

Forum IAS

7 PM COMPILATION

16th to 31st August, 2021

Features of 7 PM compilation

- ❖ Comprehensive coverage of a given current topic
- ❖ Provide you all the information you need to frame a good answer
- ❖ Critical analysis, comparative analysis, legal/constitutional provisions, current issues and challenges and best practices around the world
- ❖ Written in lucid language and point format
- ❖ Wide use of charts, diagrams and info graphics
- ❖ Best-in class coverage, critically acclaimed by aspirants
- ❖ Out of the box thinking for value edition
- ❖ Best cost-benefit ratio according to successful aspirants

Integrated Theatre commands in India – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Security forces

Sub Topic:- Theatre Command

Functioning of Parliament: Challenges and way forward – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Policy & Governance

Sub Topic:- Function of Parliament

Oil bonds and other associated issues – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Economy

Sub Topic:- Oil Bonds

Elderly population in India – Explained, pointwise

Topic:-Schemes & Initiatives

Sub Topic:- Elderly Population

Caste based census in India – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Social Issues

Sub Topic:- Cast based census

Free Trade Agreements (FTAs): Challenges & opportunities – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Economy

Sub Topic:- Free Trade Agreements

RoDTEP Scheme and Export competitiveness – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Govt Policies and Initiatives

Sub Topic:- RoDTEP Schemes

Implications of Cheap Sugar in India – Explained, Pointwise

Topic:- Govt Policies and Initiatives

Sub Topic:- Major Crops & Cropping Patterns

National Automated Facial Recognition System (NAFRS) – Explained, pointwise

Topic:-Science and Technology

Sub Topic:- (NAFRS)

National Monetisation Pipeline Project – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Govt Project

Sub Topic:- NMPP

[Yojana August Summary] Probity in Governance – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Yojana Summary

Sub Topic:- Probity in Governance

Climate induced migration – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Environment

Sub Topic:- Climate Change

Issues Associated with the Oil Palm Promotion – Explained, Pointwise

Topic:- Environment

Sub Topic:- National Mission on Edible Oils

[Yojana August Summary] Indian Bureaucracy – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Yojana Summary

Sub Topic:- Civil Services

ForumIAS

Integrated Theatre commands in India – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

The creation of Theatre Commands (Theaterization) is being called the biggest military reform that India has seen till now. The plan is to have five unified or theatre commands, which will help in better planning and military response, and aim to have a unified approach to fighting any future war.

But, the entire process has been riddled with a visible lack of consensus amongst the three arms of the military forces. In light of the internal differences over the structure and scope of the theatre commands, a committee has been set up to resolve all issues.

The panel includes the Vice Chiefs of the three services, the Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to the Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee, and representatives Ministries such as Home Affairs, Finance, and Law.

What is a Theatre Command (TC)?

A theatre command is a military structure wherein all the assets of the army, air force and navy in a particular theatre of war are under the operational control of a three-star general.

- In a TC, the logistic resources required to support his operations will also be placed at the disposal of the theatre commander.
 - As of now, the Services have to speak to each other in times of need and urgency to request their assets to conduct a particular operation.
- These ‘unified combat commands’ are organized either on a **geographical basis** (*with a defined mission in a specific ‘area of responsibility’ somewhere on the globe*) or on a **functional basis**.
- **Existing commands in India:** 19 commands exist as of now [*14 geographic commands, 3 functional and 2 joint commands: the Strategic Forces Command (SFC) and Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC)*]
- **Global examples:** More than 32 countries in the world, including the US, Russia, and China, already have some form of theatre or joint command in place. China’s Western Theatre Command covers India. The US was the first country to come up with a theaterization concept.

Note: ANC is the **first** and **only tri-service theater command** of the Indian Armed Forces, based at Port Blair, to cover India’s strategic interests in Southeast Asia and the Strait of Malacca. While SFC is responsible for India’s nuclear assets

Rationale behind theaterization

- To have a **unified approach** to fighting future wars in a coordinated manner.
- Another major factor, pushing for the need for Theatre Commands, has been the **broad military reforms within the Chinese military**. For e.g.: China’s Western Theater Command looks after the entire borders with India, unlike India where it has multiple Commands and structures to respond with different officers at the top.

Must Read: [Origins of Theatre warfare](#)

Planned Theatre Commands

According to the current proposal, there will be five theatre commands, namely

- Northern Land Theatre (*Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh and Central sector*)
- Western Land Theatre (*Pakistan-centric*)

- Eastern Land Theatre
- Maritime Theatre Command (*merging of the eastern and western naval commands, besides getting elements from the Army and the Air Force*)
- Air Defence Command

Related committees & reforms

The need for a unified approach to war fighting was brought out in the deliberations after the 1999 Kargil battle.

- The **Kargil Review Committee** and the then Group of Ministers besides the [Naresh Chandra Committee](#) had called for structural changes in higher defense management.
- It was the **Shekatkar committee**, headed by Lt Gen. (ret'd) D.B. Shekatkar, which had recommended the creation of the post of CDS and theatre commands. Until this committee, every other panel had only spoken about the need for unified planning.
- The **CDS appointment** and the decision to create the **Department of Military Affairs (DMA)** within the Ministry of Defence can all be seen as steps in the direction of achieving jointness between the three branches of the armed forces.

Benefits of theaterization

- **Increased efficiency:** It will lead to rationalization of war fighting resources, and efficiency of executions resulting in an integrated action to counter threats.
- **Cost-effective in the long run:** Theaterization will help in better planning and military response and also bring down costs. While the cost may go up in the immediate future since all theaters would have to be armed with sufficient systems, it will prove to be cost-effective in the long term as all acquisitions will be a unified one.
- **Rationalization of the command structure:** The present command structure in the Indian military is pretty uneven. The Indian Army has seven commands, while a much smaller Indian Air Force has a similar number and the Indian Navy has three commands. This structure will be rationalized under the theatre command concept.

Challenges/issues/concerns

- **IAF's concerns:** While the Army and the Navy are on board on the issue of theaterization, the IAF while supporting the move says there can't be multiple theatres. They argue that a single theatre is what is needed. IAF fears that it will lose control over its assets and operations.
- **No need for theaterization:** Experts have said that there has been no occasion during actual warfare when the three services have not operated with commendable cooperation. Hence, there is no need for an integrated theatre command.
 - Also, in recent times, no progressive country has created Theatre Commands to defend its home territory. The Western militaries call themselves expeditionary forces (our military is termed as defence forces). Hence, they created joint commands to project their power overseas, not for home-defence.
- **Different service cultures:** The service culture and way of functioning of the three services is very different. The Indian Army has regimental affiliations and is bound by its legacy. The legacy issues may not be that much in the Indian Air Force or the Indian Navy. Finding the right mix will remain a challenge.
- **Massive funding:** Creating infrastructure for the Theatre commands will also require huge amounts of funding.

Suggestions/Measures

1. **A supportive ecosystem:** In order for Theatre Commands to be effective, there needs to be a supporting ecosystem. India still remains the 2nd largest arms importer in the world. Hence, indigenous technology and hardware by self-reliance should be a priority.
2. **Managing internal & external security:** There needs to be an assessment of how the internal and external security will be managed under the theatre commands. It is because there are lakhs of paramilitary personnel and the Indian Coast Guard.
3. **Parliament's role:** The legislature needs to play a far more pro-active role. A Dedicated Standing Committee of Parliament should be created. It needs to be staffed with military advisers and other professionals to independently monitor the transition very minutely.
4. **Geography-based theatres:** Keeping in mind the changing nature of threats, India can also aim for four geography-based theatres—Northern, Southern, Eastern, and Western—each equipped to use land, sea, air, space, and cyber power to handle all threats in their areas.
5. **No theatre should 'belong' to any service,** and command appointments should be decided based on talent and experience in joint operations.
6. **Budgetary allocations and the distribution of funds** need to be clearly worked out to enable the setting up of a seamless theatre command system
7. **Modular structure:** In the theaterization debate, India must not forget to modularize its armed forces. The present big hierarchical formations need to be divided into many small networked brigades. Multiple studies have shown that these are superior to the division-based structure in terms of deployability, employability, and sustainability.

Way forward

India operates the 4th largest military in the World, and with each service acting independent of each other, the formation of theatre commands is indeed a need of the hour. But, the successful launch of the Theatre Commands should not be rushed. Issues and concerns of all the stakeholders must be resolved first.

Functioning of Parliament: Challenges and way forward – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

Over the years, the [functioning of Parliament](#) has declined, which is not a good sign for a healthy democracy. Recently, the Chief Justice of India also flagged the issue of **lack of discussion in legislative assemblies** on various laws before they are passed. The CJI also remarks that there used to be “wise” and “constructive” debates in the past, but now the **lawmaking is in a “sorry state of affairs”** now, has led to **“gaps” and “ambiguity in making laws”**

The recent session of Parliament has ended abruptly, and before its scheduled date. This is not such a first session, instead, this is the **fourth consecutive session that has been cut short**. The pandemic led to the curtailment of two sessions in 2020. This led to non-discussion of various important issues like Chinese incursion into Ladakh, Farmers issue, Covid-19 response, and strategy, Pegasus controversy, etc.

If this pattern continues, the new Parliament building will be a modern and spacious venue for a dysfunctional institution. So, let us understand the issues involved in the functioning of Parliament.

Monsoon session of Parliament

Some crucial bills passed in this session, without any major debate in the parliament, like,

1. [127th Amendment bill](#)
2. [The Taxation Laws \(Amendment\) Bill, 2021](#)
3. [General Insurance Business \(Nationalisation\) Bill](#)
4. [Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation \(DICGC Bill\)](#)
5. [Tribunal Reforms Bill](#)

Issues with the functioning of parliament

- **Frequent Adjournment of Parliament sessions:** In recent times, Parliament sessions are adjourned frequently. This hampers the work of Parliament. For instance,
 - In December 2010, soon after the 2G scam had broken out, the then winter session recorded just 6 percent work.
 - For the past 10 years, the Rajya Sabha has functioned for less than 25% of its scheduled time.
 - In the 2021 Monsoon session, Lok Sabha was scheduled to work for six hours per day for 19 days. Instead, it sat only for 21 hours in total or 21% of what was conceived, as per the PRS Legislative Research
- **Less scrutiny of Bills/government policies:** Most of the bills were passed without any scrutiny, as they were passed in the same session in which they were introduced. For instance, in the recent monsoon session,
 - Except for the 127th Constitution Amendment bill, the rest of the **bills were passed on an average of 8 minutes**.
 - Also, there was no discussion in LS on any policy issue. In RS, only one discussion was seen related to the management of COVID.
 - During the 15th LS, 18% of bills were passed in the same session. In 16th LS, the count rose to 33%.
- **Less number of Bills sent to committees for scrutiny:** Only 12% of the government's legal proposals have been sent to committees for scrutiny in the current Lok Sabha.

This number was 27% in the 16th (2014-19), 71% in the 15th (2009-14), and 60% in the 14th (2004- 09) Lok Sabha.

- **Lack of Parliamentary debate:** For instance, in the recent monsoon session, out of 20 bills, **18 bills were passed without any discussion in LS** apart from 1 bill on Schedule Tribes (Order) Amendment bill, which saw discussion of 15 minutes
- **Reduced working hours of Parliament:** The Parliament working hours are getting reduced day by day. For instance,
 - For the past 10 years, the Rajya Sabha has functioned for less than 25% of its scheduled time.
 - In 2020, Parliament sat in session for 33 days only.
- **Resort to money Bill route:** Several key pieces of legislation have been passed as Money Bills, despite the fact that they did not fit this category.
- All this denotes that the **passage of these laws was more in form than in substance.**

Read more: [Parliament is abdicating its oversight role](#)

Implications of reduced Parliament's functions

1. With reduced debate and parliamentary committee interference, the ability of **the Opposition, to hold the government accountable** for its functioning, will also get reduced.
2. Elaborate discussions prevent hasty legislation and help the legislators to understand the core issue behind the bills and help them to rectify them in Parliament itself. Thus, the better functioning Parliament will **reduce the burden on the courts and reduce unnecessary litigation.**
 - a. Recently, the **Chief Justice of India has raised concerns over the gaps in law-making** which led to a lot of litigation and inconvenience to citizens, courts & other stakeholders.
3. Moreover, the **insertion of the Tenth Schedule** through the 52nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1985, has rendered the **individual positioning of an MP toothless.**
 - a. It is the party whip's decision that prevails over the interest of a constituency, represented by its respective MP.
4. A major chunk of the **bills in the Parliament is passed using 'voice voting'**, when compared to the **much more reliable 'division voting'** that can record the response of each member, including abstentions.

Read more: [We, the people, miss our houses](#)

Significance of Parliamentary System in India

1. **Represents Diverse Group:** The parliamentary form of government provides an opportunity to various ethnically, racially, linguistically and ideologically diverse groups to share their views in the framing of laws and policymaking.
2. **Responsible Government:** The parliament can check the activities of the executive, as the latter is responsible to the former. The members of the parliament can ask questions, move resolutions, and discuss matters of public importance to pressurize the government.
3. **Prevents Authoritarianism:** In a parliamentary system, the tendency of authoritarianism decreases as the power is vested in the council of ministers rather than a single individual. The parliament can remove the government through a no-confidence motion.

4. Other benefits include,
 - a. The debates and discussions assist Parliament in **making informed decision-making**.
 - b. These debates provide a forum for MPs to **express their opinions and concerns** and contribute towards making policy.
 - c. The debate allows parliamentarians to **voice the interest of the people** of their constituencies.

