

7 PM COMPILATION

March, 2023

Features of 7 PM compilation

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

Centre-State relations and Punchhi Commission – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Indian Constitution and Polity

Sub topic:- Separation of powers between various organs dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions.

Clean Energy Transition of States and their challenges – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Economic development

Sub topic:- Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc

India's Sustainable Development Goals | SDGs – Performance So Far – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Economic development

Sub topic:- Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.

Changes to the process of selecting election commissioner: Significance and challenges – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Indian Constitution and Polity

Sub topic:- Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.

New e-waste rules and India's e-waste challenge – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Environment and Bio-diversity

Sub topic:- Environmental pollution and degradation

Renaming places in India: Rationale and Challenges – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Indian Constitution and Polity

Sub topic:- Indian Constitution—historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

Internal Migration in India and associated challenges: Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Indian Society

Sub topic:- Population and associated issues

India-Australia relations: Challenges and Significance – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- International Relations

Sub topic:- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India

Silicon Valley Bank crisis: Reasons and Impacts - Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Economic development

Sub topic:- Issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment

[Yojana March 2023 Summary] Towards cooperative fiscal federalism – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Indian Constitution and Polity

Sub topic:- Separation of powers between various organs dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions.

Saudi-Iranian normalisation and implications for India – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- International Relations

Sub topic:- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India

[Kuruksheetra March 2023 Summary] Development Directions in Budget – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Economic development

Sub topic:- Government Budgeting.

Legalising Same-sex marriages in India and associated challenges – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Indian Constitution and Polity

Sub topic:- mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of vulnerable sections.

[Yojana March 2023 Summary] Banking: focus on new responsibilities and good governance – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Economic development

Sub topic:- Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Controlling Fake News in India and associated challenges – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Security Issues

Sub topic:- role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges

[Kuruksheetra March 2023 Summary] Inclusive Development in Education – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Social Justice

Sub topic:- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education

IPCC Synthesis Report of the Sixth Assessment Cycle (AR6) – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Environment and Bio-diversity

Sub topic:- Conservation

The UN High Seas Treaty: challenges and significance – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Social Justice

Sub topic:- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Eliminating tuberculosis (TB) in India by 2025 – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Social Justice

Sub topic:- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

Criminal defamation in India – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Governance

Sub topic:- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

[Yojana March 2023 Summary] India's post-pandemic healthcare system – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Social Justice

Sub topic:- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

Disqualification of Legislators in India – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Indian Constitution and Polity

Sub topic:- Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

Execution of death penalty in India – Explained pointwise

Topic:- Social Justice

Sub topic:- mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of vulnerable sections.

The Issue of Stray dogs in India – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Governance

Sub topic:- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Institutions of Eminence (IOE) scheme and issues with higher education – Explained, pointwise

Topic:- Social Justice

Sub topic:- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education

Centre-State relations and Punchhi Commission – Explained, pointwise**Introduction**

Recently, the government's reply to an unstarred question revealed that the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has decided to start the process of seeking the states' comments on the Punchhi Commission's report on Centre-state relations. This is to obtain updated comments of the State Governments/ UT Administrations on the recommendations.

About Punchhi Commission

India's federalism has been shaped by the complex interactions between the political actors at the Centre and the state level. Sarkaria Committee and the Punchhi Commission were the most important commissions established to reduce the government's complexity and streamline its operations.

In April 2007, the government set up a three-person commission led by former Chief Justice of India M.M. Punchhi to look at the roles and responsibilities of different levels of government and how they work together. In 2010, this group submitted its report to the then-Home Minister.

What is the reason behind the non-implementation of the recommendations of Punchhi Commission on Centre-State relations?

The central government wants to implement the recommendations, but before that, it wants to develop consensus among the states. The standing committee of the Inter-State Council (ISC) met three times in 2017 and once in 2018 to talk about the Punchhi commission's suggestions.

The recommendations of the Standing Committee were finalized in the two meetings. But, the Centre has now decided to go back to the states for another round of feedback on the report. Hence, the implementation will be delayed further.

What are the challenges at present in Centre-State relations?**Political federalism:**

- The **Inter-State Council** has met only once in the last seven years, while the **National Development Council** has not met at all.
- The constitutional **office of the governor** has come under scrutiny several times for encroaching on the powers of state executive and legislature.
- Many **important and politically sensitive decisions** are taken without reference to, and consultation with, the concerned states. For instance,
 - **Article 370** was removed without consulting the state legislature.
 - **Parliament legislated on "agriculture"**, entry no. 14 in the state list, to enact the three contentious farm laws, overstepping its jurisdiction and imposing a law on the states.
 - The **BSF's jurisdiction was extended** in Assam, West Bengal and Punjab without any consultation with the concerned states.
 - The **New Education Policy** has been flagged as encroaching on the federal nature of the polity.
 - Students in Tamil Nadu have committed suicide over the discriminatory nature of the **NEET examination**. Other centralised examinations are also indifferent to languages spoken in different parts of India and education boards of different states.
 - Recently, the **rejection of the Republic Day tableaux** of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal by the Centre prompted protests by the respective states.

Must Read: [Issues Related to the Office of Governor – Explained, pointwise](#)

Economic federalism:

1. **Revenue sharing concern:** When it comes to sharing revenue, the states are upset with the Centre. In an effort to provide economic relief and fulfil the GST shortfall, the Centre announced in 2020 two alternatives for borrowing to be returned through an extension of the compensation cess beyond June 2022. Some states agreed to look at the ideas, but others didn't want to "borrow from the market at a higher interest rate.
2. **Vertical and horizontal revenue imbalances:** Two main challenges in the fiscal transfer system pertain to tackling the vertical (transfer of Union taxes to states) and horizontal (distribution between countries) imbalances. So far, the share of the states emanating from the combined revenues has remained more or less stable, thus taking care of the vertical balance. As far as horizontal balance is concerned, some Finance Commissions have addressed the issue of equalisation.
3. **GST concern:** The GST has already taken away much of the autonomy available to states and has made the country's indirect tax regime unitary in nature.
4. The **tenure of the 15th Finance Commission** was mired in controversy, and many states expressed apprehensions about devolution.
5. **NITI Aayog witnessed a boycott:** The recent meeting of the Governing Council of NITI Aayog witnessed a boycott and mounting criticism from some states.

Environmental federalism:

The **State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCCs)** have suffered from a lack of specificity in design and inadequate financial support from the Centre, and rank low among governance priorities in state capitals.

The Centre controls the major part of national revenue (in 2018-19 it raised 62.7% of the aggregate resources of the Centre and states) and plays a large normative role in defining state priorities, only the states can assess and respond to the political and physical implications of climate impacts and local energy transitions.

What are the major recommendations of the Punchhi Commission on Centre-State relations?

Issue related to Governor:

- **Appointment:** The appointment of the Governor must be done by a panel which among others also has the State Chief Minister.
- **Removal of Governor:** The doctrine of pleasure should end and should be deleted from the constitution. Governors should not be removed at the whim of the central government. Instead, a resolution by the state legislature should be there to remove Governor. There should be provisions for the impeachment of the Governor by the state legislature along the same lines as that of the President by Parliament.

On Inter-State Council (ISC): ISC needs to be "substantially strengthened. The council must meet at least thrice a year on an agenda evolved after proper consultation with states.

On economic federalism

- Handling the issues listed in the Finance Commission's terms of reference should be done between the Centre and the States. The States should be involved in the Finance Commissions' work to come up with the final terms of the contract.

- The commission was worried about the growing amount of money that was being made through **cesses and surcharges**. It was suggested that the Central Government look at all of the current cesses and surcharges to lower the amount they add to the total amount of taxes collected.
- The Finance Commission and the Planning Commission (now NITI Aayog) should work much closer together.

