a “supra-national” institution, to interfere actively in the matter of countries.
- India had to resist external solutions to its problems on issues like the Kashmir question and the nuclear.
- Thus, India was not vocal and adopted a defensive approach at that time.
- **In 2011-12**, revived Russia and a rising China began influencing UNSC to resist west.
- India witnessed rapid economic growth in the first decade of 21st century which resulted in improvement of its own relative position in the meeting.
  - Delhi was less defensive than in the 1990s, but was struggling to change its new strengths into practical outcomes.
- **At present UNSC term of India**, it is facing the challenge of sharp competition between US, China and Russia. Which is enforced by closeness of Russia-China and disagreement between US and EU.

### **What objectives India would be taking along at the UNSC?**

To make its present term fruitful, India needs to work towards 5 objectives;

- **Firstly, making the UNSC effective.** Except brief moment of cooperation in 1990s, UNSC is dealing with the divisions among 5 permanent members, making it less effective.
  - India needs to carve out the larger room for itself and try to create an atmosphere of cooperation as done by US and USSR on nuclear proliferation.
- **Secondly, making the UNSC more representative.** India wanted permanent membership since the end of the Cold War but China does not want India and Japan to join the UNSC as permanent members.
  - However, India should push its efforts in partnership with Brazil, Germany and Japan, to expand the UNSC.
- **Thirdly, India has to deal with China’s growing enmity.** On the issue of cross-border terrorism china continues to protect Pakistan from the international pressures and also tried to get the UNSC to focus on India’s constitutional changes in Kashmir.
  - India should try to get the wind in its favour by presenting real facts
- **Fourthly, the engagement with peace and security issues at the UNSC.** India will be able to strengthen its new coalitions.
  - For example, the Quad which brings together Australia, India, Japan and the US.
  - Collaboration with its European partners like France and Germany in the security field.
- **Fifthly, Delhi should renew its ties with its old partners.** Delhi should express the peace and security concerns of the global south in UNSC. Supporting the rule and survivability of the island states is a critical political task for India.
  - 60 per cent of UNSC documents and 70 per cent of its resolutions are about peace and security in Africa. There is an opportunity for Delhi to deepen India’s engagement on peace and security issues in Africa at bilateral, regional and global levels.

### **6. Rising vaccine hesitancy and its solution**

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

**Syllabus- GS2 –2** Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](http://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

**Synopsis-** As the country readies to implement its COVID-19 vaccination programme, vaccine hesitancy could be an issue that the government needs to address forthwith.

### **Introduction-**

- Prime-Minister hailed the approval of two made in India COVID-19 vaccines by the drug regulator and said India is on the threshold of beginning the largest vaccination programme in the world.
- However, the COVID-19 vaccination intent is decreasing due to increasing hesitancy.

### **What is the general perception around the world regarding vaccine drive?**

Following are the findings that validates the increasing Vaccine hesitancy.

- Recently, a survey with approximately 11,000 respondents was conducted in India, to understand the openness to take the vaccine,
  - **About 53 per cent of the respondent were unsure about taking COVID-19 vaccine.**
- A survey by New Delhi's citizen-survey platform Local-Circles found that about 69 per cent of respondents saw no urgent need to get immunized.
  - Key reasons cited for hesitancy were **limited information about efficacy, side-effects**, and perceived high immunity level.

Moreover, COVID-19 vaccination intent is decreasing globally. Since August, intentions to get vaccinated have dropped in 10 of 15 countries, most of all China (down 12 points), Australia (down 9), Spain (down 8), and Brazil (down 7).

### **What is World Health Organization's view on Vaccine Hesitancy?**

The SAGE Working Group on Vaccine Hesitancy concluded that vaccine hesitancy refers to **delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccination** despite availability of vaccination services. Vaccine hesitancy is complex and context specific, varying across time, place and vaccines.

It is influenced by factors such as **complacency, convenience and confidence [3C model]**.

- **Complacency**– Refers to a low perceived risk of vaccine-preventable diseases and therefore it is assumed vaccines are not needed. Other issues are considered more important.
- **Convenience** – Vaccination convenience is a significant factor that entails physical availability, affordability and willingness-to-pay. This continuum ranges from total acceptance to complete refusal.
- **Confidence**– Refers to a lack of trust in the effectiveness and safety of vaccines, the system that delivers them – including the reliability of the health professional – and/or the motivations of policy-makers who make determinations about vaccines.

### **What needs to be done to remove Vaccine Hesitancy?**

**Misinformation, specifically online, is a big threat to trust in Vaccines** and their programs as proved by losses suffered by poultry sector due to erroneously linking consumption of chickens to the disease.

Communication strategies are critical for tracking, negotiating and shaping perceptions around the vaccines and the programme.

- **First**, strategies need to be shaped around four key themes- **Product development, prioritization strategies, programme rollout activities**, and **AEFI** (Adverse Effects Following Immunization) and **AESI** (Adverse Effects of Special Interest).



- **Second**, it is very important to **give confidence to the public** by discussing the robustness of various processes involved in drug/vaccine development such as clinical trial designs, conduct, monitoring, analysis, reporting and the regulatory reviews that happen before it is approved.
  - This will make the public aware about the rigorous processes followed for clinical trials, and the approval, as followed by regulators.

Thus, communicating consistently, transparently, empathetically and proactively about uncertainty, risks and vaccine availability will contribute to building trust.

## 7. A multi-dimensional approach to tackle malnutrition

**Source:** – [Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus – GS- 2 – Hunger and Malnutrition**

**Synopsis:** Solution to the issue of malnutrition is not solely dependent on increasing food intake, but it requires a multidimensional approach including women empowerment.

### Introduction

- National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) has provided **mixed results**.
- **Positive results** include fall in infant mortality rates and under-five mortality rates, increase in institutional births and child immunisation rates. **Negative results** include worsening nutrition level.
- For dealing with the issue of malnutrition, it is important that direct nutrition interventions are ensured during pregnancy, breastfeeding and in the early years of a child's life.
  - hot cooked meals with adequate protein, milk, and green leafy vegetables should be provided to the pregnant women, lactating mothers and young children.

### HOW TO IMPROVE THE NUTRITION LEVEL BY A MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH?

#### 1. Hot cooked meals

- Many states have replaced the provision of **take-home rations** with the daily **hot cooked meals** for mothers
- It also **provides an opportunity** for the front-line workers to **give pregnant women iron, folic acid and calcium tablets**.
- Moreover, women coming to the anganwadi to take hot cooked meals, instead of take-home ration delivered at their homes, provides workers with an opportunity to engaged in early childhood stimulation activities by **counselling and parenting sessions** with the pregnant women.

#### Intergenerational cycle of malnutrition?

A **malnourished** mother will give birth to a low-birth-weight baby; the low-birth-weight baby will grow as a **malnourished** child, then to a **malnourished** teenager, then to a **malnourished** pregnant woman, and so the **cycle** continues.

#### 2. Adoption of life cycle approach

- To **stop the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition**, a life cycle approach needs to be adopted, which goes beyond “first thousand days” approach.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- This approach includes **prevention of child marriage** by supporting girls to stay in high school by grassroot programs and improving their nutrition level by Mid-day meal scheme.

### 3. Economic empowerment

- Childhood care enables girls **to become self-dependent** by earning their livelihood. Economic empowerment of women is directly linked to the nutrition level of children.
- To assist mothers working without concern of their children's safety and well-being, Mobile creches for younger children should be provided at worksites.

### 4. Strengthening Anganwadi system

- **Worker's development:** Supervisors of anganwadis should be provided with the facilities like interest-free loans and fuel allowance for two-wheelers.
- Upgradation of Skill level of Anganwadi workers and supervisors should be facilitated through online sessions, trainings and certificate courses on nutrition and early childhood stimulation.
- **Infrastructure development:** Facilities for cooking, playing of children, water connection should be upgraded.
- Double-burner stoves, gas cylinders, pressure cookers and sufficient steel cooking vessels should be provided to cater to multiple meal requirements.

### 5. Empowerment at gram panchayat level

- There are around 2,50,000 gram panchayats in India, and nearly 14 lakh anganwadis, the majority of these are in rural areas.
- Every Gram panchayat must have an anganwadi committee, which would meet every month on a fixed day and will present an action plan for Gram Panchayat.

### 6. Tackling issue of Exclusion and convergence

Local governments are capable of dealing with both the issues effectively.

- It can ensure the inclusion of the Poorest, migrants, nomadic and semi-nomadic communities in social welfare programs.
- Panchayats are best place to deal with the child marriage due to their social reach and influence.
- Convergence can also be brought by Panchayats by using its funds in strengthening of Anganwadis. It can work with Anganwadi workers, ASHAs, ANMs and anganwadi supervisors to ensure the beneficiaries are provided with immunisation, antenatal care, maternity benefits and nutrition services.

Women empowerment is the key for tackling the issue of malnutrition and local level government are best placed to make this empowerment possible. All the possible assistance should be made mandatory by the government to anganwadi and program focussed on the welfare of women.

### 8. Why central deputation to 3 Bengal police officers not right?

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

*Syllabus- GS 2 – Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.*

**Synopsis-** Central orders, three IPS officer from Bengal to serve central deputation to as part of an exercise to fix responsibility for the alleged lapses.

### Central Deputation

Officers on deputation serve as substitute for regular duty posts in the event of service officers holding duty posts being temporarily away from their cadre. Officers perform regular functions of the posts against which they are posted as substitutes.

### Background-

- The Centre has asked for the **three IPS officers to be sent on deputation** with the Government of India following an attack on BJP president J P Nadda's motorcade outside Kolkata, these officers were in charge of security.
- **But Bengal government refused to send** three IPS officers on central deputation. The state government in its refusal has cited a shortage of IPS officers.

### Why Centre's decision is not legitimate?

The Centre's decision not only reeks of vengeance but goes against the norms governing deputation of officers to the Centre.

- First, putting blame on the three IPS officers for the attack without even a perfunctory inquiry goes **against the norms of justice**.
  - A formal enquiry should have taken place, then the penal actions.
- **Second, forcibly deputed to central organization-** The concerned IPS officers have been assigned new responsibilities at Centre: Bholanath Pandey has been deputed as SP, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD), Praveen Tripathi as DIG, Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and Rajeev Mishra as IG, Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP).
  - The forceful deputation can demoralize the serving office which eventually affects their service performance as they go with the perception that they have been deputed on grounds of inefficiency or as a punishment.

### What is the process of deputation in India?

The movement of officers from the state to the Centre and back is of mutual benefit to the states and the government of India on the one hand and to the officers concerned, on the other.

- **First**, in normal case, officers willing to be deputed to the Centre are asked to apply through the States.
  - A panel of selected officers is prepared after which they are deputed to various Central Armed Police Forces [CRPF, ITBP, SSB etc.] and Centre police organization on the basis of merit.
- **Second, in case of disagreement** between Centre and State—**Rule 6(1) of the Indian Police Service (Cadre) Rules, 1954** says about deputation: In case of disagreement between Centre and state over deputation of an IPS officer, the Centre's will shall prevail.

### Why government reducing the CDR of IPS officers?

Central government proposes 50 percent cut in the IPS central deputation quota because—

- First, the **state governments do not spare their IPS officers** for central deputation and more than 60 per cent posts remain vacant.
  - It is observed that at present only 428 IPS officers are working on Central Deputation against the authorized strength of 1075 officers.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- Second, most officers avoid Central deputation as they enjoy **better perks and powers in the States.**
- **Third,** Central deputation could mean a **posting in the Northeast** or in a **Left-Wing Extremism-affected State.**

Thus, Centre decision to call West Bengal IPS officer to serve in central deputation seems absurd and such arbitrary decision must be avoided.

### **9. India-U.K. relations after Brexit**

**Source:** [click here](#)

*Syllabus: GS 2- International Relations*

**Synopsis:** India and UK have shared a past and they need to plan a different future together.

#### **Introduction**

PM Modi invited the British Prime Minister Boris Johnson as the chief guest for India's Republic Day parade this month. However, British PM has expressed his inability to attend the ceremony due to COVID-19 mutations in the UK. In Britain's opinion, the invite from India was quite casual and unplanned.

- It is the prime minister's decision to choose the chief guest for the Republic Day parade and he or she does not have to consult others in or outside the Cabinet.
- **PM Modi selected the following guests:**
  - U.S. President Barack Obama in 2015.
  - French President Francois Hollande in 2016.
  - The Crown Prince of the United Arab Emirates in 2017.
  - The ASEAN leaders in 2018.
  - South African President Cyril Ramaphosa in 2019.
  - Mr. Bolsonaro in 2020, and Mr. Johnson for 2021.
- The PM has mostly chosen the leaders from the west out of the 193 countries in the United Nations. **Britain is invited for the 6th time.**

#### **Discuss India-Britain relationship in the context of Free Trade Agreements.**

- **India has been unsuccessful in negotiating a trade agreement** with the European Union since 2007 and Britain was considered the reason behind this failure.
- Now due to Brexit, UK might make every effort to pursue commercial gain in Asian countries with high growth rates.
- However, India might face similar hurdles as faced with the EU during FTA negotiations i.e.
  - **Both UK and India's** export profile is primarily focused on services.
  - **Britain** will mention its new **points-based system** for immigrants for free movement of professionals. While **India**, after withdrawing out of RCEP, is **wary about discussing any new trade agreement**, and will place greater pressure on aspects related to country of origin and percentage of value addition in exports.
  - Both the countries may settle for a limited agreement covering pharmaceuticals, financial technology, chemicals, defence production, petroleum and food products.

#### **Why close relations with UK are important?**

Ties between India and U.K. are considerably important because of following reasons:

- **Firstly**, 1.5 million people from Indian origin live in Britain which also includes 15 Members of Parliament, three members in Cabinet and two in high office as Finance and Home Ministers.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](http://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- Before the pandemic hit the world, there were half a million tourists from India to Britain annually and twice that figure from Britain to India.
- **Secondly**, approximately 30,000 Indians study in Britain regardless of limited opportunities for post-graduation employment.
- **Thirdly**, Britain is among the top investors in India and India is the second-biggest investor and a major job creator in Britain.

### **10. NFHS-5 data suggest improvement on various social indicators**

**Source:** [click here](#)

*Syllabus: GS 2*

**Synopsis:** Overall trends of NFHS data suggest an improvement in population control, use of modern contraception, reproductive and child health, immunisation, and social determinants of health.

#### **Introduction**

The National Family Health Survey-round 5 (NFHS-5) covers about 6.1 lakh sample households to provide estimates for 707 districts. In the first phase, data from 22 states and UTs has been released from the latest survey conducted in 2019-2020.

#### **What are the major findings in the first phase of the report?**

- **One, the data on Total Fertility Rate (TFR)** has come down to 2.1 or below (replacement level) in all states and UTs. Bihar (3), Meghalaya (2.9) and Manipur (2.2) are exceptions in this.
- **Two**, the data shows that **the overall use of modern methods of contraception** has increased in 20 out of 22 states. The most dominant method being female sterilisation.
- **Three**, the data confirms that **the number of women marrying before the legal age** has reduced in 17 out of 22 states and UTs, with Nagaland, Maharashtra, Jammu & Kashmir and Sikkim as the top performers.
  - Indicators on teenage marriage and childbearing have also improved in 17 states/UTs.
- **Four**, 17 of 22 states/UTs saw an increase in **antenatal care visits** during the first trimester (Nagaland, Bihar and West Bengal saw the highest rise).
- **Five, the data shows consumption of IFA tablets** by pregnant women for 180 days or more has increased in almost all states/UTs (except Karnataka) albeit this has not resulted in reduction in anaemia levels among pregnant women.
  - There is a need to consider adding IFA tablets which contain more natural sources of iron, folic acid and other micronutrients in the diet.
- **Six**, 14 out of 22 states and UTs had more than 90 percent **of new-borns delivered in institutional facilities** and 14 out of 22 states/UTs have seen a drop in neonatal mortality.

#### **What does the NFHS data suggest on the indicators of women empowerment?**

Women's empowerment is a widespread concept. However, indicators like household decision making, control over personal hygiene choices and possessions like bank accounts and mobile phones are decent indirect means for evaluation.

- The data indicates that the majority of women (80 percent) participated in at least three household decisions.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- **Hygienic methods of protection during menstruation** are being used by more than 64 per cent of younger women in each of the 22 states/UTs, except Bihar at 59 per cent.
- **Personal possessions** such as mobile phone and bank account have increased to over 70 per cent across each of the 22 states/UTs of India (except Nagaland) in 2019-2020 amongst women.

### What does the NFHS data indicate about the public health in India?

- All states and UTs show a drastic increase in **the number of households with a constructed toilet, improved drinking water** and clean cooking fuels which are the indicators critical in improving public health in India.
- There has been a rise in **malnutrition rates, wasting and underweight children** in half of the states which reported an increase in exclusive breastfeeding and adequacy of diets.
  - Stunting can be affected by multiple factors such as indicators of the mother a child, financial situation, adequacy of diets, water and sanitation facilities, as well as interventions for nutrition promotion and health.
- NFHS-5 data also show an increase in **the rates of obesity in children** and risk factors for chronic diseases in adults like hypertension and blood glucose.

### Conclusion

One should not simplify these results for the whole country because data from phase 2 is yet to come and summary figures may oversee how relative health and nutritional results of the population can be.

## 11. UK-India Free Trade relations and Cairn Energy PLC issue

Source: [click here](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 – International Relations

**Synopsis:** With the conclusion of UK-EU trade agreement, now there is an opportunity to work towards UK-India Free Trade Agreement but resolving **Cairn Energy issue must be a priority for that.**

### Introduction

Present developments provide an opportunity for both India and UK to move the bilateral economic plan forward.

- Both countries have **common interest in the issues**, such as climate change and the green economy, economic recovery of both the countries from COVID-19.
- After the conclusion of **UK-EU trade agreement**, UK can now focus on concluding trade agreements with key partners like India.
- The **Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine** which has been approved in the UK was developed in collaboration between the Pune-based Serum Institute of India and the Wockhardt factory in the UK.

### Importance of resolving Cairn Energy PLC issue

The recent ruling of arbitration court in the favour of Cairn Energy PLC marks an end to the long-running dispute between Cairn Energy PLC and the Indian government over a retrospective \$1.2 billion tax demand imposed in 2015.

For India-UK trade to move forward and save the cost of arbitration, this issue need to end here.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- Cairn Energy PLC was one such global investor whose **belongings in India were held in an Indian company in which Indians sat on the board**, which had Indian senior management, where many of the engineers were Indian.
- **The Cairn India got success from a significant calculated risk.** The resources which Cairn Energy PLC bought from an international major had failed to find hydrocarbons on the land.
  - The purchase came with a major capital risk to drill several wells to totally explore the fields in Rajasthan.
  - After the oil discovery, Cairn Energy PLC then developed these fields and installed new technology to extract the oil and transport it to refineries.
  - During this entire period Cairn Energy PLC paid all taxes and dues on time and also invested in the local community, creating valuable infrastructure and jobs.

Thus, there is no reason for dragging this matter any further.

### Why resolving Cairn India issues will be beneficial for India?

The Indian government has publicly stated in the past that the decision of the court would be honoured, so the decision of the court should end the matter.

- **Firstly**, timely and logical settlement of this dispute would lead to an instant validation of the desirability of India as an investment destination and also to India's status in the international and domestic debt and equity markets.
- **Secondly**, a practical solution to the Vodafone and Cairn Energy judgments would improve India's position at the top table of global economic powers.
- **Third**, as stated above, it was one of the thorny issues in the India-UK relations and good relations with UK will open many opportunities for India in the EU region.

## 12. Dilemma of Reservation and merit system

**Synopsis:** For decades, merit system and reservation has been seen as opposites, but these differences are getting blurred.

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

**Syllabus** – GS-2

### Introduction

The year 2021 is the centenary year of the **“Communal” Government Order (GO) in Madras Presidency**. It introduced reservations based on castes and communities.

GO was the acknowledgment of the social inequalities prevalent in the society, by the British. Reservation became one of the most divisive public issues, dividing them into ‘reserved’ and ‘general’ categories. The reservation was seen as the opposite of a merit system.

Reservation, the especially caste-based reservation has been established as bad, whereas the reservations **in the name of ‘Merit Stream’** for the wards of employees or alumni of universities and colleges is seen as right and justified.

- **For example;** some of the colleges reserve postgraduate seats for the students enrolled in their own undergraduate honors programs. But officially this system is called the ‘Merit Stream’.

However, now with the EWS quota and entry of reserved category students in unreserved categories this difference is getting blurred.

**Are the merit system and caste-based reservation, mutually exclusive?**

- If not segregated by the ideological differences, all reservations use merit-based criteria for the selection of eligible candidates. Thus, they are not mutually exclusive.
- Even **in the merit-based system**, reservation like arrangements has been established that built **exclusionary access**. merit is achieved by a mix of ability, effort, and social capital and the social capital plays the most crucial role in it.
  - **For example;** expensive private schools or coaching institutes are affordable for the rich only, thus ability and effort only cannot get a student admission in them.
- Most recent judgment in the **Saurav Yadav vs. State of Uttar Pradesh case**, reiterate the judgment of Mandal judgment, that un-reserved category must be open to all and selection should be merit-based, including for those belonging to categories entitled to reservations.
- Thus, the reserved candidates making their way into the unreserved categories by the competition with the unreserved candidates should be appreciated.

**13. How to deal with Avian influenza?**

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

*Syllabus: GS 2*

**Synopsis:** Avian influenza must be stopped before continuous spread amongst humans.

**Influenza type A** viruses cause Bird flu, a highly contagious viral disease. Normally birds are carriers of this virus, takes it across the continent, though unaffected themselves, affect a large population of other birds.

These viruses mainly affect poultry birds such as chickens and turkeys. Although rare, this virus sometimes also affects mammals such as pigs, horses, cats, and dogs.

H5N8 and H5N1 are subtypes of avian influenza Virus:

- **H5N8** has been found in crows in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.
- **H5N1** strains have been found in ducks in Kerala and migratory birds in Himachal.

**Introduction**

The highly pathogenic avian influenza subtypes named as H5N1 and H5N8, have been reported in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, and Kerala.

- **Death count of poultry birds in Haryana** is in thousands followed by Jharkhand and Gujarat. The cause of death in these three States is still unidentified.
- Crows in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, migratory birds in Himachal Pradesh, and poultry in Kerala have been **targeted by the two subtypes of the virus**.
  - Tests have confirmed H5N1 is responsible for the deaths of over 2,000 migratory birds in Himachal Pradesh.
  - H5N8 has been recognized as the cause of deaths of thousands of poultry in Kerala, and hundreds of crows in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

**What is the origin of the spread of the virus and its causes?**

A European Food Safety Authority report revealed that 561 avian influenza discoveries were made between August-December in 15 European countries and the U.K.

- H5N1 and H5N8 were two of three subtypes found in Europe, these were mainly found in wild birds along with a few poultry and captive birds.
- **Migratory birds have been largely responsible** for spread of the virus into India during winter. It spreads further through movement of local residential birds and poultry.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- Genetic analysis suggested that a tenacious transmission of this virus strain is coming from **wild birds in Asia to west-central Europe**.
- **Movement of men and material from poultry farms** has also been a cause for the further blowout.

### What is being done to stop the spread?

- **Firstly**, more than 69,000 birds which included ducks and chickens were culled in Alappuzha and Kottayam in accordance with India's 2015 national avian influenza plan, in an attempt to stop the spread.
- **Secondly**, all the states have been asked to be watchful of any unusual deaths or disease outbreak signs amongst birds, particularly migratory ones as they are considered to be one of the causes of the spread.
- **Thirdly**, states have been asked to disinfect and dispose of the dead birds properly, biosecurity of poultry farms needs to be strengthened.

### Conclusion

- It is very rare that avian influenza viruses cross the species barrier and directly infect humans but mutations in the virus can create a new avian influenza virus which can result in continuous transmission between humans, leading to genesis of pandemic influenza.
- Hence, it is suggested to carry out genome sequencing of virus samples to track the evolution of the virus.

## 14. Preparing workforce for COVID vaccination

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2

**Synopsis:** India needs to prepare healthcare professionals who are trained for treating and providing vaccines for immunization, to set an example of healthcare infrastructure for the rest of the world.

### Introduction

With the permission of two COVID-19 vaccines for emergency use, a hope of an end to the pandemic is nearing. But for the administration of vaccination and treatment properly and skilfully, a trained and effective workforce is required.

### Present strength of healthcare workers in India

- In India, over 4,00,000 frontline workers have been trained to respond to COVID-19.
- It includes people with no prior experience also. Thousands have been trained for contact tracing, quarantine strategies, ventilator management, personal protective equipment, and psychological issues.

### What is project ECHO?

India was a recipient of an effective global innovation called Project ECHO.

- **ECHO is a low-cost way out for growing the size of health workers** in underserved communities to offer patients with the best possible care and facilities.
- ECHO was utilised as a strategy for treating Hepatitis C in the beginning but now is being used **for newly trained experts in HIV, malaria, tuberculosis**, addiction, mental health, and many other conditions.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](http://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- Under this project, health workers, nurses and doctors are trained through **video conferencing technology**. They learn specialty care from subject matter experts and from each other's community informed knowledge.
- **ECHO provides the ability to spread healthcare workers in the most remote areas** of the country and give them training similar to what a healthcare worker in one of our largest cities would receive.

### **What needs to be done before the vaccine arrives?**

India is led by the Serum institute of India which has the largest manufacturing capacity in the world. However, certain aspects need to be figured out and planned before the covid-19 vaccine becomes widely available:

- **Firstly**, real skills need to be cultivated for planning out the following:
  - Delivery system of these vaccines needs to be figured out.
  - Storage and handling of the vaccines.
  - India needs to overcome cultural and religious obstacles for those who are unwilling to accept a vaccine.
  - People need to be counselled about the side-effects of the vaccine.
- **Secondly**, more trained health experts are required to support vaccine treatment.
- **Thirdly**, further preparation of the ECHO model can be done to identify new healthcare workers who can be trained to be COVID-19 experts.

### **15. Flawed understanding of triple talaq law is leading to its misuse**

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

*Syllabus- GS Paper II (laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.)*

**Synopsis- Faulty** understanding of the triple talaq law i.e., Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act of 2019, as well as the Islamic law on divorce is leading to misuse of the act.

**Introduction-** In the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act of 2019, a Supreme Court Bench led by Justice D Y Chandrachud observed that mother-in-law of the second respondent (wife) cannot be accused of the offence of pronouncement of triple talaq under the Act as the offence can only be committed by a Muslim man (husband). It clearly shows that the act is being misunderstood.

#### **Background of the anti-triple talaq law-**

- Anti-women divorce **customs prevalent in pre-Islamic Arabia** had been given a severe blow by the teachings of great social reformer Prophet Muhammad.
- On the basis that “old habits die hard”, unscrupulous men innovated ways and means to circumvent the Prophet's noble teachings.
- One of these was the practice of triple talaq — repeating the word “talaq” thrice — which was believed to effect instant dissolution of marriage leaving no room for any reconsideration or reconciliation.
- Instead of defeating this innovation, law men of the time called it talaq-ul-bidat and declared it to be “sinful but effective”.
- This concept remained in Muslim societies for centuries across the globe.
- But due to its devastating effects on families and societies, country after country in Asia and Africa gradually abolished by legislation the detestable practice of triple talaq.



### Situation in India-

India took a much longer time to follow suit. During British rule, courts kept this law alive as a “**sinful but effective**” form of divorce after calling it a concept “**bad in theology but good in law.**”

Post- Independence, some High Court judges like VR Krishna Iyer of Kerala and Baharul Islam of Assam tried to awaken the custodians of state authority to the need for its abolition.

Finally, the practice of triple talaq was outlawed in the **Shayara Bano case of 2017**. The **anti-triple talaq Act of 2019** was the outcome of this judicial reform.

### How provisions of Triple Talaq law are often misunderstood?

- **Misuse of Section 498A** of the Indian Penal Code (cruelty to a woman by her husband or his relatives) was once acknowledged by the apex court and formalized some measures. But under feminist pressure, the measures were withdrawn.
- **Anti-triple talaq law together with Section 498A** is proving destructive for the families.
  - For Instance, in one triple talaq case in Kerala, a lawyer of a woman **included her husband’s mother in the FIR** filed against her husband in reference to the said IPC provision.
- Kerala High Court had refused bail to the accused husband’s mother. The case went to SC where SC highlighted the faulty applications on the act, that
  - There is no specific provision in Section 7(c), or elsewhere in the Act, making Section 438 inapplicable to an offence punishable under the Ac
- **Section 7 of the 2019 act is particularly misunderstood.** Many lawyer misbelief that it overrides the general provision for anticipatory bail under Section 438 of the Criminal Procedure Code.
  - For example, after enactment of the act, a man accused in the Triple talaq case **sought anticipatory bail in the Bombay High Court**. Lawyer argued that the non-obstante clause in Section 7, makes CrPC provision inapplicable.
  - However, Court rejected the argument and granted bail to the person.
- For understanding the common-sense fact that this Act is meant to discipline erring husbands only, the learned lawyers needed a learning session with the apex court.

### Conclusion

The verdict of SC is a significant step towards preventing the misuse of the anti-triple divorce law.

### 16. India’s counter-coercive strategy against China

Source: [Click here](#)

Syllabus: GS 2

**Synopsis:** India has done quite well in countering Chinese moves in eastern Ladakh with its coercive strategy.

### Introduction

There is an opportunity for middle powers like India to redefine their position in the world order as decline and rise of Chinese and American powers continue.

