

**9pm**

# **Compilation**

**February, 2021 (Fourth Week)**

## General Studies 2

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2. The trend of Undermining the Role of Upper House
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## General Studies 3

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# General Studies Paper - 2

## General Studies - 2

### 1. Impacts of School Closures and way forward

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus: GS 2:** Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation.

**Synopsis:** Policies to deliver education during COVID-led school closures has increased the disparities. Disparities need to be rectified by suitable policy measures to deliver universal education to all.

#### Background

- Lockdown measures to contain COVID spread has forced the government to resort to school closures.
- The governments tried to address the situation by giving a push to the digital distance learning method.
- However, studies indicate that the initiative failed to take into account existing divides such as spatial, **digital, gender and class**.
- The digital learning methods widened the digital divide between the rich and the poor and the urban and rural areas.

#### What were the steps taken by the government?

- The government used various means such as text/video/audio content through SMS, WhatsApp, radio and TV programmes to reach out to students and engage them.
- Further, the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development in March 2020 started sharing the following free e-learning platforms.

**1. Diksha portal:** It contains e-learning content aligned to the curriculum

**2. e-Pathshala:** It is an app by the National Council of Educational Research and Training for Classes 1 to 12 in multiple languages

**3. SWAYAM:** It consists of 1,900 complete courses including teaching videos, computer weekly assignments, examinations and credit transfers, aimed both at school (Classes 1 to 12) and higher education.

**4. SWAYAM Prabha:** It is a group of 32 direct to home channels devoted to the telecasting of educational programmes

#### What are the issues concerning the use of digital distance learning method?

The attempts at initiating a rapid transition to digital learning following the pandemic have many lessons,

1. **First**, according to a recent **UNICEF report**, the massive school closures exposed the uneven distribution of technology required for **remote learning**. It reduced the chances of **social and economic mobility** through education.
2. **Second**, it also disrupted the significant school programmes that resulted in high enrollment as well as regular attendance. (The mid-day meal scheme, the school health Programme and pre-matric scholarships to girl children).
3. **Third**, the abilities of the families and communities to support their children's education reduced. For example, A survey promoted by the **Centre for Budget and**

**Policy Studies** found that in families which faced cash and food shortages, only 50% of the boys and girls were confident of returning to school.

4. **Fourth**, students with lesser access to digital connectivity forced them to share the burden of household chores. Also, their educational routine disrupted. In many cases, students don't remember what they learnt earlier.
5. **Fifth**, apart from the above issues the education sector faced many challenges. Such as delivery of pedagogical processes, classroom assessment frameworks, students' support and teacher-student engagement.

#### Case study of Rajasthan:

- Rajasthan has a low literacy rate in India. It is the 2nd worst in overall literacy rate and worst in female literacy rate. (**NSS,2017-18**).
- 20% of girls in the age group 15-16 were out of school against the national average of 13.5 (**Annual Status of Education Report 2018**).
- Despite pioneering initiatives in education such as the **Lok Jumbish and Shiksha Karmi** projects, it suffers from systemic issues in education related to quality, equity and gender.
- In Rajasthan, the access of girls to education during the COVID-19 period was limited to 11%. Girls who had online access reported links through WhatsApp (92%) and YouTube (12%).
- The reasons for students inability to access online education were lack of devices, poor or no internet connectivity, and also girls' preoccupation with household activity.
- In contrast, the schools run by NGO's performed better. They did not resort to online education. Instead, teachers visited individual students at home and also taught children in small groups.

#### What needs to be done?

- **First**, Education planning should be made context-specific, gender-responsive and inclusive.
- **Second**, the government should take enabling measures even when schools are closed. Such as;
  - providing access to online education,
  - removal of barriers in pre-matric scholarships and
  - ensuring the provision of mid-day meals, iron and folic acid tablets and
  - provision of personal hygiene products to girl students
- **Third**, currently, there are around 300 million children reported to be out of school in India across all age groups. This number can increase once schools will reopen.
  - Hence, the authorities should establish the re-enrolment of children as mandated by the **National Education Policy 2020**. **Mass outreach programmes** should be developed with **civil society** to encourage re-enrollment.
- **Fourth**, to retain the poorest at schools' remedial tuitions and counselling along with scholarships, targeted cash transfers and other entitlements are advisable.
- **Fifth**, we can also think about making secondary education for girls free.
- **Finally**, to implement all these measures we need to support the education sector with adequate budgetary resources. Hence, it is important to increase the share of education to 6% of GDP, as emphasized by the President of India.

## 2. The trend of Undermining the Role of Upper House

**Source:** <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/ShareArticle?OrgId=GH88A6BJ6.1&imageview=0>

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

**Synopsis:** The ruling party who dominates the lower house is sometimes seen undermining the role of the Upper House. Such an approach dilutes the principle of bicameralism and undermines the spirit of the Constitution.

**Background:**

- The recent passage of the **Prevention of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Bill** in Karnataka's legislative council has attracted criticism.
- The reason for criticism is that the **bill was passed through a voice vote** in place of a division vote as demanded by the opposition.
- The opposition parties had a majority and didn't support the bill. This has created an impression that the bill was passed without majority support.

**Instruments to undermine the Upper House:**

- **First**, the use of **voice vote** undermines the higher number of opposition members in the upper house. In this process, the presiding officer gives a decision as per his judgment, because the names or numbers of legislators voting on each side are not recorded.
- A similar thing was seen in the passing of controversial farm laws by Rajya Sabha in 2020.
- **Second**, the presiding officer sometimes declares a bill as a **'Money Bill'** even if it is not covered under the definition of a money bill.
- As the second house can only give recommendations on it and can't stop its passage.
- For Example, Aadhaar, electoral bonds, retrospective validation of foreign political contribution, etc. passed as money bills.
- **Third**, the government **promulgates the ordinance** and frequently re-promulgates it.
- This is an abuse of temporary legislative power given to the executive who tries to give it permanency by re-promulgation.
- The objective is to forbid the second house from performing its constitutional role as the majority is already enjoyed in the lower house.

**Role of Upper House:**

- **First**, it gives **credible second opinions** on bills introduced by the ruling party in the lower house.
- **Second**, to **prevent** the country from the **brute will of the majority** of one party in the lower house. This becomes crucial as even the courts are barred from intervening in the legislative process.
- **Third**, it **duly represents the interests of states** at the national level. Rajya Sabha is representative of all the Indian states.
- **Fourth**, it **upholds the principle of separation of powers** in a robust way. The majority of the executive is often chosen from Lok Sabha by the ruling party. This allows the executive domination over the legislature and easily passes bills in Lok Sabha.

**Way Forward:**

- The speaker/chairman of the house must act in the spirit of positive morality. It would allow him to function objectively.



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- The demands of opposition should be respected. For example, division vote instead of voice vote should be used.
- The money bill issue can be rightly tackled if the Supreme Court hears the case over its misuse, gives its verdict in due time.
- The executive and ruling party must respect the dissent of the Second Chamber as done in case of repeal of the 42nd amendment.
  - Janta Government was not able to completely repeal it as Congress enjoyed a significant majority in Rajya Sabha.
- Greater focus should be on debates and discussions rather than solely focusing on quick passing of bills.
  - The Parliament was not convened for a long time during the pandemic and later got convened after suspending the question hour so that swift passage can happen. This approach needs to be changed.

### 3. Centre's decision over Finance Commission's recommendations

**Source:** <https://epaper.thehindu.com/Home/ShareArticle?OrgId=GH88A6BJ2.1&imageview=0>

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies

**Synopsis:** The **15th Finance Commission** has submitted its recommendations for 2021-26 to the Centre. Amongst which maximum have been accepted by the Centre while others are put on a hold by it.

#### Background:

- The commission headed by **N.K Singh** was required to give recommendations for the period 2020-21 to 2024-25.
- Although due to COVID-19, it was required to submit an interim report for a year 2020-21 and later give a road map for **2021-22 to 2025-2026**.
- Further, the recommendations were to be given keeping in mind the multiple challenges. This included dissolution of the planning Commission, introduction of GST and above all the fiscal and revenue stress induced by the pandemic.
- The commission gave the recommendations based on a judicious interpretation of the unusual terms of reference given to it. This has ensured that recommendations are based on the **principle of equity**.

#### Recommendations accepted by the Centre:

- **41% of the Centre's taxes** would be distributed amongst the states.
- **Revenue deficit grants** amounting to 2.95 lakh crore would be given to 17 states in 5 years.
- Grants towards urban and local bodies would be conditional upon:
  - Setting up of a State Finance Commission
  - Online publication of Local bodies accounts
  - Sanitation and Water services provided by local bodies (60% weightage)
- Setting up of a **non-lapsable defence modernisation fund** for augmenting capital expenditure on defence beyond the normal budgetary allocations.

#### Recommendations put on hold:

- Taking out 1.53 lakh crore rupees from the consolidated fund of India to partly finance defence modernization fund.
- Sectors specific and other grants to States amounting to 1.8 lakh crore rupees.

**Way Forward:**

- The Centre must take proactive steps to win the confidence of States, especially in the current stressful times.
- The instances of introducing more cess and surcharges should be reduced as these are not shared with States, like the recent agricultural infrastructure development cess.
- The Centre needs to take States along with it to drive the country on a sustainable fiscal path and ensure equitable growth throughout the country.

**4. Why India-China Border disputes are unresolved?**

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – India and its neighbourhood- relations

**Synopsis:** India and China signed several bilateral agreements for border disputes resolution. However, it has not been to ensure permanent peace at the border.