On environmental federalism:

The Punchhi Commission was formed before major climate initiatives like the Paris Agreement (COP 21), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), etc. However, the committee has a dedicated volume on environmental, resource, and infrastructural issues related to federalism. For example:

- **On water sharing:** The National Water Resources Council needs to play a greater role in integrating policy and programmes on a continuous basis.
- **On forest:** A National Policy on 'Compensation' should be put together through consultation and consensus.
- **On mineral:** To determine royalty rates an independent statutory body comprising experts and representatives from Central, State, and industries and utilities need to be set up. The Central Government, if it differs from the recommendations or modifies them, would need to lay its reasons for the same, before Parliament.

What should be done to improve Centre-State Relations further?

Apart from implementing the recommendations of the Punchhi Commission recommendations,

The government should also work on **economic federalism** and a **coordinated reform process** at all levels of government to speed up growth, reduce poverty, get rid of inequality, and make sure that people develop. This will help make up for the disadvantages and problems that come with new and smaller states.

There is a **need to find a workable solution** by making big changes to the way resources are given out. The **Finance Commission's structure** can also be changed so that it has more members and advisory bodies.

The **GST Council's job could be expanded** so that it could talk about how resources should be used and make suggestions, even though these suggestions are not binding.

In China and Indonesia over the last 20 years, having a strong political centre was good for everything except the economy. China had to split up its economy and change how it handled money with the states. When it comes to how to handle economic issues with the states, India can learn from how a strong Union government runs a decentralised economy.

There is a **need to evolve institutional mechanisms** that will not only align resources, competencies, and capabilities of the governments at all levels but also engage civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector in the policymaking implementation process.

There is a need to **go beyond the concept of cooperative federalism and create a new federal architecture** for collaborative engagement of the appropriate levels and actors in the policy-making and implementation process.

Sources: [Indian Express](#), [The Print](#), [The Hindu](#), [Economic Times](#), [Research Gate](#).

Clean Energy Transition of States and their challenges – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

The Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) and Ember has recently released a report titled “**Indian States’ Energy Transition**“. The report highlighted the glaring inequality in the Clean Energy Transition of States. As per the report, Karnataka now has the best-equipped power systems to convert its electricity system from fossil-powered to renewable energy sources, followed by Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat. On the other hand, Bihar, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh did the worst.

What is a clean electricity transition?

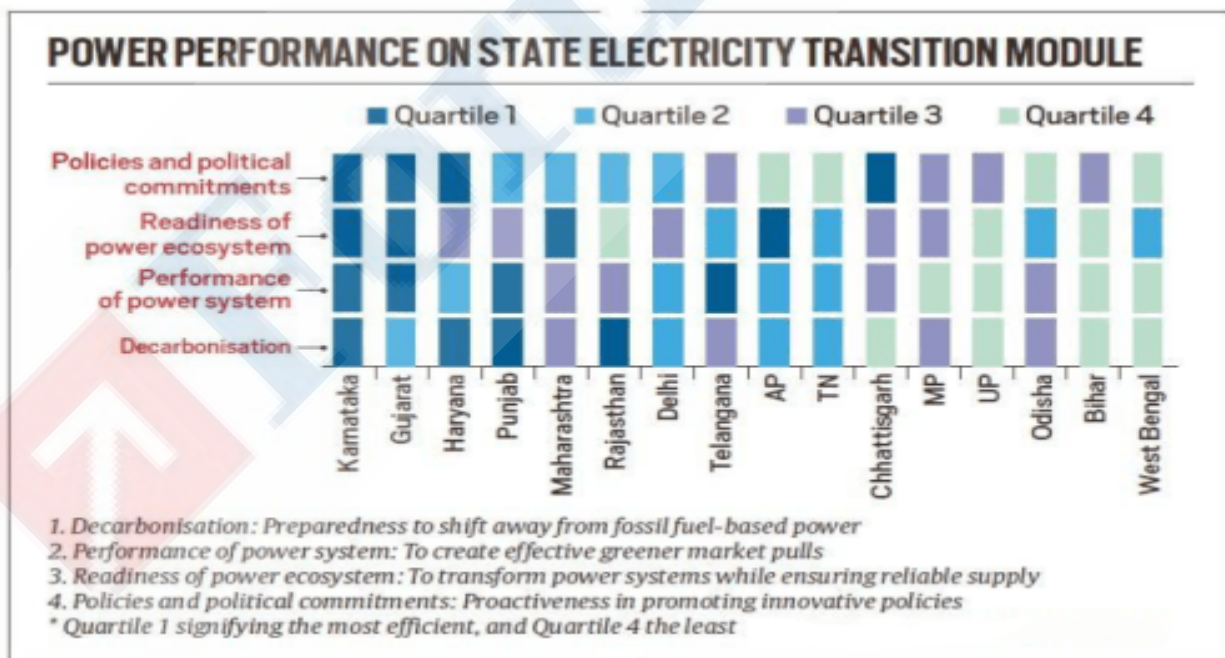
This refers to the shift from fossil-based power production and consumption to renewable energy sources by transforming the electricity sector through innovative policies, efficient technologies, and greener market pulls while ensuring reliable supply with effective closed-loop systems in place.

An effective clean electricity transition requires a timely switch towards a clean power-fuelled, economically feasible, politically viable, and secure system that can create value for business and society.

Must read: [Energy Transition: Challenges and Solutions – Explained, pointwise](#)

What are the report’s key highlights on the Clean Energy Transition of States?

The report analyses 16 states that account for 90 percent of India’s yearly power demand. Their scores were calculated based on states’ performance on four major dimensions. Such as Decarbonisation, Performance of the Power System, Readiness of the Power Ecosystem, and Policies and Political Commitments.



Karnataka:

- Karnataka ranks first in all four dimensions of the clean energy transition.

- The state fared the best in decarbonizing its power sector and has the highest share of renewables in its power supply mix (48%).

Only Delhi's power sector's emission intensity of GSDP is lower than that of Karnataka (2.2 kgCO₂eq/Rs1,000).

Haryana has the lowest installed capacity of older, more polluting coal power plants.

Maharashtra:

- It has the biggest power demand in India and was found to be in the mid-range. This is mostly because the state is slow to use renewable energy and can't shut down older, more polluting coal power plants.
- Its renewable energy share (11%) is lower than most other states.

Chhattisgarh has the highest emissions intensity of GSDP (43 kgCO₂eq/ Rs1,000). Its renewable energy share in the power supply mix (1%) is better than only Bihar.

Bihar, UP, and West Bengal:

- These states must work more to improve their clean energy transition performance.
- These states should maximize their renewable energy generation potential, and at the same time increase commitment to moving away from fossil fuels-based electricity.

What is the need for the Clean Energy Transition of states?

India's clean electricity transition requires all states and Union Territories to transform their power sectors. More specifically, **progress in states with high power demand** is not only crucial but also **urgent for India's power sector** to achieve a clean electricity transition.

The transition needs Indian states to work together and take the lead to fight the problems that make it hard to reach India's goals, such as fulfilling Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), India's net-zero commitments, and the implementation of the ambitious climate action at the national level.

What are the challenges faced by states in their clean energy transition?

Under utilisation: Renewable energy-rich states are not utilizing their renewable energy generation potential. Potential hurdles, such as land conflict, technology upgrades, and lack of transmission infrastructure, could come in the way of the clean energy transition of states.

For instance, even the top performer Karnataka has utilized only 11% of its total renewable energy potential.

Ignoring other possibilities: While the states are focusing on large-scale renewable power projects, mainly utility-scale solar, they are ignoring other possibly viable options, such as rooftop solar, small hydel plants, etc.