Suggestions to improve the functioning of Parliament

- Parliament **can change its rules to give MPs more teeth in questioning the government** and empower its committees to become critical stakeholders in the law-making process.
- The CJI has raised concerns over the lack of intellectuals and lawyers in the house. So, the **legal community and lawyers** should not confine themselves to their profession. They should take the lead and **actively participate in social & public life**.
- The government can **amend the rules of procedure** of both the Houses of Parliament under Article 118 of the Indian Constitution. It will **make it mandatory to refer bills to the parliamentary committees** and **prescribing appropriate action against unruly members**.
 - Article 118 deals with the rules and procedures of the House
- **Review of Anti-Defection law:**
 - In order to revive debate and deliberations in Parliament, the **use of whip can be restricted to no-confidence motion only**.
 - The **adjudicating power** of the speaker vis-à-vis anti-defection law can be transferred **to the Election Commission of India**.
- The government can introduce the **Legislative Impact Assessment**.
 - **Every legislative proposal must incorporate a detailed account** of social, economic, environmental, and administrative impact for wider awareness and subsequent legal assessment.
 - A **new Legislation Committee** should be formed in the Parliament **to oversee and coordinate legislative planning**.
- In order to **strengthen the role of the opposition**, the institution of the **shadow cabinet** can be formed in India like Britain.

Oil bonds and other associated issues – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

The Centre has argued that it cannot reduce taxes on petrol and diesel, as it has to bear the burden of payments in lieu of oil bonds issued by the previous government to subsidize fuel prices.

Fuel prices as of now remain incredibly high, with many metro cities having to pay more than Rs 100/litre of petrol.

Let's analyze the entire issue step by step:

Deregulation of oil price

Situation prior to deregulation: Prior to deregulation, the government would intervene in fixing the price at which retailers were to sell diesel or petrol. Govt did this to keep the fuel price cheaper. But, it led to under-recoveries for oil marketing companies, which the government had to compensate for via subsidies.

Hence, the prices were deregulated to make them market-linked, unburden the government from subsidizing prices, and allow consumers to benefit from lower rates when global crude oil prices dipped.

Fuel price decontrol (deregulation) happened gradually:

- Aviation turbine fuel in 2002
- Petrol in 2010
- Diesel in 2014

Present situation: Since deregulation, the public sector Oil Marketing Companies make decisions on the pricing of petrol and diesel based on international product prices, exchange rate, tax structure, inland freight, and other cost elements.

Now, let's understand, what are oil bonds and how they came into the picture.

What are oil bonds?

These are bonds issued to oil marketing companies, instead of cash subsidies. They have a 15-20 year life, during which the government pays the companies **interest** on the amount. Once the bond is due, the **total amount** will have to be paid.

- Moreover, oil bonds **do not qualify as statutory liquidity ratio (SLR) securities**, making them less liquid when compared to other government securities.
- Oil bonds **can be traded for liquid cash** by sale in the secondary market to insurance companies, banks, and other financial institutions. The government, being the issuer, would bear the interest payments and redemption at maturity.

As discussed above, before the deregulation of oil prices, the oil companies faced tremendous losses. Govt used to fix the price, and companies had to sell at a lower selling price as compared to the international market price. To compensate for their losses, govt-issued subsidies to them by **issuing oil bonds**, totaling Rs. 1.34 lakh crore to the state-fuel retailers.

Note: A bond is nothing but a piece of paper via which someone promises to return your money, along with interest, after a specified period of time. In this case, govt owed money to oil companies and decided to pay via issuing bonds so that it doesn't have to pay them cash subsidy immediately.

Oil bonds dues (In ₹ crore)

Years	Interest to be paid	Principal Repayment
2021-22	9989.96	10000.00
2022-23	9195.96	0
2023-24	9195.96	31150.00
2024-25	6226.99	52860.17
2025-26	2731.56	36913.00
Total	37340.44	130923.17

Source: The Hindu Business line

Note: Of the Rs 1.34 lakh crore worth of oil bonds, only Rs 3,500 crore principal has been paid and the remaining Rs 1.3 lakh crore is due for repayment between this fiscal(2021-22) and 2025-26.

Issuing such bonds, to delay paying expenses immediately, is not a new practice. It has been done in other sectors as well.

Previous instances

Bonds which subsidized payments have been issued earlier too:

- **Fertilizer bonds:** Previous govt's era also saw the issuance of fertilizer bonds from 2007 to compensate fertilizer companies for their losses due to the difference in the cost price and selling price.
- **Recapitalization bonds:** Over the years, the present government has issued bank recapitalization bonds, worth Rs 3.1 lakh crore, to specific public sector banks (PSBs) to meet the large capital requirements of these PSBs without allocating money from the budget. These bonds will come up for redemption between 2028 and 2035.

Rationale behind issuing bonds by the government

In all the above cases, instead of providing direct cash, govt preferred issuing bonds for the following reasons:

Created with love ❤️ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.

1. **Compensation for the subsidies:** To shield the domestic consumer from the harmful effects of higher prices (inflation) of a commodity, the government tries to maintain its price to a cheaper level. But, in this case, companies would need to be compensated for their losses. This is done via issuing of bonds. Now, this could also be done via giving away direct cash subsidy, which is usually not preferred because of the following reason.
2. **Controlling the fiscal deficit:** Compensation to companies through issuance of such bonds is typically used when the government is trying to delay the fiscal burden of such a payout to future years. Governments resort to such instruments when they are in danger of breaching the fiscal deficit target due to unforeseen circumstances.
3. **Resource constraints:** Being a developing country and as a welfare state, the Indian government is constantly under fiscal pressure with so many competing demands such as food security, vaccination, social welfare, etc. Hence, the usage of government funds has to be rationalized as per priority and if something can be paid gradually over time then it is the preferred way.

But, this approach does have its negative implications:

Issues/concerns

1. **Increase in overall debt burden:** These types of bonds do not have an impact on that year's fiscal deficit, but they do increase the government's overall debt.
2. **On future fiscal deficit calculations:** Interest payments and repayment of these bonds become a part of the fiscal deficit calculations in future years.
3. **No long-term value:** These bonds do not contribute anything towards the generation of any long-term viable assets for the country. They are just used as a means to delay the payment burden over time. Hence, they don't generate any revenues for the economy, acting as a liability.

Suggestions/Measures

Being a developing country, our needs will always outpace our fiscal capacity. Hence, this issue can only be solved by taking steps that have a long term impact:

- **Shift to a greener economy:** We can try and reduce wasteful consumption of conventional fuels and focus on alternative and renewable sources of energy. Also, instead of an overreliance on chemical fertilizers, farmers should be encouraged to shift towards biological farming solutions. Moreover, in light of the recent IPCC report, all these changes are no longer an option, but a necessity.
- **Rationalizing the subsidy burden:** Subsidies are also one of the reasons why such bonds are being issued. Though necessary, they must be rationalized to ensure that they are targeting the right segments of the population who are in genuine need. This will also lead to a reduced subsidy burden on the exchequer.

Way forward

Issuing bonds to cover up the subsidy bill is never a long-term solution because it's akin to passing on the burden to our future generations. But, seeing the resource crunch that a developing country like India is always in, we can aim to strike a balance between competing demands of our economy.

Elderly population in India – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

India is at a peculiar stage in its demographic transition. India is characterized by a **bulge in its youth population**, which can be a window of opportunity to accelerate growth. However, a **parallelly occurring phenomenon** that requires equal attention with regard to India's economic growth trajectory is rapid aging, i.e., rising elderly population.

According to the World Health Organization, India's elderly population will rise from its current 60 million to over 227 million by 2050. Accordingly, the old-age dependency ratio will rise from 9.8 to 20.3. An increase in our elderly population and rising pressure on pension systems can offset many of the government efforts.

Increasing elderly population around the world

Countries all around the world are experiencing an increase in the proportion of their elderly population because of falling fertility rates and rising life expectancy.

By the United Nations' population projections, the headcount of people aged 65 and above, which constituted 703 million people in 2019, will double to 1.5 billion in 2050, thus accounting for 16% of the world population.

But developing countries like India are experiencing aging at a faster pace.

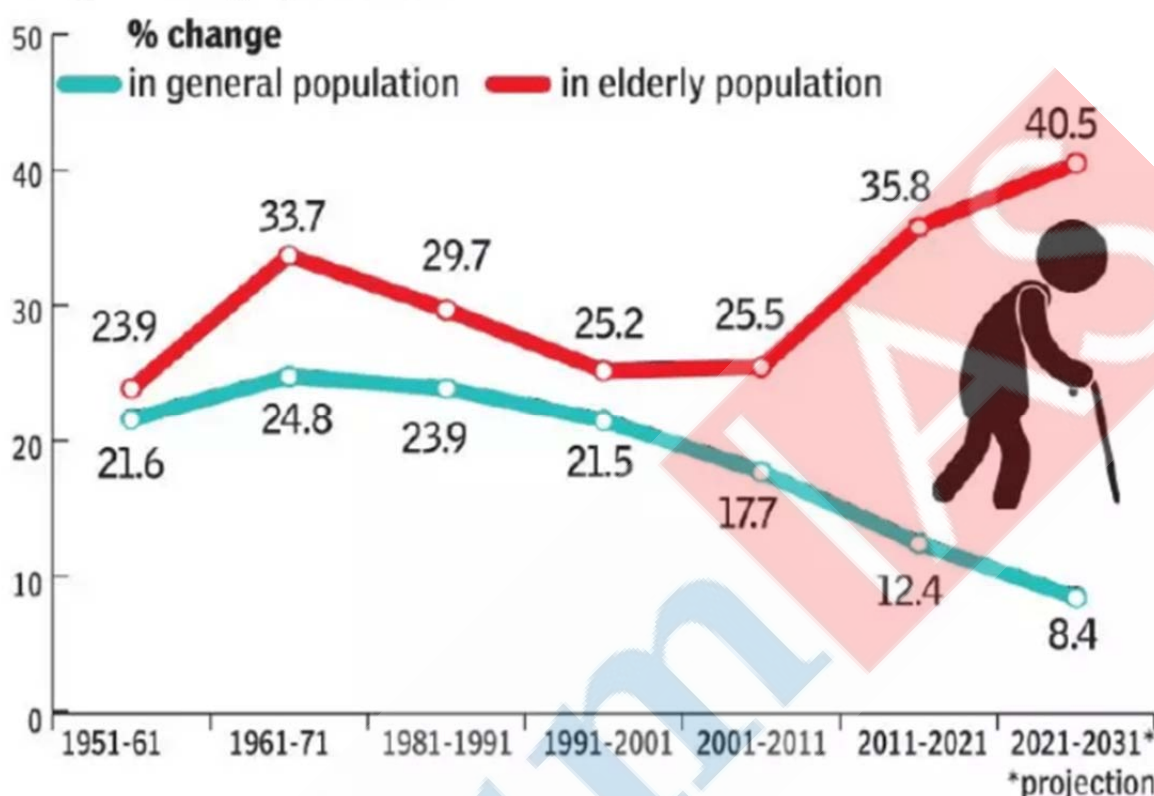
The elderly population in India

The Quality of Life for Elderly Index mentions some interesting information about the elderly population in India. Its key findings are,

- **India** is currently enjoying the demographic dividend. But the age group above the age of 65 will become the fastest-growing age group by 2050.
- **The share of elders, as a percentage of the total population** in the country, is expected to **increase from around 7.5% in 2001 to almost 12.5% by 2026**, and surpass 19.5% by 2050.

Similarly, According to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation's (MOSPI) "Elderly in India 2021" report mention that the old-age dependency ratio is increasing in India at high level. The report mentions,

Decadal growth in elderly population compared to that of general population



Population Census Data, Report of the Technical Group on Population Projections November 2019, Population. Projections for India and States 2011-2036, Census of India 2011

Source: MOSPI

- **The old-age dependency ratio** provides a clearer picture of the number of persons aged 60-plus per 100 persons in the age group of 15-59 years.
- **According to the report**, an increasing trend has been observed in the old-age dependency ratio. It has risen from 10.9% in 1961 to 14.2% in 2011 and is further projected to increase to 15.7% and 20.1% in 2021 and 2031 respectively.
- **The projected dependency ratio** for females and males is 14.8% and 16.7% respectively in 2021.

Government schemes and initiatives towards the betterment of the elderly population

In 2011, the government introduced a National Policy for Older Persons. The key objectives of the policy are,

- To encourage individuals to make provisions for their own and their spouse during old age
- To encourage families to take care of their older family members
- To bring non-governmental organizations for caring for older persons
- To provide healthcare facilities to the elderly
- To create awareness regarding elderly persons and to develop them into fully independent citizens

Apart from that, the government introduced other measures, such as,

Created with love ❤️ by ForumIAS- the knowledge network for civil services.
Visit academy.forumias.com for our mentor-based courses.

- [Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme \(IGNOAPS\)](#) – The scheme provide an old-age pension for persons above the age of 60 years and belongs to the BPL category.
- [Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana \(RVY\)](#) – The scheme provides Physical Aids and Assisted-living Devices for Senior citizens belonging to the BPL category.
- [Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana](#) – The scheme aims to provide social security during old age. It also protects elderly persons aged 60 and above against a future fall in their interest income due to uncertain market conditions.
- [Senior care Ageing Growth Engine \(SAGE\) Initiative and SAGE portal](#)– It aims to help startups interested in providing services for elderly care.
- [Elderline](#) – a toll-free helpline number for elderly persons to provide emotional care, health and legal assistance through dedicated call centers.

Read more: [Kerala's "Bell of Faith Scheme" for elderly](#)

Need to protect the elderly population

1. Elderly peoples carry an **immense experience** of their personal and professional life, society at large needs to channelise those experiences for a better tomorrow.
2. They can **provide a vital generational link** for the upcoming generation, such as providing **support and stability to families and society** at large.
3. Grandparents in joint families provide a crucial link for transferring values and morals to the younger generation. Thereby **contributing towards bringing up better human beings and responsible citizens**.
4. Acknowledging seniors' contributions would help to make ours a **more age-inclusive society** that does not pit one generation against the other.
5. Their deep cultural impressions and social experiences provide the **necessary buffer against intolerance, violence and hate crimes**.

Challenges faced by the elderly population in India

Social Challenges

Senior citizens are increasingly being neglected by the younger generation due to various reasons like **western education, globalisation, nuclear family structure**, etc

Financial challenges

- **Low funding:** India spends **only 1% of its gross domestic product on pensions**. India's income support systems in their current form are **not even capable of catering to the elderly** when their proportion of the population is only 8.6%.
- **Mitigating the fiscal costs:** The Indian economy still **needs to mitigate the fiscal costs** that arise from a **rising old-age dependency ratio**.
- *Health-related challenges*
- Increased health-related expenses and the high prevalence of Non-Communicable diseases also create a financial problem for the elderly population.
- Further, other health-related issues like blindness, deafness, mental illness, etc. are highly prevalent among the elderly population

Suggestions to improve benefits to the elderly people

1. The need of the hour is to strengthen our pension systems through better funding and coverage. For that, the government has to allocate a special budget for the elderly population.