**Background**

- The year 2020 witnessed increased India – China border tensions in the Ladakh region, especially the Galwan valley. The incident involved an armed conflict in which soldiers from both sides died.
- It happened despite signing numerous agreements in the past for settling border disputes.

**Efforts of bilateral issues resolution between India and China**

The agreements were aimed at restoring peace and promoting confidence-building measures (CBMs).

Year	Agreement/ Protocol
1993	Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the India-China Border Areas
1996	Agreement on Confidence-Building Measures in the Military Field Along the LAC
2005	Protocol for the Implementation of Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field Along the LAC
2012	Agreement on the Establishment of a Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs
2013	Agreement on Border Defence Cooperation

- **Key Features of the agreements:**
  - Refrain from use of force against each other
  - Peaceful settlement of disputes should be undertaken
  - Mutual ascertainment of LAC and deployment of minimum armed personnel around it.
  - Prior notification should be given for conducting military exercises and flying combat aircraft within 10 km of LAC
  - Practicing self-restraint in case of face to face military contacts
  - Stipulating the channels that should be used for communication and border personnel meetings in case of emergencies.
- The agreements between India and China were inspired by the success of Russia – China engagements.

**How China- Russia resolved bilateral disputes?**

1. The relations between China and Russia marked by military confrontation along the border in the 1960s. However, the disputes were duly tackled by new leaders like



Mikhail Gorbachev. He promoted CBMs (confidence-building measures) for dispute resolution.

2. Both countries developed a strategic partnership based on equality and mutual trust.
3. In 1990, an Agreement on the Guidelines of Mutual Reduction of Forces and Confidence-building in the Military Field along the border was signed.
4. In May 1991, an Agreement on the Eastern Sector of National Boundaries was concluded by the two countries. This resolved 98% of outstanding boundary issues.

**What were the reasons for the success of the China-Russia agreements?**

1. Unilateral concessions were made by the bigger power (Russia).
2. The collapse of the Soviet Union brought the two countries closer against the common enemy (US).
3. They identified common interests that helped them build broad and institutionalized relationships.

**Why are border disputes still persistent between India and China, despite agreements?**

- **First**, As per China, Tibet never had the sovereign rights to conclude agreements. Therefore, recognition of the McMahon line (Line of actual control) by India based on Tibet's past agreement undermined China's sovereignty.
- **Second**, China's approach of following a forward policy in the western region often leads to clashes along the border. The recent one is the Galwan valley clash of 2020.
- **Third**, being the bigger power, China has never shown its will for unilateral and asymmetric concessions.
- **Fourth**, the agreements signed between the countries were not nurtured in an environment of equality and mutual trust.
- **Fifth**, the countries have failed to publish a joint declaration on LAC. This is necessary for promoting CBMs between the countries.

**Way Forward:**

- China needs to change its traditional stance of assertiveness along the border which would help in better implementation of bilateral agreements.
- Further interaction in other spheres like trade and commerce should be carried out despite border tensions as done by both countries till now.

**5. Science and Technology in India's foreign policies**

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus:** GS-2 – Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors

**Synopsis:** Covid-19 Pandemic provided India an opportunity to mainstream science and technology (S&T) in its foreign Policies. It became possible due to the past achievements by the country in the domain of S&T.

**Background:**

- The roots of India's scientific programs can be traced to the 1959 speech delivered at the Indian Science Congress by Jawaharlal Nehru.
- He called for a focus on robust scientific research and seeking international scientific advancements.
- Strong countries like the US tried to curb the country's advancements in important spheres like nuclear and space programs. However, despite this, the country managed to augment its S&T potential.

**‘Science and Technology’ in International Relations:**

- The country gave **significant support to Asian and African nations** especially in the field of health. This strengthened its relation with Global South.
- In the 1990s, after liberalization, India asserted its scientific interest in a better way. It established the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India in 1999.
- An **improvement in Nuclear and Space programs** was also seen in the 21st century. It was facilitated by growing ties with the US and their joint vision to curb China's assertiveness.
- It also **signed strategic partnerships** with countries like the UK, Canada, etc. that had substantial S&T components.
- The country's **Science and Technology Policy 2003** and **Science, Technology and Innovation Policy 2013** clearly relate international S&T cooperation with the national interest.
- To boost international S&T collaboration, A **Cyber Diplomacy Division**, an E-Governance & Information Technology Division, and a New Emerging & Strategic Technologies Division under the Ministry of External Affairs were also set up.
- Very recently, India's pharma firms such as the Serum Institute of India partnered with the U.K.'s Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine project. Similarly, Bharat Biotech produced an indigenous vaccine called Covaxin.

**India's efforts for international cooperation during COVID Pandemic:**

- Initially, India gave medicines such as hydroxychloroquine and paracetamol to over 150 countries.
- The Vaccine Maitri program was also launched to give vaccines to other countries.
- India delivered vaccines to many needy countries in South Asia and South America very recently.
- India's response was a mark of its advancement in S&T. Moreover, responses were aligned with its Neighbourhood First, Act East, Indo-Pacific and LookWest policies.

**What more should be done?**

- India should now convert the crisis into an opportunity by launching more programs like **'Vaccine Maitri'**. This program attracted appreciation from multiple countries including Brazil, Canada, and Barbados.
- There is a need of giving **greater financial devolution** towards S&T for achieving self-reliance under Aatmanirbhar Abhiyan. This can be duly leveraged in international relations.
- Further, the participation of states, universities, and the private sector in research and development efforts should also be enhanced.
- Scientists must be made more aware of foreign policy objectives and diplomats about the latest scientific advancement in order to strengthen the integration.

**6. Landmark verdict on Sexual harassment and its value for Women**

**Source – The Indian Express, The Hindu**

Syllabus – GS 2 – mechanisms, laws, institutions, and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of vulnerable sections

**Synopsis –** The key takeaways from the landmark verdict on Sexual harassment by Delhi High Court and its value for women.

**Background –**

Recently Delhi court has acquitted a former journalist in a defamation case filed by a former Union minister.

In this case, a journalist initially made allegations of sexual harassment against the former Union Minister. In turn, a criminal defamation case was filed in Delhi High Court against the journalist by Union Minister. However, Delhi High Court acquitted the journalist of the Criminal Defamation charges in its very recent verdict.

#### **What is the law for Defamation?**

- **Defamation** – The act of communicating false statements, spoken or published intentionally with the aim to damage someone's reputation.
- **Punishment Under section 500 of the IPC** – Whoever defames another shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years, or with a fine, or with both.

#### **Why the Journalist was acquitted in a defamation case?**

The law acknowledges that a person's reputation cannot be used as a defense against their own bad behavior. Thus, **Section 499 of the IPC** prescribes several exceptions to claims of defamation. Further, the court held two important observations.

1. The actions of a journalist are not defamation. Instead, it is the attribution of truth. Such attribution will not fall under defamation.
2. The journalist made such actions in order to make good for the public (Public good). The Act of public good also not fall under defamation.

#### **Court's observation-**

- Women cannot be punished for raising their voices against sexual harassment.
- A woman has a right to put her grievance on any platform of her choice, even after years and decades. Because, Vishaka Guidelines and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013 were not available at the time of sexual harassment.
- Only because women are not able to provide evidence, Women's testimonies on sexual harassment cannot be dismissed as false or defamatory.
- The right of reputation cannot be protected at the cost of a woman's dignity guaranteed under Article 21.

#### **Way forward**

- This historic decision has set an example for women to speak up against sexual harassment regardless of time.
- The verdict was also seen as a huge moral victory for the #MeToo movement.
- Further, The verdict will help to prevent the unethical use of defamation law.

### **7. Australia's news media bargaining code**

**Source- The Hindu**

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

**Synopsis** – Australian government proposed a bargaining code. This code has provisions to compensate media companies for using their content.

#### **Background**

- Australia's recently proposed **News Media and Digital Platforms Mandatory Bargaining Code Bill 2020**.
- The law would make technology platforms like Google and Facebook pay media publishers. The payment will be made for using their news content by social media platforms and search engines.
- As per News agencies, internet companies became wealthier at their expense by selling advertising linked to their reports, without sharing revenue.

- Google accounts for 53% percent of Australian online advertising revenue and Facebook 23%.

#### Why this proposed law is justified?

- **First, power imbalance** – Australian government intended to curb the financial imbalance between multibillion-dollar internet companies and news organizations
- **Second, negotiating power-** The law will give individual publishers more **negotiating leverage with internet giants**.
- **Third, these provisions are not new. In France,** Google was forced to negotiate with news agencies for reusing their material online under a neighboring rights' law.

However, many experts believe otherwise:

- The proposed code is **against the principles of an open Internet**.
- **The new law is a result of pressure from powerful media agencies** such as Rupert Murdoch's News Corp.

#### Way forward-

The proposed law is an Australia Government's effort to ensure that its economy is able to take full benefits of the growth of digital giants. By that, it is also protecting its news media houses. Other governments can also learn from Australia's approach.

#### 8. Why Sedition law needs a relook?

**Source:** Click here

**Syllabus:** GS-2

**Synopsis:** Recent charges of sedition against individuals have brought back focus to seditions law. The oppression of dissenters is more dangerous for society. It creates more division in society compared to seditious acts.

#### Introduction

In Kedar Nath Singh v. State of Bihar (1962), the Supreme Court defended the constitutional validity of sedition. It noted that it is a reasonable restriction on free speech as provided in Article 19(2) of the Constitution.

The court also made clear that an individual has the right to speak or write anything about the government. However, it should not result in inciting people to violence against the government.

