

9pm Compilation

August, 2021 (Fourth Week)

General Studies - 1

1. Open Doors not Walls
2. On India's population, let the data speak
3. Kabul Echoes In Lucknow
4. Indian treasures at home and abroad

General Studies - 2

1. India must negotiate well on free trade pacts: Experts
2. Missing School, Missing Meals
3. New, Dangerous Quad Around India
4. Our flawed e-com policy sends out awful signals
5. SC allowing women to sit for NDA test is a welcome [push for a substantive gender](#) reset in the armed forces
6. Focusing on diseases sidelined by Covid 19
7. It is time to end judicial feudalism in India
8. An unworthy Chinese example that India ought not to emulate
9. Give it a rest: SC reminds lower courts, cops to avoid unnecessary arrests. But bureaucratic habits die hard
10. Finding a healthy way to cook
11. Why the citizens' assembly is an idea whose time has come
12. Why the post-pandemic school is an opportunity to reinvent learning?
13. Capital Disadvantages: Delhi & Washington DC
14. Why India needs an NHS-like healthcare model?
15. A surfeit of sero surveys
16. Fourth evacuation from Kabul since 1992 & The legal challenges in recognising the Taliban
17. Don't chase the mirage of iron-fortified rice
18. Income and quotas
19. Helping and hindering justice
20. The class divide that threatens to thwart our educational goals
21. What happens to India's 'pluralism' after Taliban takeover of Afghanistan
22. Higher education in regional languages won't be easy
23. Explained: The Malabar Exercise of Quad nations, and why it matters to India
24. Beyond courts: Vendetta politics muddies the logic for speedier resolution of cases [against](#) MPs, MLAs
25. Covering the gaps in the game of data
26. Making sure that girls don't drop out of school
27. India's tuition Pandemic (On India's mushrooming ed-tech sector)

General Studies - 3

1. How can India's wool sector be revived
2. How we're beneficiaries of suspension of human rights
3. What it'll take to achieve goods exports of \$400 billion?
4. India needs an ecosystem that's conducive to MSME expansion
5. India remains a very difficult country for dying companies
6. India pivot from Look east to trade West
7. Tauktae, Yass and Planning for the next
8. Telcos need three more bold decisions

9 PM Compilation for the Month of August (Fourth Week), 2021

9. Don't let the new e-commerce rules ruin innovation
10. Explore unconventional sources of edible oil
11. Climate change, a catalyst for Arctic cooperation
12. The digital future of our country is distinctly being re-imagined
13. The lure of 10 million jobs a year (On agri sector)
14. The dangers of India's palm oil push
15. Switch it off!: How light pollution disorients ecosystems
16. Climate crisis putting a billion children at 'extremely high risk,' warns new UN report
17. India has done well to ratify the Montreal accord amendment
18. It's time for Industry 4.0
19. A way of diluting credit discipline (On RBI's current account circular)
20. Inside the RBI's digital currency dream (On CBDC)
21. Negotiating the new global climate policy
22. Financing India's green future
23. The clean-up crew we need (On vulture conservation)
24. Protecting consumers, the heart of finance
25. Dealing with the discarded: E-Waste management in India
26. Facial recognition spreads, concern over absence of data protection law
27. Explained: Haryana's changes to land law; why they have been criticised
28. Asset monetisation — execution is the key
29. Why agrarian reforms should go beyond meeting demands of the agitating farmers

General Studies Paper - 1

General Studies - 1

1. Open Doors not Walls

Source: [Indian Express](#)

GS1: Modern Indian History from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present-significant events, personalities, issues.

Relevance: Gandhian Values

Synopsis: It is not enough to protect the precincts of Sabarmati Ashram, we must go beyond that. Adopting the **Gandhian way of building a mutually nurturing society, should be the aim.**

Introduction:

The Mahatma Gandhi Ashram at Sabarmati has always attracted universal respect in India and outside. It has received and welcomed a wide range of individuals.

Significance of Sabarmati ashram:

1. The Ashram is where our history of achieving freedom for millions with non-violent means was made. It is where we experimented with a future way of living.
2. The Ashram inspired **satyagraha and carved pathways** to peace.
3. It is our common and shared responsibility to protect, preserve and promote.

Along with the **sanctity of the ashram**, India needs to preserve the simplicity, logic, and spirit of Gandhiji's ideas and values.

What should be done to preserve the sanctity of the ashram?

Any change to the Ashram should be made with consensus, collaboration with each other. Also, the suggestions and protest letters about **the redevelopment plan** are most valuable to continue this open and peaceful process to achieve a consensus.

Hence, we can say, Gandhi Ashrams will not work for the betterment of India's society if they are not aligned to the Gandhi way.

What is the Gandhian way?

First, we should conceive of Gandhi as a **way of thinking** about our society, economy, and politics. The Gandhi way is **self-reliance at the local level** and full employment at the household level.

Second, Non-violence has been a force of its own that is **connected with wider day-to-day political, social, and economic struggles** for the freedom of the poor and women workers.

Third, it is a way towards **sustainability** and a near-zero carbon footprint. It implies **local ownership** of the means of production.

Fourth, it calls for a broad-based and **inclusive social and economic democracy**. The Gandhi way is to build peace at home, in the neighborhood, and in the world in which dalits, minorities, Adivasis, women, and workers have a leading role to play.

Conclusion:

As a society, we are rushing towards mass suicide, with investments that lead to no jobs, and infrastructure that pollutes air, food, and water. The ashrams should take the economy and the **citizens to self-reliance, to full and meaningful employment**, to sustainability, and to local cooperative control of the means of production.

2. On India's population, let the data speak

Source: [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS paper 1 – Population and associated issues

Relevance: Population control measures have to be rational and focus on the welfare-based approach

Synopsis:

Focusing on the education and empowerment of women can help states to achieve desired fertility rates.

Introduction

The recently released empirical data from the National Family Health Survey 2019-20 (NFHS-5) for 22 states and Union territories provides that except for three states — Bihar, Manipur and Meghalaya —the fertility rates have gone below the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman.

Read more: [The Power of Population for Economies](#)

Key findings of the NFHS-5 data:

- In all the seven Northeastern states, the fertility rates range from 1.1 in Sikkim to 1.9 in Assam, except Manipur (2.2) and Meghalaya (2.9).
- The TFR in the Union territories of Lakshwadeep and Jammu & Kashmir, which have sizeable Muslim populations, have gone substantially below the replacement level with 1.4 children per woman.
- *Among populous states*
 - The TFR has gone down to 1.6 children in West Bengal.
 - It is only 1.7 each in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.
 - Even in Bihar, where the TFR is 3, there is a relative decline in fertility from 3.4 in NFHS-4 (2015-16).

About NFHS – 4

1. In NFHS-4 itself, as many as **23 states and Union Territories**, including all the states in the south region, **showed fertility below the replacement level**.
2. In Uttar Pradesh, too, there is a declining trend in TFR from 3.8 in NFHS-3 (2005-06) to 2.7 in NFHS-4 (2015-16).
3. The NFHS-4 (2015-16) shows interesting **linkages of fertility with education and economic well-being**.
 - For example, women with no schooling have an average of 3.1 children, compared with 1.7 children for women with 12 or more years of schooling.

Read more:

- [No need for a drastic population policy](#)
- [Population populism: UP draft population bill fails tests of necessity, intrusiveness](#)

Outcomes from the NFHS report:

Fertility rates are **reflective of the progress in respective states** on schooling, income levels, decline in neonatal and infant mortality rates and increase in the contraceptive prevalence rate. States with relatively higher TFR like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh need to work on these fronts.

Read more: [Population control measures in India – Explained, pointwise](#)

Terms to know:

- [National Family Health Survey \(NFHS\)](#)
- [National Population Policy](#)
- [Total Fertility Rate \(TFR\)](#)

3. Kabul Echoes In Lucknow

Source: [Times of India](#)

Syllabus: GS 1: Communalism, regionalism & secularism

Synopsis: India needs to reject Islamophobia and has to **assert liberal democracy in every aspect of life**.

Introduction:

Recently, India witnessed widespread Islamophobia. This is evident from the instances like Cattle slaughter rules, the love jihad law and vigilante attacks on interfaith couples, anti-conversion campaigns, etc.

This is because the religious majoritarianism in India has resulted in excess use of religious mobilisation in politics. For instance, the present Lok Sabha has only 5% Muslim MPs, 90% are Hindu. As a secular country, India needs to reject Islamophobia and start to **asserting liberal democracy in every aspect of life**.

Taliban and Islamophobia:

- Two members of All India Muslim Personal Law Board **praised the Taliban** for “showing courage” and “creating history”.
- During the monsoon session of the Uttar Pradesh assembly, **UP Chief Minister** has said that all those “shamelessly **supporting Taliban should be exposed**”.
- Further, **A sedition case has been filed against an MP** for allegedly referring to Taliban members as “freedom fighters”.

Read more regarding the recent developments in Afghanistan:

1. [The script of the new endgame in Afghanistan](#)
2. [Return of Taliban has implications for India](#)
3. [New Delhi's Af-Pak: Old friends versus old foes: Should India accept Taliban, betray Afghans or support resistance movements like Saleh's?](#)
4. [History over Geography](#)

Religion in the eyes of founding fathers:

India's founders drafted a Constitution in which **religion was viewed as an entirely private individual choice**, not the basis of law or governance or politics.

Gandhi was intensely spiritual and mobilised people by calls to a higher moral and spiritual cause. His prayer meetings were consistently non-denominational and held outdoors.

What India needs to do?

India should not go back into medieval religious wars.

For modern 21st century India, there can be **only one holy book, the Constitution of India**, not Sharia law or the Manusmriti.

The return of the Taliban is an occasion for India to **strongly assert modern democratic values** at all levels of society.

Terms to know

- [Sedition](#)
- [Taliban](#)

4. Indian treasures at home and abroad

Source: [Business Standard](#)

Syllabus: GS 1 – Art and Culture

Relevance: To understand India historical artefacts.

Synopsis: Historically significant sites, artefacts and papers in India and the UK should be made accessible to wider audiences.

Introduction

Recently, the National Gallery of Australia has decided to return 14 ancient Indian paintings and sculptures, including a 12th-century sculpture of a dancing child-saint called Sambandar.

Read more: [National Gallery of Australia returns 14 artworks including Chola idols](#)

Indian artefacts in foreign soil

Many Indian art & other valuables were acquired by East India Company & officials between 1858-1947. These are exhibited in:

- **Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) in London.** The art objects generally belong from the 2nd century BC to the 15th century. For example
 - A **Shiva Nataraja sculpture:** It is made of a copper alloy and listed as a 12th century piece from Tamil Nadu. This piece was “donated” in 1935 by Lord Amphill who was the Governor of Madras from 1900-1906
 - Another representative piece was part of treasures excavated at Coimbatore, dates back to the 15th century. This item was taken to the V&A in 1927 by Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India from 1898-1905.
- **The Royal Geographical Society in London:** It has priceless drawings of India’s east and west coasts. These were taken by surveyors on board British ships going up and down the east and west coasts of the Indian peninsula in the 17th and 18th centuries.
- **British Library in London:** It holds archives and records of the East India Company (1600-1858), the Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India (1784-1858) and the India Office (1858-1947). The library has the written records on the deliberations among the East India Company Military Board members about roads, buildings and irrigation works. These include engineering and funding details for bridges on the Grand Trunk Road to Peshawar and digging of the Upper Ganges Canal close to Roorkee in 1842.

Destruction by invaders

The arts were often targeted by invaders with misplaced zeal against idolatry. For instance,

- In Sarnath, noses and faces on the sculptures have been chipped away.
- In Elephanta caves where Statues taking back to the 7th century have been disfigured.
- The large scale ruins of palaces of Vijaynagar Empire at Hampi.

Challenges associated with bringing artefacts to India

- Given the distance and cost of travel, it is out of reach for historians, academic community and the general public.
- The chances of the museums returning the artifacts to India are very less.
- Inter-museum loans are difficult, given the risks of theft during transportation.

So, “The wonder that was India” cannot be experienced by many Indians

Way Forward:

The government can push for a 10 part, 1 hour each documentary series, with 3-D holographic images for artefacts for a real-life experience of History.



General Studies Paper - 2

General Studies - 2

1. India must negotiate well on free trade pacts: Experts

Source: [Business Standard](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 – Bilateral and multilateral agreements involving India.

Relevance: Negotiating Free Trade Agreement (FTA's)

Synopsis: India is on the verge of signing FTA's with some important nations. Let's have a brief look at the subject.

Context: Recently, commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal had said that India is at a 'positive momentum' with respect to inking trade deals with the UK, Australia, Canada, Bangladesh, EU, GCC nations, and Israel.

Suggestions by the experts on FTAs:

- **Focus on reduction in tariff** – Experts say that reduction in tariff is equally crucial while working towards any deal.
- **Better preparation**– We need to provide better opportunities to other countries than the previous agreement.
- **Discussion on the new subject**– we should not restart discussions in areas where consensus has been reached. Starting discussion around areas where there were differences will be a step in the right direction.

For further read – [Free Trade Agreements \(FTAs\): Challenges & opportunities – Explained, pointwise](#)

Why the urgency now?

- **India's exit from RCEP**– This acted as a catalyst to sign better deals with other nations.
- **Export opportunities**– due to a consistent surge in exports over the last few months, experts believe that such deals are important to continue the momentum.

Benefits of FTAs:

- **Attracting investment**– These FTAs will be effective in attracting investment in the country through PLI scheme.
- **Boost Competition**– FTAs will create an open market system, which leads to an increase in competition in the economy.

Terms to know: [RCEP](#), [PLI scheme](#)

2. Missing School, Missing Meals

Source: [Times of India](#)

Syllabus: GS2- Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources

Relevance: Covid-19 and its impact on the education sector

Synopsis: The education sector in India is under pressure from pandemic-related issues, as identified by a parliamentary committee on Education. Let's have a brief look at issues in the education sector of India.

Context: Recently, the Parliamentary committee on education prepared a report on the impact of Covid-19 on India's education system.

Findings of the report:

- Some 24 crore children have missed school for over a year.
- 77% of children have no access to online instruction.
- In any case, 'Online education is not real education.'
- Dropouts have increased at the secondary level

Other issues in the education sector:

1. **Gender divide**– There are more dropouts among boys than girls. Boys are abandoning school to earn a living – sometimes, after Covid, as their family's chief breadwinner.
2. **Digital divide**– The report admits the yawning digital divide that has deprived most children of instruction during the lockdown. Further, the benefits of online education are going to select few rich people.
3. **Effect on primary education**– the batches of 2020 and 2021 have effectively not taken the first step towards literacy and numeracy, by enrolling in class 1. A large proportion of those enrolled earlier will not have acquired the skills or forgotten what they acquired.
4. **Effect on health and nutrition**– physical growth and nourishment have been declining among India's children for several years. The post-pandemic plight of the poor will multiply the damage. The Centre for Science and Environment estimates that 37.5 crore children might suffer weight and growth loss

Must read: [What ails Mid Day Meal scheme's implementation](#)

3. New, Dangerous Quad Around India

Source: [Times of India](#)

Syllabus: GS-2: India and its Neighborhood- Relations.

Relevance: Changing global order and emerging security threats for India

Synopsis: The combination of Taliban-led Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran & China is a grave threat for India.

Background

- With the Taliban well and truly in control in Afghanistan, countries in the region have already started a push for power and stakes in the new emerging order.
- **China** was one of the first to **welcome the change** in Afghanistan. China stated that "Taliban have repeatedly expressed their hope to develop good relations with China, and we welcome this."
- Similarly, **Pakistan** too **welcomed the Taliban** on national TV by stating that the Taliban has broken the chains of mental slavery in Afghanistan.
- **Iran**, reacting to the Taliban takeover, stated that the "defeat" of the United States in neighboring Afghanistan should be transformed into **an opportunity**. Further, it encouraged all groups in Afghanistan to work towards national unity as a "neighbouring and brotherly" country.
- **Russia** was more cautious and restrained in its reaction, but has kept its embassy in Kabul functional to **"maintain contacts with Taliban"**.

What are the Imminent threats for India due to changing global order in Afghanistan?

Russia, due to its old and traditional ties with India along with military and diplomatic goodwill, could be counted as a reliable ally. However, it needs to be remembered that Russia,

twice this year, didn't include India in Afghan peace talks. Also, **Russia-Pakistan's military cooperation** in recent times and close coordination between Russia and China are issues of concern to India.

Iran, Iran's hatred for Israel and the US has posed a diplomatic challenge for India. The threat of a military conflict between the US and Iran over attacks on oil tankers in the Persian Gulf, alleged attacks by Iranian drones on Saudi airfields, the ongoing Yemen crisis, or the killing of General Soleimani, each of these occasions has posed a diplomatic challenge to India with regard to its relations with Iran. Iran is also critically important to India, as the land routes to Afghanistan and the Central Asian region go through Iran only.

China's is definitely not an ally for India, especially since the Galwan valley conflict. Further, it publicly stated opposition to India's participation in the US-led Quad against China in the Indo-Pacific. Whereas, **Pakistan** has upped its ante again after India revoked Article 370 in August 2019.

Regarding Taliban, there is always a clear and present danger to Indian interests in the region. The hijacking of **Indian Airlines Flight IC 814** in December 1999, the fact that Afghan fighters made up to 20-22% of terrorists operating in the state of Jammu and Kashmir are imminent threats from the Taliban.

Conclusion:

If the interests of Pakistan, Taliban-led Afghanistan, China, and, to some extent, Iran converge and unite to forge another Quad, it could pose a security threat unapparelled in independent India.

Last time the Taliban came to power in 1996, China was not in the equation. With China now looking to lock horns, this could well be the biggest threat India has ever faced.

4. Our flawed e-com policy sends out awful signals

Source: [Livemint](#)

GS-2- Statutory, Regulatory, and various Quasi-judicial Bodies.

Relevance: Regulatory regime in India and issues related to it.

Synopsis: India's regulatory framework for e-commerce needs to be market-friendly because its failure to pass this test will go against long-term economic interests.

Introduction:

As a developing economy, India's regulatory ambitions fall short of what defines 'regulation'.

