9pm Compilation

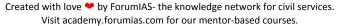**May, 2021 (Second Week)**

9 PM Compilation for the Month of May (Second Week), 2021

General Studies - 2

1. Why the Taiwan Covid-19 Model Works?
2. Nation wide lockdown is an Opportunity to Improve Health Infrastructure
3. US Support to TRIPS Waiver – Challenges Ahead
4. National Task Force for Transparent Oxygen Allocation
5. U.S Exit from Greater Middle East Will Alter Regional Relations
6. Time to Revive the Plan for Indian National Health Services
7. Impacts of Digital inequality on Health and Education
8. Why Safeguards for Child adoptions Needs to be Followed Strictly?
9. Lessons learnt from the Ladakh crisis
10. Importance of Parliamentary Proceedings
11. Links between Crisis and Economic Reforms
12. UGC Advises Universities to Include NCC as an Elective Subject
13. Expansion of Social Security Net is Need of the Hour
14. Centre Should Relook its Vaccine Policy
15. Gauhati High Court Questions FCRA Amendment Act
16. ASEAN's Initiative to End Political Crisis in Myanmar
17. India's Vaccine exports are guided by good diplomacy and good epidemiology
18. Measures to control the impact of Pandemic in rural India
19. Treating Israel-Palestine issue with a humanitarian response
20. State should form a joint committee to negotiate COVID vaccine price
21. Laws and Initiatives for Welfare Orphaned Children
22. Bad Policy Making Aggravated the Pandemic Disaster in India
23. Issues With Technocratic Approach to Vaccination Drive

General Studies - 3

1. EAC Recommends the Great Nicobar Development Plan for EIA Study
2. Solving Present Health Care Crisis With Lessons from Green Revolution
3. Issues Associated with IPR Waiver to Covid Vaccine
4. Consequences of Neglecting Science Education

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General Studies Paper - 2

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General Studies - 2

1. Why the Taiwan Covid-19 Model Works?

Source: Click here

Syllabus: GS-2, Social Issues, Health related Issues

Synopsis: Taiwan detected its 1st case of Covid-19 in January 2020. However, it managed to control the pandemic effectively despite the adverse circumstances. With India suffering heavily from Covid-19, it becomes important to have a good look at the Taiwan Covid-19 model.

Introduction

- A novel form of pneumonia was first emerged in Wuhan, China, in 2019, and is called coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19). It has caused more than 150 million cases and more than 3.1 million deaths worldwide.
- The disease has a huge medical, economic, and social impact across the globe. It has considerably threatened global efforts to attain the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
- Taiwan was expected to be one of the most severely affected countries by the virus because of its proximity to China. Taiwan did not ignore the Covid-19 alarms, given its experience of fighting the 2003 SARS outbreak.

Explain the Taiwan Covid-19 model

Taiwan gathered information from evolving official and unofficial accounts to understand the emerging disease i.e. Covid-19. It helped them in understanding the scope and severity worse than what the global public view suggested.

1. **Firstly, the system used this information to launch superior monitoring** in December 2019. They have vigorously implemented public health control methods ever since Taiwan's first case was detected. They didn't ignore warnings or public health containment measures unlike many other countries.

2. **Secondly, Taiwan was benefitted by its experience in handling** the 2003 SARS outbreak. It had an **established nationwide infectious disease healthcare network.** This network provides the **legal authority for shifting patients** with highly infectious diseases to chosen facilities.
   o This has helped protect health systems and health professionals from being overburdened. It also allowed most non-Covid-19 health services to continue.

3. **Thirdly, Taiwan diminished the economic impact of Covid-19** by acting early and effectively. Taiwan implemented flexible measures to maintain vital international, social, economic, and trade activities.
   o **It applied flexible quarantine measures for vessels and aircraft** so that fisheries, offshore wind farms, and air transport industries could continue operations.

4. **Fourthly, public trust and cooperation with the government's response** was equally important in successfully containing Covid-19. The government followed the principles of rational response, minimum damage, and steady adoption while framing disease control rules.

5. **Fifthly, Taiwan has stressed the right to health and associated protections** and strong opposition to human rights abuses. **It prioritized the protection of disadvantaged groups**, including migrant workers.
   o Taiwan's response to Covid-19 has been very successful. It has proven that Taiwan cannot remain outside the global health network. **It plays a key role in the global monitoring and early warning systems** that detect the threat of emerging infectious diseases.

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Way forward

- The Taiwan model has proven that it is capable of containing Covid-19. Taiwan will be able to work with the rest of the world by contributing to international Covid-19 supply chain systems, global diagnostics, vaccines, and therapeutics platforms.
- WHO and related parties should acknowledge Taiwan's age-old contributions to the international community in public health, disease prevention, and the human right to health. Taiwan should be included in WHO meetings, mechanisms, and activities.
- As a result, Taiwan will work with the rest of the world to safeguard that all enjoy the fundamental human right to health as specified in the WHO constitution. Resonating with the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Goals mantra, no one should be left behind.

2. Nation wide lockdown is an Opportunity to Improve Health Infrastructure
Source – [The Hindu](#)
Syllabus – GS 2 – Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors
Synopsis – At last, states are implementing strict lockdowns. It is to handle the out-of-control spread of Coronavirus infection. Now, states should use this opportunity to improve health infrastructure in the country.
Introduction

- Life threat from a mutating virus has aggravated manifold. An increase in Covid cases from 9,000 new daily in early February to over 4,00,000 in May, is mostly caused by incorrect messaging, political rallies, and religious gatherings.
- To curb the transmission of the virus, there is a need to impose national wide lockdown. However, lockdown should be used to improve the health infrastructure.

Benefits of a lockdown

- **Break the chain of transmission of COVID-19 –** The lockdown will help to break the chain of transmission of the virus so that number of cases falls.
- **Lockdown will provide breathing time-**
  - **The chance of respite for the overburdened medical community** – The lockdown will help healthcare professionals to manage existing cases.
  - In the meantime, the **government should increase essential health supplies** such as oxygen concentrators, ICU beds, and ventilators. It is necessary to treat Covid-19 patients.
  - The lockdown provided a breathing space for **the government to ramp up COVID-19 testing facilities** to assess the true scale of the pandemic.
  - The lockdown would provide the Centre government time and capacity to boost vaccine's domestic production.

Way forward

- Government should avoid shut out employment and services completely. Home delivery services and some vending should be permitted.
- The state government should ensure proper social distancing during ration distribution. Online payment for ration and consumer goods and doorstep delivery can be used.
- Travel for emergencies must be facilitated without harassment.
- People should focus on wearing quality good masks, keeping a safe distance, and avoiding big gathering

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3. US Support to TRIPS Waiver – Challenges Ahead
Source- The Hindu
Syllabus- GS 2- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health
Synopsis – US is supporting the TRIPS waiver on Covid-19 Vaccines. However, it may take much more time and effort to take benefits out of it.
Introduction

- The US is supporting a temporary waiver of the TRIPS agreement [patent protection rules] on Covid-19 vaccines proposed by India and South Africa.
- Article IX of the WTO Agreement allows for waiving obligations in exceptional circumstances.
- However, developed nations [home to the big pharmaceutical companies] oppose the TRIPS waiver.

Why developed countries were against the proposal to waive TRIPS?
According to some developed countries-

- If IP (intellectual property) not properly protected, investment in the medical field, especially in the area of infectious diseases, would be reduced.
- It will also add a risk factor for the growth of medical technology which will be hindered, and essential products may not be developed in future crises.
- Hopefully, just support for the waiver is not sufficient. There are many more challenges in achieving the final goal of mass production of vaccines in every country.

TRIPS Waiver Challenges-

- **First, Previous experience**- TRIPS Agreement contains flexibilities. These include the freedom to use parallel imports and compulsory licenses that help countries get access to medicines. Yet such flexibilities are not always easy to use.
  - o **For example**- Following the HIV/AIDS crisis in Africa in the 1990s, the WTO adopted a decision in 2003 to waive certain TRIPS obligations.
  - o In 2003, a mechanism was developed that enables countries with no pharmaceutical manufacturing capability to use and benefit from compulsory licenses. However, it was subject to so many conditions that poor countries could not get the benefit of this waiver, such as
    - ▪ The exporting country must ensure that the drugs so manufactured are exported to that nation only.
    - ▪ The medicines should be readily identifiable through different colours, or shapes.
    - ▪ Only the amount necessary to meet the requirements of the eligible importing country are manufactured
    - ▪ The importing country has to notify the WTO's TRIPS Council.
- **Second, Time-taking process-** Given the WTO's consensus-based decision-making process and the complexities of the issues involved, negotiations on the text of the waiver will take time.
- **Third, the limited scope of the waiver- The US only supports waiving IP protection on Covid-19 vaccines. W**hile medicines and other therapeutics and technologies related to the treatment of COVID-19 are being ignored.
- Forth, **Non-IP challenges-** The lack of access to technological know-how related to manufacturing COVID-19 vaccines will not be solved by TRIPS waiver.
  - o IP Waiver does not impose a legal requirement on pharmaceutical companies to transfer or share technology.

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Recommendations-
- Governments must negotiate with big-pharma firms for technology transfer by offering additional financial benefits and establishing a favorable policy environment.
- Countries should start working towards making suitable amendments to their domestic legal framework to operationalize and enforce the TRIPS waiver.
- Developed countries should consider waiving medicines and other therapeutics and technologies related to the treatment of COVID-19.