#### Why does the sedition law need a relook?

In the Aseem Trivedi case, the Bombay High Court issued guidelines which the police must follow in a sedition case. **These guidelines include an objective evaluation of the seditious material.** By that police must form an opinion on whether the words and actions caused disaffection and disloyalty to the government. However, the law needs a relook due to the following reasons:

- **Firstly**, despite repetitive warnings to **law enforcement agencies by courts**, there is poor implementation of guidelines given by the court.
- **Secondly**, the recent reports show that **the number of cases of sedition under Section 124A increased** by 160%. Whereas the rate of conviction dropped to 3.3% in 2019 from 33.3% in 2016.
- **Thirdly**, in this social media age, information travels at a lightning speed, and Cyberbullies can easily trend wrong information. Any kind of misinformation can lead to **public disorder**.
- **Fourthly, the U.K. abolished the offence of sedition in 2010. Whereas, India is still retaining the law** given by the British Empire.



- **Fifthly, various commissions have questioned the efficacy of such a law in the statute book.** For instance, the Law Commission of India questioned how far it is justified to retain Section 124A.

#### **What steps can be taken to deal with sedition?**

Sedition laws will not be repealed anytime sooner. In the meantime, courts can adopt an approach that can balance the issue of National security and the right to speech.

- At present sedition is decided based on a content-based test that reviews **only** the text i.e. even if a written material not caused any social unrest, it can be held a seditious text based on the words used.
- **Courts must adopt an effect-based test** that examines the effects of the seditious text. It means whether the text resulted in violence or not.
- **The principles of justice**, liberty, equality and fraternity exists in the Preamble to our Constitution. Courts must uphold these principles.

It is not the alleged seditious acts that are creating fragments in our society; it is in fact the persecution of individuals and labelling them that are really creating cracks in our socio-political ecosystem.

### **9. Allowing constructive criticism of Government Policies**

**Source: The Hindu**

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests

**Synopsis:** India should respect the universal nature of human rights. It should allow constructive criticism of its policies by the Global community. Thus, India should welcome, praise as well as criticism from other nations.

#### **Background:**

- The use of military-grade barriers and internet shutdown against Farmer's protest **attracted criticism from global celebrities**. However, the government has advised them to refrain from interfering in the internal issues.
- Moreover, the government has arrested activists (like Disha Ravi) and warned social media companies (Like Twitter) supporting such celebrities.
- It is not the first time global celebrities stood for human rights. They also advocated democratic and human rights in other cases, like for Syrians on an Italian shore, the Rohingya in Myanmar, or Hindus in Pakistan.
- The global community is surprised by such a response. It is because India has itself been a champion and propagator of the universal nature of human rights.

#### **India supporting universal nature of human rights:**

- The country **criticized the practice of apartheid** and arbitrary revocation of Nelson Mandela in South Africa. The efforts led to the setting up of the United Nations Special Committee Against Apartheid.
- India was part of the committee that **formulated the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. The Declaration was adopted in 1948. This created a list of universal rights available to every human being.
- Indian freedom fighters like Mahatma Gandhi **played a pivotal role in drafting the UN charter** at the 1945 San Francisco conference.

#### **Respecting the Universality and Indivisibility:**

- The framers of the Indian constitution didn't intend to protect the customs and traditions. They adopted liberty, equality, and fraternity ideals of French Revolutions on the basis of following justifications.



- Liberty without equality will lead to the supremacy of few and equality without liberty would kill innovation.
- Without fraternity, liberty and equality could not become a natural course of things.

#### Why should we welcome Foreign Criticism?

1. **First**, India itself intervened on matters of other countries on grounds of human rights. The 1971 intervention in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) was justified on humanitarian grounds.
2. **Second**, implementation of the latest laws like the Citizenship (Amendment) Act is only possible when criticism from other countries is accepted. The law offers a home for certain persecuted citizens of three foreign countries.
3. **Third**, the interests of Sri Lankan Tamils can be protected when the country is itself open to foreign comments.
4. **Fourth**, the country anyway welcomes praise from foreigners as observed in case of giving refuge to the Dalai Lama. Similarly, some Europeans were allowed to visit Kashmir in order to examine the human rights situation.
5. **Fifth**, public criticism is not a direct intervention in internal affairs.

#### Way Forward

- India must realize that it can sustain its reputation as the world's largest democracy only when it ensures and secure universal rights for all. This would require giving everyone a sense of security and respecting their dignity.
- Further, the practice of accepting only praise from foreign celebrities also needs to be changed. Constructive criticism also requires acceptance.

India must refrain from shunning the criticism on the grounds of 'internal matter'. India has itself intervened in fellow countries to protect and uphold human rights.

### 10. Frequent transfer of public servants affect public administration

**Source- The Hindu**

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

**Synopsis-** Frequent transfers of public servants ultimately affect their morale, performance, and also the public administration.

#### Introduction-

- An analysis of the executive record (ER) sheets of thousands of IAS officers reveals that the frequent transfers in service are normal.
- But, frequent transfers have an adverse impact on their morale. This will lead to a decline in productivity and efficacy.
- **Few examples of frequent transfer of public servants**
  - IAS Ashok Khemka has been transferred more than 50 times.
  - Pradeep Kasni has been transferred 65 times.

#### Why frequent transfers happening?

Frequent transfers happen due to two major reasons. Such as,

1. Interference of local politicians in public policy.
2. Transfer guidelines have been undermined by the State governments. The 2nd ARC also highlighted this issue.

**What are the impacts of frequent transfer of public servants?**

- The officer is not getting the proper time to **focus on the developmental needs of the area**.
- **For Example-** the **Shopian district** in Jammu and Kashmir for the last 14 years witnessed the transfer of 13 Deputy Commissioners. Among them, two officials were transferred within 25 days of their posting. So the public servants not able to frame proper long-term developmental policies.
- Frequent transfers affect the **functioning of public administration** and **demoralize the bureaucracy**.
- The **Hota Committee report on 2004** also highlighted a few impacts. Such as
  - Frequent transfers will create a **lag in the implementation of government policies**. As the new public official has to know the status of the project, challenges in a particular area, etc.
  - Further, frequent transfers will result in the **wastage of public resources**. This is due to inadequate supervision of the program and large-scale corruption.
- Above all, transfers can create **administrative favoritism** among the public servants and create divisions among civil servants.

**Way forward**

The government has to frame an **efficient transfer policy**. This will preserve the fundamental principles of civil services such as neutrality, impartiality, and anonymity.

**11. Delhi Court's ruling on Disha Ravi Toolkit case**

**Source- Indian Express**

**Syllabus – GS 2 –** Indian Constitution—historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions, and basic structure.

**Synopsis –** Delhi court grants bail to Disha Ravi in its ruling in the tool kit case. It termed evidence produced by Delhi police as inappropriate.

**Introduction-**

- Delhi Court granted bail to climate activist Disha Ravi, arrested in the Greta Thunberg 'toolkit' case.
- Delhi Police arrested her on charges of **sedition** and **criminal conspiracy** in the Greta toolkit case.

**Key takeaways from Court's ruling-**

- The Delhi court dismissed the claims as Delhi police failed to show any evidence.
- **On criminal conspiracy**, the Court noted that mere assumption is not sufficient. It should be backed by evidence.
- The judge stated that only interaction with people of **doubtful credentials is not an offence**.
- **On sedition**, the court cited Kedar Nath case (1962) that actual violence or incitement to violence should be associated with words.
- Moreover, the Court negated the state's "global conspiracy" claims and stated that the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression "includes the right to seek a global audience". Also, "there are no geographical barriers on communication" as long as it is "under the four corners of the law."

**What is the Toolkit case?**

**Toolkit-** A document created to explain any issue which provides information on what one needs to do to address the issue.

- Toolkit includes information about petitions, details about protests, and mass movements.
- It also provides a roadmap of how to take forward the protest and what can be done, when and how.

#### Disha Ravi Toolkit case-

- Delhi police reported that Ravi was the editor of a Google doc (called a toolkit) related to farmer's protest.
- Police alleged her that she started a WhatsApp Group to make the Toolkit doc in collaboration with a **pro-Khalistani organization to spread disaffection against the Indian state.**
- She was charged with **Section 120B [Criminal conspiracy]**, along with **Sections 124A (sedition)** and **Section 153A** (Promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony) of IPC.

### 12. President's rule in Puducherry: Issue in constitutional and legal provisions for Union Territories

**Source: The Hindu**

**Synopsis:** President's Rule has been imposed in Puducherry after all parties failed to make government. Legal and constitutional provisions related to UTs contribute to the destabilization of government there.

#### Background

- **President rule** has been imposed recently in Puducherry after the Narayanasamy government lost majority support in the assembly.
- This incident is not new. It is very **common** especially when **Union Territories with assemblies** and Central government are ruled by different parties.
- Present constitutional and legal provisions for Union territories facilitate this destabilization.

**How the present constitutional set up makes it easier to destabilize Union Territories**  
Constitution of India under **article 239A** provides for **Legislature and Council of Ministers in Union territories**. The intent behind this move was **to fulfill the democratic aspirations of the people** of these UTs. In other words, the rule of the President under article 239 through administrator is not in line with democratic needs.

However, certain provisions are working as hurdles in achieving the real intent behind these provisions.