- The government has to increase the monthly pension to a minimum of Rs.5,000 per month. Any amount below this is of no use, given the rising inflation.
- 2. The first step to mitigating fiscal cost is by **changing the negative connotation attached to old age**. Promoting behavioral change can be done through education, public awareness, and innovative measures such as Switzerland's time bank.
 - **About Switzerland's time bank:** Under this initiative, the younger generation will start to save 'time' by taking care of senior citizens. Later, they will use the saved 'time' when they get old, sick, or in need of someone to take care of them.
- 3. As the elderly population is going to increase in the future, India should **raise the retirement age in the future**, albeit **in a phased manner** so as not to jeopardize opportunities for younger generations.
 - However, it is not possible to extend the working age, if the country does not have a pool of healthy elderly people. So, the **youth of today must have adequate access to social goods** and employment opportunities.
- 4. The government must make sure that there are sufficient old age home facilities.
- 5. The local government can provide entertainment facilities like libraries and clubs at the grass-root level.
- 6. The Government also has to proactively work on lifestyle modification, non-communicable disease management, vision and hearing problem management, and accessible health care.

Caste based census in India – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

At the recently concluded Parliament session, there was a **demand to lift the 50% cap on reservation imposed by the Supreme Court** through the legislative route. With the 2021 Census coming up, several political parties have **demand a nationwide caste census**.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Home Affairs has said that the **Government of India has decided not to enumerate the caste-wise population** other than SCs and STs in Census 2021.

The proponents of caste census argue that a Socio-Economic Caste Census is the **only way to make a case to breach the 50% cap on the reservation** and rationalise the reservation matrix in the country. While there are merits to this argument, the state should be extremely cautious of this move.

Caste Census in Colonial Time

- The First Census conducted in 1871 included questions about caste.
- This **data was then used to divide and conquer India**.
- It first **privileged Brahmins** as interpreters of Indian culture and then targeted them as the root of caste-based oppression and inequality.
- This classification was also a **source of anti-Brahmin movements** of 20th century

What kind of caste data is published in the Census post-independence?

- **Every Census** in independent India from 1951 to 2011 has published data on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, but not on other castes.
- **Before that**, every Census until 1931 had data on caste. However, in 1941, caste-based data was collected but not published.
- **Hence**, in the absence of such a census, there is no proper estimate for the population of OBCs.
- **The Mandal Commission** estimated the OBC population at 52%. Some other estimates have been based on National Sample Survey data.

About Socio-Economic Caste Census(SECC)

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

- **Socio-Economic Caste Census(SECC)** was conducted by the Ministry of Rural Development in rural areas and the Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation in urban areas.
- **The SECC data** excluded caste data and was published by the two ministries in 2016.
- **The raw caste data** was handed over to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment,
- The ministry formed an Expert Group under former NITI Aayog Vice-Chairperson Arvind Pangaria for the classification and categorisation of data.
- However, **only the details of the economic conditions of the people** in rural and urban households **were released. The caste data has not been released till now.**

Read more: [A caste census will serve no clear worthy purpose](#)

Difference between SECC and Census

Census	SECC
The Census provides a picture of the Indian population	SECC is a tool to identify beneficiaries of state support
Census falls under the Census Act of 1948 and all data are considered confidential	All the personal information given in the SECC is open for use by Government departments to grant and/or restrict benefits to households.

Rationale behind conducting caste census1. **Rationalise reservation:**

- Many have argued that an **SECC would be the best way to rationalise reservation** based on data and make a strong case for breaching India's reservation cap.
 - Since **job and education quotas are based on caste**, this will **help in evidence-based policymaking**. The current policies are based on the last caste census, which was conducted in 1931.
 - Further, this census can **help the government in identifying the most benefited section and reduce their share** in the overall reservation to provide an opportunity to others.
 - Also, Most estimates show the OBC population to be above 40%. This is much greater than the current reservation, which stands at 27%. The caste census will provide the exact proportion of OBC population.
2. A caste census would actually **bring forward the large number of issues** that any democratic country needs to pay attention to. For instance, this **census will reveal** information regarding **caste-based marginalisation, deprivation, the kind of jobs pursued by a caste, etc.**
- Caste census will give authentic information regarding the socio-economic condition and education status of various castes.
3. **Better targeting of Government welfare schemes:** The courts in India have often emphatically said that it is important to have adequate data regarding the reservation. So, the **caste census is nothing but the collection of data** that is **necessary for any democratic policymaking**.
4. **Break the myths associated with castes:** The caste census will reveal the actual data on castes and remove ambiguities associated with the caste. For instance,
- In Karnataka, there were claims that among the castes, the Lingayats are the most numerous. So the census can reveal the true information on that.
5. **Recommendation from the Sachar committee:** Sachar committee was formed to examine the socio-economic and educational status of the Muslim community in India. In its report, the committee mentioned that the availability of data on religion was useful in highlighting the relative deprivation of minorities. So, similar data on caste is also desirable to identify vulnerable sections within castes.

Read more: [Socio-Economic and Caste Census: A Need for reforms](#)

Challenges linked to conducting caste census1. **Reservation tussles:**

1. Reservation is going to cater only to a small proportion of those who are entitled to it. Further, there is also some debate that the reservation policy in India invariably led to the **growth of**

elites among castes and communities. So, the **caste census along with reservation might favour elites among castes.**

2. There is a possibility that caste-based reservations will lead to heartburn among some sections and **spawn demands for larger or separate quotas.** For instance, Patels, Gujjars, Jats and other castes are demanding reservations. The caste census might **induce more such demands in future.**
2. **The caste census will give rise to caste division.** : As India seek to eliminate and weaken the notion of caste, a caste census would only strengthen it.
3. **Collection of caste data is not easy:** Some sections of people believe that Caste is a very important source of privilege and advantage in our country. On the other hand, some sections of people feel disadvantaged by revealing caste-based information. So, the **naming and counting of caste is a difficult thing in India.** For instance, the same caste is spelt in different ways in different states.

Suggestions to improve condition of vulnerable sections

1. Instead of going behind the caste based census, the government can **subclassify the Backward Classes** like in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal etc. This will provide the benefit to intended beneficiaries.
 - o Since the government has **already appointed Justice G Rohini Panel on Sub-categorisation of OBCs.** The Panel has to fast pace the sub-classification process.
2. Reservation is one among many considerations which affect competition among candidates. So, the **50% limit can be extended** to the proportion of backward classes population in our country.
3. **Use technologies to assess the caste date on SECC:** The government can use technologies like Artificial Intelligence and machine learning to assess the SECC data and **condense them into meaningful categories.** After that, the government **can reveal some important caste-based information.** This will **provide the necessary time to analyse the need for a caste census.**

Conclusion

A caste census without data integrity would be much worse. The data of caste censuses have always been disputed, probably due to the contest of several vested interests in accepting the data.

However, the government must go beyond caste and work for the upliftment of illiterate, marginalised and poor sections of the population. The government should give more importance to economic division, education, health etc

Free Trade Agreements (FTAs): Challenges & opportunities – Explained, pointwise**Introduction**

The government seems to be resetting its position on trade policy. The Union commerce secretary recently said India would fast-track free trade agreements (FTAs) as the country needs to engage with the rest of the world.

Since the world is moving towards bilateral and regional trade arrangements, such deals would be important. Hence, India is now performing a **review and re-negotiation of the existing FTAs** with ASEAN, Japan and Korea, and at the same time, forging enhanced trade alliances with the European Union, UK, US and Australia.

So, let's understand in detail about Free Trade Agreements (FTAs):

What is a Free Trade Agreement (FTA)?

It is an arrangement between two or more countries under which they agree to end tariffs and non-tariff barriers on a large value of imports from partner countries.

Coverage: The agreement may also cover, among others, services, investment, and economic cooperation.

- FTA normally covers trade in **goods** (such as agricultural or industrial products) or trade in **services** (such as banking, construction, trading etc.).
- FTA can also cover other areas such as intellectual property rights (IPRs), investment, government procurement and competition policy, etc.

Main focus: The focus of an FTA is primarily on economic benefits and encouraging trade between the countries by making it more efficient and profitable. But FTAs may also have political, or strategic benefits.

Types of FTA

- **Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA):** In a PTA, two or more partners agree to reduce tariffs on an agreed number of tariff lines. The list of products on which the partners agree to reduce duty is called the positive list. India MERCOSUR PTA is such an example.
- **Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT):** A Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) provides investors with various guarantees when investing in the country of the treaty partner.
- **Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) or Comprehensive Economic Partnership (CEP):** The EPA/CEP agreements are comprehensive in scope, covering such fields as trade in goods, trade in services, investment, and economic cooperation
- **Foreign Investment and Protection Agreement (FIPA):** The main provisions of the Foreign Investment and Protection Agreement cover the handling of foreign investments by the host country, the transfer of capital and investment income, compensation for expropriation, and procedures for settling disputes.
- **Custom Union:** In a Customs union, partner countries may decide to trade at zero duty among themselves, however, they maintain common tariffs against the rest of the world. An example is the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) among South Africa, Lesotho, Namibia, Botswana, and Swaziland. European Union is also an outstanding example.
- **Common Market:** Integration provided by a Common market is one step deeper than that by a Customs Union. A common market is a Customs Union with provisions to

facilitate free movements of labour and capital, harmonize technical standards across members, etc. European Common Market is an example.

- **Partnership Cooperation Agreement (PCA):** The aim of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) is to encourage political, commercial, economic, and cultural cooperation. With attention for human rights and democratic processes, the PCA moves beyond many other trade agreements

Rationale behind FTAs

- **Market access:** By eliminating tariffs and some non-tariff barriers, FTA partners get easier market access into one another's countries.
- **Preferential treatment for exports:** Exporters prefer FTAs because they get preferential treatment over non-FTA member country competitors.
- **Increased Investment:** Possibility of increased foreign investment from outside the FTA. Consider two countries A and B having an FTA. Country A has high tariff and large domestic market. The firms based in country C may decide to invest in country A to cater to A's domestic market. However, once A and B sign an FTA and B offers better business environment, C may decide to locate its plant in B to supply its products to A.
- **Job creation:** Sectors like automotive, textiles, handicrafts, leather, pharmaceuticals, light electricals, some chemicals, many agricultural items, jewellery and professional services, which are all employment-intensive, can trigger huge job creation riding on exports.

Also Read: [List of India's FTAs](#)

Issues with FTAs

- **Dominance of one player:** A dominant FTA partner may dictate changes in the partner country's regulation to match its own. The US got many FTA partners to restrict flexibilities like the use of compulsory licensing allowed under the TRIPs.
- **Crowding out of domestic Industries:** Many emerging markets are traditional economies including India rely on farming for most employment. They can't compete with subsidized agri-businesses in the developed countries. This can give rise to unemployment.
- **Lack of consensus:** For taking part in Global Value Chains, members must agree to a zero tariff zone and relax the rules of origin. Most FTAs fail to deliver on these counts. RCEP would be an apt example.
- **Political factors:** For many, FTAs are a political and not economic decision. Diplomats may want to achieve political ends at the cost of economic.
- **Dumping through imports** by FTA partner countries and re-routing of imports from non-FTA partner countries through FTA partner countries.

Challenges

- **Lack of awareness about the FTAs** and high cost of compliance: Utilization rates for India's FTAs are low, due to a failure to disseminate information especially to MSMEs
- **Widening of trade deficits:** Due to various factors, India's trade deficit with its FTA partners esp ASEAN, Japan, and Korea has widened. Importantly, the deficits have also widened for India's dominant value-added sectors, reflecting a deteriorated quality of India's trade with its FTA partners.

- **Export competitiveness:** The more important reason is India's own supply-side constraints and bottlenecks, i.e., its difficult regulatory environment, poor logistics quality, inadequate and inefficient trade infrastructure, and high transactions costs, among others, all of which hurt export competitiveness.

Suggestions/Measures

1. **Alignment with Aatmanirbhar Bharat strategy:** Our future FTA negotiation strategy and tariff schedules need to be completely aligned with the Aatmanirbhar Bharat strategy. This does not imply complete protection for these industries, but a phase-wise reduction of import tariffs over years under the FTA. SO that domestic industries can completely integrate with global value chains (GVCs).
2. **Strengthening of safeguard clauses:** We need to strengthen the safeguard clauses within existing FTAs under review, as well as in the new ones. Within the FTA, provisions should be made to prevent the dumping of cheap imports.
3. **Engagement with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU),** comprising Russia and many of the erstwhile Soviet republics, should be another high-priority area. The EAEU is rich in energy resources, has a hunger for our pharmaceuticals, textile and agriculture exports, and traditional goodwill for India.
 - **Africa is another large, growing market, and** we should leverage their apprehension of Chinese dominance and take a lead in initiating a dialogue with the AfCFTA.
4. **Drawing up a negative list of FTA partners:** We need to be careful while dealing with countries with huge subsidies and large scale manufacturing, like China. The government wisely abandoned the RCEP, where the proposed tariff elimination on 80% trade would have wrecked our domestic industry. The US, with its insistence on binding rules on digital trade and intellectual property and ambitious market access for US exports, is another one to avoid.
5. **Improvement in competitiveness:** The FTAs can ensure market access to only the right quality products made at competitive prices. Improvement in firm-level competitiveness is a must. The government can help by ensuring lower duties on raw materials and intermediates than on the concerned finished products. It can set up an elaborate quality and standards infrastructure for essential products.

Way forward

For the industry to grow and become globally competitive, integration into the global value chain is inevitable. However, this requires pragmatism while choosing trade partners for opening up domestic markets, especially China, which is known for its unfair trade practices. Ultimately, all trade deals are a game of 'win some, lose some' and a balanced outcome is what all trade partners should be looking for.