For Further read – [Draft e-commerce rules](#)

Issues with the regulatory regime in India:

- **First**, regulatory agencies operate with varying, ambiguous, and controversial degrees of independence (not fully independent) from the traditional political executive.
- **Second, the absence of a regulator's political autonomy** allows the executive's discretionary and arbitrary controls over the regulatory framework.
- **Third**, complex legal structures can be interpreted differently and end up favoring one set of private players over others. Skewed policy frameworks that tilt in favour of some have been India's specialty over the past 50 odd years.
 - It results in **inefficient allocation of resources and impairs** long-term economic efficiency. The amended **Consumer Protection (E-commerce) Rules, 2020** is a live example of a complicated policy with rule revisions that will attract litigation.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of August (Fourth Week), 2021

- However, the ministry of consumer affairs, food, and public distribution claim the guidelines were framed in response to complaints from consumers and traders.
- Other restrictions on sharing data and barring 'related' companies from selling wares on the same platform seem like rules forged not only **to hinder MNC e-com firms** but also Indian conglomerates.
- **Fourth**, regulations have **additional compliance norms** which overlap and conflict with other regulations.
- **Lastly**, frequent amendments. For instance, e-com rules amended within a year of promulgation with an eye on upcoming elections in Uttar Pradesh.

Conclusion:

Hence, all rules need to be market-friendly, serving all participants equally and the shifting of policy for a particular agenda goes against long-term economic interests.

5. SC allowing women to sit for NDA test is a welcome push for a substantive gender reset in the armed forces

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: **GS 2 – Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population**

Relevance: Understand evolving notions of gender parity

Synopsis: Recent guidelines by SC to allow women candidates to appear for the NDA (National Defence Academy) exam is a welcome step in gender parity. We need to understand all of its dimensions.

SC decision to allow women to sit for the NDA exam is one step further towards push to armed forces to bridge the gender discrimination gap in the armed forces. Even last year, SC asked the government to grant permanent commission to women officers of the army serving under the Short Service Commission, (SSC).

What is the present scenario?

- Women were eligible for entry into the army through the Officers' Training Academy and Indian Military Academy.
- NDA, which recruits cadets fresh out of school (between the ages of 16 and 19), remained an all-male bastion.

Read more: [ITBP inducts first women officers on combat service](#)

Impact of the new moves

SC decision to allow women for the NDA exam comes along with the centre decision to [admit girls to Sainik schools](#). Both decisions will lay a roadmap for substantive change.

1. It has the potential of **attracting more women to professional life** in the military
2. It will **create a wider pool of girls** and young women trained for long, ambitious careers **in the uniformed services**
3. It can help **re-engineer the institutions** of the armed forces, which are by default conceived of as default male spaces.

What is the counter view?

In Ministry of Defence vs Babita Puniya & Others, there were arguments over women being unsuitable for military life. The reason behind that is:

9 PM Compilation for the Month of August (Fourth Week), 2021

- They have to deal with pregnancy, motherhood, domestic obligation towards children and family etc.
- Their physical capability for combat exercise is considered lesser.
- An all-male environment would have to moderate itself in the presence of women.

Read more: [Arms and the Women](#)

What will be the future challenges

Infusion of women cadets might bring some challenges of infrastructure to both Sainik Schools and the NDA

- Change in the training modules, more hiring of women teachers
- Inclusion of gender sensitisation programmes

Way Forward:

There is urgent and necessary work required if institutions are to comply with constitutional requirements of non-discrimination and equality. The defence establishment must also give women, their due, as equal citizens of constitutional democracy.

Read more: [SC rules in favour of permanent commission for women officers in Navy](#)

6. Focusing on diseases sidelined by Covid 19

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 – Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

Relevance: Understand issues around non-communicable diseases. (NCD)

Synopsis: Given the increasing menace of NCD there is an urgent need for a multi-stakeholder approach to handle the impending crisis.

Introduction

The world is struggling with Non-Communicable diseases (NCD). Nearly 71% of all deaths worldwide occur due to NCD such as hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, cancer etc

The top contributors to NCD:

1. **At the Global level:** Top contributors of global deaths are cardiovascular diseases(CVD) such as stroke, heart attack, coronary artery disease. 1/4 of deaths occur because of this, especially among young patients.
2. **Indian subcontinent:** There is a rapid progression of these diseases with a high mortality rate
3. In India, there are high cases of premature loss of life due to NCD in the 30-69 year age group

About government initiatives:

To address the growing burden of NCD, National Health Mission (NHM), in 2010, launched the **National Programme for prevention and control of cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and stroke**. The focus of this programme is to strengthen infrastructure, promote good health, human resource development, early diagnosis, and management & referral services.

How Covid disrupts the NCD services

Because of the rapid spread of Covid, there were disruptions in the management of NCD. According to World Health Organisation (WHO) survey in May 2020, it was found that:

- Low-income countries are the worst affected because of Covid disruption.
- More than 53% of countries have partially or completely disrupted services for hypertension treatment, 49% for diabetes & related complications, 42% for cancer treatment & 31% for cardiovascular emergencies

Reasons for discontinuing the services

- Staff reassigned to support Covid patients
- Postponement of public screening programmes
- Shortage of medicines, technologies etc
- Decreased availability of public transport

Relationship between Covid & NCD

- It was found that persons suffering from both Covid and NCD are at higher risk. Among the NCD, persons with diabetes are in a higher risk category.
- Recent studies show that nearly **one in every two Indians** living with diabetes are unaware of their condition, and they are at **higher risk of dying if they got infected with Covid**. This is because of the uncontrolled glucose level in their blood.

What needs to be done?

1. A paradigm shift in governance towards effective & participatory leadership with strong vision and communication is the need of the hour to tackle this silent epidemic.
2. There is a need to include NCD services in the national Covid preparation strategy. Presently, 42% of lower-income group countries do that
3. India should also include tobacco-related activities to address the burden of NCD
4. India should work on innovations in the campaign strategy for promoting a healthy lifestyle
5. To enhance screening for NCD at the grass-root level. Incentives to ASHA workers for delivery of locally relevant & contextual messages for health promotion are needed.
6. India should ensure access to essential NCD medicine and basic health care services in all primary healthcare facilities.
7. The use of alternative modalities such as online platforms for disseminating information on exercise & mental health management must be made available

Way Forward

- There is an urgent need to adopt a multidisciplinary approach. This should focus on 'primary healthcare' with 'all of the society approach'.
- This should address various challenges like administrative challenges, infrastructure, a strong health workforce & continued access to care for vulnerable people.
- All these can help India achieve the WHO goal of a 25% relative reduction in mortality from NCD by 2025.

Terms to know

- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](https://www.who.int/)

7. It is time to end judicial feudalism in India

Source: [The Hindu](#) and [Indian Express](#)

Subject: GS 2 – Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary

Relevance – To understand the working of Collegium

Synopsis: Recent breaking of deadlock between collegium and GoI is a welcome step. We should take it further to cut on judicial hierarchy.

Introduction:

Recently, the Supreme Court Collegium headed by Chief Justice of India recommended nine names for appointment as judges to the top court, with presidential approval.

They all will soon be appointed. This is the largest number of entries approved in one go.

Read more: [Collegium's list of recommendations to Supreme Court breaks a deadlock – and leaves a trace](#)

Task before collegium

Read more: [The Collegium System – Explained Pointwise](#)

- Given the expectation of the people to deliver complete justice (Article 142), judges have to be careful in their selection process.
- The selection is a difficult task as all judges are senior and meritorious, building consensus around any one of the judges is a difficult task.

Need for transparency

- Norms that are used for selecting judges are of vital public interest.
- There is a need to follow a judicious blend of merit, seniority and interests of the marginalized.
- India is the only country where Judges select judges in higher Judiciary, so the need for transparency is higher.

Issue of Judicial hierarchy

- While higher judiciary works through collegium, norms are different for the subordinate judiciary.
- Article 235 speaks of “control over subordinate courts”, and this creates this notion of sub-feudalism.
- Though the constitution contemplates hierarchy, yet judges are supreme in their Jurisdiction. So one Judge cannot be considered as inferior to the other.
- Though the constitution allows supervision through Annual Confidential Report (ACR's), it does not allow dominance.
- Such attempts at equality were made by courts also. Himachal Pradesh High Court ruled that all the courts in the state other than the high court shall be referred to as district judiciary.

What is needed

- A complete recasting of Article 235 which does away with an expression of “control” powers in the high courts.
- In fact, it is time for Parliament to remove the substantial nomenclature of “subordinate judiciary”.

Way forward

Thus, India needs to focus on transparency in the collegium system. At the same time, we should work to reduce the artificial feudalism that has been created by the judicial hierarchy.

Read more: [Issue of Gender Gap in Judiciary – Explained, Pointwise](#)

Terms to know

- [Article 142](#)

8. An unworthy Chinese example that India ought not to emulate

Source: [Live Mint](#)

Syllabus: GS2- Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries

Relevance: Economic policies of India

Synopsis: India shouldn't become too much restrictive to business by trying to copy recent policy actions of Chinese government.

Background

China's crackdown on businesses has been going on steadily and continually. Initially, it was felt that the target was Jack Ma because he dared to challenge the system in a speech last October. But soon, it became clear that it was not just about Jack Ma or non-bank companies and the systemic risk they posed to China's financial stability. The ruling Communist Party was worried about some businessmen becoming too successful, and hence too powerful, and that they might one day challenge the party's authority.

China's recent crackdown on large businesses

The communist party ordered Jack Ma to step down from the helm of the affairs of a futuristic business-cum-leadership school that he had set up.

Then came China's crackdown on ride-hailing app **DiDi** right after it listed its shares in the US. It was said that Beijing was concerned about the privacy and sovereignty of Chinese data. Overnight, these for-profit businesses were asked to turn themselves into non-profit entities. The country's online recreation and entertainment industry was the next target. They were branded 'moral opium.'

What are the reasons for such actions?

- **Threats from big capital:** According to some journalists and experts, China is now against the big capital, especially if it flows into areas that the government does not consider priorities. Also, more importantly, big capital was creating power centres that could threaten the government.
- **Standardizing unreasonable income:** Recently, China's President presided over the 10th meeting of the Central Finance and Economics Committee and emphasized the promotion of **common prosperity**. The meeting concluded that it was necessary to strengthen the regulation and adjustment of high incomes and to clean up and standardize what it called unreasonable income.

Why India shouldn't copy China's present actions?

India faces elections in 16 states before 2024 and national elections in 2024. Political parties might be tempted to play the populist-socialist card to retain power or win elections. In India, the tendency to play the populist card either through policies or through fiscal support is no longer sustainable

While America and China, that have created far more economic wealth than India, can turn their attention towards sharing it. India still has to expand its wealth to engage in a meaningful redistribution.

Way forward

Indeed, some of our growth-friendly measures would automatically help raise incomes at the bottom of the pyramid, if the licence, inspection and compliance raj is systematically dismantled at all levels. This is the 'populism' that India needs, not failed social and economic engineering that destroys capital.

9. Give it a rest: SC reminds lower courts, cops to avoid unnecessary arrests. But bureaucratic habits die hard

Source: [TOI](#)

Subject: GS 2 – Judiciary and the Fundamental Rights

Relevance – To differentiate between the right to arrest and need to arrest

Synopsis: Supreme Court (SC) mentioned that arrest provision in law does not mean that government can use power indiscriminately to crush the personal liberty

Introduction

Recently, the SC has held that merely because **the law allows arrest, it doesn't mean that the State can use the power** indiscriminately.

SC clarified, word "custody" under section 170 of the CrPC does not mean police or judicial custody, but it only means the presentation of the accused in the court by the investigating officer.

Read more:

- [SC- Arrest should not be done as routine](#)
- [Arrest is not always a must, says Supreme Court](#)

When a person should not be arrested?

- When an offence is not heinous
- When a person is cooperating with the investigation
- When a person is not influencing the witness

Where does the problem lie?

The high court in many instances and the SC in Joginder Kumar guidelines 1994 instructed the police and courts to follow for arrest in cognisable offences.

But despite that, the SC mentioned that the **trial court judges were insisting on arrest** as a "prerequisite formality" for taking charge sheets on record.

What needs to be done

- There is a need for better training and refresher courses for judicial officers
- India also needs an effective method for circulating important SC judgments and statutory changes to the lower judiciary and police.
- For example,
 - There are still courts accepting Section 66A of the IT Act cases blissfully unaware of its 2015 scrapping

9 PM Compilation for the Month of August (Fourth Week), 2021

- Police officers are ignorant of the far older 1962 Kedar Nath Singh judgment underlining that criticism of the government isn't sedition

Way Forward

There is a need to strike the right balance between thorough investigation and the rights of the accused.

Terms to know:

- [Section 66A of IT Act](#)
- [Kedar Nath Singh judgment](#)
- [Joginder Kumar Guidelines](#)

10. Finding a healthy way to cook

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 – Issues related to development and management of social sector/ services related to health

Relevance: To understand the issue of Environment and misery of women

Synopsis: This article highlights the problem of women using firewood based stoves/ chulhas in many poor households.

Introduction

There is a need to introduce more alternative sources of energy rather than providing free LPG connections

III Effects of Chulhas

- It affects the health negatively
- This leads to indoor pollution because of the release of toxic gases like carbon monoxide & carbon dioxide
- It also has a negative effect on the environment

Read more: [Burning wood, coal for cooking can cause blindness: Study](#)

What efforts have been made by the Government?

To get rid of this problem, the government, in the 1980s, introduced smokeless or fuel-efficient chulhas for cooking.

1. **National Programme on improved Chulhas:** The government launched this scheme in 1984. But this programme did not attain its objective because of the following limitations:
 - Losing interest of government & withdrawal of subsidies
 - Less participation of people to use these chulhas
 - Beneficiaries were not properly targeted
 - Little quality control
2. **Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) under PAHAL scheme:**
 - The government introduced this scheme in 2013.
 - Its aim was to alleviate the public health burden posed by household air pollution on women.
3. **LPG under PM Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY):** It was launched in 2016 & aims to provide universal access to LPG by 2025.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of August (Fourth Week), 2021

- **Under the scheme**, an adult woman member of a below poverty line family was given a deposit-free LPG connection with the financial assistance of Rs 1,600 per connection by the Centre.
4. **Ujjwala 2.0:**
- Under this, the government announced the target of an additional one crore LPG connection.
 - It aims to provide deposit-free LPG connections to those low-income families who could not be covered under earlier PMUY.
 - Under this scheme, migrants will not require to submit a ration card or address proof.

Problems with the existing scheme

According to studies, it was found that many LPG connection holders were still using other fuels like fuelwood or dung cakes. The main reasons behind that are:

- Many people got the connection but were **unable to refill because of economic reasons**.
- More use of cow dung and other similar fuels because of their **easy availability** and also **at free of cost**.
- Generally, **a low value is attached to women's time** in production, as the opportunity cost of women's labour is low.
- LPG is used for cooking when the opportunity cost of women labour is high, such as peak season in farming.
- Administrative constraints such as distance to LPG distribution centres, long waiting time, the rising cost of LPG cylinders etc

Way Forward

Women need a better source of cooking, but LPG connections work only for non-poor households. Women in India can achieve energy security for cooking only through cheaper & efficient alternatives.

- As one solution may not fit all, there is a need to **offer a set of energy resources to households** so that each of them finds suitable energy for itself.
- The government should introduce affordable alternatives such as solar cookers, biogas plants, smokeless chulhas etc for the poor households
- The public & Private sector needs to be encouraged to research & development to explore these alternatives

Terms to know

- [Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana](#)
- [Ujjwala](#)

11. Why the citizens' assembly is an idea whose time has come

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 – Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability

Relevance: To understand the idea of democracy and citizen assembly

Synopsis: Democratic exercise has been reduced to periodic elections. It is time that we think of innovative solutions like Citizen's assemblies.

Introduction:

There is disenchantment with political parties in the US and Europe. Assemblies are divided along the party lines and there is hardly any open-minded deliberation. Major issues such as poverty, citizens' privacy are often ignored.

How can the right to information and protest help in this?

The right to vote, to elect and free and fair democracy is vital, but not enough for deep democracy. All governments, even authoritarian ones, work for the people. What makes a government democratic is the sense of accountability.

This is dependent on access to information, thus Right to Information was a step in the right direction. Social media has opened other avenues for protest. However, the flow of information must be two-way, where the Government must listen too.

- When they don't, Citizens must have the right to protest.
- The government, in the public interest, can place restrictions w.r.t site or timings, but should not seek to curb the protest completely.

What needs to be done to access "the missing middle"?

The problem in governance is the "missing middle" – the space between public protest and constitutional mechanisms like Parliament. To address this problem:

- We need to **build a middle layer of institutions** for public deliberation to solve public problems.
- Consent of Governed should go beyond just the elections. It should also include **expanding the franchise of democracy through the widespread inclusion of people** in the political process.

What solutions can we adopt?

An EU civil society movement "Citizens for Europe" proposed "A European Citizens Assembly" – a transnational forum for deliberation and citizen's participation.

- These assemblies should be established in cities, districts and states.
- They not only act like think tanks but also act as a forum where citizens are heard.
- They should run parallel to formal constitutional bodies that have "decision rights", such as elected assemblies and courts, and must become a source of solutions for them.

Way Forward

The state must support them and provide resources, as citizen's assemblies will fulfil the essential requirement of good governance.

Terms to know

- [Right to Information Act](#)

12. [Why the post-pandemic school is an opportunity to reinvent learning?](#)

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 – Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education

Relevance: Importance of student-friendly learning

Synopsis: The classroom must be centred on joyful and creative learning. It should join the dots between children's lives and education.

Introduction

Education is not a race. It is a child's journey to fulfilling his potential. Reopening schools can be an opportunity to rethink the teaching and learning process itself.

Concept of Santiniketan School

It was started by Rabindranath Tagore. His concept is not limited to education alone. It seeks to bring life in harmony with all existence. He dismissed any pedagogy that sought to cut children off from the world around them. He put his philosophy into practice at Santiniketan, or the "Abode of Peace".

- Classes at Santiniketan were held outdoors, under an assigned tree, unless it was raining, or if the lesson needed a laboratory.
- Students were carrying small mats sat on the ground and teachers sat on cement seats.
- The approach was to help the child to learn through exploration — art, music, curiosity, and the careful observation of nature
- There was no concept of corporal punishment.