1. **First, Article 239A** provides that a local Legislatures or Council of Ministers (CoM) or both can be created for Union territory. It means there can be a Council of Ministers without a legislature or with it or vice versa.
  - In our constitutional scheme, either CoM or legislatures can work alone. The legislature is a law-making body and CoM proposes these laws.
2. **Second,** constitutional provisions provide that **legislature to be a partly elected and partly nominated body**. Center through a simple amendment can create a legislature with more than 50% nominated members.
  - In the case of Puducherry, the Centre can nominate 3 members to 33 members in the Puducherry Assembly. Thus, the Centre nominated 3 members of its party to the assembly. This move was challenged in SC. However, SC ruled that the Centre is not required to consult the State government for nomination and **nominated members have the same right to vote as regular members.**

- **Rajya Sabha** also has nominated members, but, under clause (3) of Article 80, some **qualifications are mentioned for such nominations**. It ensures enrichment of quality of debates.
- However, it is not the case with Puducherry assembly. No qualifications are mentioned for nominations.
- 3. **Third, Lieutenant Governor** in the UTs restricts the autonomy granted to UTs. Center can interfere in every decision of the Council of Ministers through LG and President.
  - Article 239 AA(4) and section of UTs act vests the power in the administrator. He or she can **express disagreement** with any policy matter and refer the **matter** to the President. Then, **he or she can take all actions** he or she deems fit in the matter.
  - In Puducherry too, conflicts between the Lt. Governor and the Chief Minister were perennial.

Thus, past experience proves that the UTs with legislatures have ultimate control vested in the central administrator. It is not workable.

### 13. Issue of Bail under anti-terrorism cases

**Source: The Hindu**

**Synopsis:** Bombay HC granted bail in UAPA case on health grounds. It will set a new example of upholding the individual's right in anti-terrorism cases.

#### Background

- Bombay High Court granted bail to poet Varavara Rao on medical grounds. He was jailed under the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for the Bhima Koregaon case**.
- Recently, Varavara Rao was admitted to the Nanavati Hospital after his condition deteriorated due to some ailments.
- NIA was of the opinion that there is a statutory bar under Section 43D (5) of the UAPA on providing bail if the accusation against a person is prima facie true. Also when the accused has access to treatment in a government hospital. Bail on the health grounds will attract a flood of such petitions.
- However, HC ruled that even provisions of anti-terrorism law cannot curb the right to life under Article 21.

#### Grounds for Bail in Anti-terrorism cases

1. **Supreme Court ruling in 2019** made it **nearly impossible to grant bails** in the cases of UAPA. It is possible only in the case when one could prove charges against him to be prima facie untrue.
2. However, recently, **SC held that prolonged imprisonment without any near possibility of completion of the trial is a ground for bail**.
3. In this case, too, HC observed the same situations before granting the bail. It was observed that there was no possibility of early completion of the trial. Moreover, charges are yet to be framed.

This HC judgment will set a new precedent of **valuing human Rights over National Security Laws**.

### 14. Issue of adultery in Civil Services and Army

**Source: The Hindu**

**Synopsis:** SC decriminalized the act of adultery in the **Joseph Shine vs Union of India case**. However, it is still not clear whether adultery is the right ground for departmental enquiries against Civil Servants or Army officials.



### Background

- **Members of All India Services (AIS) are governed by a moral code of conduct.** It requires them to “maintain absolute integrity and devotion to duty” and do “nothing which is unbecoming of a member of the service”.
- Similarly, the **Army Act also contains penal provisions** for displaying “unbecoming conduct” or “disgraceful conduct”.
- However, the terms “**unbecoming conduct**” or “unbecoming of a member of a service” are **not defined anywhere**. It leaves the scope for employers or disciplinary authorities to define them as per their own understanding.
- It is the reason that there is doubt whether illicit or adulterous relations are covered under these definitions or not.
- This issue has become more prominent after SC decriminalised adultery in the Joseph Shine vs Union of India case. The Centre has filed an application for clarification with the SC that whether this judgment applies to armed forces or not.
- The matter has been **referred to the constitutional bench**. However, Justice Nariman made an observation while issuing the notice. He **observed** that **even if the law is scrapped, the act of adultery will still be an ‘unbecoming conduct’**.

### Earlier High Court judgment on adultery and misconduct

1. The above observation of Justice Nariman is in contrast to earlier High Court judgments.
2. **Calcutta High Court in Rabindra Nath Ghosh** in a case of adultery held that the head constable who was living with another woman is not guilty of misconduct in the performance of his duties.
3. **Allahabad HC in In State of U.P. vs BN Singh (1989)** held that the act of adultery by a government servant cannot be covered by default within the definition of ‘personal immorality’. For that, there should be a relation between the act of adultery and the reduction of his utility as a public servant.
4. **Rajasthan High Court in Mahesh Chand Sharma vs State of Rajasthan (2019)** held that “no employer can be allowed to do moral policing on its employees which go beyond the domain of his public life”.

Various HC has declared that **adultery is not a sufficient ground to initiate departmental proceeding** if it is not interfering with official functions. Whereas Justice Nariman has provided a different interpretation. Thus it becomes utmost important to define the terms like “misconduct” and “immoral act”.

### 15. Strengthening decentralisation for improving human capital

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers

**Synopsis:** The poor performance of India in human capital indicators can be improved if the 3 tier decentralized structure of governance gets strengthened.

### Background:

- India has secured a poor 116 rank in the World Bank’s human capital index. Further, the data of the National Family Health Survey – 5 for 2019-20 highlights the poor performance in the domain of malnutrition.
- Similarly, issues in learning outcomes are highlighted by the National Achievement Survey 2017 and the Annual Status of Education Report 2018.
- Moreover, these statistics are expected to further worsen due to Covid-19 pandemic.



Therefore, the focus should be on enhancing the investment in human capital. This would require better decentralisation among 3 tiers – Centre, States and Local Bodies.

**Why should there be a focus on a decentralised approach?**

- **First**, the government has launched various programs like Poshan Abhiyan and Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan. But they have failed to deliver optimum results.
- **Second**, international studies show there is a positive correlation between decentralisation and human capital formation.
- **Third**, India spends only 4% of its GDP on human capital which is very less in comparison to its peers. This means these minimum funds should be spent in the most optimum way. It is possible with decentralisation.

**What are the existing mechanisms for decentralization in India?**

- The Constitution allows the Centre to **support States in their fiscal domain**. This can be done through tax devolution and grants in aid. In addition, the Centre can make 'grants for any public purpose' under Article 282 of the Constitution.
- Education was moved from the state list to the concurrent list by the 42nd amendment in 1976. It ensured **better coordination between Centre and States**.
- The enactment of the 73rd and 74th amendment gave constitutional status to **municipalities and panchayats as the 3rd tier of government**. Further various domains like education, health and sanitation are given to them under the 11th and 12th schedule.
- The 14th Finance commission (FC) called for **distributing 42% of Centre's taxes** among States, an increase from earlier 32%. This was effectively retained by 15th FC as well.

**Challenges to decentralisation:**

- **First**, significant fiscal support by Centre to States is in the form of grants-in-aid and centrally sponsored schemes (CSS). As per SC ruling in Bhim Singh vs Union of India, these routes are for special, temporary or ad hoc schemes under Article 282.
- **Second**, States have been **reluctant to transfer their power** to local bodies under the 11th and 12th schedule.
- **Third**, the **municipalities and local bodies are not fiscally empowered**. This can be seen by low property tax collection which is under 0.2% of GDP, compared to 3% of GDP in some other nations.
- **Fourth**, even state finance commissions (SFCs) are not constituted on time by respective states for recommending tax devolution and grants-in-aid to the third tier.

**Way Forward:**

- The Centre must use the route under Article 282 in a cautious way as it is listed as a 'Miscellaneous Financial Provision'. It should give maximum fiscal support using Articles 270 and 275, which fall under 'Distribution of Revenues between the Union and the State'.
- The Centre should also encourage knowledge sharing between the States which would help them in improving their fiscal potential.
- The 15th FC's recommendation should be duly implemented. It recommended giving no grants to any State after March 2024 if it doesn't constitute SFCs.
- The 3rd tier of government should be vested with all the functions mentioned under the 11th and 12th schedule.

Thus, the need is to leverage the true potential of our multi-level federal system that would help in developing human capital.

## 16. Flaws in Corruption Perception Index

**Source-** The Indian Express

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

**Synopsis-** Corruption Perception Index as a measure of corruption cannot be used as a base for policymaking.

**Introduction-**

- **Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)** is an index published annually by Transparency International [TI] since 1995.
- The index ranks countries by their perceived levels of corruption as determined by expert assessments and opinion surveys.
- **India's ranking**– 86th with an overall rating of 40.
- Experts argue that there are shortcomings in CPI as it fails to highlight the key issues.

**What are the major flaws in CPI?**

1. **CPI lacks representativeness**– TI uses only expert reviews and surveys of business owners. It does not use public polling.
  - The index has been under criticism for substantial bias from the powerful elite.
  - It ignores the perception of the poor.
2. **The index is not able to distinguish between a bribe and a customary act. For example**– Global businesspersons may consider **Diwali gifts** as corruption which are customary for locals.
3. **Not all countries are part of the index**– It requires 3 surveys per country. As a result, it is not possible to have many countries in CPI.
  - **For example**– In 2003, only 133 countries were ranked by the CPI.
  - **Makes the ranking order irrelevant**– A country's rank can also change because new countries enter the index and other drops out.
4. **Changing methodology**– Data cannot be compared from year to year as **TI uses different methodologies and samples every year**. This makes it difficult to evaluate the performance of the country.
5. **Perception rating depends on media coverage**– Anti-corruption drive in a country has often translated into declines in that country's CPI score in the following year. **For example**– In 2011, the year of the massive anti-corruption movement, India's CPI rating declined. While Countries that suppress a free press may escape with this.