Different priorities between the centre and states: The national (central) government and sub-national (state) governments in India often have different priorities with respect to the energy sector. For example,

The Centre's perspective is informed by macroeconomic stability, economic growth and geostrategic issues. On the other hand, states are driven more by local and state-level concerns. Further, the State's political-economic realities are affected by factors such as energy access, affordability, local jobs and economies.

Energy Transition at the State Level and Fiscal Impact: Many coal-producing states naturally rely heavily on fossil fuels for revenues as they benefit from both coal-related royalties from mining but also tax revenues from sales of oil and natural gas.

The transition and its impact on the state's employment: As the country moves away from fossil fuels, there will be negative effects on jobs all along the value chain. This includes employment across mining, transport and storage, processing and manufacturing, and trade.

Read More: [India's Strategy for Net Zero – Explained, pointwise](#)

What steps have been taken by the Indian states towards the clean energy transition? Initiatives of the central government to facilitate clean energy transition of states

- **Intra-State Transmission System – Green Energy Corridor Phase-II** for laying the infrastructure for connecting electricity generated from renewables with the power grid in seven states. This scheme would receive 33% central financial assistance. This is crucial to create green market mechanisms for inter- and intra-state renewable energy trading.
- The scheme for **“Development of Solar Parks and Ultra Mega Solar Power Projects”** has a target of generating 40GW capacity by March 2024. So far, the central government has sanctioned 50 solar parks with a combined capacity of 33.82GW in 14 states.
- Progressive policies like net metering, banking of power and feeder segregation are implemented under the **‘Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan Yojana (KUSUM)’** scheme.
- **The green day ahead market (GDAM):** The Power Ministry has launched GDAM to enable India to achieve green targets and facilitate the integration and expansion of green energy in an efficient, competitive, sustainable, and transparent manner.
- The government has **permitted foreign direct investment up to 100 per cent under the automatic route** and has **wavered Inter-State Transmission System (ISTS) charges and losses** for the inter-State sale of solar and wind power for projects.
- Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd (IREDA), as of November 2020, has financed more than 2,700 renewable energy projects in India with cumulative loan disbursements to the tune of ₹ 57,000 crore.

Initiatives of state governments to facilitate clean energy transition

The **Interstate Clean Energy Procurement Program (ICEPP)** was launched in India by the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA). ICEPP will **help eight Indian states build up their clean energy infrastructure** by giving public procurement officials training on best value and life-cycle cost analysis. USTDA is funding ICEPP through its Global Procurement Initiative (GPI).

Various states also have many initiatives. Such as,

- **Rajasthan:** Rajasthan Wind Solar Hybrid Policy 2019 and Rajasthan Electric Vehicle Policy 2022 helped accelerate the capacity addition.
- **Karnataka:** It was the first southern state in India to notify a renewable energy policy, the Karnataka Renewable Energy Policy 2009-14 to harness green, clean, renewable energy sources for environmental benefits and energy security. Recently, the state released the Karnataka Renewable Energy Policy 2022-2027.
- **Tamil Nadu** has a dedicated solar energy policy 2019 and EV Policy 2019
- Several states have announced their EV Policy to complement the national scheme and to address state-specific needs.

What should be done to ensure the clean energy transition of states?

In order to enhance the state's clean energy transition, the "Indian States' Energy Transition" report has recommended the following,

Focus on offshore wind energy: India has the potential to generate 140GW of electricity from offshore wind along its 7,600km coastline. However, there is a need to **develop local supply chain, logistics and port infrastructure** to utilise offshore wind's full potential.

Pay attention to coal plants: State energy departments need to closely monitor their coal plants and retire older plants, unless needed as peaker plants during high-demand months.

Increase green market participation of states: States need to focus on increasing participation in green market mechanisms like GDAM, GTAM, open access, corporate PPAs etc. In addition, states also need to focus on innovative bilateral financial markets mechanisms like Virtual Power Purchase Agreements (VPPA) and Contracts for Difference (CfD).

Introduce private sector participation: The introduction of private sector participation and competition shall bring more capital and management expertise into the electricity sector. This will help enhance operational efficiency, and increase accessibility and affordability.

Focus on feeder segregation: Reliable state-level data on feeder segregation needs to be made available for more robust analysis. States with large agriculture loads need to focus more on feeder segregation.

Develop a circular approach: States need to develop a holistic and circular approach towards handling solar panel, battery, and electric vehicle waste. This is even more crucial as India sets up new manufacturing units under the Atmanirbhar Bharat scheme.

The **other recommendations** include, **a)** Data transparency and availability at the state level needs an enhancement for robust analysis, **b)** Robust transmission infrastructure is necessary to better evacuate renewables at the state level, **c)** Initiatives like 'Time of Day tariff' and 'Direct Benefit Transfer' need more focus for state-level implementation in addition to regular tariff revisions by the state regulators.

India's Sustainable Development Goals | SDGs – Performance So Far – Explained, pointwise**Introduction**

Recently, the Lancet journal published a report titled "Progress on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators in 707 districts of India: A quantitative mid-line assessment using the National Family Health Surveys, 2016 and 2021". The report has highlighted India's SDGs performance is not up to the mark and mentioned that India may not be able to achieve at least 19 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

What are SDGs?

The SDGs are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity. There is a total of 17 interlinked goals; interlinked because they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others and that development must balance social, economic, and environmental sustainability.



Source: UNDP

They were adopted by a **UN General Assembly Resolution** in September 2015 (Agenda 2030). Through the resolution, the global leaders pledged to set the world on a new trajectory to deliver meaningful progress for people and the planet through domestic actions in the next 15 years.

Must read: [Need for Public-private partnerships in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals \(SDG\)](#)

About the Lancet survey

The study was conducted by collecting data on children and adults from two rounds of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) conducted in 2016 and 2021. It identified 33 indicators that cover 9 of the 17 official SDGs.

It used the goals and targets outlined by the Global Indicator Framework, Government of India and World Health Organisation (WHO) to determine SDG targets to be met by 2030.”

What is the status of India's SDG performance according to the Lancet study?

- India is not on-target for 19 of the 33 SDGs indicators (Sustainable Development Goals) of the United Nations, which is more than 50% of the indicators.
- Among the 19 off-target indicators, the situation has worsened for three of the off-target goals including those relating to anaemia among women, pregnant and non-pregnant women, between 2016 and 2021.
- The critical off-target indicators include access to basic services, wasting and overweight children, anaemia, child marriage, partner violence, tobacco use, and modern contraceptives.
- Off-target districts are concentrated in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, and Odisha,
- The performance of aspirational districts is also not satisfactory.
- Many districts will never meet the targets on the SDGs even after 2030 due to a worsening trend observed between 2016 and 2021.

What are the positive aspects of India's SDG performance highlighted in the Lancet survey?

The study found some good things about India's SDG performance. These include

- At the all-India level, the **one SDG indicator that has already been achieved** is related to **adolescent pregnancy** in the age group of 10–14 years.
- India is also **On-Target to meet 13 out of the 33 indicators**, including Internet use, women having a bank account, full vaccination (card), improved sanitation, multidimensional poverty, birth registration, skilled birth attendants, electricity access, tobacco use (women), child marriage of girls less than 15 years of age, under 5 mortality, teenage sexual violence, and neonatal mortality.
- If efforts continue, India may meet the target of improved water access by 2031, clean fuel for cooking by 2035, lowering teenage pregnancy age by 2039, and partner sexual violence by 2040.
- Another 11 off-target indicators, including access to basic services and partner violence (physical and sexual), may be met between 2041 and 2062.

Read more: [\[Yojana May Summary\] Sustainable Economic Growth – Explained, pointwise](#)

What is the reason for India's poor SDG performance?