In the words of Amartya Sen:

He, himself, was a student in Santiniketan. In his memoir "Home in the world", he talks about his experience of learning there. Here he discovered the freedom of learning at his own pace as there was no pressure to excel in terms of grades or exam performance

What Indian education system can learn from it?

- Need to make education more joyful & focus on creative learning
- Every child should be able to learn in an atmosphere that is free, reflective, and affirming.
- They should be able to relate new concepts to what they are already familiar with in their own lives.

Karnataka model

Karnataka adopted the **Vidyagamma programme** during the pandemic. It is a group of committed teachers creating informal, outdoor learning circles or "vataara shaale".

- Under this model, children gather with a teacher for in-person teaching in small groups, in outdoor community spaces. They are not bound by blackboards and textbooks, but learning interactively, through stories and activities.
- This model is acknowledged as an example of an alternate model of teaching and learning.

Way Forward

If these models got integrated into regular schooling, such learning environments can bring new life into our education system, not only during Covid but also beyond, in normal times.

The pandemic, itself can be a starting point for inquiry-based learning: Children should be encouraged, within the safe space of the learning circles, to discuss what they saw, experienced and learned during the pandemic.

In Gandhi's words: "I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any."

Terms to know

- [Rabindranath Tagore](#)

13. Capital Disadvantages: Delhi & Washington DC

Source: [TOI](#)

Syllabus: GS 2, centre-state relations

Relevance: To understand the issue of Delhi's statehood.

Synopsis: Full statehood remains a dream for residents, both in Indian and US national capitals

US and India both are reluctant to allow residents of their capitals full statehood. Both territories enjoy lesser power than the states

Status of Washington DC

- It has 3 electoral votes to elect the president (since 1961), but its people have no vote in Congress.
- It has a Mayor and a Council, but laws passed can be overturned by US Congress under Article 1, Section 8 of the US constitution

Progress has been slow in Washington DC too:

- DC was set to allow control over its own security after the 1783 mutiny.
- Such tentative steps were reversed in 1874 when Congress decided to rule abruptly through a 3 member commission.
- As the city's economy grew, demands for self-governance grew.
- But despite demands from citizens, the statehood progress has been slow.

What is the status of Delhi?

- Initially, it was a Part C state under the constitution enjoying a measure of self-governance
- After the reorganisation of states, when Delhi became UT, it was the only Part C state to lose an elected government
- By 69th AA, Article 239AA, it was again given an elected assembly and CM. Delhi presently enjoys all the power except land, police, law and order.

What is the real problem?

- The government report states that Delhi's residents enjoy special status and must pay the price for it.
- However, the trend towards greater Democratization has helped Delhi and Washington DC to improve their governance.
- But with the recent move([GNCT of Delhi \(Amendment\) Act](#)), the standoff between the governor and CM has only increased in Delhi. Further, the Supreme court also has not been able to resolve the deadlock.

Way forward

Even the recent amendments can not solve the problem. The real problem in Delhi and Washington DC is political and not administrative.

14. Why India needs an NHS-like healthcare model?

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS2 – Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources

Relevance: Understanding issues in the Indian health sector

Synopsis: India's health care sector is plagued with various issues which have been exposed during Covid crisis. Let's have a brief look at issues affecting Indian health sector.

Context

The Health ministry has claimed in Parliament that only Punjab has reported four "suspected" deaths during the second Covid-19 wave due to lack of oxygen, which is against the ground reality.

Even before the pandemic, similarly horrific healthcare tragedies occurred every single year like in 2017, 800 children died in Jharkhand of suspected encephalitis. In 2015, 18 patients died in a Chennai hospital, due to power failure after the floods. In 2014, 13 women died after illegal sterilisation at an overcrowded government health camp in Chhattisgarh.

Issues affecting the Health Sector

- **Vacancy and absenteeism**– According to Niti Aayog database, in the worst state of Bihar in 2017-18, positions for 60% of midwives, 50% of staff nurses, 34% of medical officers and 60% of specialist doctors were vacant. Those on the job, despite being handsomely paid, are chronically overworked.
- **Public Expenditure on health**– Even after the pandemic, the Indian government continues to budget less than 1% of GDP for healthcare, one of the lowest in the world. In contrast, China invests around 3%, Britain 7% and the United States 17% of GDP.
- **High out of pocket of expenditure**– 62% of health expenses in India are paid for by patients themselves. It is one of the main reason for families falling into poverty, especially during the pandemic.

Global best practices

- **Britain's National Health Service (NHS)**– Britain's legendary health network cures 15 million patients with chronic ailments, at a fraction of the cost spent by the US. The NHS funded by direct taxes is also the fifth-largest employer in the world, after McDonald's and Walmart. One of every 20 British workers is employed as doctor, nurse, catering and technical personnel.

15. A surfeit of sero surveys

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 – Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

Relevance: This article explains the advantages and disadvantages associated with Sero surveys

Synopsis:

Though Sero Surveys are useful in detecting the prevalence of antibodies, frequent surveys are expensive and futile

Introduction:

A sero surveillance ascertains the prevalence of past infectious disease in a population; In Covid cases, it helps to detect whether anti-bodies to SARS-CoV2 are present in a population or not.

The antibodies are like evidence in a crime scene, and the virus is like a criminal.

Read more: [Explained: ICMR's fourth serosurvey and its findings](#)

Benefits of sero surveys:

1. For public health authorities, sero surveys provide a variety of use at different phases of the pandemic for policy formulation, effective control of pandemic, etc.
2. Independent sero surveillance data can **expose the level of data suppression**. So, the media and epidemiologists use them to show the under-reporting of cases and deaths due to Covid-19.
3. **Sero surveys** can ascertain the details about community transmission. For instance, they can explain whether community transmission has taken place or not.
4. Sero surveys can **explain how far or close** the community to attain to **herd immunity**.

Drawbacks of the Sero survey:

1. Sero surveillance is expensive (costs around ₹25lakh for a city of 5000 people) and not a good investment for a country still grappling with the pandemic.
2. Frequent surveys can result in **poor use of staff time, technology and stuff**. Further, it will also divert the government attention from core activities (screening and testing).
3. Those surveys are **no more useful than our COVID-19-appropriate behaviour and vaccinations** to control the pandemic.

16. Fourth evacuation from Kabul since 1992 & The legal challenges in recognising the Taliban

Source: The Hindu([Article 1](#), [Article2](#), [Article 3](#), [Article 4](#), and [Article 5](#)) and [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS paper 2 – India and Neighbourhood relations

Relevance: This article explains the recent developments in Afghanistan.

Synopsis:

After the rise of the Taliban, Countries around the globe are in dilemma over recognizing the Taliban.

Introduction

Recognition of governments under international law is vital for several reasons. It is important to know who is the governing authority, who has the responsibility for carrying out domestic and international legal obligations, etc.

The Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan has triggered a new debate in international law on the issue of **recognising an entity that claims to be the new government** of a state.

Regardless of the issue with recognition, India decided to pull out all its diplomats from Afghanistan. This is the fourth time, India has had to perform such an evacuation.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of August (Fourth Week), 2021

About the previous evacuations:

1. **In 1993**, India decided to close the mission in Kabul after a rocket attack on the Chancery building killed an Indian security guard.
2. **In 1996**, after opening the Embassy for about a year, India decided to close it again, when the Taliban entered Kabul and brutally murdered former President Najibullah and his brother.
 - o During the 1996-2001 period, India had actively supported the Northern Alliance.
 - o The 'Northern Alliance' was a united military front that came in formation in late 1996 after the Taliban took over Kabul. They fought a war with the Taliban in 2001 and ended the Taliban's rule over Afghanistan.

How the situation is different from now and then?

1. **This time, the U.S., Russia, China, and other countries have not shunned the Taliban.** Instead, they appeared to **legitimize them by signing a deal** with them, inviting Taliban delegations to their capitals, and holding [talks with them in Doha](#).
2. Further, India also made huge investments in Afghan like never before. In the past 20 years, India has built considerable interests, including major infrastructure projects and ongoing development projects.
 - o [Read this post to know about India's Afghanistan investment](#).

What are the criteria to recognize the government?

1. Theory of effectiveness

1. According to this principle, a government can be recognized when **it effectively controls the state it claims to govern**.
2. In broader terms, it also includes control over the state's territory, population, national institutions, the banking and monetary system, etc.
3. Under this doctrine, it is **not important how the new government occupied office** (whether through civil war, revolution, or a military coup).
4. According to this test, the Taliban can be recognised as a government.

2. Theory of democratic legitimacy

- a. According to this doctrine, recognition of a government also depends on whether **it is the legitimate representative of the people it claims to govern**.
- b. Governments that capture power through non-democratic means are not considered as a government under this theory.
- c. Since the end of the Cold War and the subsequent **spread of democracy and awareness about human rights** in the world gave an impetus to this doctrine in the last three decades.
- d. For instance,
 - i. Many countries recognised Yemen's Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi government in exile since 2015 on the ground that the rebellious separatists acquired power in Yemen through illegal means.
 - ii. Similarly, the Nicolás Maduro government in Venezuela is not recognised by several countries due to the alleged lack of democratic legitimacy.
- e. According to this test, the Taliban can not be recognized as a government.

Nevertheless, there is **no binding legal obligation on countries to withhold recognition** of the Taliban on the ground that it does not enjoy democratic legitimacy.

Suggestions for India

A more open, liberalised visa policy, and swift processing of the newly **launched special “e-Emergency X-Misc” visas** would reassure both Afghans and the international community that India’s exit from Afghanistan is not permanent.

India should **adopt a clear policy** that it will **deal with the Taliban simply because it is the de facto government, not because it is a legitimate one**. This principle should be followed for bilateral relations and also for multilateral dealings, such as within the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

Read more regarding the recent developments in Afghanistan:

1. [The script of the new endgame in Afghanistan](#)
2. [Return of Taliban has implications for India](#)
3. [New Delhi’s Af-Pak: Old friends versus old foes: Should India accept Taliban, betray Afghans or support resistance movements like Saleh’s?](#)
4. [History over Geography](#)

Terms to know:

- [Taliban](#)
- [e-Emergency X-Misc visa](#)

17. Don’t chase the mirage of iron-fortified rice

Source: Indian Express

Syllabus: GS2 – Issues related to poverty and hunger

Relevance: about rice fortification programme

Synopsis: Rice fortification programme might not be the answer to India’s food security and nutritional challenges. A push to a balanced and diverse diet is a far more superior strategy. Issues with the recently announced mandatory rice fortification programme.

Background

Read these articles in sequence

- [PM announces rice fortification plan to tackle malnutrition](#)
- [Is grain fortification the only way to meet India’s nutritional challenge](#)
- [How rice fortification is done?](#)
- [Food fortification in India – Explained](#)

Note: Only new points, those not covered in above articles, have been covered in this article.

The problem

There’s extraordinarily high levels of anaemia in India, affecting women and children equally, and despite the mandatory supplementation of iron tablets, it still persists.

- And an anaemic individual has a lower capacity to work and think, and so the collective capacity of society is at stake.

The govt recently announced the compulsory rice fortification program through PDS. Hence, policy response to the problem of iron supplements not working has been to add even more iron to the diet via fortification.

Is fortification prog necessary?

No. As per some experts, the mandatory rice fortification programme is not required in India and the policy should be re-examined.

There’s a need to examine the intended effect of the programme on anaemia.

Issues/Concerns

1]. Overestimation of anaemia burden: There is a significant overestimation of anaemia burden due to following two factors:

- **High WHO haemoglobin cut-offs:** Anaemia is diagnosed on the basis of the blood haemoglobin level. There is a growing global consensus that, the WHO haemoglobin cut-offs used presently, may be too high, resulting in an inflated anaemia figure. A recent Lancet paper suggested a lower haemoglobin cut-off level to diagnose anaemia in Indian children. **Using this will actually reduce the anaemia burden by two-thirds.**
- **Using capillary blood samples:** Secondly, haemoglobin level can be falsely low when a capillary blood sample (*taken by finger-prick*) is used for measurement, instead of the **more reliable venous blood sample** (*taken with a syringe from an arm vein*). The anaemia burden in India is estimated from capillary blood. Global studies, including from India, have shown that using capillary blood inflates the anaemia burden substantially. If the recommended venous blood sample is used, it would halve this burden.

2]. Does iron-deficiency cause anaemia?

- **Not the primary cause:** Iron deficiency is thought to be the primary cause of anaemia in India. But recently, a MoHFW national survey (Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey) of Indian children showed that iron deficiency was related to less than half the anaemia cases. Many other nutrients and adequate protein intake are also important, for which a good, diverse diet is required.

3]. Is Indian diet really deficient in iron?

The belief that normal Indian diet is iron-deficient is **based on older iron requirements** (as per National Institute of Nutrition [NIN] 2010), which were **much too high**.

- The latest corrected iron requirements (NIN 2020) are 30-40 per cent lower, with the so-called iron “gap” also being much lower. The iron density of the Indian vegetarian diet, about 9 mg/1000 kCal, can thus meet most requirements and the efforts to mandatorily fortify the dietary iron content for the whole population are unnecessary.

4]. Rice fortification is complex: It requires a fortified rice “kernel” which should be indistinguishable from the grain it is fortifying in appearance, density, cooked characteristics and so on. The problem lies in making “matching” kernels for each rice variety that is distributed in the food safety-net programmes. If it does not match, the instinct of a home cook will be to pick out and discard the odd grains, thereby defeating the purpose of fortification.

18. Income and quotas

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 – Fundamental rights

Relevance: To understand dimensions of creamy layer

Synopsis: Supreme Court (SC) lays bare the limit of using economic criteria to determine reservation ability

Introduction

In *Pichhra Varg Kalyan Mahasabha Haryana v. State of Haryana* case, the Supreme Court recently stated that economic criterion cannot be the sole basis for identifying sections of backward communities as ‘creamy layer’.

Read more: [‘Economic criterion not sole basis for creamy layer’](#)

Indra Sawhney (1992) case judgement

- The court introduced the concept of “Creamy layer” – the well-off community amongst the Backward Classes.
- These are persons of high-ranking constitutional functionaries, persons with significant property & agricultural holders, employees of certain ranks in State or Centre government and an identified annual income.
- The court ruled that these sections should be denied the reservation benefits as they are advanced sections amongst the BC and formulated criteria for identifying them.

Read more: [The Mandal case and Reservation in India – Explained, Pointwise](#)

SC judgement in Haryana case

- It corrected the error by the State which fixed income (6 Lakh) as the sole criteria for identifying the creamy layer which was contrary to Indra Sawhney judgement
- SC ruled that Haryana’s criteria based on income alone were contrary to its own law that specifies creamy layer would be identified through socio, economic and other factors.

Constitutional Provisions

The recent ruling was based on the ideas of the constitution.

- The constitution has provided special provisions through the 1st Amendment Act in favour of “socially and educationally backward classes”.
- This was extended further by providing reservation in government employment for BC.
- However, the Judiciary later introduced the 50% ceiling and creamy layer concept as a constitutional limitation on reservation benefits.
- However, the 103 Amendment Act, which introduced a 10% reservation for the Economically Weaker section, has significantly altered the affirmative action programme.

Read more: [Maratha Reservation and the Reservation Policy in India – Explained, Pointwise](#)

Way Forward

- There is a strange and questionable balance between OBC and EWS in terms of eligibility.
- So, the creamy layer definition for OBC should go beyond economic parameters.

Terms to know:

- [Creamy layer](#)
- [103rd Constitutional Amendment Act](#)

19. Helping and hindering justice

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 – Judiciary

Relevance: To understand the challenges associated with the e-courts project

Synopsis: Pandemic exposed the e-courts project to the outer world. Digitization enabled the Judiciary to respond the online world. However, many challenges also surfaced which need careful consideration.

Introduction

The Supreme Court introduced the system of e-filing and artificial intelligence-enabled referencing. This effort is not just to counter pandemic, it also seeks to improve efficiency and

transparency to tackle judicial pendency. It also seeks to make it cost-effective and reachable for all the litigants.

Read more: [Inauguration of “Judgments and Orders Portal” and “e-Filing 3.0 module”](#)

SC observation on CoWIN platform

In June, the Judiciary pointed out that despite [CoWIN initiative](#), there were many digital impediments in the delivery of the vaccines. These include:

- Inadequate digital literacy across the country
- Inadequate digital penetration
- Issues of bandwidth and connectivity

These could result in the exclusion of a large segment of the population. The government soon responded by saying CoWin registration would not be mandatory.

Read more: [CJI launches “SUPACE Portal”— AI-driven Research Portal](#)

Challenges in e-Courts project

What the Judiciary said about the delivery of Vaccines is equally true about Justice. It is true that Judiciary rose to the challenge posed by Covid 19 and adopted electronic mode at a great pace.

However, one should understand that the **technology alone should not be seen as a panacea** that will completely cure the Judiciary:

- Experience shows that despite digitization of Judiciary, from Phase 1 of eCourts since 2007, the current performance of Judiciary during pandemic left a lot to be desired.
- In fact, pendency reached an all-time high and rose sharply by 18% between December 2019 and December 2020.
- During the same period, High courts witnessed an increase in pendency by 20%.

Read more: [The Pros and Cons of e-Courts project](#)

What is the way forward?

Based on our experience of performance during the pandemic, India should adopt an evidence-based rational approach.

- **First**, India should focus on filling vacancies that are reported to be as high as 38% in Higher Courts and 22% in lower courts by India Justice Report 2020. Like doctors, even Judges cannot be replaced by bots of technology.
- **Second**, given the digital divide, it should not further accentuate the power divide between the citizens.
- **Third**, the shortage of technical infrastructure at times is slowing the procedure and access to justice. This needs to be immediately rectified.
- **Fourth**, Just like vaccination procedure was adopted after rigorous trials, judicial procedures should also have to be subject to trials.

Terms to know:

- [e-courts project](#)

20. The class divide that threatens to thwart our educational goals

Source: [LiveMint](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 – Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education

Relevance: Understand the learning loss due to Pandemic

Synopsis: The article highlights the “learning loss” that occurred due to school closure during the pandemic. India has to work hard to ensure that learning loss does not translate to a loss in future.