RoDTEP Scheme and Export competitiveness – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

After delaying by 8 months, the government of India has notified the rates and norms for the [Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products \(RoDTEP\) scheme](#). Accordingly, the Commerce Ministry released details of the RoDTEP scheme to help exporters to stay competitive and increase exports at a time when there is an increase in demand from developed economies.

RoDTEP Scheme together with the Rebate of State and Central Levies and Taxes (RoSCTL) scheme, which focuses on textiles, is the latest attempt to intervene in the export market and increase India's exports' competitiveness. While these schemes are better structured than previous efforts, these schemes have certain flaws in both conception and implementation.

About RoDTEP Scheme

1. **Launched by:** Ministry of Commerce & Industry
2. **Which scheme is it replacing?** The RoDTEP scheme is replacing the earlier Merchandise and Services Export Incentive Schemes (MEIS and SEIS) that were in violation of WTO norms.
3. **Aim:** To reimburse all the taxes/duties/levies being charged at the Central/State/Local level which are not currently refunded under any of the existing schemes but are incurred at the manufacturing and distribution process.
 - **The refund under the scheme** shall not be available in respect of duties and taxes already exempted or remitted or credited.
4. The scheme seeks to rebate sales tax, excise duty, electricity duty, stamp duty etc.
5. The rebate will be in the form of a transferable duty credit/electronic scrip (e-scrip) that will be maintained in an electronic ledger by the Customs.

Key Features of the RoDTEP Scheme

1. **Coverage:** The scheme covers over 8,555 tariff products, accounting for about 75% of traded items and 65% of India's exports.
2. **Rates:** The tax refund rates will vary between 0.5% and 4.3% of the export value of goods.
 - The lowest rate is offered on items like chocolates, toffees and sugar confectionery.
 - Yarns and fibres have been granted the highest rate.
3. **Sectors Included:** The scheme covers sectors such as marine, agriculture, leather, gems and jewellery automobile, plastics, textiles, electronics among others.
4. **Sectors Excluded:** Pharmaceutical, steel and chemicals have been kept out of the purview of the scheme. Products manufactured at export-oriented units and special economic zones have also been excluded from the scheme for the time being.

Read more: [Govt notifies RoDTEP rates, guidelines](#)

How does the RoDTEP scheme work?

- The refund for the taxes paid by exporters under the scheme will be credited to an exporter's ledger account held with customs.
- This refunded amount can be used by exporters to pay basic custom duties on imported goods.

- These credits can also be transferred to other importers.
- A monitoring and audit mechanism has been put in place to physically verify the records.

Read more: [How can the new rebate scheme help exporters?](#)

Need for RoDTEP Scheme

In 2018, the US challenged five Indian export subsidy schemes in the World Trade Organisation (WTO). This includes schemes such as

1. Merchandise Export from India Scheme (MEIS),
2. Special Economic Zone (SEZ),
3. Export Oriented Units (EOU)
4. Electronics Hardware Technology Parks (EHTP)
5. Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG)

In October 2019, WTO ruled that these schemes are inconsistent with the WTO agreements for providing prohibited export subsidies. The WTO panel also recommended that the Indian government should withdraw these schemes.

In response, the Indian government came up with the RoDTEP scheme, which is WTO-compliant.

Advantages of the RoDTEP scheme

1. **Make Indian Industries competitive:** The scheme would lead to the cost competitiveness of exported products in international markets and better employment opportunities in export-oriented manufacturing industries.
2. **Fulfils India's commitments to the World Trade Organization:** The government had to go in for the RoDTEP Scheme to replace the MEIS. Because, the **tax rebates are compliant with India's commitments to the World Trade Organisation**, while export incentives are not.
3. **Covers the uncovered aspects of GST:**
 - a. Exporters are already able to seek refunds for their GST payments.
 - b. The idea behind the RoDTEP and related schemes is that the taxes exporters pay on the fuel required for freight, electricity consumption, or for agricultural mandis, should also be refunded.
 - c. So, it is expected to significantly impact India's competitiveness, trade flows, and export numbers over the next 5-10 years.
4. **Par with International Standards:** Indian exporters will be able to **meet the international standards for exports** as affordable testing and certification will be made available to exporters within the country instead of relying on international organisations. This would increase the economy for the country and the working capital for the enterprise.
5. **Automated Tax Assessment:** Under the Scheme, tax assessment is set to become fully automatic for exporters. So, the businesses will get access to their refunds via an automatic refund route.

Challenges with the RoDTEP scheme

1. **Issues with low rates**– Exporters are unsatisfied with the amount of relief offered and argue that the **low rates** under the scheme will have **little benefits compared to the MEIS**.

2. **Issues with exemption**– Exporters in the sector like engineering and electronics, which use iron and steel as inputs, are unhappy because they are unable to claim the benefits for their inputs since iron and steel has been exempted from the scheme.
3. **Not sustainable**: Instead of **simplifying and unifying the tax system**, the scheme adds complexity to the tax system. The addition of greater complexity to the tax and rebate system is not a sustainable way forward.
4. **Multiple rates are difficult to manage and administer**: The intervention of the RoDTEP scheme is granular in nature — 8,555 products— with reimbursement rates that vary from 0.3 per cent to 4.3 per cent, in addition to various per unit rebates as well, will be difficult to manage and administer. For reasons such as,
 1. Will each of these 8,555 products have its administered rebate rate altered when the respective industry's cost structure changes?
 2. Does the government have the capacity to make these changes swift, transparent, and justifiable?

Suggestions to improve India's export competitiveness

1. The government must educate the exporters that the **MEIS was a direct export subsidy and a violation of WTO**. So the government cannot continue that scheme. The government has to inform exporters that the **RoDTEP is a remission of taxes/duties/levied** that are currently not refunded through other schemes, and the scheme is WTO Compliant.
2. **Timely funding**: In the past, export incentive schemes and even the standard GST refund have run aground because the government has failed to pay back exporters on time. So, the government has to **ensure speedier refunds** under the RoDTEP Scheme **for better export competitiveness**.
3. **Focus on sustainability and simplicity, not complexity**: Export competitiveness should be addressed through both **improving the regulatory and business environment** in India. Further, India can move towards **simplification and unification of the tax** system.
4. **Expand the ambit of GST**: If the fuel taxes, electricity duties, real estate and so on were **part of the GST** Regime, the exporters could **claim swift refunds** on them **through the existing mechanisms**. This will create a condition that the **government does not need any additional scheme/ resource/ infrastructure** etc.

Implications of Cheap Sugar in India – Explained, Pointwise

Introduction

India is the largest consumer and the second-largest producer of sugar. With the increase in consumption of packaged foods, there has been a significant increase in the consumption of refined sugar.

This has resulted in a **twin burden of obesity and malnourishment** among children in India, due to the consumption of junk food by both categories. Almost 40% of children in the 10-18 age group from urban elite schools are either overweight or obese.

A colonial link to cheap sugar in India

The global consumption of sugar was revolutionized by the **emergence of the soft drink industry** after the second world war. A key reason behind the success of Coca-Cola was cheap sugar from tropical producers and the US government's policy of subsidies and tariffs.

In pre-independent India, the sugar industry was nurtured by the colonial state by inducing farmers to supply cane to the mills, instead of diverting it to traditional village-based industries that made jaggery. At the time of independence, about two-thirds of the sugar consumption in India was in the form of jaggery, but some provincial governments banned jaggery production to promote sugar mills.

Moreover, early research into sugarcane was geared towards creating thick-rind varieties suitable for mills but harder to crush using traditional methods. This was vigorously opposed by Gandhians like J.C. Kumarappa who advocated (for) increasing (the) production of palm jaggery, which is more environment-friendly and does not require arable land.

Implications of high sugar intake

1. **Oral health problems:** At least eight in ten children in India suffer from oral health problems and 44% were in need of treatments such as root canal or extraction, found a 2019 survey by the market research firm Kantar IMRB.
2. **Increase in non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and heart ailments:** About 17% of India's adult males and 14% of adult females were found to be diabetic in 2019-20.
3. **Fatty liver and obstructive sleep apnea**
4. **There are also several cases of polycystic ovaries among young girls.**

Why does India continue to encourage the production of cheap sugar despite its enormous health cost?

Farmers tend to grow more sugarcane due to its potential for generating higher returns over costs, about 60-70% more compared to most other crops. Refined white sugar is also cheap for consumers.

Sugar mills mandated to procure cane at the government-determined **fair and remunerative price (FRP)** are often unable to make payments on time following surplus production.

To clear the unpaid dues, the government then grants soft loans and export subsidies to the industry. In the process, refined sugar turns out to be the cheapest among food commodities, which fuels a steady rise in consumption.

Further, with the **increase in household incomes, the affordability of sugar has increased** even more. However, despite its high usage, the supply of sugar has outpaced its

demand. The production is concentrated in states such as Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Karnataka, keeping the prices under control.

Measures to limit sugar intake through processed foods

1. FoP mean front-of-the-pack (FoP) labeling

It warns the consumers on how much sugar, salt, and fat they are consuming and by how much these exceed the daily recommended thresholds.

In 2018, an expert committee set up by the **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** proposed simple and effective **front-of-the-pack (FoP) labeling** for packaged food. However, the rules were diluted in 2019 following strong opposition from the food industry.

However, evidence suggests that FoPs work. **In Chile**, for instance, the **adoption of an effective FoP** warning label of 'excess sugar' covering 10% of the front surface of a packet was followed by a 24% drop in consumption of highly sweetened beverages.

2. Sugar tax on soft drinks

After the introduction of a **sugar tax on soft drinks** in the UK in April 2018, it was found that sugar content in the drinks fell by almost 10%. The study was based on 30 million household purchases.

In comparison, Indian consumption of sugary beverages more than doubled between 2010 and 2019 from 8 milliliter (ml) to 18 ml per person per day, shows by data from Euro monitor International.

Suggestions

1. With increased incidences of diabetes and a reduced preference in people for white sugar, there is a case for greater encouragement to the gur industry," the Niti Aayog's task force report on sugar suggested.
2. A task force set up under **Niti Aayog**, recognized the need to encourage farmers to move away from cane and suggested **promoting jaggery production**, which is considered to be a healthier alternative to refined white sugar
3. The mismatch in sugar supply and demand—with supplies (at over 30 million tonnes a year) consistently outstripping demand has led to a buildup of excess stocks, leading to lower prices and higher subsidy outgo for the government.
4. According to Niti Aayog, about 30% of cane area could be diverted to other crops by providing incentives to farmers at a cost of about ₹9,200 crores. But in the process, India would benefit from a reduction in subsidies as well as water outgo, especially in drought-prone areas including parts of Karnataka and Maharashtra's Marathwada and Vidharba regions.
5. Sugarcane growing is also faced with issues such as Low wages, inhospitable and unsanitary living conditions, 12-hour long working days. It leads to an epidemic of unnecessary hysterectomy operations among women cane cutters in Maharashtra. Hence, an alternative to the sugar crop needs to be supported firmly.
6. The world is moving towards FoP and the Existing back-of-the-pack labeling is not consumer-friendly. It is meant to confuse, and the only purpose it serves is scientific compliance. Hence, India should also move towards FoP.

National Automated Facial Recognition System (NAFRS) – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

In Mar 2020, the Home Ministry gave its approval to the National Automated Facial Recognition System (NAFRS) to be implemented by NCRB.

On its implementation, NAFRS will function as a national-level search platform that will use facial recognition technology to facilitate investigation of crime or for identifying a person of interest (e.g., a criminal) regardless of face mask, makeup, plastic surgery, etc.

NAFRS is based on the relatively new technology of **facial recognition**, so there is a constant debate on finding the right balance between regulation and promotion.

Let's take a deep dive into various issues involved.

Must Read: [What is NAFRS? – Explained](#)

Rationale/Need

NAFRS will play a very vital role in improving outcomes in the area of **Criminal identification and verification** by facilitating easy recording, analysis, retrieval and sharing of Information between different organizations.

Also, the current facial recognition in India is done manually, the fingerprints and iris scans provide far more accurate matching results. Automatic facial recognition is an easier solution, especially for identification amongst crowds.

Benefits/Advantages

In India, a severely under-policed nation, NAFRS surely offers many benefits:

- Control of crime with enhanced detection abilities.
- Better border controls and countering terrorism.
- The facial recognition technology could help protect human and child trafficking victims.
- In identification of unidentified dead bodies

Issues/Concerns

Various issues and concerns have been expressed against the proposed system. Some of those are:

- **Intrusive nature of the tech:** The technology is absolutely intrusive: computer algorithms map unique facial-landmarks (biometric data) such as shape of the cheekbones, contours of the lips, distance from forehead to chin, and convert these into a numerical code — termed a **faceprint**. Thus, for the purposes of 'verification' or 'identification', the system compares the faceprint generated with a large existing database of faceprints (typically available to law enforcement agencies) through a database on driver's licence or police mugshots).
- **Results are not accurate:** The real problem is that facial recognition does not return a definitive result — it **'identifies' or 'verifies' only in probabilities** (e.g., a 70% likelihood that the person shown on an image is the same person on a watch list). This can result in the possibility of 'false positives' (a situation where the algorithm finds an incorrect match, even when there is none) resulting in **wrongful arrest**.
- **Possibility of bias:** Facial recognition software is based on pre-trained models. Therefore, if certain types of faces (such as female, children, ethnic minorities) are under-represented in training datasets, then this bias will negatively impact its

performance. With the element of error and bias, facial recognition can result in profiling of some overrepresented groups (such as Dalits and minorities) in the criminal justice system.

- **Impact on Right to privacy:** As NAFRS will collect, process, and store sensitive private information i.e. facial biometrics for long periods, it will impact the right to privacy.
- **Discourage civic society activism:** Further, as anonymity is key to functioning of a liberal democracy, unregulated use of facial recognition technology will dis-incentivize independent journalism or the right to assemble peaceably without arms, or any other form of civic society activism. Due to its adverse impact on civil liberties, some countries have been cautious with the use of facial recognition technology.

Facial recognition is already being used in various states of India.