General reasons responsible for India's poor SDG performance

Slow world growth rate: To reach the SDGs, the world needs to grow by 2.5 percentage points every year. But the world has only grown by 0.36 percentage points up to 2021. This is almost seven times slower than the United States.

The covid pandemic stopped all progress around the world from 2019 to 2021.

Linear extrapolation: To illustrate the gap between expectations and delivery, one can use linear extrapolation to project a future date when the world will achieve perfection. This is merely a generalisation since countries that are getting near completion will probably start focusing on and funding other goals.

Unrealistic promises: Some of the promises, such as ending the war, poverty, climate change, hunger, and disease, are unrealistic.

Impossible to focus: Having 169 aims is like having no priorities, so promising everything makes it impossible to focus. Most countries are either not able or not willing to set aside enough money to keep all their promises.

India-specific reasons:

Worsening period: According to the Lancet report many districts will never meet the targets on the SDGs even after 2030 due to a worsening trend observed between 2016 and 2021.

Financing SDGs: SDG targets like zero hunger, poverty, etc requires significant investments to eliminate them. Being home to one-third of the world's 1.2 billion extremely poor, the Indian government alone cannot fund these SDG targets.

Monitoring & Ownership of Implementation Process: Although NITI Aayog is expected to play an important role, the members of the Aayog have expressed their concerns time and again about the limited manpower they have to handle such a Herculean task.

What are the initiatives taken by India to achieve SDG Targets?

- **JAM trinity:** Jan Dhan, Aadhaar and mobile proved to be helpful in forming the Digital Public Goods (DPGs) and Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) which would be helpful in

driving financial inclusion and helping improve benefits targeting which have been crucial to India's progress on SDG 1, namely No Poverty.

- The [Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act \(MNREGA\)](#) is being used to give unskilled workers jobs and raise their standard of living.
- The [National Food Security Act](#) is being used to make sure that food grains are subsidised.
- **Healthcare sector initiatives** which are helpful in achieving sustainable development goals are – The Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram, Ayushman Bharat, National digital health mission (NDHM), etc.
- The government of India has taken several steps to mitigate the effects of climate change, like – National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project (NCRMP), The Net Zero Commitment.
- The government also supports the 10-Year Framework Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production. For that the Ministry has published a **draft notification of regulation on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** for Waste Tyre for receiving comments from the public and 'Guidelines on the EPR for Plastic Packaging' under Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 has been notified.
- Apart from the above-mentioned initiative, other initiatives include the Swachh Bharat mission, Beti Bacho Beti Padhao, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Smart Cities, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gram Jyoti Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, among others.
- **NITI Aayog "SDG India Index"**: It is the world's first government-led sub-national measure of SDG development. It was launched in 2018 and has been developed to capture the progress of all states and union territories (UTs) in their journey towards achieving the SDGs. This index is based on the idea of cooperative and competitive federalism, which says that action needs to be taken at all levels. The index shows how the Global Goals of the 2030 Agenda cover a wide range of issues while also taking into account national priorities.

Must read: [India's efforts to achieve SDGs](#)

What can be done to improve India's SDG performance?

This Lancet report has suggested the following steps to improve India's performance on the SDGs:

Appraisal of the policies and programs: India needs to urgently conduct an appraisal of the policies and programs that relate to SDGs, especially those that relate to four SDG targets relating to no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being and gender equality.

Identifying and prioritizing districts: On critical indicators of health and social determinants of health, there is a need for a greater degree of precision in identifying and prioritizing districts for intervention. Meeting these goals will require prioritising and targeting specific areas within India

Inter-ministerial initiatives: Since the different SDGs fall under tightly organised ministries, there is a need to establish inter-ministerial initiatives, with clear governance structures under the Prime Minister's Office. Similar structures could be developed at the state level under the respective chief minister's office.

Conduct economic cost-benefit analysis: This will aid in setting priorities and directing more resources to the policy that offers the greatest return for each additional rupee spent.

Along with other initiatives, India should also **create a strategic road map** that will help make sure that the SDGs are met successfully.

Changes to the process of selecting election commissioner: Significance and challenges – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

In the case of **Anoop Baranwal v. Union of India**, a five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court ruled unanimously that a powerful committee must choose the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners. This committee has the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha, and the Chief Justice of India as members (ECs).

About the case

What the Supreme Court said

Key highlights of what the apex court said in two separate, but concurring judgments that revamped the selection mechanism to appoint CEC and ECs.

1 "The right to vote is not just a statutory right but a constitutional right."

2 "The ballot is more potent than the most powerful gun."

3 "Parliament never intended the Executive to have absolute power to appoint CEC and ECs."

4 "Democracy is inextricably linked to the power of the people. Power of the ballot is supreme, capable of unseating the most powerful parties."

5 "A party in power will have an insatiable quest to continue in the saddle."

6 "An EC that does not guarantee rule of law is against democracy."

7 "Complete independence of ECs is paramount to ensure purity of electoral processes."



Read here: [President to appoint CEC, ECs on advise of committee comprising PM, LoP, CJI: Supreme Court](#)

What are the changes introduced by SC regarding selecting Election Commissioner?

What the order says

- The CEC and the election commissioners shall be appointed on recommendations by a three-member committee comprising PM, leader of the Opposition/leader of the largest Opposition party in the Lok Sabha, and CJ

Existing practice

- The President makes the appointments on the advice of the Union Council of Ministers headed by PM
- Election commissioners have a tenure of 6 years or up to the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier

Source: Business Standard

There are just five Articles (324-329) in Part XV (Elections) of the Constitution which deals with CEC and ECs. The Constitution does not lay down a specific legislative process for the appointment of the CEC and ECs. Currently, the President makes the appointment on the advice of the Union Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister.

The SC has now given the Opposition and the judiciary a say in the matter, ruling that the CEC and ECs must be appointed by the President on the advice of a committee comprising the PM, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, and the Chief Justice of India.

Other observations made by SC in respect of the election commission are:

Secured Tenure: The SC noted that the conditions of service of Election Commissioners, after appointment, should not be “varied to their disadvantage”. These directions hold that the tenures of the Election Commissioners should not be disturbed in any way. The Election Commission (Conditions of Service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Act, 1991 requires that the CEC and Election Commissioners must hold the post for a period of six years.

Expenses from the Consolidated Fund of India: The court has made an appeal to the Parliament and the Union Government to set up a permanent secretariat which draws its expenses directly from the Consolidated Fund of India and not the government.

What is the need for the change in selecting Election Commissioner?

To uphold the constitution: Article 324(2) of the Constitution stipulated that the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners shall be appointed by the President subject to the

provisions of any law made on that behalf by Parliament. It may not have happened in the last 70 years. This change will help make the constitutional requirement happen.

To ensure free and fair elections: As a constitutional body vested with plenary powers of superintendence, direction and control over elections, the ECI is a vital component of the republic that requires functional freedom and constitutional protection to ensure free and fair elections.

To end monopoly: To end the government monopoly and “exclusive control” over appointments to the highest poll body.

To bring uniformity: The judgment also brings a certain uniformity in appointment procedures across institutions and statutory bodies responsible for independently maintaining democracy and institutional autonomy.

To fulfil the historical demand: The demand for an independent system for the appointment of members of the Election Commission goes back nearly 50 years. It has been repeatedly recommended in various committees such as the **Justice Tarkunde committee 1975**; the **Dinesh Goswami committee, 1990**; the **second administrative reforms commission, 2007**, and by the **Law Commission of India in its 255th report, 2015**.