Introduction

The lockdowns because of the Pandemic impacted the learning, especially for the children. There is no systematic effort to recover that lost learning. Moreover, online education is found to be inadequate for children, because of the nature of education.

What is learning loss?

Learning loss is the product of two factors:

- What should have been taught and learned in the past 17 months
- What children knew in Mar 2020 but have forgotten because of extended school break.

Read more: [India's schoolchildren need their childhood back](#)

The class divide has also impacted the learning outcomes:

- **Middle/upper-class people** have better access to digital tools augmented by personal tutoring & other learning resources. Moreover, students have the support of their families too, so learning loss is less.
 - India's top 10% have not been impacted by this crisis
- But the learning loss impacted the future of almost 210-220 Million children.

Read more: [A pandemic-optimized plan for kids to resume their education](#)

Issues with government initiatives:

- Although some states took steps to address the learning loss, they did not seem adequately cover this problem.
- The main reason behind that is inflexibility and poor coordination of our education system

Way forward

A lost year means a lost future. So, India must quickly start out schools and work towards bridging the gap of learning by focusing on recovering the lost learning.

21. What happens to India's 'plurilateralism' after Taliban takeover of Afghanistan

Source: [The Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS paper 2 – International Relations

Relevance: This article explains India's International Relations strategy

Context

In his recent book titled The Indian Way, the Indian Foreign Minister wrote: “It is time for us to **engage America, manage China, cultivate Europe, reassure Russia, bring Japan into play**, draw neighbors in, **extend the neighbourhood and expand traditional constituencies** of support.” This plurilateralism is expected to bring numerous benefits to India.

What is plurilateralism?

Plurilateralism refers to the negotiations between three or more countries. In a plurilateral agreement or arrangement, the countries agree to new terms and conditions on a voluntary basis.

About the recent developments that facilitate the plurilateralism

- Recently, India revived the Quad arrangement.
- India also took membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.
- India at present has a longstanding trilateral relation with Russia and China. This coexists with one involving the US and Japan. For instance,
 - Indian PM visited the US and conducted a Howdy Modi gathering in 2019. In the same year, the Chinese President and Indian PM met in Mamallapuram in Tamil Nadu.
 - Similarly, recently India participated actively in the RIC (Russia-India-China) meeting and the Vladivostok Summit (India-Russia). With the same energy and enthusiasm, India also participated in the JAI (Japan-America-India) trilateral meeting.
- Further, India also maintains cordial relations with the nations even when they fight among themselves. For instance,
 - Relations with Iran and Saudi Arabia,
 - Relations with Israel and Palestine.

About India's relations in South Asia

Regarding India's region, the foreign minister reflected in the motto "Neighbourhood First" in the book. He recalled the priority of South Asia and presented **India** as the country that **can "rebuild a fractured region"**.

What is driving India's plurilateralism strategy?

India's willingness to look beyond dogma and enter the real world of convergences help India to evolve these relationships without any troubles. He provides an example of "calculus, not just as arithmetic." to explain this.

The defence minister defined this strategy of India as "**a parallel pursuit of multiple priorities**". He also mentions that some countries did not understand the Indian initiatives and relations with multiple countries. He explains this as a **hallmark of the new "Indian way"**.

About the recent developments in Afghanistan

Read the following articles to know about the developments in Afghanistan.

- [The script of the new endgame in Afghanistan](#)
- [Return of Taliban has implications for India](#)

Christophe Jaffrelot seems that "plurilateralism" is not feasible anymore, as two blocks (East and West) are crystallising on the occasion of the Afghan crisis. He provides the following examples.

East bloc Supporting Taliban

- Russia is prepared to recognise the Taliban.
- China is willing to hold talks with the Taliban.
- Pakistan is helping the Taliban without necessarily controlling them

- India invested a considerable amount of resources in developing Chabahar port and connect Afghanistan from Iran. But Iran also said it was ready to deal with the Taliban.
 - Further, Iran is also moving closer to China while distancing itself from India.

This is witnessed ever since India adhered to the US Sanctions on Iran.

Contrary to the Eastern bloc, the western bloc opposes the Taliban. But, India geographically in the East aligned its ideology with the west regarding the Taliban. This creates challenges for India.

Other challenges to India's plurilateralism

The developments in Afghanistan **might create a new Cold War** against the backdrop of "Belt and Road Initiative vs. Indo-Pacific".

Furthermore, India also moving its attention towards the West from the East. This is visible from India's move to **back out from Regional Comprehensive Economic partnership (RCEP)**, setbacks in Act East policy, and conducting trade negotiations with the Western Countries.

Read more: [India pivot from Look east to trade West](#)

Terms to know:

- [Act East policy](#)
- [Regional Comprehensive Economic partnership](#)
- [SCO](#)
- [QUAD](#)
- [JAI and RIC](#)

22. Higher education in regional languages won't be easy

Source: [Live Mint](#)

Syllabus: GS2 – Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education,

Relevance: Use of mother tongue in teaching and associated issues

Synopsis: Need for promoting the use of mother tongue in teaching at higher educational institutions and challenges associated with it.

Must Read: [A language ladder for an education roadblock](#)

Need

The following reasons indicate that teaching in vernacular is indeed helpful and should be considered.

1. **Substantial demand:** A quick check on YouTube reveals a high viewership count for content explaining math and science concepts in Hindi and other Indian languages. This indicates substantial demand for vernacular-language educational material. Several edtech startups have also tapped this market.
2. **Better performance:** Performance in science and math, in particular, has been found to be better among students studying in their native language compared to English, other things being equal.
3. **Higher motivation:** Further, educational psychology literature reports additional benefits of instruction in the native language, including higher attendance and motivation among students and improved parental involvement and support in studies.
4. **Can bridge the divide:** It can narrow the divide in access to higher education between the marginalized and the privileged.

Challenges

- **Industry placements** of graduates trained in regional languages might remain a question mark. For instance, many public sector units accept Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering (GATE, conducted in English) scores for entry-level positions.
- **The availability of faculty** for regional-medium courses. Given the English-medium legacy of higher education in India, attracting and retaining quality teachers who are willing and able to teach in regional languages would be a challenge.
- **There are also globalization trends** to consider. The NEP encourages the internationalization of education by facilitating the movement of faculty across borders. But regional-medium students may be unable to reap the benefits of knowledge transfers on account of a language barrier.
- **Disadvantage at global level:** Finally, delivering technical courses in regional languages may prevent students from competing in global labour and education markets, where fluency in English yields a distinct edge.

Way forward

- **Mother tongue plus English approach:** We need to Shift from Mother tongue vs English approach to Mother tongue plus English approach. Research has shown that small children quickly grasp new languages, given their **neuroplasticity** in early years. Hence, this is an appropriate age to be exposed to a foreign language as a means of communication.
 - *Neuroplasticity means the capacity of brain cells to change in response to intrinsic and extrinsic factors*
- **Quality control of initiatives:** To counter the challenge of availability of study material in regional language, the AICTE has launched an artificial intelligence-powered tool to translate books, academic journals and videos. However, quality control of these translations should be given utmost importance. We need further efforts in linguistics and machine learning to serve the cause.

23. Explained: The Malabar Exercise of Quad nations, and why it matters to India

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS-2 International Relations

Relevance: To understand Malabar exercise

Synopsis: Malabar exercise, which now involves all navies of QUAD countries, is the centrepiece of the emerging security architecture in the Indo-Pacific region.

Context:

Navies of the four-member nations of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue(Quad) — India, USA, Japan, and Australia — are participating in the **25th edition of the Malabar Exercise**. The 25th edition began off the coast of Guam in the Pacific Ocean on August 26.

Read more: [Quad Summit and its relevance – Explained, Pointwise](#)

What is Malabar Exercise and how it has evolved

- It is a multilateral war-gaming naval exercise that started in **1992 as a bilateral exercise** between India and the USA.
- After successful editions in 1995 & 1996, there was a **break until 2002** in the aftermath of India's nuclear tests.
- It has been conducted every year after 2002

9 PM Compilation for the Month of August (Fourth Week), 2021

- Japan and Australia first participated in 2007, and since 2014, India, the US and Japan have participated in the exercise every year.
- Japan joined in **2015** as a permanent member, and Malabar became a **trilateral exercise**.
- **In 2020, for the first time in over a decade, Australia joined the exercise and all QUAD navies were seen together in action.**

What does Malabar exercise include?

- It includes simulated war games and combat manoeuvres.
- It includes complex exercises including anti-surface, anti-air and anti-submarine warfare drills.
- These combat drills will enhance synergy and mutual understanding among the four navies.

Why did Australia return and what is the significance of the Malabar exercise

- Australia had first participated in 2007, however, in 2008 government in Australia changes, and it stopped participating after that.
- Now, the assertive rise of China is acting unifying cause for the region.
- **Australia remarked** that Malabar exercises will help in upholding the rules-based international order and territorial integrity of all nations.
- **Experts view** that the Malabar exercise will strengthen QUAD, which will act as an instrument of deterrence against China.

India's other naval exercises with QUAD countries

Indian Navy conducted a number of **Passage Exercises (PASSEX)** with the navies of Japan, Australia, and the US. These are basic exercises to increase operability between the navies.

Way Forward

Malabar exercise adds the military dimension to QUAD. Though QUAD will not emerge as an alliance like NATO, but moves like Malabar exercises will create sufficient deterrence.

Terms to know

- [QUAD](#)

24. Beyond courts: Vendetta politics muddies the logic for speedier resolution of cases against MPs, MLAs

Source: [TOI](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 – Structure, Organization & Functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary

Relevance: checking criminalization of justice

Synopsis: Given the rise in the number of politicians with criminal cases, there is a need for reform in political and judicial systems.

Introduction

The Supreme Court's push to fast-track criminal cases against politicians isn't making great progress. In fact, a rise of 18% has been seen in criminal cases pending against sitting and former MPs and MLAs.

Constitutional Provision

In the 2013 judgement, SC ruled that the Representation of people act should have provisions to instantly disqualify convicted lawmakers.

This had given urgency to tackle the criminalization of politics, but after 8 years the progress is still disappointing.

What can be done

There are a lot of cases related to different categories like riots, unlawful offences, corruption etc which are pending against the politicians. We need to

- Prioritize the most heinous crimes like sexual offences, corruption, economic offences
- Close the cases which are pending with CBI & Enforcement Directorate (ED) , which are never going to reach the trial

Read more: [CBI ED cant keep sword hanging over accused](#)

Challenges in closing the pending cases:

However, one should not be overzealous in this regard. We have to keep in mind that:

- **First**, Politicians may frame their opponents for vendetta. The exercise of fast-tracking mustn't descend into a witch-hunt against the opposition parties.
- **Secondly**, there are problems of political favouritism. This is evident when the government of the day withdraws cases against its favourite. Recently, the SC has ruled that state governments must take high court approval before the withdrawal of cases.

Way forward:

Further, there is also a problem **of pendency and the slow pace of the Indian judiciary**. This is compounded by a lack of a sufficient number of judges. So setting up special courts may comprise hearing of matters of ordinary citizens.

- India must make arrangements for retired Judges with meritorious records to help in speeding the disposal of cases.
- Then there is need for Judicial, investigation and police reforms.

Terms to know

- [Central Bureau of investigation \(CBI\)](#)
- [Enforcement Directorate](#)

25. Covering the gaps in the game of data

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS2 – Policymaking, good governance

Relevance: To understand the role of data in evidence-based policymaking.

Synopsis: The “statistical vacuum” in India can be bridged with decentralization and if states build their own quality databases

Introduction

The e-Governance and penetration of the internet have made data the new talking point in Governance. The role of data and politics has long been established by thinkers like Foucault. But the government's recent denials about having data on Covid casualties showed how data can be used to manipulate the narrative.

What is Data Based policymaking?

It is an idea in public policy proposing that policy decisions should be based on, or informed by, rigorously established objective evidence (data).

Advantages of data-based policymaking

- Data helps in formulating programmatic policy decisions.
- Data-based decisions can help address inter and intra-district inequalities.
- However, this has to be supported with the existence of reliable, rigorous and validated data.

Challenges with data-based policy-making

- States and their various departments collect an enormous amount of data. So, there is a need to link databases of various departments, but this is stalled by factors like Jurisdiction issues.
- Issues like household data that would vary from department to department also prevent the data linking.
- Accurate collection, measurement and interpretation of data are crucial for evidence-based policymaking.
- Standardization of data formats and procedures is important as manipulation of data can lead to abuse of data. For example,
 - During the Covid crisis, some States in North India were not testing enough, and it created an impression that States in South India were unable to control the infection.
- There can also be issues like the consistency of data, assimilation and calculation of data. For e.g. recent data released by the Union government showed Tamil Nadu having 27 educationally backward districts. On the other hand, the same report ranks Tamil Nadu in fourth place on educational attainment. This shows that the data needs proper scrutiny.

Way forward

The challenges require efforts on two fronts during data collection:

- Homogenize the data sets
- Validate the data through urban local bodies and rural local bodies

We are in a data-driven world, so the move towards data-based governance is the next natural step. Scholars like Jean Dreze and others have called for **decentralized data collection systems**.

26. Making sure that girls don't drop out of school

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS-2 Education: status of literacy in India & reforms required

Synopsis: Addressing gender bias in education requires providing social, financial and emotional support to the girl child.

Introduction

In the recently held Olympics, Indian women showed their excellent performance. They can also excel in other fields like education. Women can contribute not just to the economy of the nation, but can also be the agents of social transformation.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of August (Fourth Week), 2021

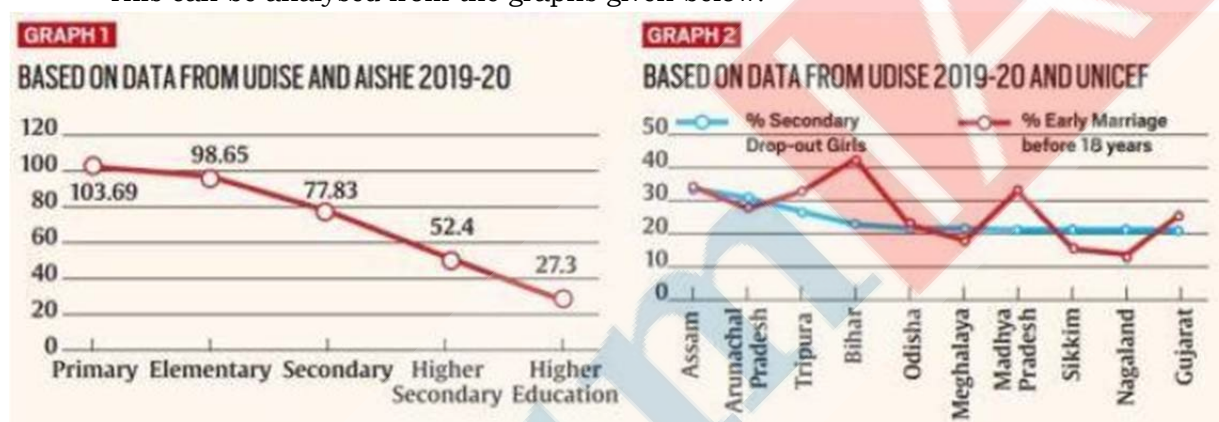
This is evident from the World Bank review, which pointed that the **global average for the private rate of return** (the increase in an individual's earnings) **with just one extra year of schooling is about 9 percent**. While the social returns of an extra year of school are even higher — above 10 percent at the secondary and higher education levels.

Impact of Corona on girls globally: It is estimated that over 2.4 crore girls globally are on the verge of dropping out of schools because of the corona pandemic. The main reasons behind that are pandemic-induced school closure & economic hardship.

In India

Before Pandemic:

- There was a gradual increase in the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for women in higher education — from 19.8% in 2012-13 to 27.3 % in 2019-20. But the rate of dropouts is still high.
- This can be analysed from the graphs given below:



Source: Indian Express

Graph 1: It shows this gradual descent and the resulting paucity of women, who are even eligible to go to college.

Graph 2: Shows that states having the highest rate of secondary school drop-outs among girls are also the ones where a significant percentage of girls who get married before the age of 18 years.

What are the reasons to drop out?

- Girls engaged in domestic activities (31.9%)
- Financial Constraints (18.4%)
- Lack of developing interest in education (15.3%)
- Marriage (12.4%)
- Gender bias & patriarchy

Given the need for women empowerment, the government has taken numerous Initiatives:

1. National Scheme of Incentives to Girls for Secondary Education (NSIGSE)
2. Supernumerary seats in all IITs
3. PRAGATI Scholarship scheme for girls in technical education

But government initiatives alone may not be enough. We need to take many more steps like:

1. **Mohalla school or a community learning programme:** These should be started with appropriate Covid norms
2. NITI Aayog, with the help of civil society organisations, had started a community programme led by volunteers called “**Saksham Bitiya**”. It aims to train girls in socio-emotional and ethical learning. Such initiatives should be replicated to ensure more girls do not drop out of schools during the pandemic.
3. To predict likely drop-outs, a **gender atlas comprising relevant indicators** should be developed.
4. **Teachers should also be trained** in all the scholarships and schemes available which provide economic support to girls and their families for continuing their education.
5. There is a need to **revise the National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education** in areas or states where there is a high prevalence of drop-outs and early child marriages
6. **Special education zones should be set up** in areas that have been traditionally backward in education.
 - o The National Education Policy 2020 provides for a gender inclusion fund. This fund should be utilised to support STEM education in these schools as well as in all Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas.
7. State governments need to leverage existing schemes to design interventions to promote women in higher education.
8. Behavioural nudges are the key to tackling social prejudices and orthodox cultural norms that prevent girls from achieving their innate potential.
 - o For this, Behavioural Insights Units (BIU) should be established across states to tackle social issues with the help of NGOs

Way Forward

The pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges for educators and students, especially for those on the margins, including girls. However, with informed targeting and an agile policy environment, this challenge could well prove to be an opportunity.

Terms to know

- [National Sample Survey Organisation](#)
- [World Bank](#)
- [Pragati Scheme](#)

27. India's tuition Pandemic (On India's mushrooming ed-tech sector)

Source: [Times of India](#)

Syllabus: GS2- Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education, Human Resources.