- Alexander L. George, an American political scientist, is best known for his work on coercive diplomacy. The happenings in eastern Ladakh can be understood with reference to **four variations of coercive diplomacy:**



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- **A gradual turning of the screw.**
- **A try-and-see.**
- **A tacit ultimatum.**
- **A full-fledged ultimatum.**

### **How the four variations of coercive diplomacy were used in the border standoff?**

- **China attempted to alter the existing status quo** in eastern Ladakh, this resembled gradually **turning the screw** and then waiting to see India's reaction.
- **India adopted a try and see approach.** India wanted to engage in mild forms of coercion that involved the building up of forces to achieve parity on the ground.
- IAF was displaying its capabilities in Ladakh indicating that India wanted PLA to restore the status quo without any threats.

After India failed to compel the PLA to withdraw by mid-july, it had two options according to **Alexander George's escalatory ladder**:

- **First**, India could have issued an indirect or **tacit ultimatum** that would involve an unspoken and firmly controlled tactical action, by this means signifying resolve and intent.
- **Second**, it could issue a **full-fledged ultimatum** followed by multi-dimensional military action that could lead to a limited conflict.

### **What approach did India took to handle china?**

**At the operational and strategic level**, the Chinese did not expect the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force to mobilise and get into their operational roles at high altitude with effortlessness.

- **Indian Army** lowered the psychological high ground gained by Chinese by occupying key heights overlooking Chinese PLA.
- **At the strategic level**, India's political establishment did not push the panic button and synergised politico-diplomatic-military approach was adopted.

### **Conclusion**

- India has militarily recovered well, diplomatically played ruthlessly and strategically postured skilfully in spite of the restrictions of the ongoing pandemic. However, it is too early to predict the course of events; it can only be fair to say that India has done well in countering Chinese coercion in Ladakh with its own brand of counter-coercion.

### **17. Post-Central vista verdict: Need to improve process of developing Public project?**

**Source:** [click here](#)

*Syllabus: GS 2- Governance*

**Synopsis:** The issue of Central Vista Project has reiterated the need for holistic solutions for the issues in process of the redevelopment projects.

#### **Introduction**

The majority ruling decided that the government had followed all processes as required by the regulations and could go ahead with the construction.

However, it is only the one instance, which is visible, the problem of redevelopment project is much bigger. For instance, Amaravati project as the proposed capital for Andhra Pradesh.

- In this project firstly land was acquired through controversial methods and later on the project was abandoned, creating problems for farmers.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](http://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

Thus, thoughtful solutions to the issues, is required that can be common for all such projects

### What are the areas require improvement?

**Public participation and architectural services procurement** are the 2 of several areas that are in urgent need of improvement;

#### The issue of public Participation

- **Horizontal accountability** ensures check on government, by creating connected state organisations such as heritage committees and environmental regulators.
- **Vertical accountability requires citizen oversight. Citizens are asking for improved participatory process.**
  - Government argues that horizontal accountability is in the place. Provisions for consultation although are not absent, but the process of consultation is vague.
  - Judgment in central Vista is also not clear on the matter of public participation.
  - Development of Land Acquisition act provides a few lessons that has spelt out consent required from a minimum number of landowners.

#### Process of architectural services procurement

- Process of choosing a **designer for a public project need improvement** as there is lack of evaluation criteria and standards for design. Also, weightage is given to lower fee instead of better designs.
- **The architecture firms face entry barriers** as their expertise is judged on the basis of their company's turnover. The unreasonable revenue conditions make it difficult for many firms to qualify and also reduce pool of choice.

#### What regulatory changes can be made?

- **First**, for improving consultation, regulations and process have to clearly state what prior disclosures are required, when meetings have to be held and reasons for accepting and declining suggestions should be listed properly.
- **Second**, the government adopted the Quality and cost based selection (QCBS) for choosing designers. This method specifies requirements for consultants, places higher weightage on their technical capability and lower weightage on financial proposals.
- **Third**, in order to reduce the entry barrier, one can consider the suggestions made by the Architects' Council of Europe. It suggests dropping turnover requirements and emphasized on qualitative selection criteria.
  - Weightage given to design value has to be clear and fixed as more than 65% of the registered architects in India are below 35 years and many firms are medium-sized, such changes are all the more required.

#### Way forward

- Policymakers maintain that developing countries like India have a quite low state capacity. Therefore, higher standards set in the matured economy and continued by governments with higher capacity cannot be suddenly implanted.
  - The dominant argument is that practices will improve as economic growth happens and as the country builds capabilities. However, this incremental approach to be moderated.

## 18. Re-imagining the school education in India

Source: [Indian Express](#)

GS-2: *Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education.*

**Synopsis:** We need to reimagine our school education system to ensure quality education for all and to make India a knowledgeable super power.

### **Background:**

- Currently, the school as an institution has been criticised by many experts for **turning into caged jails**, for being run like factories, functioning like corporate enterprises and for forcing the curriculum into the child.
- In this backdrop, we will evaluate how the school system has been envisaged by great personalities, **what are the drawbacks in our present schooling system and how we need to improve it to make school education inclusive, knowledgeable and as an institution for self-discovery.**

### **How the school system has been envisaged by great personalities?**

Progressive thinkers have always envisioned “free schools” for children. They always believed that school should be made to fit the child rather than the other way round. For example,

- **Leo Tolstoy** (Russian Novelist) himself founded a school for the children of poor peasants at his home (Yasnaya Polyana) without any strict schedule, homework or physical punishment.
- **Maria Montessori** (The first Italian woman to become a doctor) educational philosophy too emphasised on children’s freedom and choice.
- **Rabindranath Tagore** in his classical tale **The Parrot’s Training (Totaakahini)** has vehemently criticised the **rote learning method** followed in the Indian school system.

### **What are the issues with government schools in India?**

Government schools in India faces the following challenges,

- **Firstly**, the **poor Infrastructure** in government schools leading to instances such as roof collapse.
- **Second, lack of effective governance and monitoring.** For example, Children’s falling sick after consuming mid-day meals.
- **Third**, there is a deep segregation of school systems in India, ignoring the **1966 Kothari Education Commission’s** recommendation for a common school system.
- **Fourth**, existing inequality among children’s due to **widening digital divide**, the poor do not have access to mobiles, laptops and internet connectivity.
- **Fifth, lack of political will** to strengthen the government schools in India which can be understood from the point that government is pushing towards privatisation by handing over land and managements to private organisations.

### **What needs to be done?**

**We need to improve on the following areas to provide a healthy education to our younger generation.**

- **Firstly**, we need to improve the **schooling infrastructure** by providing Clean toilets, drinking water, library, a tinkering lab, and a playground.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- **Second**, we need to think on having classes with **mixed age groups** instead of segregating children by age. This will allow children to learn at their own pace and make learning a fun activity. For example, **David Horsburgh's Neel Bagh School in Kolar, Karnataka**, Here, Children's could study Class V Telugu, Class III English and Class VII math all at the same time.
- **Third**, we need to **identify the champions** from within the government system and use them as effective resource people. This will surely motivate many teachers to perform better and achieve excellence.
- **Fourth**, **government** needs to co-operates with best NGO's like **PRATHAM** to bring in best practices from all over the country.
- **Fifth**, we need to envision a plan to **bring tens of thousands of retired professionals** as teachers as they will bring years of practical experience to learning.
- **Sixth**, as we reimagine the school system, we must strive to bring more **neighbourhood learning spaces as places for community learning**. This can be done by utilising community halls in large housing societies and by creating an "**activities centre**" in each housing society.
- **Seventh**, we need to build a free archive for Indian languages such as **archive.org** where nearly 1.5 million people log in every day. The recent announcement by the government that it will buy bulk subscriptions of scientific journals to make them **accessible for all** is a step in the right direction.
- **Lastly**, we need to reimplement the success of Delhi government schools throughout India where government schools have become better than private ones by improving infrastructure (no stinky toilets), giving dignity to teachers, **constituting school management committees** and by involving many good NGOs for **innovating learning methods**.

We need to reimagine our school as a place where children with different backgrounds class, caste, religions, abilities can study together and learn to care and empathise. They should also be trained to excel in **soft skills** such as cooperation, group work, **compassion, human dignity and plurality of opinions**.

### 19. What are the issues in ailing American democracy?

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

*Gs2: Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests, Indian Diaspora.*

**Synopsis:** The rioting by the Donald Trump supporters in the **US Capitol** seeking to stall President-elect Joe Biden's certification by Congress personifies the **decaying Democracy in America**.

#### **Background**

- Recently, a violent mob (loyal to President Donald Trump) in an attempt to overturn America's Presidential election stormed the U.S. Capitol and forced lawmakers into hiding.
- This act of violence indicates that **American democracy is critically ill**.

#### **What are the reasons to perceive that American democracy is under threat?**

According to the author, American democracy suffers from five disorders.

- **Firstly**, the major headache of what the American democracy is witnessing is the breakdown in the culture of **bipartisanship** (opposing political parties find common

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.

Visit [academy.forumias.com](https://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.



ground through compromise) that was so intrinsic to American politics and kept the system working.

- **Bipartisanship** in America has been replaced by **ideological chauvinism** built on a **psychology of hate** that sees competitors as the enemy within. This mindset particularly is incapable of compromise, consensus and difficult to cure.
- **Second**, is the **rise of the plebiscitary leader** which is similar to **Max Weber's concept of charismatic personality** has created a **partisan constituency**.
  - A Plebiscitary leader speaks to his followers, directly, bypassing institutions, that are supposed to limit his powers. It is like every person voting on every policy-matter.
  - For example, the ideologies built by Mr. Trump such as “**make America great again**”, “**drain the swamp**”, “**lock her up**”, “**stop the steal**” has exaggerated the feeling of grievance and have created a partisan constituency.
  - In this type of politics, institutions becomes weaker and locus of power shifts to the political leader.
- **Third**, is the **weakening of America's democratic institutions** by disrupting its checks and balances by Mr. Trump. For instance,
  - Bureaucrats who have opposed his views, have been replaced immediately and media too was suppressed by dubbing their reports as **Fake news** when they highlighted about his transgressions
  - **Institutions are the life and soul of a democracy** as they check the excesses of power, socialise elected representatives into democratic politics, embody the rules and conventions to maintain balance between private and public interests. Any nation that subverts its institutions, do not thrive.
- **Fourth**, is the evolution of the political formula of **neo-liberalism** that has been used by capitalist elites to not just accumulate wealth but to make the non-elite feel that such accumulation is in the public interest.
  - These Political formulas **gives legitimacy to elite rule** and American democracy today has become the **textbook example** of the political formula of neo-liberalism.
- **Fifth**, is the **increasing inequality in American society, which provided lifeblood to all of the above problems**. With the help of charismatic leadership of Trump and use of vigilante **politics** the government was successful from diverting the citizens from the real issue of rising inequality in American society.
  - **vigilante politics**: an organized effort outside legitimate channels to suppress or eradicate any threats to the status quo

American democracy will need to **self-examine** itself and need to fix the loop holes that allowed a **narcissistic leader**, with **plebiscitary power** to expose the fragility of its institutions. It needs to reform itself to set a precedent to other nations such that this model of politics, **the politics of hate** will not be entertained in any other country.

## 20. Gulf reconciliation

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

**Syllabus-** **GS 2** – *Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.*

**Synopsis** – Gulf leaders have signed a solidarity and stability agreement towards ending the diplomatic rift with Qatar in the 41st Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Summit in Al-Ula, Saudi Arabia.



### Background-

- In 2017, Saudi Arabia and its allies [UAE, Bahrain and Egypt] decided to boycott Qatar and imposed a naval, air and land blockade.
- Qatar was charged to be too close to Iran and backed radical Islamist groups.
- The four countries presented Qatar with **13 demands** as conditions for ending the embargo, which included-
  - Closing Al-Jazeera and other Qatar funder TV network,
  - closing a Tusking military base in Qatar,
  - Reducing diplomatic ties with Iran and
  - Ending interference in other countries internal affairs.

However, Qatar did not budge despite the heavy economic cost.

### What are the impacts of 2017 boycott on Qatar?

Qatar showed resilience and manage the economic blockade. Qatar was able to deepen its relations with Turkey and Iran during the embargo, as both countries provided vital support.

- **First**, When the Saudi and Emirati airspaces were closed, **Iran offered Qatar global connectivity**.
- **Second**, Turkish **troops arrived in Qatar** and **Iran increased shipments of supplies** to the import dependent country. Qatar also **bolstering its ties with Turkey** during this period, which is eager to play a bigger role in West Asia.
- **Third, Qatar played an important role in the U.S.-Taliban deal** and continued to host talks between Taliban representatives and the Afghan government.

Saudi Arabia and its ally's embargo on Qatar failed in its objective and Members of the GCC signed a deal in AlUla, Saudi Arabia to remove all the sanctions over Qatar and re-open their land, sea and air borders to Qatar.

However, Qatar has made few concessions to reach the reconciliation. The 13 specific demands were replaced by a broad agreement on non-intervention in other countries' internal affairs and cooperating to ensure regional stability and security

### What are the main reasons behind reconciliation?

- **First, to counter Iran-** The move is mainly aiming to create a regional bloc to counter Iran as the rift in the gulf helped Iran.
  - Iran, reeling under U.S. sanctions, got some financial relief from Qatari payouts for using its airspace. Lifting the air and sea blockades, the Saudis and the Emiratis could deny Iran of those funds.
- **Second, bridging the Gulf between two American allies-** The reconciliation also a signal of unity for incoming administration of President Joe Biden.
  - By resolving the feuds, Saudi Arabia will be able to put forward a much more united stance in front of US against Iran as Joe Biden is preparing to renegotiate the Iran nuclear deal.

### Way forward-

- Although the Gulf reconciliation is a progressive step, especially in warming relations between Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Saudi Arabia should learn from the mistakes and build ties based on mutual interests and cooperation.

## 21. Kenneth Arrow's paradox and why elections are flawed

Source- [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus- GS-2

Synopsis- Theory of Arrow's paradox and the impact of loss of concentration

### Introduction-

- The mechanics of all elections are flawed. The mathematician Kenneth Arrow laid bare the flaws in elections.
- The internet helps the minority voice to instigate a large part of the populace. The recent U.S. presidential election is an example of this.

### What is Arrow's paradox?

The theorem is named after mathematician and Nobel laureate **Kenneth Arrow**, who demonstrated the theorem in his doctoral thesis in 1950.

He identified that in any electoral system where three or more options exist, a curious paradox comes into play. Views of the minority voice can dictate the broader choice. His finding is now called Arrow's Paradox.

### For example-

- A set of population has three preferences in the run-up to an election which pits binary choices against each other – A= go to war or B= Don't go to war.
- the voters will be distributed along three lines as follows:
  - **The minority** – The hawks, those who want to go to war.
  - **The majority of voters but are roughly equally split.**
    1. The doves, who prefer not to go to war under any circumstance.
    2. The realists, who don't want to go to war unless it's absolutely necessary.
- The minority hawks have the ability to dictate the outcome by convincing the realists by prevailing on the realists that war is actually needed.
- Arrow's Paradox can cause an election which should have a predictable outcome to become a farce since the outcome can be gamed to allow minority factions to prevail.

### How arrow paradox theory swayed US elation result?

People now generally lose concentration after eight seconds, highlighting the affects of an increasingly digitalized lifestyle on the brain.

- The recent events such as **Proposition 22** in US elections have proved this phenomenon.

### Proposition 22

- Uber, Lyft and other gig industries poured money into their **'Yes on Proposition 22'** campaign, raising over \$200 million and the courts to preserve their business model by keeping drivers from becoming employees eligible for benefits and job protections.
- **Misleading campaigns-** 58% of more than 11 million voters choosing to keep drivers classified as independent contractor, without the additional steps needed after that to get to the truth.
- The outcome was a defeat for labor unions that had pushed for a state law aimed directly at Uber and Lyft, mandating they provide drivers with protections like minimum wage, overtime, health insurance and reimbursement for expenses.

It is certain that there will be future attempts at influencing elections using both intense messaging which takes advantage of our shortened attention spans as well as the setting of agendas of electoral choice which Arrow first described.

## 22. Diplomatic practices

**Source:** [click here](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 2

**Synopsis:** India is unwilling to interfere in the political turmoil of Kathmandu and Beijing on the other hand is making efforts to preserve the unity of ruling party in Nepal. Stances of both the countries are very different from their traditional foreign policies.

### Introduction

Interventions in the happenings of neighbouring countries have been a permanent feature of Indian and Chinese foreign policy.

- China's intervention in Nepal is a part of its interventionist strategy across Asia and beyond.
- Big nations like China and India always interfere in other nations but ward off possible threats to their own sovereignty. For example, India countered intensely the Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's comments on the farmers' distress.

### On what factors does India's national sovereignty depend upon?

The national sovereignty has always depended on **the ability of the nation to secure it by its widespread national power**. Big nations tend to intervene more, and the smaller ones find ways to manage this through the politics of balancing against their large neighbours.

- **First**, India has to carefully manage the unavoidable and active interaction between the domestic political processes of India and its neighbours.
  - **Active and direct intervention** in the domestic politics of neighbours must be a sensible exemption rather than the rule in India's regional diplomacy.
- **Second, the bitter past of partition** leave the domestic political connotations of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan knotted together and complicate their relations as distinct sovereign bodies.
- **Third**, the concept of national **sovereignty and effectiveness of third-party intervention is limited by circumstance**. Outside mediations in the domestic politics of neighbours are rarely successful and yield unplanned penalties.

### What are the steps to be taken?

It is extremely hard for even the most powerful nations to make the smallest states agree to do what is right on issues such as democratic governance, minority rights and federalism.

- **India can only encourage and not force Colombo and Kathmandu** to respect the rights of Tamils and Madhesis but given the complex web of linkages across South Asian borders, Delhi can't avoid dealing with these challenging issues either.
- **India should try to be a dependable partner and reliable friend** and should be committed to strengthening bilateral ties "on the basis of mutual trust, mutual interest, mutual respect and mutual sensitivity" as promised by the minister of external affairs to the political leaders in Sri Lanka.

### Way forward

- Delhi's constant quest of this agenda could help India in managing the multifarious dynamic with its neighbours a little better.

### 23. Dialogue and deliberation with beneficiaries are a prerequisite for Welfare Policymaking

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs2: *Important Aspects of Governance, Transparency and Accountability, E-governance-applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential.*

**Synopsis:** The state and central government can learn from the good practices of Rajasthan on **dialogue and deliberation** with beneficiaries while policy making to transform from mere governance to good governance.

#### Background

- The recently enacted **Farm laws** were passed without any consultation with the farmer community.
- Even when policies are made in good principles, for effective programme implementation, **consultations and deliberations** are needed during the initial stages of law making.
- If the farm laws were made by taking consultations from the relevant stakeholders especially from the farming community, we could have avoided the ongoing Farmers protest in Delhi.
- **The case of Rajasthan**, that has a healthy tradition of consulting with worker groups and civil society organisations during the **initial stage of policy formulation** and to take continuous feedback from the field to carry out periodic midway course corrections serves as a shining example for effective policy making.

#### How Rajasthan shines as a text book example for effective policy making?

- The example of the implementation of the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)** in Rajasthan can illustrate this better.
- Though MGNREGA wages are now directly credited from the central government to a worker's bank account this system faces the **Issue of payment rejections**. There are numerous reasons for rejection, for example,
  - There are instances where block level data entry operators make errors in entering the account or **Aadhaar** details of workers.
  - There are instances where money does not get credited due to technical issues, for example, the **issue of 'Inactive Aadhaar'**. This happens when the linkage of the worker's **Aadhaar** and their bank account is broken in the software maintained by the NPCI.
  - Sometimes banks are not able to transfer money as the beneficiary account remains

#### How the Rajasthan government was able to solve the Issue of payment rejections?

- To resolve payment rejections, the **Department of Rural Development of the Government of Rajasthan** has held numerous discussions which resulted in conducting **periodic workshops** with the relevant stake holders.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- Through workshops the worker groups and civil society organisations interacted directly with the aggrieved workers, administrative officers from the village level to the State level, and bankers.
- Through **Continuous dialogues** with aggrieved workers, they were able to finalise a detailed guideline with well-defined responsibility, clear timelines, and monitoring and protocols to be followed by officials to resolve the issue.
- This has resulted in a significant reduction in payment rejections in Rajasthan. Within a period of 1 year, the Rajasthan government was able to clear ₹380 crore worth of payments to workers that were earlier stuck due to rejections.
- By resolving the payment issue through **dialogues, deliberations and constant feedback**, the government ensured that every person who has worked, gets their full payment on time
- There is also another case of **Jan Soochna Portal** similar to **MGNREGA** where government through a 'digital dialogue' involving government officials and numerous civil society organisation have designed and formatted each scheme of **Jan Soochna Portal**.
- **Jan Soochna Portal** was launched to facilitate **The Right to Information (RTI) Act** that was obscured by issues such as **ill-defined formats, inaccessibility**
- The JSP is a single platform in the **public domain** providing information across 60 departments of over 104 schemes. The JSP makes **disclosure of information accessible for all**.

Federalism and good governance require constant constructive engagement between people and officials through Deliberation and debate. A constitutionally committed government should listen to the voices of the marginalised before making welfare policies.

### 24. Paying women for domestic and care work

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs2: Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections of the population by the Centre and States

**Synopsis:** Paying women for domestic and care work will not reduce or redistribute their burden. It will only lead to mere recognition of their efforts.

#### Background

- Women bear a disproportionately **high burden of unpaid domestic work and care work** in India.
- According to the **all-India Time Use Survey (2019)** data, females bear more than 83% of the burden of **domestic and care work** both in Tamil Nadu and India.
- To end this disparity, recently, Kamal Haasan's political party, **Makkal Needhi Maiam**, proposed that homemakers should get due recognition through payment for their work at home.
- This proposal has generated curiosity and reopened the unsettled academic debate of Paying women for domestic and care work.

#### Can the proposed policy address the huge gender disparity in unpaid care work?

Evaluation of **Makkal Needhi Maiam** party's proposal reveals that though it will be a progressive step, it has the risk of furthering the gender disparity in unpaid work within homes.

- According to economist Diane Elson (2017), the **public policy** should aim at closing the huge **gender gap** in **unpaid domestic and care work** through '**recognition, reduction and redistribution**' (**Triple-R**).

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- The **Makkal Needhi Maiam** party's proposal only satisfies the first component of Triple-R, that is 'recognition'.
- Since it is women who predominantly carry out unpaid domestic and care activities, often at the expense of their employment prospects and health, the monetary reward is a recognition of their contribution to the well-being of the household and the opportunities forgone by women. The proposal appears progressive, for this reason.

However, the proposal also has the potential to increase women's burden. This is because

- Firstly, paying monetary benefits will endorse the social norm that domestic and care work are 'women's work', for which they are being paid.
- Secondly, paying monetary benefits for women makes redistribution' of the burden of unpaid work impossible. This is because, paying women for domestic and care work will give Rights to men that women are bound to do these unpaid activities as they are being compensated.
- Instead of incentivising men to participate more in household work and reducing women's burden by redistributing the responsibility, the current proposal might do the opposite.

The electoral promise of Paying women for domestic and care work cannot possibly address the 'strategic' gender needs of reducing and redistributing women's burden. What is needed is to Incentivise men, to participate more and spend longer hours in sharing unpaid work.

### 25. Formalising the work of community workers

Source: [Indian Express](#)

*Gs2: Development Processes and the Development Industry — the Role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders.*

**Synopsis:** Government should strive to formalise the work of community workers such as **Anganwadi, ASHA and National Health Mission workers** to make them accessible for various **social security benefits** such as safety, insurance, risk allowance and fixed wages etc.

#### Background

- In India, there are about a lakh **ASHA worker**, 1.3 million **Anganwadi workers** and another 1.2 million **Anganwadi helpers**. (Community workers)
- At present, community workers are classified as "**honorary workers**" and are denied of **minimum wages**, leave and other conditions that is available to formal workers.
- Even in the best paid states, this **honorarium** is not even close to the government-mandated **minimum wages** offered to workers doing comparable jobs.
- Also, the state by preferring to call them as "volunteers" denies the opportunity to recognise their crucial work as **care service providers**.
- This led to the two-day **nationwide strike** by **Anganwadi, ASHA and National Health Mission workers** demanding safety, insurance, risk allowance and fixed wages during the pandemic

#### What is the importance of community workers to society?

- Firstly, during the COVID-19 the **Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) and Anganwadi workers**, women "volunteers" functioned as the **frontline warriors** in the battle against the pandemic.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- Second, these community workers serve as the **connecting link between the community** and the state machinery. This was very much visible when there was uncertainty and fear of the virus.
- Third, the services of community workers are essential to **facilitate localised approaches** to problems as they have robust contacts at the grass roots.

### What is the way forward?

- Firstly, there is an urgent need to **recognise Community workers as workers**. It can be done by Implementing the recommendation of **Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour** to formalise the work of community workers.
- Second, Recognition of care work in the public sphere could also help in settling the issue of gendered and unequal division of house work and **unpaid care burden**.

It is high time that the state recognises the contributions of these women and accept them as workers. The recognition of **ASHA and Anganwadi volunteers** as workers will be a tribute to their contribution during the **pandemic** and also it gives a fresh start towards the structural understanding of **women's labour** and their status in the labour market leading to **Gender sensitive policy making**

### 26. Reasons for frictions between Puducherry CM and LG

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs2: Separation of Powers between various organs Dispute Redressal Mechanisms and Institutions

**Synopsis:** Tussle between the Puducherry CM and LG Kiran Bedi is one of the examples of increasing frictions between constitutional functionaries. In today's article we are listing the causes of frictions between them.

#### Background

- Recently, Puducherry Chief Minister (CM) V. Narayanasamy staged a three-day protest against **Lieutenant Governor (LG)** Kiran Bedi.
- The CM accused LG of "**functioning in an autocratic manner**" and adopting an "**obstructionist attitude**" in ensuring the progress and welfare of people and asked the Centre for the recall of the Lt Governor.
- Whereas, LG defended herself by stating that the Lt Governor's secretariat is ensuring **just, fair and accessible administration, within the legal limits**.

#### What are the causes of friction between Puducherry LG and CM?

Both have been in friction over issues such as;

- The **appointment of the State Election Commissioner**, an office critical to holding elections to local bodies in the Union Territory.
- The **implementation of direct benefit transfer** in the public distribution system using cash, instead of free rice, being given to beneficiaries.

#### How experts are seeing this issue?

- **First**, the Assembly elections are likely in April or May. The protest of CM leading the protest against the Lt Governor was seen as an **act of political mobilisation**.
- **Second**, experts opine that LG should also take into account the legitimate requirements of an **elected government** and try to accommodate Mr. Narayanaswamy's views on important matters such as the **free rice scheme**.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- Even the Centre itself did not see any benefit in the **DBT mode** when it decided to give additional food grains (rice or wheat) free of during the **COVID-19 pandemic**.

Now the responsibility lies with the Centre to step in and restore the breakdown of communication between the Lt Governor and the Chief Minister in the interest of smooth administration.

### **27. Issues in the process of COVID Vaccine trial**

**Source:** [Click here](#)

*Syllabus: GS-2, Health and related issues*

**Synopsis:** Many issues have been highlighted in the Phase-3 trial of **Bharat Biotech's COVID-19 vaccines. Those issues could have been avoided after HPV vaccine trial controversy.**

#### **Introduction**

**In a previous case, Human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccine trial** was carried out on nearly 23,500 girls in the 10-14 age group in Vadodara, Gujarat and Khammam without proper consent. Almost eight years later the **Supreme Court of India criticized the government** for its inability to take action on illegal clinical trials carried out in India by multinational countries.

Present situation of the approval process in India suggests **nothing much has changed**.

- The **phase-3 clinical trial of Bharat Biotech's COVID-19 vaccine** resembles the HPV vaccine because it seems that the trial is suffering from serious violations.
- The **ICMR which has assigned the task of promulgating research ethics guidelines** is also the cosponsor of the Covaxin trial.

#### **What are the problems in the Covaxin phase 3 trial?**

**After the 2013 SC order, The Indian regulator made audio-video recording of the informed consent of each individual participant mandatory in 2019.** Written consent from the participant had to certainly be taken before the audio-video recording.

However, the process was not followed properly;

- **Firstly**, no efforts were made to explain and inform the participants about the pros and cons of taking part in the trial instead; they were deceived by the trial site to think they were getting a COVID-19 vaccine for free.
- **Secondly**, many participants didn't know about their rights to get free medical care in case of any adverse events.
  - Many aware participants sought medical help from private practitioners whereas some of the participants don't possess mobile phones, thus medical follow-up was not possible.
- **Thirdly**, not enough time was given to discuss with the family before signing the consent form. At least in a few instances, the consent was taken after vaccination, which is a serious violation.
  - Participants were not given a copy of the consent form and other documents to prove their participation.
- **Fourthly**, 700 participants in the trial were illiterate and there is no evidence that an impartial witness was present during the entire informed consent process to attach his/her signatures to the consent form.
- **Fifthly**, communities living close to the hospital have told the media that **they were offered ₹750, and luring people in trial for money is unethical.**



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- Although the company maintained that the amount was the reimbursement for the transportation and loss of wages, an **open announcement of remuneration was unethical**.
- **Lastly**, it is not yet confirmed that institutional ethics committee approved the advertisement for inviting people to the trial, in lieu of money.

### Way forward

- India has already approved 2 vaccines for restricted use and the virus spread slowing down, so enrolling participants will be more challenging. Therefore, a thorough and impartial inquiry will bring back confidence in clinical trials.

### 28. SC judgment on-farm laws: violation of separation of powers

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Gs2: Separation of Powers between various organs Dispute Redressal Mechanisms and Institutions.

**Synopsis:** The Supreme court (SC) has stayed the implementation of farm laws. The decision is a case of violation of separation of powers.