4. National Task Force for Transparent Oxygen Allocation
Source: [Indian Express](#)
Syllabus: GS 2 – Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

Synopsis

The supreme court has constituted a National Task Force for transparent oxygen allocation. It is a 12 member body constituted to guide the central government allocation of medical oxygen to the states. Further, it will also recommend a framework for broader pandemic preparedness and response.
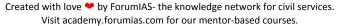
Background
- The second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic has crippled the healthcare system in India.
- The situation is worse in the domain of oxygen supply. Due to acute shortages, the toll of preventable deaths has increased.
- In this scenario, the supreme court has set up a National Task Force for transparent oxygen allocation.

About the National Task Force for transparent oxygen allocation:
- It is a 12 member body constituted to guide the central government's allocation of medical oxygen to the states.
- It has 10 members who are leading clinicians, critical care specialists, and virologists. Along with this, there are 2 government officials – Secretary, Ministry of Health, and Cabinet Secretary.
- It is established for a period of six months.

Working and Mandate of Task Force:
- It will work **as per its 12 point terms of reference**.
- The first five points focus on oxygen supply. This includes:
  - Deciding on a methodology for the scientific allocation of oxygen to states
  - Facilitating audits (of oxygen supply, distribution, and utilization) by sub-groups within each state and UTs.
- The 6th point allows it to review and suggest measures necessary for ensuring the availability of essential drugs and medicines.
- The remaining 6 points are aimed at the broader pandemic preparedness and response. This includes planning and adopting remedial measures:
  - To ensure preparedness for present and future emergencies;
  - To facilitate the use of technology;
  - Furthermore, to suggest augmenting the availability of trained doctors, nurses, and paramedical staff;
  - Also, to promote evidence-based research and enhance effective response to the pandemic;

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o To facilitate sharing of best practices across the nation to promote knowledge about management of the pandemic
o Lastly, to make recommendations in regard to other issues of pressing national concerns.
- It can constitute more sub-groups in specialized areas or regions to assist in its work.
- It can seek assistance from experts both within and outside government in areas such as clinical virology and immunology, epidemiology/ public health, etc.

Benefits of Creating such a task force:
- **First**, it will facilitate a public health response to the pandemic based upon **scientific and specialized domain knowledge**.
- **Second**, it will give inputs to decision-makers. These inputs will enable them to **go beyond ad hoc solutions** to unprecedented challenges.
- **Third**, it will **alter the techno-bureaucratic nature** of policy decisions by ensuring the participation of independent subject experts.
- **Fourth**, it will **give suggestions to improve state-level public healthcare systems.** As it looks at the shortage of medical oxygen through a broader lens of pandemic preparedness and response.
  o The state-level health care system currently has:
    - Insufficient planning, delayed procurement, and weakness of supply chain management.
    - Insufficient government funding
    - absence of sufficient and trained human resources
    - high out-of-pocket expenditure (around 30-40%)

Way Forward:
- The members of NTF have the needed qualification and expertise to advise on clinical matters and oxygen supply. However, they may need to **proactively co-opt experts** from other fields for giving suggestions on broad issues in a short time. This involves experts from medical procurement and supply; pharmacology, free medicines, and diagnostics, etc.
- Further, the task force should refrain from giving a mere medicalized response to a public health challenge. The focus should be on creating a healthcare system that can keep people healthy and respond to future epidemics and pandemics.

5. U.S Exit from Greater Middle East Will Alter Regional Relations
Source: Indian Express
Syllabus: GS 2 – Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests
Synopsis: The future US exit from the greater Middle East region is altering the relationships among the regional powers. In this regard, both India and Pakistan must come to terms with the changing dynamics.

Background
- The US will soon **withdraw its last forces from Afghanistan** in September 2021. The country is also shifting its focus from the Middle East region to Indo-Pacific.
- The US has played a pivotal role in the **greater Middle East region** in the last 50 years.
  o It is a vaguely defined region comprising the "Arab world" plus Afghanistan, Iran, Israel, and Turkey.

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- Many regional actors sought **alliances with America** to secure themselves against ambitious or troublesome neighbors (like Saudi Arabia, U.A.E). Similarly, others (like Russia, China) sought to balance against America.
- The withdrawal will simply alter the regional equations and induce the creation of new realignments.

Why is the US withdrawing?
- **First**, the country has failed to solve centuries-old conflicts in the region even after decades of presence.
- **Second**, there are very few compelling factors that can compel the US to incur huge military, political and diplomatic investments in the region.
- **Third**, the rising Chinese assertiveness has compelled it to focus its resources on the Indo-Pacific region.
- Realizing the reality of withdrawal, countries have started to alter their relationship with neighboring countries or search for alternate patrons.

Attempts towards improving the relationship among the Middle East countries:
- Turkey is focusing on establishing peace with Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Although it had tried to trouble them using other Muslim countries.
- Saudi Arabia and Iran are now exploring means to reduce bilateral tensions and moderate their proxy wars in the region.
- Saudi Arabia has also refrained from isolating Qatar from the Gulf region.
- Similarly, UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan are trying to normalize their hostilities with Israel. These 4 Arab states recognized Israel as an independent state in 2020.
- **How India and Pakistan have responded?**
- **India's approach towards Middle East countries:**
  o The country has maintained its approach of dealing with all the gulf countries, without focusing on their regional rivalries.
  o There has been a little friction in the relationship with Turkey owing to the policies of President Erdogan. However, India is hopeful of improving the relations post the withdrawal.
- **Pakistan's Approach towards Middle East countries**:
  o The country has struggled to adopt a pragmatic policy due to domestic politics and ideological considerations.
    ▪ For instance, it has not established diplomatic ties with Israel. Despite knowing that a normal relationship with the Jewish state serves Pakistan's interest.
  o Earlier, the country tried to construct a new Islamic bloc with Turkey and Malaysia in order to overpower the Saudi-led bloc. However, its huge economic dependence on Saudi Arabia and UAE induced it to establish good relations with them.
- **Bilateral Relations**:
  o Some experts believe that Pakistan is now adopting a softer stance towards India as its relevance will get reduced post-U.S withdrawal.
  o Both the countries have maintained the February 2021 ceasefire along the Line of Control.
  o Pakistan is also trying to delink the question of India's 2019 constitutional changes in Kashmir from the normalization of bilateral relations.
- Despite improvement in bilateral relations, both countries want US forces to stay in Afghanistan.

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Why do India and Pakistan want the U.S forces to stay in Afghanistan?

- **India** – The presence would keep a check on the rise of extremist forces like the Taliban. This would have enabled India to play a greater role in Afghanistan.
- **Pakistan** – The presence would sustain the dependence of the US on Pakistan for geographic access and operational support in combating terrorism. This dependence can, later on, be used as a bargaining chip in International relations.
- Further, the **trans-border links** between the Taliban and other extremist forces in South Asia would be strengthened without US forces. It is extremely worrisome as the region is already surrounded by a significant degree of terrorism as testified by the May 2021 attack on the former president of the Maldives.

Way Forward:

- The South Asian states must collaborate on countering extremism and terrorism, else every one of them will be weakened.
- They should realize that the national interest of the state must prevail over all other considerations, including religious ones.
- The middle eastern countries should also cooperate on pragmatic lines rather than working on old ideological tropes like pan-Islamism, pan-Arabism, or anti-Americanism.

6. Time to Revive the Plan for Indian National Health Services
Source: [The Hindu](#)
Gs2: Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health.
Synopsis: The pandemic has broadly highlighted the inadequacy in our health care system and has brought serious consideration for the formation of the Indian national health services.

Background

- There has been a coordinated effort from medical staff, the Centre, the state, and other state institutions to control the Pandemic. For instance,
  - The railways are running special trains carrying oxygen supplies.
  - The military is involved in medical supply chains.
  - The Karnataka government has ordered private hospitals above a certain size to reserve 75% of their beds for COVID-19 patients, who will be paid for under a public scheme
- Despite these measures, the Indian healthcare system is struggling to control the Pandemic.

Issues in the Indian health care system

- **Inadequate public health expenditure**: India spends nearly 1% of GDP**.**
- **Inadequate public health providers: for instance,** in certain rural areas the doctor-population ratio is over 1:40,000
- **High out-of-pocket expenditure**: Medical expenses constitute the major reason for personal debt in India.
- **Systemic issues:** Highly fragmented, corruption, urban-centered, elite-focused.
- To address the issues ailing our health care system, India needs to form Indian National Health services, in line with British National Health Service.

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How the British National Health Service function?

- The service is **funded entirely from Public money** (Taxation). The budget includes a payment to general practitioners, most of whom remain private providers but are paid by the state for treating NHS patients
- All hospital treatment and **medicines are free,** as are outpatient and follow-up appointments.
- The NHS is the **largest employer in the U.K.** and Its current budget is about 7.6% of GDP. Despite being large in scale, it provides **highly localized access** to care.
- The formation of the British National Health Service has resulted in providing top-class universal healthcare, including training and research. However, some issues like subjective preference to patients of different social classes still exist.
- In India, during 1946, the civil servant **Sir Joseph Bhore** proposed Indian national health services broadly modeled on the lines of the British National Health Service or NHS.
- He further recommended the integration of preventive and curative medicines at all levels.

7. Impacts of Digital inequality on Health and Education

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Gs2:Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Synopsis: Digital inequality or Unequal access to digital platform is worsening inequalities in accessing public goods such as Education and Health.

Facts on Digital inequality in India

- **Inequality in access to digital devices:** According to **National Sample Survey (2017),** only 6% of rural households and 25% of urban households have a computer.
- **Inequality in access to Internet Services**: Only 17% in rural areas and 42% in urban areas have access to internet.
- Due to the prevailing inequality in digital access, the digital solutions offered for providing basic services such as health and education have failed.