Relevance: Issues due to the rise of Edtech sector

Synopsis: With billions of dollars in capital and tech backing, Indian educational corporates are creating a situation of tuition pandemic.

China's crackdown on edtech

Recently, the Chinese government announced a crackdown on its booming educational tuition sector. Under its new policy,

- private tutoring businesses have to **restructure as non-profit companies**.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of August (Fourth Week), 2021

- They are banned from listing on the stock market or raising foreign capital.
- They are prohibited from offering tutoring classes on weekends and school holidays.
- Parents and students are being encouraged to report schools and teachers who make extra income through private tutoring.

What is the Indian Scenario?

The **overemphasis on tuition** is an issue in India too. While the Chinese solution is not the best one, the underlying problem exists in India.

We make children compete for exams that do not test true talent and operate like a lottery. This isn't a new issue. For instance, we already have the Kota factory phenomenon.

Why overemphasis on tuition is not good?

- Sports, musical instruments, dramatics, art, elocutions, debates anything that doesn't feature in entrance tests or board exams is cut out.
- The time spent to score little extra marks can instead be used to **learn a completely new skill**, which would make one more employable and contribute more to the economy.
- **Tuition takes away the level playing field.** Many of these tuitions cost lakhs. Very smaller number of Indians can afford it.

Suggestions/Measures

The solution does not lie in banning mega educational companies. It attacks supply of tuitions, but does nothing about the huge demand for it.

1. One, we need to make a **cultural shift**. We must let our children learn other than engineering and medicine.
2. Two, we also need **more good colleges**. Lack of reputable colleges gives way for new edtech startups. Incentivize good people to open colleges, grant prime land and create more world-class institutions.
3. **Take the pressure off** the cutoffs and entrance exams.
4. **Better regulate** the mushrooming educational startups. Many of these companies provide excellent services, such as making people job-ready, upgrading skill-sets or teaching different vocations.

Conclusion

China's massive crackdown is about how the tuition-obsession combined with tech can go too far. We need to fix this here before it is too late.

General Studies Paper - 3

General Studies - 3

1. How can India's wool sector be revived

Source: [Down To Earth](#)

Syllabus: GS 3: Economics of animal-rearing

Introduction

The shepherds in Uttarakhand will soon get a batch of lambs through the cross-breeding of sheep indigenous to the region with Australian Merino sheep. Australian Merino sheep are known to have the softest and finest wool used for apparel. This cross-breeding was done with an aim to boost the pastoral economy and reduce the country's import dependence on raw wool.

India's Wool Industry:

1. India is the seventh-largest producer of wool and accounts for nearly 2 to 3% of total world production.
2. According to the 20th Livestock Census in 2019, India has the third-largest number of sheep in the world, with 74.26 million sheep under 42 registered breeds. This was a 14.1% increase from the previous census in 2012.
3. In India, wool is used to prepare products like carpets, yarn, fabrics and garments for the domestic market and for exporting, especially to the United States and Europe.
4. The major wool-producing states in India are Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.
 - o **Rajasthan is the largest wool producer** and is known for its superior carpet grade Chokla and Magra wool.

Why does India import raw wool?

1. **Despite India having the third-largest sheep population in the world**, the average annual yield per sheep in India was 0.9 kg, as against the world average of 2.4 kg in 2018-19.
2. **In 2019-20**, India produced 40.42 million kg of wool that year, whereas its consumption was at 260.8 million kg.
3. **Hence**, due to this insufficient domestic production, India depends on imports for raw wool, particularly from Australia and New Zealand.

Challenges faced by India's Wool Industry:

1. **Low Demand for Indigenous wool:** In the last 10 years, wool consumption by the country's processing units increased by 50%, but the use of indigenous wool fell to almost 10% of the total current sales.
2. **A shift in Farmer's Focus:** There is a shift in farmer's focus from wool to meat. For Instance, Telangana promotes the meat-producing Nellore breed through a subsidised sheep distribution scheme, and the breed now comprises 51 percent of the state's sheep.
3. **The decline in Pastures:** Pastures are diminishing across India with the increase in plantations as well as urbanisation.
4. **Processing Facilities:** The Woollen industry suffers from inadequate and outdated processing facilities. The pre-loom and post-loom facilities are required to be modernized for ensuring quality finished products.
5. **Low priority of State Governments** in the development of the wool sector.

6. **Lack of Research and development** and inadequate marketing facilities and infrastructure.
7. **Absence of organized marketing** and minimum support price system for ensuring remunerative return.
8. **No educational institute** for wool technology resulting in a lack of expertise in the wool sector.

2. How we're beneficiaries of suspension of human rights

Source: [LiveMint](#)

Syllabus: GS 3 – Security challenges and their management

Relevance: To understand the complexity of Human rights and national security.

Synopsis: Recent revelations in a book have revealed that State agencies do use the means like torture or violation of human rights to achieve the goal of national security.

Introduction

The recent book 'Spy Stories: Inside the secret world of the R.A.W. and the I.S.I.' reveals how state agencies violate human rights for stealing information.

Why agencies resort to such means:

- There is a common perception that the intelligence agency of democracy is run by humane patriots. But, the fact is that they perform many grey/dark operations to protect national security.
- This is because they are protecting millions of lives from other people who are willing to inflict harm and damage to others.
- For instance,
 - After 9/11, the US treated Pakistan with very little respect; The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the US wanted directly to access the ISI's counter-terrorism wing. In 2003, the CIA instructed Pakistan's officials to assist in raiding a house in Rawalpindi but refused to give any further details. They captured the mastermind of the 9/11 attacks. Soon after his capture, he was taken to secret CIA prisons in Afghanistan and Poland. There he was brutalized in various ways.
 - Even Research and Analysis Wing also **carry out various operations to make Pakistan look untrustworthy** in the eyes of the world. The authors of the book hint that there might be some substance to theories that **Indian agents had a connection to the 13 December 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament.**

Way forward

The boundaries of human rights become thinner in matters of national security. We need mechanisms to balance these two interests, which at times may be in conflict with each other.

3. What it'll take to achieve goods exports of \$400 billion?

Source: [Livemint](#)

Syllabus: GS3- Industrial policy and growth

Relevance: Doubling India's exports

Synopsis: The blueprint for doubling India's exports has already been crafted 10 years ago. It needs to be adapted to the modern times by incorporating suitable changes. A brief look at some factors that merit attention.

Context

India has set a target of merchandise exports of **\$450 billion** in a couple of years.

Also, as per the commerce secretary, the present fiscal year's exports are growing between 25% and 30%, which is ahead of target. And to boost exports, a strategy paper to double exports in three years had been prepared by the ministry.

Opportunities present before India

1. The world economy, led by two of its largest economies, the US and China, is booming.
2. These two economies make up nearly **40% of global GDP**, and they will clock an average growth of 5% over the next two years. That is the equivalent of India's economy growing at 50%.
3. **Booming international trade** will result in high commodity prices, increased freight charges, container and ship shortages, and overflowing order books.
4. The run-rate of exports in the first three months of this fiscal indicates that a \$400 billion target is achievable.
5. Economic diplomacy will serve the cause of energizing exports.

Must Read: [RoDTEP Scheme and export competitiveness – Explained](#)

Key factors to consider

1. **First**, along with free trade agreements, tax and trade reforms, decrease in transaction costs are also necessary. For example, India's biggest trade partner is the US, with which we do not have an FTA. An **FTA is not a prerequisite** to keep export engine running. Almost **three-fourths of India's exports are outside the ambit of FTAs**. So, trade and investment treaties with the EU, Australia, Canada and the US should not hamper export growth.
2. **Secondly**, nearly 80% of our exports are from only **21 chapters of the Harmonised System (HS)** of codes for classifying goods. The remaining chapters lie underused, which need focused attention to double exports.
3. **Thirdly**, India needs to ensure that initiatives like **Atmanirbhar Bharat or production-linked incentives (PLIs)** do not result in protectionism.
4. **Fourthly**, export incentives must be generous enough to negate the effect of domestic taxation.
5. **Fifth**, the embrace of global value chains means that our exports will have significant import content. Hence, tariff barriers for imports have to be modest. Otherwise, it will result in delays and cumbersome processes.
6. That is why **tariffs should be modest and let exporters focus on enhancing their competitiveness**.
7. Sixth, another aspect is the **rupee's exchange rate**. For exports, a slight bias towards an undervalued currency is preferable. India has a current account deficit, so it should not fear being labelled a '**currency manipulator**'.
8. **Last**, access to global markets for small enterprises. Omnipresent global e-commerce players should be the way for this, where a buyer in remote Alaska can click on an item to be shipped from Coimbatore.

Terms to know

- [HS Codes](#)

4. India needs an ecosystem that's conducive to MSME expansion

Source: [Live Mint](#)

Syllabus: GS3- Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment

Relevance: Issues related to the growth of MSMEs in India

Synopsis: We must adapt our policy settings to favor new opportunities for small businesses if we want them to play a big role in job creation.

Context

With 65% of India's population below the age of 35, job generation by micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) therefore assume a high level of importance.

To reap the dividends, the country must equip MSMEs to use modern marketing tools, especially of e-commerce, which could be key for their expansion and sustainable growth.

Significance of small businesses in India

India has approximately 63 million MSMEs, more than 99% of them are tiny businesses. Only a fraction of them are registered.

According to data shared by India's MSME minister in the Rajya Sabha,

- The list of registered MSMEs is dominated by **micro enterprises**, which number 2.2 million in 2019-20.
- Mid-sized businesses numbered 10,981 during the same period.

What needs to be done?

1. **Proper tracking:** The first need is to continue to **track MSMEs**, so that we have a repository of information on these businesses, by geographical area and the products they sell. The aggregation of similar businesses will enable us to **target skilling** and handholding initiatives closely and also expose them to new market opportunities.
2. **Quality manufacturing:** Efforts need to focus on quality manufacturing, with the use of automation to enhance operations, and the exploration of new markets through e-commerce. This would require a holistic approach of hand-holding existing manufacturers in the sector, equipping both managers and their workforce with appropriate skills, and educating them on new technologies and standardization norms. New MSMEs, especially, should be encouraged to start off with this advantage.
3. **Skilling through Apprenticeship:** India's current goal of skilling 402 million people is way too large, unnecessary and unattainable. Skilling plans, in accordance with sector-wise requirements, will enable us to create appropriate job opportunities not just in India but also across the globe. For the formal sector, the key is to forge collaborations with industry, and for the non-formal sector, schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana will need to deliver results. Given the prevailing trends, industrial units and emerging e-commerce platforms are best equipped to provide the right kind of skilling.
4. **Statutory backing for Apprenticeship.** The traditional concept of apprenticeship, involving part-time work, does not find mention in India's wage-protection rule-books. This oversight can be fixed via coverage by either the wage code or social security code rules, or perhaps the Shops and Establishments Act rules, as deemed appropriate. At this juncture of the development of our digital economy, it should be lawful for employers to engage part-time workers, ideally for up to six hours a day.
5. **Suitable policy framework:** Apart from trained manpower and a compliance burden, what holds India's MSME sector back is a policy framework. It effectively acts as a

disincentive for MSME's to adopt emerging market platforms like e-commerce. Indian policies need to be revisited so that discrepancies are removed and we encourage small units to take advantage of e-com platforms.

Way forward

Policies should be designed to evolve an ecosystem that acts more as a facilitator with a light compliance regime and a sustainably credible framework for these units to plan and invest in expansion over longer time periods.

5. India remains a very difficult country for dying companies

Source: [Live Mint](#)

Syllabus: GS3 – issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

Relevance: Insolvency bankruptcy code and corporate failure

Synopsis: The failure of Insolvency bankruptcy code to achieve its intended objectives is dubbed as 'isomorphic mimicry' by developmental scholars.

What is 'isomorphic mimicry'?

It is the tendency of governments to mimic (copy) other governments' successes, replicating processes, systems, and even products of the "best practice" examples.

Issues pertaining to the IBC

Global investors were genuinely excited by India's 2016 insolvency law, hoping to profit from bad loans. Initial success with distressed steel plants raised hopes that the savings-starved economy would extricate valuable capital from failed ventures.

But now, IBC is challenged by

- **Low recovery rate (90% haircuts)**
- **Lack of bailout funds**
- **Long delays in admitting cases by tribunals**
- **Shortage of judges:** Across the country, 27 tribunals are being run by 29 judges, at least 25 short of what's required. Many have no experience in financial matters. Insolvency courts also adjudicate unrelated matters under the Companies Act, overwhelming an already strained system. Delays abound, not just in approving a sale or liquidation in 270 days as the law proposed originally (it was later increased to 330 days), but even in admitting cases.

Way forward

It's still not too late to fix the bankruptcy regime. Maybe it will happen only once the state is no longer a dominant player in the lending market.

6. India pivot from Look east to trade West

Source: [LiveMint](#)

Syllabus: GS 3 – Foreign Trade

Relevance: To understand India's Free Trade Agreements (FTA)

Synopsis: India has signed numerous FTA's, but they have not yielded expected results. As India embarks on a new spree to sign new trade deals, India needs to do its homework very well.

Introduction

India recently backed from Regional Comprehensive Economic partnership (RCEP).

Probable causes include:

- Widening trade balance with China
- Chinese goods might make a two-way entry via some other countries
- Border conflict with China

Why did India face setbacks in the East?

India's Look East was followed by ASEAN (2009), South Korea (2009) and Japan(2011). India's Act East policy was to cement this further, with RCEP at the fulcrum. But all this faced

- India has sought a review of FTA's with S Korea and Japan, which have been refused by the respective countries.
- Some experts claim that is because India's major export items like Pharma etc. are subject to regulatory norms and thus face Non-Trade Barriers.
- This has led to the belief that India's FTA is not working, or their utilization is low.
- According to a Deloitte study, FTA utilization is about 70-80% for developed countries, but 3-4% for developing countries.

Why India is turning towards the west for FTAs?

- There is a compulsion as many of India's trade partners in Asia are unhappy with India not joining RCEP.
- Moreover, India's exports have been stuck at \$300 billion for over a decade now. So India needs market access.

This is visible as India is negotiating trade deals (FTA) with the UK, EU. Similarly, India is also working to close a PTA with Canada and maybe with the UAE.

- EU and UK, post-Brexit have emerged as hopeful candidates for FTA's.
 - While the UK is keen to expand its trade basket post-Brexit, EU and India are keen to start again after the failure of the Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement.

What are the stumbling blocks to sign FTA's with the west?

Challenges in Europe:

- EU insistence on labour and environmental standards, access to Government procurement and stricter IP norms will not be easy for India to meet.
- While India seeks zero duty access to garments, textiles and leather, the EU is keen for market access to automobiles, wines etc.
- Also, the EU wants to split talks into 3 compartments – trade, GI tagged goods and services and investment. While India favours parallel talks and simultaneous agreements.
- Data access is another sticky point with the EU not granting India the 'data adequacy' status. As per experts, this requires India to legislate similar law like EU's GDPR (General data protection regulation) guidelines.

Challenges in the US:

- Though India was hopeful of FTA under the Trump administration, the recent US government has signalled that they are not in a hurry to sign FTA.

Way Forward:

Despite difficulties, India will find it easier to settle with the West than with the East.

Terms to know

- [Free Trade Agreement \(FTA\)](#)
- [Act East policy](#)
- [Regional Comprehensive Economic partnership](#)
- [Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement](#)

7. Tauktae, Yass and Planning for the next

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS3 – Disaster and disaster management

Relevance: Cyclone, its impacts and mitigation strategies

Synopsis: Cyclones in India, are the second most frequent phenomena causing widespread damage across the board. A brief look at cyclone scenario in India, the devastation caused by cyclones, including the protective measures that have been taken and can be taken in the future.

Cyclones in India

1. Every year, around **five to six tropical cyclones** are formed in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea; of these, two to three turn severe.
2. The World Bank and the United Nations (2010) estimate that **around 200 million city residents would be exposed to storms and earthquakes by 2050** in India. The west coast experienced 31 cyclones, while 282 cyclones crossed the east coast.
3. The **Odisha coast** witnessed 97 cyclones, followed by **Andhra Pradesh (79)**, Tamil Nadu (58), West Bengal (48), Gujarat (22), Maharashtra/Goa (7), and Kerala (2).

Extreme weather-related events in India

Cyclones are the second most expensive in terms of the costs incurred in damage, accounting for 29% of the total disaster-related damages after floods (62%). Such extreme-weather related events cause massive loss to India every year.

- India lost around 2% of GDP and 15% of total revenue over 1999-2020.
- According to the Global Climate Risk Index report 2021, India ranks the **seventh worst-hit country globally in 2019** due to the frequent occurrence of extreme weather-related events
- In 2019, **India also ranked first concerning human deaths and economic losses** due to extreme weather-related events.

Trends related to Cyclones in India

- **Increasing frequency of cyclones:** According to India Meteorological Department (IMD), 2013 data, increasing sea surface temperatures in the northern Indian Ocean and the geo-climatic conditions in India have led to a rise in the frequency of devastating cyclones in the coastal States accounting for 7% of the global tropical cyclones
- **Decline in fatalities:** Fatalities due to cyclones declined from 10,378 in 1999 to 110 in 2020. The significant drop was on account of improved early warning systems, cyclone forecasting, and better disaster management activities such as timely evacuation,

rehabilitation and relief distributions. But these measures are not adequate to achieve a zero-fatality approach and minimise economic losses from cyclones.

- **Increase in damages:** Between 1999 and 2020, cyclones inflicted substantial damage to public and private properties, in the absence of long-term mitigation measures. In addition, damages caused due to cyclones increased nine times during the same period.
- Cyclones also led to **an increase in the fiscal burden of governments** through increased spending to implement effective cyclone preparation measures. As a result, direct government expenditure on natural calamities increased 13 times

Suggestions/Measures

- **Improve the cyclone warning system** and revamp disaster preparedness measures.
- **Widen the cover under shelter belt plantations** and help regenerate mangroves in coastal regions to lessen the impact of cyclones.
- **Adopt cost-effective, long term mitigation measures**, building cyclone resilient infrastructure (storm surge resilient embankments, canals, improving river connectivity to prevent waterlogging).
- **Installing disaster resilient power infrastructure** in the coastal districts, providing concrete houses to poor and vulnerable households and creating massive community awareness.
- **A healthy coordination between the State and the Center** for the effective implementation of measures.