Read more: [Supreme Court verdict will ensure a more independent Election Commission](#)

What are the advantages of the changes to the process of selecting election commissioners? The advantage of the neutral selection committee for selecting election commissioners are **a) It addresses the conflict of interest** inherent in the current selection process for election commissioners, **b) Enforces the EC’s credibility** and insulates the EC from political attacks, **c) Can act as a constitutional lesson** in India’s troubled times, and **d) Recognises the fine distinction** between conventional democracy and constitutional democracy.

Read more: [Supreme Court calls out Centre over short tenures of Chief Election Commissioners](#)

What are the challenges associated with the changes to the process of selecting election commissioner?

Highlights “judicial activism”: According to the government, “in the absence of a law, the President has the constitutional power.” Hence, Judiciary’s committee guidelines are seen as the era of judicial activism by some experts. Even the government has also asked the court to exhibit judicial restraint.

Note: *The ruling cites past instances of the Court stepping in to fill a gap in the law, including the Vishaka guidelines to curb sexual harassment in the workplace, and the interpretation of the process of appointment of judges.*

Against the “doctrine of separation of power”: The constitution has given powers to the Parliament to frame the law with respect to the appointments of the election commission. The Supreme Court’s intervention in this domain is regarded as a disregard for the doctrine of separation of powers. This is also against the “basic structure” of the Constitution.

Against the idea of “constitution is supreme”: The words “subject to the provisions of any law made on that behalf by Parliament” mentioned in Article 324(2) have been included only after prolonged discussions in the Constituent Assembly. This highlights that the government can decide and frame any law.

The debates made clear that **a)** The Parliament will step in and provide norms to govern the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and the Election Commissioners, **b)** A law by Parliament is final and not the executive who exclusively calls the shots in the matter of appointments to the Election Commission.

At this juncture, the involvement of the Court in the selection process has highlighted that the judiciary is the sole impartial body capable of ascertaining the best interests of the country.

Success is uncertain: For the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), a similar panel for making appointments has been set up. There is no clear proof that the CBI Director maintains independence.

Also, having the CJI on appointing committees could give all appointments extra legitimacy and make it harder for judges to look objectively for mistakes or flaws in the process.

What should be done forward?

- **Extend safeguards to other Election Commissioners:** The procedural safeguards in place for effecting the removal of a Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) should be extended to the Election Commissioners under the first proviso to Article 324(5) of the Constitution. A CEC, like Supreme Court judges, can be removed from office only by way of a parliamentary process. However, no such protection of tenure is available to the Election Commissioners.
- The **retired member** of the Election Commission shall be **prohibited from taking any office of profit** under the state.
- Similarly, he shall be **prohibited from joining any political party** for at least 10 years after relinquishing his office.
- Constitutional functionaries have to be not just appointed fairly, but also held to account thereafter. So, the EC and other regulatory bodies should be **made autonomous of the executive** and **held answerable to designated committees of Parliament or committees of legislators**.

The SC's attention to the functioning of EC is timely. The ruling examined a number of provisions in the Constitution, including the ones relating to the powers of the Supreme Court and High Court; establishing the SC, ST and Backward Classes Commissions, etc. But the judgement also raises questions about the selection process for the judiciary. The selection process for the judiciary to needs reform.

New e-waste rules and India's e-waste challenge – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

Ministry of Environment and Forests has recently notified a new set of e-waste rules. The rules will replace the previous E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2016 and the rules will come into force from April 01, 2023. Despite many positives, many experts are also cautioning against the new e-waste rules due to India's increased e-waste generation.

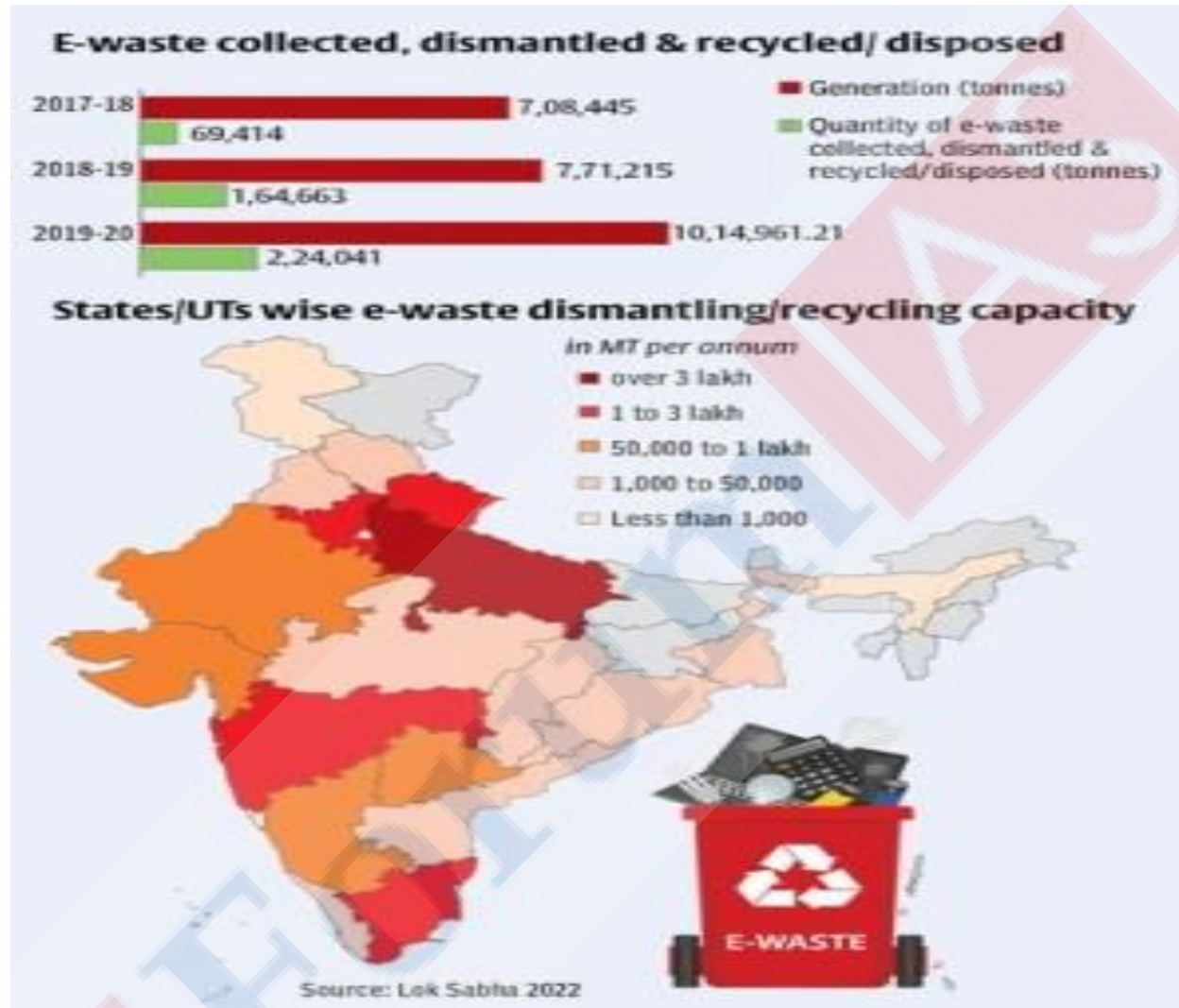
What is E-waste?

Electronic waste, or e-waste, is a term for electronic products that have become unwanted, obsolete, and have reached the end of their useful life. It refers to 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.

Read more: [Government initiatives to curb e-waste and health impacts of e-waste](#)

About India's e-waste generation



Source: Lok Sabha

- India ranks 3rd in terms of producer of e-waste after China and the United States of America.
- Only 22.7 per cent of the total e-waste generated in 2019-20 in India was collected, dismantled, and recycled or disposed off.
- 95% of e-waste in India is recycled by the informal sector.
- The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) and KPMG joint study on Electronic Waste Management in India released on 2017 identified that computer equipment accounts for almost 70 % of e-waste, followed by phones (12%), electrical equipment (8 %), and medical equipment (7 %) with remaining from household e-waste.
 - Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Tamil Nadu, and Haryana are among the States that have a bigger capacity to dismantle and recycle e-waste.