### Background

- Recently, the SC has stayed the implementation of three farm laws until further orders.
- The SC has also given direction to set up a four-member committee to break the deadlock between farmers and the Centre.
- Many experts opine that by this judgment the supreme court has encroached into political and administrative management without any legal basis and seen as **a violation of the separation of powers**.

### Are the reforms necessary? If yes, why it has been opposed?

According to many agricultural experts, agriculture needs serious reform for achieving the following objectives.

- To improve farmers' incomes and well-being.
- To increase crop diversification.
- To make agriculture more environmentally sustainable.
- To make subsidies less counterproductive.
- To keep food inflation down, and ensure that nutrition reaches all.

The government was right to think reforms were necessary. However, the government failed to gain the trust among Farmer communities by prioritising the wrong reforms. For example, "choice of traders," which did not tackle the underlying issues, but created more uncertainty.

### What are the negative implications of recent Supreme Court decision?

The Supreme court (SC) decision has been criticised on the following grounds;

- **First**, SC's involvement in Farm bill issue will give a misleading impression that a **distributive conflict** can be resolved by technical or judicial means.
- **Second**, by setting up a four-member committee to hear farmers' grievances the SC has invaded into **political territory**. The role of judiciary is to determine **unconstitutionality** or illegality of law rather than **mediating a political dispute**.
- **Third**, the court has **lost its neutrality** by seeking to break the momentum of a **social movement**.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- Rather than facilitating the orderly and law-bound expression of protest the court has acted to defuse the genuine **democratic protest** by shifting the onus on the farmers to stop their protests.
- **Fourth**, the court's action will disrupt the normal political give and take in a democracy between the government and people.
- **Fifth**, the court has redefined the function of mediation the court by **violating the first rule of mediation**. i.e., The mediators must be acceptable to all parties and appointed in consultation with them. Whereas the SC has **Suo Moto** appointed a four-member committee without any consultation with farmer groups.
- **Finally**, the court has also positioned itself as an **arbiter of national security**. It admitted the **Attorney General's** contention that farmers' protests may be the vehicle for the **Khalistan movement**.

### What is the way forward?

- In principle, any mediation to break the stalemate is welcome. But the **mediation** has to be a political process between the government and the people and it is the responsibility of the Parliament to fix the issue.
- What the farmers need is clarity of law and the right to make their demands heard through the political process and **civil society** not the **paternalism** of the court

The court, in the process of saving the government from being on the political back foot the court, has forfeited the very thing it needs most, the repository **of trust among its citizens**.

### 29. Importance of Reviving SAARC

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

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

**Synopsis-** SAARC has become dysfunctional and not able to meet since last 6 years. Reviving SAARC is crucial for countering common challenges in the region, amid COVID pandemic.

#### **Introduction**

- The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is the regional intergovernmental organization and geopolitical union of nations in South Asia founded in 1985 with 7 member nations.
- The group was established to promote regional economic growth through active collaboration. But in past years there has been deadlock type condition especially due to India-Pakistan conflict.
- In 2016, the Summit schedule in Pakistan got canceled in the backdrop of the terrorist attack in Pathankot and Uri. Since then, no SAARC meeting has been held.

#### **Why SAARC failed?**

The last physical SAARC summit was held in 2014 and subsequently, summits could not be held after that. The reasons for a dysfunctional SAARC are;

- **First, India-Pakistan bilateral relations**—Enmity between India and Pakistan is one of the main reasons why SAARC is not prospering. This long-standing conflict has impacted other meeting of SAARC as well, making it easier for member countries, as well as international agencies, to deal with South Asia as a fragmented group.
- **Second, the novel coronavirus pandemic** and **China's aggressions** at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) put a new spotlight and shadows for SAARC meeting.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](http://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

India's position on not attending SAARC is particularly confusing. It has been attending SCO meeting even after clashes with China and engaged with Nepal even after boundary related issues.

### Why reviving SAARC can be helpful in countering the common challenges?

#### 1. Pandemic Challenges-

- **First**, South Asia's experience of the pandemic has been very unique. The COVID-19 has provided a window for introspection and for scaling up preparedness for inevitable pandemics in the future.
- **Second**, a Collaborative approach is also necessary for the distribution and further trials needs for the vaccine as well as developing cold storage chain.
- **Third**, the pandemic's **impact on South Asian economies**- The economic consequences of COVID -19 on South Asia are proving to be even greater than the health Challenges in the region.

#### 1. China's Factor in SAARC- Amid India- China border tensions, as part of its global expansionism, China is chipping away at India's interests in South Asia, a unified South Asian platform remains India's most potent countermeasure.

- China expanding footprints in South Asia by investments in trade, tourism, BRI, and other programs should be given attention. All SAARC members except Bhutan, are **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** partners of China will be hard placed to help individually.
- Only a matter of time before china, it may hold a meeting of all SAARC countries except minus India and Bhutan for they are all part of the BRI, and even that they will be invited to join RCEP, which India declined.

### Way forward

- To make SAARC more effective the organization must be reformed and member countries must reach a consensus regarding the changes required.
- The tragedy of Covid-19 provided an opportunity for India to demonstrate its compassionate face to secure a region at peace with itself
- In dealing with the challenge from China too, both at India's borders and in its neighborhood, a unified South Asian platform remains India's most potent countermeasure.

### 30. Allahabad HC judgment on Special Marriage Act

Source: [Indian Express](#)

*Gs2: Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation.*

**Synopsis:** Allahabad high court recently ruled that interfaith couples want to register under Special Marriage Act can refrain from publishing the mandatory 30-day notice for their intention to marry. It will have a significant bearing on our society.

### About the Special Marriage Act

- **The Special Marriage Act was** originally enacted in 1872 to provide a framework for inter-caste and inter-religious marriages.
- As per **Section 5 of the Special Marriage Act**, marriages irrespective of the religion of the couple require parties to give a 30-day **public notice of their intention to**

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.

Visit [academy.forumias.com](http://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

**marry** before solemnizing their marriage (performing the public ceremony/rites of marriage.)

- The public notice produced by the parties is displayed at the office of the marriage officer. It invites potential objections to the marriage.

### About the case

- Recently, a writ petition was filed in Allahabad High Court.
- While hearing the case the court found that, though the couple wanted to marry under the **Special Marriage Act**, the mandatory provision for 30-day notice compelled them to take the easier route of **religious conversion**.
- **Thus, Section 5 of the Act** has been a barrier to inter-faith couples' marriages who wanted to marry under the **secular law** rather than taking religious conversion routes.
- Consequently, Court allowed not to publish the mandatory 30-day notice of their intention to marry.
- Also, the court allowed the individuals, who desire to have more information about their counterparts, to opt for publication of notice under Section 6 of **the Act**. Such publication of notice under free will not be violative of their fundamental rights.
- The court also noted that when marriages under personal law do not require a notice or invitation for objections, such a requirement for inter-faith couples' is obsolete in secular law and cannot be forced on a couple.

### What were the reasons given by the court to nullify mandatory 30-day notice?

The court has made the following observations against the mandatory provision for 30-day notice,

- It is an **invasion into the fundamental rights of liberty and privacy of individuals**.
- Also, it **violates the right to choose a partner for marriage** without interference from state and non-state actors.
- It is **against the changed social circumstances and progress in laws** proposed by the **Law Commission**".
  - As **the Special Marriage Act** was originally enacted in 1872, It is **unethical** to force the present generation living with its current needs and expectations to follow the customs and traditions adopted nearly 150 years back.
- It is against the previous judgments of the Supreme Court on the **right to privacy**. The court cited the following landmark judgments;
  - Right to Privacy **recognized by SC in 2017 Aadhaar case**.
  - The **2018 Hadiya case** (a medical student who converted to Islam to marry a Muslim), which held that the right to choose a partner is a fundamental right.
  - The 2018 ruling in which the court **decriminalized homosexuality**.
- The court also cited the example of Himachal Pradesh High Court, which in 2012, had struck down provisions that required notice of intention in case of religious conversion in the **Himachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act, 2006**, citing that it violates the fundamental right to privacy.

### What would be the impact of this judgment?

The judgment will have the following impacts on our society,

- **First**, it will remove hindrances to inter-faith marriages and bring relief to inter-faith couples who are being increasingly targeted by **vigilante groups**.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](https://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.



- **Second**, as the **Special Marriage Act is a central legislation**, couples across the country seeking to marry under the law will benefit from the liberal ruling of the provisions.
- **Third**, it paves way for abolishing and cleansing obsolete **Victorian-era protectionist provisions** in other laws as well.
- **Fourth**, it will be a body blow to **Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance, 2020** which have provisions such as
  - Declaring conversion of religion by marriage to be unlawful
  - Mandating a 60-day notice to the District Magistrate
  - Requiring the Magistrate to conduct a police inquiry to know the real intention behind the conversion.

### **31. Strategic guidelines for COVID vaccine program: Challenges and suggestions**

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

*GS-2: Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/ Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.*

**Synopsis:** Government has issued strategic guidelines for the effective rollout of COVID vaccine program. There are challenges in the way of the Vaccine program that should be tackled as soon possible.

#### **Strategic guidelines for COVID vaccine programme**

With limitations of Vaccine related to efficiency and efficacy in mind, government has framed **strategic guidelines** for COVID vaccine programme

- Guidelines were framed using the knowledge acquired over three decades of implementing the Universal Immunisation Programme. It aims to cover 30 crore people by July 2021.
- It **has specified involvement of 19 departments**, donor organisations and NGOs at the national, state, district and block level **in the roll out of COVID vaccine programme**.
- The guidelines have also clearly mentioned the **priority criteria**. Citizens eligible for the first round of **COVID vaccine programme** includes the following,
  - The **caregivers and front-line workers** working under the department of health, defense, municipalities, and transportation.
  - Persons above the age of 50.
  - And persons below the age of 50 who suffers from **comorbidities** such as diabetes, hypertension, cancers, and lung diseases are all included.
- The strategic guidelines have also clearly stated in detail,
  - The skills, roles, and responsibilities of the required human resources.
  - The quantum of logistics required for delivering vaccines at point of use.
  - The requirement of physical infrastructure, monitoring systems based on digital platforms, and feedback systems for reporting adverse events.

However, it has been criticised that the guidelines are ideal and have failed to provide solutions for real-time issues of our health system.

#### **What are the challenges involved in effective rollout of COVID vaccine programme?**

There are many challenges to roll out COVID vaccine programme. They are,

- **First, unequal distribution of cold storage facilities among states**. For example, out of the 28,932 cold chain points, half are in the five southern states, Maharashtra and Gujarat.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- Whereas the eight states in the North and Odisha that account for over 40 per cent of the country's population have only 28 per cent of the cold chain points.
- **Second**, pertaining issues in our health care sector such as **poor human resources, a weak private sector**, poor safety and hygiene standards, frequent power outages, poor infrastructure will reduce the capacity to implement the vaccine programme with speed, quality, and accuracy.
- **Third**, a massive **immunization programme for 30 crore people** can distort the routine health service delivery and affect other immunisation drives, and can lead to exhaustion of health care workers.
- **Fourth**, acquiring the data for under the 50s with **comorbidities** will be challenging though we have data for the above-50-year-olds in the electoral rolls.
- **Fifth**, there are also challenge of tackling **Fudging, false certification, and siphoning off vaccines to private facilities** in the event of vast price differences between private hospitals and public hospitals.
- **Sixth**, the non-availability of efficacy data could result in huge wastage and gives scope for errors and duplication during the procurement and supply of vaccines.
- **Seventh**, the trust among the people on COVID vaccines are decreasing leading to suspicions and fears due to various reasons such as
  - Non-transparency of data on either of the two vaccines proposed for use in the program.
  - Opacity with which the licenses were given etc. **For example, have not completed the Phase 3 trials** that confirm the safety and efficacy of the vaccine.
  - Above all, India hasn't signed the **advance purchase agreements** for vaccines that have completed Phase 3 trials from other countries.

### What is the way forward?

- **First**, avoid the complexity of listing the **priority groups** throughout our country. It should be replaced by covering the complete area in one go, instead of sequencing them into different groups.
  - The areas could be ranked on the basis of a **vulnerability index** based on **disease burden, caseload of COVID infections, demographic profile**, health-seeking behavior and availability of infrastructure, etc.
- **Second**, to create confidence in the community we need to establish an independent team of experts under the aegis of the WHO to ensure adherence to recruitment standards, consent conditions, adverse event record management, compensation standards.
- **Third**, to build trust about vaccination programme we need to plan for large-scale public education and information programme through State- and local-level networks where people are informed, sensitised and their feedback was taken.
- **Fourth, People should be involved in decision-making.** For this Local leader from public figures, religious leaders, self-help groups, the media, and even educational institutions need to participate to help citizens understand its importance and build trust
- **Fifth, Science, evidence, and data analytics** need to be extensively used for effective policymaking.
- **Finally**, vaccination is not a complete solution to end the epidemic. We need to adopt safe behavior through a **communication strategy**. For this, the government can use its experience of controlling the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](https://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

The need of the hour is a winning strategy against epidemic that has drained us economically, socially and psychologically. Government needs to understand that the effective way of improving uptake of the vaccine while reducing costs is by creating participatory frameworks of engaging experts and communities and building effective and reliable public information, and transparency.

### **32. Issues in SC Mediation step on farm laws**

**Source:** [click here](#)

*Syllabus: GS 2*

**Synopsis:** The Supreme Court's decision to take a route of mediation, instead of judgment on the legality of the law, is being criticized by some experts. Let's have look at the criticisms?

#### **What are the issues in SC mediation process?**

Supreme Court-appointed a committee and put a stay on implementation of the laws. Although it is officially not called a mediation committee, but the Court does **mention its role in helping the negotiations between the farmers and the government.**

The committee route that SC has adopted should have been a legislative and executive exercise. Moreover, if it is an attempt to mediate, there are issues in it;

- Firstly, Mediation should be Voluntary. i.e. all parties must provide their consent to it. Major farmer's union have denied participating in it; thus, it is not a successful attempt.
- Secondly, **the mediators must be fair and neutral. Majority of its members have a positive attitude towards bill. Thus, it is not fair and neutral.**

#### **What are the steps to be taken?**

The Chief Justice of India said that the dialogues seem to be going nowhere, and something urgent needs to be done. If the Court wants to mediate due to the government's reluctance in doing so, then it must observe some prerequisites.

- **First**, the committee should be made of such people who give out **an image of impartiality, ability and seriousness.** The committee should have knowledge and respect so that it can influence sceptics to give the process a try.
- **Second**, assurance should be taken from the government that its **ministers at high posts will meet the committee and participate** in the proceedings as this will assure the consent of all parties.

#### **Way forward**

- Once discussions start and are properly guided, solutions are possible. It may well be that once the important elements get focused upon and the key concerns expressed, approaches will open up which will secure legitimate interests to the maximum extent possible. All this is possible only when mediation is on the lines of principles.

### **33. New opportunities for India in Afghanistan**

**Source:** [click here](#)

*Syllabus: GS 2 – India and its neighborhood*

**Synopsis:** Change of power in the US has provided India with an opportunity to re-engage with Afghanistan.

#### **Introduction**

- The National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval paid a 2-day visit to Kabul. It was the first trip to Afghanistan, by a top Indian official, since the start of Doha Talks between Taliban and Afghan republic representatives.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- Both sides discussed efforts for building regional consensus on supporting peace in Afghanistan and counter-terrorism cooperation.

### What has been the course of events in Afghanistan?

- **The US has agreed to withdraw all its troops from Afghanistan** after an agreement with the Taliban.
- **Although the dialogues between the Taliban and the Kabul delegation** were still ongoing, President Ashraf Ghani is suspicious of Taliban's intentions. It is due to Taliban's refusal of a ceasefire and a high level of violence.

Now the Presidency in the US is changed. It will be tough foreign policy tasks for the Biden Administration, to take onward the Afghan process started under the Trump government.

### Why are India's stakes in the Afghanistan Peace process?

The main concern of India is linked to Pakistan's involvement in the process;

- **First, Pakistan has been key to bring the Taliban to the talks table.** Thus, at present, it has an upper hand compared to India.
- **Second**, Pakistan's intelligence agency has friendly relations with the Taliban and the Haqqani network.

### What Opportunities does India have to increase its presence?

The Change of power in the US has provided an opportunity to both India and the Afghan government, to raise apprehensions about the Afghan process to Washington.

- **Firstly**, Kabul will pressure for the conditions for talks that the **Taliban must agree to a ceasefire**. Afghan Foreign Minister is looking for India's help in this.
- **Secondly**, the new administration in the US is expected to be **more sensitive to the concerns of other participants in Afghanistan**. For example, concerns of women and rights groups about the return of the Taliban.
- **Thirdly**, External Affairs Minister of India said that Delhi **might increase "military assistance" to Afghanistan**.

### Way forward

- Now is the right time for India to **increase its presence in the Afghan peace process**. India should rethink the "temporary" closure of the Indian consulates in Afghanistan.

## 34. UK report classified India among 'difficult four' countries

Source: [Indian Express](#)

**GS-2:** Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests, Indian Diaspora.

**Synopsis:** The report released by the Royal Institute of International Affairs (UK) recommends an arm's length relationship with India due to rise of religious intolerance.

### Background

- Recently, the **Royal Institute of International Affairs** (UK) have proposed a blueprint titled "**Global Britain, Global Broker**", for Britain's future foreign policy after **Brexit**.
- As a matter of concern for India, the report has paid less attention to India's role in the futuristic vision of a "Global Britain".

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](https://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- The report **has classified India as one of the “difficult four” countries** along with **Russia, Turkey and Saudi Arabia**. India will be counted among the UK’s “rivals” or “awkward counterparts”.

**What was the reason given in the report for classifying India as one of the “difficult four” countries?**

**The report highlights two major issues for that**

- **First**, according to the report the rise of **Hindu nationalism** in India is weakening the rights of Muslims and other **minority religious groups**.
- This rise in **intolerant majoritarianism** is damaging the vision of a **secular, democratic India** envisioned by Nehru.
- **Second**, the report labels India as a **half-hearted supporter of liberal democracy** and a country with mixed approaches to **human rights abuses**.

**Why the report’s criticism towards India is meaningless?**

Criticism of India over **growing religious intolerance** and the **suppression of critique and dissent** is not a surprise. Most of the diplomats from various countries have consented regarding this. For example, the Canada has voiced against the **Kashmir internet shut down**.

But second criticism is particularly pointless. Despite being the world’s largest democracy, labelling India as a half-hearted supporter of **liberal principles** and institutions abroad is not correct, because,

- India for long been unwilling to step up on the global stage to the responsibilities of **“committed democracies”** due to uneven playing field in today’s international order.
- The 21st century Global order produces **unevenly distributed rights, obligations, and burdens** for post-colonial nations and the principle of equality and sovereignty of states still remains as a myth.
- Even today, the post-colonial states such as India, **do not enjoy full political and economic independence** on how they make decisions at home, nor in their efforts to shape the agendas of international institutions.

Thus, 2nd criticism of India can be precisely summarised in the words of **Former Indian foreign secretary and national security advisor Shivashankar Menon**. He said, **“Encouragement by western international partners for India to “behave responsibly” usually means doing what they would like us to do”**.

**What is the way forward for India?**

- **First**, India need not look into the issue of UK distancing from India too seriously. No nation today can move forward without factoring in India. Even the report has highlighted this.
- **Second**, India’s high-profile international activity in the next 2 years as elected member of the **UN Security Council** and as **host of the 2023 G20 Summit** should be effectively used to leverage India’s positions of influence in the international sphere.
- **Third**, India needs to build on the critical and normative resources to inspire greater **equality, legitimacy and inclusivity** in the international sphere.

### **35. Factsheet for administration of COVID-19 Vaccine released**

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

**Gs2: Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health**

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

**Synopsis:** Government has released a Vaccine **Fact sheet** that contains guidelines for administering both vaccines (**Covaxin and Covishield**).

### **Background**

- Union Health Ministry has sent a **comprehensive fact sheet** for both vaccines (**Covaxin and Covishield**) to all states and immunisation officer.
- The Centre has also asked the states and immunisation officers to disseminate the fact sheet to all programme managers, cold chain handlers, and vaccinators before the rollout.

### **What is this fact sheet?**

The fact sheet contains the general guidelines that should be followed during the initial phase of the **Covid-19 vaccination drive**, while vaccinating the priority **group** (3 crore people).

The fact sheet contains the guidelines on the following aspects,

- Physical specifications such as dosage, cold chain storage requirements.
- Specific guidelines on contraindications (a factor due to which the vaccine is to be withheld to certain categories of people)
- Guidelines on adverse events
- Details on special precautions.

Now we will examine in detail, the exceptions, precautions, and possible adverse events that are mentioned in the fact sheet.

**First**, the **general guidelines** in the fact sheet contain the following directives to ensure that proper care is taken while administering the vaccine.

- Only **people over the age of 18 years** are eligible for vaccination.
- Since **2 doses of vaccines are required** per person, every Person should be administered the same vaccine in both the dosage. It is to deal with the issue of possible interchangeability.
- While administering the vaccine to a person with a history of any bleeding or coagulation disorder, platelet disorder, clotting factor deficiency, or coagulopathy, it should be done with caution.
- Both **Vaccines have to be stored at +2°C to +8°C** and needed to be protected from light. If it is found frozen it has to be discarded.

**Second**, the **specific guidelines on contraindications**. The three categories of people for whom the vaccine should not be administered. They are,

- Persons who have shown a history of an allergic reaction.
- People who show an immediate or delayed onset of an allergic reaction to vaccines or injectable therapies, pharmaceutical products, and food items.
- Pregnant and lactating women.

**Third**, guidelines on **temporary contraindications**. 3 categories of persons for whom vaccination is to be deferred for four-eight weeks. They are,

- Persons showing active symptoms of SARS-CoV-2 infection.
- Covid-19 patients who have been treated with anti-SARS-Cov-2 monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma.
- Acutely unwell and hospitalised patients (with or without intensive care) due to any illness.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

**Fourth**, the fact sheet under **not contraindicated**, specifically mentions that persons suffering from following health conditions can get vaccinated. However, the response to the Covid-19 vaccine may be less in these individuals. They are;

- Persons with a past history of Covid-19 infection.
- Persons with a history of chronic diseases and comorbidities (cardiac, neurological, pulmonary, metabolic, and malignancies).
- Persons with immunodeficiency or HIV, and patients on immune suppression due to “any condition” can be administered with the Covid-19 vaccine.

**Fifth**, the fact sheet has also separately mentioned the **Possible Adverse Reactions** for both the vaccines along with the required precautions to be taken during the adverse reaction.

Guidelines provide the list of mild adverse events and rare adverse events that may follow the vaccination from both **Covishield and Covaxin**. **It also provides for the precautions and medication that will be required in the above cases.**

**For example; In case of Mild adverse events for Covishield like** myalgia (deep muscle pain), malaise (a feeling of overall discomfort), common painkiller **paracetamol** may be used.

### **How Covid-19 vaccines administered in other countries have performed till now?**

Though the overall performance is found to be safe so far, there were few adverse events recorded in a small section of the population. For example, in the case of the US,

- The **US Centers for Disease Control (CDC)**, monitoring by the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System detected 21 cases of anaphylaxis (a severe, life-threatening allergic reaction that occurs rarely after vaccination) out of a reported 1,893,360 first doses of the **Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine**.
- Whereas in the case of **Modern’s mRNA vaccine**, which was authorized for emergency use in the US, the CDC said data is still limited.

### **36. Issues in Standardisation of research**

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

*GS – 2: Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.*

**Synopsis: Standardisation of research** based on the basis of standards in European institutions is harmful to the very essence of research, particularly for subjects like social sciences and humanities.

#### **Why standardization of research is harmful to research practices?**

The recent case of **Elsevier, Wiley, and ACS** filing lawsuits against pirate websites such as **SciHub** and **Libgen** which allows access to millions of research papers can help us understand the **issue of control and governance over knowledge in academia**.

**First** issue is applying “**global**” standards based on the practices of American and European institutions to higher education in the global south as well. This system has many issues.

- **Such** Precise point-based measurements of **knowledge production** is often incompatible with the educational systems in countries like India.
- Moreover, there is no clarity of the relevance of such knowledge in societies, even in Europe and America.

**Second**, in an Indian context, the UGC mandated “standardisation” process has particularly impacted social sciences and humanities research in Indian universities. **How?**

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- In India, UGC has been the regulatory body responsible for maintaining standards in higher education.
- The UGC is using an objective criterion to evaluate institutions. It is creating many issues;
  - Institutional funding has been linked to ranking and accreditation systems like NAAC and NIRF.
  - In faculty research, Universities are being ranked based on citations in global journal databases like **SCOPUS**.
  - Moreover, ranking of universities based on citations fails to distinguish between the various disciplines like **STEM (science, technology, engineering and management) and social sciences**. For example,
    - In **STEM disciplines**, research is often highly **objective and quantified**, and conclusions can be published more easily as reports.
    - The same in the case of **social sciences and humanities** research is difficult as it is subjective, **analytical and argumentative**.
    - It impacts research in **social sciences and humanities** by **devaluing books as authentic forms of research as**, social science disciplines like history, sociology, politics researchers are more confined to writing books rather than publishing articles in journals.
- **Third**, the **issue of Peer review** is affecting scholars research in the following ways,
  - Since the continuous publication of research has been linked to the growth of Teachers. They spent less time in **pedagogy and research** and most time on getting their articles published.
  - A large surplus of articles has surfaced on the same topic due to that, competing with each other for citations.
  - Moreover, the **Peer review process** itself is subjective and depends upon the knowledge and inclination of the particular reviewer.
    - For example, there are many instances where the same article received two opposite reviews.
- **Fourth**, the issue of **ghettoization of research** in journal databases. The **paid subscription** makes **research inaccessible for students** in universities.
  - This has made **access to knowledge inequitable** by favouring the elite institutions and their Students.
  - This has also led to the **growth of Pirate websites** such as **Libgen and Scihub**.

### What is the way forward?

- **First**, “**Regulating**” research needs to be replaced with “**facilitating**” research. Regulations without facilitation will merely bureaucratize the governance of knowledge without generating any pathbreaking research.
- **Second**, to improve the research potential of teachers and to raise the Indian education standards to global levels, the following issues impacting scholars research must be resolved.
  - Uncertainty in employment.
  - Longer teaching hours accompanied by a dismal student-teacher ratio.
  - Lack of career break, research, and travel grants.
  - Lack of access to research facilities and office space.
  - Decreasing expenditure on public institutions, including education.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](https://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.



### 37. 6th meeting of Nepal-India Joint Commission

Source: [The Hindu](#)

GS-2: India and its Neighbourhood– Relations

**Synopsis:** Nepal's Foreign Minister co-chaired the 6th meeting on Nepal-India Joint Commission.

#### Background:

- Recently, Nepal's Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali took a three-day visit to India to attend the **6th meeting of the Nepal-India Joint Commission**.
- Following **this meeting**, Nepal's Foreign Minister delivered the speech at the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) on "Nepal-India Relations".

#### What are the recent developments that have taken place in the meeting?

During the visit both sides, India and Nepal discussed the entire bilateral relations, including **COVID-19 cooperation** and **border management**. However, the issue of border dispute was not discussed.

- First**, during the Joint Commission meeting, Nepal has raised the Kalapani boundary dispute with India. But no discussions were carried from India's side.
  - But this holds significance because for two reasons,
    - One**, this is the first time that the Foreign Minister of Nepal has presented the boundary dispute to India since the issue erupted in November 2019.
    - Two**, the observations from **the meeting** about the border dispute reveal a slight positive change in Nepal's articulation of the dispute.
  - Second**, they also took up Kathmandu's vaccine requirements to fight the **COVID-19 pandemic**. Kathmandu approved Serum Institute of India's (SII) **Covishield vaccine**.
    - India assured that the requirements of Nepal would be prioritised after the roll-out of vaccines.
  - Third, India raised the **issue of "submission"** of the report on the **"review of the Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1950"** which is yet to be submitted by **Eminent Persons Group (EPG)** constituted by Mr. Oli in 2016 to the Indian Prime Minister.
  - Finally, they **reviewed the development partnership** between both sides.
    - While both sides welcomed the commencement of construction of the **third Integrated Check Posts (ICP) at Nepalgunj**, they also discussed the benefit of the **(ICP) at Birgunj and Biratnagar**.
    - As a developmental aid, India also conveyed that it would build two **cultural heritage projects** in Nepal on the **'Pashupatinath Riverfront Development'** and the **'Bhandarkhal Garden Restoration** in Patan Durbar' **through grant assistance**.

### 38. Importance of nutritional security to improve immunity

Source: [Indian Express](#)

GS2: Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/ Services relating to Health

**Synopsis:** There is a strong case to provide **Nutrition sufficiency** among citizens to increase immunity against infections.

#### Why we need to provide nutrition sufficiency?

**The need for adequate nutrition is summarized as follows,**

- First**, the strength and duration of the vaccine response do not depend entirely on the vaccine, it also depends on age, nutritional status, and existing health condition among the persons receiving the vaccines.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](https://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- **Second, nutrition is an important influencer of both natural immunity and adaptive immunity.** Ignoring the nutrition aspect will lead to **neglect of nutrition in public health policies.**
- **Third,** the body's reaction to vaccination depends on nutritional status. For example, diets having high levels of **ultra-processed foods** may incite high levels of inflammations in the body, and also, they adversely affect the composition of **healthy biomes in our gut** thereby adversely affecting our immunity.
- **Fourth,** even studies from various vaccination drives such as cholera, Rota virus have shown that specific nutrition's are vital for our immunity. For example, **Zinc, selenium, vitamin E** can enhance natural immunity.
- **Fifth,** Recent studies have shown that even **cellular immunity** is influenced by nutrition. For example,
  - Studies from Japan tested with mice states that nutritional state is important for preventing the infectious disease from vaccination
  - Similarly, a study from France revealed that elderly persons who have received Zinc, selenium supplements were able to develop more antibodies and fewer respiratory infections compared to others who didn't receive Zinc, selenium supplements.