Instances of usage in India

- The govt used facial recognition technology to track down the protestors who were present at the Red Fort on January 26, 2021
- UP police is using an AI-based facial recognition system called Trinetra. Police used this software to run surveillance on anti-CAA protestors following which more than 1,100 arrests were made.
- The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) used facial recognition to match admit card photos on record to match students logging in to give their board exams.
- The Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF) estimates that there are currently 42 ongoing facial recognition projects in India, from the Automated Multimodal Biometric Identification System (AMBIS) in Maharashtra to FaceTagr in Tamil Nadu. Of these, at least 19 are being developed and deployed by state-level police departments and the NCRB for the specific purpose of security and surveillance.

Global examples

- **USA:** The Federal Bureau of Investigation in the United States uses facial recognition technology for potential investigative leads. However, in 2020, the Facial Recognition and Biometric Technology Moratorium Act of 2020 was introduced in the Senate to prohibit biometric surveillance without statutory authorization.
- **England:** Police forces in England use facial recognition to tackle serious violence. However, in one instance, the Court of Appeal in the United Kingdom ruled the use of facial recognition technology by South Wales as unlawful in the absence of clear guidelines.
- **China:** In other cases, countries such as China use facial recognition for racial profiling and mass surveillance — to track Uighur Muslims.
- **Europe:** Privacy watchdogs in the European Union have called for a ban on facial recognition.
- **Various multinational companies:** IBM has closed its facial recognition technology division. Amazon has put a moratorium on the technology for a year. Microsoft has announced it will not sell its facial recognition technology to the police in places without federal regulation.

Implications

The biggest implication is the likely impact on **Right to privacy**. In Justice [K.S. Puttaswamy vs Union of India \(2017\)](#) Supreme Court recognized right to privacy as a precious

fundamental right and provided a **three-fold requirement**. Accordingly, any encroachment on the right to privacy requires:

- The **existence of 'law'** (to satisfy legality of action)
- There must **exist a 'need'**, in terms of a 'legitimate state interest'
- The measure adopted must be **'proportionate'** (there should be a rational nexus between the means adopted and the objective pursued) and **'least intrusive.'**

Unfortunately, **NAFRS fails each one of these tests.**

- **NAFRS lacks 'legitimacy':** It does not stem from any statutory enactment (such as the DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill 2018 proposed to identify offenders or an executive order of the Central Government. Rather, it was merely approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs in 2009.
- **Disproportionate measure:** Even if we assume that there exists a need for NAFRS to tackle modern day crimes, this measure is grossly disproportionate. This is because to satisfy the test of 'proportionality', benefits for the deployment of this technology have to be sufficiently great, and must outweigh the harm.
 - For NAFRS to achieve the objective of 'crime prevention' or 'identification' will require the system to track people on a mass-scale, resulting in **everyone becoming a subject of surveillance:** a disproportionate measure.

Suggestions/Measures

- **Adequate safeguards:** Both the Information Technology Act 2000, and the Personal Data Protection Bill 2019 gives the central government unchecked power for the purposes of surveillance. We need adequate safeguards such as penalties so that police personnel are not able to misuse the facial recognition technology.
- **Algorithmic Impact Assessment:** Agencies that want to deploy these technologies should be required to carry out a formal algorithmic impact assessment (AIA). Modelled after impact-assessment frameworks for human rights, environmental protection and data protection, AIAs help governments to evaluate artificial-intelligence systems and guarantee public input.
- **Rigorous review:** Legislation should be enacted that requires that public agencies rigorously review any facial recognition technologies for bias, privacy and civil-rights concerns.

Way forward

Without accountability and oversight, facial recognition technology has strong potential for misuse and abuse. In the interest of civil liberties and to save democracy from turning authoritarian, it is important to impose a moratorium on the use of facial recognition technology till we have meaningful checks & balances, in addition to statutory authorization of NAFRS and guidelines for deployment.

Implications of Cheap Sugar in India – Explained, Pointwise

Introduction

India is the largest consumer and the second-largest producer of sugar. With the increase in consumption of packaged foods, there has been a significant increase in the consumption of refined sugar.

This has resulted in a **twin burden of obesity and malnourishment** among children in India, due to the consumption of junk food by both categories. Almost 40% of children in the 10-18 age group from urban elite schools are either overweight or obese.

A colonial link to cheap sugar in India

The global consumption of sugar was revolutionized by the **emergence of the soft drink industry** after the second world war. A key reason behind the success of Coca-Cola was cheap sugar from tropical producers and the US government's policy of subsidies and tariffs.

In pre-independent India, the sugar industry was nurtured by the colonial state by inducing farmers to supply cane to the mills, instead of diverting it to traditional village-based industries that made jaggery. At the time of independence, about two-thirds of the sugar consumption in India was in the form of jaggery, but some provincial governments banned jaggery production to promote sugar mills.

Moreover, early research into sugarcane was geared towards creating thick-rind varieties suitable for mills but harder to crush using traditional methods. This was vigorously opposed by Gandhians like J.C. Kumarappa who advocated (for) increasing (the) production of palm jaggery, which is more environment-friendly and does not require arable land.

Implications of high sugar intake

1. **Oral health problems:** At least eight in ten children in India suffer from oral health problems and 44% were in need of treatments such as root canal or extraction, found a 2019 survey by the market research firm Kantar IMRB.
2. **Increase in non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and heart ailments:** About 17% of India's adult males and 14% of adult females were found to be diabetic in 2019-20.
3. **Fatty liver and obstructive sleep apnea**
4. **There are also several cases of polycystic ovaries among young girls.**

Why does India continue to encourage the production of cheap sugar despite its enormous health cost?

Farmers tend to grow more sugarcane due to its potential for generating higher returns over costs, about 60-70% more compared to most other crops. Refined white sugar is also cheap for consumers.

Sugar mills mandated to procure cane at the government-determined **fair and remunerative price (FRP)** are often unable to make payments on time following surplus production.

To clear the unpaid dues, the government then grants soft loans and export subsidies to the industry. In the process, refined sugar turns out to be the cheapest among food commodities, which fuels a steady rise in consumption.

Further, with the **increase in household incomes, the affordability of sugar has increased** even more. However, despite its high usage, the supply of sugar has outpaced its demand. The production is concentrated in states such as Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Karnataka, keeping the prices under control.

Measures to limit sugar intake through processed foods*1. FoP mean front-of-the-pack (FoP) labeling*

It warns the consumers on how much sugar, salt, and fat they are consuming and by how much these exceed the daily recommended thresholds.

In 2018, an expert committee set up by the **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** proposed simple and effective **front-of-the-pack (FoP) labeling** for packaged food. However, the rules were diluted in 2019 following strong opposition from the food industry.

However, evidence suggests that FoPs work. **In Chile**, for instance, the **adoption of an effective FoP** warning label of ‘excess sugar’ covering 10% of the front surface of a packet was followed by a 24% drop in consumption of highly sweetened beverages.

2. Sugar tax on soft drinks

After the introduction of a **sugar tax on soft drinks** in the UK in April 2018, it was found that sugar content in the drinks fell by almost 10%. The study was based on 30 million household purchases.

In comparison, Indian consumption of sugary beverages more than doubled between 2010 and 2019 from 8 milliliter (ml) to 18 ml per person per day, shows by data from Euro monitor International.

Suggestions

1. With increased incidences of diabetes and a reduced preference in people for white sugar, there is a case for greater encouragement to the gur industry,” the Niti Aayog’s task force report on sugar suggested.
2. A task force set up under **Niti Aayog**, recognized the need to encourage farmers to move away from cane and suggested **promoting jaggery production**, which is considered to be a healthier alternative to refined white sugar
3. The mismatch in sugar supply and demand—with supplies (at over 30 million tonnes a year) consistently outstripping demand has led to a buildup of excess stocks, leading to lower prices and higher subsidy outgo for the government.
4. According to Niti Aayog, about 30% of cane area could be diverted to other crops by providing incentives to farmers at a cost of about ₹9,200 crores. But in the process, India would benefit from a reduction in subsidies as well as water outgo, especially in drought-prone areas including parts of Karnataka and Maharashtra’s Marathwada and Vidharba regions.
5. Sugarcane growing is also faced with issues such as Low wages, inhospitable and unsanitary living conditions, 12-hour long working days. It leads to an epidemic of unnecessary hysterectomy operations among women cane cutters in Maharashtra. Hence, an alternative to the sugar crop needs to be supported firmly.
6. The world is moving towards FoP and the Existing back-of-the-pack labeling is not consumer-friendly. It is meant to confuse, and the only purpose it serves is scientific compliance. Hence, India should also move towards FoP.

Source: [Live Mint](#)

National Automated Facial Recognition System (NAFRS) – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

In Mar 2020, the Home Ministry gave its approval to the National Automated Facial Recognition System (NAFRS) to be implemented by NCRB.

On its implementation, NAFRS will function as a national-level search platform that will use facial recognition technology to facilitate investigation of crime or for identifying a person of interest (e.g., a criminal) regardless of face mask, makeup, plastic surgery, etc.

NAFRS is based on the relatively new technology of **facial recognition**, so there is a constant debate on finding the right balance between regulation and promotion.

Let's take a deep dive into various issues involved.

Must Read: [What is NAFRS? – Explained](#)

Rationale/Need

NAFRS will play a very vital role in improving outcomes in the area of **Criminal identification and verification** by facilitating easy recording, analysis, retrieval and sharing of Information between different organizations.

Also, the current facial recognition in India is done manually, the fingerprints and iris scans provide far more accurate matching results. Automatic facial recognition is an easier solution, especially for identification amongst crowds.

Benefits/Advantages

In India, a severely under-policed nation, NAFRS surely offers many benefits:

- Control of crime with enhanced detection abilities.
- Better border controls and countering terrorism.
- The facial recognition technology could help protect human and child trafficking victims.
- In identification of unidentified dead bodies

Issues/Concerns

Various issues and concerns have been expressed against the proposed system. Some of those are:

- **Intrusive nature of the tech:** The technology is absolutely intrusive: computer algorithms map unique facial-landmarks (biometric data) such as shape of the cheekbones, contours of the lips, distance from forehead to chin, and convert these into a numerical code — termed a **faceprint**. Thus, for the purposes of 'verification' or 'identification', the system compares the faceprint generated with a large existing database of faceprints (typically available to law enforcement agencies) through a database on driver's licence or police mugshots).
- **Results are not accurate:** The real problem is that facial recognition does not return a definitive result — it **'identifies' or 'verifies' only in probabilities** (e.g., a 70% likelihood that the person shown on an image is the same person on a watch list). This can result in the possibility of 'false positives' (a situation where the algorithm finds an incorrect match, even when there is none) resulting in **wrongful arrest**.
- **Possibility of bias:** Facial recognition software is based on pre-trained models. Therefore, if certain types of faces (such as female, children, ethnic minorities) are under-represented in training datasets, then this bias will negatively impact its

performance. With the element of error and bias, facial recognition can result in profiling of some overrepresented groups (such as Dalits and minorities) in the criminal justice system.

- **Impact on Right to privacy:** As NAFRS will collect, process, and store sensitive private information i.e. facial biometrics for long periods, it will impact the right to privacy.
- **Discourage civic society activism:** Further, as anonymity is key to functioning of a liberal democracy, unregulated use of facial recognition technology will dis-incentivize independent journalism or the right to assemble peaceably without arms, or any other form of civic society activism. Due to its adverse impact on civil liberties, some countries have been cautious with the use of facial recognition technology.

Facial recognition is already being used in various states of India.

Instances of usage in India

- The govt used facial recognition technology to track down the protestors who were present at the Red Fort on January 26, 2021
- UP police is using an AI-based facial recognition system called Trinetra. Police used this software to run surveillance on anti-CAA protestors following which more than 1,100 arrests were made.
- The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) used facial recognition to match admit card photos on record to match students logging in to give their board exams.
- The Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF) estimates that there are currently 42 ongoing facial recognition projects in India, from the Automated Multimodal Biometric Identification System (AMBIS) in Maharashtra to FaceTagr in Tamil Nadu. Of these, at least 19 are being developed and deployed by state-level police departments and the NCRB for the specific purpose of security and surveillance.

Global examples

- **USA:** The Federal Bureau of Investigation in the United States uses facial recognition technology for potential investigative leads. However, in 2020, the Facial Recognition and Biometric Technology Moratorium Act of 2020 was introduced in the Senate to prohibit biometric surveillance without statutory authorization.
- **England:** Police forces in England use facial recognition to tackle serious violence. However, in one instance, the Court of Appeal in the United Kingdom ruled the use of facial recognition technology by South Wales as unlawful in the absence of clear guidelines.
- **China:** In other cases, countries such as China use facial recognition for racial profiling and mass surveillance — to track Uighur Muslims.
- **Europe:** Privacy watchdogs in the European Union have called for a ban on facial recognition.
- **Various multinational companies:** IBM has closed its facial recognition technology division. Amazon has put a moratorium on the technology for a year. Microsoft has announced it will not sell its facial recognition technology to the police in places without federal regulation.

Implications

The biggest implication is the likely impact on **Right to privacy**. In Justice [K.S. Puttaswamy vs Union of India \(2017\)](#) Supreme Court recognized right to privacy as a precious

fundamental right and provided a **three-fold requirement**. Accordingly, any encroachment on the right to privacy requires:

- The **existence of 'law'** (to satisfy legality of action)
- There must **exist a 'need'**, in terms of a 'legitimate state interest'
- The measure adopted must be **'proportionate'** (there should be a rational nexus between the means adopted and the objective pursued) and **'least intrusive.'**

Unfortunately, **NAFRS fails each one of these tests.**

- **NAFRS lacks 'legitimacy':** It does not stem from any statutory enactment (such as the DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill 2018 proposed to identify offenders or an executive order of the Central Government. Rather, it was merely approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs in 2009.
- **Disproportionate measure:** Even if we assume that there exists a need for NAFRS to tackle modern day crimes, this measure is grossly disproportionate. This is because to satisfy the test of 'proportionality', benefits for the deployment of this technology have to be sufficiently great, and must outweigh the harm.
 - For NAFRS to achieve the objective of 'crime prevention' or 'identification' will require the system to track people on a mass-scale, resulting in **everyone becoming a subject of surveillance:** a disproportionate measure.