Reasons behind Digital inequality in education

- **Lack of access to online classes:** According to the **Azim Premji Foundation, ASER and Oxfam** report, between 27% and 60% could not access online classes, due to lack of devices, shared devices, inability to buy "data packs", etc.
- **Loss of Lives:** a college student studying in Delhi and a 16-year-old in Goa committed suicide as their family could not afford to repair the phone they used.
- **Lack of learning environment at home:** a quiet space to study is a luxury for many. For instance, 25% of Indians lived in single-room dwellings in 2017-19. Further, girls at home are burdened with domestic chores.
- **Advantages in Peer learning is forgiven: For instance,** even students with issues in English language found easy to pick up the language with the help of peers. Now, online education has deprived them this advantage.

Reasons behind Digital inequality in health

India's Poor population is at a disadvantage in accessing good health care due to the following reasons,

- **One,** very low public spending on health (nearly 1% of GDP). This has contributed to the high share of '**out of pocket' (OOP) health expenditure** in India was over 60% in 2018.

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- o Even in the United States, where health system is highly privatised, OOP was merely 10%.
- **Two,** the private health sector in India is poorly regulated. As a result, they charge exorbitant prices and has contributed towards the development of black market for scarce services
- **Three,** shortage of essentials such as drugs, hospital beds, oxygen, vaccines etc.,
- To overcome the above challenges, the government chose to promote Digital health services as a solution. However, digital health services have resulted in unequal access to health care due to the following reason.
- **Exclusion**: Platform- and app-based solutions can exclude the poor entirely thereby denying their right to access health care. For instance,
- People with knowledge of technology are at advantage to access digital health services, compared to the vulnerable populations without digital knowledge. For example, in the case of **CoWIN,** it is much harder for people without phones, computers, and the Internet to book slots.
- **Language barrier**: The website is only available in English, restricting the use for the mass non-English population.
- **Privacy violation**: For example, the push towards **digital health ID databases** may result in health records being used by private entities without our consent.

Way forward
- Need to increase spending on health to 3% of GDP to reduce 50% of out-of-pocket expenditure as per **Economic survey 2021.**
- Need to enforce laws against medical malpractices strictly**.**
- To ensure Patient privacy, decentralized digital storage followed in countries like France and Taiwan should be created rather than creating a centralized database for digital health records.

8. [Why Safeguards for Child adoptions Needs to be Followed Strictly?](#)
Source: [The Hindu](#)
Gs2: Mechanisms, Laws, Institutions and Bodies constituted for the Protection and Betterment of these Vulnerable Sections.
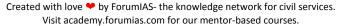**Synopsis:** In India Pandemic has increased the number of orphans in the country. Negligence for legal procedures of Child adoption creates a ground for Child trafficking of these orphans.

Background
- According to **UNICEF**, India has over 30 million orphan and abandoned children.
- The Pandemic has left many more children orphaned due to the death of their parents by Covid-19 infection.
- Today, some people are offering such infants for instant adoption without following proper legal safeguards.
- Moreover, some child trafficking rackets are exploiting negligence for legal procedures of adoption and hasty sentimental considerations by people.

Child Adoption laws in India
- **The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) law was enacted in 2015.**
  - o It is a secular law and all persons are free to adopt children under this law. It also allows the adoption of Children of relatives.

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- o Only, those children can be adopted who are declared legally eligible for adoption under the Juvenile Justice Act.
- **Adoption Regulations of 2017:**
    - o Rehabilitation of all orphaned, abandoned, and surrendered children is regulated by the strict mandatory procedures of the Adoption Regulations.
    - o Violation of the Juvenile Justice Act and the Adoption Regulations invites punishment up to three years and a fine of 1 lakh, or both.
- **CARA (The Central Adoption Resource Authority):**
    - o The Juvenile Justice Rules of 2016 and the Adoption Regulations of 2017 provided for the creation of CARA.
    - o It is a statutory body, and it looks after the regulation, monitoring, and control of all intra-country and inter-country adoptions.
    - o India became the signatory to the **Hague Convention on Protection of Children** and Co-operation in Respect of Inter-country Adoptions. Thus, CARA was designated as the nodal agency to grant a no-objection certificate for all inter-country adoptions.
- **India is also a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:** It provides a legal mandate of all authorities and courts to offer protection to children.
- **Procedure for legal Adoption in India**
- **First,** parents willing to adopt children should register on the Child Adoption Resource Information and Guidance System **(CARINGS)**
- Then, specialized adoption agencies will be adjudging the eligibility of prospective adoptive parents living in India based on home study reports.
- If approved, prospective children are offered as per seniority in the adoption list and pre-adoption foster care follows.
- The specialized adoption agency then secures court orders approving the adoption.
- For NRI's,
- They need to approach authorised adoption agencies in their foreign country of residence for registration under CARINGS.
- Their eligibility is adjudged by authorised foreign adoption agencies through home study reports.
- As per seniority, they are offered profiles of children, and child study reports are finalized.
- CARA then issues a pre-adoption 'no objection' certificate for foster care, followed by a court adoption order. No objection certificate from CARA is mandatory for a passport and visa to leave India.

What needs to be done to prevent the child trafficking rackets from misusing child adoption system?
- **One, CARA** needs to conduct an **outreach program** to inform citizens about misuse of illegal adoption.
- **Two**, the legal process of adoption must be adequately publicized.
- **Three**, The **National and State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights** are empowered by law to take effective action against those engaging in illegal activities. They need to ensure safety of Children through increased Vigilance.
- **Four,** Social activists, NGOs and enlightened individuals must report all the incidents that come to their notice.
- **Five,** Media shaming of those involved in Child trafficking can deter the crime to some extent.

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9. Lessons learnt from the Ladakh crisis
Source: The Hindu
Gs2: India and its Neighborhood- Relations.
Synopsis: A critical evaluation of the Ladakh crisis, may help India to achieve advantageous position against China at LAC in long term.

Background

- Even after a year of **Ladakh crisis**, the stand-off between Indian and Chinese troops in eastern Ladakh shows no signs of resolution. Disengagement has been stalled and China continues to reinforce its troops.
- Even in the future, the relationship between the two countries is set to remain vulnerable to destabilizing disruptions.
- In this context, it's important for our military and political leaders to learn the right lessons from Ladakh. It will ensure that India is rightly prepared to meet the challenge of Chinese coercion in the future.

What are the lessons learnt from the Ladakh crisis?
According to a recent study published by the **Lowy Institute,** the Ladakh crisis offers India three key lessons in managing the strategic competition with China**.**

- **First,** India's military strategy doctrine based on denial has been more successful than the retaliation strategy. **For example**, India's occupation of the Kailash Range provided it a strategic advantage in case of further advance of Chinese.
    - o Focus on denial strategy will enhance the Indian military capacity to thwart future land grabs across the LAC.
    - o Further, improved denial capabilities will allow India to reduce the resource drain of the increased militarization of the LAC.
- **Second,** the threat of political costs will work more in India's favor rather than the material threat of material costs.
    - o Because, China's military spending is three to four times larger than India's. Any material cost incurred, will not disrupt its existing priorities.
    - o However, China will not be interested in destabilizing its political relationship with India owing to its pre-occupation in many territorial disputes.
- **Third,** India should persist with its strategies to secure the Indian Ocean even if threats at LAC increases.
    - o Because the future of the Indian Ocean Region is more consequential and more uncertain than the Himalayan frontier.
    - o The Ladakh crisis has highlighted the need for increased militarisation at the LAC. However, pursuing the strategy of increased militarisation at the LAC will delay India's plan for military modernization and maritime expansion in the Indian Ocean.
    - o India needs to make tough-minded strategic trade-offs. India needs to prioritize military modernization over increasing militarisation at the LAC.
    - o However, rebalancing India's strategic priorities is politically challenging. Here, the chief of Defence staff should step in to issue firm strategic guidance to the military services.

10. Importance of Parliamentary Proceedings
Source: click here
Syllabus: GS 2
Synopsis: Parliamentary proceedings should operate virtually to ensure the voices of all sections of the country are heard. Many other countries are doing the same.

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Introduction
The legislature which is the third arm of the state seems to be missing when there are as many as 306 districts now with a positivity of 20 percent or higher. The executive and the judiciary can be seen and heard in the public health emergency.

- Recently, Congress MP and its leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury have written a letter to President and the LS Speaker. They asked for a special session to discuss the response to Covid. This marked Parliament's absence in the crisis.
- Earlier, Mallikarjun Kharge had sent a letter to Prime Minister and RS chairman. He asked for virtual parliamentary standing committee meetings.

How has the world responded to the functioning of parliament and opposition suggestions amid a pandemic?
For instance, many other democracies across the world have found ways for their parliaments to carry on gathering amid the pandemic.

- **Firstly, some democracies used conventional ways** and continued to meet physically, but with restrictions. **Some switched to virtual meetings** with the help of technologies that allow remote working.
- **Secondly, the UK has adopted hybrid models**. In this, a mix of members is present in the chamber and others participate by video conference. Many states have had to change laws and relax procedures, reset minimum number rules, and rearrange venues.
- **India's response:**
- **Thirdly, in India, the government shows little or no urgency for parliamentary proceedings**. It has shown high resistance to suggestions and interferences by Opposition leaders.
  - o **For example**, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's suggestions were quickly disregarded by Health Minister Harsh Vardhan earlier.