### What needs to be done to achieve nutritional security?

- **First,** we can think of **providing nutrition counseling during mass immunization Programme.** Enabling people to consume nutritional food will enhance their immunity levels and help to build a robust immune response.
- **Second,** we need to **reconsider our agricultural priorities** and need to reshape our food systems.
  - For this, we need to **replace processed foods and cereal stripped of Fibre foods with pulses, millets, vegetables, nuts, and fish.**
- **Third,** we need to plan effective strategies for mitigating the adversities of climate change. For example, a recent study from Columbia has found that **climate change can negatively impact the nutritional quality of staples** resulting in an increase in zinc-deficiency, protein-deficiency, and iron deficiency.
  - Diversification of crops by **replacing rice cultivation partly with sorghum, millets** can improve **nutritional food security in India** along with enhancing Indi's climate resilience.
- **Fourth, ultra-processed foods** can be regulated and taxed to improve their production, promotion, and consumption.

India needs to think on a **nutritional strategy** that makes consumption of nutritional foods available and affordable which can enable people for consuming **balanced diet** that promotes good growth and good health. The above steps not only will increase nutritional security but also **reduces the risk of Zoonotic infections like Covid 19.**

### 39. Why Politicians should be given priority in Vaccination drive?

Source: [click here](#)

Syllabus: GS – 2 – Health-related issues

**Synopsis:** The policy of vaccinating health workers on priority is correct and justified. But, should elected representatives be given priority in vaccination drive?

### Introduction

As the first phase of vaccination began on 16th January, nearly 2 lakh healthcare workers received Covid-19 Vaccination. It is an apt decision to give priority to the healthcare workers due to their contribution and vulnerability.

### Why Health Care Workers are getting priority?

Providing priority to the healthcare workers in Vaccination drive is important due to the following reasons;

- Healthcare workers have been fighting the contagious virus from the frontline ever since the pandemic began; many frontline workers also lost their lives to the virus.
- Including priority workers is also important due to the fact that health workers are more prone to infection, and it will curb the transmission rate.

### Should politicians be included in the priority list?

Bihar, Odisha, and Telangana requested the Center to include elected representatives in the priority population. It would be a feasible step due to the following reasons:

- **Firstly**, giving lawmakers the title of frontline workers won't cost much. This would mean an **addition of only 6000 people to the priority list, in the first phase.**
- **Secondly**, Parliamentary activities were restricted for the last 10 months but with the vaccine coming in, legislative functions **could be resumed.**
- **Third**, vaccinating political leaders with permitted COVID vaccines will boost public confidence in them.
- For example, leading figures of the country's healthcare system including the director of AIIMS, Randeep Guleria, took the shots on the first day of the drive in India.

### 40. Need and ways of Decongesting Indian prisons

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

*Gs2: Reforms in Indian criminal justice system*

**Synopsis:** Health Experts are calling federal prisons a “breeding grounds for uncontrolled transmission” of the virus. There is an urgent need of decongesting them. What are the ways to decongest Indian prisons?

### Background

- In India there are around 1,400 prisons, ‘housing’ over **5 lakh prisoners**. These prisoners are facing the threat of Covid pandemic, with no organisational support.
- Whereas, in the countries such as U.K and U.S, activists are strong enough to influence public policy and voice against **human rights abuse** in prison.
- Also, these Countries have accurate data over the impact of pandemic on prisoners in **public domain**. For example
  - The data from Texas state shows that the pandemic has killed more than 230 people in prisons, 80% of whom had not been convicted of a crime.
  - Similarly, The United Kingdom Ministry of Justice figures shows that prisoners testing positive in October stood at 1,529, with five deaths.
- However, **India lacks such crucial data on Prison Statistics in public domain** and also such statistics are not being demanded of our criminal justice system.

### How a lack of effective criminal laws is affecting under-trial prisoners in India?

According to the **Prisons Act of 1894**, prisons come under the exclusive responsibility of State governments. Over the years, despite being upgraded to the status of **correctional homes**, these prisons are facing the challenge of **Congestion of Under Trial Prisoners (UTPs)**.

- According to the **National Crime Records Bureau's** report for 2019 out of 4.5 lakh prisoners, 3.3 lakh are '**under-trial prisoners**', i.e., investigation or trial is supposed to be 'in progress'.
- These **UTPs** are detained under **Section 167 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)** which provides for "Procedure when investigation cannot be completed in 24 hours".
- The original Cr.PC of 1898 specified the period of detention as 15 days. Later, through amendments, it was extended to periods that can go up to 90 days and, in some exceptions, to an indefinite period.
- Out of 3.3 lakh, about 2.2 lakh are either not likely to be even charge-sheeted, or they are likely to be acquitted."
- This is a huge **violation of the basic human rights of UTPs**, who are already facing the issue of **inadequate healthcare facilities and torture by other rowdy prisoners**.
- Moreover, it is a **huge injustice to the families of the UTPs**. For example, their children are denied a normal childhood, proper education, and are exploited by a cruel section of the society and are **forced to take to the path of crime**.

### What needs to be done?

Pandemic provides an opportunity for an immediate review of all **prisoners' vulnerability to the epidemic**,

- **First**, we need to conduct repeated testing in all prisons, especially sub-jails. An arrangement for the isolation and hospitalization of who testing positive needs to be planned.
- **Second**, to **de-congest prisons**, the **Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Act, 2005**, which contains the much-needed Section 436-A needs to be activated.
  - it provides for an under-trial to be released on a personal bond, with or without sureties if the under-trial has spent half of the period of prescribed imprisonment in detention.
- **Third**, 'Prisons' is purely a '**State subject**'. But it is imperative of the centre to support the states as the **Constitutional responsibility** of handling **infectious and contagious diseases listed in the Concurrent List**.

It is the duty of the state to vaccinate inmates at the 'Hospitals of Correction'. It is similar to anyone in a state hospital may rightly expect to be vaccinated on a priority against the virus.

### 41. India-US relation under Joe Biden administration

**Synopsis:** Biden's administration is focussed on ensuring economic security of the middle class by reducing the **expansive globalist ambitions**. What does it mean for India?

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

*GS- 2: Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests, Indian Diaspora.*



## Background

- **Two important themes** that are at the centre of Biden's vision are,
  - To **"restore the soul of America"** by resolving the multiple economic and political challenges confronting the US.
  - To rebuild the backbone of the nation, **the middle class**.
- Biden's emphasis on the middle class is not very different from Trump's emphasis on **"America First"**. But it will not be called the same due to negatives associated with it.

Understanding this continuity of "America First" policy under Joe Biden will help India to engage productively with the new American administration.

## What are the possible elements of Biden's foreign policy?

The report titled **"Making US Foreign Policy Work Better for the Middle Class"**, co-authored by Sullivan (designated National security advisor under Biden administration) **offers insight into the future of American foreign policy**. It has pointed the following observations,

- **Economic anxiety and discontent** in the American heartland are deepening.
- Similar to Trump's view on **Free trade**, the report highlights that **trade liberalisation has not benefitted everyone in the US**
  - The report recommends addressing the **deepening income inequality at home** and domestic investment and industrial strategy that will allow America to become more competitive in the world.
- It recognizes that the **expansive globalist ambitions** of the American foreign policy have lost much domestic political support. For example,
  - Escalating a new Cold War with China.
  - Or waging struggle between the world's democracies and authoritarian governments.
- Pointing to the overreach of American foreign policy in recent decades the report proposes for a **"less ambitious" foreign policy** in the future.

The report signifies under Biden's administration, the US will adopt a **less interventionist approach** in geopolitical issues, reduced international military interventions, **absence of trade wars** as against Trump years.

## What does it mean to India?

- **First**, in trump years India-US relation saw both developments and confrontations going together. For example, sharpening tensions on trade was going parallel with deepening defence and security cooperation
  - Under Biden administration, India finds an opportunity to overcome the bilateral differences on trade and elevate defence cooperation to a higher level.
- Second, India's pragmatic international orientation to the **Atmanirbhar strategy** could open some space for working with Biden on **reforming the global trading system** and make it more politically sustainable.
- Finally, America that plans for a **less ambitious" foreign policy will** need strong partners like India who can contribute more.

A political understanding of **strategic burden-sharing** would help India-US to develop deeper military cooperation and more intensive diplomatic coordination in the **Indo-Pacific**.

#### **42. RERA 2016 protects the interest of Homebuyers**

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Gs2: Statutory, Regulatory and various Quasi-judicial Bodies

**Synopsis:** As compared to RERA 2013 act, the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act (RERA) 2016 was successful in empowering the home buyers. This has reduced the incidence of unfair trade practices in the real estate sector.

#### **How RERA 2016 act was better than RERA 2013 act?**

The RERA 2013 act had the following issues;

- It did not cover either “ongoing projects” or “commercial real estate”.
- Also, the minimum limit for registration of projects was so high that it excluded many projects from the coverage under law.
- These exclusions made the 2013 bill meaningless and harmful to the interests of home buyers.

However, the 2016 RERA act has fixed all the loopholes in the RERA act 2013,

- First, after a holistic review along with multiple stakeholder consultations both “ongoing projects” and “commercial projects” were included in the act.
- Second, the minimum limit for registration of projects was reduced to cover more projects. It reduced evasion under law.

#### **How the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act (RERA) 2016 has contributed to the empowerment of consumers?**

RERA act addressed the existing power gap in the real estate sector between buyers and promoters. It further empowered the consumers in the following ways.

- First, the real estate sector which was largely unregulated is now being regulated under RERA.
- Second, RERA along with demonetization and GST has reduced the use of black money in the real estate sector.
- Third, it has the mandatory rules of getting approval of competent authority for project plans.
  - Also, according to the RERA act, the builder needs to register with a regulatory authority.
  - This stringent regulation has ended the practice of selling real estate based on false advertisements.
- Fourth, to prevent fund diversion, Promoters are required to maintain funds of a specific project in separate bank accounts.
- Fifth, disclosure of unit sizes based on “carpet area” has been made mandatory. It has reduced the scope for unfair trade practices.
- Sixth, it promotes equity by making it mandatory for payment of “equal rate of interest” by the promoter or the buyer in case of default.

#### **Federal issues in its implementation**

RERA is a product of cooperative federalism. Though the Act was introduced by the Central government, state governments are empowered to notify the rules, appoint regulatory authorities and the appellate tribunals. Currently, RERA is notified in 34 states and Union territories.

However, the act is facing implementation-related issues in some states such as Maharashtra and West Bengal.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- **First**, in the case of Maharashtra, the state enacted its own law in 2013. The law was not consumer-friendly, and it has created a disadvantageous position for homebuyers in Maharashtra.
  - However, the center repealed the state act and enforced the RERA act 2016 for the regulation of real estate sector.
- **Second**, in the case of West Bengal, the state government ignored RERA act 2016 and enacted its own state law (the West Bengal Housing Industry Regulation Act (WBHIRA)) in 2017.
  - Even after multiple efforts by the Centre, West Bengal refused to implement RERA.
  - Though there was a central law on the subject, Knowingly, the state government enacted WBHIRA in 2017.
  - This act of WB government is a violation of constitutional principles and has been challenged in the court.

As SEBI is to securities market RERA will be to the real estate sector. RERA act 2016 will provide huge impetus to the growth of real estate sector while significantly contributing to the needs of Urban India.

### **43. Issue of Big Tech's increasing power**

Source: [Indian Express](#)

*GS-2: Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests, Indian Diaspora.*

#### **Background:**

- Recently, sitting US President Mr. Trump's account was removed from online platforms like Twitter, Facebook.
- This has divided the world with two contrasting views.
- Few people say that the social media companies were right to suspend Trump's accounts.
- While others are concerned about the enormous power that these platforms wield over the **public discourse**, and their impact on democracy.

#### **Issue of Parler app removal from tech giant platforms**

- **Parler is a social networking site** that remained as an alternative to Twitter.
- Recently, **Amazon** removed it from its cloud hosting service **Amazon Web Services (AWS)**. Similarly, Apple and Google removed Parler from their app stores.
- This incident demonstrated the enormous power that Amazon wields as a web infrastructure service provider.
- This has also raised concerns about how the bigger tech players can destroy new competition due to their stronghold over the cloud infrastructure. For example,
- AWS controlled 45 per cent of the cloud infrastructure in 2019, while Google and Microsoft control much of the rest.

#### **Issues in action against Trump**

**In many instances, the tech giants have responded with inconsistency in their actions.it has been discussed below with examples.**

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- **First**, In March 2020, Facebook and Twitter deleted posts by **Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro** and **Venezuela's President Nicolás Maduro** for **Covid19 misinformation**.
  - But no action was taken against Trump, who was also propagating misinformation about the Pandemic.
- **Second**, during the **Black Lives Matter protests** Trump tweeted **"When the looting starts, the shooting starts"**. This was an act of glorifying violence. However, Twitter responded very lately to remove the tweet.
- **Third**, the action against Trump was only taken after he **lost his political leverage**. Congress had ratified the victory of President-elect Joe Biden before that.
- **Fourth**, Digital platforms are **for-profit corporations**. Over the years, digital platforms have never been **neutral arbiters** and are acting in the **nexus with the state governments**.
  - For instance, these platforms have repeatedly **blocked the ability of Wikileaks** to accept donations on PayPal and other payment intermediaries.
- **Fifth**, after a 2018 court order, Trump was forced to unblock several dozen followers. The argument was put forward by petitioners that they were entitled to follow the official announcements and comment on public affairs of the handle.
  - If the same logic is applied in the case of Trump ban, he cannot be stopped from making public announcements by a social media company.

### What is the way forward?

- Experts agree that the rules and guidelines of social networks are not being consistently applied throughout the world.
- The issue should be resolved by setting up a common global rule for social networks.
- EU countries are the pioneers in regulating the tech giant with investigations, fines, and legislation. They have taught the world how to control these giants without expelling them from the country's economy.

### 44. New transition in India-Nepal relations

**Source:** [click here](#)

*Syllabus: GS 2 – International Relations*

**Synopsis:** Recent Joint Commission Meeting in Delhi was a positive development for bilateral relations of India and Nepal.

#### **Introduction**

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal, Pradeep Kumar Gyawali visited New Delhi for the sixth meeting of the India-Nepal Joint Commission.

#### **What was discussed in the meeting?**

In this joint meeting discussions on the following project and assistance took place. It will strengthen India-Nepal relations: –

- India assured an early delivery of vaccines to Nepal, in its fight against the pandemic.
- **Cross-border rail connectivity projects**, including a possible Raxaul-Kathmandu wide-scale railway line, were discussed.
- Further easing of cross-border movement of people and goods through ICPs was discussed.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- **Integrated Check Posts (ICPs)** at Birgunj and Biratnagar were inaugurated recently. These ICPs have helped in the smooth association of people and trade.
- These ICPs will ease trade and transit for Nepal, since it is dependent on India's seaports for majority of trade.
- Nepal has shown support **for India's permanent membership of an expanded UN Security Council (UNSC)** to redirect the changed balance of power.

However, India declined Nepal's request of including boundary issues in the commission meeting. India suggested finding a fresh mechanism for that purpose.

### What are the possible reasons behind this positive development?

- India is not getting involved in any internal political conflict of Nepal and willing for deeper engagement with all sections. It has sent a positive signal in Nepal.
- After a brief period of friction, PM Oli is himself trying to reach India now. This policy change is also a result of China's hyper-interventionism in Nepal's politics.

### Way forward

With the increasing demand for restoring the monarchy, Nepal cannot afford to enter another round of political volatility. India has always played a positive role in Nepal, a good India-Nepal bilateral relation in this regard is mutually beneficial.

### 45. Challenges to internationalisation of higher education

Source: [Indian Express](#)

GS-2: Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources

**Synopsis:** NEP, 2020 has an objective to attract International branch campuses (IBCs) of top Universities in India. But there are several challenges associated with it.

### Background

- Recently, National Education Policy-2020 (NEP-2020) was introduced in India. **NEP-2020**, for the first time has highlighted **internationalisation of higher education** as an objective.
- To achieve this, **NEP-2020** allows the **top 100 World Class Universities** to open **international branch campuses (IBCs)** in India.
- The reason behind this is to raise the standard of research and teaching to international levels and **reduce the out-bound mobility** of Indian students.

In this article, we will discuss the challenges that needs to be addressed at the implementational level before allowing International branch campuses (IBCs) in India.

### How IBCs will help to increase the inflow of foreign students?

- In April 2018, India launched **Study in India Programme** with generous scholarships to increasing the inflow of foreign students. However, it did not succeed in attracting foreign students on a large scale.
- It is expected that, the establishment of IBCs in India will increase **in-bound mobility of students and scholars**.
- The international standards maintained by the IBCs will attract international students to explore and experience Indian education and culture.

### What are the challenges that need to be addressed?

**Top universities are willing to open international branch campuses (IBCs)** in India. But they need clarity in areas essential for operationalisation of branch campuses in India.

**First**, such universities are not driven by state **sponsored infrastructures**. For example, the **Dubai Knowledge Hub**, that offered ready to move in campus, office space. IBCs wants to accumulate profits like any other business enterprise and **repatriate income to their home**.

**Second**, which subjects and areas of research to be allowed for IBCs is an area of concern. Most of the time **Humanities and Social sciences** are not considered due to low profits in them.

**Fourth**, IBCs demands for **more autonomy** in curriculum design, daily functioning of the institution etc. Thus, they might take decisions against the local requirement if they feel it is not profitable.

**Fifth**, IBCs will also **expect to be treated on par with Indian institutions** in matters of government funding and scholarships.

### 46. Vaccine diplomacy

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

Gs2: India and its Neighbourhood- Relations.

**Synopsis:** India's Vaccine diplomacy will raise India's Stature at the global arena.

#### **Background:**

- Till now, India has supplied Covid19 vaccines to Maldives, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Nepal, Myanmar and Seychelles. The initial supplies of Covid19 vaccines have been sent free of cost.
- It is expected that India will be distributing vaccines to other countries including Sri Lanka and Afghanistan.
- By supplying vaccines at quick interval, India has delivered on the commitments it made to these countries.

### What is the significance of Vaccine diplomacy?

**First**, it will lead to new kind of diplomacy based on the **common good and common interests** of the South Asian people.

**Second**, India's prevailing good reputation over manufacturing medicines will only increase in the **south Asian region**. This will increase the scope of **Medical tourism** in India.

**Third**, Sale of Covid19 vaccines will be economically beneficial. For example, Countries such as Myanmar and Bangladesh have started negotiating for **commercial agreements** with manufacturers for more quantities.

### What is the way forward?

India should refrain from entering into contest with China for supply of vaccines to its Neighbours. Because,

- First, **Vaccines are a global common good**.
- Second, the demand for **anti-COVID 19 immunization** across the world is increasing. it is the responsibility of all countries with the capability to manufacture the vaccine to make it **available equitably to all**.
- Third, Immunization is in every country's interest, as it is crucial to **restore the movement of people and goods across nations**, to build a global immunity prior to COVID19 situation.

#### **47. Privacy and surveillance**

**Source:** [click here](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 2

**Synopsis:** Issue of WhatsApp privacy policy has again raised the concern of data privacy in India. What are the options available with the government to handle this issue?

#### **Introduction**

Facebook's revenue model uses data on its platform to allow advertisers to target relevant consumers.

Now Facebook Inc. wants to integrate the services from WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook. The intent behind this step is to monetise their use by consumers.

WhatsApp is one of the most used Social Media App in India. It is capable to share user metadata and mobile information of Indian users with Facebook, its parent company.

**Now,** Indian government is looking for ways to protect the data privacy of Indian Users.

#### **What are the steps that government can take?**

The Ministry of Electronics and IT has sent WhatsApp a series of queries. It includes, why Indian users would be sharing information with Facebook, unlike EU.

- Data protection laws in the EU have strict restrictions on storage and transfer of user data. Thus, data transfer from WhatsApp to Facebook is not possible in such regions.
- Whereas, in 2019, government in India diluted the provisions of Data protection bill. For, example, it only set the requirement of keeping sensitive personal data in India. Whereas, in the Srikrishna Committee recommended the same for all personal data.
- The Indian government should also bring in a strong data protection bill which aligns with the recommendations of the Srikrishna Committee.
- The committee tried to address concerns about online data privacy in line with the 2018 Puttaswamy judgment.

However, data localisation also carries the possibility of domestic surveillance over Indian citizens.

#### **Way forward**

Privacy is better addressed by stronger contractual conditions on data sharing and better security tools being adopted by the applications that secure user data. Thus, with the data localisation, stronger checks on state surveillance are also required.

#### **48. Are courts encroaching on the powers of the executive?**

**Source:** [click here](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 2

**Synopsis:** The instances of court's intervening in the executive matters without providing comprehensive legal reasoning are increasing. SC's recent decision to put stay on farm laws has been analysed in this context.

#### **Introduction**

The Supreme Court is trying to make a political settlement between farmers and the government. It has put a stay on farm law and made a committee for mediation. But the court has not provided any legal or constitutional reasons for that.

### What are the contradictions in this decision of SC?

The following reasons suggests that the **decision of SC to stay farm laws was a clear encroachment into the domain of executive.**

**Firstly, the petition was** filed on the argument that **only states are eligible to enact farm laws under Seventh Schedule** to the Constitution. SC should have analysed the validity of such basis.

**Secondly,** the court is giving the example of the **protests during Maratha reservation case** in which it had issued a stay on the law in question. But in that case the stay was given on constitutional grounds.

**Third, the reason given by the court** for its decision was not a legal reason. It provided that this step will ease the hurt feelings of farmers and it will become easier to bring them on the negotiation table.

**Fourth,** In the recent years, SC has been **hesitant to take up constitutional challenges to similarly politically controversial moves.** This decision by SC also falls into the same category. For Example; the cases of Article 370, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, reservation quotas for economically weaker sections, electoral bonds, and the 'love jihad' laws.

**Fifth,** Earlier SC Held protests as **completely legal and part of the exercise of citizens' rights** under Article 19 of the Constitution. But in a related case told that the question of whether the tractor protests should be allowed or not is a **'law and order' question and the decision will be taken by Police.**

SC is under question of the critics these days, but the positive roles played by it cannot be ignored due to that. In the Navtej Johar case (Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India) court acted in a counter-majoritarian manner and decriminalised Homosexuality.

### 49. Impacts of devaluing domestic work

Source: [Indian Express](#)

GS-2: Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and issues arising out of their Design and Implementation

**Synopsis:** There are negative social impacts of devaluing the household care activities of women.

#### Background

- The following incidents have brought the issue of valuation of Women's household activities.
  - Recently, Kamal Hassan the leader of the **Makkal Needhi Mayam (MNM) party** made an election promise of a salary for Women's unpaid care work at home.
  - A recently released Malayalam film, **The Great Indian Kitchen** has highlighted the hard labour of women in the kitchen.
  - **As per time-use survey 2019,** nearly 4.5 lakh Indian women spend nearly five hours every day on unpaid domestic work. This time duration is 98 minutes daily for men.

#### Why household care activities by women need to be valued?

- **First,** like other work, household care work demands skill, creativity, and organization.
- **Second,** The household work performed by a majority of Indian women helps to sustain households. Also, it enables men to take up productive paid jobs, without hindrance at home.
- **Third,** the culture to take up unpaid care activities at home by women is one of the leading causes for their declining **labour force participation.** (one of the lowest in the world).



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- **Fourth**, It denies women an opportunity in a formal employment. For example,
  - A study by economist Ashwani Deshpande found that the **gender gap in domestic work** reduced during the lockdown, but widened again when many men returned to employment.
- **Fifth**, it compromises the rights of women **to participate in a democratic protest**. For example,
  - A recent statement by SC chief justice that women farmers from Punjab should leave democratic protests and return home.

### Is Paying salary for housework by the state a good decision?

The proposal will only recognize the value of women's household care, but it will not address the following issues.

- **First**, the proposal does not challenge the **notion of fundamental hierarchy** in the patriarchal home. It establishes that a woman's place is in the home.
- **Second**, a salaried worker is entitled to bargain for higher wages, and exit her workplace. But, such negotiations cannot take place at home.
- **Third**, a woman cannot get a fair price for her domestic works at her home. It is because the household care work is not seen as valuable in fundamental societies.

### How this practice of devaluing household care work affects society?

- **Impact on marginalized people:** The practice of devaluing household care work allows caste-privileged women and nearly all men to pass on this work to those from lower castes and the marginalized for low wages.
- **Impact on work culture:** It creates a **work-culture** that gives preference to males. It is because they can afford to work 24×7 and can ignore the demands of the home.
- **Impact on domestic workers:** It leads to low wages paid to domestic workers. It is evident from the struggle of **ASHA workers**.

Removing the hierarchies of patriarchy and making women independent at home will make the family a happy place.

## 50. World Economic Forum: Need for 'the Great Reset' of capitalism

Source: [Indian Express](#)

*GS-2: Important International Institutions, agencies, and fora – their Structure, Mandate*

**Synopsis:** WEF's executive chairman Klaus Schwab is advocating for rearrangement of the global order through "The Great Reset". India should also take this development seriously and try to limit the potential implications of this possible global reset.

### Background

- The WEF's (**World Economic Forum**) online Summit began recently. Its physical meeting is scheduled to take place in Singapore in June 2021. It is only the second time after 2002 that Davos annual meeting is taking place outside Davos.
- Choosing Singapore instead of any European or American city is a symbol of shifting focus on Asia.
- In this context, the World Economic Forum's initiative for "**The Great Reset**" has gained attention.
- In this article, we will discuss what is "Great Reset" and what are the key changes suggested by the "Great Reset" initiative, and how India should plan for it?

### What is “The Great Reset”?

- The concept has been given by the founder and executive chairman of the WEF- **Klaus Schwab**.
- **The concept is developed, based on the assessment** that the world economy is in deep trouble. Events like the **pandemic**, ongoing **technological revolution**, impacts of **climate change** have further worsened the global situation.
- Hence, **the concept of “The Great Reset”** suggests, there is an urgent need to reform global societies and economies. Reforms should be brought into every industry of the world and every country should participate in it.
- This initiative will mainly focus on reforming **market-led Capitalism into stakeholder capitalism**. Which will be focussed on ensuring equality and sustainability.

### Why the “Great Reset” initiative is a step in the right direction?

**Firstly**, economic reforms like deregulation and globalization reduced barriers to capital movement within the countries. Now it is being challenged even in a country like the US.

**Secondly**, US and EU countries failed in dealing with the COVID pandemic and its economic impacts. Whereas Asian Countries handled it effectively. It magnifies the failure of the Capitalism model of these countries.

### How focus areas of The Great Reset’ are relevant for the present world?

The agenda of **The Great Reset** focuses on many key issues faced by the world today. Three important themes among them are,

- **First**, serious thinking on moving from capitalism to “**stakeholder capitalism**”. Because
  - **One**, capitalism’s lack of concern for stakeholders/society’s interests and its greed for **profit maximization**. **For example**, Tech giants who are the big beneficiaries of deregulation pay few taxes and actively depress wages for working people.
  - **Two**, their increasing power to influence the governments is a cause of concern.
- **Second**, with the US rejoining the 2015 **Paris accord** on mitigating climate change. Now, the focus needs to shift on equal distribution of economic and social costs of moving away from carbon use.
- **Third**, the Liberalism of the ’90s resulted in increasing conflicts among nations and resulted in present “**competitive multilateralism**”. The forum will focus on global cooperation on important universal issues.

### Way forward for India

Rearrangement of the global order looks inevitable. **India should prepare for changes** that will be introduced due to it;

- India must actively contribute to the framing of new rules to govern global capitalism and the **reshaping of international institutions**.
- Simultaneously, we must also reform our own economy and society to make it more **equitable, sustainable**.

### 51. Reasons for increasing Palk Bay fishing conflict

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs2: India and its Neighborhood- Relations.

**Synopsis:** The recent death of 4 fishermen resurfaces the unresolved issue of fisheries conflict between India-Sri Lanka at Palk Bay.

**Background:**

- Recently four fishermen from Tamil Nadu died while fishing in **Palk Bay**.
- Tamil Nadu has accused Sri Lankan Navy of that. But, the Sri Lankan navy maintains that they died when their trawler collided with a naval vessel while trying to avoid arrest.
- The timing of the incident signifies the sensitivity of this issue. As recently, after a three-year gap, India and Sri Lanka have resumed their discussion on fisheries through a **Joint Working Group (JWG)**.
- In JWG, India demanded the early release of fishermen and the boats in Sri Lankan custody. On the other hand, Sri Lanka demanded to curb illegal fishing by Indian fishermen, which has adversely affected the livelihood of its fishermen.
- India has registered its strong protest against these deaths.

**Why the conflict has not been resolved yet?**

There are many reasons for the continuance of the conflict. They are,

- **Failure in implementing joint working group resolutions:** Earlier both sides agreed for no violence or loss of life while handling the fishermen. A hotline was **established** between the respective Coast Guards for that. However, the proposed **hotline** has not been operationalized yet.
- **Alternate solutions failed:** The plan to replace Tamil Nadu fishermen trawlers with **deep-sea fishing vessels** has not been successful.
- **Failure of Direct talks:** Attempts to negotiate a settlement through direct talks between fishermen from both sides have also failed.
- **Inability to find a common ground:** Sri Lanka favors an immediate **ban on unsustainable fishing practices** such as **bottom trawling**. While Tamil Nadu fishermen want a lengthy **phase-out period for the same**.
- **Insensitivity of Tamil Nadu Political leaders.** Political leaders in Tamil Nadu fail to acknowledge that incursion into Sri Lankan waters by the State's fishermen contribute immensely to the problem.