Must Read: [Steps and suggestions to handle cyclone related disasters in India](#)

8. [Telcos need three more bold decisions](#)

Source: [Business Standard](#)

Syllabus: GS3 – Changes in Industrial Policy and their Effects on Industrial Growth.

Relevance: Resolving issues plaguing the telecom sector in India

Synopsis: Undoing the retrospective tax amendment affecting Vodafone Group and Cairn Energy among others was an excellent move, and proves what the government can do. These moves must now be followed by further policy changes. A brief look at some of them.

Problems that remain

- **Overreach in [Adjusted Gross Revenue \(AGR\)](#) definition** (this issue is quite evident; several times SC has set aside such claims). AGRs for telecom operators need to be defined rationally.
- **Spectrum allocation and pricing:** This structure needs to be completely changed. Instead of requiring companies to make up front payments (in auctions) for spectrum allocation, rules can be made which allow its usage to be paid for by a share of revenues. This will make spectrum costs an operating expense, and will not require enterprises to make up-front capital investments, as with other resources: Electricity, water, and leased land.
 - Moreover, currently the spectrum is **priced at five times** the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) nations, whose per capita income is 15-20 times higher than us.

Implications

Like retro tax, these problems have restricted telecom and digitization support, limiting our capacity, hereby leading to an adequate communication infrastructure. This has led to issues in many areas such as energy and water management, education and skilling, healthcare, and productivity across sectors —commerce, transportation, hospitality and tourism, manufacturing, agriculture— and in mitigating environmental impact.

Suggestions/Measures

- A rationally, fair and transparent definition of Adjusted Gross Revenue.
- Wider swathes of spectrum for high data throughout; better wireless access network.
- Sharing of spectrum and facilities among operators, which will likely be the norm in 5G and 6G, providing a high multiplier to network usage, while considerably reducing capital investment needs countrywide.

Way forward

Constructive emphasis on infrastructure support is the way forward. The major changes of using spectrum as a shared resource with payment for usage through a share of revenues, in combination with undoing retro taxes and AGR, are the required steps. There are different ways to do this, and the government needs to steer the process through consultations to an acceptable way for us to move forward with 4G, 5G and beyond, for effective communications and digitisation.

9. Don't let the new e-commerce rules ruin innovation

Source: [Livemint](#)

Syllabus: GS3 – Changes in Industrial Policy and their Effects on Industrial Growth

Relevance: Implications of Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020.

Synopsis: Small internet outlets have flourished lately, but may find their operations hampered by compliance burden under the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020.. A brief look at some problematic provisions.

Background

- **Read here:** [Draft ecommerce rules – Explained, pointwise](#)
- Reason behind increase in online businesses in India
- **The internet has made it easier for anyone to monetize their passion** than ever before. Anyone can post a product online and dozens of people will be willing to buy it. This removed much of the pain once associated with starting a new business.
- In India, the **proliferation of digital platforms** means, every element of the commercial workflow is readily available as a disaggregated service that anyone who cares to use can access. This has made it possible for small businesses to take advantage of the web without the help of platforms like Shopify.

For example: Most home-food businesses use Instagram as their menu, displaying their dishes on the app as a series of images or short videos to select from. Others use Instagram Stories or WhatsApp Blasters to announce spot sales.

- Unlike elsewhere in the world where small businesses need to sign up to large digital platforms, in India they can assemble the services they need into **customized digital workflows** tailored to meet the unique requirements of their businesses. This allows

them to set up fully functional stores at a fraction of the cost that platforms like Shopify charge.

- *A digital workflow is the automation of a company's processes and the internal steps needed to get its business done.*

How the draft ecom rules can create problems?

The draft ecom rules apply to **all** entities that “own, operate or manage digital or electronic facilities or platforms for electronic commerce”, which implies that services such as those described above would fall within its ambit—as they make “digital or electronic facilities” for electronic commerce available to small home chefs and micro businesses. This can cause the following problems:

- **Increased compliance burden:** What this means is that all these services will have to appoint nodal and grievance officers in much the same way as big e-commerce players do. While all these compliances make sense in the context of large marketplace websites that display the goods of multiple sellers on their website, they are **counterproductive** when applied to digital services that offer commercial workflows to help small businesses manage their orders, payments and deliveries.
- **Cost of compliance:** The cost of putting in place these processes will shut down these services, leaving the small businesses that rely on them without the technical support they need to sustain their operations.

10. Explore unconventional sources of edible oil

Source: [Business Standard](#)

Syllabus: GS3 – Major Crops: Cropping Patterns in various parts of the country

Relevance: Analysis of New Edible Oil mission

Synopsis: The new edible oil mission launched by Central government offers both advantages and some issues. A brief look.

Context

In the backdrop of previous failed attempts to increase domestic oil seeds production, the government has recently set up Rs.11000 crore New Edible Oil Mission.

Why previous attempt failed?

The previous policies, most often, tended to over-protect consumer interests, disregarding those of the producers. Due to this, the supply deficit continued to soar, making India the world's largest importer of cooking oils.

The need for a new mission

Today, the country meets its 70% requirement of oils through shipments from abroad. These imports, in value terms, are now next only to those of petroleum products, which is creating a huge import burden.

Must Read: [Why attempts to boost oil palm farming may work?](#)

Activities under the mission

- **Boost oilseed output**– mission would boost oilseeds output by providing the growers the needed inputs, technology, and know how
- **High yield and pest resistant varieties**– Mini-kits of seeds of new high-yielding and disease- and pest-tolerant strains of various oilseed crops, including groundnut and soybean, are planned to be distributed to the farmers under the mission

- **Area expansion**– Over 600,000 hectares of additional area is sought to be planted with oilseed crops in this season

Issues with the mission

- **Disturbing geology and ecosystem**– The stress on encouraging oil palm cultivation in Northeastern states and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, seems technically correct since the agro-ecological conditions in these areas are conducive to cultivating oil palm. However, it is been promoted by clearing forest hence disturbing geology and ecosystem
- **Neglect of unconventional sources** such as rice bran and cottonseeds. These products are available in abundance and are going almost untapped at present. The proposed oilseed mission should include these unconventional sources
- **Lack of assurance of remunerative returns** and competition from cheap imports are not taken into account.

11. Climate change, a catalyst for Arctic cooperation

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS3 – Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment

Relevance: Importance of Arctic region for global climate

Synopsis: Apart from the geopolitical and strategic importance of the Arctic region, it is important for the global community to view it through ecological lenses.

Context

Along with the growing security concerns in the Arctic region, the region is also witnessing an unprecedented transformation due to climate change.

Arctic countries

There are eight countries that have direct access to the Arctic resources, i.e., Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the United States. In 2013, six Observers joined the Council, including China, Japan, **India**, Italy, South Korea, and Singapore.

Security concerns in the region

- In 2007, Russian explorers planted their flag on the seabed 4,200 m (13,779ft) below the North Pole stating Moscow's claims in the Arctic. This move was certainly viewed as provocative by other Arctic States.
- The regional tension increased after the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2014. Consequently, relations between the U.S. and Russia reached their lowest point again
- Russia's intention to re-establish the military might of its Northern Fleet also creates the security concerns and features prominently in the Norwegian foreign policy.

Must Read: [India's draft Arctic policy](#)

Impact of climate change

- There are increasing instances of extreme heat in North America, wildfire in Russian Siberia due to environmental transformation in the region
- According to **The World Climate and Security Report 2020**, the Expert Group of the International Military Council on Climate and Security, or the IMCCS, 'the Arctic is warming nearly twice as fast as the rest of the planet with consecutive record-breaking warm years since 2014'

Way forward

Given the significance of the region, the Arctic will continue to draw increased attention.

- Apart from pursuing national interests, participating nations should also be concerned about the future developments in the region and their larger implications for humanity.
- All the Arctic actors should have a **long-term vision** and **strategic goals** as compared to immediate short-term gains.
- Instead of creating a potential battleground that is reminiscent of the Cold War, the parties concerned should utilize their expertise to achieve shared goals

Terms to know:

- [World Climate and Security Report](#)

12. [The digital future of our country is distinctly being re-imagined](#)

Source: [Livemint](#)

Syllabus: GS3 – Science and Technology- Developments and their Applications and Effects in Everyday Life

Relevance: Impact of Digital India

Synopsis: The Digital India mission has made a positive impact on India's socio-economic development in past few decades. It also led to transformation of lives and livelihoods that at the grassroot levels.

Platformization is the key

At the core of India's transformation into Digital India—India's 'platformization' story, that is, how the country has built one of the world's most robust and comprehensive digital public-good platforms as the foundation of Digital India.

- A digital public-good platform **creates enormous value** by enabling seamless transactions, promoting innovation and generating efficiency and transparency for users.
- India's 20-plus public digital platforms have successfully built scale across multiple citizen services and also helped **create a vibrant tech startup ecosystem** that is making good use of this digital infrastructure.
- The rise of public digital platforms also **represents a productive engagement** between the government and Indian industry to work together in tackling crucial socio-economic challenges.

Examples of various digital platforms

- Use of **UPI (unified payment interface)** for making payments
- Booking a vaccination slot using **Cowin platform**
- **Aadhaar** ecosystem has attained 1.3 billion registrations and how a unique identity has become the foundation for digital transformation across sectors
- **FastTag**, which became mandatory earlier this year and enables online toll collection, has already facilitated 192 million transactions
- **Umang app**, which offers a one-stop platform for multiple government services, has witnessed a cumulative 1.7 billion transactions
- **MyGov** Chatbot as India's response to the covid crisis
- **eSanjeevani**, which has so far enabled 9 million telemedicine consultations
- The upcoming **National Digital Health Mission: Universal Health Initiative**, for example, can also be a game-changer for healthcare services in the country.

Potential of digitisation

From enabling farmers to sell their produce through e-commerce platforms, to facilitating education and healthcare in the remotest parts of our nation, digitalization offers enormous transformative opportunities for India.

- Open digital ecosystems today have the potential to unlock opportunities worth **\$700 billion** for India by 2030, as per a report by BCG.
- The environmental, societal and governance (ECG) impact across sectors like healthcare, talent, urban governance, agriculture, law and justice, education and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) can create new value of **\$500 billion-plus**, and over \$200 billion in savings for the country.

Reasons behind success of Digital India

- **Affordability** through low-cost development
- **Interoperability** with an API-driven backend
- **Mobile-first suitability** even for the country's non-smartphone segment
- **Multi-lingual interfaces** to increase access to common people
- Leveraging of offline infrastructure of **Common Service Centres** in remote areas

Conclusion

India has made a tremendous leap to become a robust digital economy, and the future of our country will be defined by how well we can integrate digital solutions across platforms. We must strive towards developing a seamless, transparent, and inclusive digital ecosystem that is driven by India's world-class innovation capabilities.

Terms to know

- [National Digital Health Mission](#)

13. The lure of 10 million jobs a year (On agri sector)

Source: [Down to Earth](#)

Syllabus: GS3- Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment

Relevance: issues with creation of employment opportunities in farm sector

Synopsis: There is a question over capacity of Agriculture sector to absorb more workforce in India. As per the latest data of the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) increasing number of people are joining agriculture for employment, in a shift from non-farm sectors like manufacturing and other informal jobs

Context

The CMIE analysis says that the **share of the agriculture sector in total employment has increased** to 45.6% in 2019-20, from 42.5% in 2018-19.

According to the report, the economic collapse due to the impact of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has led to huge losses in jobs in non-agricultural informal sectors.

Migrating people from farm to non-farm sectors has been the key strategy of India to provide livelihoods to the largely informal workforce. So, this report comes as a shocker.

What does this indicate?

It is a sign of distress in the labour market where non-agricultural sectors are unable to provide employment and labour is forced to shift to agriculture, i.e. an involuntary reverse migration from “factories to farms”.

It's also a problem because the sector has an average wage of Rs 291 per day

Can agriculture still create jobs?

- In 1999, the govt set up a **Task Force on Employment Opportunities** under Montek Singh Ahluwalia to suggest ways to achieve 10 million jobs a year. Ahluwalia submitted the report in 2001. It gave the verdict that in the future, agriculture would not be a job creator anymore.
- In 2002, another task force, called the **Special Group on Targeting Ten Million Employment Opportunities per year**, was set up. It concluded that the agricultural sector was a ‘gold mine’, with the potential to create at least 11 million jobs over five years. It emphasised horticulture, floriculture, agroforestry, minor irrigation and watersheds among others as labour-intensive, high-value areas. These are the same ways that the present govt is focusing on doubling farmers’ income.

Conclusion

The debate over farm vs non-farm needs a fresh look. Jobless growth is happening, but the farm sector has beaten this trend in recent years. It shows that agriculture might not have lost all its potential. It just needs a new political deal to revive.

14. The dangers of India's palm oil push

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS3 – Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment

Relevance: Issues associated with Palm oil cultivation

Synopsis: The recent push by Government of India to promote production of palm oil in Northeast and Andaman Nicobar islands has raised various concerns. A brief look.

Context

On August 15th, 2021, PM announced a support of Rs 11,000 crore to incentivize oil palm production. The government intends to bring an additional 6.5 lakh hectares under oil palm cultivation and aims to reduce the country's dependence on palm oil imports, especially from Indonesia and Malaysia.

Background

- The Yellow Revolution of the 1990s led to a rise in oilseeds production.
- Most of these oilseeds are grown in rain-fed agriculture areas of Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.
- Though there has been a continuous increase in the production of diverse oilseeds — groundnut, rapeseed and mustard, soybean — that has not matched the increasing demand.
- Thus, the National Mission on Oilseeds and Oil Palm is a part of the government's efforts to reduce the dependence on vegetable oil production.

Why the recent push?

The recent push comes from the “success stories” of the two Southeast Asian countries, **Indonesia** and **Malaysia**. Indonesia has emerged as a significant palm oil hub in the last decade and has overtaken Malaysia. The two countries produce 80% of global oil palm. Indonesia exports more than 80% of its production.

Must Read: [Explore unconventional sources of edible oil](#)

Impact on Malaysia & Indonesia

- **Declining biodiversity**– Studies on agrarian change in Southeast Asia have shown that increasing oil palm plantations is a major reason for the region’s declining biodiversity.
- **Loss of forest cover**– for example Indonesia has seen a loss of 1,15,495 million hectares of forest cover in 2020, mainly to oil palm plantation
- **Increasing water pollution**– in the region due to area expansion for oil palm cultivation
- **Increasing carbon emissions**– The decreasing forest cover has significant implications with respect to increasing carbon emission levels and contributing to climate change
- **Affects customary land rights of Forest dwellers**– Legislation allowing the clearing of tree cover and cutting forests for growing palm trees has led to increasing land-related tussles between government officials, locals and agribusiness groups in Malaysia and Indonesia
- **Against the notion of community self-reliance**– The initial state support for such a crop results in a major and quick shift in the existing cropping pattern that are not always in sync with the agro-ecological conditions and food requirements of the region
- **Increases vulnerability of farmers**– Palm oil cultivation has had a positive impact on poverty eradication in Malaysia by increasing income levels of small and marginal farmers, but in case of variations in global palm oil prices, households dependent on palm oil cultivation still face vulnerabilities from external factors.

In, India’s case it also goes against the government’s commitments under the **National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture**– which aims to make agriculture more productive, sustainable, remunerative and climate resilient by promoting location specific integrated/composite farming systems. The palm oil mission, instead, aims at achieving complete transformation of the farming system of Northeast India.

Conclusion

The increasing focus on palm oil will gradually result in focus shifting away from rain-fed oilseeds. Apart from the possible hazardous impacts in Northeast India, such trends could have negative implications on farmer incomes, health, and food security in other parts of the country in the long run.

Terms to know

- [National Mission on Edible Oils Oil Palm](#)
- [National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture](#)

15. Switch it off!: How light pollution disorients ecosystems

Source: [Down to Earth](#)

Syllabus: GS3 – Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment

Relevance: Impact of light pollution

Synopsis: Excessive use of light in urban areas has negative impact on human and animal life. Analysis of the impact and mitigation measures that can be taken.

Context

Watching the night sky, the stars and other astronomical objects is an absolute delight. While one may still observe these phenomena in rural areas, they are becoming increasingly rare in densely populated urban areas. The presence of artificial light in the environment is a major reason behind this.

About Light pollution

“It is an unwanted consequence of outdoor lighting and usually occurs due to excessive and inappropriate artificial light”. There are five components of light pollution:

1. **Urban sky glow**– Urban sky glow refers to the brightening of the night sky over urban inhabited areas
2. **Light trespass**– The falling of light in an area where it is not intended or needed is called light trespass
3. **Glare**– It is the excessive brightness of light, causing visual discomfort and disability.
4. **Uplight**– An uplight is directed toward the open sky, causing a very strong, localized form of light pollution.
5. **Clutter**– It refers to an excessive grouping of lights, commonly found in over-lit areas.
6. Causes
 - o Poor placement of signage and streetlights
 - o Excessive and inappropriate use of light
 - o High population density
 - o Higher road density and traffic density
 - o Environmental conditions such as smog, fog and high levels of suspended particles also increase the intensity of light pollution.

Must Read: [Skyglow forces dung beetles to abandon milky way as their compass](#)

Impact

- **On plants**– light pollution affects plants by interfering with **photoperiodism**. Several biological activities in plants, such as pigment formation, leave shedding and the onset and breaking of bud dormancy are determined by the photoperiod. Increasing lighting can prevent flowering and pollination in plants and hamper reproduction.
 - o **Photoperiodism:** *It is the functional or behavioral response of an organism to changes of duration in daily, seasonal, or yearly cycles of light and darkness.*
- **On animals**– Crepuscular (active only at dusk and dawn) and nocturnal (active only during the night) animals depend on the duration of day (light) length to start / stop their daily activities. Exposure to artificial light interferes with these activities, decreases their chances of finding food and mates and exposes them to predators.
- **On insects**– Artificial light at night is one of the important causes of global decline of insects. Amphibians are sensitive to ambient light, long exposure to artificial light can interfere with their reproduction
- **On turtles**– Sea turtles lay their eggs on beaches. However, artificial lights on the coasts draw them away from the ocean and in the wrong direction.
- **On nocturnal birds**– Nocturnal birds use moonlight and starlight for navigation and hunting and, thus, become disoriented by a large amount of artificial light.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of August (Fourth Week), 2021

- **On humans**– Artificial light causes major sleep disturbances in humans. Brain wave patterns, hormone generation, cell regulation and other biologic functions are affected by light pollution. Light pollution hampers disruption of circadian clock which has been associated with a variety of medical issues, including depression, sleeplessness, cardiovascular disease and cancer

Mitigation

- We should use light only in places and at times it is needed. Installation of time and motion sensor-based lighting can help achieve this.
- Efficient lighting should be used and should be directed at the ground, not the sky.
- A good lighting design should optimize the visibility of the intended object and minimize glare and light trespass.
- Artificial light should be minimized in ecologically sensitive areas, such as routes for migratory birds and beaches with active hatching of turtle eggs.
- Proper guidelines should be introduced regarding lighting on the highways and roads in or near forest regions.