Suggestions
- **It is very important for governments to listen, learn and correct errors** to find the best way forward. The response to a national health crisis needs the participation of all the people's representatives, across states and party.
- The virus has brought death and distress to every constituency. To battle this, **MPs must group ideas and resources,** ask questions and apply the check and balance.
- **The House should reopen its doors virtually** to ensure that the executive does not remain limited to echo chambers of its own making.

The conclusion
- In a shared crisis, one-sided responses are terribly insufficient and even counter-productive. Parliament must return as a space for a wider discussion. The government must take the lead and make this happen.

11. [Links between Crisis and Economic Reforms](#)
Source: [The Hindu](#)
Syllabus: GS: 2: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors
Synopsis:
The 1991 economic crisis indicates that the crisis is a good opportunity for economic reforms. But that is not true, specifically in the case of 2021 crisis. Thus, not all crisis results in economic reforms.

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Introduction:

2021 marks 30 years of 1991 economic reforms. The 1991 reforms permanently altered the production and distribution structures of the Indian economy. But during the pandemic, the government introduced few reforms as well.

Both 1991 and 2021 have one thing in common. Both reforms came after the **economy faces a severe growth crisis**. This raises a few important questions.

1. Is the crisis a prerequisite for reforms?
2. Are reforms capable of stimulating the economy?

The link between Crisis and economic reforms:

Big economic policy reforms often face hurdles in terms of rules and routines. This is because these reforms generally depart from existing economic policies. So the fundamental shifts will always face criticisms.

But the **Crisis** situation **provides an opportunity for the government** to introduce radical economic reforms due to the following reasons,

- The crisis situation **challenges the legitimacy of existing policy**. So, many experts suggest new proposals and possibilities to overcome the crisis.
- **Delivery of services** will also face challenges during the crisis. So to meet the societal expectations institutional reforms are necessary.
- **For the policymaker**, crises can generate increased demand for changing the policy.
- However, not all crises end in reforms. But all crisis will provide an opportunity for reforms.
- Converting a crisis into an opportunity:

Reforms can be feasible during a crisis on three factors.

1. During a crisis, the economic modes of interactions will change and set a suitable background for economic reforms
2. In a crisis situation authority replaces rules. (Authorities will change the rules frequently to tackle the crisis situation). This makes it easier for authorities to push the economic policies in a short time span.
3. During the crisis period, the legitimacy of prevailing rules and routines diminish. This will make it easier for the government to depart from them.

Difference between two crisis:

Even though the existent of crisis in 1991 and 2021, both the crisis have **differences in terms of character and consequence**.

1991 Economic crisis:

- **Cause:** The 1991 crisis was a product of India's economic policies(Internal).
- **Effect:** The economy was forced to adjust to the internal shock.
- **Policies:**
    o India specific policies are implemented. The world never went through any drastic policy shift.
    o There was also a semi-fixed template for reforms available. These generic measures were the result of various economies experienced external sector imbalances. So, a tried, and tested policy was available to India.

2021 Pandemic crisis:

- **Cause:** The 2021 crisis is a product of a pandemic. This is outside the economic system.
- **Effect:** The economy is forced to adjust to this external shock.
- **Policies:** The economic effect of the crisis is global in nature.
    o This makes policy responses very challenging.

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o India specific policies have tempered with the dynamics of the rest of the world.
o Availability of a <u>semi-fixed template</u> for reforms was <u>not available</u> to the global community.

The challenges of 2021 crisis:
Two uncertainties pose serious problems in creating economic reforms.

- Firstly, the **uncertainty with regard to the government's own revenues**. A prolonged pandemic limits the government revenue. This will limit the policy interventions of the government. Further, the government <u>cannot practice Expenditure reduction</u>. As the government has to enhance the demand of people and also invest massively to create necessary health infrastructure.
- Secondly, **Unpredictability of global factors.** India's dependence on the global economy has increased manifold after the 1991 reforms.
  Both these uncertainties have the potential to jeopardise the implementation of any strategic changes.

The intensity of 2021 crisis:
The magnitude and intensity of the crisis of 2021 are manifold compared to the 1991 economic crisis. According to [Pew Research Center](#),

- A large section of India's population would be pushed into poverty
- The number of [Poor people in India increased by 7.5 crores](#). This accounts for nearly 60% of the global increase in poverty.
- India introduced a rural employment programme to combat poverty in agricultural areas. These schemes saw [spikes in people participation in rural employment schemes](#).
- Conclusion:
- The difference, intensity and challenges show the **non-suitability of this crisis for radical reforms.** In conclusion, **all crises do not inevitably lead to reforms, despite creating opportunities.**
- So to turn crisis into opportunities <u>requires an in-depth understanding of the factors that led to the crisis</u>.
- Apart from that, <u>all crucial agents in the policy process need to have a shared vision</u>. This includes political leaders, policymakers, implementers and stakeholders.

12. [UGC Advises Universities to Include NCC as an Elective Subject](#)
Source- [The Indian Express](#)
Syllabus- GS 2 – Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to education.
Synopsis – The UGC has forwarded the proposal to universities to introduce NCC as an elective subject in the curriculum.
Introduction-

- Recently, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has issued an advisory to the vice-chancellors of all universities to include NCC as an elective subject.
- If implemented, NCC will be a part of the **Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS)** envisioned in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

National Cadet Corps (NCC)
The NCC was formed in 1948 on the recommendation of the H. N. Kunzru Committee [1946].

- **Significance of NCC-**
  o NCC is the world's largest uniformed youth volunteer service organization.

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- o The NCC cadets undergo basic military training at various levels and as well as academic curriculum basics related to the Armed forces and their functioning.
- o Its gender ratio is higher than any other uniformed organization in the world. With female cadets responsible for one-third of the number.

Why universities should consider UGS's proposal to include NCC as an elective subject?

UGS's proposal would aid in the expansion of the NCC and will provide students with the following benefits

- **Academic benefit**- Students who enrolled as NCC cadets will receive academic credits for NCC training on successful completion of the course. Also, they will receive the NCC "B" and "C" certificates.
- **Employment incentives** – Cadets can also avail of employment incentives and benefits offered in various central and state government schemes.

Issues related to NCC structure-

- **Lack of funding**- States do not provide adequate infrastructure for training and administrative functions of NCC. It is despite the huge support provided by the Centre.
- **Attitude of the armed forces toward NCC**- In armed force, An NCC posting is regarded as being sidelined. It is because forces do not deploy the best and brightest with the NCC. There is a trend toward deploying those who are medically unfit.
- **The majority of NCC cadets join the armed forces as jawans,** with just a few joining the officer stream. 99 percent of NCC cadets join only as jawans in the armed forces.

What needs to be done to expand the NCC?

NCC structure must evolve in such a way that youth, regardless of socio-economic background, are attracted to it as a means of advancing both character and career-

- **Needs to change the perception –** The general attitude in the armed forces that the NCC is a dumping ground needs to change.
  - o NCC tenures should result in additional credit in promotions for deployed military officers or personnel.
- **Proper utilization of funds**- The Central government must ensure that the states provide proper infrastructure for training, administrative functions, and logistical support to the NCC.
- The quality of the local training staff such as the Associate National Cadet Corps Officers (ANOs), and their career advancement must also be assured.
- The above reforms in NCC structure may result in better intake into the officer stream of the armed forces and higher management in other public and private sectors.

13. Expansion of Social Security Net is Need of the Hour

Source: The Hindu

Syllabus: GS 2 – Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States

Synopsis:

The pandemic and subsequent lockdown have hurt the poor on multiple fronts of healthcare, livelihood and hunger. Both urban and rural regions are facing difficulties,

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however, miseries in rural regions were less due to wide coverage of social security net. This calls for expanding social security nets across the country.

Background:
- The April 2020 lockdown brought immense misery for the people of India. It's been almost a year and masses have now learned to adapt to the new normal.
- Nonetheless, the situation for the poor has been worse as they were hit on multiple fronts including healthcare, livelihood and hunger.

Dismal State of Affairs:
- The **State of Working India report 2021** shows that nearly half of formal salaried workers moved into informal work between late 2019 and late 2020. Further, the poorest 20% of the households lost their entire income in April and May 2020.
- **Greater Hardships for Urban Regions**: Hunger Watch (HW) Survey 2021 was conducted in 11 States in October 2020. It found that:
  - In October, 26% had no income in rural areas while 30% had no income in urban areas.
  - While 54% in urban areas had to borrow money for food, it was 16% lower for rural respondents.
  - Urban respondents were 15 percentage points worse off compared to their rural counterparts across 13 key parameters.
- **Disproportionate impact on Vulnerable sections**: As per HW survey, the situation is worse when data is observed in terms of caste, religion, and other special forms of vulnerability.
  - For instance, 60% of Muslims, 51% of Dalits, and 56% of single women-headed households went to bed without a meal at least once.
- However, some form of relief was provided by social security nets during these turbulent times.

Relief provided:
- **National Food Security Act:** Under this, 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population are entitled to 5 kg of foodgrains each month at subsidised prices.
  - The government announced additional grains for the poor under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana.
  - Further, an additional entitlement of 5 kg of foodgrains per individual and 1 kg of pulses per household for free was available. Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) cardholders under the NFSA, were eligible for this benefit.
- **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)**: It guarantees 100 days of work a year to every rural household with an aim to enhance the livelihood security of people.
  - There was a 47% increase in person-days of work under MGNREGA in 2020-21 in comparison to 2019-20. Further, a record 72 lakh households completed 100 days of work in one year.
- **Reasons behind less distress for Rural areas**:
- **First**, employment guarantee schemes like MGNREGA are not available for urban regions.
- **Second**, the coverage of rural regions is more under NFSA in comparison to urban areas i.e. 75% versus 50%.