A comprehensive solution to end this conflict is to **ban unauthorized fishing. It should be followed by the** facilitation of **sustainable use of resources** by fishermen from both sides

**52. COVID Vaccine and Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy (STIP), 2020**

**Source:** [Click here](#)

**Syllabus:** **GS 2** – Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education and Human Resources.

**Synopsis:** The hasty **Emergency Use Authorization (EUA)** to the two COVID-19 vaccines is against draft **Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy (STIP) 2020**.

**Introduction**

Open Science principle is a global movement. It advocates steps against unethical practices such as fabrication and falsification of data, plagiarism, unethical authorship, etc.

**Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy (STIP), 2020**

The Government has prepared a draft of the **Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy (STIP)** in December 2020 based on the principle of "**Open Science**".

**To implement 'Open Science' principles**, STIP, 2020 provides for the following provisions:

1. **First, creation of Open Science Framework:** It will provide everyone with access to scientific data, information, knowledge, and resources.

2. **Second, FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable) terms:** Under FAIR terms, all data of publicly funded research will be available to everyone.

However, EUA to 2 vaccine candidates without efficacy data is not consistent with this policy of the government.

**Read – [DST releases Draft 5th National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy \(forumias.com\)](https://forumias.com)**

#### **What are the two first vaccine candidates?**

**First, Covishield:** It is developed by AstraZeneca and Oxford University. It is manufactured by the Pune-based Serum Institute in India. The overall efficacy of the vaccine:

**Major concerns on this Vaccine are 1.** Limited ethnicity data in the present trials and 2. The absence of results on elderly people above the age of 55.

**Second, Covaxin:** It is developed by Hyderabad based Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). EUA was provided to vaccine while It was undergoing Phase III trials.

Research on these vaccines was public-funded research. The ICMR funded the clinical trial site fees for Covishield and collaborated in the development of Covaxin. Thus, these vaccines fall under the scope of the draft STIP 2020. So all data on these vaccines must have been available publicly.

#### **What are the implications of non-transparency?**

- **First,** It may result in erosion of public trust in science and scientist.
- **Second,** It hampers the Self-critical and self-correcting nature of science. It includes scientists analysing the data available on new researches.

#### **Way Forward**

The government should implement STIP 2020 on a priority basis. It should make the data across the different stages of COVID-19 vaccine research public on ICMR's open access repository, the Department of Science and Technology, or other open access repositories identified by the CSIR.

### **53. Mandatory Minimum Sentencing under POCSO Act**

**Source:** [Click here](#)

*Syllabus: GS 2- Indian Constitution—historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions, and basic structure.*

**Synopsis:** Recently Bombay High Court has acquitted a man of sexual charges under POCSO act. The existence of Mandatory Minimum Sentence in the POCSO act is leading to these decisions.

#### **Introduction:**

A petition was filed in the Bombay High Court against the decision of the sessions court. The Session Court had convicted a person for the offense of sexual assault under Section 8 of the POCSO Act. The court sentenced him to imprisonment for three years. The person was accused of groping and trying to remove the clothes of a 12-year-old girl.

Bombay High Court in its decision acquitted the person of sexual charges under POCSO act and convicted him for a lesser offense under the Indian Penal Code (IPC). For its decision, High Court provided the following justifications:

- **Firstly,** the groping by the convict was not a direct contact i.e. skin to skin.
- **Second,** there are no specific details regarding the removal of clothes of the victim.



- **Third**, the offences under POCSO Act provide for stricter punishment. Thus, punishment requires allegations of a more serious nature and a higher standard of proof.

Before that in a similar case, **State v Bijender (2014)**, Delhi Court acquitted the accused under section 7 of POCSO Act. Instead, it convicted the accused of an offense under the IPC act. These judgments have a common reason behind them i.e. the existence of mandatory minimum sentence in POCSO act.

#### **What is the mandatory minimum sentence?**

Section 8 prescribes the punishment for the offense of sexual assault defined in Section 7 of the Act. It provides for the mandatory minimum sentence of 3 years and a maximum of 5 years.

**Where a law provides for mandatory minimum punishment, Courts cannot prescribe the punishment lower than that.** It does not give any discretion to the court to pass any lighter sentence. Only the statute will determine the sentence.

The sentence is prescribed to act as a deterrent to crime. There are many other laws such as IPC Section 124A, where mandatory minimum punishments have been prescribed.

#### **Case law: J&K v/s Vinay Nanda**

It was held that if a person is found to be guilty under the POCSO Act, the court has to pass only such a sentence which is reasonable, but it cannot be less than the minimum prescribed by the law.

#### **What are the criticisms of mandatory sentencing?**

1. **Firstly, It results in more acquittals**, as when judges think that punishment for the offence is high, they prefer to acquit the accused. It has been reported by the Centre for Child Law at the NLSIU, Bengaluru.
2. **Secondly**, the discretion of punishment is not removed but shifted from the judges to the police.

#### **Way Forward**

Legal experts are of the opinion that mandatory sentences are not very effective to give a deterrent effect or reducing crime in society. Therefore, judicial reforms such as making the sentencing process more accountable, transparent and recording specific reasons would prove to be a long lasting solution.

#### **54. SC Stay on Bombay HC judgment in POCSO case**

**Source:** [Click here](#)

**Syllabus:** **GS 2-** Indian Constitution—historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions, and basic structure.

**Synopsis:** Supreme Court put stay on the recent verdict of the Bombay High Court in the sexual assault case.

#### **Background:**

1. The Session Court had convicted the man for the offence of sexual assault under Section 8 of the POCSO Act. And sentenced him to imprisonment for three years.
2. In its recent decision, the Bombay High Court set aside the decision of the Session Court and acquitted the man from charges under POCSO Act. The reasoning given for that is the absence of direct physical contact i.e. skin to skin contact with the victim.

3. The Bombay High Court convicted the man for the offense of outraging the modesty of a woman under the Indian Penal Code and sentenced him to imprisonment for one year.
4. Supreme Court in its recent decision put a stay order on the decision of the Bombay High Court.

**Read More** – [Why Judges are acquitting accused under POCSO Act](#)

#### **Why the SC put a stay on the order of the Bombay High Court?**

- **Firstly**, the High Court decision introduced a new condition to satisfy for a trial under POCSO Act.
- **Secondly**, this erroneous decision of the High Court may be used as a precedent by the other courts in similar cases.
- **Thirdly**, this differentiation would also have a negative social impact. Low punishment is less likely to discourage the sexual assaults on the children.

#### **Way Forward**

Sexual abuse and outraging the modesty of a child is a matter of great concern. The step initiated by the Supreme Court is taken to re-evaluate an insensitive judgment which is harmful for the interpretation of the POCSO Act.

#### **55. Causes of Rising Inequality**

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

**Syllabus-** GS 2 – Social Issues

**Synopsis** – The COVID-19 pandemic has sharply increased the economic inequality in all countries.

#### **Introduction**

- The Inequality Virus report released on the opening day of the **World Economic Forum's Davos Agenda**.
- The report states that the COVID pandemic has increased economic inequality in almost every country.

**Read More** – [inequality in India Oxfam report | ForumIAS Blog](#)

#### **Pandemic impacts on Rich vis-à-vis Poor –**

The economic impacts of COVID pandemic are not the same for the rich and poor. The following facts of the Oxfam report provide a glimpse of sharp difference:

1. 1000 richest people in the world regain their COVID-19 losses within just nine months. But it could take more than a decade for the world's poorest to recover from the economic impacts of the pandemic.
2. The increase in income of the top 100 billionaires since the March lockdown is enough to give each of the 138 million poorest Indians a cheque of Rs.94045.
3. It will take up to 3 years for unskilled labor in India to earn what the richest earned in one second last year.

Some sections are disproportionately affected by the increasing disparities in income and opportunities due to discrimination based on gender, caste, and other variables.

#### **What are the causes behind rising inequality?**

Policymakers have accepted inequality as one of the impacts of economic growth. While they are happy with the reduction in absolute poverty, inequality kept on rising.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](http://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

The criticism of capitalism has never been taken seriously. Moreover, capitalism has been linked with the existence of democracies.

While the debates 'the Great Reset' are ongoing on WEF, states are continuously implementing discriminatory labour policies.

Now, economists are agreed that the divide of new wealth between capital and labour is one-sided. While the wealthy are getting wealthier, workers are continually being forced into poverty.

#### **Way forward-**

The government needs to take specific and concrete action to build a better, more equal future.

#### **56. GI tag for Basmati Rice to Pakistan: a cause of concern for India?**

**Source:** [Click here](#)

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

**Synopsis:** Pakistan secures the Geographical Indications (GI) tag for its Basmati rice. Experts say it would in no way affect India's Basmati exports.

#### **Introduction:**

Before partition in 1947, both India and Pakistan shared the Basmati rice-growing zone. After partition, Basmati rice became a joint heritage of India and Pakistan.

#### **What is the Geographical Indications (GI) tag?**

A GI tag is a sign used on goods that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are specific to that origin.

- The tag can be awarded for agricultural products, foodstuffs, wine, handicrafts, and industrial products.
- A GI tag is a part of the intellectual property rights that comes under the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property.
- Once a product is accorded a GI tag, it is protected by various legislations, such as legislations by the World Intellectual Property Organization.

#### **What are the regions comes under Basmati zone of both Nation?**

**India's Basmati Zone includes-** Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.

**Pakistan's Basmati belt** was the Kalar bowl, a tract of land between Ravi and the Chenab rivers, covering the districts of Narowal, Sialkot, Gujranwala, Hafizabad, and Skeikhupura in Punjab province.

#### **How did Pakistan get the GI tag?**

Pakistan has also been exporting Basmati rice to European countries, along with India. It is only after enacting the act, that a country can claim for GI tag. **Pakistan has just enacted the GI Act** and is now following India's path. Whereas, India enacted GI Act in 2001.

**India also applied for an exclusive GI tag** for Indian-origin basmati rice. The application was published in the EU journal in 2020.

The geographical identity of Basmati is attached to the Indo-Gangetic Plains. **Madhya Pradesh, which is outside this belt, also asked to be included in the GI tag for Basmati.** It is only after the inclusion of MP that Pakistan pushed its case for Basmati and received it.

### Is it a cause of concern for India?

It is not a cause of concern for India. India never contested Pakistan's claim of GI tag for Basmati rice.

Initially, both countries were inclined to file for GI tag together, however, this move could not be successful, due to the following reasons;

- **Firstly**, Pakistan had no nodal authority with which the **Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority [APEDA] of India** could have dealt.
- **Secondly**, the plan was interrupted by political issues also.

Pakistan produces Basmati only in its 14 districts in comparison to the 7 States of India. The output of India is very large in comparison to Pakistan, and it won't be affected by the GI tag.

### **57. rocedure and impotence of President's Address in Parliament**

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

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

**Synopsis:** The History, Procedure & tradition and format of President's address in Parliament.

**Background:**

- **The first Parliament session for 2021** is set to begin. It is the constitutional mandate for the **President (Ram Nath Kovind)** to address the 1st session of the members of both Houses of Parliament, every year.
- It is the only occasion in the year when the entire Parliament, i.e., the President, Lok Sabha, and Rajya Sabha come together, in a normal situation.
- This process of President's address every year during its 1<sup>st</sup> session has its own history, tradition, and procedures.

#### **History: Before Independence**

- In India, the practice of the President addressing Parliament can be traced back to the **Government of India Act of 1919**. This law gave the Governor-General the right to address the Legislative Assembly and the Council of State.
- But the **Government of India Act of 1919** did not have any provision for a joint address.

#### **History: After independence**

- After the Constitution came into force, it empowered the President to address **either House or a joint sitting** of the two Houses of Parliament.
- For the first time on January 31, 1950, **President Rajendra Prasad** addressed members of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.
- According to **article 87 of the constitution**, the President needs to address a joint sitting on two special occasions
  - The first is to address the opening session of a new legislature after each general election.
  - The second is to address the first sitting of Parliament each year.
- It has to be noted that, Article 87(1) originally required the President to address both Houses of Parliament at the commencement of **every session**.
- However, **The First Amendment to the Constitution** in 1951 changed this position and made the President's address **once a year**.



### Format for the President's speech

- Currently, The address of the President follows a **general structure**. It highlights the government's accomplishments from the previous year and sets the broad governance agenda for the coming year.
- The government also uses the President's address to make policy and legislative announcements. For example,
  - In 1996, PM **Atal Bihari Vajpayee's** (13-day) government used the president's address to announce its intention of giving statehood to Uttaranchal and Jharkhand (Jharkhand) and 33 percent reservation to women in legislatures.
  - In 2004, After the devastating tsunami of, Prime Minister **Manmohan Singh's** government used the President's Address to announce the creation of a national law for disaster management.
  - And in 2015, the **Narendra Modi** governments used the president's address to announce its plan to fast pace financial sector reforms.

### Motion of Thanks: Procedure & tradition

- Following the President's address, a **motion of thanks** is moved in the two Houses by the ruling MP's. The **deliberations** on this motion last for three to four days.
- During this period, MPs of both the Houses will have a broad debate on governance in the country.
- Following the debate, The Prime Minister will reply to the motion of thanks in both Houses and responds to the issues raised by MPs.
- Then the motion is put to vote and MPs can express their disagreement by moving **amendments to the motion**.
- Such amendments may be used for including some issues or highlighting some issues which did not find mention in the speech.
  - Opposition MPs have been successful in getting amendments passed to the motion of thanks in Rajya Sabha on five occasions (1980, 1989, 2001, 2015, 2016). But it has been less successful in Lok Sabha.
- Also, it has to be noted that the **motion of Thanks** must be passed in both of the houses.
- A failure to get a motion of thanks passed (which may rarely happen) amounts to the defeat of the government.
- Hence, Motion of thanks is sometimes deemed as **no-confidence motion**.

### 58. MEA's Eight broad principles to resolve conflict with China

Source: [Indian Express](#)

#### Gs2: India and its Neighborhood- Relations.

**Background: Recently**, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar participated in the 13th **All-India Conference of China Studies** organized by the Institute of Chinese Studies.

**What were the observations made by the External Affairs Minister in the 13th All-India Conference of China Studies?**

In the conference, he made the following observations;

1. **First**, he admitted that the **military conflict in eastern Ladakh** brought the India-China relationship under "exceptional stress".
2. **Second**, he expressed concern over the fact that till now India has not received any credible explanation for the change in China's stance or reasons for increasing troops in border areas.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

3. **Third**, he also criticized China that the developments in eastern Ladakh show **disregard” for commitments** about minimizing troop levels. It doesn’t show any **willingness for peace and tranquillity**.
4. **Fourth**, He also raised concerns about the **increasing construction of border infrastructure** by the Chinese side.

**The Minister stated** that the decisions or choices they make need to be well thought as they will have an impact on the entire world. He proposed **eight broad principles** to resolve the strained ties between India and China.

### **What are the eight broad principles and “mutuals” proposed by External Affairs Minister?**

The eight broad principles outlined by the External Affairs Minister to take bilateral ties forward are,

- Strict adherence to all agreements on **border management**.
- Fully respecting the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)**.
- Making peace and tranquillity along with the frontier the basis for overall ties.
- Recognizing that a **multipolar Asia** is an essential constituent of a **multipolar world**.
- Managing differences effectively.

Along with this, he mentioned three mutual commitments that need to follow. He described them as determining factors for the ties. They are

- **The Mutual respect**
- **Mutual sensitivity**
- **Mutual interests**

By giving the eight broad principles MEA made clear India’s approach in dealing with China. He also said that the development of ties can only be based on “mutuality”, whether it is the immediate concerns or more distant prospects.

### **59. Importance of Abiding by the Parliamentary Processes**

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

*Syllabus: GS 2-Parliament and State Legislatures—Structure, Functioning, Conduct of Business, Powers & Privileges and Issues Arising out of these.*

**Synopsis:** Following the Democratic Parliamentary Process is more important than enforcing the will of the majority.

#### **Background**

1. Nearly 20 Opposition parties boycotted the recent (2021) **President’s address** to a joint sitting of Parliament.
2. Further, the Opposition is planning to move a **joint motion** demanding a repeal of the three **Farm laws** in the coming **Budget session of Parliament**.
3. The boycott is indicative of the worsening relationship between the government and the Opposition.
4. The last time the Opposition boycotted the **President’s Address** was in November 2019 during the celebration of the **Constitution Day**.
5. Regarding the **Farm Bill**, the President said that the government will keep the Farm Bills on hold as per a Supreme Court directive. But the speech had no indication of reconsideration of the laws.

### What is the way forward?

1. The government should follow the **democratic route** of getting Parliamentary approval for Ordinances. Because **democratic processes** are more important than enforcing the will of the majority.
2. The Ordinances promulgated during the pandemic time should be put in front of Parliament for detailed discussion.
3. Though, the government has advantages over the Opposition, in terms of the numerical strength in Parliament. But a democracy cannot be run, alone by the executive, without any accountability. Parliament and opposition functions as a check on the powers of the executive.

The government needs to hold the high standards that India has set for itself as a democracy. Hence, **Discussion, Debate, Deliberative Dialogue** should be the way forward.

### 60. Chasing National Interests at the UN high table

Source: [click here](#)

Syllabus: GS 2

**Synopsis:** Non-permanent period at the UNSC is **once in a decade opportunity for India**. It should pursue the high national objectives with a balanced and clear approach.

#### Introduction

India has got a two-year non-permanent period at the UNSC. But it is almost certain that India is not getting permanent membership of UNSC anytime soon. Thus, this opportunity should be viewed as a once in a decade opportunity to pursue the national interests of the country.

#### What are the trends that will dominate UNSC?

New Delhi's entry into the UNSC coincides with the rise of the new world order. There is an absence of global leadership. The world is divided into rival blocs for narrow national interests. Currently, **the relevance of the UNSC is in serious doubt, and** it is not able to do justice to its primary objective i.e. "the maintenance of international peace and security".

Biden's administration will be busy undoing the policies of the previous regime for some time. Thus, nothing much should be expected from the US as of now.

India's term at the UNSC comes at a time when its **military rivalry with China is increasing**. This has come to the UNSC table after china opposed the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) to be chaired by India in 2022.

#### What are the focus areas in front of India at UNSC?

1. India's seat at the UNSC is important for **keeping in check the further Chinese invasions along the line of actual control**.
2. **Terror is going to be a major focus for India at the UNSC**. New Delhi's approach on the issue is going to be on the lines of external minister's statement: **"Terrorists are terrorists; there are no good and bad ones. Those who propagate this distinction have an agenda. And those who cover up for them are just as culpable"**.
3. Recently India assumed the chair of the **Taliban sanctions committee**. India's policy approach on Taliban will be very important for its global image.
4. India should focus to use the platform and its engagement there **to build alliances among like-minded states**. It should set out its priorities for the next decade from climate change to non-proliferation.

5. India would try to shape the narrative and global policy engagement regarding the **Indo-Pacific concept**. This would also provide an opportunity to improve its relations with Moscow.

#### **The way forward**

- New Delhi must focus its energies on what it can achieve during the short period that it would be in the UNSC rather than expecting a permanent membership because UNSC is unlikely to admit new members anytime soon.

#### **61. Improving public health by Budget 2021**

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

**Syllabus-** GS Paper II, Health Related issues

**Synopsis-** The Union Budget 2021 must focus on increasing public allocation on health systems as it will enhance our economic growth. More money for health will lead to more health for the money.

**Introduction-** The Union Budget of 2021 is between the year of COVID-19 pandemic and a year when India will celebrate its 75 years of Independence. The year of COVID-19 pandemic helped us to realize that health and the economy should be our topmost properties. They should remain the same even after the pandemic is over as a health crisis will derail our economy and on the other hand investments on health will enhance our economic growth.

#### **What should be the focus areas for Union Budget 2021?**

- 1) **Higher allocations to health-** At present, our public expenditure on health is 1.3 percent of India's GDP. In a country like India, where much of the workforce is in the informal sector, insurance paid through mandatory salary deductions ("labour taxes") is not a good option. Coverage from employer-paid and privately purchased insurance are low.
  - Public expenditure on health should be raised to 2.5 per cent of India's GDP by 2025.
  - Budget 2021 must increase 20-25 percent in the overall allocation to health in comparison to the past year.
- 2) **Reducing the out-of-pocket expenditure on health-** The World Bank and the World Health Organization recommended that programmes of universal health coverage should aim to reduce out-of-pocket expenditure to 15-20 per cent. Our out-of-pocket expenditure on health is still around 58 per cent. The total health expenditure should rise but with the largest share of public financing. The states should also increase their allocations for health.
- 3) **Building stronger health systems-** In the budget, health allocations must focus on both the priorities of pandemic response and building a stronger health system.
  - A broad range of health services will facilitate sustained efficiency and equity.
  - To strengthen pandemic response, the focus should be on Health literacy for COVID-appropriate behaviour, Early case detection and contact tracing.
  - Home care for most infected persons and chronic care for long-term effects of the virus.
  - The Urban Health Mission must be activated to detect and care for co-morbidities. Primary healthcare offers the largest package of services and is cost-optimising both in low-cost services and high-cost care.
  - **The budget must reflect the National Health Mission's goal to allocate two-thirds of health financing to primary care.**
- 4) **Financing mechanisms-** It must include primary, secondary and tertiary levels of care.
  - The Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana must link with the National Health Mission to provide coverage for out-patient care, including essential drugs and diagnostics.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- It should expand coverage to cover the “missing middle” of our population who too are vulnerable to health shocks.
  - Elderly care must receive greater attention, as must disability services and mental health.
  - Higher taxes on all varieties of tobacco products, ultra-processed foods and beverages, alcohol and luxury vehicles can raise more allocation to health.
- 5) **Upgradation of medical health system-** Upgrading of district and medical college hospitals must also be accorded high priority.
- Surveillance systems and laboratory capacity must receive support, including One Health eco-surveillance.
  - Expansion of a multi-layered, multi-skilled health workforce
  - Expansion and investments in training institutions in partnership with the states.
  - Multi-disciplinary public health expertise.
  - Creating public health cadres at the Centre and states. **The centrally financed mechanism and guidelines will help to establish such cadres as recommended in the National Health Policy 2017.**

**Note:** One Health eco-surveillance traces microbial migration from wildlife to veterinary and human populations.

- 6) **More funding for health research-** We need to increase funds for health research mainly in the area of implementation research. Health technologies need to be incentivised to enhance the effectiveness and equity of health services. “Make In India” must support domestic pharmaceutical, vaccine and medical equipment makers for improving both quantity and quality.

### Way Forward

To deliver sustained benefits of better health and a brighter economy to the nation, a strong financial allocation is a step in the right direction. The budget is a clear indication of the government giving values to health. Hence, Budget 2021 must focus on increasing public allocation on health.

# General Studies Paper – 3

## General Studies - 3

---

### 1. Farmer welfare in Kerala, in the absence of Mandi system

Source: [click here](#)

Syllabus: GS 3 –

**Synopsis:** Absence of Mandi system in Kerala has not impacted the farmer's welfare in the state.

#### Background:

Thousands of farmers have assembled to protest against the 3 farm bills and have established a new way of life at Singhu, Tikri, Ghazipur, Noida and Shahjahanpur borders.

- Farmers have made all necessary arrangements for food, shelter, clothing, and sanitation. They have been gathering a countrywide support.
- **A tussle among various political parties is also ongoing** on the issue of support or opposition to farmer's demand.
- Meanwhile, in all this debate, example of Kerala was used by some big politicians that the states with no Mandi system is also siding with the farmers.
- However, ground realities and facilities for farmers in Kerala suggest that the same model can be applied at other places too for the welfare of farmers.

#### How Farmer's Welfare in Kerala assured?

Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMCs) and mandis although do not exist in Kerala, the needs and interests of farmers are taken care of in the state.

- The central government's rate for obtaining rice is ₹ 18 a kg whereas the government in Kerala has fixed the price of rice from cultivators at ₹27.48 a kg. This increased basic price is also applicable on fruits and vegetables.
- **Basic prices (per Kg) of 16 items are assured** by the government. Few examples are tapioca ₹12, banana ₹30, garlic ₹139, pineapple ₹15, tomato ₹8, string beans ₹34, ladies' fingers ₹20, cabbage ₹11 and potato ₹20.
- Dried coconut also has a much higher procurement rate in Kerala as compared to the rate announced by the central government.
- Apart from crop insurance, paddy cultivators also get the royalty in Kerala at the rate of ₹2,000 per hectare. They get a pension as well, which is a very unique step in the country.
- **A debt relief commission was** introduced in 2006 by the left government when farmers' suicides were increasing, this initiative tried to help and save them.

Above facts prove that farmers in Kerala are in a better condition compared to the state of farmers in other states after enacting Farm Laws. Forex; 40% of mandis in Madhya Pradesh have registered only zero transactions after the passing of 3 bills.

### 2. Impact of Diluting disclosure requirement in Patent Rules, 2003

Source: [click here](#)

Syllabus: GS 3

**Synopsis:** The dilution of patent working disclosure rules obstructs the success of India's compulsory licensing regime.

#### Background

According to the new Patent Rules, 2020, licensees are **no longer required to annually submit to the Patent Office** disclosing the degree to which they have commercially worked or made the patented inventions available to the public in the country.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](http://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

### What were the requirement of disclosure in Patent Rules, 2003?

The purpose of granting patents itself is to ensure that the inventions are operated in India and are made available to the public in adequate amounts at rational prices.

- The information about **the degree at which these patentees are operating in India** is very important to check abuse of patent monopoly. For example, excessive pricing or scare supply of the invention
  - **Courts have refused a temporary ban in cases** charging violation of a patent which has not been operated in India.
- **Section 146 (2)** asks every licensee to submit to the Patent Office an annual statement explaining the extent to which they have worked the invention in India was not found in patent laws.
- **The disclosure is to be made in the Form 27** format as suggested under the Patent Rules, 2003.

### Irregularities and PIL filed

- **The amendment to the form was made after a PIL** was filed by Shamnad Basheer before the Delhi High Court in 2015. The PIL was about the non-filing and defective filing of Form 27 by licensees and wanted an action against the violators.
- **The PIL also called for a reform of Form 27** because the information it sought was totally insufficient to determine the level of the working of the patent.
- Court directed the government to bring an amendment to strengthened the patent working disclosure rules.
- However, after 2 years, instead of strengthening, government introduced an amendment that dilutes the disclosure requirements.

### How government changed the disclosure requirement?

The amendment in patent laws has considerably weakened it and is defeating the whole purpose of the amendment exercise. The requirement of submitting a lot of important information was removed. The form now requires the patentees to provide only for the following information:

- **Firstly**, whether the invention has worked or not and the revenue generated from it (manufacturing and importing). Reasons for the invention not working and the steps being taken towards it to make it work.
- **Secondly**, they don't have to provide data about the amount of the invention manufactured in India and imported which is vital for proper assessment.
  - **Licensees can just self-certify** that they've worked the patent without having to prove the claim with the data on how they've done it, including through licensing/sub-licensing the patent.
  - **For instance**, the disclosure of this data by Bayer in Form 27 played a crucial role in grant of India's first compulsory license to Natco for the anti-cancer drug Sorafenib/Nexavar.

### What are its impacts?

- Doing away with the condition of providing inventions for public requirement at a reasonable price, will have negative impacts on the affordability of new medicines in India.
- Doing away with the condition to disclose price and demand will make it difficult to assess the quantum of invention made available to the public in sufficient quantity and at an affordable price.



### Conclusion

- The government must reconsider its amendments as it is going to **impact public interest**. Some inventions may remain inaccessible to public because of the lack of information. Such lack of accessibility in case of patented medicines could have adverse consequences for public health of the country.

### 3. Solving the issue of Urban employment through platform/gig economy

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

*Syllabus- GS Paper III (Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment)*

**Synopsis-** With no urban equivalent to the NREGA as yet, there must be a focus on supporting new forms of urban employment in the form of the gig economy.

**Background-** Debate around GDP contraction and V-Shaped recovery has ignored the prevalence of unemployment in India.

Data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy points to a gradual slowdown in employment recovery which is evident from the fact that **national unemployment rate** has been increased from 6.51% to 9.06%.

#### How does the rural economy provide better employment compared to urban?

For the labour population moving back to rural India, National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGA) provided employment support, which witnessed a 243% increase in person workdays.

Whereas many Indian cities, during this pandemic, shut down the employment avenues for millions of workers, who either migrated to rural areas or took up new forms of platform work. Gig economy became their only source of employment.

#### What is the Gig Economy?

A labour market characterized by the prevalence of short-term contracts or freelance work as opposed to permanent jobs.

#### Performance of gig/platform works

**The Fairwork Foundation** published its report related to the gig economy and its annual review of platform labor gains prominence. It used the following metrics to evaluate the wellbeing of gig workers.

1. Fair Pay
2. Fair Conditions
3. Fair Contracts
4. Fair Management
5. Fair Representation

#### Findings

In this report **platform giants, namely, Uber, Ola, Swiggy and Zomato are at the bottom** of the ranking. Only Urban Company and Flipkart scored fairly.

#### How to increase urban employment?

As in Urban India, **there is no scheme like NREGA**. Government must focus on evaluating, regulating and supporting platform/gig employment.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

### 1. Issue of evaluation–

- Current understanding regarding the scale and impact of these platforms is only based on the limited disclosure by the companies themselves.
- Moreover, there exists no authoritative estimate on the total number of gig workers in India.
- There is a need to create a valid database regarding platform works and workers to facilitate evaluation.