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

- Maharashtra has the highest number (116) of authorised dismantlers and recyclers.

What are the New e-waste rules-2022?		
Parameter	2016 rules	2022 rules
Scope	Dealer, consumer, bulk consumer and collection centres were covered.	It has been restricted to manufacturers, producers, refurbishers, dismantlers and recyclers of e-waste ('MPRDR')
Definition of the term 'e-waste'	Restricted definition	The definition of term 'e-waste' has been widened to include solar photo-voltaic modules or panels or cells.
Schedule 1	Only 21 EEE have been under the EPR regime.	106 EEE have been included.
EPR mechanism	It focused more on the producer's responsibility to collect back the e-waste and provided collection targets.	It provides annual e-waste recycling targets to the producers.
Registration requirement	It mandates 'MPRR' to obtain authorization from the concerned State Pollution Control Board,	MPRR of e-waste has to obtain registration on the portal ('Portal') to be developed by Central Pollution Control Board ('CPCB').

New additions to the 2022 e-waste rules:

EPR recycling certificate: Producers can purchase online EPR recycling certificates from registered recyclers to fulfilling their recycling target. Such a recycling certificate issued by CPCB will be valid for two years.

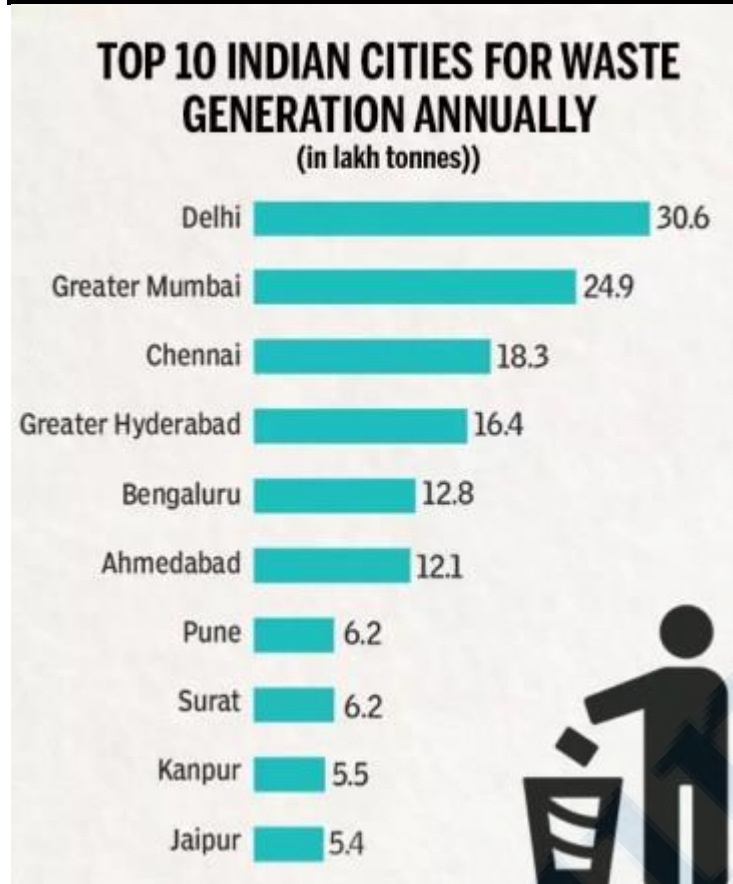
Refurbishing certificate and deferred liability: The concept of deferred liability has also been incorporated. Producers can purchase refurbishing certificates from refurbishers to defer their EPR vis-à-vis the corresponding quantity of e-waste in a particular year.

Incorporation of penal provisions and widened scope: The rules expressly introduced provisions related to environmental compensation and prosecution under section 15 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 ('EPA').

Further, environmental compensation can also be imposed on an entity which aids or abets the violation of the 2022 Rules.

Must read: [Centre issues e-waste management rules](#)

What is the need for the New e-waste rules?



To address the “Tsunami” of e-waste: A report titled ‘Waste-Wise Cities: Best Practices in Municipal Solid Waste Management’ by NITI Aayog and Centre for Science and Environment, states that the use of electrical and electronic equipment has witnessed explosive growth and so is e-waste. The UN has termed this phenomenon a “tsunami” of e-waste.

Building a circular economy: According to the UN report, lowering the amount of electronics entering the waste stream and improving end-of-life handling are essential for building a more circular economy.

Recycling rare metals: India doesn’t have a lot of valuable mineral resources, but untreated e-waste ends up in landfills. By making sure that recycling rules are followed correctly, the new rules will help increase availability of rare metals. For instance, recycling can increase the availability of cobalt, which is in great demand for laptop, smart phone and electric car batteries.

Employment generation: By adopting the best practices for e-waste recycling India can generate jobs as well as viable business prospects for locals.

To achieve SDG: A better management of e-waste will contribute to the achievement of several goals of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

What are the advantages of the rules 2022 in handling India's e-waste?

Restricted the use of hazardous substances: Every producer of EEE and their components have to ensure that their products do not contain lead, mercury and other hazardous substances beyond the maximum prescribed concentration.

Annual E-Waste Recycling targets: Producers of notified EEE, have been given annual E-Waste Recycling targets based on the generation from the previously sold EEE or based on sales of EEE as the case may be.

Standardising the e-waste value chain through a common digital 'portal': It may ensure transparency which is crucial to reduce the frequency of 'paper trading' or 'false trail', i.e., a practice of falsely revealing 100% collection on paper while collecting and/or weighing 'scrap' to meet targets.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Framework: If a product does not comply with the e-waste management rules, the manufacturer will have to withdraw all samples from the market. It is the responsibility of the manufacturer to collect e-waste generated during manufacture and to ensure its recycling or disposal. Environmental compensation is to be provided by companies that don't meet their target.

Responsible state government: The State governments have been given the job of setting aside industrial space for e-waste disassembly and recycling facilities, developing industrial skills, and coming up with ways to protect the health and safety of workers at e-waste disassembly and recycling facilities.

What are the challenges associated with new e-waste rules-2022?

Unorganized sector left behind: The informal sector draws no acknowledgement in the new guidelines which could be on account of its 'illegality'.

Not ensuring 'recovery tangent': The rules briefly talk about "component recovery" and "residual disposal," which are two important steps in "efficient" e-waste recycling, but they don't make it clear what needs to be done to make sure the "recovery tangent" happens.

Not ensure double verification: Rules do away with 'Producer Responsibility Organisation' (PRO) and dismantlers and vest all the responsibility of recycling with authorised recyclers. PROs acted as an intermediary between producers and formal recyclers by bidding for contracts from producers and arranging for 'certified and authorised' recycling.

Fresh challenges might emerge as companies are no longer required to engage with PROs and dismantlers, who partially ensured 'double verification' in terms of quantity and quality of recycling.

Read more: [About the Draft E-waste Management Rules, 2022: Right intent, confusing content](#)

What should be done to reduce India's e-waste?

Move towards Circular economy: There is an urgent need to move from a Linear & Reuse economy to a Circular economy. The linear economy focuses on profitability, irrespective of the product life cycle, whereas the Circular economy targets sustainability.

Market-based incentives: This will promote both demand and supply-side variables to voluntarily adopt e-waste recycling.

Increase government support: The government should encourage new entrepreneurs by providing the necessary financial support and technological guidance.