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- **Third**, the availability of ration cards was higher in rural regions than urban areas. Around 56% of respondents had NFSA cards in rural regions while only 27% had them in urban areas.

Way Forward:
- The Central government must immediately expand the coverage and quantity under the NFSA for at least one year.
- It should increase MGNREGA entitlements to 200 days per household from the current 100 days commitment.
  - States like Odisha and Himachal Pradesh have already added 50 days and increased it to 150 days in a year.
- A guaranteed urban employment programme on the lines of MGNREGA can provide protection to the urban poor.
- Further, the government must offer a wage compensation of Rs. 7,000 per poor household for the next few months.
- In a nutshell, we need to expand the social security net in order to meet basic requirements of at least 33 crore poor households in India.

14. Centre Should Relook its Vaccine Policy
Source: Click Here
Syllabus: GS 2 – Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design
Synopsis: The vaccine policy of the government would enhance the difficulties of states and the vulnerable population. It would give greater benefit to the affluent class and the urban regions. Therefore, the center must relook it in order to make it more equitable.

Background:
- The Centre government has filed an affidavit in Supreme Court with reference to the COVID-19 management case. It has insisted on the continuation of its revamped vaccine policy that was introduced for vaccinating the 18+ population.
- The policy was revamped after the demand to universalize the vaccination program among all adults came from various states.

About the Vaccine Policy:
- The center has put forward a more liberalized policy under which it will procure 50% of the total vaccine production. While the states and private sector will be allowed procurement of 25% each in every state.
- Each state will get vaccines based on a quota decided by the Centre government and there would be a uniform price of vaccines across all the states.
- The policy would **increase the vaccine maker's revenue** as Covaxin will fetch a weighted price of Rs. 477 per dose. Similarly, Covishield would be priced at Rs. 302 per dose.
  - The weighted average is calculated based on a share of 50% for the Centre, 25% for States, and 25% for the private sector for both vaccines.

Procurement Price	Covaxin	Covishield
Centre	154	154
States	400	300
Private	1200	600

However, many experts are demanding a relook of this policy as it may not deliver the desired results.

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Issues with vaccine policy that demands a relook:
- **Bias against the Vulnerable population**: The private players will sell vaccines at higher prices that may not be affordable for the vulnerable population. Further, the addition of 600 million (18-44 age category) people, has created extreme vaccine shortages thereby leading to more exclusion under the current program.
- **Against International Practice**: The national government is solely buying the vaccines in every other country. Although there are some exceptions like Indonesia and the Philippines. Here the corporates are allowed to buy internationally, to vaccinate their workers for free.
- **Inconsistent Nature:** The policy is based on the principle of liberalization. However, the center is controlling both price and quantity for every State. This is against liberalization.
    - o It is also ironic that on one hand, the center is deciding which manufacturer of Remdesivir will sell how much to which State and at what price.
    - o While on the other hand, it is deregulating the Covid vaccine market which currently has just two suppliers.
- **Burden on States**: Instead of the full production at zero cost, the States now got one-quarter of the production at twice or more the price paid by the Centre.
- **Problems with Private Participation**: It is not clear how to define the private sector in a specific state. Procurement contracts by private participants are done at a corporate level and not by State units. This may benefit large urban areas, where there is a greater presence of the private sector.

Way Forward:
- The centre **should procure 100% doses** and equitably distribute them among the states. Its ability to give bulk orders allows it to buy vaccines cheaper than States or the private sector.
    - o It can increase its procurement price from 154 in order to raise the revenue of vaccine producers.
    - o Further, the companies must be given large long-term orders for 100% of India's needs. This would enable them to invest more and sell globally.
- The government should also **widely licence** Covaxin in order to boost production and tackle vaccine shortages. Most of the core work in developing the vaccine was done at the ICMR-NIV in Pune, indicating the use of public funds for development.
- It should **arrange more supplies** by negotiating with global suppliers through the diplomatic route. This would also help in converting the idea of the door to door campaign into a reality.
- It should give **special interest-free 50-year loans to States** in order to bear the additional burden of the vaccine program.

15. Gauhati High Court Questions FCRA Amendment Act
Source: The Hindu
Syllabus: GS-2: the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders.
Synopsis: The Gauhati High Court questions the new FCRA Amendment Act.
Introduction:
An Assam-based NGO has filed a petition in the Gauhati High Court against an amended provision of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act(FCRA). As the amendment makes Aadhaar mandatory for opening and operating the account in Delhi.

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FCRA Amendment Act, 2020:
- **The FCRA amendment** has made it compulsory for the NGOs to open an exclusive Bank account with the State Bank of India in New Delhi to receive foreign donations.
- **The amendments also make** it mandatory to provide the Aadhaar details of the chief functionaries, trustees and office-bearers. This is for opening and operating a bank account in Delhi.
- **The Ministry of Home Affairs** has given the deadline of March 31st, 2021 to open this bank account.
- **However, if the NGOs failed to open the bank account** before the deadline. Then they will not be able to receive fresh foreign funds from April 1,2021 in the existing accounts. But they could utilise the money that already exists in the old account.

What are the issues with these FCRA Amendments?
- Several NGOs have filed a petition in the Gauhati High Court against making Aadhaar mandatory for opening and operating the account in Delhi.
- They have said that they are not able to open bank accounts as they do not fulfil the eligibility criteria (since they don't have an Aadhaar card).
- Further, several NGOs have also asked for an exemption from the Union Home Ministry deadline to open an FCRA account with the SBI branch in New Delhi.
- It said that only 16% of registered NGOs have active bank accounts with the State Bank of India's main branch in Delhi.

What has the Gauhati High Court said on FCRA Amendments?
- **The Gauhati High Court** has sent a notice to the State Bank of India(SBI) asking it to explain why Aadhaar was necessary to open a bank account.
- **The Court also referred to the 2018 Supreme Court judgement** in the K.S. Puttaswamy (Aadhaar) case. During this case, the apex court had ruled that mandatorily linking Aadhaar to a bank account "does not satisfy the Doctrine of proportionality".

Note: **The Doctrine of proportionality:** It is a principle where courts would examine priorities and processes of the administration for reaching or recalling a decision. Proportionality means that the administrative action should not be more drastic than it ought to be for obtaining the desired result. This implies that a missile should not be used to shoot a sparrow. Thus, this doctrine tries to balance means with ends.

16. ASEAN's Initiative to End Political Crisis in Myanmar
Source: The Hindu
Gs2: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.
Synopsis: ASEAN's initiative is trying to resolve the political crisis in Myanmar through peaceful mediation. It is a shining example of how regional grouping can be helpful in diffusing crises in its member countries.

Background
- People in Myanmar organized a **civil disobedience movement** against the military. They demanded the release of their elected leaders and the return of freedoms and democracy.
- However, the people's movement was controlled using brute military power. 750 were killed, thousands injured, and over 2,500 detained.
- The opposition is demanding the rejection of the 2008 constitution. Also, adoption of a new Federal Democracy Charter, and announcement of the 'national unity

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government' with representation from the majority **Bamar and ethnic minority communities. But the army didn't accept their demands too.**

- Further, the army set aside the results of the 2020 elections and promised for new elections in a year or two and a **disciplined democracy.**

How the international community responded to the derailment of Democracy in Myanmar?

The international community was divided on their response. There was no united action taken by the international community to settle the crisis in Myanmar. For instance,

- The U.S., the U.K., and the European Union advocated strong sanctions against the military regime.
- Whereas, China and Russia were determined to protect Myanmar's army from excessive censure and opposition as greater instability would affect their interests.
- Asian powers, mainly India and Japan, preferred to support reconciliation.
- However, the ASEAN, regional grouping of Southeast Asian nations has taken a bold initiative to settle the crisis.

ASEAN's Mediation Process

- Myanmar is a member of the ASEAN grouping**.** Though ASEAN is built on the values **of non-interference in the internal affairs of its member states**, ASEAN decided to mediate with Myanmar for the region's larger good.
- After that, the ASEAN member countries organized the **Jakarta Summit** to discuss Myanmar's governance crisis along with Myanmar's army general.
- The Jakarta Summit ended with two major outcomes.
1. One, **the Five-Point Consensus** with the acceptance of Myanmar's military general on the following demands
   o Immediate cessation of violence
   o Supply of humanitarian assistance and Constructive dialogue.
   o ASEAN's mediation through the visit by a special envoy of ASEAN's chair and the ASEAN secretary general.
2. Two, however, the Myanmar military had reservations on the following two elements
   o One, repatriation of Rohingya's from Bangladesh.
   o Two, the release of all political prisoners including foreigners. This makes clear that leaders will be released only when the situation normalizes.

ASEAN's initiative to resolve its issues peacefully has been largely appreciated by the international community. India too welcomed the ASEAN initiative. Myanmar's leaders should work for a lasting reconciliation, deriving inspiration from Lord Buddha's '**Middle Path'**.

17. India's Vaccine exports are guided by good diplomacy and good epidemiology
Source: The Indian Express
Syllabus: GS 2 – Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health
Synopsis:
The vaccine exports by India have not obstructed its efforts in tackling the Covid-19 outbreak. Rather it is a strategy guided by good diplomacy, good economics and good epidemiology. That is immensely beneficial for the country.

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Background:

- As of May 11, India exported 663.698 lakh vaccine doses to foreign countries. Out of this, 16% was sent as aid, 54% as commercial supplies and 30% as part of WHO's COVAX program.
- These exports have drawn criticism from various experts. As they believe that exports are creating vaccine shortages in India. However, there exist multiple reasons which induced the government to export vaccines.