### 2. Issue of regulation– This step is significantly more sensitive as it revolves around the variable nature of gig work.

- As these platforms are used both as a “side hustle”, and primary source of employment.
- One-size-fits-all regulatory strategy further complicates the matter as regulations might also hurt the freelancing works that provided avenues to highly skilled workers during Pandemic.
- For that, Government can enter into partnerships with platforms like it did by flagship scheme. **Swiggy’s Street Food Vendors programme under the PM SVANidhi scheme.**
- **Under this scheme**, Swiggy employed 36,000 street food vendors and also ensured the registration of each vendor and their certification by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India.
- The simultaneous creation of jobs, alongside the voluntary adoption of quality standards is an example of a mutually beneficial partnership between the state and a platform.

### 3. Urban employment –

- **Similar collaborations** can be done by the government for urban employment, that require labour platforms to comply with disclosure norms and worker compensation standards to access government support.
- It would not only **bring down costs** significantly (for both the state and their partners), but would also create an environment where **firms would be more likely to cooperate with the state.**

### Way Forward

India must take significant steps to tackle the challenge of urban unemployment in the present reality.

With Industry 4.0 platforms absorbing increasing numbers of the urban workforce, the government must focus on evaluation, collaboration, and regulation.

By now, India must have its own understanding of the future of work. For that, the state needs to ensure that this future is defined not only by the quantity of jobs it creates but also by the quality of livelihoods they provide for.

### 4. Increasing energy efficiency among consumer

**Synopsis:** Recently released electricity rules should also focus on the problem faced by DISCOMS that can be sorted out by increasing energy efficiency.

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

*Syllabus – GS-3 – Energy-related issues*

Recently published Electricity Rules, 2020 lay down uniform performance standards for DISCOMS and makes them liable to consumer compensation in case of violations of their rights.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](http://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

Rules have been framed keeping in mind the decreasing payment rates for electricity bills due to rising consumption and limited finances.

[Electricity Rules, 2020](#)

### Challenges faced by Discoms

1. **Firstly**, by 2030, residential electricity consumption in India is expected to double. Moreover, increase in electric appliances is creating doubts around the discom's ability to provide reliable supply at affordable rates.
2. **Secondly**, some of the daily use appliances are not Energy Efficient.
  - Out of the 90% households using fans, only 3% are using energy-efficient fans,
  - 60% of T.V. are energy-guzzling CRT (cathode ray tube) models and
  - desert coolers are not even covered under the labelling programme.
3. **Third**, Indian Discoms are facing difficulties in managing their finances that required govt. to sanction liquidity relief to help discoms. But it is only temporary relief.

### Way forward

As mentioned above, discoms might not be able to keep up with the demands of consumers in the long run. Thus, following steps are required to reduce the energy demand;

1. **Firstly, availability and affordability of energy-efficient appliances need to be improved.**
  - Although BEE is planning to bring ceiling fans under mandatory labelling from 2022, it would double the costing, which would create a barrier.
  - Manufacturers should be provided with lucrative offers to produce efficient technology at scale and bring it within purchasing capacity.
2. **Secondly, nationwide consumer awareness campaign should be launched for energy efficiency.**
  - Awareness level among small towns and rural areas is very low compared to residents of metros and tier-1 cities.
  - Thus, a consumer-centric engagement strategy with the cooperation of State governments, discoms and retailers should be evolved to create mass awareness.
3. **Third, supply quality and changing consumption pattern should be monitored on real time basis.**
  - Smart metering should be used to monitor actual saving by consumer due to energy efficient appliances.
  - It would create a confidence among people and would also be crucial for enforcing consumer rights rules.

India has many examples of success in creating awareness for energy efficient appliances. UJALA scheme transformed the market for LED bulbs. Now, 90% of Indian homes use LED lamps or tubes resulting into reduction of carbon emission equivalent to 82 million tonnes.

More such programs are required to be fast-tracked.

### 5. Digital technology worsen financial exclusion in rural India

Source- [Indian Express](#)

**Syllabus- GS Paper III – Economy – Financial Inclusion**

**Synopsis-** Internet Services base payment system is worsening the financial exclusion prevalent in rural India.

### Introduction

Internet services have provided much comfort to the user. But for the majority of the rural population digital technology has become troublesome due to lack of technical knowledge and nexus of service providers, middleman, government officials and others.

We need to find solutions so that the fruits of digital technology will be borne by all the rural population.

### Introduction of the digital payment based solution in rural India

- Direct Benefits Transfer (DBT) was launched with an aim of improving financial inclusion in 2011. Since 2015, it has become synonymous with the **Aadhaar Payments Bridge Systems (APBS)**.
- Money is transferred to the various beneficiaries of programs under DBT such as maternity entitlements, student scholarships, and wages for MGNREGA.
- To deal with the **“last mile challenges”** facing beneficiaries in accessing their money, banking kiosks known as Customer Service Points (CSP) and Banking Correspondents (BC) were promoted.
  - These are private individuals who offer banking services through the Aadhaar Enabled Payment Systems (AePS).
  - At these kiosks, beneficiaries can perform basic banking transactions such as small deposits and withdrawals.

However, it doesn't solve the basic issues that are being faced by the lower strata of the rural areas in receiving their own money from their bank accounts.

### What are the issues faced by rural population?

The process of transition from older payment systems and the APBS technology needs to be scrutinised which impact all DBT programmes.

- **Lack of technical knowledge**– Workers have little clue about where their wages have been credited and what to do when their payments get rejected, often due to technical reasons such as incorrect account numbers and incorrect Aadhaar mapping with bank accounts.
- **Lack of accountability**– State governments have not set any accountability for APBS and AePS/payment intermediaries and there is no grievance redressal mechanism for the same.
- **Lack of consultation**– The workers/beneficiaries have rarely been consulted regarding their preferred mode of transacting.
- **Creation of new forms of corruption** – All the above factors have resulted into new form of corruption. For Example; Massive scholarship scam took place in Jharkhand, where many poor students were deprived of their scholarships owing to a nexus of middlemen, government officials, banking correspondents and others.

### Findings of the new report by LibTech India

**LibTech India recently released a research report based on a survey of nearly 2,000 MGNREGA workers across Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Rajasthan.** The survey explains the experiences of workers in obtaining wages in hand after they were credited to their bank accounts.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- **Access to wages from banks becomes arduous**– Rural banks are short-staffed and tend to get overcrowded. Hence, it requires more hours and multiple visits to access wages from banks.
- **Technical issues**– CSP/BCs appeared to be a convenient alternative to banks due to their proximity. However, an estimated 40 per cent of them had to make multiple visits to withdraw from CSPs/BCs due to biometric failures.
- **Too much travel cost is involved** – To get their DBT share, MGNREGA workers need to spend too much on travel leading in addition to the loss of their daily wage on the day of travel. E.g. **the average travel cost for one visit to a bank in Jharkhand is Rs 50 which becomes Rs 100 for two bank visits.**
- **Passbook related issues**– The only way for rural bank users to keep track of their finances is through their bank passbooks. However, more than two-thirds of time workers were denied the facility to update their passbooks at banks, some workers are even charged **(45 per cent in Jharkhand)** for this free service by CSPs/BCs.

### Way forward

The right to access your own money in a timely and transparent manner is a basic right of every individual that must be protected by government at any cost.

- There are just 14.6 bank branches per 1 lakh adults in India. This is sparser in rural India. Despite hardships of access, most workers preferred to transact at the banks. Hence **Branch expansion** into rural unbanked locations will significantly reduce poverty.
- **The technological solutions must be coupled with a governance structure**, in which protection of rights and choices of individuals must be fundamental.

### 6. Why lightning kills so many Indians?

Source: [Click Here](#)

Syllabus: GS3: Disaster and disaster management.

**News:** According to a report, Lightning strikes have caused 1,771 deaths between April 1,2019 and March 31,2020 in India.

#### Facts:

- The report has been prepared by Climate Resilient Observing Systems Promotion Council (CROPC), a non-profit organisation that works with India Meteorological Department (IMD), Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), India Meteorological Society (IMS) and World Vision India to disseminate early lightning forecasts.

#### Key Takeaways:

- **State Wise Deaths due to Lightning Strikes:** Uttar Pradesh with 293 deaths, Madhya Pradesh 248, Bihar 221, Odisha 200 and Jharkhand 172 deaths together accounted for more than 60% of the numbers which are 33% of total fatalities from all natural disasters during the time period.
- **Highest Lightning Strikes State:** Odisha had 11.20 lakh plus lightning strikes—the highest in the country—with 200 casualties. During Cyclone Fani, the state saw more than one lakh intense lightning strikes in 2019.
- **Deaths due to Lightning:** The reason for death due to Lightning is because people are unaware and about 78% deaths took place due to people standing under isolated tall trees. About 22% of the people were struck in the open.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](http://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- **Why are lightning strikes increasing?** The report mentions that the lightning is direct promulgation of climatic extremities like global warming, deforestation, depletion of water bodies, concretisations, rising pollution and aerosol levels have cumulatively pushed the environment to extremes.

### Recommendations:

- **Lightning needs to be listed as a notified disaster** by the Ministry of Home to get required attention in national policy directives and developmental programmes.
- **Implement a local lightning safety action plan** like installing Lightning Protection Devices.
- **Need of Scientific and Community Centric approach:** National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has issued guidelines for preparations of Lightning action plans to states. But the large number of fatalities show the implementation also needs a more 'scientific and focused community centric approach' as well as convergence of various departments.
- **A National Lightning Resilience Programme** is needed to identify the precise risk in terms of lightning frequency, current intensity, energy content, high temperature and other adverse impacts.
- **Early lightning warning** to farmers, cattle grazers, children and people in open areas.

### Additional Facts:

- **What is Lightning:** Lightning is the process of occurrence of a natural electrical discharge of very short duration and high voltage between a cloud and the ground or within a cloud accompanied by a bright flash and sound and sometimes thunderstorms.
- **Types:** Inter cloud or intra cloud (IC) lightning which are visible and are harmless. It is cloud to ground (CG) lightning which is harmful as the 'high electric voltage and electric current' leads to electrocution.
- **Technology:** CROPC has a MOU with the India Met Department (IMD), Ministry of Earth Science (MoES) to disseminate early lightning forecasts which uses satellite observations, inputs from 'network of Doppler and other radars', 'lightning detection Sensors' among others.
- **Origin of Lightning:** Most Lightning strikes originate from Chotanagpur Plateau – the confluence of Odisha, West Bengal and Jharkhand—and extended to Bangladesh to Patkai plateau of Meghalaya affecting other North eastern states.

## 7. Issue of single law for different regions of agriculture

**Source:** [click here](#)

*Syllabus: GS 3*

**Synopsis:** Present agriculture reforms have not considered the ground level issues faced on the regional level and vertical level.

### Introduction

Recently, the current government has opened up the output market with the purpose to let market forces improve effectiveness and create more value for farmers and the economy.

- New farm laws state that farmers are now free to sell all their products anywhere and to anyone beyond the APMC markets.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- The laws also promote contract farming by creating partnerships between farmers and food-processing companies and license unlimited notice of food except in special conditions.

However, reforms cannot be forceful and should be implemented as per the requirement of farmers.

### What do the farmers want?

The farmers gave 3 main suggestions in the enquiries held with them:

- **Firstly**, the selling price of their produce should include the cost of production and reasonable profit margin.
- **Secondly**, rise and fall in prices should be nominal.
- **Thirdly**, Farmers are not comfortable in dealing with legal or administrative officials, so there should be little or no interface between them.

### What are the issues with new laws?

There will be no control over the new markets by anyone which creates a lot of uncertainty.

- **First, concerns related to Mandi-market system:**
  - Farmers could go to local leaders in case of malpractices in Mandis but there is no authority to report to in the new system.
  - **There is no certainty over the continuation of the mandi-MSP system** as if the alternative traders offer better prices, farmers will go there and not to the mandis.
- **Second, Issues related to contract farming:**
  - **There is an advantage to the corporate-buyers** as they can choose to not buy the full quantity and delay payments. The corporates have access to several lawyers, so the poor farmers can't complain or compete against them.
  - **This is a contract between unequal and will result in unequal outcomes.** Farmers do not have the resources or are not educated enough to deal with traders or corporates.
- **Third, Issues related to similar solution for different problem**
  - **The conditions of different regions are not similar** as country is diverse with some 15 agroclimatic zones and has over 50 crops grown.
  - It is also the reason behind farmers from outside the wheat-rice belts in northern India are not protesting.
  - Thus, a comprehensive law for all the regions with different cropping patterns and climatic conditions might create troubles for farmers later.

### What are the steps should be taken?

- The problem of lack of progress and high input prices in agriculture can be resolved through an efficient approach suggested in **the M.S. Swaminathan Commission and/or the Ashok Dalwai Committee**.
  - For example, a solution should be worked out for farmers to switch from water-soaking paddy crops to other crops in Punjab and Haryana in the next five years.
  - They would reduce the area under paddy by 25-30%, and the loss they suffer in the short run, will be compensated for by the government. This could also be done for sugarcane in western Maharashtra.

## 8. Issue of privacy and Personal Data Protection Bill 2019

Source-[IndianExpress](#)

Syllabus- GS Paper 3 –

**Synopsis- Present** data-based technological development and Personal Data Protection Bill 2019 presents a unique challenge to the privacy of individuals.

### Introduction-

**By Puttaswamy v India (2017) case**, privacy was established as a fundamental right. In other cases, MP Sharma v. Satish Chandra (1954) and Kharak Singh v. Uttar Pradesh (1962), as well, Privacy rights were upheld by SC.

However, the development of global technology and implementation of the Aadhaar biometric programme in India have diluted the effect of these rulings. Now there is an urgent need to take a new look at the legal position of privacy in India.

As depicted by Aadhaar based technology and global social media platforms, data has become a new oil i.e., it has become a **tool for economic and political gain**. It created a stream of data protection legislations, globally. India is also trying to join the league by Personal Data Protection Bill 2019 (DPB).

In India, the **Personal Data Protection Bill 2019 (DPB)** is currently under consideration by a parliamentary committee. There are various issues in this bill that go against the privacy rights of individuals.

### Commercial and Political consequences of the Data Protection Bill (DPB):

#### 1. Data Collection related issues

- **First-** Bill will negatively impact the **emerging technologies market of India dealing in the creation, use, and sale of data that is valued at \$1 trillion by 2025**.
- **Second-** The bill requires digital firms who want to operate in India to obtain permission from users before collecting their data.
- **Third-** Bill also declares that users who provide data are, in effect, the owners of their own data and may control its usage or request firms to delete it.
  - **European internet-users are able to exercise a “right to be forgotten” and have evidence of their online presence removed.**
- **Fourth-** The bill allows the government to use “critical” or “sensitive” personal data, related to information such as religion, to protect national interest.
- **Fifth-** Open-ended access to government could lead to misuse of data. **Mr. B N Srikrishna, the chairman of the drafting committee of the original bill, warned that government-access exemptions risk creating an “Orwellian state”.**

#### 2. Issues related to Establishment of Data Protection Authority (DPA)

- Bill aims to establish a **Data Protection Authority (DPA)**, which will be charged with managing data collected by the Aadhaar programme.
  - Authority will consist of a chairperson and six committee members,
  - Members will be appointed by the central government on the recommendation of a selection committee.
  - Members will be selected from senior civil servants, including the Cabinet Secretary.
- The **government’s power to appoint and remove members at its discretion** provides it an ability to influence the independence of agency.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- Unlike similar institutions, such as the Reserve Bank of India or the Securities and Exchange Board, the DPA will not have an independent expert or member of the judiciary on its governing committee.
- The UIDAI, for its part, has a chairperson appointed by the central government and reporting directly to the Centre.

### 3. Issues related to government use of data for surveillance

There are instances that suggest, **India is acquiring some features of a surveillance state.**

- As stated by the Union Home minister recently, **police used facial recognition technology** to identify people after the anti-CAA protests and the Delhi riots.
- There is a high possibility that police was matching the video offstage with the **database of Election Commission and e-Vahan, a pan-India database** of vehicle registration.

### 4. Issue related to the safety of data

There are instances of controversy where the government has shown a casual approach towards data safety and privacy of its citizens:

- **First**, Safety concerns were raised during **aadhaar data collection**, which stores biometric data in the form of iris and fingerprints which is a violation of the right to privacy.
- **Second** instance was of **Aarogya Setu contact-tracing app** which was allegedly not able to protect the data provided by citizens.

### Way Forward

- The Data Protection Bill is a unique opportunity for India, a country with some 740 million internet users. It would be a standard setter for privacy of individuals.
- Inclusive debate needs to take place in the Joint Parliament Committee and then in Parliament to examine the Data Protection Bill and promote transparency.

## 9. How India is increasing its maritime domain awareness?

**Syllabus: GS-3, Security**

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

### Introduction

**Foreknowledge** was identified by the **legendary military theorist, Sun Tzu** as the critical element in the battle. It can be gathered only with specialized tools and by men who knew the enemy well.

Although modern warfare has become technology-based and more complex, **'foreknowledge'** is still critical as the enemy at sea has become more unrecognizable.

A normal fisherman or a port worker can turn out to be a terrorist, a pirate, a criminal, or a sea-robber. To observe and track suspicious movements, Law enforcement agencies require high-grade sensors and communication networks, and information sharing in real-time.

This enhanced consciousness at sea is called maritime domain awareness.

### What are India's concerns regarding maritime domain awareness?

- People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) is developing a **generation of stealthier submarines** that will be capable of passing through undetected under enemy surveillance.
- This breakthrough by the Chinese has been ascertained by a successful **test of shaftless rim-driven pump-jets.**

### How India is increasing its maritime domain awareness?

Post-Galwan clash, Indian Navy is mainly focused on improving maritime domain awareness in the Indian Ocean, specifically in the seas around Andaman and Nicobar islands, to monitor the activity of China.

- **Coastal Radar network:** India has already integrated Mauritius, Seychelles, and Sri Lanka into the wider coastal radar chain network. Now, it is seeking to set up radar stations in the Maldives, Myanmar, and Bangladesh.
- **Monitoring:** India's **P-8I aircraft** are monitoring near-seas and Indian naval ships have patrolled the Andaman Seas and eastern chokepoints for People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) submarines.
  - India is planning to install an array of **undersea sensors** near the Andaman Islands in partnership with Japan.
- **Information cooperation: Indian Navy's Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region** in Gurugram is fast emerging as the most prominent information hub in the Eastern Indian Ocean. Following countries are planning to post their officers at the centre;
  - Seven Indian Ocean countries — Maldives, Myanmar, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Mauritius, and Seychelles
  - At the centre, Indo-Pacific navies — Australia, Japan, the U.K, and the U.S.
  - Whereas, France has already posted an officer at the IFC.
- **India has also posted a Liaison Officer in**
  - Madagascar at Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC)
    - India has recently joined the RMIFC as an observer.
    - It is a key center of maritime information in the Western Indian Ocean
  - In Strait of Hormuz (EMASOH) at European Maritime Awareness
    - It is helpful in monitoring maritime activity in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz.
- **Relations with France: India signed a logistics agreement with France in 2019.**
  - France has been key for India's participation in the Western and South-Western Ocean.
  - France facilitated an 'observer' status for India at the Indian Ocean Commission.
- **Sagar:** India is furthering its **Philosophy of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)** as a 'security provider' and 'preferred partner' in the Indo-Pacific region.
  - India has entered into shipping agreements with 21 countries in the Indian Ocean.
  - GSAT-7A, India's military satellite, will facilitate a real-time sharing of maritime information with partners.

However, India's maritime initiatives are not just focussed on strategic considerations but also generating cooperative synergies in the neighborhood.

### 10. USTR slams India's Equalisation levy

**News:** US Trade Representative (USTR) has released the findings of the Section 301 report.

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

*Syllabus: GS:3 Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth*

The report has said that India's 2% equalisation levy is unreasonable or discriminatory potentially attracting withdrawal of US trade concessions or duties on Indian exports.

### What is Equalisation Levy?

- **When was 2% Equalisation Levy introduced?** In the Finance Bill 2020-21 a 2% digital service tax (DST) was imposed on non-resident e-commerce operator in India.
- **Eligibility:** Companies with a turnover of over Rs. 2 crore, will pay this levy on the consideration received for online sales of goods and services.
- **Purpose:** The purpose of the levy is to ensure fair competition, reasonableness and exercise the ability of governments to tax businesses that have a close nexus with the Indian market through their digital operations

### Why USTR is concerned?

- USTR is mainly concerned as 72% companies that will face the levy are American.
- Aggregate tax bill for US companies will exceed US \$ 30 Million.

### What does the Special 301 Report say on Equalization levy?

The USTR report has said that the Equalisation Levy is a violation of international tax principles:

1. **Firstly**, it is discriminatory as the law explicitly exempts Indian companies while targeting non-Indian firms.
2. **Secondly, levy** is contravening the international tax principle that companies absent a territorial connection to a country should not be subject to that country's corporate tax regime.
3. **The third** issue is of taxing revenue instead of income. This is inconsistent with the international tax principle that income—not revenue—is the appropriate basis for corporate taxation.
4. **Fourth, levy is discriminating against US companies.** As shown above, majority of the affected companies will be American.

### What are the justifications by the Indian Government?

1. India has said that **levy does not discriminate against US companies** as it applies equally to all non-resident e-commerce operators irrespective of their country of residence.
2. The levy **does not have extraterritorial application** as it applies only on the income generated from India.
3. **Government is in its rights to tax digital transactions** as the levy is recognition of the principle that in a digital world, a seller can engage in business transactions without any physical presence.
4. In addition, Equalisation levy was one of the methods suggested by the 2015 OECD/G20 Report on Action 1 of BEPS Project which was aimed at tackling the taxation challenges arising out of digitization of the economy.
5. Equalisation levy is a way to tax foreign digital companies and seen as a temporary alternative to the **GAF A** (Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon) **tax** until such measure is well defined in India.

#### Additional Facts:

1. **Special 301 Report:** It is prepared annually by the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) that identifies trade barriers to United States companies and products due to the intellectual property laws, such as copyright, patents and trademarks in other countries.

2. **GAFATax:** It is a proposed digital tax named after digital giants Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon. GAFATax is levied on large technology companies and Internet companies. Recently France has decided to introduce 3% of GAFATax on revenues from digital activities within their territory.

### 11. RBI's expansionary policy and challenge of the impossible trinity

**Synopsis:** RBI need to exit out of its expansionary policy and manage 'the impossible trinity', i.e. **Capital inflow, inflation and exchange rate.**

*Syllabus: GS-3, Economy*

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

#### Introduction

- RBI adopted the extraordinary expansionary policy after Covid-19.
- It reduced policy interest rates aggressively to increase the liquidity in the market. It also provided targeted assistance to especially distressed sectors.
- But, now RBI should consider an exit plan out of expansionary policy to avoid any loss in the macroeconomic terms.
- In this process RBI might face the challenge of managing 'the impossible trinity', i.e. **Keeping doors open for capital flows while simultaneously maintaining a stable exchange rate and restraining inflation.**

#### What are the challenges in managing 'the impossible trinity'?

**Firstly,** RBI need might face a **dilemma of managing Inflation and support to economic recovery.**

- Inflation is above the RBI's target band for the past several months and is expected to remain above target for the next several months.
- Whereas, MPC is not able to decide against expansionary monetary policy, out of concerns for growth and financial stability.
- MPC expects inflation to soften by itself due to bumper winter crop and normalization of supply chain post-lockdown.

**Second,** RBI need to think about the **savers, offered low interest rates at a time of high inflation.** Thus, value of their saving is getting reduced.

**Third,** RBI require to withdraw the 'excess' liquidity from the market.

- Banks are routinely depositing trillions of rupees with the RBI is the evidence that the liquidity increase by RBI is not giving the intended results.
- Mispricing of risk of too much liquidity for too long can lead to financial crisis.

**Fourth,** RBI might face the challenge of '**taper tantrums**' at the later stage, which triggers the panic sell-off by the investors in the market.

- **Taper tantrum:** In May 2013, U.S. Federal Reserve Chairmen announced that they were considering gradually tapering/reducing 'quantitative easing'.
- **Although the announcement should have been taken as signs of a robust recovery in the economy, instead panic sell-off started in the financial market.**
- Thus, RBI also need to frame their communication strategy in a way that it doesn't trigger the panic sell-off.

**Fifth,** RBI will have to **stop the rupee from appreciating**, in the face of policy change.

- Current Account Surplus this year together with massive capital flows has caused increase in flow of dollar in the system.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- It is putting the upward pressure on the Rupee, which is already overvalued in the real terms.
- RBI has already absorbed this year, nearly \$90 billion to prevent exchange rate appreciation and to maintain the competitiveness of the rupee.
- Thus, RBI's ability to keep the Rupee value in control will be constrained by increasing inflation.

In the upcoming days, managing the impossible trinity will be a tricky challenge for RBI given the condition of the economy after COVID-19.

### 12. Efforts to increase Electric mobility in India

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

*GS3: Infrastructure: Energy, Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation.*

**Synopsis:** Significance of shifting towards electric vehicles for India and how the government has actively facilitated this process

#### What are the significances of shifting to electric vehicles for India?

Transition to electric vehicles is important for India as not only it will save public money but also the environment.

- The progression to electric vehicles **will make India sustainable** as it has the potential to reduce carbon emissions and build self-reliant domestic energy sector.
- it can **reduce dependence on crude oil** and help to save government money especially the **FOREX**. For example, **India is the third-largest oil importer in the world** in terms of value. In 2018–19, India imported 228.6 MT of crude oil worth \$120 billion.
- Besides being an economically and environmentally viable option, India's transition to electric vehicles will also **allow us to improve our infrastructure**.
- This will also have a **significant impact on our foreign policy** as our energy security dependence will shift from **West Asia to Latin America**.

#### Sourcing Lithium

In India, In the last two years, **lithium imports have tripled from \$384 mn to \$1.2 bn and its demands are being fulfilled** by imports from China, Vietnam, and Hong Kong.

- Latin America's famous **lithium triangle** Argentina, Chile, and Bolivia, encompasses about 80% of the explored lithium of the world.
- Currently, India's majority of trade from Latin America is concentrated on crude oil which includes 14%-20% of India's total crude oil imports which is likely to change towards Lithium and cobalt.
- government is looking to buy **overseas lithium reserves** to develop domestic battery manufacturing capacity.
- In 2019, a **joint venture agreement** was signed between three Indian **CPSE's** (National Aluminium Company (NALCO), Hindustan Copper Limited (HCL) and Mineral Exploration Corporation Ltd (MECL)) to form **Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL)** that has the objective to explore **strategic mineral assets** like lithium and cobalt abroad for commercial use and to meet the domestic requirement for battery manufacturers.

**What were the steps taken by government to facilitate the shift towards electric vehicles?**

With the vision to have 30% electric vehicles plying the roads by 2030 the government of India has taken up the following initiatives.

- First, under the **Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles** and **Fame 2.0**, the government has allocated **\$1.3 billion in incentives** for electric buses, three-wheelers and four-wheelers to be used for commercial purposes till 2022, and earmarked another \$135 million for charging stations.
- Second, **NITI Aayog** has proposed for a **\$4.6 billion subsidy** for battery makers to facilitate domestic manufacturing of **Lithium batteries**.
- Third, In September 2019, government gave its nod to set up a manufacturing unit in Gujarat by Japanese consortium (Suzuki Motor+ Denso+ Toshiba) to venture into the production of lithium-ion batteries and electrodes.

The Indian government's **pre-emptive policy** action will not only help the lithium and cobalt industry to grow domestically but also help India to chalk out a long-term solution to **clean our cities**, build new markets, and **skill people** for new jobs towards an '**Atmanirbhar Bharat**'.

**13. Issue of K-shaped recovery: How government budget can deal with it?**

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

*Syllabus- GS-3: Indian Economy- Growth and development*

**Synopsis** –The macro-implication of K-shaped recovery and labour market pressure. How government budget will deal with it?

**Introduction-**

- **COVID Vs Economic Mobility** –India has broken the link between COVID virus proliferation and mobility earlier and more successfully.
- India's GDP estimates for 2020-21 show that the economy is expected to perform much better than earlier projections.
- However, the present economic recovery is very hopeful developments but, juxtaposed with a stronger-than-expected recovery, is confirmation of labour market scarring.

**What are the present economic developments in India?**

- **Industrial sector** - The large firms have endured the crisis better and are gaining market share at the expense of smaller firms.
  - Although it will increase medium-term productivity, but it will also increase the dominance/pricing power of big companies in the market.
- **Employment** – CMIE's [Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy] labour market survey reveals 18 million fewer employed (about 5 per cent of the total employed) compared to pre-pandemic levels.
  - These labor market projections not incompatible with a sharper near-term rebound, as this recovery is led by capital and profits, not labour and wages
- **Household sector** – Households at the top of the pyramid are seen their incomes largely protected, and savings rates forced up during the lockdown, increasing 'fuel in the tank' to drive future consumption.
  - Meanwhile, households at the bottom are likely to have witnessed permanent hits to jobs and incomes.

### What are the implications of a K-shaped recovery?

**K-shaped recovery** happens when, following a recession, different sections of an economy recover at starkly different rates or magnitudes. The macro-implication of K-shape recovery in India are-

- **Firstly, issue of Income-** Upper-income households have benefitted from higher savings for two quarters. Present recovery is led by these savings.
  - But lower-income households are facing loss of income in the forms of jobs and wage cuts. This will be a recurring drag on demand, if the labour market does not heal faster.
- **Second, the issue of Consumption-** To the extent that COVID has triggered an effective income transfer from the poor to the rich, this will be demand-hindering because the poor have a higher marginal propensity to consume (i.e. they tend to spend (instead of saving) compared to higher marginal propensity to import among rich.
  - **Consumption pattern-** Passenger vehicle registrations (proxying upper-end consumption) have grown about 4 per cent since October while two-wheelers have contracted 15 per cent.
- **Third, increases the inequality-** COVID-19 reduces competition or increases the inequality of incomes and opportunities between rich and poor.
  - This could affect the trend growth in developing economies by hurting productivity and tightening political economy constraints.