Integration of the informal sector into a transparent recycling system: It is crucial for better control of environmental and human health impacts.

Multi-stakeholder consultation: While producers are responsible for e-waste management (EPR), consumers, retailers, state governments, municipalities, NGOs, CSOs, Self-Help Groups (SHGs), local collection agencies and others need to play an appropriate role in collection, facilitation, and creation of infrastructure to make e-waste management a success.

Digitally connecting stakeholders: It will open opportunities for industry collaborations and participation by stakeholders will result in implementing robust waste segregation – collection – disposal best practices.

Creating awareness: Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) need to be provided with funding and incentives to create information campaigns, capacity building, and awareness among key stakeholders including end consumers by educating them on their role in e-waste management.

Providing the right information: In order to ensure the efficient implementation of the law, stakeholders must have the right information and intent to safely dispose of e-waste.

Renaming places in India: Rationale and Challenges – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

The Supreme Court has recently dismissed a PIL that sought a renaming commission focussed on “ancient India”. The court issued a strong statement in favour of the “rule of law, secularism, and constitutionalism” and warned against intolerance.

About the SC ruling on renaming places in India

A PIL has been filed and sought the Court’s intervention in restoring the “original names” of places “renamed by barbaric invaders”. The petitioner had contended that several roads, public places and cities in the country are named after “foreign looters” and argued that the “benevolent nature of Hinduism had resulted in wiping out of it from Pakistan and Afghanistan”.

However, the court dismissed the PIL and said that the “country cannot remain a prisoner of the past”. The bench criticised the petitioner for going by the playbook of those who “invoke history selectively” to create “schisms in society”.

Must Read: [Listen to the court – SC warning against renaming places by abusing history, and invoking it selectively, is valuable and timely](#)

What are the constitutional provisions for renaming places in India?

- The Constitution of India provides for the renaming of a state under Article 3.
- Article 3 provides for the formation of new States and the alteration of areas, boundaries or names of existing States.
- The procedure of renaming the state can be initiated by either the Parliament or the State Legislature.

How has India renamed places since Independence?**RENAMING SPREE**

Old Name	New Name
Allahabad (UP)	Prayagraj
Faizabad district (UP)	Ayodhya
Mughalsarai (UP)	Deen Dayal Upadhyay Nagar
Osmanabad (Maha)	Dharashiv
Aurangabad (Maha)	Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar
Hoshangabad (MP)	Narmadapuram
Habibganj Rly Stn (MP)	Rani Kamlapati Rly Stn
Khizrabad (Haryana)	Pratap Nagar
Miyan Ka Bada (Rajasthan)	Mahesh Nagar Halt

Source: TOI

Renaming soon after Independence

In India, Kingsway became Rajpath (now renamed Kartavya Path), and Queensway Janpath, in an effort to wipe out the colonial past. Names of well-known freedom fighters – Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Azad, Pandit Nehru has replaced those of viceroys and British royalty in statues or institutions.

Renaming places for the sake of linguistic correctness: Names of towns or places which had become anglicised were restored to their original colloquial usage. Thus, Bombay became Mumbai, Calcutta became Kolkata, Madras became Chennai, and Bangalore became Bengaluru, to name but a few.

Renaming places to project pride in a regional hero: For example, to celebrate Shivaji, Victoria Terminus became Shivaji Chatrapati Terminus. Other well-known landmarks named after him like the Prince of Wales Museum.

Renaming places since the reorganisation of states on linguistic lines

Memorialising leading members of the political party made for another wave of renaming places: For example, Connaught Place – named Rajiv Chowk, Mughalsarai (UP) named Deen Dayal Upadhyay Nagar, etc.

By 2022, an estimated 57 cities and at least nine states were renamed, among them United Provinces becoming Uttar Pradesh and Madras state becoming Tamil Nadu.

What is the rationale behind renaming places in India?

India's rapid development: India is expected to add another 416 million people to its cities by 2050, taking the urban population share to 50%. This will be associated with major infrastructure expansion. Each new project, street, or square will need a new name.

Sense of 'Indian identity': Changing colonial names has been done ostensibly to give a sense of 'Indian identity'. For example, Waltair was the name given by the Britishers to the city of Visakhapatnam, quite evident by the etymology.

Admired for generosity and kindness: For example, the renaming of Aurangzeb Road to Dr APB Abdul Kalam road for universally admired generosity and kindness.

Communal pride and identity politics: Renaming places consider as a powerful tool for promoting a particular brand of identity politics. For example, Faizabad district (UP) was renamed as Ayodhya.

Political changes: Renaming places can become a testing ground for political changes that go beyond symbolic politics.

Read more: [Why terming medieval rulers as "invaders" and "outsiders" is wrong?](#)

What are the advantages of renaming places in India?

Preserving culture: For example, Gurgaon was changed to "Gurugram" because that was the name of the city in the past. "Gurugram" comes from the Mahabharata story of Guru Dronacharya. A similar reason is given for renaming Allahabad as "Prayag".

Renaming can **help to revive civilisational consciousness and restorative justice** in India, which has been the victim of invasions and colonialism.

Control the values inscribed into the public space: Renaming places contributes to the construction of a "natural order of things" it continues to be important for governments to control the values inscribed into the public space.

Economic benefits: Words have power, and names can act as economic multipliers. For instance, US data indicates homes on 'Lake' streets average 16% more than the national median home value.

What are the challenges in renaming places in India?

Sows confusion: In a global economy, changing names after they have gained universal recognition sows confusion. Many places recognise and respect this fact and have maintained dual identities for centuries — one, in the language of their peoples and another, which is directed at a global audience.

Only tangible changes: Renaming results in tangible changes, but several intangible aspects of places continue to be associated with the lived reality of communities. For example, Varanasi may today be the official name of the historical city, but culturally, its idea will always be "Banarasi".

Cultural genocide: The renaming of places and “reclaiming” of monuments are part of a large and long process of cultural genocide. A community feels diminished if it is made to think that it has not made any genuine, original contribution to the life of a nation of which it is a part.

The economic cost associated with a name change: All the name change costs public money, from revisions in signage to official documents and assorted data sets.

Read more: [Our urban spaces need renewal, not new names](#)

What should be done while naming or renaming places in India?

The court’s warning against misusing history and its command to uphold “the concept of fraternity established in the Constitution’s Preamble” must be heeded.

Re-educate present societies: The remedy for the historical guilt of a leader or a community does not lie in renaming a few buildings or removing statues but in the re-education of present societies in the wrongs they represented.

Revamp philosophy of naming: With India’s projected urban development and infrastructure expansion, India needs a revamped philosophy of naming to avoid wasting social capital and the court’s scarce time.

Keep politics out of it: Need to get out of the cross-party obsession with history when naming streets, squares, and airports. Political parties should not use popular belief as a political stunt, making the situation worse.

Prioritise growth: Lawmakers should prioritise growth rather than prolong social division and fragmentation.

Follow global protocol: Top airports around the world and most have straightforward geographical titles. For instance, Amsterdam, Beijing, Dubai, Incheon, Los Angeles, and Munich.

Similarly, in many countries, streets are named by their simple number and direction. All of this is both user-friendly and conflict-reducing.

Can pay homage to nature: Singapore Changi Airport has been permitted to be named after a legendary tree, and around 300-odd streets named after Oak in California. India can follow a similar approach.

The government and civil society need to make sure that cultural landscapes include names, symbols, languages, and scripts from all of India’s different castes, religious communities, and other groups so that all Indians can truly feel at home in their own country.

Sources: [The Hindu](#), [The Wire](#), [Hindu Business line](#), [Indian Express](#).