Conclusion

Awareness about this lesser-known form of pollution needs to be augmented so that we can fine-tune our activities to reduce the negative impacts and make the world a better place for all beings

16. Climate crisis putting a billion children at ‘extremely high risk,’ warns new UN report

Source: [Down to Earth](#)

Syllabus: GS3 – Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment

Relevance: Impact of climate change on the lives of children

Synopsis: A recent report by UNICEF has stated the children’s across the globe are vulnerable to climate crisis. Article details the findings of the report

Context

Recently UNICEF along with ‘Friday’s with Future’ launched a new report called **“The Climate Crisis Is a Child’s Rights Crisis”** highlighting the impact of climate change on the lives of children.

The report introduces the new **Children’s Climate Risk Index (CCRI)**, a composite index that ranks nations based on children’s exposure to climate shocks, providing the first comprehensive look at how exactly children are affected by the climate crisis

Findings

- Approximately 1 billion children — nearly half the world’s child population — live in countries that are at an **“extremely high risk”** from climate impacts
- Almost every single child on the planet has been exposed to at least one climate or environmental stressor, such as air pollution, flooding, heat waves, tropical storms, flooding or drought.
- The report found that children are **“highly exposed”** to exceedingly high levels of air pollution, water scarcity, heat waves, vector-borne diseases, tropical storms and coastal flooding.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of August (Fourth Week), 2021

- The 33 extremely high-risk countries for children — including the Central African Republic, Chad, Nigeria, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau — collectively are **responsible for a mere 9% of global carbon dioxide emissions**, reflecting deep inequity regarding who must ultimately deal with the consequences of climate change.

Suggestions

- **Governments and businesses** should protect children from the climate crisis by reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- **Increasing investments** in health and hygiene services, education and clean water.
- Providing children with **climate education and green skills**.
- Including **young people in climate negotiations** and decision-making
- **Ensuring a “green, low-carbon and inclusive” COVID-19 recovery** “so that the capacity of future generations to address and respond to the climate crisis is not compromised.”

Terms to know:

- [Fridays for Future](#)

17. India has done well to ratify the Montreal accord amendment

Source: [Business Standard](#)

Syllabus: GS3 – Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment

Relevance: Understanding India’s ratification to Kigali Agreement

Synopsis: The recent announcement of Government of India to ratify the Kigali agreement is expected to bring various benefits including strengthening India’s global position in fight against climate change

Context

The government’s decision to ratify the amendment to the Montreal accord on phasing out ozone-depleting and environmentally-injurious substances has come at a time just before the UN 26th summit (COP 26). The conference on climate change to be held in November at Glasgow.

Background

- India has been a party to the adoption of the amendment to the Montreal Protocol at Kigali (Rwanda) in 2016 that called for gradual elimination of the hazardous chemicals commonly used as cooling agents.
- These substances mostly fall in the category of hydro-fluorocarbons (HFCs) which are injurious to the earth’s ozone layer that protects it from the harmful ultraviolet radiation coming from the sun
- Though HFCs were introduced as non-ozone depleting alternatives to the relatively more hazardous Hydro-chlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), they were found to emit highly potent greenhouse gases (GHGs)
- Thus, Kigali agreement now aims to replace all these chemicals with safer substitutes.
- India’s strategy
- A national strategy to discontinue the use of HFCs is proposed to be crafted by 2023 in consultation with the various stakeholders.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of August (Fourth Week), 2021

- This would involve a four-phased cutback schedule aimed at a cumulative reduction of 10% by 2032, 20% by 2037, 30% by 2042 and 85% by 2047.
- This structure is in line with the target of eliminating HFCs by the late 2040s

Benefits of HFC phaseout

- The elimination of HFCs at the global level is estimated to **reduce GHG emissions** equivalent to around 105 million tonnes of carbon dioxide
- It would help **avoid up to 0.5 degrees Celsius rise in temperature** by the end of this century, even while allowing the ozone layer to repair itself.
- **Benefits to India:**
 - For India, the notable gain would be the opening of the door for indigenous production of equipment as well as cooling agents, which are non-HFC and have low global warming potential.
 - The next generation refrigerants and refrigeration technology is expected to involve the use of relatively safer chemicals like hydro-fluoro-olefins (HFOs) or admixtures of HFCs and HFOs.

Terms to know

- [Montreal protocol](#)
- [Kigali Agreement](#)

18. It's time for Industry 4.0

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS3 – Science and Technology- Developments and their Applications and Effects in Everyday Life.

Relevance: Modernization of Indian MSME's

Synopsis: MSMEs are significant to India. India can leverage multiple benefits by integrating 'Industry 4.0' features in Indian MSMEs.

What is 'Industry 4.0'?

The term 'Industry 4.0' was coined by the German government in 2011. Additive manufacturing, Internet of Things, Cyber Physical Systems, Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality and data analytics are some technologies associated with Industry 4.0.

With the help of these technologies, the manufacturing industry will be able to make **data-driven decisions**. The reduced costs of electronics like sensors, transmitters, and cloud have allowed us to capture the data produced during operational activities. With the availability of advanced algorithms, this captured data can be analysed for decision-making in real time.

Thus, Industry 4.0 **integrated 'data' with manufacturing and Information Technology**.

Significance of MSMEs to India

- MSMEs form more than 95% of the industries in India, produce more than 45% of the total manufacturing output and employ more than 40% of the workforce.
- According to the **Economic Survey 2020-21**, over 6 crore MSMEs employ more than 11 crore people and contribute roughly 30% to the GDP and half of the country's export.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of August (Fourth Week), 2021

- MSMEs are also ancillaries to larger enterprises, leading to a seamless supply chain integration. As a result, making MSMEs more efficient will be advantageous for the whole economy.

Challenges in adoption of Industry 4.0 by MSMEs

1. **Lack of awareness:** First, they lack awareness regarding Industry 4.0 and its benefits. They consider such technologies disruptive and having the potential to demolish their existing system. However, Industry 4.0 improves the existing system. Sensors and WiFi networks being integrated with old machines like lathes and mills will improve their performance.
2. **Major financial investments:** Second, MSMEs will need to make major financial investments to adopt Industry 4.0. Investing in the right set of technologies will need experts and consultants as well.
3. **Lack of assistance:** Thirdly, the framework and steps that can assist MSMEs in adopting Industry 4.0 technologies have been missing. In this regard, MSMEs need to understand the data they are producing from all their operational activities. Based on such data, their readiness can be evaluated.
4. **Lack of vision:** Finally, MSMEs should develop their own vision of Industry 4.0 technologies that they want to adopt and identify the relevant tools and practices they need for such a tailored vision.

Benefits to MSMEs

- The adoption of Industry 4.0 technologies by MSMEs will **make them more competitive** as they will be able to offer world-class quality products to customers.
- Additionally, **delivery timings and the flexibility to meet different needs will improve.**

Way forward

Proper sensitization of the Government of India, higher education institutions, practitioners, entrepreneurs, industrial associations, trade unions, venture capitalists, consultants and research agencies would help to speed up this task.

19. A way of diluting credit discipline (On RBI's current account circular)

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS3- Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development

Relevance: Credit Discipline, Regulations by RBI

Synopsis: Recent RBI circular on opening current accounts will have the counter-intuitive effect of diluting credit discipline rather than strengthening it.

Context

Recently, some bank borrowers have gone to court demanding that it quash the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) circular on opening current accounts. However, now the RBI has extended the date for compliance.

Why such move by RBI?

Current accounts with non-lending banks are an important channel for diversion. Internal diversion is for non-priority purposes and funds are diverted to other firms, owned or controlled by the same group, friends or relatives.

What are the regulations?

1. If borrowing is through a cash credit or overdraft account, no bank can open a current account.
2. If a borrower has no cash credit or overdraft account, a current account can be opened subject to restrictions.
3. If the bank's exposure is less than 10% of total borrowings, debits to the account can only be for transfers to accounts with a designated bank.
4. If total borrowing is ₹50 crore or more, there should be an escrow mechanism managed by one bank which alone can open a current account.

Issues with the regulations:

1. First, if a borrower has an overdraft, **how can there not be a current account?** An overdraft is the right to overdraw in a current account up to a limit.
2. Second, the **circular forecloses operational flexibility.**
3. Third, why should a bank with low exposure transfer funds to another bank when it can use it to adjust other dues with it?
4. Fourth, there is **a mismatch between what a borrower needs and the regulations allow.** Support of non-lending banks through current accounts in other banks is required for large accounts. The circular rules out this possibility.
5. Fifth, transactions in an active current account enables a bank to monitor a borrower's account. The lack of such control will increase NPAs.
6. Sixth, the **regulation mandates splitting working capital into loan and cash credit components across all banks.** Such a one-size-fits-all regulation does not factor in the purpose of the different facilities.

Other regulatory issues

- First, it is more effective to base regulation on principles that focus on outcomes rather mere compliance.
- Second, regulation **needs to use more generic terms.** Terms such as Working Capital Term Loan might mean different things in different banks.
- Third, it is questionable to design regulation to target exceptional events such as diversion of funds as it is better to leave it to management.
- Fourth, the costs of regulation should be justified by the benefits.
- **Lastly**, when regulation ignores market practices, it lacks legitimacy and when legitimacy is wanting, compliance suffers.

Conclusion

Forced compliance is leading to a new banking practice of overdraft in fixed deposits. A bank could also merely rename current accounts as overdraft, as there is no bar in having a credit balance in an overdraft account.

20. Inside the RBI's digital currency dream (On CBDC)

Source: [Live Mint](#)

Syllabus: GS3- Indigenization of Technology and Developing New Technology.

Relevance: Future of Central bank digital currency

Synopsis: CBDC is likely to be in the arsenal of every central bank going forward. Factors behind sudden global interest of CBDC, its need and associated challenges.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of August (Fourth Week), 2021

Context

RBI may come out with a model for the implementation of a government-backed digital currency by the end of this year.

Must Read: [What is a CBDC?](#)

Why a sudden global interest in CBDC's?

Globally, there are two factors behind this sudden interest in CBDCs.

1. First is the rise of cryptocurrencies such as bitcoin, and
2. Second, the proposed launch of a Facebook-backed digital **stablecoin** called **Diem** (formerly known as Libra).
 - o **A stablecoin** is a digital currency that is **linked to an underlying asset**, such as a national currency like the US dollar or a precious metal like gold. For example, **Tether**, the largest stablecoin, is backed by the US dollar on a 1:1 basis.

Also, there is **intense competition between central authorities and private players** who are simultaneously attempting to bring in greater efficiency to payments. Central banks certainly don't want to end up on the losing side.

Must Read: [Private partners could help RBI run a digital currency](#)

Need for CBDC

1. Much effective than traditional financial system to effectively handle cross-border trade and movement.
2. Existing **SWIFT** system of (international) money transfer ensures that the US has a disproportionate control of the (current) global settlement process. CBDC can ensure a level playing field.
3. Enables Faster money transfer at low cost.
4. Reduction in the compliance burden
5. CBDC's are necessary to protect the public in an environment of volatile private virtual currencies
6. Will help India to slowly move towards a cashless economy

CBDCs role in welfare schemes

Over the years, one major shortcoming of traditional money has been in the area of delivering welfare schemes.

In India, the DBT program is currently in place to enable the transfer of subsidies directly to a person's bank accounts.

- However, sending money via traditional banking channels is **costly**, as banks have to adhere to KYC and anti-money laundering requirements.
- Since CBDCs are programmable money and can be embedded with a computer code, a digital rupee can hold KYC information within itself.

Therefore, a central bank-issued digital currency can ultimately **lower the cost incurred** by banks.

Must Read: [Merits of an RBI currency outweigh the risks](#)

The challenges

1. **Operational challenges:** The RBI will need to decide about

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

ForumIAS

- the degree of anonymity when transacting via CBDC.
 - whether CBDC can be utilized for both retail payments (peer to peer) or will it be limited to wholesale payments (among banks and financial institutions for the settlement of transactions);
 - whether CBDC units will be interest bearing
2. **Privacy concerns:** Centralized ownership would make all money traceable by the government.
 3. **Managing Future risks:** Governance and control structures will need to be updated to manage the unique risks which will arise with CBDC.
 4. **Legal challenges:** Several amendments to existing banking norms will be required to enable a digital currency (as opposed to paper currency).

21. Negotiating the new global climate policy

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS3 – Environment

Relevance: issues with the current global climate change dialogue

Synopsis: Global climate change policy negotiations require a new framework that is **based on cumulative emissions** by taking into account the **legacy emissions** of the developed world, esp North America and European countries. This is necessary as developing countries still need to pull out a considerable chunk of their population from the clutches of poverty.

Context

The recent [report of the United Nations \(UN\) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#) clearly states that reaching net-zero alone is not enough.

It is the **cumulative emissions up to net-zero** which determine the temperature that is reached. A global policy that considers only current emissions will not limit global warming and its adverse effects.

Hence, suitable changes need to be made to the current climate change framework.

Important stats

Per capita GHG emissions (tonnes of CO₂)

Per capita here means the total amount of carbon dioxide emitted by the country as a consequence of all relevant human (production and consumption) activities, divided by the population of the country.

- **World** = 6.55 tonnes of CO₂ per person
- **USA, Canada, and Australia** = more than two-a-half times of the world
- **China** = 6.4 tonnes (just below the global average)
- **India** = 1.96 (less than 1/3rd)

Global carbon budget

The total amount of carbon the world can emit to limit global warming to 1.5° C, is referred to as the carbon budget.

- **Remaining carbon budget** = 400 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide

Must Read: [Origin of current emissions based approach](#)

Issues

The present framework has created an imbalance between countries sharing global carbon space and suffers from the following issues:

- **Unfair to developing countries:** Merely achieving net-zero of current emissions by 2050 — the proposal of the G7 — restricts well-being. Varying levels of per-capita emissions leading to a common point of net-zero is unfair to developing countries. It allows those who have already used more than their fair share of the carbon space a larger share of the remaining space too.
- **Ignores cumulative emissions:** By contributing over 60% of global cumulative emissions, with just one-fourth of the global population, North America and Europe are responsible for nearly 970 billion tonnes of carbon emissions. Whereas, the world's remaining carbon budget is only 400 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide, and the U.S. alone has contributed this amount for its high standard of living. The current approach of stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations ignores the fact that developing countries will need some flexibility here.
- **Doesn't account for different civilizational values:** With different civilizational values, consumption of the middle class in developing countries is less wasteful than in the first phase of urbanization.

Implications

Pressure on developing countries: Development has depleted carbon space, causing the climate change problem, and developing countries are now being pressured to limit their use of the remaining space as the solution.

Accepting 'net-zero' emissions by 2050, based on current emissions, effectively prevents India's urbanization and shift of the rural population into the middle class.

Suggestions/Changes needed

- **Bring emissions to global average:** At the G20 Climate and Energy Ministerial meeting in July 2021, India proposed that major economies bring down their own per capita emissions to the global average by 2030. This ensures that they do not use up more than their fair share of the remaining carbon budget.
- **Flexibility for essential emissions:** Developing countries should be allowed flexibility for 'essential emissions'. Infrastructure, or construction, essential for urbanization and quality of living is responsible for two-fifths of global carbon dioxide emissions from fuel combustion and 25% of emissions overall. These emissions arise from energy-intensive cement production and half of the steel produced which is used in construction, both having no substitutes
- **Sharing prosperity** should be the objective of new intergovernmental mechanisms, with the involvement of the private sector, for example, supporting solar energy, joint research in new crop varieties and exchanging experiences on infrastructure viability.

22. Financing India's green future

Source: [Business Standard](#)

Syllabus: GS3 – Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment

Relevance: Increasing investment in decarbonising technology is important for achieving a green future

Synopsis: India's is among one of the few countries to achieve its target under Paris Commitment. However, we still require investment in green future to promote sustainable development.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of August (Fourth Week), 2021

Context

Currently, India is moving ahead of its target of reducing 33-35 % emissions intensity of 2005 gross domestic product (GDP) before 2030 under Paris commitment. However, India **needs to consider even lower carbon pathways**, including Net-Zero emissions.

Each of these development pathways require enormous financing requirements which will come through, **commercial** (purely financial returns-driven), **impact** (both financial and social returns- driven) and **public** (social returns-driven) capital.

How much capital is required?

According to the **International Energy Association (IEA)** India requires \$1.4 trillion over the next two decades in financing green energy technologies alone. This is half of India's GDP for financial year 2020-21.

The recently announced **PM Gati Shakti investment programme** is sized at Rs 100 trillion, or about \$1.3 trillion.

Need of commercial capital

- Commercial capital drives the global economy and is many times larger than public funds or impact capital
- Green investments must therefore compete with brown (non-green) investments to find large markets and generate attractive returns.

Role of government

Government can play a crucial role to promote Government and market collaboration:

- Public investment should absorb the initial capital expenditure of demonstration or pilot projects
- Government can offer subsidies for part of the capital or operating costs
- It can incentivise off take of the final product
- Government can help push for and create technology transfer initiatives between countries
- It can offer connecting infrastructure or distribution for the new technology.

Role of Impact capital

Three different categories of impact capital providers assist in jumpstarting green industries to complement the role played by government and the market.