**Conclusion-**

CPI is a flawed instrument of corruption measurement, capable of only measuring ambiguous corruption proxies. CPI would be meaningful if used alongside other indices such as the Global Corruption Barometer, Press Freedom Index, and Rule of Law Index.

## 17. Issues associated with the launch of Coronil

**Synopsis:** Coronil Launch event is in controversy again. Ministers and public figures must not be seen as endorsing drugs whose efficacy is in doubt.

**Background**

At a recent event, Haridwar-based Patanjali announced that its **Coronil Ayurveda medicine** has been recognized as a “supporting measure in COVID-19” by AYUSH Ministry. Ministry awarded the Certificate of Pharmaceutical Product (CoPP) as per the WHO certification scheme.

After receiving certification, the export of medicine has become possible. This event was presided by Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan and Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari.

The company claimed that it is the **first evidence-based medicine to fight COVID-19**. This event attracted several criticisms. Indian Medical Association (IMA) criticized this promotion as unethical and a “blatant deceiving of the people of the country”.

**What are the issues associated with the launch of Coronil?**

1. **First**, Patanjali is a private company and coronil is the product of it. As per code of act, Doctors are barred from promoting any drugs and Dr. Harsh Vardhan (Health Minister) is an ENT surgeon.
2. **Second**, Baba Ramdev claimed at the event that WHO endorsed Coronil. Whereas, WHO South-East Asia in a tweet refused any such endorsement.
3. **Third**, the publication of randomized clinical trial of Coronil in a research journal was also put forward as an endorsement by that magazine. These publications are nothing but an initial requirement that put forward the report in front of subject experts.
4. **Fourth**, the published report reveals that medicine was tested only on 95 patients. All of them were asymptomatic and mildly symptomatic but confirmed as RT-PCR positive. This number is very small. Moreover, a large population with mild or no symptoms are getting recovered without any external intervention.

However, it is not the only case, where a drug got approved without any solid research. DGCA previously approved itolizumab by Biocon, which was tested only on the sample of 30. The Covaxin drug also hurriedly got approval and lacked solid scientific evidences.

**18. Right to discussion of State Assemblies and interference of the Supreme Court**

**Synopsis:** Recently Facebook India head appealed in the Supreme Court against the summon by Delhi Assembly. SC should avoid any interference in the assembly's right to discussion on important public matters.

**Background**

A few months ago, Delhi Legislative Assembly issued a notice to the head of Facebook India, Ajit Mohan. The notice was for him to appear in front of the Assembly's Peace and Harmony Committee. This committee is investigating the Delhi Riots.

Ajit Mohan filed a petition against this notice in Supreme Court. Hearing on this case is ongoing.

This petition will have implications on the separation of powers, federalism and fundamental rights in India.

**Why Court should not interfere in Assembly's right to discussion**

Set of rights and immunities granted to Parliament are called **Parliamentary privileges**. The House of Commons has been granted the right to free speech and right to call for evidence and witnesses in the House since 1689. **Both Parliament and State Assemblies are granted with same privileges.**

There are some misleading doubts that State Assemblies are on par with Parliament on these matters.

1. **First**, discussion in legislatures are not only a part of law-making, it is also used in its **non-judicial power of inquiry**. This inquiry power is inherent to the legislature as it is the voice of people of State. For example: States inquire into the possible ecological implications of a nuclear waste site within the State. States often hear testimony from soldiers and pass resolutions to honour the armed forces.
2. **Second**, it is not necessary that all discussions lead to law making. Some discussions end with the arguments only. Thus, **interference of courts before conclusion of debate** will be pointless.
3. **Third, Co-operative federalism** cannot be promoted if assemblies are barred from even discussing the matters, which are beyond their legislative competence.

4. **Fourth**, Judiciary ought not to enter the domain where it will examine the proceedings of the house. It is **against the Separation of Power**.
5. **Fifth, experiences of Canada and Australia** in this matter also, go against any Court mandated restrictions on legislative competence.

Free speech in the House is a landmark of liberty. It allows elected representatives on behalf of people to challenge the most powerful people of the land. It would be incorrect, if Court appoints itself an arbiter of legislative discussions.

### 19. Western ideas have to be adapted like China and not to be followed like India

**Source:** The Indian Express

**Syllabus:** GS 2 Constitution, Comparison of the Indian constitutional scheme with that of other countries

**Synopsis:** The key to China's immense growth is that it focuses on itself instead of trying to live up to the expectations of the Western countries. India could learn a few lessons from China as it struggles to match up.

#### Introduction

China and India are the two oldest civilizations and also the youngest nation-states. Both countries got modernized in the late 1940s. China went ahead and imitated the USSR and its authoritarianism.

- China although rejected the Soviet Union as an ideal, continued with authoritarianism. India followed the path of democracy and proved western experts wrong. Because western experts predicted that Indian democracy would collapse soon after Independence.
- Indian democracy was successful among the common people of the country. Despite that, studies generally focus on the failures of democracy in India.
- The greatest failure of Indian democracy as pointed out by many critics is, not able to match the expectations of western democracies.
- However, China has not faced such criticism.

#### How China managed to develop on its own?

- **First**, China kept local needs and aspirations in mind while using western concepts. They moulded western ideas according to their needs. On the other hand, India simply tried to live up to standards set by the west.
  - **For example**, China abandoned the Soviet economic model as it realized its limitations. It abandoned the Material Product System (MPS) of the Soviets. This method calculated the value of goods based on state-determined prices. It not even included the service sector.
  - China moved towards the Gross Domestic Product and start calculating the value of goods and services on market prices. This gave a psychological boost to the Chinese, and it helped revive nationalism among the young in China.
  - India used GDP calculation from the beginning. When the economy has not grown enough India did not switch to local calculation. Instead, Indian economists start convincing global and local people.
- **Second, timeline of Chinese economy growing larger than Indian economy:**
  - China adopted the GDP as a criterion to evaluate the wealth of the nation in 1993. At that time, its GDP was \$0.444 trillion. It was one and a half times higher than the GDP of India.
  - India's GDP crossed \$1 trillion and China was touching the \$5-trillion figure in 2008. China's GDP remains almost five times more than India's.



- **Last**, China used and moulded western idea sets to **create a knowledge economy**. They spent a substantial amount of money on research and set up their own peer review systems. But India did not spend on research like China did.

### Conclusion

Despite India got Independence from the British, western norms and ideas are still assimilated into the minds of Indians. This is the reason for India to remain a follower of western ideas.

### 20. New social media rules – an analysis

**Source:** Indian Express

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors

**Synopsis:** The government announced the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021. The experts have welcomed the step but there are some cautious provisions in the new social media rules.

#### Background of the new social media rules:

- The rise of social media resulted in enormous controlling power in the hands of big technology companies. The government took this step to regulate the misuse of power by them.
- A core framework to determine intermediary liability was ensured by Section 79 of the Information Technology (IT) Act. This was supplemented by operational rules and SC's judgment in the Shreya Singhal V. Union of India case.
- However, the intermediaries were kept immune for the content that is transmitted and stored by them. In return, they had to comply with a set of conditions that were set by the government.
- It is this set of conditions that got translated into Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021. The rules were jointly announced by the Minister for Information Technology and the Minister for Information and Broadcasting.

#### About the new social media rules:

- They contain fresh obligations for social media companies and platforms.
- The user should be given a notice before its content is taken down. This improves the accountability of social media platforms.
- The government can direct messaging platforms to tie the identity of the user with the message transmitted by him/her for strengthening traceability.
- An oversight mechanism is being created for digital news media portals as well as for online video streaming platforms. It will perform a similar role like what the Ministry of Information and broadcasting does for T.V regulation.
- The body conducting oversight will also be empowered with censorship and blocking powers as per Rule 13(4).

**Read more** – Social Media and OTT rules

#### Criticisms of new social media rules:

- Various aspects of rules **were not put for public consultation** especially those related to regulations of online news portals and video streaming platforms.
- The rules allow the government to **enforce a traceability mechanism**. This simply means a **threat to the user's privacy**. It will hamper the end-to-end encryption of platforms like WhatsApp.
- As the new rules **curtail free speech** on these platforms, there will be a **sense of fear** among the users.



- The IT Act doesn't cover content authors and creators like news media, but rules have included them. This provides discretionary powers to the government.
- The proposed oversight mechanism **doesn't have any legislative backing** which is generally given to other regulators. For example, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act provided powers to TRAI (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India). Under the rules, the regulation will be done by a body composed of bureaucrats. They might perform discretionary censorship.

**Conclusion:**

The proposed rules seem to enhance political control and enhance fear in the minds of users. They should have been formulated in a more deliberative way involving parliamentary processes. To protect citizen rights, India can frame a regulator like OFCOM in the UK. Anyway, the enactment of new social media rules is still a watershed moment that will transform the digital information ecology in India.

**21. Problems associated with Anti Defection Law**

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus:** GS 2 – Indian Constitution—historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments

**Synopsis:** The problems associated with Anti defection law got highlighted again in the Puducherry assembly issue. The law was unable to provide stability to the ruling government which led to the imposition of President rule in the State.

**Background:**

- Some MLAs from the ruling government resigned from the Puducherry assembly. This eventually resulted in imposition of the President's rule.
- This is not only the case with Puducherry, similar instances have been seen in the past in Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka as well. Due to that, experts are now pointing towards the flaws of Anti defection law.

**About Anti Defection Law:**

- The 10th schedule was added to the constitution by the **52nd amendment in 1985**. This deals with the Anti defection process.
- The objective behind such a law was to prevent **political defections and provide stability** to the ruling government.
- As per the 10th schedule, a member can be disqualified if he/she votes contrary to his party directions. The **Speaker/Chairman** is the final deciding authority in this regard.
- The law is applicable to Parliament as well as State legislatures. Further, any person disqualified for defection cannot get a ministerial position unless he/she gets re-elected.