Suggestions/Measures

- **Adequate safeguards:** Both the Information Technology Act 2000, and the Personal Data Protection Bill 2019 gives the central government unchecked power for the purposes of surveillance. We need adequate safeguards such as penalties so that police personnel are not able to misuse the facial recognition technology.
- **Algorithmic Impact Assessment:** Agencies that want to deploy these technologies should be required to carry out a formal algorithmic impact assessment (AIA). Modelled after impact-assessment frameworks for human rights, environmental protection and data protection, AIAs help governments to evaluate artificial-intelligence systems and guarantee public input.
- **Rigorous review:** Legislation should be enacted that requires that public agencies rigorously review any facial recognition technologies for bias, privacy and civil-rights concerns.

Way forward

Without accountability and oversight, facial recognition technology has strong potential for misuse and abuse. In the interest of civil liberties and to save democracy from turning authoritarian, it is important to impose a moratorium on the use of facial recognition technology till we have meaningful checks & balances, in addition to statutory authorization of NAFRS and guidelines for deployment.

National Monetisation Pipeline Project – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

Recently, Union Finance Minister unveiled the Centre's four-year infrastructure asset monetization programme to raise ₹6 trillion under the National Monetization Pipeline (NMP) project.

Under the ambitious NMP, the government has identified 13 sectors — including airports, railways, roads, shipping, gas pipeline among others— which will be privatized as the government aims to monetize its brownfield infrastructure assets.

The monetization plan was first announced in the annual budget speech in February 2021. It will serve as a medium-term road map for the government's asset sale initiative.

The plan is well-conceived, as it brings several intended monetization and divestment plans under one umbrella- National Monetization Pipeline (NMP). It is also timely given the government's strained fiscal condition after the COVID-19 pandemic.

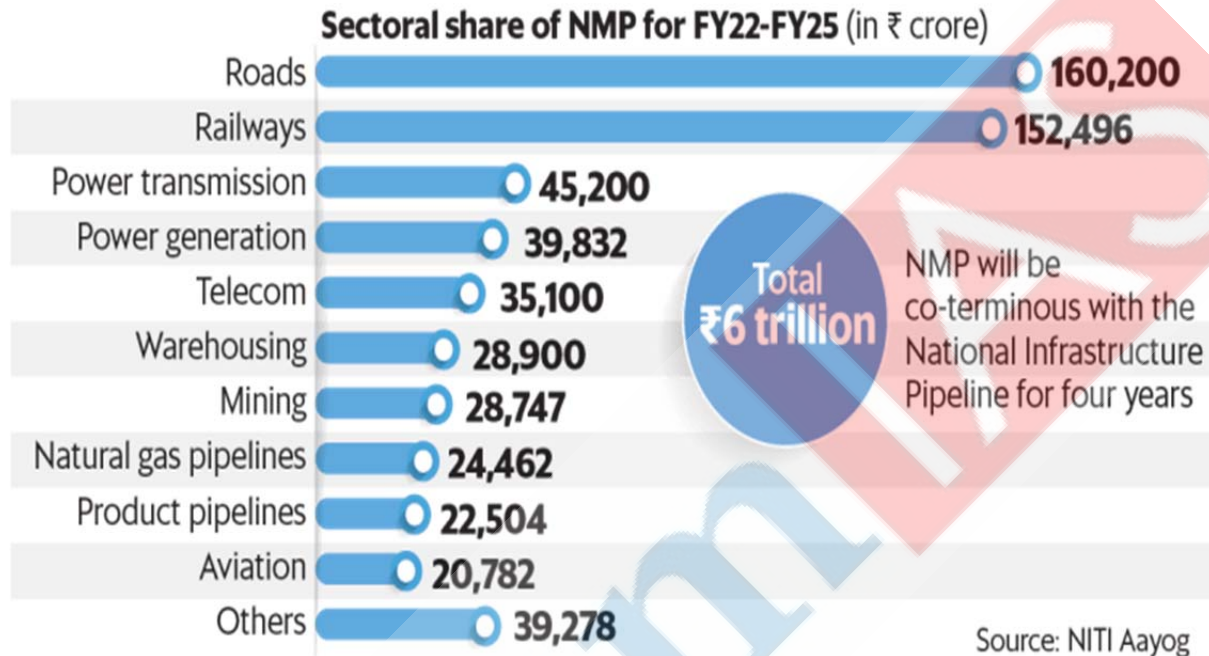
Let's go through it in detail.

What is the NMP project?

- The National Monetization Pipeline involves leasing out central government assets valued at around Rs 6 lakh crore over a four-year period ending in 2024-25. NMP represents an **alternative to an outright sale** of assets.
- The major idea is to **lease out brownfield projects**, proceeds from which can be used to finance greenfield projects.
- Only underutilized assets will be monetized.
- The **ownership of the assets** monetized, though, will **remain with the government**, with the private players taking on the operational risk.
- **Major sectors:** The top three sectors by value identified for asset monetization include roads (27%), railways (25%), and power (15%) in the value of the total asset. While roads, railways, and power account for around 65% of the proceeds of the program. It also includes sectors such as telecom, aviation, mining, and warehousing.
 - The potential models of road asset monetization would be **Toll Operate Transfer (ToT)** and [Infrastructure Investment Trust \(InvIT\)](#).
- **Participation of states:** The central government is also incentivizing states to participate in this program.
- For the FY22, the government through its asset monetization program **plans to raise ₹88,000 crores**.
- Govt plans to correlate NMP with the [National Infrastructure Project](#) announced earlier.
- An **empowered committee** has been constituted to implement and monitor the Asset Monetization program. The Core Group of Secretaries on Asset Monetization (CGAM) will be headed by the Cabinet Secretary.

Unlocking capital

The NMP will help the authorities ease fiscal constraints and free up the balance sheets for more greenfield infrastructure creation.



Objective of NMP

The desired goal is to provide a clear framework for monetization and give potential investors a **ready list of assets** to generate their interest.

NMP aims to **monetize the existing asset base** and using its proceeds for **new infrastructure creation**, recycling the future assets and build multiplier effect on growth and revive credit flow.

Rationale behind Asset Monetization

A developing country like India needs asset monetization for the following reasons:

- **Financing the infrastructure creation:** With a massive infrastructure deficit, finding resources to build physical assets is a difficult task. Hence, the government wants to monetize existing infrastructure assets by leasing them out to private firms for a fixed tenure under a revenue-sharing model.
- **Easing fiscal burden:** It will help the authorities ease fiscal constraints and free up balance sheets for more greenfield infrastructure creation. For example, a stadium, built by the government that remains idle for the most part of the year, can be leased to a private party that can efficiently manage it by organizing cultural functions and allowing the public to use it for a fee.
- It could also **provide States with the additional resources** needed to sustain public investment during this period of stressed public finances.

What is the monetization of assets?

Under this, the government **transfers revenue rights of an asset to private parties** for a specified transaction period, in return for upfront money, a revenue share, and commitment of investments in the assets. Real estate investment trusts (REITs) and infrastructure investment trusts (InvITs), for instance, are the key structures used to monetize assets in the roads and power sectors. Other monetization models on PPP (Public Private Partnership) basis include:

- Operate Maintain Transfer (OMT)
- Toll Operate Transfer (TOT)
- Operations, Maintenance & Development (OMD)
- OMT and TOT have been used in the highways sector, while OMD is being deployed in the case of airports.

Is asset monetization new to India?

No. India has been monetizing assets for a long time through public-private partnerships (PPP). In India, the concept was suggested by a committee led by **Vijay Kelkar on the roadmap for fiscal consolidation in 2012**. The committee had suggested that the government start monetization as a key instrument to raise resources for development.

- **The Delhi airport** has been built through the PPP mode. The project that started in 2006 has been completed at a total cost of ₹12,500 crores, enabling world-class infrastructure creation with no additional cost to AAI.
- In 2020, the Maharashtra State Road Development Corp. Ltd awarded the tolling rights of the **Mumbai-Pune Expressway and old Mumbai-Pune corridor** for ₹8,262 crores.

Global examples

Australia: Asset recycling has been enacted in Australia through the **Asset Recycling Initiative (ARI)** of the federal government, which during the 2014-15 budget announced the Infrastructure Growth Package (IGP), a 10-year vision of infrastructure investment in the nation. ARI was aimed at encouraging states to recycle assets and utilize the sale proceeds for productivity-enhancing infrastructure by asking private firms to fund and run public infrastructure. This **helped unlock more than \$17 billion in infrastructure development** across Australia.

Issues/Challenges

1. **Making it attractive for the private sector:** As ownership is not being transferred, GoI will retain oversight through the contract period. The contract, however, needs to be flexible enough to make it attractive for a private entity. Finding the balance within a government framework has been challenging in the past.
 - a. The slow pace of privatization in government companies including Air India and BPCL, and less-than-encouraging bids in the recently launched PPP initiative in trains, indicate that attracting private investors' interest is not that easy.
2. **Creation of a regulatory framework:** Another challenge is creating a regulatory framework to deal with a monopoly, which is something that will happen in the railway projects under NMP.
3. **Structural challenges:** Proper maintenance of asset register and title and encroachment may adversely affect the monetization plan. Similarly, land unavailability, delayed approvals and clearances, policy constraints, and lack of coordination among stakeholders could hinder the project's progress

4. Privatization of a state-owned industry can also cause **job-loss anxieties** among its workers.
5. With proposed concession periods running up to 60 years for some assets, NMP deals, by contrast, could pose a long-term headache if they are not structured with end-user interests in mind, **balancing the profit and utility motives**.
6. The sharing of risk and rewards between the public and private partners needs to be weighed carefully for each sector. **Checks and balances** are needed for actual infrastructure usage versus projections at the time of bidding.
7. Due to current economic situation, **revenue projections for PPP assets could be deflated now**, leading to lower bids followed by super-normal gains for the operator in the future.
8. **Other challenges:** Lack of identifiable revenues streams in various assets, level of capacity utilization in gas and petroleum pipeline networks, dispute resolution mechanism, regulated tariffs in power sector assets, and low interest among investors in national highways below four lanes.

Suggestions/measures

- **Preventing a monopoly:** The government needs to avoid a situation where a few firms capture most of the assets.
- **Structuring the deals:** The key to success lies in the way the deals are structured to make them attractive enough for enhanced private sector participation.
- **Smooth implementation:** It would be important for the government to get the first few projects in each sector right to start things in the right direction. Smooth implementation of the first Rs 10,000 crore will determine the fate of the Rs 6 trillion monetization plan. Hence, achieving the first-year target of Rs 0.8 trillion is very important to build confidence in the market.
- **Proper regulation:** To maximize their profit over a limited time frame, investors would want to raise prices, limit competition or cut back on maintenance. Hence, we need proper bureaucratic ability and regulatory mechanisms to prevent this from happening.

Way forward

NMP represents an alternative to an outright sale of assets. Its success will depend on execution.

[Yojana August Summary] Probity in Governance – Explained, pointwise**Introduction**

Ethics and probity form the cornerstone of the public administration system. In today's world, governments are playing an active role in the socio-economic development of the country. This makes the **role of the government functionaries more challenging**, as they are **both the facilitators and enforcers of the law and rules**. However, it is not easy to imbibe values like empathy and subordination of self to a larger public good in government functionaries. So, Probity in governance is vital for an accountable governance system, which can facilitate socio-economic development.

Thus, many countries have enforced accountability through moral ideas of society based on the Code of Conduct/Ethics for its ministers and civil servants.

The Indian government also has introduced various legislative and institutional methods to ensure probity in governance. But still, there is room for improvement.

This article explains the applicability of the concept of Ethics in Public Administration, particularly in the context of India, and explains how probity is ensured by institutional mechanisms.

About Ethics

The word 'ethics' is derived from the original Greek term 'ethikos', meaning 'arising from habit'. Ethics is a set of standards that helps guide the behavior, choices, and actions of individuals.

Ethics in public is **not limited to the expression of high moral values alone**. It also refers to the **framework for holding the public functionaries legally accountable** for their acts of omission and commission.

Further, **Adherence to key principles** of Integrity, Honesty, Objectivity **promotes trust and confidence** among the stakeholders and **enhances credibility**.

Probity in governance and Ethics

Probity in Governance is defined as adherence to ethical and moral values like honesty, integrity, rectitude, uprightness, etc.

It is absolutely essential for an efficient and effective system of governance. **Ethics and probity cannot be seen in isolation**. Both are intertwined and have to be seen as complementary to each other.