Reasons behind vaccine exports:

- **First**, out of the 107.15 lakh doses sent as aid, 78.5 lakh doses (73.26 per cent) have been sent to just seven neighbouring countries. This is **good epidemiology.** As it is essential to vaccinate India's immediate neighbours for its own pandemic control measures.
- **Second**, approximately 14% of commercial supplies are sent to the U.K. India **not only has a legal duty but also a moral duty** to supply the vaccine. As the Covishield vaccine is manufactured by India based on a licence granted by Oxford – AstraZeneca partnership.
- **Third**, two lakh doses are sent as aid to the UN peacekeeping force. This will help in the **vaccination of 6600 Indians deployed** there. Similarly, 12.5% of commercial supplies are sent to Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia possesses a large Indian diaspora.
- **Fourth**, there is **an international obligation** to supply the vaccines under COVAX initiative of WHO.
  - The COVAX program aims to ensure rapid, fair and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines for all the countries around the world.
  - Being a participant, India is **itself entitled to receive nearly 97 million doses** of Covishield through the COVAX facility at affordable prices.
- **Fifth**, vaccine production requires imports of various inputs from multiple countries that are part of the complex supply chain network. Hence, the suppliers of raw materials will also deserve some portion of the final product.
- This is why India's vaccine exports are considered as good diplomacy, good economics and good epidemiology.

Various steps to enhance vaccine availability in India:

- The government has provided support of approximately **Rs 200 crore to boost vaccine production**. This will help to improve the current manufacturing rate of Covaxin by 10 times in the coming months. Currently, 10 million doses are produced in a month.
- The government has also provided **special regulatory dispensation.** This allows emergency use authorisation of foreign-made Covid-19 vaccines. This facility will be available only for Covid-19 vaccines approved for emergency use by credible foreign regulators.
- Going forward, India can make an open commitment to supply a certain percentage of production as commercial/COVAX exports. This allows other countries to plan and execute their own vaccination drives. Further, it will be in consonance with good diplomacy, good economics and good epidemiology.

18. Measures to control the impact of Pandemic in rural India
Source: Indian Express
Gs2: Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

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Synopsis: To limit the impact of Pandemic in rural India, states must produce reliable data on Covid-19 infection. State governments need to build capacities and involve panchayats in Covid-19 response.

Background of Pandemic in rural India
- To tackle the second wave, active coordination between all three tiers of Government (The union, the State and Panchayat) is necessary.
- The second Covid-19 wave has impacted Rural India equally. This necessitates the need to implement the delivery of vaccines and healthcare services on a war footing in rural areas.
- However, ensuring access to health services for all in rural India is a big challenge due to various reasons.

Challenges in tackling Pandemic in rural India:
- **Disparities in access to health care between urban and rural India is high**: For instance, 75 per cent of hospitals are in urban areas.
- **Denial attitude**: People in rural India are hesitant to test themselves. Further, they are not willing to admit that they have the disease. This denial attitude is leading to the loss of lives.
- **Lack of Medical Kits for testing:** Many in Rural India lack access to medicine, thermometers and oximeters.
- All the above problems have complicated the availability of reliable data on the number of infected persons as well as the death caused by Covid-19. This resulted in ineffective planning. **For instance, hurdles in Oxygen availability and allocation.**
- **Suggestions to tackle Pandemic in rural India**
- **First,** State officials and district commissioners **should actively report both positive numbers and deaths.** As it is important to have the right data. For this, mobile testing vans need to be introduced immediately.
- **Second,** families with Covid-positive members should be given kits consisting of medicine, thermometers and oximeters. The delivery of the kits can be supplied through the **panchayats**.
- **Third,** a task force, consisting of all ward officers, district and municipal commissioners, should map out the demand for health care equipment. This will help Epidemiologists, experts and doctors to predict better the requirement of oxygen, medical devices, etc.
- **Fourth, learning from the best practices of Mumbai administration.**
  - **Mobilisation of human resource**: Mumbai used the food and drug administration department for planning the demand and ensuring the supply in the city.
  - **Foresighted Planning**: Every ward in the city of Mumbai also created an emergency stock of oxygen. This reduced the time to send supplies to hospitals running out of oxygen.
  - **Building additional capacity rationally**: One of the important lessons to be learnt from Mumbai is that hospitals should only increase beds if they can provide oxygen.
    - The state should also increase hospital capacity by creating additional oxygen plants with adequate ICU beds.
- **Fifth, Decentralised decision-making and planning.** The Union government should decentralise crucial decisions to the state governments.
- These steps can ensure a better reduction rate of Covid-19 Pandemic in rural India.

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19. Treating Israel-Palestine issue with a humanitarian response
Source: The Indian Express
Syllabus: GS 2 – Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests
Synopsis:
The Israel-Palestine issue should be looked beyond geopolitical opportunities. The world leaders must come forward and treat the issue with basic dignity and justice.

Background:
- The Israel-Palestine issue is one of the world's longest-running and most controversial conflicts.
  - o It is a conflict between two self-determination movements — the Jewish Zionist project and the Palestinian nationalist project towards the same territory.
- The issue was recently triggered by Israel. As they tried to dispossess and oppress the Palestinians. This resulted in deadly riots in Israel and the exchange of rockets between the two sides.
- Experts believe that this instance is going to attract 3 kinds of responses – indifferent, imperial and humanitarian. Amongst them, the imperial response is likely to overpower the other two.

Indifferent Response :
- **The majority of the global countries will adopt** an indifferent response to the situation. They believe that both Israelis and Palestinians have their share of rights and wrongs.
  - o Israelis and Hamas infuse terror in the region. Similarly, places and Monuments are targeted by both sides.
- This indifferent attitude towards the issue is the result of geopolitical self-interest shown by the US and Arab states towards the Palestinians.
  - o Their approach has only internationalised the issue and not helped in resolving the issue. The global countries have forgotten that **injustice to Palestinians and denial of human rights forms the core** issue.

Imperial Response to Israel-Palestine issue:
- **Israel will adopt an imperialist response** towards the Palestinians. This is because its past actions have the characteristics of imperial modes of governance. This includes measures such as,
  - o Eviction of (Palestinian)people from property,
  - o Creation of second-class citizens to fight Palestine,
  - o Maintenance of oppressively governed enclaves
- Israel has been pushing out Palestinians from the territory Israel wants to claim. The country managed to evict as it enjoyed **considerable support from big powers** like the US and U.K.
  - o The process began with Nakba(catastrophe) in 1947. Under this, more than half a million Palestinians were evicted.
  - o Since then, it has been doing consistent evictions by following a policy of thousand cuts to dispossess Palestinians of their homes.
- It is believed that reducing Palestinian presence in East Jerusalem is likely to be the next objective of Israel.

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Humanitarian Response to Israel-Palestine issue:
- This response calls for **focusing on mutual sufferings** observed by both the communities.
- It involves taking measures guided by shared humanity rather than ambitious political objectives.
- <u>Peace movements in the past have focused on this approach.</u> This approach uses the culture and a history of shared suffering to build bridges. They emphasise that dispossession and exile is something both communities share.
- This approach has met with limited success. This is because there is an absence of serious political solutions.

Suggestions to resolve Israel-Palestine issue:
- The Israel Palestine issue must be looked at as an **unfinished task of decolonisation**, and **a human rights catastrophe**. Future negotiations must be based on the pillars of justice and human dignity.
- Israel must realise that it cannot be safe unless the Palestinians are safe. Further, Israel must forgo its adamant zeal of occupying three million people. Instead, it should work on a two-state solution.
- Friendly countries including India must remind Israel about the brutal consequences of adhering to imperial politics. This includes the destruction of the moral legitimacy of one's own claims, undermining of human rights and justice etc.

20. State should form a joint committee to negotiate COVID vaccine price
Source- The Indian Express
Syllabus- GS 2- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health.
Synopsis- Vaccine Price, availability and affordability [for 18-44 age group] would require a coordinated effort from state governments.
Introduction-
- The central government has pulled out from the third phase of the vaccination drive. The center has provided state governments' the full responsibility for vaccinating [a group that constitutes about 40 per cent of the population].
- Now state governments have to procure vaccines directly. Further, they also need to compete with private players at the same time for a better price. As there is only a limited number of capacity and vaccine suppliers.

How can the state bring down vaccine prices?
In contrast to a market with multiple buyers, a single buyer can always negotiate a lower price for a product with one or more sellers. Thus, to bring down vaccine price**, So, the State governments should form a consortium.** There are some factors related to this. Such as,
- **Involvement of Pre-purchase agreements-** This would tackle any uncertainties from the point of view of vaccine manufacturers. It will also allow for faster expansion of production capacity.
- **Delay in the formation of the consortium will impact the procurement –** Any delays will strengthen the potential private buyers' position. It will automatically weaken the position of the consortium to negotiate a lower price. This will result in,
  - **Further, widening of vaccination gap between the rich and the poor** – The price difference between the consortium's agreed prices and private sellers is likely to encourage inequity and black marketing

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- Thus, the formation of a consortium provides a mechanism to achieve affordable prices in India. Further, there is also a survey conducted on **willingness to pay (WTP) for Covid-19 vaccines.**

Key highlights of a survey on willingness to pay (WTP) for Covid-19 vaccines
- The survey is conducted for WTP for two possible vaccine choice [one is 100 percent effective and the other is 70 percent effective]
  - The maximum WTP on average stood at **Rs 140 for a 100 % effective vaccine,** and at about **Rs 109 for one with 70 % effectiveness.**
  - Only **2 % were willing to pay Rs 600 or more to 100 % effective vaccine** and 1.5 % were willing to pay the same amount for the other vaccine.
- Nearly 66 % of the respondents experienced an income reduction of more than 50 percent as compared to the last year's income levels. **WTP also declined uniformly with the level of economic shock experienced.**
- So, the economic ability of these households to afford vaccination is severely restricted.
- Apart from that, leaving sections of the eligible population out of vaccine coverage poses further risks of mutations in the virus.