### How upcoming budget may help India to deal with K Shape recovery?

Policy needs to look beyond the next few quarters and anticipate the state of the macroeconomy post the sugar rush, for the wellbeing of poor citizens and increase its income level.

- **First,** Policy will look for the **private sector to start re-investing and re-hiring**, and thereby sets the economy onto a more virtuous path. Barring that, the labor-market hysteresis could sustain with the manufacturing and service sectors.
  - Private investment revival policy may be implemented first for recovery of the private sector.
- **Second,** Ensure **exports should benefit** from increasing global growth as the world gets vaccinated steadily.
- **Third,** Government may **invest in large physical and social** (health and education) infrastructure push. It may provide employment for who lost job due to COVID. It may **reduce inequalities**.
- **Fourth, a reliable medium-term fiscal plan** will be key to anchoring the bond market and underscoring an adherence to macro stability.
- **Lastly,** the investment model for **public investment must be balanced** to push and financed by aggressive public asset sales.

### 14. Reviving consumption demand for economic growth

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

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

**Synopsis-** Expenditure side of National Income is showing signs of stress. The government should try to revive the consumption side to return to the growth path.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

### Introduction

- The first advance estimates of GDP growth for FY21 is more optimistic than the projections provided by many institutions, global and domestic.
- However, the figures still have a substantial chance of uncertainty as the source of data is not reliable [Very little up-to-date primary information is available for the estimation].

### What are the areas of concern?

On the expenditure side, except for government final consumption expenditure, alternative drivers of demand are down sharply. Non-Public Consumption Expenditure is predicted to contract 9.5 per cent while capital formation has contracted by 14.5 per cent, with imports and exports also contracting.

The economic performance was dented by sharp de-growth in the following three sectors-

- **A** sector-wise breakup of data for FY21 shows the **sharpest fall in trade**, hotels, transport, communication, and broadcasting services at **-21.4 per cent** from 3.6 per cent growth last year.
  - This is followed by **12.6 per cent contraction within the construction** sector as against a growth of 1.3 per cent last year.
- **Manufacturing is declining by 9.4** per cent in 2020-21 from 0.03 per cent growth last year.

The estimated losses in these three sectors account for 93.5 percent of the total loss for the whole year. Hence, fiscal policy needs to focus on priming demand to return to the trend growth path.

### What policy interventions are needed to increase consumption?

- **First, Government should focus on enhancing credit flows to the small and marginal farmers**
  - KCC (Kisan Credit Cards) constitute 60% of Major outstanding bank credit due to COVID and Agri stress.
  - To encourage consumption among farmers, interest payment by farmers should be sufficient for their KCC loan renewal.
  - It may result in a reduction of the NPA of the banks from KCC.
- **Second, the government should try to mainstream the tenant farmers**
  - There are almost 3-4 crore tenant farmers, not receiving PM-KISAN benefits.
  - The government should try to formalize the credit delivery to tenant farmers by issuing tenancy certificates on the line of Andhra Pradesh.
  - Another way is the formation of SHGs to enable formal lending.
- **Third, waive tax on Senior citizen saving scheme**– The government should make SCSS interest income to be tax-free.
- **Fourth, Launch Adopt-a-family scheme**– The scheme is voluntary and taxpayers with income up to over Rs 10 lakh could be incentivized for supporting a BPL family for a year. The government can incentivize taxpayers with around Rs 50,000 tax deduction apart from exemption offered under-80C.
- **Fifth, take the following steps** to bring more FDI and increase Ease of Doing Business rankings;
  - Withdraw all tax appeals.
  - Accept all domestic arbitration decisions against government departments/agencies
  - Clear above outstanding dues within a stipulated time.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- **Sixth, the Government should increase investment in the health and education sectors;**
  - The government can introduce a medical savings account.
  - Interest earned by the depositor can be deducted by government to provide the person with Mediclaim policy.
- **Lastly**, the government should bring down its stake in state-owned banks to less than 50 percent.

### Way forward-

By fulfilling these criteria, India can improve its position on the Ease of Doing Business ranking.

### 15. Need for social media Policies on hate and incitement

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

*Syllabus- GS Paper III (role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges)*

**Synopsis-** Social media platforms need clear policies on which they commit to a consistent refusal to help heads of state incite violence.

**Introduction-** On January 6, when the extremists stormed the United States Capitol building, Trump's social media accounts were active and communicating.

- After this incident, social media companies blocked particular communications including videos of the speech, and then suspended Trump's accounts.
- Eventually, Trump was barred from using Facebook and Twitter.

### How a ban on Trump has been justified by companies?

Soon after the ban, Critics pointed out that social media companies should not "censor" a president for making 'Politically biased decisions'.

As per social media companies, Trump did not stop at expressing dissatisfaction about the electoral outcome. But he chose to insist that the election was "stolen", calling for action. This took his speech beyond the realm of political opinion into the realm of incitement. Thus,

- A head of state cannot be allowed to incite violence.
- If restrictions were not enforced, Social media would have amplified the incitement, given the connection between his words and the violence.
- Moreover, Trump has access to the mass media, thus it doesn't affect his freedom of expression.

### Challenges in front of Social Media Companies:

**The First challenge** is regarding what to allow on the platform

- Social Media platforms have a major impact on public life, thus **platforms ought to follow international human rights law, especially the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.**
- For example; they must ensure they do not facilitate genocides such as the Rohingya genocide in Myanmar.
- On the other hand, Social Media need to ensure democratic debates on the imp. Issues like the COVID-19 virus, vaccines, abortion, Kashmir, LGBTQ rights, or marital rape.

### The Second challenge is linked to the speaker

- Barring a whistle-blower would have more impact compared to the head of state. Because Whistle-blower has no access to mass media.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](https://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- In contrast, a head of state like Trump who is barred from social media has access to the mass media.

### **The third challenge is regarding the measurement of communication effectiveness**

It also varies depending on the speaker and the audience.

- Incitement by a head of state is more dangerous than incitement by a powerless, ordinary individual because an influential speaker is much more likely to actually incite violence.
- A powerful leader can persuade his followers that it is acceptable and even righteous to engage in violence.

### **Why a policy is required?**

- Earlier in mid-2020, Facebook refused to regulate the US President's inflammatory posts due to its "newsworthiness" exception.
- Earlier, while Twitter suspended another account posting copies of Trump's tweets for glorifying violence, left the president's tweets up. This was because of Twitter's exception for public or elected officials' speech which is seen as being in "public interest".
- Now, these platforms have taken a step against incitement once the election result is confirmed.

### **Way Forward**

Social media needs to deal with this kind of issue in future very seriously. The platforms like Facebook and Twitter (Fourth Pillar of Democracy) should not be circulating speech that is very likely to cause violence. They need clear policies in which they commit to a consistent refusal to help heads of state incite violence.

## **16. Why caution is required in formation of Bank Investment Company (BIC)?**

**Source:** [click here](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 3

**Synopsis:** Amid to requirement for bank-led growth to deal with a pandemic induced slowdown, government is facing the challenges of infusion of capital in NPA ridden PSBs. Government is looking to form BIC to handle its investment in PSBs. But a clear strategy is required in its constitution to save BIC from ineffectiveness.

### **About Bank Investment Company (BIC)**

BIC is envisaged to become a holding company for government's share in PSBs. Its formation will ultimately transform all PSBs into BICs' subsidiaries.

### **Why government is looking to looking to form Bank Investment Company (BIC)?**

- As government is focussing on bank-led growth strategy, Public Sector Banks (PSBs) have a challenge to manage their balance sheet due to increasing NPAs.
- But government is hesitant in assisting PSBs by capital infusion this time, because
  - **Despite, capital infusion of nearly Rs 3.1 lakh crore from 2015-16 to 2019-20, PSBs have underperformed.**
  - Their gross non-performing assets (GNPAs) is projected to increase to 16.2 per cent.

Thus, as per few reports' government is planning to form **Bank Investment Company (BIC) to consolidate government shareholding in PSBs.**

### **About Bank Investment Company (BIC)**

P J Nayak Committee (formed in 2014 by RBI) Proposed formation of **Bank Investment Company (BIC).**

Committee was tasked with analysing the governance at public and private sector banks. It analysed that recapitalisation will only incur fiscal costs without any return. Thus, **government can either opt for privatisation or complete reformation of bank governance.**

In case of complete reformation of bank governance, a 3-step process is suggested:

1. Government to disassociate from operations, management and governance of PSBs.
2. Reconstitution of PSB board on professional lines.
3. Transformation of BICs from an owner to an investor with an aim to protect the government's financial investment in the banks by raising the returns.

Thus, BIC proposal is a right step towards PSB reforms. However, caution is required in formation of BIC as well.

### **Suggestion for BIC formation**

- Firstly, BIC will need to be allowed to bring in the essential talent and expertise, and operate with freedom. In the absence of freedom, it will result into another reform like Banks Board Bureau (BBB);
- BBB which was tasked with appointments and strategic decisions for PSBs is no more independent after inclusion of representatives from the RBI and the government.
- **Secondly, the goals of the BIC should be clear.** If capital raising is one of the goals, It need to maintain a proper portfolio of relatively better performing and non-performing banks to attract investments.
- RBI also raised its reservation regarding BIC structure, as investors might face challenges in assessing relative risks, returns and performance of the banks.

### **Way forward**

It is important that government deal with the challenges in formation of BICs in advance. Otherwise, privatisation can also be considered by repeal of the Bank Nationalisation Acts and the State Bank of India Act.

## **17. Ensuring Intergenerational Equity in Mining in India**

**Source:** [Click here](#)

*Syllabus: GS 3*

**Synopsis:** For ensuring Intergenerational Equity, it is important to ensure availability of resources for future generation. For this, sustainable mining should be ensured.

### **Introduction**

India's **National Mineral Policy 2019** states that "natural resources, including minerals, are a shared inheritance where the state is the trustee on behalf of the people to make sure that future generations receive the benefit of inheritance."

But Present trend of mining as much as possible, is not according to the role of trustee acquired by the government in its policy. The extraction of oil, gas and minerals is effectively the sale of this inheritance.

### What are the issues in mining trends at present?

- **First**, governments without their role of trustee in mind, end up with a mineral price that is considerably lesser than what they are worth.
- For example, it is projected from the yearly reports of Vedanta that from 2004 to 2012, Goa lost more than 95% of the value of its minerals. They sold mineral wealth worth 100 rupees for 5 rupees.
- **Second**, extractors try to extract as much as possible and move on quickly to reduce their cost and maximize their profits from an area.
- **Third**, the government also allows the hasty extraction, as it perceives more mining equals more government revenue.

### What are the steps to be taken?

The Government Accounting Standards Advisory Board needs to correct this error in the standards for public sector accounting and reporting for mineral wealth.

- There should be **legal safeguards against unregulated mining** and minerals should be considered as a shared inheritance.
- The state as **trustee of mineral wealth must collect the full economic rent** i.e., sale price minus the cost of extraction and cost including profit for the extractor. The full value of the extracted minerals should be received by the state, according to India's national mineral policy 2019.
- India can also maintain the entire mineral sale profits in a **Future Generations Fund** like Norway did. This Fund could be submissively financed through the National Pension Scheme framework.
- The Supreme Court gave a judgement in Goa Foundation vs UOI & Ors and ordered the creation of a Goa **Iron Ore Permanent Fund in 2014**, which already has an amount of ₹500 crores.
- This may be distributed as a citizens' dividend, equally to all the owners and future generations would benefit from the dividend in their turn.

### Way forward

- The principle of fair mining in return of its real value is fully constitutional, promoting justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity. The reduction in losses would also limit corruption, crony capitalism and growing inequality.

## 18. Ensuring accountability in the new Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2020

Source: [The Hindu](#)

GS-3: Infrastructure: **Energy**, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

**Synopsis:** the consumer protection rules will not guarantee better power supply quality without strong accountability provisions.

### Background

- Many States in India are not able to provide a **quality supply of electricity, specifically** to rural and small consumers.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- To resolve this issue, recently, Union **Ministry of Power** has promulgated the **Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2020**. The rules provide consumer with the **rights of power**.
- It is expected that the new **Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2020** will protect and empower electricity consumers' rights.

**Read more** – [Electricity Rules 2020 | ForumIAS Blog](#)

### **What are the limitations of the Rules?**

The following issues highlights the need for implementation of existing provisions in letter and spirit along with strong accountability provisions.

- **First**, Discoms are unable to provide quality supply. Reason for this is not lack of rules or regulations but the lack of accountability mechanism to enforce them. For instance,
- Many rights provided in rules 2020 **already exists in** Standards of Performance (SoP) of various **State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERCs)**.
- **Second**, the past efforts such as the **draft National Tariff Policy**, the proposed **Electricity Act amendments**, or various committee processes did not address the accountability concerns.
- **Third**, it is also doubtful that how Discoms will automatically compensate its consumers in the event of failure of power supply. Because, till now the availability of power supply is not monitored properly.
- **Fourth**, compensating consumers in the event of failure of power supply has serious financial implications. For example,
- In August 2020 rural areas received only 20 hours of supply. If existing regulations are followed it would cost hundreds of crores to discoms.
- **Fifth**, the new rules dilute the progressive mechanisms that exist in few States. For example,
- As per the new rules faulty meters should be tested within 30 days of receipt of a complaint.
- However, states such as Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh have rules that mandates that such testing needs to be conducted within 7 days.
- **Sixth**, the rules that the **Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum** should be headed by a senior officer of the DISCOMS company is a regressive provision.
- Because, it will reduce the number of cases that are decided in favour of consumers.
- It also questions the credibility of the new **Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2020**.
- **Seventh**, some provisions are confusing and requires clarity. **For example**,
- **The rules guarantee** net metering for a solar rooftop unit less than 10 kW. But it is not clear whether solar rooftop unit above 10 kW can also avail net metering.
- This confusion will lead to unnecessary litigation which will increase investments costs in rooftop solar units.
- It will discourage medium and large consumers from opting an environment-friendly, cost-effective option.

### **What steps are required?**

To ensure accountability, we need to consider implementing the following solutions,

- SERCs needs to be tasked to **assess the SoP reports of DISCOMs** and revise their regulations more frequently. Also, **SERCs** should be assisted in setting up **public grievance mechanisms**, to help consumers raise their concerns.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](https://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- Further, DISCOMs should be directed to ensure automatic metering at least at the 11 kV feeder level. This information should be available online.
- Apart from this, **The Central Electricity Authority of India** can also be directed to collect supply quality data from DISCOMs, publish data in public domain and prepare analysis reports.
- Finally, the Central agencies too can support in independent surveys and nudge State agencies to enforce existing SoP regulations.

The enactment of the new Rules will not change the status quo. Governments, DISCOMs and regulators should demonstrate the commitment and the will power to implement existing regulations to make the new **Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2020** successful.

### 19. Why Chinese forces are weakening?

Source – [the Hindu](#)

Syllabus Topic – International Relations – India and its neighborhood

**Synopsis:** In the beginning of this year, Chinese President Xi Jinping instructed his armed forces to be “combat-ready to act at any second”. However, in reality Chinese forces are facing too many inside challenges.

#### Why China is becoming aggressive?

**First,** Policies of new US President Joe Biden favours **freedom of navigation operations** in the South China Sea and Taiwan straits. By this aggression, China wants to show its confidence and military preparedness in response to new U.S. policies.

**Secondly,** China is preparing for possible military conflicts due to **its aggression in South China Sea, Taiwan and Ladakh.**

**Thirdly,** after a **series of setbacks in Ladakh**, China’s Western Theatre Command (WTC) has realised that it is still not well prepared. It suffered a high number of casualties in the June 15 Galwan valley clash. Moreover, the Indian Army also captured the strategic mountainous heights at Rezag La and other passes.

#### Reasons for poor performance of Western Theatre Command (WTC) in Ladakh

As mentioned above, Chinese WTC forces were outperformed by Indian troops in Ladakh. It brought many weaknesses of WTC in light, i.e.

- Chinese troops have not faced any combat for last 41 years. They crumbled when faced with the strong opposition by Indian forces.
- Chinese forces are facing the promotion related issues. It has negatively affected their morale.
- **For example;** many senior officers are not getting promotions due to a doubt over their loyalty to Mr. Xi.
- Chinese soldiers are not able to face the extreme high-altitude climate.
- Recently, 10,000 troops from the WTC were moved to lower locations due to fatigue and other complications.

#### Issues facing Chinese forces

- **Firstly,** Promotions in Chinese army are based on the loyalty to Chinese President Xi.
- **Secondly,** most of the recruitments are forced due to policy of compulsory military service. Personnel forced into military lack motivation to fight a war.
- **Third,** Chinese army is more of a political force and lack professionalism.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](https://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- **Fourth**, the concept of Joint Theatre Command has been introduced to promote to deal with regional threats. This idea is not feasible due to lack of coordination between different Chinese forces.

Chinese forces have shown too much aggression everywhere recently, but in reality, it is suffering from many issues from inside.

### 20. SC ruling on Section 32A of IBC

**Synopsis:** Supreme Court uphold the validity of Section 32A of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

**Syllabus – GS –3**

**Source – [Indian Express](#)**

Section 32A was introduced in the IBC by the amendment act of March, 2020.

By this section, government provided protection to successful bidders during corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP). These bidders offer reasonable and fair value for the corporate debtor.

#### Why this Provision was introduced?

Since implementation of IBC in 2016, insolvency resolution plan for many big companies could not be implemented. It was because of investigations by agencies like ED and SEBI.

- **For example**, In 2017 Bhushan Power and Steel with more than Rs. 47,000 crore debt, entered into insolvency proceeding. After a long bidding process, JSW Steel won the rights to take over Bhushan steel. However, ED jumped in and attached their assets worth Rs. 4,000 crores for the fraud by company's previous owner.

#### What was the case and ruling of Supreme Court on that?

Petitioners of the case argued that section 32A closes the door for individual investors to recover their claims from the new management. Thus, they are left with the only option of pursuing remedies under criminal law against the former management.

- Supreme Court in its recent decision **uphold the validity of Section 32A of IBC**.
- **Justice Joseph stated that** the purpose behind amendment was to **enable a new and clean beginning for the new management** and a clean break from the company's past.
- Thus, **a new management cannot be prosecuted for an offence committed prior** to the commencement of the corporate insolvency resolution process.
- It will also be **immune from investigations** being conducted either by any investigating agencies ED or other statutory bodies such as SEBI. Immunity is granted only for the matters linked with prior management.
- However, such immunity would **be applicable only if there is an approved resolution plan**, and a change in the management control of the corporate debtor.

This will provide the corporate bidders with a confidence to proceed with confidence while bidding on disputed companies and their assets.

### 21. WhatsApp Privacy Policy Issue: Need for Data Protection Law

Source: [Indian Express](#)

GS-3: Security and related issues

**Synopsis:** Draft data protection law needs to be enacted in India to curb data privacy violations in India.

### What is the issue?

- Recently, WhatsApp updated its **terms of service (ToS)** and **privacy policy for users**. It permits WhatsApp to share users' data with Facebook and its companies with their consent.
- This data would include transaction data, mobile device information, IP addresses, and other metadata on how users interact with businesses on WhatsApp.
- This is a classic case of an organization using its near-monopolistic power against the **interest of Consumers**.
- The government responded strongly by asking the platform to withdraw proposed changes. Along with this, the government sought their response to 14 queries related to their practices in India.

### Why it is a cause of concern?

- **First**, Even though sharing will be done by notifying the user it is against the **Principle Of Purpose Limitation**. **The principle has been used to address Privacy concerns at a global level**.
- **Second**, Facebook has a poor record on data protection of its users. For example, **Analytica data scam** during the 2016 US elections and **Brexit**.
- **Third**, recently there were reports stating that Facebook is **entering into data-sharing deals** with other tech firms like Apple, Amazon, Spotify.
- **Fourth**, it is a cause of concern because WhatsApp's growth was mainly due to its **virtue of protecting user privacy through end-to-end encryption**. But, with the change in the **privacy policy on users**, they are breaking away from their core virtue.

### Principle Of Purpose Limitation

1. A specific and legitimate reason is needed for the collection of any personal data.
2. Personal data can only be used for the specified reasons
3. Exceptions could be made if further processing is for any of the following purposes:
  - archiving in the public interest
  - scientific or historical research
  - statistical reasons.

### What is the way forward?

- **First**, the government should pass the **Personal Data Protection Bill (PDPB) 2019** because of the following reasons,
  - It has the provision on **Principle Of Purpose Limitation**. This would have restricted WhatsApp's action as it is illegal against the **Principle Of Purpose Limitation**.
  - Such practices are not allowed in the EU. Their users' private data is protected by **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**.
- **Second**, given the digital proliferation in the country tech giants needs to be monitored closely through competent legal and regulatory frameworks.

In India, the User base of social media for communications and business is increasing at a fast pace. Hence, it should be the priority of the government to **ensure a safer digital space**.



## 22. The Cost of Guaranteed MSP

Source: [click here](#)

Syllabus: GS 3

**Synopsis:** Farmers want guaranteed MSP which has no legal backing as of now. It is feasible and won't cost very high for the government.

### Introduction

Farmer unions are protesting to achieve two fundamental demands.

- **The first demand** is to take back the three agricultural reform laws enacted by the Centre.
- **The second demand** is to provide a legal guarantee for the minimum support prices (MSPs).

### How can MSP be made legally mandatory?

This can be done in 2 ways:

- **First, the private buyers are enforced to pay** it, and then no crop can be bought below the MSP. It would also act as the floor price for bidding in mandi auctions.
- **For instance**, in sugarcane, mills have to pay farmers the Centre's "fair and remunerative price" within 14 days of supply as per the law.
- **Second, the government itself has to buy** at MSP, the entire crop that farmers grow.

### How much of farmers' produce can the government buy at MSP?

**MSP is currently applicable on 23 farm commodities** including 7 cereals, 5 pulses, 7 oilseeds, and 4 commercial crops. The MSP value of all 23 commodities was around Rs 10.78 lakh crore in 2019-20.

- However, the entire produce is not marketed as farmers retain a part of it for self-consumption, as a seed for the next season's sowing, and for feeding their animals.
- Therefore, the **MSP value for the marketable crop** which farmers actually sell would be around **Rs 8 lakh crore**.

### What would be the government expenditure to ensure MSP?

The earlier mentioned amount will not be the amount the government has to spend because of the following reasons:

- **Firstly**, sugarcane should be excluded from the calculations. **MSP for sugarcane is paid by sugar mills and not the government.**
- **Secondly**, the **government is already buying several crops** like paddy, wheat, cotton, pulses, and oilseeds which made the combined MSP value of these crops more than Rs 2.7 lakh crore in 2019-20.
- **Thirdly, Government need not buy the entire produce of farmers.** Even if the government buys a quarter or third of the crops available in the market, it is enough to lift the prices.
  - For example, CCI has so far bought 87.85 lakh bales of cotton out of the current year's projected crop of 358.50 lakh bales. This has led to open market prices crossing the MSPs.
  - **Fourthly, the crop bought by the government also gets sold.** The profits gathered from sales would partially balance the costs from MSP procurement.
- **Lastly**, the maximum amount the government has to spend on buying crops to guarantee MSP to farmers, will not be more than **Rs 1-1.5 lakh crore per year.**

Government buying crops at MSP is a better option rather than forcing private buyers.

### Way forward

Economists suggest guaranteeing minimum incomes instead of minimum prices to farmers. This can be done by direct cash transfers either on a flat per-acre like done in the Telangana government's Rythu Bandhu scheme or per-farm household basis, under the Centre's Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi.

### 23. Need for New 4-tier Regulations for NBFCs

Source: [click here](#)

Syllabus: GS 3

**Synopsis:** The RBI's plan to tighten regulations on large NBFCs is critical for financial stability.

#### Introduction

The RBI has planned an important change in its regulatory approach towards India's non-banking financial companies (NBFCs). It plans to monitor larger NBFCs almost as closely as it monitors banks.

Read – [4-tier structure for regulation of NBFCs](#) | [ForumIAS Blog](#)

#### What was the need for a change in the regulatory framework?

- **The size of NBFC has increased from just about 12% of banks in 2010, to a quarter of the banking sector.**
- The growth has been facilitated by the lighter regulations on sourcing funds from home loans to micro-finance and large infrastructure projects.
- **However, These lighter regulations revealed a systematic risk.** For instance, IL&FS's payment defaults resulted in a large scale economic crisis in 2018.

#### What is RBI's proposed regulatory structure?

The RBI has introduced a four-tiered regulatory structure. By this, RBI is striking a balance between the need for low regulations and less systemic risks in the sector.

- **First,** For smaller NBFCs, regulations are light, on the basis of a largely 'let it go' approach.
- **Second,** For the largest NBFCs, it is imposing tougher 'bank-like' capitalization, governance, and monitoring norms. It is with an aim to reduce a systemic risk due to the nature of their operations.
- **Third,** the top tier will be activated only when a certain large player poses 'extreme risks'. NBFC categorized in this tier will face the toughest regulations.

### Way forward

- The banking sector is in despair over the past two years (PMC Bank, Yes Bank, Lakshmi Vilas Bank). Thus, a complete restart of the omission tool for NBFCs is critical to keep the confidence and maintain financial stability.
- It is hoped that the plan for the regulation of NBFCs is official soon. This would ensure the new economic recovery is not hampered by funding constraints.

## 24. Feasibility of Remote Voting Project

Source: [The Hindu](#)

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

**Synopsis:** ECI is planning to implement a **remote voting project**. It must analyze the issues of the system before its implementation.

### Remote Voting Project

- Recently, the **Chief Election Commissioner** (Sunil Arora) announced that it is starting trials of a **“remote voting project”**.
- IIT-Madras is developing the system for the **“Remote Voting Project”** by using **Blockchain technology**.
- The concept of remote voting became popular during the **COVID-19 pandemic** to address **social distancing**.

**Read More – [Remote Voting Project](#)**

### How voting technology developed over time?

Since the beginning, EC has been facing challenges in ensuring a fair voting system for the country. Over the years, it has introduced many changes for that.

- In the initial phases, ECI used the **“paper balloting”** method to conduct elections in India.
- However, the “paper balloting” method was subjected to malpractices such as **ballot stuffing** and **booth capturing**.
- Due to these lacunae, ECI introduced Electronic **Voting Machine in India (EVM)**. EVMs have passed intense scrutiny, because of their standalone **single-chip device**. **This device is not connected to any network**.
- Recently, **Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) have been added to the EVMs**. It has enhanced the ability to verify the voting.

Now, ECI has started trials in the **“Remote Voting Project”** that uses blockchain technology. This system will definitely face the same level of scrutiny, that was faced by EVMs.

### How blockchain-based voting system work?

- This technology has been already in use for **cryptocurrencies**. It is used to record a list of transactions that can be used to find out who owns which bitcoins **without any centralized authority**.
- The blockchain method uses an **online public bulletin board** that is public and available for anyone to read and verify.
- **The voting authority will have to authenticate this bulletin board**.
- Further, The **public bulletin board** allows for a **linear ordering of data** that ensures only a user can add data.
- This allows the users to sign in to the bulletin board using **cryptographic signatures** to register their votes in a ledger.
- The **blockchain-based voting system** with its cryptographic features, **promises data security and verifiability**.

### What are the issues in using a blockchain-based voting system?

- The use of **blockchain-based voting systems** will depend upon a network. It will also face all the online vulnerabilities that other devices are facing at present.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- Also, a recent draft paper by MIT and Harvard researchers pointed to serious vulnerabilities in the designs of a remote block-chain-based voting system.
- The research paper also claims that blockchains will introduce issues related to complexity and their management.

The ECI should be cautious before deploying this method in elections.

### 25. Establishing thought partnerships between the government and private entities

Source – [The Hindu](#)

**Synopsis:** Government should put more effort into establishing more “**thought partnerships**” with private entities. It aims to find appropriate solutions to the policy challenges faced by the country.

#### Background

- Over the last few years, cooperation between the government and private partners on complex policy issues has increased. For example,
  - Induction of private individuals into the civil services through **lateral entry scheme**.
  - Recruitment of private individuals as consultants, officers **on special duty** by Central government ministries and institutions such as NITI Aayog.
- Such support is critical for tackling issues like; huge vacancies in the central government and over-burdened and under-resourced civil service.
- Moreover, lack of government capacity (knowledge) is **evident in suboptimal policy decisions and poor implementation** of those policies.
- Hence, there is a strong case for building a “**thought partnership**” with private entities.

#### What is a “thought partnership”?

- Thought partnership is different from the recruitment of private consultants.
- Recruitment of private consultants is usually done to support government officials with additional manpower to manage routine tasks.
- In “**thought partnership**“, private entities will engage with the government in **collaborative thinking**.
- Thought partnerships are a **structured mechanism** for private entities. They provide strategic expertise to the government on policy design, evaluation, and implementation.

#### What are the advantages of building a “thought partnership”?

- First, it will help us to utilize the **domain knowledge** and **resources of private individuals**. It will ensure the government delivers on its mandate across sectors in the most effective manner.
  - For example, take the case of **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) 3.0**.
  - Through **PMKVY 3.0** the government wants to focus on matching local skilling requirements with local job opportunities.
  - However, any plan of this large scale cannot be successful only with the work of a few individuals, a department, or even a ministry.
  - It requires co-working with different entities, including collaboration between the government and external partners.
  - This is where “**thought partnership**” with private entities becomes helpful.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- **Second**, the private entities can be used to fund the thought partnership expeditiously without any conditions. **For example**, Already several domestic and international **philanthropies** are investing billions of dollars into critical sectors in developing countries including India.