- First, advanced countries are deploying capital (grants, aid, loans, equity) to help commercialize new technologies.
- Second, philanthropic capital, which is concerned about long-term social impact and does not judge its performance solely by financial returns.
- And, finally, there are many firms that are committing to net-zero targets: Their cash flows are being channelized into green investments.

Conclusion

India will require huge amount of investment to get to the Green Frontier. These immense funding requirements will necessitate that we fully mobilize domestic and global sources of capital. Our financing system will have to be geared up to support these capital flows.

Terms to know:

- [International Energy Association](#)

23. The clean-up crew we need (On vulture conservation)

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Syllabus: GS3 – Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment

Relevance: Importance of vultures for an ecosystem

Synopsis: Vultures play a very important role in an ecosystem by acting as its scavengers. However, their declining population has increased various concerns. Let's have a brief look into it.

Context

India lost more than 95% of its vulture population through the 1990s and by the mid-2000s. Today, the country requires urgent conservation efforts to save vultures from becoming extinct

About vultures

- Vultures belong to the Accipitridae family, whose members include eagles, hawks and kites
- They are relatively social birds with an average lifespan of 10-30 years in the wild, nest on tall trees or rocky cliffs
- Vultures are slow breeders and so the survival of every individual is very crucial
- They have excellent eyesight and strong sense of smell, and hence can detect the presence of dead animals from great distances
- Vultures don't have a voice box, and so they cannot sing. They communicate via grunts and hisses
- Unlike other raptors, vultures have weak legs and claws (talons)
- They do not carry food; instead, they regurgitate food and feed their young ones
- Vultures have a highly acidic stomach that helps them digest a rotting carcass and kill disease-causing bacteria

Reason behind decline

- **Use of drug Diclofenac**– Diclofenac, which relieves cattle of pain, is toxic to vultures even in small doses and causes kidney failure and death
- **Hunting**– Myths about the medicinal healing powers of vultures' body parts has led to the hunting of vultures.
- **Quarrying and blasting**– of stones where vultures nest have also caused their decline
- Impact of the decline
- **Inefficient clearing of carcasses**– Removing vultures from the ecosystem leads to inefficient clearing of carcasses and contaminates water systems
- **Giving rise to disease-causing pathogens**– If dead animals are left to rot for long durations, it may give rise to disease-causing pathogens.

Steps taken

- India banned diclofenac for veterinary use in 2006.
- Five States are to get vulture breeding centers under the Action Plan for Vulture Conservation for 2020-2025.
- **Vulture 'restaurants'**, which exist in some countries, which provides diclofenac-free carcasses of cattle to feed the vultures.

Must Read: [Vulture conservation in India](#)

24. Protecting consumers, the heart of finance

Source: [Business Standard](#)

Syllabus: GS3- Inclusive Growth and issues arising from it

Relevance: Consumer protection and education in financial sector.

Synopsis: Competitive markets in financial services are the best bulwark against consumer fraud in the long run. In the medium term, dedicated legislation could be the answer

Context

In the recent Budget, several initiatives were announced to develop and deepen the country's financial markets. For instance, the announcement of a **unified securities market code**, an **investor charter** to assimilate the rights of investors across all financial services.

Issues with consumer protection in India

- **Very little is being done to protect and educate consumers** from financial frauds. Very minimal actions have been taken in this regard. For instance, a year ago, a **National Strategy for Financial Education (2020-2025)** prepared by the financial sector regulators was released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). This strategy document thinks deeply about consumer protection and education.
- Also, India has **only few legislations** for governing consumer protection for financial services. For instance, the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 (COPA). Moreover, it is fundamentally oriented towards consumers of non-financial goods and services. This has resulted in the various forms of **consumer abuse** in Indian finance.
- The present financial laws **do not establish a precise legal framework** for consumer protection in finance.
- The working of the existing regulators on quasi-legislative and quasi-executive functions has shortcomings, which feeds through into their work on consumer protection also.
- **Invisible infrastructure on problems** such as privacy is lacking. A consumer-friendly redress mechanism is lacking.
- Finally, the present inter-connected systems of financial repression and debt management generate financing for public debt in ways that are **unfair to the users of formal finance** in India.

FSLRC's contribution

The creation of the **Financial Sector Legislative Reforms Commission (FSLRC)** was announced in the 2010 budget. It explicitly mandated an examination of issues of data privacy and protection of consumer financial services in the Indian context.

- The FSLRC drafted the **"Indian Financial Code version 1.1"** that provided a strategy for consumer protection through prevention and cure. The prevention is done by solving the problems of financial regulatory architecture, the working of regulators, and setting a clear set of principles defining consumer protection.
- Further, it proposed a unified and independent **Financial Redress Agency (FRA)** a one-stop forum for complaint settlement for all financial consumers. This does away with the multiplicity of redress forums (internal forum of the FSP, sectoral ombudsman, consumer dispute redressal forums, civil courts) and allied costs.

The work of FSLRC ended in 2015. In many respects, when we look at the various forms of consumer abuse in Indian finance, then we can see that the institutional reforms proposed by the FSLRC would have delivered better outcomes.

Way forward

A deep and liquid market is the best protection for ordinary consumers, better than the protection of interventionist regulators. Too often in India, we are interested towards a more socialistic and centrally-planned system, in the name of protecting consumers. But this reduces gross domestic product growth and increases poverty, this is the greatest form of consumer abuse.

Conclusion

Our biggest task in consumer protection should be to break away from the system of regulators.

25. Dealing with the discarded: E-Waste management in India

Source: [Down To Earth](#)

Syllabus: GS3- Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation

Relevance: Managing the e-waste problem in India

Synopsis: Technology plays a dominant role in our lives. But the increase in its use, coupled with extreme consumerist behaviour has come with some ill-effects on the environment, like generation of e-waste. Analysis of the e-waste issue, associated problems and measures needed.

Context

India is the third-largest producer of e-waste after China and the United States. More than 95% of this waste is handled by informal sector.

According to a Central Pollution Control Board report, in financial year 2019-2020, India generated 1,014,961.2 tonnes of e-waste for 21 types of EEE. This **unprecedented generation of e-waste** is a cause of concern.

What is e-waste?

The **International Telecommunication Union** defines e-waste as, *all items of electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) and its parts that have been discarded by its owner as waste without the intent of re-use.*

Such items include cooling and freezing equipment like refrigerators, televisions, monitors, laptops, notebooks and tablets etc.

Challenges

1. First problem lies with the **nature of the material used**. The e-waste stream contains **hazardous substances** such as lead, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), polybrominated biphenyls (PBBs), mercury, polybrominated biphenyl ethers (PBDEs), brominated flame retardants (BFRs), and valuable substances such as iron, steel, copper, aluminum and plastics.
2. Second, hazardous materials require **special treatment** and cannot be dumped in landfill sites.
3. Third, decomposing e-waste is an **expensive** process.
4. Fourth, E-waste **releases harmful chemicals**, such as lead, on burning, which adversely impacts human blood, kidney and the peripheral nervous system.

5. Lastly, a Comptroller and Auditor General of India report found that over 75 per cent of state bodies were not implementing **hazardous waste** laws.

Measures needed

By consumers:

1. Efficient use of electronic devices by regularly maintaining them.
2. There is a need to **break consumerist patterns**.
3. Reevaluate choices and use one multi-purpose device.

By Tech-giants:

1. All tech companies should **mandate their customers to buy new technology only after exchanging old electronic** products for the new ones.
2. Hardware stores and companies should **offer incentives and discounts** to customers who give away their old electronic devices.
3. Tech companies and sellers should collaborate with e-waste disposing companies for their proper disposal.
4. Adopt smart ways to recycle old products **by outsourcing contracts to e-waste disposal**.

By the government:

1. Activities such as recycling, exchange and incentives can be sanctioned by government laws where in they can provide **companies tax benefits** for recycling of e-waste.
2. **Implementations of legislations to regulate** the disposal and management of e-waste in India, like
 - o Hazardous Wastes (Management and Handling) Amendment Rules, 2003
 - o Guidelines for Environmentally Sound Management of E-waste, 2008
 - o E-waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2011.

26. Facial recognition spreads, concern over absence of data protection law

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS3 – Science and Technology- Developments and their Applications and Effects in Everyday Life

Relevance: Regarding Facial Recognition technology

Synopsis: The greater rush for the use of FRT systems has raised various concerns, despite the strength of justification. Let's have a brief look into the debate.

Context

Facial recognition technology (FRT) software systems are being installed at some of India's busiest airports and train stations. The growing list of users of this technology, started with the Home Ministry's National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) and various police forces. It now includes the Airports Authority of India, the Indian Railways, public sector utilities, and the state-owned agency etc.

Must read: [National Automated Facial Recognition System- Explained point wise](#)

Applications

- **Airport Authority of India** under **Digi Yatra program**, is using this technology
- **Indian Railways** plan to install facial recognition tech at railway stations to "identify criminals"

9 PM Compilation for the Month of August (Fourth Week), 2021

- **The Delhi Police** acquired an automated facial recognition software as a tool to identify lost boys and girls by matching photos
- **State-owned NTPC Ltd** has started implementing FRT alongside biometrics to capture the attendance of employees. As per NTPC's policy, consent of employees "shall not be" required for implementation of FRT.

Concerns

- **India does not yet have specific laws** with regard to FRT and personal data protection
- Experts have also flagged the issue of **lack of informed consent**: Images gathered from CCTV surveillance will also be used to extract particular data points such as the facial features etc. An individual might not have consented to sharing these when entering a CCTV-surveilled zone. These data points can be used to track future movements of the person.

Note: This article contains only those new points which haven't been covered in our 7PM article on NAFRS. So, kindly go through that first.

27. Explained: Haryana's changes to land law; why they have been criticised

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS-3 Land Reforms

Relevance: To understand land policies of Haryana

Synopsis: The recent land acquisition bill passed by Haryana Government is being termed as "anti-farmer" which will promote "crony capitalism".

Context:

Recently, Haryana government passed the **Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Haryana Amendment), Bill, 2021**. It seeks to expedite development projects by simplifying the procedure for the acquisition of land.

Provisions of the bill

1. **Exemption:** It has brought Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects to the 'exempt' category, for which Social Impact Assessment (SIA)/ consent of landowners is not required.
 - Under the Central Land Acquisition Act, it is mandatory for the government in PPP projects to seek the consent of at least 70 % of affected families and conduct Social Impact Assessment (SIA).
2. **Power of collector:** The Collector can determine the fair compensation and make the award without further enquiry if he is satisfied that all persons interested in the land have given their consent to the terms and conditions based on their free will.
3. **Building Evacuation:** Under the new law, the condition of giving 48-hour notice to the occupants of an acquired building to evacuate has been removed. Occupants would be required to vacate the building immediately after the Collector announces the award.
4. **Compensation:** It seeks to do away with the provision that required the government to give the evicted people plots of land in addition to monetary compensation.

Impact of the bill:

The government is no more bound to obtain the Consent of landowners, SIA for a range of projects. These projects are related to

1. National security or defence of India;
2. **Rural infrastructure** eg electrification; affordable housing etc

3. **Industrial corridors** set up by the state government or its undertakings
4. **PPP projects** wherein the ownership of land continues to vest with the state government
5. Urban Metro and rapid rail projects.

Why the bill is being opposed?

- It will provide arbitrary powers to the government to acquire land from landowners, majorly farmers. It will provide arbitrary powers to vacate buildings immediately after Collector's notice, even at midnight.
- It would offer no choice to landowners to negotiate, but to accept the compensation and hand over their lands
- The government can now acquire even irrigable/cultivable land with or without the consent of the owner
- Tenants and poor persons who may have non-proprietary rights on the land are likely to lose out.
- There is fear that land will fall into the hands of corporates

Haryana Governments Stand

The government rejected the apprehensions that acquired lands will eventually go to corporates. Further,

- There is no reduction in the amount of compensation. It will continue to be the same as it used to be under the Central Act

Conclusion:

Haryana is not the only state that has sought to make the amendments in the Central Act. 16 other states, including Telangana, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra, have also enacted such laws. Although these laws have also been challenged, they are pending in court at present.

Terms to know

- [Social Impact Assessment](#)
- [Public Private Partnership](#)

28. Asset monetisation — execution is the key

Source: [Business Standard](#), [The Hindu](#) 1, [The Hindu](#) 2

Syllabus: GS3 – Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment.

Relevance: Mobilization of resources

Synopsis: Challenges in implementing the National Monetisation Pipeline Project and suggestions for better implementation.

Background

- **Read more:** [National Monetisation pipeline \(NMP\) project – Explained](#)

Privatisation vs Monetisation

- Privatisation takes the government out of a business, whereas Monetisation keeps the government in there as an active player.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of August (Fourth Week), 2021

- In asset monetisation, the Government parts with its assets such as roads, coal mines for a specified period of time in exchange for a lump sum payment. At the end of the period, the assets return to the Government. Unlike in privatisation, **no sale** of government assets is involved.

Rationale behind Asset Monetization

While the Government gets a 'fair' value for its assets. The private player gets its return on investment. The economy benefits from an increase in efficiency.

Issues and Challenges

- **Cronyism:** Given the record of past blunders and under-achievements and the vulnerabilities of India's eroded institutions, the infrastructure asset monetization programme might end up as another scandal. Similar to the infamous auction of telecom licences and coal mines
- **Correct valuation of assets is very difficult:** It is very difficult to get the valuation right over a long-term horizon, such as 30 years. For instance, for a road or highway, growth in traffic would also depend on factors other than the growth of the economy such as the level of economic activity in the area, the prices of fuel and vehicles, alternative modes of transport and their relative prices, etc.
 - If the rate of growth of traffic turns out to be higher than assessed by the Government in valuing the asset, the private operator will reap windfall gains.
 - Alternatively, if the winning bidder pays what turns out to be a steep price for the asset, it will raise the toll price steeply. The consumer ends up bearing the cost.
- **Monetisation will eventually end up as Privatisation:** There is no incentive for the private player to invest in the asset towards the end of the tenure of monetisation. The life of the asset, when it is returned to the Government, may not be long. In that event, asset monetisation virtually amounts to sale. Monetisation through the PPP route is thus riddled with problems.
- **Cost of Capital:** The cost of capital for a private player is higher than for a public authority. A public authority needs less equity capital and can access debt more cheaply than a private player. The higher cost of capital for the private player could neutralize the benefit of any reduction in operating costs.

Suggestions

- **Co-ordination among financial sector regulators** (RBI, SEBI, IRDA and PFRDA) is important as the assets that are to be monetised are listed across sectors.
- There is a **need to expand the investor base** and scale of monetisation instruments like InvITs and Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs).
- **Existing investment guidelines** for insurance and pension funds have varying restrictions on investing in InvIT/ REIT and these needs to be streamlined.
- **Restrictions pertaining to investments** in the overall corporate bond market also needs to be streamlined. Such norms limit the investor class participation thereby constraining the pool of liquidity available.
- **Monetisation through InvITs:** Utilising InvITs is likely to prove less of a problem than the PPP route. Because, In the InvIT route to monetisation, the public authority continues to own the rights to a significant portion of the cash flows and to operate the

assets. So, the issues that arise with transfer of assets to a private party such as incorrect valuation or an increase in price to the consumer are less of a problem.

- The Government should **set up an Asset Monetisation Monitoring Authority** staffed by competent professionals. The authority must evaluate all aspects of monetisation such as valuation, the impact on price charged to the consumer, monetisation of under-utilized versus well-utilised assets, the experience across different sectors, etc.

29. Why agrarian reforms should go beyond meeting demands of the agitating farmers

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS 3 – Land Reforms

Relevance: To understand the land reforms

Synopsis: The land reforms of 50's and 60's have been inadequate in addressing the inequity in land ownership. Thus, new agricultural reforms should be targeted on land reforms.

Introduction

The government brought farm laws in 2020 and ever since then farmer's protests and agitations have been going on. However, what is often missed in the discourse of such reforms is the larger issue of land reforms and equitable distribution of productive resources in rural India.

About Agriculture:

Agriculture in India is of vast importance because it has been an important contributor to GDP. In '60s and 70's, after the success of the green revolution, it contributed by making India self-sufficient in food grains. This also helped in reducing food imports and import bills.

However, India witnesses persistent poverty in rural India. This can be seen as:

- Poverty co-exists with prosperity due to the inequitable distribution of resources like land.
- National level food sufficiency has not translated to household-level food sufficiency.
- Poverty alleviation necessitated interventions like MGNREGA.

Land reforms since Independence

Land reforms were initiated as soon as India gained its independence. These included measures like

- Abolition of feudal landlordism,
- Conferment of ownership on tenants,
- Fixing land ceilings,
- Distribution of surplus land,
- Increasing agricultural productivity and production.

These reforms were met with some success, like abolishing Zamindari, tenancy rights.

Present status of Land ownership

Even though India introduced land reforms, the progress of land ownership has been slow and dismal.

- Less than 1 percent of the total land in the country was declared as surplus.
- Owing to manipulations in land records, very less land was available for distribution.

Challenges in land ownership

The land reforms in fact complicated the rural power structure and political environment.

- This was accompanied by **fast development of other sectors** in the economy.

9 PM Compilation for the Month of August (Fourth Week), 2021

- Rural areas were absorbed into urban and industrial areas. The new landowner soon turned capitalist farmers.
 - Capitalist farmers utilized programs like the green revolution, the nationalization of banks and urbanization and gained access to markets.
 - They soon dominated the labour markets, small farmers and rural credit.
 - They also cornered a disproportionate share of subsidies.
 - Many members of rich farm households moved into industry, business and professions, which resulted in further procurement of land.

Suggestions

What agricultural reforms actually demand is the **reforms in land distribution** to check the concentration of land in few hands. This is because the relation between caste and land still persists, with **higher caste holding land assets**. So **any land reforms must address all segments of rural society**, including farmworkers.

This calls for radical land reforms such as,

- Agricultural land should be pooled and equally distributed among farm households.
- Non-farm households should not be permitted to hold farmland
- The land reforms programme should not be left to the states as it will be sabotaged by capitalist farmers who also hold political power.
- India can make land reforms a central subject; while agriculture can remain a state subject.
- The aim should be to provide a justiciable universal property right that must form an inalienable part of Article 21 (Right to Life) of the Constitution.

Terms to Know

- [MGNREGA](#)
- [Article 21](#)