**Problems with Anti Defection Law:**

- **First**, the MPs or MLAs are supposed to act as per the party's command and not by their own judgment. This **undermines representative democracy** as they are unable to put forward the demands of the people.
- **Second**, the **scope of defection is very wide** as it is applicable on every bill. It is not restricted to important bills only like no-confidence motion, money bill, etc. Moreover, it is also **applicable to members of Rajya Sabha and Legislative Councils** which don't have a say in the stability of the government.
- **Third**, it ensures that legislators are accountable to the party and not to voters. Thereby it **reduces their status to mere party agents**.

- **Fourth**, the elected legislators are **unable to ensure independent accountability** of the executive. They scrutinise the working as per collective opinion of the party. This is against the spirit of the Parliamentary system which was adopted to ensure robust accountability.
- **Fifth**, the law also **erodes the constructive role of legislatures**. Fruitful discussion and debates can't happen when the legislators are not allowed to freely express their opinions.
- **Sixth**, the stability of the government is hampered when multiple resignations are used to topple it as seen in the case of Puducherry. The anti-defection law fails to prevent such a thing.
- **Lastly**, there is **no time limit** in which the Speaker/Chairman takes a call on disqualification. This has led to the creation of unusual situations like opposition members taking ministerial positions as seen in the last Andhra Pradesh legislative assembly term.

#### Way Forward:

- The **scope of anti-defection law needs to be re-examined. It will enable** the MPs to perform the dual role as a delegate of the constituency and a national legislator effectively.
  - For example, in the recent vote on the impeachment of former U.S. President Donald Trump, seven members from his party voted to remove him.
- The **voters should be more cautious** while casting their votes. Many defectors in States such as Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh got re-elected in the by-polls, thereby encouraging them to do future defections.
- The **Speaker/Chairman should give decisions within 3 months** as advised by the Supreme Court.
- The ultimate solution to defection lies in the creation of **robust exit barriers** by political parties. It includes an opportunity to rise on merits within a party rather than on inheritance.

To sum up, we can say that the anti-defection law has been unable to control the defections. It has reduced the accountability of executives by the legislatures and been unable to provide the desired stability to the elected government.

## 22. Ceasefire between India and Pakistan: Prospects of strengthening bilateral relations

**Source:** Indian Express

**Synopsis:** India and Pakistan have agreed to ceasefire along the Line of Control. But further strengthening of relations will depend upon the security improvement in the region.

#### Background

- Recently, India and Pakistan agreed to a “strict observance” of all agreements and cease-fire along the Line of Control. This statement was delivered by Director Generals of Military Operations of India and Pakistan.
- It has become possible due to a strong leadership in India. Also, in South Asia there is a chance of building “security community”.
- A security community is defined as a region where countries have agreed not to use violence to settle their conflicts.

#### Why this agreement is important?

- This development is an important confidence-building measure. It is very important because the number of reported violations of the cease-fire across the LoC have increased dramatically in the last year.

- Due to firing impacts collateral damage takes place on the both sides. The most vulnerable sections is the one, living close to the LoC and other sectors.
- They will be the immediate beneficiaries if the statement is implemented in letter and spirit.

Now there is a hope that this move will be the first step towards a gradual normalisation of diplomatic relations. Relations deteriorated since the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019.

#### **What are the positive signals for good bilateral relations of India and Pakistan?**

1. Pakistan's leadership (including its army) has now started to understand the futility of a confrontationist course with India.
2. Also, it is in interest of India to strengthen these tendencies by offering incentives to Pakistan that include the promise of a robust engagement.
3. India has also proved that its Neighbourhood First slogan is not an empty one. Under **Vaccine Maitri initiative**, India is providing free vaccine to its neighbours.
4. There is a possibility of signing Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement with Bangladesh.
5. If bilateral relations improve, we would witness a SAARC summit in Islamabad with participation of India in it.

#### **What are the challenges?**

- Strengthening connectivity and collaboration between India and Pakistan totally depends upon the security commitments.
- The big question now is, Would Pakistan avoid any interference in the Jammu and Kashmir? It would be the test of Pakistan's strategic commitment to rebuilding bilateral relations.

### **23. Education Ministry circular on online conferences**

**Source:** The Hindu

**Synopsis:** Ministry of education's circular for regulating online conferences is not well thought out. It will discourage innovation.

#### **What was the circular?**

- Recently, the education ministry released a circular to state-funded universities and educational institutions. A per this circular, these institutions and universities need prior official approval from the external Affairs ministry for hosting online "international conferences and seminars online".
- It also prohibits the conference topics related to the security of the state, border, the northeast, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, and broadly, any "internal matters". Not only topics, but a background check of participants will be required.
- Event organisers are required to give preference to technological tools and channels not owned or controlled by hostile countries or agencies.
- The circular was issued in consultation with the External Affairs Ministry. Indian Academy of Sciences protested against this circular and suggested a rethink on it.

#### **Importance of virtual conferences**

1. **First**, in a pandemic-hit phase, virtual conferences are the only viable channel for researchers to collaborate and discuss various issues with their global peers. The circular created a new bureaucratic hurdle for scientists in public universities, colleges, and organizations.

2. **Second**, virtual conferences were instrumental in the increased participation of thousands of Scientists. It increased attendance at events by 80% in 2020 over 2019 for the Plant Biology Worldwide Summit and over 300% for the American Physical Society meeting.
  3. **Third**, these conferences clear out many hurdles like visas, expensive travel, and physical disability, and so on, for the scientists who don't have resources for that. Even researchers and students in the smallest towns can attend these conferences.
  4. **Fourth**, India has also made progress in peer-reviewed publications due to these collaborations. It reduces the concerns of biopiracy by documenting natural assets.
- Thus, online conferences are very beneficial for research and technology in India. The government should adopt a more liberal approach towards it.

#### 24. NEP's Approach to Effective Education for Children

**Source:** click here

**Syllabus:** GS 2

**Synopsis:** The end-of-the-year examination results do not reflect the full potential or uniqueness of a child. Thus, NEP attempts to look beyond examinations and emphasizes child-centered pedagogy.

##### Introduction

Gijubhai Badheka, an educationist who helped introduce Montessori methods to India, wrote in his book that the school culture in India considers several things of children's interest. It ranges from insects to stars which is irrelevant to classroom study.

- Teachers teach students from the textbook to prepare them for examination instead of developing the child's curiosity. The school does not provide conditions in which the teacher could focus on the overall development of children.
- Examinations should not be the final goal of a rewarding learning experience as it only rewards the power of memorisation.
- Exams are one of the multiple milestones to be crossed by a child on her path to holistic growth and development.

##### What does the new education policy focus on instead of examinations?

The National Education Policy, 2020, uses two interesting phrases: "No hard separations" and "elimination of silos" in the context of learning.

1. **First**, India is now working on implementing the policy. It is important to have an understanding of these phrases and their implications.
  - For example, NEP 2020 requires the achievement of common standards for high-quality education in all schools. It means removing differences between public and private schools through the setting up of a State Standard-Setting Authority (SSSA). It requires a variety of learning from pre-school to higher education.
2. **Second, the removal of hard separations would include removing the barrier of language. For that**, the mother tongue/language spoken by the child shall be the medium to understand the subjects, especially in the foundational years.
3. **Third, teaching and schooling should be activity-based** and experiential. It helps in cognitive growth through story-telling, art, and craft, sports, and theatre.
4. **Fourth, classrooms need to discard the typical seating plan. At present** all the children sit, facing the board. A flexible seating plan which has students sitting in a circle or in groups shall be introduced.
5. **Fifth, schools will need to embrace a variety of teaching** and learning materials. For that, methods such as toys, puppets, magazines, worksheets, comic and storybooks, nature walks, visits to local crafts, etc. are useful.



6. **Last, assessment should only be viewed as a means of learning.** The NEP would help in including more in depth knowledge with fewer curriculums, less content but more proficiency, less textbooks but more diverse learning, less stress but more joy, less assessment by the teacher but more self and peer evaluation.

**The way forward**

- A lot of research shows that a supportive environment is one in which a child is constantly learning to collaborate, think critically, solve problems, be creative and articulate.
- NEP 2020 wants to break the belief that taking exams on the basis of what is written in textbooks is sufficient. Examination results do not reflect the full potential or uniqueness of a child.



# General Studies Paper - 3

## General Studies - 3

### 1. Clean energy is the key to COVID-19 recovery

**Source-** The Hindu

**Syllabus-** GS 3 – Investment models.

**Synopsis** – United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) report shows that energy demand reductions have mainly impacted fossil fuels. But Renewable energy development continued to grow throughout 2020. This shows that clean energy is key to the COVID-19 recovery, not fossil fuels.

**Introduction** - UN-ESCAP released the Regional Trends Report, 2021. The report titled ‘**shaping a sustainable energy future in Asia and the Pacific – A greener, more resilient and inclusive energy system**’. The report examines the ambitions and progress of ESCAP member states in achieving sustainable energy goals.

#### Importance of continuous energy supply during the pandemic-

1. Hospitals and healthcare facilities require continuous energy supply to function 24X7.
2. Allowing work from home, distance learning and communication of essential health information status all required uninterrupted power.
3. **Support for cold chain systems and logistics** also need an uninterrupted power supply. This is essential for the proper transportation, distribution and storage of the Covid-19 vaccine.