The Second Administrative Reforms Commission in its Second Report on Ethics suggested the principles for ethics in the governance and stated that:

“Any framework of ethical behavior must include the following elements:

1. Codifying ethical norms and practices.
2. Disclosing personal interest to avoid conflict between public interest and personal gain.
3. Creating a mechanism for enforcing the relevant codes.
4. Providing norms for qualifying and disqualifying a public functionary from office”

Code of conduct/Ethics around the globe

United Nations Convention against corruption	Nolan Committee	Code of Good Governance of Spain
It envisages that in order to fight corruption, each State Party shall,	Seven Principles of Public Life:	Principles of ethics and good conduct developed in the Code:
(a) Promote inter alia, integrity, honesty and responsibility among its public officials, in accordance with the fundamental principles of its legal system.	(a) Selflessness	(a) objectivity
(b) Establish codes or standards of conduct for the correct, honourable and proper performance of public functions.	(b) Integrity	(b) integrity
(c) Establish measures and systems to facilitate the reporting by public officials of acts of corruption to appropriate authorities.	(c) Objectivity	(c) neutrality
(d) Establish measures and systems requiring public officials to make declarations regarding, their outside activities, employment, investments, assets and substantial gifts or benefits from which a conflict of interest may result with respect to their functions as public officials.	(d) Accountability	(d) responsibility
(e) Take disciplinary or other measures against public officials who violate the codes or standards established in accordance with this article.	(e) Openness	(e) credibility
	(f) Honesty	(f) impartiality
	(g) Leadership	(g) confidentiality
		(h) dedication to public service
		(i) transparency
		(j) exemplary conduct
		(k) austerity
		(l) accessibility
		(m) efficiency
		(n) honesty
		(o) promotion of the cultural and environmental environment, and
		(p) equality between the sexes

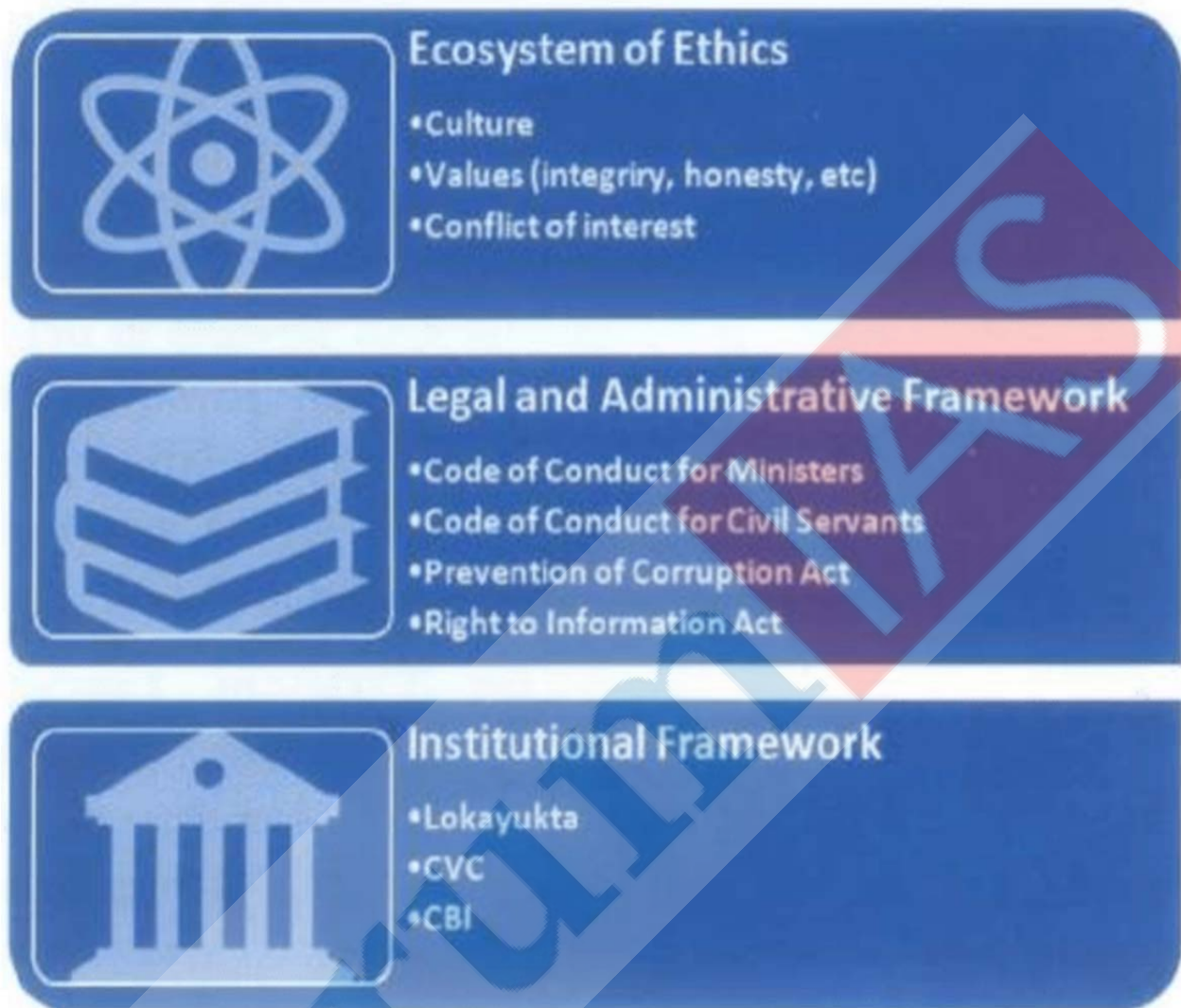
Source: Yojana

The **General Assembly adopted** the United Nations Convention against Corruption in 2003. Article 8 of the Resolution refers to “**Codes of Conduct for public officials**”

In UK: The Committee on Standards in Public Life in the United Kingdom, popularly known as the Nolan Committee, outlined the seven principles of public life. Further, the country also has Ministerial Code for legislators.

Apart from that, the Code of Conduct/Ethics for its Ministers, legislators, and civil servants are prescribed in many countries. For instance, a Code of Conduct in the US Senate, Spain’s Code of Good Governance for Ministers and Senior officers, etc.

Code of conduct/Ethics in India to ensure accountability



Source: Yojana

For legislators

The Government of India has prescribed a **Code of Conduct, applicable to Ministers** both in the Union Government and State Government.

- It envisages disclosure of assets and liabilities by the Minister,
- S/he also has to disclose the connections with the business which he was interested in before joining the Government.
- Further, S/he should not accept any contributions or gifts for himself or any family member, etc.

Code of Conduct for the Civil Servants (CCS)

Similarly, India also has the **Code of Conduct for the Civil Servants (CCS)**. But it has evolved over time.

- A compendium of instructions containing 'dos and don'ts' for Civil Servants was issued in the **1930s** and collectively called '**Conduct Rules**'.

- After the **recommendations of the Santhanam Committee**, the **Conduct rules were revised and enlarged**, resulting in CCS Conduct Rules 1964. These rules were revised from time to time and followed even today. A few notable revisions include,
 - Requirement of observing courtesy,
 - Prohibiting demanding and accepting dowry,
 - Prohibiting sexual harassment of women employees (After the Supreme Court's [Vishakha guidelines](#))
 - Recently, prohibition to employ children below 14 years of age as domestic help (in view of the amendment to the Prohibition of Child Labour Act).
- The CCS Code of Conduct (1964) explicitly or implicitly enshrined the principles enunciated in the UN declaration, Nolan Committee recommendations, and Code of Good Governance of Spain
- The Conduct rules also prescribe Major and minor penalties for any deviation from the conduct rules.

Other legislative and institutional frameworks

- Institutions such as the Central Vigilance Commission, Central Bureau of Investigation, Comptroller and Auditor General of India, Lokpal & Lokayukta address the issues relating to probity in governance.
- Similarly, India also has few legislative frameworks relating to the probity in governance. These include,
 - [Benami Transactions Prohibition Act](#)
 - [Prevention of Corruption Act](#)
 - [Right to Information Act](#)

Other initiatives

Apart from these initiatives, the government has taken to improve transparency and accountability. For instance,

- **Doing away with interviews** in certain entry-grade positions has tremendously enhanced transparency in the selection process.
- Use of **Information Technology** by municipal bodies **for issuing birth and death certificates and payment of property tax.**

Issues linked to the probity in governance

1. The Committee on Prevention of Corruption (1964) also known as 'Santhanam Committee' had observed:
2. *The lack of moral earnestness, which has been a conspicuous feature of recent years, is perhaps the greatest single factor which hampers the growth of strong traditions of integrity and efficiency."*
3. The norms of 'right conduct' cannot be enforced through the rigid enforcement of laws and rules alone. For instance,
 1. Values can not be codified and are subject to interpretation, situations of conflict do arise.
 2. Honesty can't simply be a mandate emanating out of a government order. Instead, it has to come from within. Changes in attitudes are the key.
4. The entire process of awarding the penalties under the CCS conduct rules is rather tedious and time-consuming.

Suggestions to improve probity in governance

1. **Avoid conflict of interest in all circumstances** and at all times. It can be avoided by the following steps,
 1. The official position should not be used for private purposes.
 2. Government functionaries should be careful about their relationships with stakeholders
 3. Decisions should never be driven by gains for a select few or specific segments of society.
2. **Regarding penalties:** Procedural issues in the CCS conduct rules can be addressed by laying down the timelines for each stage of the process and more importantly by monitoring that the timelines
3. There is no code of Ethics prescribed for civil servants in India, although such codes exist in other countries. So, the Indian government should take proactive steps in creating one.
4. The Consultation Paper on 'Probity in Governance' issued in 2001 by the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution highlighted certain necessary suggestions. These include,
 1. A law is necessary for providing the **confiscation of illegally acquired assets of public servants**,
 2. India has to strengthen the Criminal Judicial System.
 3. Enactment of certain essential legislations such as a
 - i. **Public Interest Disclosure Act** – The Act encourages and facilitates the disclosure of information by public officials about suspected wrongdoing in the public sector
 - ii. **Freedom of information Act** – The Act will facilitate full or partial disclosure of previously unreleased information and documents controlled by the government.
5. Apart from these the accountability and transparency can be enhanced by
 1. Minimizing the discretions in various functions
 2. More extensive use of Information technology in all fields of governance
 3. Making Citizens' charter more elaborate with clear timelines for delivery of services and related activities

There is a strong legal and institutional framework for ensuring probity in India. It needs to be strengthened and made more effective by nudging people to follow the laws of the land and making punishments for the delinquents very severe.

Climate induced migration – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

Climate induced migration (both internal and external) is a stark testimony to the unsustainable global development model that we have followed for years. The climate change crisis is now forcing people to flee their homes across the world.

Migrants from Africa are risking their lives to cross the Mediterranean and get to Europe. Large numbers of people in South Asia are migrating within their nations, seeking a livelihood snatched away by global warming.

Hence, it is high time we address this challenge of climate induced migration.

What is Climate induced migration?

As per International Organization of Migration (IOM), climate-induced migration is referred to as,

the movement of a person or groups of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive change in the environment due to climate change, are obliged to leave their habitual place of residence, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, within a State or across an international border

Climate migration is thus a subcategory of environmental migration; it defines a singular type of environmental migration, where the change in the environment is due to climate change.

Note: As of now, there is no legal or internationally accepted definition of climate-induced migration. And it is a subtype of climate-induced movement.

Must Read: [Types of climate induced movement](#)

How climate change causes migration?

Climate change induces migration in the following ways:

- The intensification of natural disasters.
- Increased warming and drought that affects agricultural production and access to clean water
- Rising sea levels make coastal areas uninhabitable and increase the number of sinking island states. (44% of the world's population lives within 150 kilometers of the coast).
- Competition over natural resources may lead to conflict and in turn migration.
- **Scale of climate induced migration**

Global scenario

- **The World Economic Forum** finds that between 2008 and 2016, extreme weather events forced over 20 million people each year to become climate refugees.
- **The World Bank** estimates that by 2050, 1.2 billion people could become environmental refugees. Over 40 million climate migrants are expected in South Asia alone.
- **According to the UN**, disasters and geophysical hazards have triggered an average 3.1 million displacements a year since 2008.

Scenario in India

India is very vulnerable to climate induced migration problem. It ranks 7th in the [Global Climate Risks Index](#) 2021.

- There is now a much higher scale of migration from the hills, with entire ghost villages or empty habitations scattered across the Himalayas. According to 2011 census figures, of 16,793 villages in the state 1,053 have no inhabitants and 405 villages have less than 10 residents.
- Due to Cyclone Phailin, which ravaged the coastal state of Odisha in 2013, the state witnessed an unprecedented scale of migration of fishing communities that had otherwise been based there for decades.
- In 2018, environmental disasters caused over 2.7 million displacements.
- 45 million, in India alone, will be forced to migrate from their homes due to climate disasters by 2050 in a business-as-usual scenario.

Must Read: [Types of climate induced migration in India](#)

Issues/Challenges

Global

- **Lack of a clear definition:** There is a lack of clarity around definitions relating to human migration in the context of climate change. Moreover, migration can be induced by a complex interplay of multiple factors of which climate change may only be one of them.
- **Lack of resources:** The UNHCR has thus far refused to grant these people refugee status, instead designating them as “environmental migrants,” in large part because it lacks the resources to address their needs.
- **Lack of data:** A persistent lack of data is one of the primary challenges to measuring the relation between migration and the environment, while data collection on migration and the environment represents a challenge in itself.

For India

- **Poverty and size:** The sheer size of the country and levels of poverty provide fertile grounds for climate-induced migration. A large majority of the country’s poor people live in rural areas, which are most prone to climate-driven shocks due to their low adaptive capacity.
- **Rising rural distress and the urban-centric nature of economic growth** means migration is increasingly from rural to urban areas. Climate change will further push more people to move to cities.
- **The unplanned expansion of Indian cities** makes them more susceptible to climate change’s effects. But the significance of rural-urban migration will rise in the future as agriculture-dependent livelihoods come under increasing climatic stress, and urban areas will continue to support the growing number of people.

Implications

- **Migrants lack representation and rights:** Climate migrants often lack representation, residency rights, or social entitlements and hence find themselves clubbed into the category of illegal immigrants, with little or no effort made by the authorities to discern their motivation for migration.
- **Social conflict:** Climate change is fuelling social conflicts — the UNHCR finds that 80% of displaced people worldwide live in areas with acute food insecurity. The desperation over existential resources is sharpening struggles.
- **Human trafficking:** Displacement or rise in migration due to disasters has raised concerns on increasing human trafficking. **For e.g.:** The UN Environment Programme

estimates that trafficking goes up by 20-30 percent during disasters. Incidences of human traffickers being arrested or tracked and girls being rescued spiked during or post-disaster in **Indian states**, particularly in Odisha, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.

- **Risk of the complete disappearance** of some Small Island Developing States (SIDS) due to sea-level rise opens new questions about the territorial sovereignty of these disappearing island States, as well as the human rights of islanders who could effectively become stateless.
- **Increased vulnerability:** Large movements of people from areas affected by climate shocks and stresses into densely populated areas can also create new risks, like limited access to basic services and infrastructure, increased exposure to communicable and vector-borne diseases, etc.

Suggestions/measures

Global

- **Climate-resilient solutions:** It is essential to invest in building local climate resilience and protecting community economies. Solutions like rooftop water harvesting, community ponds etc can work really well.
- **Funding and support:** Most of the world's unsustainable increase in global temperatures was produced by wealthy, industrialised countries in Europe and North America. There should be a large pool of funds from these advanced economies to support developing nations, facing the brunt of the climate crisis now.
- **Improving the migratory process:** Research is needed to determine the best way to improve the migratory process itself—be it increasing migration monitors, providing safer modes of transport, and consolidating and expanding destination country integration resources.