Suggestions to reduce Vaccine price and provide universal vaccination
Shortage of the vaccine, poor administration and vaccine hesitancy is the reason for low rate of vaccination, therefore-
- State governments must take immediate action to form a consortium and make provisions for further subsidization of the vaccine.
- Implementing budgetary solutions like **public health bonds** will help to improve public finances.
- Further, the government must focus on Universal vaccination. To achieve this, the center can allow State governments to exceed budget deficit targets.

21. Laws and Initiatives for Welfare Orphaned Children
Source: The Hindu
Gs2: Mechanisms, Laws, Institutions and Bodies constituted for the Protection and Betterment of these Vulnerable Sections.
Synopsis: This article provides information on the available legal means to report about orphaned children and protections available under the state.

Introduction
2nd wave of the pandemic has taken the lives of many young mothers and fathers. It has left many children orphaned and vulnerable. It is usual to see requests to adopt a child on social media.
Some NGOs are helping such children. However, legal procedures need to be followed in adopting such children. It ensures the safety and security of children,

What are the available options to help orphaned or abandoned children?
There are many legal options available for an individual to help the orphaned children who need care and protection.
- **Option 1, Toll free Childline number 1098:** Managed by the Women and Child Development department's nodal agency, the Childline India Foundation.
- **Option2,** informing the concerned **District protection officer.** Contact details can be found on the **National Tracking System for Missing and Vulnerable Children portal.** It is maintained by the Women and Child Development department.

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- **Option3**: The third alternative is to approach the nearest police station or its child welfare police officer. Such officers are specially trained to exclusively deal with children, either victims or juveniles.
- **Option 4**: Calling the **Emergency Response Support System** (ERSS). It is a pan-India single number (112) based emergency response system for citizens in emergencies.

How the state provides support for children who are in need of care?
- Once an outreach agency recovers the orphaned child, they need to produce the child within 24 hours before the **Child Welfare Committee (CWC)** of the district.
- The CWC, after an inquiry, decides whether to send the child to a children's home or a fit facility or fit person.
- If the child is below six years, he or she shall be placed in a specialized adoption agency.
- It is the duty of the state to take care of all such children who are in need of care and protection, till they turn 18 years.
- Once a child is declared legally free for adoption by the CWC, adoption can be done either by Indian prospective adoptive parents or non-resident Indians or foreigners.

What are the safeguards provided for orphaned children by the state?
- **One**, an orphan child kept by an unlawful authority is punishable. According to the **Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956**, the father, and in his absence the mother, is the natural guardian. Not even a close relative is allowed to look after the child without authorization.
- **Two**, In **Sampurna Behrua vs Union of India** (2018), the Supreme Court of India directed States and Union Territories to ensure that all child care institutions are to be registered.
  - Hence, according to **The Juvenile Justice Act,** an NGO, which is not registered, cannot house children in need of care and protection.
- **Three, the** Supreme Court in **Bachpan Bachao Andolan vs Union of India** directed all Directors General of Police, to register a first information report as a case of trafficking or abduction in every case of a missing child.
  - Further, it mandated at least one police officer not below the rank of assistant sub-inspector in each police station to undergo training. So that they can deal with children in conflict with the law and in need of care and protection.
- **Four**, each district should have its **special juvenile police unit**, headed by an officer, not below the rank of a DSP.
- **Five,** The Supreme Court in **Re: Exploitation of children in Orphanages in the State of Tamil Nadu (2017),** specifically asked the National Police Academy, Hyderabad, and police training academies in every State to prepare training courses on the JJA and provide regular training to police officers in terms of sensitization.
- **Six,** recently **The** NCPCR requested the state to intimate about any information received about any, abandoned or orphaned child to it by email or over the telephone.
- Children are an important national asset. Their wellbeing is directly related to the growth of the nation. Also, DPSP (Article 39) of the Constitution prohibits children from being abused. Hence, it is the duty of the state to provided necessities to the children in need of care.

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22. Bad Policy Making Aggravated the Pandemic Disaster in India
Source: The Hindu
Gs2: Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation**.**
Synopsis: Bad Policy-Making by the government during and before pandemic aggravated the Pandemic Disaster in India. Adherence to Key Principles of Healthcare, Economy, Data integrity, and Science would have limited the impact of the Pandemic in India.

What are the key principles forgone by the government?
- **First, prioritizing** universal health coverage instead of strengthening Public health facilities
  - India prioritized insurance coverage after 2014, for example, Ayushman Bharat. Whereas, international experience showed strengthening public health care is the right way.
  - For instance,
    - UK's **National Health Service Act** revolutionized health care in the United Kingdom by delinking it from a person's income.
    - Kerala's heavy investment in public health care in the 1950s increased the capability of Human resources.
  - Even, the high-level expert group appointed by the **Planning Commission** concluded that progressive strengthening of public facilities is the only way to achieve **universal health care**.
- **Second,** discarding the principles of Science worsened the Pandemic situation**.** There are instances when Science was least prioritized by the government,
  - Government representatives supporting Patanjali's Ayurvedic cure for COVID-19.
  - Ignoring the Suggestions of public health expert or Scientists in Public policymaking related to Lockdown, organizing Kumbh mela, Election rallies
- **Third,** Government's apathy towards prioritising **Data integrity**. For instance,
  - One, evasion of Economic data: For example, Maximizing GDP numbers, employment statistics changing baselines, withholding periodic labor force surveys.
  - Two, under-reporting of Covid-19 infection and Deaths.
- **Fourth,** negligence of Good economics principles. For instance, relying on Freebies rather than prioritizing sound Welfare economics like Institutionalising social security net.
  - According to the latest report by **the Azim Premji University**, 230 million Indians slipped below the poverty line during the pandemic.
  - Providing Social security net to the BPL population would have limited the Pandemic disaster in India.
  - Even the global experience from US, UK, Germany, and China proved the same. Yet, India discarded the global experience.
- Adherence to basic scientific and rational principles, helped India to effectively fight against smallpox and polio. This needs to be replicated now.

23. Issues With Technocratic Approach to Vaccination Drive
Source-The Indian Express
Syllabus- GS 2 – Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health.
Synopsis – The current technocratic-based vaccination drive in India excludes the digitally illiterate population of the country. It is leading to substantial biases and inequality.

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Introduction-
- The GOI launched CoWin portal to digitize the vaccination drive and made online registration mandatory for vaccination booking [18-44 age groups].
- The approach has resulted in a digital divide among the rural population. Moreover, it also brought several other issues, such as vaccine exclusion and lack of privacy, with it.

Key issues with the current technocratic based vaccination drive
- **Lack of technical literacy** –With no internet access and understanding of CoWin portal functions, the majority of India's rural population is left out of COVID vaccination efforts.
  - **Concerns-**
    - **Digital divide-** Only 34.60 percent of the rural population has access to the internet.
    - **Lesser registration through CoWin portal-** According to CoWin data, only 2,52,96,511 of the 14,42,10,652 vaccine registrations [for 45-plus age group] were done through CoWin.
- **The COWIN portal ignores data protection and cybersecurity-** The CoWin website lacks a privacy policy, putting medical healthcare data at risk of disclosure through third-party providers.
  - **The CoWin website is contrary to-**
    - The **Supreme Court's right to privacy judgment**
    - **Also, the GOI's departmental guidelines for official websites** states that while collecting data, government websites "must incorporate a prominently displayed privacy statement…".
- **Use of Facial recognition technologies FRT also poses a threat to privacy –** The CEO of the National Health Authority said that Aadhaar-based FRT will soon replace biometric fingerprint or iris scan machines at Covid-19 vaccination centres. It will avoid infections.
  - The FRT will increase the risk of exclusion and discriminatory outcomes. Moreover, FRT is not an accurate more of identification, thus affecting the proper dispensation of the shots.
- The technocratic approach is prioritizing data collection and efficiency over vaccine equity. It disregards the experience of public healthcare and digital rights experts. The present deployment of CoWin, is undermining the right to health, instead of augmenting it.

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General

Studies

Paper - 3

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General Studies - 3

1. EAC Recommends the Great Nicobar Development Plan for EIA Study

Source: The Hindu
Syllabus: GS 3: Environmental Impact Assessment
Synopsis: The Environment Appraisal Committee has recommended the **Great Nicobar Development plan** for grant of terms of reference for EIA studies. The committee also flagged a few critical concerns.
Introduction
The Environment Appraisal Committee (EAC) had raised serious concerns about NITI Aayog's ambitious project for the **Great Nicobar Development plan.** However, the EAC has also recommended the plan for a term of reference (TOR) for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) studies.

About the NITI Aayog's Great Nicobar Development plan:
NITI Aayog developed a 'Holistic Development of Great Nicobar Island at Andaman and Nicobar Islands' plan.
The plan proposal includes construction of the following,
- An international container trans-shipment terminal,
- A greenfield international airport,
- A power plant and a township complex spread over 166 sq. km
- **Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation (ANIIDCO)** will be the nodal agency for the implementation of the Great Nicobar Development plan.

The 'pre-feasibility report of the Great Nicobar Development plan was prepared by a Gurugram-based consulting agency Aecom India Private Limited for NITI Aayog. The report mentioned the implementation of the plan will require an estimated cost of □ 75,000 crores.