### Has India attempted “systemic thought partnerships” in the past?

Yes, several ministries have attempted **systemic thought partnerships occasionally**. However, it has not yielded the definitive way forward on government-private collaboration. Some of them are,

- **One**, the establishment of **The National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, Department of Economic Affairs Research Programme**.
  - It was established after the 2005 **Ashok Lahiri Committee** report. The report stated that there was not enough knowledge about external capital flows and controls in India.
  - The Programme led to the creation of world-class research on capital controls and flows in India, developed by Indian researchers.
- **Two**, In 2015, the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs** constituted a research secretariat headed by the **Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy**.
  - It was tasked to support the **Companies Law Committee** to make informed decisions on the principles involved and international practices in the areas of insolvency, raising of capital, etc.
- **Three**, Currently the **National Institute of Financial Management** is working with the **Department of Economic Affairs** to provide legal research and technical assistance on Indian and foreign financial markets.
- **Four**, In 2018, the **Ministry of Skill Development** started engaging with multiple private firms such as **Dalberg Global Development Advisors** and **Samagra-Transforming Governance** to conceptualise and design its vision for 2025.

Policy choices made in isolation without proper debate, research, and questioning will produce suboptimal results. It is therefore in the **public interest** that government should build more “**thought Partnership**” with private entities to find optimal solutions to the pressing policy challenges faced by the country.

### 26. Way forward for Taxing older vehicles

**Source:** [click here](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 3

**Synopsis:** Raising the tax on older vehicles will help in reducing pollution.

#### Introduction

The Centre has planned a policy to raise road tax on vehicles of a certain age from April 1 next year. This has the potential to renew a big part of India’s vehicles on the road, raising fuel efficiency, and improving safety standards. The proposal is

- **Commercial transport vehicles will have to pay 10%-25% extra** on road tax after 8 years while renewing the fitness certificate. While for personal vehicles it will be implemented after 15 years.
- **Public transports are given concessions**. While hybrids, electrics, and farm vehicles have been exempted.
- **Higher tax on diesel engines and in most polluted cities** is also proposed.

**What will be India's approach to make this initiative a success?**

**India's scheme depends on penal taxation** to motivate owners to scrap their old vehicles. However, there are some prerequisites for its success;

- **Firstly, the additional tax suggested should be bigger than the resale value** of the polluting vehicle. It would make its disposal a more viable option, this would make the approach work.
  - Disposal should be done with enough safeguards to ensure that it is really scrapped and recycled under a monitored system.
- **Secondly, equity features can be built into the scheme.** It can be done by offering a discount to marginal operators such as auto-rickshaw drivers. It would be similar to the 2009 incentive given under the JNNURM scheme for buses.
- **Thirdly,** Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari planned a reduction in automobile prices of 20% to 30%. It would be done by the recovery of scrap steel, Aluminium, and plastic; and recycling it further.
  - **Now, capacity building** in the organized sector can be improved for scrap collection and processing. It will manage the task of materials recovery, efficiently.
- **Fourthly, the vehicle registration database for all States** should be updated. It will show the actual numbers of old vehicles on the road. Such data will help target scrappage policy benefits better.

**The way forward**

- India's policy to eliminate polluting fuel consumers took a lot of time, and States should see the value of operationalizing it as planned. New vehicles and cleaner fuels should help clear the toxic air in cities and towns and make roads safer.

**27. "STI policy 2020" emphasising self-reliance in science**

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

**Gs3: Science and Technology- Developments**

**Synopsis:** The recently released Draft Science, Technology, and Innovation policy has many issues and challenges that need to be addressed to promote **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** in science

**Background:**

- Recently, the Department of Science and Technology has released the 5<sup>th</sup> draft of the **Science, Technology, and Innovation policy** for **Public scrutiny**.
- It contains the objectives and goals of our new science policy.
- But it has many issues and challenges that are highlighted below, along with the required actions that need to be taken.

**What are the key objectives stated in the 5<sup>th</sup> draft of the Science, Technology, and Innovation policy?**

1. **First**, it proposes **technological self-reliance**. It will position India among the top three **scientific superpowers**. (US, China, India)
2. **Second**, to achieve this, it proposes developing a "**people-centric**" science, technology, and innovation "ecosystem". This will help us to retain our best minds in India.
3. **Third**, it proposes to double the private sector's contribution to the **Gross Domestic Expenditure on Research and Development**. This is similar to the 2013 policy.

4. **Fourth**, it has proposed the vision for a **decentralized institutional mechanism** for a robust **STI Governance**.
5. **Fifth**, it also acknowledges the disconnect between science and society in the chapter 'Science Communication and Public Engagement'.
6. **Sixth, it aims** to impart an **inclusive culture** in academia. For that, the document promises to tackle discrimination based on gender, caste, religion, geography, language, disability, and other exclusions and inequalities.
7. **Seventh**, the policy abides by our constitutional obligation to **“develop a scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform.**

### What are the issues in the 5<sup>th</sup> draft of Science, Technology, and Innovation policy?

The author has cited the following issues in the draft science policy that has been released for Public Feedback.

1. **Issues in Readability of the draft:** The draft report is written with complex language. It makes the task difficult for the Public to provide meaningful feedback. This destroys the very purpose of Public Scrutiny.
2. **No data on the progress of previous policies:** for example, the 2013 science policy had the similar objective of doubling the private sector's contribution in **Research and Development**. However, what has been achieved till now in this regard has not been stated.
3. **Policy objectives signify neglect of government responsibility:** R&D investment in science is stagnant for several years (0.5% GDP). It is despite strong recommendations by scientific bodies to raise it to 2% GDP.
  - The proposal to increase private sector investment in R&D shows that the government is shifting the responsibility of financing R&D to different agencies such as the States, private enterprises, and foreign multinational companies.
4. **Mechanism followed to institutionalise robust STI Governance is faulty:** it proposes for several new authorities, observatories, and centres to institutionalise decentralization. This may end up increasing bureaucratic control which is already high in science administration.
5. **Lack of planned solutions to achieve the stated objectives:** for example, the policy mentions more representation of women and the LGBTQ community in academia. But it is silent on how it will be achieved.
6. **It does not provide solutions to address issues in society that hampers scientific research:** for example, our belief systems, values, and attitudes have an impact on the quality of research. This explains why Indians who have chosen to pursue research abroad are able to make path-breaking discoveries.

### What is the way forward?

1. **First**, the private sector cannot be expected to pay for basic research because the **return on investment** in basic research takes too long. Hence, the government should finance research.
2. **Second**, Decentralization of an administrative structure is essential, but it would be a better option to provide more autonomy to research and academic centres for financial management.
3. **Third**, we need to control the propagation of **pseudoscience** in the name of traditional science. It is needed to develop a rational scientific ecosystem for young minds.

With the advent of new disruptive technologies, global competitiveness will be increasingly determined by the quality of science and technology. Hence, the government should priorities raising the standard of Indian research/education centres and R&D spending.

## 28. How should India handle the new virus variants?

**Source:** [click here](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 3

**Synopsis:** Mutation of the coronavirus has become a new threat to the world. India must take precautionary measures to deal with it.

### Introduction

New SARS-CoV-2 variants have emerged independently in several countries and the virus is changing very quickly. If it continues to change, currently available vaccines will become ineffective.

### Why do viruses mutate?

All the viruses carry a genetic code in the form of RNA or DNA. The DNA is replicated as the cells multiply and this process may **cause random errors in the new DNA**.

Errors in DNA can be corrected by the enzymes present in the cell. However, RNA doesn't contain enzymes, thus errors caused in RNA cannot be corrected. It causes **more genetic changes (mutations) in RNA than DNA viruses**.

### How are vaccines tested for efficiency against emerging variants?

- **Indirect tests are conducted in labs.** It will find if variant virus escapes antibodies developed after natural infection or vaccination.
- Antibodies that neutralize the original virus are tested on the variant viruses.

### Are the emerging variants vulnerable to vaccines?

- The emerging variants from **South Africa could pose a challenge to current vaccines**. Not enough information is available yet for the Brazil variant.
- However, the studies have **only tested antibody responses**. Vaccines also increase cellular immunity to eliminate infection which has not been tested.

The evidence currently does not suggest that vaccines are failing.

- However, Moderna and Pfizer/BioNTech have agreed that their vaccines have had reduced protection against the South African variant. Both the companies are now working on developing new vaccines to fight these variants.

### What steps should India take in this situation?

There is no local transmission of the new variants in India until now. Only the UK variant viruses have been found in travellers coming to India.

1. **Firstly**, India should **strictly implement masks and limit crowds**. It should also do the contact tracing of people infected with the new UK variant.
2. **Secondly**, India should also put **a ban on travel from South Africa and Brazil** just like the US did. India must also be cautious of people with a history of travel to South Africa since October 2020, and Brazil since December 2020.
3. **Thirdly**, the most efficient way to catch emerging variants is **increased genomic surveillance**. So far, there are only about 5,000 SARS-CoV-2 sequences from India in public databases, which accounts for only 0.05 percent of confirmed cases.



The setting up of an inter-ministerial group -Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (**INSACOG**) to increase genomic surveillance is a step in the right direction. India should take more such steps.

## 29. Reason behind Anthropocene epoch- Capitalism or Socialism?

Source: **Indian Express**

**Gs3: Conservation, Environmental Pollution, and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment.**

**Synopsis:** Human race should respect the **carrying capacity of the environment** in order to survive.

### Background

- After World War 2, there has been a significant rise in the emission of carbon dioxide.
- Emission was caused by the rapid advancement of the manufacturing sector and the global market system.
- Along with this, the rapid rise of digital, virtual, and biotechnological systems from the 1990s, have pushed mankind to a new era of **Anthropocene** from the **Holocene era**.

The Anthropocene epoch is a time during which human activities started to make significant changes to Earth's surface, atmosphere, oceans, and systems of nutrient cycling.

### Is capitalism the reason for the Anthropocene epoch?

1. **The Capitalistic economic system** is blamed for the arrival of the Anthropocene epoch. But even the Socialistic economic order could not have prevented this.
2. If the world had followed **Socialist economic order** it would have contributed more to the problem of the **greenhouse effect**. Because its core principle of **equitable distribution of resources** would have meant more purchasing power for everyone. It would have resulted in more consumption of resources.
3. Hence, mere criticism of Capitalism won't solve the issue of sustained "**Ecological disaster**" by Human Species.

### What needs to be done?

Human efforts to control nature through technological developments have backfired. It is evident from the impact of the Pandemic and the negative consequences of Climate change. We need to make the following changes;

- First, we need to think of an alternative development model. It should include the **ecological impacts** of development into serious political considerations.
- Second, societies must plan for **Population control** to reduce the **ecological footprint** on nature.
- Third, the need to shift from "**materialistic culture to conservatism**". This will also help to reduce the **ecological footprint** of nature.

Hence, it's important, for the Human race to continue, should understand its "**Species sense**"- **to live in harmony with nature**.

## 30. Ways to control Monopolistic tendencies of Internet Giants

Source- **The Hindu**

*Syllabus- GS 3 – Awareness in the fields of IT, space, computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology, and issues relating to intellectual property rights IPR.*

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](http://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

**Synopsis-** The lawmakers are facing the confusion between managing the misuse of monopoly power by major Internet corporations and the economic income generated by them.

### **Introduction-**

In the US and Europe, governments are using antitrust regulations against Internet giants such as Facebook and Google. This is to stop the alleged abuse of the dominant position.

Some are comparing this case to the prior U.S. antitrust inquiries. At the conclusion of this inquiry in 1982, the break-up of the AT&T was dictated by the Department of Justice.

### **What are the key differences this time when compared to the earlier antitrust investigations?**

There are three major variations relative to the earlier investigation-

1. **First, Information non-competition-** These big industries are based on information or data. There is no competition between 2 similar companies. While earlier telecom companies faced competition due to limited network capacity.
2. **Second, Jurisdictional issues-** Telecom is jurisdictional and regulators have the authority to create guidelines for orderly actions. In contrast, Internet firms operate globally. Thus, it is often difficult for various country regulators to set international laws of obligation and compliance.
3. **Third, Non-excludable-** The nature of goods and services provided by the Internet is non-excludable, unlike telecom. It means it is not exclusive for anyone or anyone can access or enter into it.

### **How information goods provided by private Internet firms causing problems?**

This non-excludable and non-rival model is creating the following issues:

- **First, Personalize Advertisement and third-party sharing-** Internet businesses are earning through targeted ads by sharing personal information and data to third-party for monetization purposes.
- **Second, Monopoly-** Tech giants are involved in the wrong means such as takeover or suppression of competition, resulting in an uneven playing ground for other organizations.

### **However, there are positives externalities too, such as-**

- Google Maps API [application Program Interface] use by all logistics and transport companies and Facebook API for advertisement.
- Recently, Google announced to provide accurate and timely information about vaccine distribution.

### **What are the possible solutions to regulate Tech giants?**

1. **First, need to subsidize the good-** Tax subsidies should be granted for tech giant's orderly behaviour.
2. **Second,** there should be controlled expansion of products and services. This needs to be done without damaging the interests of customers and smaller rival companies.
3. **Third,** as pointed out by the Australian government, the tech giants such as Google and Facebook must negotiate a fair payment for services such as news by the media industry.

4. **Fourth, to use the power of the public voice. For example-** WhatsApp has delayed the rollout of its updated privacy policy after facing a huge backlash of tens of millions of its customers.

### Way forward-

The balance between controlling the monopolistic tendencies of internet giants and establishing environment of positive externalities must be created.

A secure digital space needs to be established where the human rights of all consumers of digital resources are secured.

### 31. Why Farm laws must be redrafted?

**Source:** [click here](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 3

**Synopsis:** The process adopted by the government to enact the three farm laws was not appropriate. The government should reconsider its stand to not withdraw the laws.

#### Introduction

Much has been debated about the impacts and benefits of farm laws on farmers. But the ordinance route adopted to enact these laws **was a clear violation of the rules and procedures** of Parliament.

#### What were the discussions between the first Lok Sabha speaker and the first Prime Minister?

After independence, the ordinance route was criticized for being inherently undemocratic by G V Mavalankar in a letter to Nehru. In reply, Nehru also agreed with his view.

They both agreed on one thing that the ordinance route is not appropriate and should be avoided except on special and urgent occasions.

#### What was wrong in the process of passing these laws?

Passing these farm laws through the ordinance route was bad in law and in clear violation of established parliamentary practices. **There was nothing urgent** which could not have waited for Parliament to reassemble.

In normal circumstances, bills are referred to the **concerned standing committee** for examination and report. Only in rare cases, the bills are passed directly by the two Houses without referring them to the committee.

**For example**, the Companies Amendment Bill was examined by the committee twice in spite of the opposition of the then corporate affairs minister Veerappa Moily.

The procedures established by the parliament ensures that the two Houses do not go wrong in the passing of bills for the public purpose. In case of a mistake, courts have the power of **reviewing these bills**.

#### Way forward

**The Supreme Court has stayed the implementation** of the laws. But these laws can be declared void for not following the established procedure, stepping over the power of states. Although The government agreed and delayed their implementation for 18 months, it should consider the government withdrawing the laws completely. It should redraft the bills if required and send them to the standing committee on agriculture.

### 32. Issues related to R&D in India

Source: [click here](#)

Syllabus: GS 3

**Synopsis:** Chief Economic Adviser said that the private sector in India needs to increase the spending for the country to scale up growth.

#### Introduction

According to Chief Economic Adviser Krishnamurthy V Subramanian, the private sector in the country needs to increase spending from 37 percent to 68 percent. So that India could scale up and match the level of the top 10 economies in terms of the expenditure on R&D.

#### Issues related to R&D in India

1. The country's gross expenditure on R&D for 2020-21 stood at 0.65 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It was less than one-third of the funds spent by the top 10 economies of the world. The top 10 economies of the world spent between 1.5 to 3 percent of GDP on R&D.
2. More than half of the total expenditure on R&D was done by the government in India. Still, India's gross domestic expenditure on research and development (GERD) is very low.
3. According to the survey, the number of patent and trademark applications filed by Indian start-ups has increased over the past 5 financial years but there is a lack of consistent approvals.
  - For example; startups in India filed 1,100 applications for patents between April and October, but none were approved. They filed more than 3,500 applications for trademark recognition. But none of them was granted approval between April and October 2020.

#### What needs to be done?

Private investment in R&D needs to be boosted. There should be a focus on innovation in various sectors.

- Firstly, India needs to improve its standing in the total number of patent applications filed in the country.
- Secondly, a major push on R&D by the business sector is required. India's local companies should increase their share in total patents to a level equal to our status as the fifth-largest economy in the current US dollar.

### 33. Lessons for India from one year of COVID Pandemic

Source: [click here](#)

Syllabus: GS 3

**Synopsis:** One year has been passed when the first confirmed case was reported in India. What are the lessons that India should learn from this Pandemic?

#### Introduction

India's first confirmed case of Sars-CoV-2 was reported exactly a year ago. Experts with the help of a modeling-based study predicted that the country could have hundreds of millions of cases and a few million deaths by July 2020.

#### What were the challenges faced by people during the pandemic?

There was a sudden decrease in economic activities, low job opportunities, slowing of the economy. Impacts further worsened due to lockdowns.

Created with love ❤ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.  
Visit [academy.forumias.com](http://academy.forumias.com) for our mentor-based courses.



## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- One of the most disturbing visuals that came from the pandemic was **the migrants walking back to their villages on the highways**.
- **People who tested positive for the virus and the frontline workers** were discriminated against in society.
- **An excessive amount of unreliable information i.e. “infodemic”** became a major obstacle in effective response to the pandemic.

### What were the steps taken to deal with the pandemic?

Pandemic highlighted the need for strengthening the Indian health system and boosting public health services.

1. **Firstly, COVID-19 specific services** which include testing, contact tracing and treatment facilities were scaled up.
2. **Secondly**, in order to **achieve self-sufficiency**, the production of personal protective equipment (PPE), testing kits, and ventilators were increased in India.
3. **Thirdly**, researchers and scientists worked together to develop new testing kits, to conduct **clinical trials on treatment procedures and vaccines**.
4. **Fourthly, two SARS CoV-2 vaccines were approved in India** and vaccination started at the beginning of 2021. The COVID-19 vaccines manufactured in India are being used in other countries as well.

### What are the lessons learnt from the pandemic?

India has reported nearly 10.7 million confirmed cases and 1,53,000 deaths in the last year. Five lessons which should be learnt are mentioned below:

- **First**, the pandemic has widened the inequalities in the society as the poor and vulnerable sections were the worst affected. The government should urgently **increase investment in strengthening health systems** to address inequities and reduce poverty.
  - This will prepare the country for future pandemics and help in accelerating economic growth.
- **Second, Stronger health infrastructure is possible by** interventions in various areas, such as:
  - Governance and leadership.
  - Health financing and health information system.
  - Providing services and delivery.
  - Health infrastructure and workforce.
  - Medicines, diagnostics, and vaccines.
- **Third**, the hospital-dominated medical care system needs to be changed to a more inclusive health system for the lower section.
  - **Community clinics could be set up** along with a strengthened primary healthcare system in both rural and urban areas.
- **Fourth, states and the union government should spend more on health care** and public health services. Laboratories and disease surveillance systems should be well-developed. The provision of mental health services via **teleconsultation** can be effectively used.
- **Fifth, sustain the three-way partnership** between policymakers, technical experts, and community members which have been formed for pandemic response.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of January, 2021

- This would help in ensuring that health policies are informed, effectively implemented, and services widely used by the community. People's participation and community engagement was important and need to be continued post the pandemic.

### Way forward

- These learnings should be used to create a stronger healthcare system in India, which will provide accessible, available, affordable, and quality healthcare services to each and every citizen of this country.

### 34. India's Sovereign Ratings don't reflect its fundamentals

Source: [Indian Express](#), [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 3-Indian economy Planning and development

**Synopsis:** The Economic Survey 2020-21 concludes that the **sovereign credit ratings** are biased, and they do not reflect the Indian economy's fundamentals.

#### Background:

- Currently, India's sovereign rating is rated under a **very low investment grade**.
- Though it will not have impact on market performance, rupee value against the dollar, or on G-Sec yield. But it can impact the **FPI inflow into equity and debt instruments**.

#### On what basis the economic survey has made this remark?

- As per the survey, it is for the first time in history that India, which is the fifth-largest economy in the world, has been rated as low in the investment-grade (**BBB-/Baa3**).
- Historically, the **fifth-largest economies** have been mostly rated **AAA**. It reflects the economic size and its ability to repay debt. China and India are the only exceptions to this rule.

#### What is the solution to address this issue?

- The economic survey suggested **reworking the sovereign credit rating** methodology to make it more transparent and less subjective.
- It also called for co-operation among developing economies to address this bias and subjectivity, inherent in **sovereign credit rating methodology**.

#### What are the other factors affecting investment according to the Economic survey?

- The Economic survey pointed out the issue of **over-regulation in the Indian economy**. The survey suggested **simplification of regulatory processes** along with transparent decision-making processes.
- The survey also highlighted the problem of **asymmetric information** between the regulator and the banks which was noticed during the **forbearance regime**. (short-term relief for borrowers to postpone loan payments-witnessed during the Pandemic)
  - The survey suggested conducting an **Asset Quality Review exercise** immediately after the forbearance is withdrawn.

India's willingness to pay debts is demonstrated often through its **zero sovereign default history**. So, the current sovereign ratings are not a representation of India's growth and commitments.

### 35. Focus areas of Economic Survey 2020-21

Source- **The Indian Express**

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

Synopsis – **The Economic Survey 2020-21** outlines the status of various sectors of the economy.

#### Introduction-

- The government presented Economic survey 2020-21 of India in the Parliament.
- The Economic survey provides a summary of the annual economic development across the country during the previous financial year.
- The focus of this year's economic survey is on the following basic tenets:
  - Atmanirbhar Bharat in COVID times.
  - Shifting from entitlement-based approaches to an entrepreneurship-based policy framework.
  - Going beyond “nudging”.

Nudging is a method of changing people's behavior by incentives and encouragement. It does not favour the use of force or penal actions for inducing behaviour change among people. It was used to discourage open defecation by communicating its advantages and financial incentives for toilet construction.

#### Key highlights of Economic Survey 2020-21

The Economic Survey 2020-21 examined the correlation of inequality and per-capita income with a range of **socio-economic indicators, including health, education, etc.**

1. **Economic recovery:** The emphasis is mostly on the economic recovery routes after the damage due to COVID-19 pandemic. It is expected that the recovery will follow a **V-shaped path**. **Now**, the target of making India a \$5-trillion economy by 2024 is also clear.
2. **Health expenditure:** The survey recommends **raising government spending on the healthcare sector** [from the current 1 per cent to 2.5-3 per cent of GDP]. It will reduce out-of-pocket expenditures.
  - **Health outcomes-** The health results of the states that have adopted **Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)** have improved compared to those that have not adopted the scheme.
3. **Bare necessities-** Access to the bare necessities such as water and sanitation, accommodation, micro-environment, and other facilities has improved across all States. The survey looks at how the bare necessities have changed.
4. **National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) will boost inclusive economic growth and employment opportunities during 2020-25.** The NIP [introduced in 2020] has estimated a cumulative investment of **111 lakh crore over five years in infrastructure projects**.
5. Government consumption and net exports cushioned the growth from diving further down.
  - Strong services exports and weak demand leading to a sharper contraction in imports than exports.
  - India remained a preferred investment destination in FY 2020-21 with FDI pouring.
  - India's forex reserves at an all-time high as to cover 18 months' worth of imports in December 2020.

However, the survey should have focused more on the external trade aspect. India should try to establish value chains with South and Southeast Asia.

India should also reconsider the high cost of tariffs when 38% of our exports rely on imports.

### 36. Contribution of Chidambaram Subramanian

Source: [Click here](#)

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Science and Technology – Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.

**Synopsis:** Jan 30 is the birth anniversary of Chidambaram Subramanian. He had trust in science and believed that technology can resolve the problem faced by society.

#### About Mr. Chidambaram Subramanian (CS)

1. He was born on 30 January 1910.
2. He was concerned about the problem of food security in India. Also, an architect of public policy for Indian science and the Green Revolution.
3. He was awarded the nation's highest civilian honour, the **Bharat Ratna in 1998**.
4. His call was for "**Science of the humanity**".

#### What were the contributions of Mr. Chidambaram Subramanian?

##### Firstly, Food sufficiency goal-

- Chidambaram Subramanian is known as the **architect of India's modern agricultural development policy**.
- His initiatives led to a record harvest of wheat in 1972 – an achievement termed the Indian **Green Revolution**.
- He introduced **high-yielding seed varieties** and **more intensive application of fertilizers** as Minister for Food and Agriculture. It paved the way for increased production.
- The site used for storing food grains during the Green Revolution became the **Technology Bhavan** that continues to house the Ministry of Science and Technology.

According to Chidambaram Subramanian, the economic independence of any Indian was heavily dependent on the **four E's: Education, Environment, Economy, and Empowerment of farmers**.

##### Second, Institutional mechanism-

- **National Agro Foundation (NAF)** was set up as a Public Charitable Trust in 2000 by **Chidambaram Subramanian** to revive rural India through rural innovations. NAF institutionalized his will through farmer-centric programs.

##### Way Forward

- In the time of novel coronavirus pandemic, when millions of people have been pushed below the poverty line. The best way out is to look for solutions by connecting to science.



# General Studies Paper – 4

## General Studies - 4

---

### 1. Teachings of Swami Vivekananda

Source: [Indian Express](#)

GS4: Contributions of Moral Thinkers and Philosophers from India and World

**Synopsis:** Teachings of Swami Vivekananda is still relevant to the 21st century youth.

#### Background:

- 12th January, the birthday of Swami Vivekananda, is celebrated as **National Youth Day**. His teachings still inspire the youth of India.
- At present one fifth of the young person in the world lives in India.
- The contribution made by these young population is significant in making India the third-highest growing economy among the 13 major economies in the last five years.

#### How Vivekananda's teachings are still inspiring our Youth's?

- **Firstly**, by giving the slogan of **"Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached."** Vivekananda's has inspired Indian youths to take the leadership role in world arena and they are now eager to give direction to the world.
- **Second**, through the slogan of **"Make a life's aim and incorporate that idea into your life.... Think that thought over and over again. Dream it, live it... that is the secret to being successful"** he was able to inspire Indian youths to focus more on their goals without any distraction and have helped them to be more successful.
- **Third**, through the slogan of **"Until you can trust yourself, you cannot trust Allah or God"** Swami Vivekananda was able to educate the youth on the power of **Self-belief**.

#### How Vivekananda contributed to the Idea of a secular society?

Swami Vivekananda, in his teachings combined thinking of different religions, communities and traditions.

- He represented **Sanatan Dharma** in Chicago in 1893, where he taught the world that it is our duty to encourage all those doing good so that they can make their dreams come true. He also highlighted the values of **"Vishwabandhutva", tolerance, cooperativeness, participation**, religion, culture, nation, nationalism and the collective India-Indianness.
- Swami Vivekananda instilled his idea of charity at the root of Sanatan Dharma through his teaching that **"The more we come to help and help others, the purer our heart becomes. Such people are like God"**.
- His vision also gave rise to the idea of **Antyodaya**. Where he said, **until the upliftment of the last poor person in the country is ensured, development is meaningless**.
- At the **Parliament of World religions**, he said **the Sanatani religion** is instrumental in teaching the world the lesson of **tolerance** and **universal acceptance**. He proudly said Indian soils were the first laboratory and protector of **secularism**.
- When he addressed the **Parliament of World Religions**, he gave the message of **universal brotherhood**.
- Currently, His inclusive thinking is also reflected in the Narendra Modi government's slogan **"Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas"**.

Swami Vivekananda took forward the efforts made by other thinkers to reach the roots of Indian culture. Secular thinking and the importance of oneness of the world made him acceptable worldwide.

## 2. Contributions of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s

**Source:** [click here](#)

*Syllabus: GS – 4*

**Synopsis:** Dr. King helped the U.S. to become a more inclusive society. His movements and ideas still have universal appeal.

### Introduction

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s ideas for a more inclusive society and polity assume significance amid the persisting racial discrimination in the US that resulted in the Black Lives Matter movement.

### What were the ideas Dr. king presented in his speech?

Amid the persisting racial discrimination, he dreamt of an inclusive America and turned it into a movement in the 1950s and 1960s.

- In 1963, he gave his most remembered "I have a dream" speech at the Lincoln Memorial. There he **expressed his vision for an inclusive and equitable America.**
- In his speech, he expressed his desire that one day America will live out the true meaning of its creed that **all men are created equal.**

### Importance of DR. king's contribution to the Civil Rights Movement

Dr. King's involvement in the Civil Rights Movement was extraordinary. He was a unique leader among the ones who propagated freedom and dignity.

- **First**, the Uniqueness of Dr. King's movement lies in reforming the architecture of movements. He propagated his ideas by a relentless and nonviolent movement.
- **Second**, the civil rights movement **adopted ideas from India's civil disobedience.** For instance, the 381-day Montgomery bus boycott validated the potential of nonviolent mass protest and stimulated the Civil Rights Movement.
- **Third**, his ideas renewed the benchmarks of equality, justice, and dignity in the US society and provided African-Americans with a better version of it.
- **Fourth**, his movements ultimately resulted in **path-breaking laws such as Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965**, which ended several residues of racial discrimination and led to the empowerment of African Americans.