#### How to make society more resilient to future crises such as COVID-19?

1. Governments should make **meaningful progress on SDGs**. The government can achieve this by addressing the systemic issues that made societies more vulnerable to COVID-19. Such as addressing issues in health, decent work, poverty and socio-economic inequalities,
2. **Fiscal stimulus packages focused on investments that support SDGs**. This can be achieved by not investing in industries such as fossil fuels. At the same time focusing more on renewable energy and energy efficiency projects is required. This will create industries that are resilient to crisis.

#### What are the advantages of promoting clean energy?

1. **Clean energy will create more jobs**. Evidence suggests that clean energy will create more jobs than fossil fuel projects for similar investments. For example, an increase in spending on clean cooking and electricity access will enhance economic activities in rural areas. Further, it will improve the health and well-being of women and children.
2. **Low-carbon infrastructure and technologies reduce global warming**. This will take a step closer towards achieving ambitious climate pledges, and the Paris Climate deal. It is also important to note that several countries have announced the **carbon neutrality targets**.

#### Conclusion:

COVID-19 crisis has shown that we can restrict fossil fuels and can be more adaptive and resilient. But we should not waste the opportunities given by the crisis to phase out fossil fuels.

### 2. Importance of Perseverance Mission on Mars

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus:** GS 3: Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life

**Synopsis:** The Perseverance mission on Mars will test out technologies to help sustain the presence of humans there. Further, it will help the future manned mission to Mars along with several other important experiments.

### Introduction

The scientific community is suspecting that life may have existed on Mars before Earth. Thus, there might be a possibility of microscopic life on the planet. Understanding this will enhance our studies of evolution and nurture of life outside the earth.

### Landing of Perseverance rover:

1. **NASA's mission on Mars has focused on finding traces** and trails of water. The water may be related to the possible existence of life on the planet.
2. The curiosity rover which landed on Mars in 2012 found out regions that could have hosted life.
3. The recent NASA mission, Mars 2020, landed on the **Jezero Crater** in Mars on February 18.

### What does the new Mars mission aim to do?

The mission is expected to last at least the duration of **one Mars year**, i.e. 687 earth days. The goals for this mission are to look for signs of ancient life and collect rock and soil samples.

1. Perseverance will take the investigation made by the earlier Curiosity rover to the next level by **studying the Jezero Crater**. This particular crater was chosen because it was found to be home to an ancient delta according to an aerial study.
  - **Clay minerals and carbonates were found on the crater.** It makes this crater a good place to search for life's existence.
2. The rover will **study the geology of mars and store samples** in a place that can be accessed by a future mission.
3. The rover will **test out technologies** that will **help to sustain the presence of humans** in future. This includes testing an instrument that **extracts oxygen from atmospheric carbon dioxide**.
4. The rover carries a **helicopter named Ingenuity**. Ingenuity is specially designed to **fly in Mars's thin atmosphere**. Its only purpose would be to **demonstrate flight on Mars**.

### The conclusion

- Perseverance Mission will be able to answer whether little green microbes did inhabit Mars in the distant past or not. But till then we have to wait and watch the progress.

### 3. Challenges in controlling Zoonotic diseases in India

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus:** GS 3: Issues relating to the development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

**Synopsis:** India can turn into a hotspot for zoonotic diseases (diseases that spread from animal to human), if not controlled now. Research must be proactive as this could be a larger crisis than the COVID pandemic.

### Introduction

During the covid-19 pandemic, **Scientists developed tools to study the virus more effectively**. Further, they also set up channels to test the efficacy of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved drugs. But the challenges of Zoonotic diseases still exist.

### Vulnerability of India to Zoonotic diseases:

Global meta-analyses mention that **Zoonotic diseases are likely to emerge in areas with many mammal species**. As per the analysis, high land use and land cover change, and high human population density are the reasons for zoonotic diseases.

1. According to Global meta-analyses, **India can be a hotspot** for the possible **emergence of zoonotic diseases** in the world.
2. **India's approach** to addressing zoonotic diseases has mainly been **reactive**. This is evident as the research and public health intervention usually begin when there is an outbreak.

### Challenges in controlling Zoonotic diseases?

There are several scientific challenges that exist in zoonotic diseases. They are,

1. One **cannot predict the zoonotic disease pandemic**. This is evident from the recent Covid pandemic.
2. It is **hard to collect viral and bacterial samples** from biodiversity. Collecting samples is nearly impossible from wild reservoirs like bats and rodents.
3. It is **impossible to monitor and control biodiversity hotspots**. Further, the government **cannot detect the transmission** of the pathogen from one hot spot to another.
4. Moreover, it is difficult **to predict the evolutions of pathogens and their relation with the hosts** (animals). It is also evident in the COVID pandemic.

### Suggestions:

Scientists have to conduct interdisciplinary research and sustained efforts to reduce challenges. So, Scientists from various domains have to come forward and work for a common cause just like they did for covid testing and vaccinations.

### 4. Rise of excise duty on petrol and fiscal stance of the government

**Source:** The Hindu

**Syllabus:** GS 3 – Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, Growth, Development, and Employment.

**Synopsis:** The rise in excise duty on petrol is in contradiction with the fiscal stance adopted by the government in the Economic Survey 2020-21. The new fiscal stance requires the government to borrow more instead of increasing taxes.

#### Background:

- The COVID-19 has brutally impacted the economy due to which the fiscal deficit has risen to 9.5%. This is 2.7 times higher than the expected 3.5% fiscal deficit.
- Further, there is a drastic fall in receipts of revised budgetary estimates in comparison to original estimates.
- Thus, the government increased excise duty on Petrol and Diesel. It resulted in an increase in the prices of petrol and diesel for the consumer.
- However, a rise of Rs. 94000 crore rise was observed in estimates of excise duty.
- This is the traditional approach that calls for increasing taxes rather than borrowing to improve the economic situation of the country.

### Rationale behind such move:

1. An increase in sales tax/ excise duty can be fruitful in **improving revenue collection**.
2. This occurs as demand for products like petrol, diesel, tobacco, etc. is **inelastic** (not changing significantly with a change in price).
3. Further, a **rising fiscal deficit is not desired**. The Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act (**FRBM**) **restricts its rise to 3.5%**.



4. It is believed that fiscal deficit automatically transforms into government debt. Such high debts coupled with their interests can create a **debt trap**. It is a situation where present borrowings keep increasing to repay past borrowings and service charges.
5. This in turn reduces the scope of spending on judicious activities and also decreases the creditworthiness of the government.

However, rising excise duty didn't prove to be fruitful.

**Impact of rising excise duties:**

- Revenue from an increase in duty could not compensate for the shortfall in other revenue resources. Thus, the fiscal deficit has increased to 9.5%.
- Further, these duties have been increased on final and intermediate goods which would increase the inflation level in the future.
- The estimation of a **7.7% output decline** simply means loss of employment. This along with rising price levels would **enhance inequalities** in society.

**What is the New approach given by Economic Survey?**

1. The survey of 2020-21 calls for adopting the approach of Professor Olivier Blanchard who has given a counter view to FRBM act. As per him, debt-financed fiscal spending can increase growth.
2. It may not necessarily reduce the inequalities but can definitely help in the overall growth of the economy.
3. Professor's approach doesn't focus on increasing the tax on the rich to augment expenditure and reduce inequalities.
4. Further government's fiscal expenditure has a stronger multiplier impact during recessions compared to booms. This happens as:
  - When the economy is in a boom, the private sector is willing to borrow more. But it may get crowded out if interest rates are increased due to more government borrowings.
  - When the economy is in recession, the private sector is unwilling to borrow due to uncertain long-term expectations. Higher government borrowings in this situation are desired for boosting the confidence of the private sector.
5. The adoption strategy **requires the GDP growth rate to be higher than the sovereign rate of interest**. It would prevent the creation of a future debt trap.
6. The survey pointed out that India's average interest rate and growth rate over the last 25 years (leaving out FY 2020-21) have been 8.8% and 12.8% respectively. This satisfies Blanchard's condition.

As the condition got satisfied, it is difficult to ascertain why the government deviated from the recommendations of the economic survey. The only reasonable argument could be higher interest rates than the growth rate in 2020-21.

**5. How to become Petroleum Independent?**

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

**Syllabus:** GS- 3

**Synopsis:** India first needs to manage the demand for petroleum products, before expanding and diversifying the energy supply.

**How government can reduce dependence on petroleum?**

There are many things that the government can and should do to reduce dependence on petroleum.

1. **First, the government should introduce a zero-emissions vehicle (ZEV)** program. It requires all vehicle manufacturers to produce a definite number of electric vehicles. ZEV programs are present in China, South Korea, and Canada, etc.

2. **Second, the government should strengthen fuel efficiency** requirements for new passenger cars and commercial vehicles. Two-wheelers are not subject to any fuel efficiency standards even when they consume two-third of the petrol used in India.
  - A target of 50% reduction in fuel consumption by 2-wheelers may result in innovations, such as increasing efficiency of internal combustion engine (ICE) efficiency and increase in electric driven two-wheelers.
3. **Third, similar steps should be applied to the passenger vehicle** and heavy-duty commercial vehicle. Consumers who switch to electric vehicles will save even more money as electricity is cheaper compared to petrol and diesel.

#### What are the steps taken by the government?

1. The **National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP) was launched**. However, the **NEMMP mainly focused on hybrid electric vehicles** and most incentives went towards subsidizing mild hybrids instead of electric vehicles.
2. Heavy-duty vehicles, which consume nearly 60% diesel, are now subject to fuel efficiency standards.
3. **The Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles (FAME-II) scheme** now focuses largely on electric vehicles.
  - **The FAME scheme** focuses on two- and three-wheelers, taxis, and buses. It should be extended to all passenger cars, commercial vehicles, and to agricultural tractors.
4. **Introducing complementary policies** like stepping up investments in charging infrastructure is essential. The GST rates for all passenger vehicles could be made proportional to their fuel efficiency level.