About the Environment Appraisal Committee:
- A 15 member EAC headed by a marine biologist and former director, Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), Deepak Apte was formed to study the pre-feasibility report.
- Recently, the EAC made their decision and uploaded the documents on the MoEFCC's Parivesh portal.
- In that, it recommended the plan for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) studies.
- Apart from that, the committee also raises few concerns with the plan.

What were the concerns of the committee?
The committee held two meetings one in March and the other in April. During that, it raises both technical and practical concerns. The discussion of the March meeting was delayed because of the incomplete submission of documents.
1. **The incomplete information includes** the details of the township, information on seismic and tsunami risks, freshwater requirement details for projects and settlements, etc. Apart from that, the impact on the Giant Leatherback turtle was also incomplete.
   o After the completion of projects, it is expected that nearly 6.5 lakh people will live on the island. The current population is only 8,500 on Great Nicobar. The current total population of the entire island chain is less than 4.5 lakh.

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2. **The committee also pointed that there were no details of the trees to be chopped.** 130 sq. km. of the project area has some of the finest tropical forests in India. Hence, the numbers of chopped trees could run into millions.

3. **The committee asked for details of the corporate environment policy of the implementing agency.** Similarly, the EAC also asks whether the company has an environmental policy, a prescribed standard operating procedure to deal with environmental and forest violations.

4. **AECOM's pre-feasibility report has proposed 2022-23 for the start of work** on the site. However, **one year is not enough if the government and project proponents follow the EAC's** recommendations in letter and spirit.

5. **Galathea Bay** of Great Nicobar forms the **centrepiece of the NITI Aayog proposal**. The Plan aims to construct a port in Galathea Bay. But, this has a number of issues in the plan.

   o **Ecological surveys have reported a number of new species**, many restricted to just the Galathea region. These include the critically endangered Nicobar shrew, the Great Nicobar crake, the Nicobar frog etc. **These are not mentioned in AECOM's pre-feasibility report**.

   o The beaches at the mouth of the river Galathea in South Bay are among the most prominent nesting sites of Giant leatherback turtles.

   o **The EAC highlighted that the site selection** for the port had been done on technical and financial criteria. **The environmental aspects were ignored**.

   o So the EAC has asked for an **independent evaluation** for the aptness of the proposed port site **with a specific focus on Leatherback Turtle**.

6. At present, the ANIIDCO is involved in activities such as tourism, trading and infrastructure development for tourism and fisheries. Its annual turnover for 2018-19 was ☐ 379 crore. But to manage the infrastructure **project valued to cost ☐75,000 crore is way beyond its capacity.**

Action points suggested by the Environment Appraisal Committee:
More than 100 specific points of action are listed out by the committee. The important ones include,

1. The need for an independent assessment of terrestrial and marine biodiversity
2. A study on the impact of dredging, recovery and port operations, including oil spills.
3. Analysis of risk-handling capabilities and a disaster management plan.
4. Details of labour, labour camps and their requirements.
5. The need for studies of alternative sites for the port with a focus on environmental and ecological impact
6. Conducting a hydro-geological study to assess the impact on ground and surface water regimes.

2. Solving Present Health Care Crisis With Lessons from Green Revolution
Source: The Hindu
Syllabus: GS:3 – Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth and development
Synopsis: India is facing a severe shortage of healthcare infrastructure. But, this is not the first time. India already tackled a food shortage worse than this during the 1960s by the green revolution.

Introduction:
India is witnessing shortages of almost everything needed to treat COVID-19 patients. Such as hospital beds, drugs, ventilators, Vaccines, and, above all, medical oxygen. Many countries such as the US, the U.K., the European Union, and even China offering help to

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India to tackle the second Covid-19 wave. This situation resembles India from the Mid-1960s.

The Situation of India during the 1960s:
- India faced a **severe food shortage after facing two consecutive years of drought**. After that, India forced to accept US aid. It is a point to note that, India at that time neither supported USSR nor the USA.
- **President Lyndon, send food to India by the shipload**. So that India can keep the ship on a short lease"
- Though it was the worst situation, the response of Indian leadership was exemplary.
- Prime Ministers Lal Bahadur Shastri, Indira Gandhi, and others brought the scientific and bureaucratic communities to debates. Especially to bring a **quantum leap in food production**.
- The debate turned into action very soon. Within a few years, India **achieved Food security**.
- No one imagined that India from such a dreadful situation will achieve food security this fast.
- The **Green Revolution** stands out in Indian history even today. It is the display of extraordinary accountability of political leadership, combined ability to resolve an issue from bureaucrat and Scientific community.

Advantages for present India vis-à-vis 1960s:
- In March 2020, India faced a similar 1960s problem on health infrastructure. To improve the medical capability and delay the Covid-19 spread India imposed lockdown at very short notice.
- But India has certain advantages at present when compared to the situation in 1960. Such as,
  - At present, India has a better industrial base, compared to the 1960s. So, India needs some time to ramp up hospital beds, ventilators, and oxygen supply.
  - Similarly, certain parts of India actually have a surplus of oxygen. They can help to fulfill urgent demands.
  - India has an enormous foreign exchange reserve at present. This is not the case in the 1960s. So, India was in a better position to import some crucial medical inputs such as vaccines.

Suggestions:
- **Inter-State variation in death rate is directly related to the amount of health spending** with respect to the state domestic product. Similarly, the health infrastructure of the country is also important. So, to avert any future crisis States have to increase the level of spending on health.
- India also witnesses a hike in Food prices during the pandemic. This denotes that there is a disruption of supply in between in the supply chain. This will be further impacted due to various State-level lockdowns. To avoid this, **PM has to interact with the farming community**. This is an important lesson for India from the mid-sixties.

3. Issues Associated with IPR Waiver to Covid Vaccine
Source: click here
Syllabus: GS 3
Synopsis: IPR waiver will not bring instant benefits. Thus, efforts must be made to share the excess stockpiles of vaccines lying with the developed countries.

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Introduction

The Biden administration announced that it would support a waiver on intellectual property rights (IPR) for the production of COVID-19 vaccines.

- The original plan, for TRIPS waiver for Covid vaccines, was drafted at the WTO by India and South Africa last year.
- During the 2020 U.S. presidential election, Joe Biden made a promise to share vaccine technology with countries that needed it if he won. He was expecting the deep gap of inequality in vaccine access.

How has the world reacted to this stance?

This policy stance of US has been rejected by major EU nations and met with counter-suggestion.

- **The first refusal came from Germany.** They said that it would create major complications for the production of vaccines, the major pharma corporations resonated with this view.
- **French President Emmanuel Macron** was relatively less antagonistic to considering the proposal. However, he **lashed out at the Anglo-Saxons for hindering vaccine availability** globally by blocking the export of ingredients.
- **There is some substance to the argument that an IPR waiver may not fully resolve the vaccine shortage issue** in countries suffering the worst of the pandemic now, even if it were to become a reality.

What should be done?

- **Firstly, the grant of a waiver would have to be supplemented** by technology transfer. It will provide the pharmaceutical manufacturers with the required trained personnel, raw materials, and high-tech equipment and production know-how.
- **Secondly, after tech transfer, there must be a scientific** criterion to test the safety, immunogenicity, and protective efficacy of the vaccine developed by these generic manufacturers.
- **Thirdly, the effect on global supply chains for vaccine production** should be inspected so major troubles might be avoided.
- **Lastly, other options to instantly address vaccine shortages should be considered.** Developed nations should share a considerably greater part of their vaccine stockpiles, particularly in cases where the latter exceed projected domestic needs.

Conclusion

- There is a rumor that Mr. Biden's waiver announcement might be a tactic to persuade pharmaceutical companies to accept less painful measures. This includes
  - sharing some of their technology willingly,
  - agreeing to joint ventures to increase global production expeditiously, and
  - simply producing more doses at affordable prices to donate directly to where the need is most severe, especially in India.

4. Consequences of Neglecting Science Education

Source: The Hindu

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

Synopsis: Neglect of Science education on disease control and health is one of the main reasons for the current Covid crisis in India.

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How Science Education can help in controlling the spread of disease?
- Many waterborne diseases in India could be prevented if children are taught the science behind the origin and causes of the disease.
- For instance, in the case of Malaria, avoiding the proliferation of mosquitoes prevent the chances of being infected by the parasite. Malaria breeds in stagnant water. Spreading kerosene on stagnant water restricts the growth of Mosquito larvae.
- Similarly, it is possible to prevent other diseases, such as typhoid fever and jaundice, by avoiding contaminated water. Children should be taught, how boiling water can kill microbes and ensure disease prevention.
- The same is the case with Common diarrhea. It can be prevented by ensuring the supply of clean water in all geographical locations,
- Apart from teaching the Science behind the disease spread and control, it is important to instill a belief system regarding disease control and prevention. For instance,
    - Giving an opportunity for children to view microbes through use of Microscopes.
    - Conducting field study to educate them on how stagnant water helps in breeding mosquitos.

How the neglect of Science education in India, on disease control and health contributed to the current Covid crisis?
- Inefficiency of our education system has failed to instill belief system on controlling the diseases. For instance, to control the Pandemic, Health advisories such as Social distancing, wearing masks, ban on spitting are seen as a solution.
- Due to a lack of knowledge in the Science of Health and diseases, many violated these health advisories. It resulted in the rapid spread of Covid-19.
- Rather than cultivating belief in Science, our education system has cultivated belief in Fatalism.

Way forward
- Along with due importance for Science teaching, a rational social environment is needed.
- Children should be encouraged to participate in dissent and debate to instill rationality.

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