India

We need to respond to this climate-induced migration through a pragmatic mix of climate action and more inclusive development policies.

- In rural areas, this would involve **supporting the livelihoods of people and strengthening social support systems**, particularly for women, children, and Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe populations. We already have an extensive net of social security measures, including the PDS, NREGA, and the ICDS, which cater to different population segments.
- We must **invest in ecological infrastructure** which safeguards local economic well-being. This can be achieved via MGNREGA scheme.
- Public policy response requires **creating more inclusive and resilient cities** that provide poor migrants and their families with decent and dignified jobs, affordable housing, access to health and education, and improved water and sanitation facilities to help them deal with climate shocks and improve their lot.
 - Higher urbanisation, if properly managed, can generate **greater economic prosperity** and create more plural urban spaces and communities.

Must Read: [International agreements on climate induced migration](#)

Way forward

The world needs to act swiftly to develop an international framework dealing with climate-induced migration so that people forced to move because of climate change stay protected.

Issues Associated with the Oil Palm Promotion – Explained, Pointwise

Introduction

Recently, the government announced National Mission on Edible Oils- Oil Palm. This mission, with a total outlay of Rs. 11000 crores, aims at making the country self-sufficient, by boosting the production of domestic oil palm. The mission plans to raise oil palm cultivation to one million hectares by 2025-26 and 1.7-1.8 million hectares by 2029-30. However, there are many ecological and viability-related issues that may act as hurdles in achieving the objectives of the mission.

About National Mission on Edible Oils- Oil Palm

- It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**. It aims to **increase the domestic area and productivity** of oilseeds and Oil Palm. Likewise, it will reduce India's dependence on oil imports.
- The mission has a **special focus on the North-eastern region** and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- **Target:** The mission hopes to increase the area under oil palm by an additional 6.5 lakh hectares by 2025-26. It also has a target to increase the production of crude palm oil to 11.2 lakh tonnes by 2025-26 and up to 28 lakh tonnes by 2029-30.

Read more – [National Mission on Edible Oils – Oil Palm](#)

Need of National Mission on Edible Oils- Oil Palm

India consumes 10% of the total global production of palm oil, however, it is still a net importer of palm oil. India produces less than 0.7 million tonnes of palm oil annually. Since domestic production is not sufficient to meet the demand, India **imports** around 9 million tonnes of palm oil annually.

Most palm oil imports in India originate from **Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand**, accounting for over 90% of total imported volumes in 2019 and 2020.

Demand for palm oil is driven by **high consumption** due to its various usage in the **food industry** in India. It is a raw material for the Indian bakery industry, which is projected to reach \$12 billion by 2024.

According to FAO's **State of Food Security And Nutrition in the World report**, 194.4 million people are still undernourished in India and palm oil provides a cheap solution to address the issue.

Significance of the mission

- **Food security and nutrition:** Global production and demand for palm oil are increasing rapidly. The cultivation of palm oil is more advantageous than other vegetable crops like soy, sunflower, and mustard, with 4-10 times the output per unit of land. This makes its cultivation critical to global food security and nutrition.
- **Low prices and neutral taste:** which enhances oil accessibility to people below poverty lines.
- **Versatile nature:** it can be easily blended with mustard, coconut, groundnut, and sesame, oil which are locally produced and traditionally used vegetable oils in Indian cooking.
- **Land availability:** Land identified for oil palm plantations in northeastern States is already cleared for cultivation.

- **Suitable climatic condition:** apart from land availability, the region possesses climatic conditions suitable for palm oil cultivation.

Previous attempts to boost oil palm production

- **OPAE:** The Government of India had also supported a Special Program on Oil Palm Area Expansion (OPAE) under [RKVY](#) during the year 2011-12 with an objective to bring 60,000 hectares under Oil Palm cultivation.
- **NMOOP:** The National Mission on Oilseeds and Oil Palm (NMOOP) was launched during the 12th plan, in which Mini Mission-II (MM-II) was dedicated to oil palm area expansion and productivity increase. It is being implemented in 13 states which include Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Goa.

Read more – [Previous schemes for palm oil](#)

Why Previous attempts failed?

- **Long gestation period and high level of investments**– A palm is a monoculture crop with a long gestation period. This makes it more suitable for corporates and not for small farmers.
- **Small landholding**– Indian farmers generally have very small farm holdings which make investment difficult.
- **Lack of private investment**– corporate sector investments in oil palm are limited compared with Malaysia and Indonesia.

What are the issues associated with the mission?

Some members of civil society and activists have raised concerns about introducing oil palm in biodiverse regions such as Northeast states, Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

1. **Destruction of rainforests and native biodiversity**- The focus areas of the mission are biodiversity hotspots and ecologically fragile. Oil palm plantations would denude forest cover and destroy the habitat of endangered wildlife, as witnessed in Southeast Asia.
2. **Impact on community ownership of tribal lands**– the mission does not focus on community ownership of land in these regions. Thus, it may detach tribal from their identity linked with the community ownership of land.
3. **Water stress**– oil palm is a water-guzzling crop, which requires 300 liters of water per tree per day. Thus, it can lead to water stress in the region.
4. **Invasive species**– The palm is an invasive species. It's not a natural forest product of northeastern India. Thus, its impact on biodiversity as well as on soil conditions has to be analyzed.
5. **Past experience:** Andaman and Nicobar Islands have some prior experiences in palm oil plantations. A 1,593-hectare area on Little Andaman used to be cultivated. However, it was abandoned on the instructions of the Supreme Court, as much of the lands were protected or reserve forests.
6. **Examples of foreign countries:** Sri Lanka, with similarly suitable climatic conditions, has stopped palm oil plantations because it became an invasive species, threatening native plants and animals. Furthermore, it dried up local streams.

Conclusion

The oil palm crop is probably better suited for states such as Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Odisha. There, it can replace paddy and be grown using drip irrigation, mulching, and other water-saving practices. India is anyway producing too much rice, and any diversification must be welcomed.

Furthermore, If similar subsidies and support are extended to oilseeds that are indigenous to India and suited for dryland agriculture, they can help achieve self-reliance without dependence on oil palm.

ForumIAS

[Yojana August Summary] Indian Bureaucracy – Explained, pointwise**Introduction**

Bureaucracy is the backbone of the administrative machinery of the country. Indian Bureaucracy forms the permanent executive branch of the government. They have played a crucial role in many national activities such as the conduct of free and fair elections, disaster response, construction and maintenance of critical infrastructures such as highways and railways.

Above all, the role of bureaucracy in the preservation of national unity and integrity is unimaginable. This is why our Indian Constitution through Articles 310, 311, and 312 confers the protection from political interference and unwarranted harassment.

What is the History of the Civil Services in India?

1. From a reading of the historical literature, **public administration** in India **can be traced back to the manuscripts of Arthashastra written by Kautilya.**
2. In modern times, the original conception of the 'civil service' can be **traced back to the Royal Charters** which gave the East India Company the powers to raise a cadre of troops – for both civilian and military purposes. These officers gradually transformed from trade officers to administrative officers who signed 'covenants' thereby, being part of the 'covenanted civil service'.
3. Later it became 'covenanted' and 'uncovenanted' civil service. The major difference between them was,
 - a. **Covenanted civil service:** This is the category of officers who were recruited from England sent to India.
 - b. **Uncovenanted or subordinate service:** This includes the large category of Indian officers in subordinate positions.
4. This **uncovenanted service was later called the Indian Civil Service (ICS)** established to handle the affairs on behalf of the Queen. The Civil services **soon became the proverbial 'steel frame'** to maintain control over the vast British Empire.
5. The introduction of **competitive exams** in the mid-1800s was an important development. It **gave primacy to merit-based appointments** as opposed to privilege-based appointments through a referral system.
6. The commissions that were set up in reforming the public services – from the **Macaulay Committee to the Islington Committee to the Lee Commission, strongly suggested that the Statutory Public Service Commission** be brought into force.
7. During the **Constituent Assembly Debates (CAD)**, there were detailed **discussions and arguments about** the continuity, role and loyalty of Indian civil servants. But the debates of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (almost single-handedly) made India to set up the Civil Services in Independent India. He supported the Civil Services, especially All India Services (AIS), on the following grounds:
 - a. He expressed his opinion on civil services as "In point of patriotism, in point of loyalty, in point of sincerity, and in point of ability, India cannot have a substitute".
 - b. Further, he also mentioned, that without the "civil services there would be chaos" in the nation.

- c. Above all, he mentioned that an efficient All India Service will have “to express their opinion without fear or favour” of the political class.
8. Post-independence, India adopted the socialist-welfare model of development, which increased the scope of government’s interference in all key sectors of the economy. After the economic reforms of 1991, the role of government is getting shifted to facilitator of services.

Read more: [Economic reforms in 1991 – Explained, pointwise](#)

Early Indians in the Civil Service

Until 1922, post the Montagu Chelmsford Reforms, the **exam was conducted only in London**. This greatly restricted the access of Indians to clear the examination. However, there was a fair share of Indians who started clearing the exams.

1. The **first Indian to clear the ICS** exam was **Satyendra Nath Tagore** in the year 1864.
2. The other notable names being Bihari Lal Gupta and Romesh Chandra Dutt, etc.
 - **Note:** RC Dutt later became the **President of the Indian National Congress** in 1899 and wrote the pioneering book “**The Economic History of India**“.
3. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose did not join the Indian Civil Service even after clearing the exam. This shows the strong ideological stance Bose took during the freedom struggle.
4. **Sir Benegal Narasinga Rau** was another eminent personality among the ICS who was **appointed as the Constitutional Advisor** on 1st July 1946 over a year before India became independent. Later, he became the **first judge of the International Court of Justice from India**.

What are the fundamental tenets of Civil Services?

Some of the fundamental tenets of a good bureaucracy are **political neutrality, objectivity in decision-making, empathy, equity**, etc.

Further, **Constitutionalism** also matters because every civil servant must be guided by the letter and spirit of our Constitution.

Ethics in public administration are important because civil servants are often holding offices that give them a lot of power and authority. Therefore, an officer’s moral compass is key for good governance.

Read more: [\[Yojana August Summary\] Probity in Governance – Explained, pointwise](#)

What is the reason behind the success of Civil Services in India?

1. One of the major reasons for the success of the Civil Service in India can be attributed to the **traditions imparted and followed by career bureaucrats**. Impartiality, incorruptibility, spirit of service are some of the virtues that are seen in civil servants even today.
2. The esprit de corps (a **feeling of pride and mutual loyalty**) and the camaraderie (**mutual trust and friendship**) among the civil servants’ fraternity have been the **biggest strength** of our Civil Service.
3. Traditions such as **not letting down the subordinate officers will instil faith in them**, and **creating a sense of intimacy between batches** have been of tremendous help for the civil servants in the face of dealing with adversity.

What are the Constitutional provisions that deal with the Civil Services?

Articles 310, 311, and 312 of the Indian Constitution pertain to services under the Union and State.

1. **Article 310:** It enshrines that **civil servants of the Union and All-India Services are appointed by the President of India** and civil servants at the **State level are appointed by the Governor** of the State. They continue to **hold office as per the pleasure of the President and Governor**, respectively. Therefore, they have the **security of tenure**.
2. **Article 311:** It mentions the **procedures and conditions for removal, dismissal from service, and reduction in rank**, thus, ensuring due process of law. This ensures that civil servants are **protected from political interference** and undue harassment.
3. **Article 312:** This provision lays down the All-India Services of India.
4. Further, The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and the State Public Service Commissions are **constitutional bodies**.

Few examples of Civil Servants acting as role models for the Youth

Civil servants have played a crucial role in many national activities. Thus, they inspire large sections of the student population and people. Few prominent civil servants are,

- **SR Sankaran:** He was accorded as 'people's IAS officer' for his efforts in **abolishing bonded labour** and his pioneering work on **welfare schemes to uplift the marginalised sections, especially with the Safai Karamchari Andolan**. He is one of the very few civil servants in whose name a statue is erected and is a household name in Andhra Pradesh even today.
- **BN Yugandhar:** He had a mass following for his contributions such as the **₹2 per kg rice scheme** to the watershed development projects to mentoring young students at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration.
- **IPS Madhukar Shetty and IAS Harsh Gupta:** Rich planters had encroached on the land of poor villagers of Chikkamagaluru. Both these officers successfully reallocated the encroached land to the villagers. As a mark of gratitude, the **residents named the entire village as Gupta-Shetty halli**.

What are the reforms brought by the government to improve transparency and accountability in civil services?

The **Second Administrative Reforms Commission** (headed by Veerappa Moily) discussed the shortcomings and **suggests improvements regarding recruitment, performance, and result-oriented bureaucracy**.

Similarly, **various committees** over the years **have suggested changes and improvements** to the civil services regarding recruitment, mid-career training, capacity-building, the impetus for specialisation, efficiency, accountability, etc. The government from time to time implemented few reforms. Such as,

1. **Legislations** such as the **Right to Information Act, 2005** lays down rules and procedures for a citizen's right to information, thus creating more transparency and accountability in governance.
2. **Citizen's Charters:** The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances in Government of India (DARPG) has initiated Citizen's charter in India. By including the Vision and Mission Statements, it ensures that the needs and grievances of the user, that is, citizens, are met.

3. In the last decade, several reforms have been undertaken. These include,
- The **introduction of lateral entry** to have expert consultants at the Joint Secretary level,
 - **Implementation of Mission Karmayogi**: It is a National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB). It will lay the foundation for the capacity building of civil servants so that they remain entrenched in Indian Culture while they learn the best practices across the world.

Must read: [Major Administrative Reforms by the govt](#)

Conclusion

At present, the debate is about 'generalists' versus 'specialists'. But many fresh graduates from IITs, IIMs, NLUs and other professionals like doctors, chartered accountants, etc. appear for the UPSC Civil Services every year. This has brought fresh energy and ideas into the bureaucracy. They bring with them their professional expertise, adding richly to public administration. Thus, they are slowly transforming the landscape of public administration in our nation.