#### Conclusion

- Adopting strict fuel efficiency standards and a ZEV program by 2024 can result in India's petroleum demand peaking by 2030. By that, the government can save money for the consumer while enhancing long-term energy security by wielding the regulatory tools at its disposal.
- Thus, it is time for India to adopt stringent fuel efficiency standards and a zero-emissions vehicle program.

#### 6. PM Modi's acknowledgement of role of private sector

**Source:** The Indian Express

**Syllabus:** GS 3 -Changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth

**Synopsis:** Future growth in India should be led by the private sector. The government should encourage the private sector as a central part of its strategy.

##### Introduction

Recently the Prime Minister acknowledged the role of the private sector. Now it is up to the private sector to grow their business, pursue excellence, follow the law of the land and pay taxes.

#### Why the role of the private sector is critical in India?

- **India has limited capital and the private sector is the best provider of capital** in the economy. The private sector will deliver the most benefit in terms of growth or return on capital employed.
- **Private sector focus on wealth creation.** The PM also praised the wealth creators with a logic that if you can't create wealth, you won't be able to distribute it. The creation of wealth is essential for growth, employment and the reduction of poverty.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of February (Fourth week), 2021

- India's **successes in many fields linked to the private sectors**. Sectors such as banks, airlines, insurance, telecom, IT services, IT-enabled services etc were created a huge growth after they have been open up to private players.

### What can be expected from PM speech?

The Prime Minister's speech has raised the expectations that more positive reform for the private sector is around the corner.

- First**, the government can now bring in **policy and future economic reforms** in India as it has recognised the private sector's role in parliament.
- Second**, India has been **making worthy steps in the Ease of Doing Business**. It is easier now to start a business in India than it was a decade ago. A government willing to listen gives a good head start to solving those problems.
- Third**, the **success of the Mudra Yojana and Start-up India** has proven the new wave of innovation and enterprise in young India. India is now willing to look at other sectors such as space, defence, aeronautics etc.
- Fourth**, Private involvement in the **India stack** (Stack is a combination of technological projects that comprises all the technologies required to operate for any particular sector) has revolutionised the fintech sector. Now the digital health stack will likely to do the same for the health tech sector.

### Suggestions:

- The private sector should now follow the law of the land and pay taxes. They should also become good corporate citizens of India or else the mistrust of the private sector might affect the sector.
- The upcoming entrepreneurs will be the strong foundations of Atmanirbhar Bharat. The recent Union Budget has made it clear that the government will pursue economic reform and go for growth.

## 7. New Social Media Code – A much needed one for India

Source: The Indian Express

**Syllabus:** GS-3: role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges

**Synopsis:** The new Social media code is much-needed to ensure the online platforms are subject to law of the land

### Introduction:

Recently, the government introduced the Information Technology (Guidelines for Intermediaries and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021. The rules have the potential to transform the online media platforms to fit into the Indian ecosystem.

### Few salient provisions in the New Social Media Code:

- The OTT platforms together have to **enact a code for self-regulation**. Further, the OTT platforms also **have to classify the content**. So that, an underage minor will not be able to view the adult contents.
- The new social media code creates a **three-tier grievance redressal mechanism**.
  - First-tier:** The **publishers** of social media have to **appoint officers** to redress their grievances. These officers have to ensure the time-bound disposal of grievances.
  - A **self-regulating body** headed by a retired judge will be at the **Second-tier**.
  - The Central government **oversight committee** will be in the **third tier**.
- All the **grievances have to be resolved within the framework of India's laws**. Recently, Twitter disobeyed government rules. After the implementation of New social media codes, social media have to obey the government's directions.

### Why do India need New Social Media Code?

1. The policy will **create a level playing field** in two important things.
  - o Between the online news platforms and print media
  - o Between the online news platforms and television news media.
2. The new social media rules will **bring in the online news portals within the ambit of the code of ethics**. It is a much-needed step considering the recklessness and irresponsibility shown by some of the digital media platforms.
3. Further, the new social media rules **aim to achieve oversight responsibilities**. Like the film certification agency for Cinema, the social media platforms have to **ensure a content classification**.
4. The new social media codes will **ensure freedom of speech to the artists**. This is achieved through **self-regulation**. Social media platforms can provide more freedom for artists to create content. Since they are the ones going to regulate it, they can classify the content of artists instead of banning them like other media (film, print, etc).

### What are the global lessons for digital media platforms in self-regulation?

1. **Lessons from Australia:** In Australia, Digital companies have drafted a code to deal with fake news and disinformation. This is called the **Australian Code of Practice on Disinformation and Misinformation**. The code has few important provisions including the removal of content and disabling the content from the digital platforms.
2. **Lessons from the UK:** The UK government has proposed an **“Online Safety Bill”**. The Bill aims to deal heavily on digital platforms that promote violence, child abuse, terrorist material, cyber bullying, etc.

### Conclusion:

The New social media code has the necessary provisions to ensure free speech. At the same time, it will regulate and stop social media companies from violating the law of the land.

## 8. Draft Science, Technology and Innovation Policy 2020

Source: The Hindu

**Syllabus:** GS-3: Science and Technology- developments

**Synopsis:** The draft Science, Technology and Innovation Policy 2020 has the potential to transform the science and research in India.

### Introduction:

The government introduced a draft Science, Technology and Innovation Policy 2020 in January 2021. The draft policy aims to address the issues in the past four science and technology policies.

### Evolution of Science, Technology and Innovation Policies in India:

Right after independence, India realised the value of science in promoting the welfare of people. So far, India has released four policies in Science. These are:

1. **The Scientific Policy Resolution, 1958**
  - o The policy aimed to lay the foundation of scientific temper and develop scientific enterprises around India.
  - o The policy led to the establishment of many research institutes and national laboratories across India.
  - o **Achievement of the policy:** By the end of 1980, India developed advanced scientific infrastructure along with sufficient scientific personnel.
2. **The Science and Technology Policy Statement, 1983**
  - o This policy aimed to achieve **technological self-reliance**. The policy also aimed to use technology to benefit all sections of society.



- The policy aimed to strengthen the research in fields such as biotechnology and electronics.
- 3. **The Science and Technology Policy, 2003**
  - This is the first Science Policy in India after the economic reforms in 1991.
  - This policy aimed to increase investment in research and development. The policy brought India's investment in research to 0.7% of GDP.
  - During this policy only, the **Scientific and Engineering Research Board (SERB)** was **established in India** to promote research.
- 4. **The Science, Technology and Innovation Policy, 2013**
  - This policy **brought innovation** into the science and technology policy.
  - The policy aimed to make India as one of the top five global scientific leaders in the world.
  - India achieved this by the following steps
    - The Centre built partnerships with State governments,
    - The government established more research and development centres throughout India
    - India collaborated in international research projects such as **the Neutrino research, Large Hadron Collider**, etc.

#### **What are the outcomes of these four scientific policies?**

The US-based National Science Foundation released a report. The report highlighted the outcomes of the policies. They are

1. **Achievement of Policies:**
  - India was the third-largest publisher of peer-reviewed science and engineering journal articles and conference papers.
  - India achieved this milestone at the pace of a 10.73% annual growth rate from 2008. This is higher than the growth rate of China (7.81%).
2. **Where do the policies lack?**
  - India's index score was very low in Highly Cited Articles of the world. India has a score of 0.7. This is lower than the US, China and the EU.
  - India's **Gross Domestic Expenditure on R&D (GERD) is only 0.6% of GDP**. This is very low as compared to the U.S. and China (their GERD is greater than 2%).
  - According to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) report, **India only filed 2053 patents in 2019**. On the other hand, China filed 58,990 patents and the US filed 57,840 patents.

#### **How India aimed to tackle the drawbacks?**

The government aimed to tackle the drawbacks holistically by releasing a new science and technology policy. The government released the **draft of the fifth Science, Technology and Innovation Policy 2020 (STIP 2020)** in January 2021

#### **Salient provisions of Draft Science, Technology and Innovation Policy 2020:**

1. The draft STIP **aims to double the following things every 5 years.**
  1. Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) researchers
  2. Private sector contribution to the GERD
  3. Gross Domestic Expenditure on R&D (GERD)
2. Apart from that the draft Science, Technology and Innovation Policy also aim to **get India into the top three scientific superpowers of the world within a decade.**
3. The draft STIP 2020 also **defined the Open Science Framework**. The framework will **provide pan India access to all scientific journals**. This will be achieved by creating a **"one nation, one subscription"**.

4. The draft Science, Technology and Innovation Policy will **improve Private sector participation**. This will be achieved by a strategy. Under it, the State governments will fund the research. The Private will participate in it. The government will provide fiscal incentives. Further, the government will also support innovation in the MSME sector.
5. The other focus areas of the draft Science, Technology and Innovation Policy are:
  1. The provision for **supporting indigenous knowledge** systems in India
  2. The draft STIP provide steps to **improve artificial intelligence**
  3. The policy will encourage the **participation of Indian scientific diaspora**
  4. The policy will set up a **special fund for research** known as the **strategic technology development fund**.

**Conclusion:**

The draft Science, Technology and Innovation Policy looks good on paper and also has the potential to transform the entire science, technology and innovation in India. But the actual results will occur only if the **government fulfil its role as the primary funder of research and encourage the private sector**.