Internal Migration in India and associated challenges: Explained, pointwise

Introduction

Recently, a fake video was found in Tamil Nadu that showed images of locals beating up migrant workers. Representatives from Bihar and Jharkhand have been to Tamil Nadu to check out the situation. The issue once again stirred the debates on issues of Internal Migration in India.

What is the Internal Migration?

Migration is the geographic movement of people across a specified boundary for the purpose of establishing a new permanent or semi-permanent residence. The term “in migration” and “out migration” are used for movement between areas within a country (internal migration).

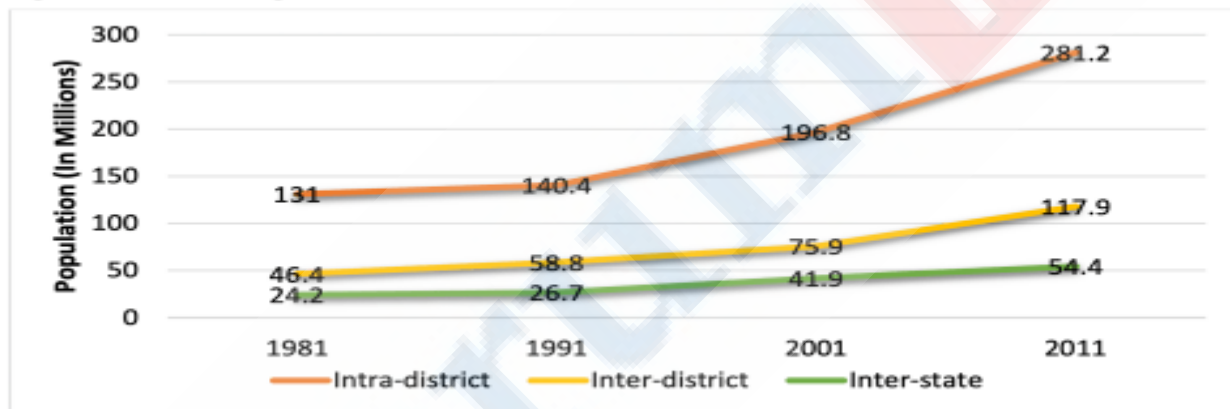
Note: The terms “immigration” and “emigration” are used to refer to moves between countries (international migration).

What are the constitutional provisions that facilitate Internal migration?

- Migration within the country for work is a fundamental right of a citizen as upheld by **Article 19** of the Constitution of India.
- The fundamental rights further **prohibit human trafficking and guarantee freedom from discrimination based on place of birth**, equal opportunities for employment, and protection from forced as well as child labour.
- Interstate migration comes under the seventh schedule of the Constitution, **List I (Union List)**, entrusting the authority to the central government.

What is the status of Internal Migration in India?

Figure 1. Internal Migrants in India, 1981–2011



Source: Census of India 1981–2011.

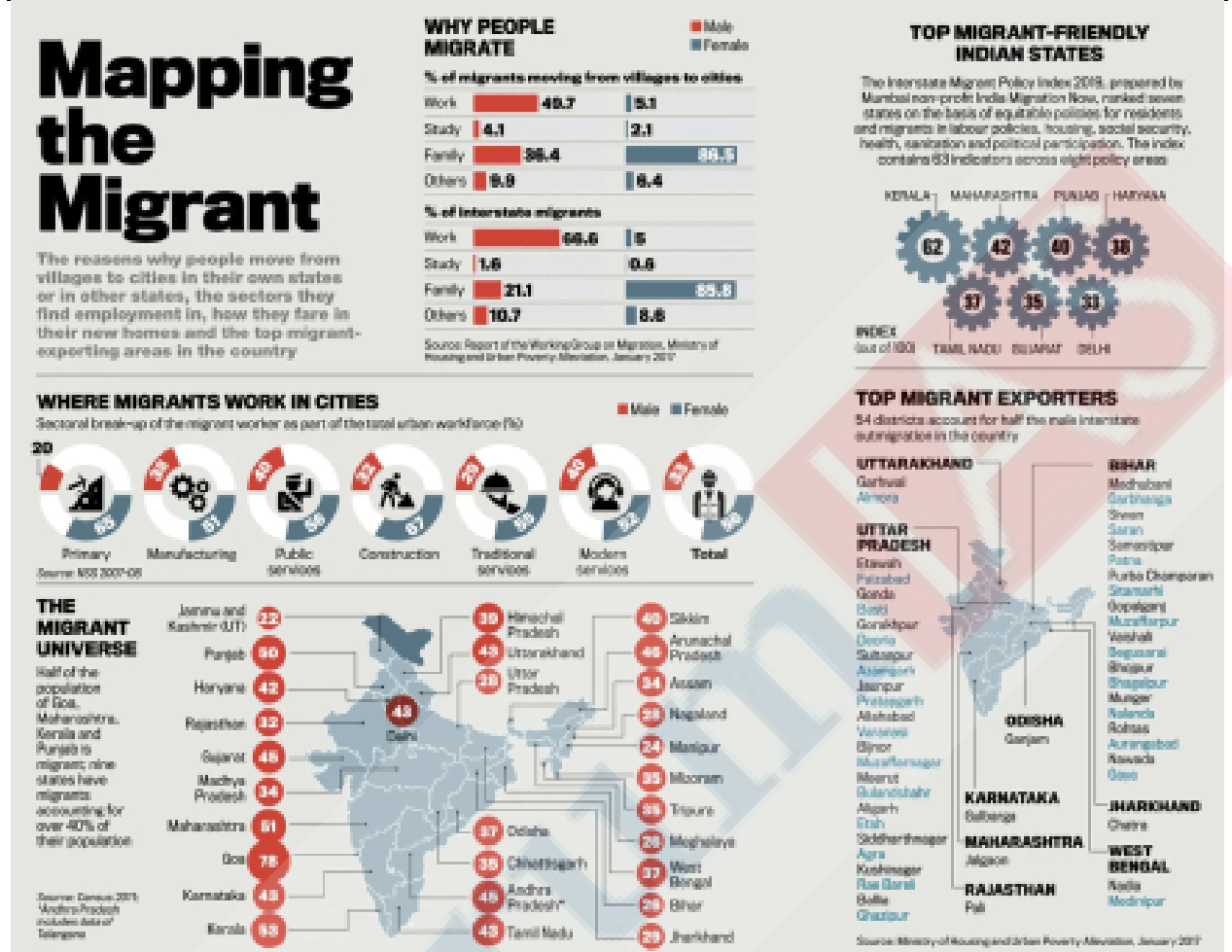
Source: Census

According to the 2011 Census, India had 45.6 crore migrants in 2011 (38% of the population) compared to 31.5 crore migrants in 2001 (31% of the population). In 2011, 99% of total migration was internal and immigrants (international migrants) comprised just 1%.

In 2017, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation stated that 17 districts accounted for the top 25% of India’s total male out-migration.

According to the Economic Survey of 2022-23, **Tamil Nadu** has the highest number of interstate migrants – over 25 lakh people – engaged in factories in India. States like Jharkhand and Bihar are amongst the lowest.

What are the benefits of Internal Migration in India?



Source: MoHUA

Match labour demand and supply: Migration fills gaps in the demand for and supply of labour, efficiently allocates skilled labour, unskilled labour, and cheap labour.

Availability of cheap labour: Internal migration offers a competitive environment for manufacturing especially the availability of cheap labour.

Improve inequity: Due to internal migration, wages in rural areas increase. The people from the poorer section get the job, and inequality improves. Some migrate for seasonal work, and then they come back with remittances. There are two channels that work to improve inequalities in the areas of origin areas.

Reap the demographic dividend: Migrant workers can help the economy reap the demographic dividend when quality jobs, adequate healthcare and nutrition and universal social protection are provided.

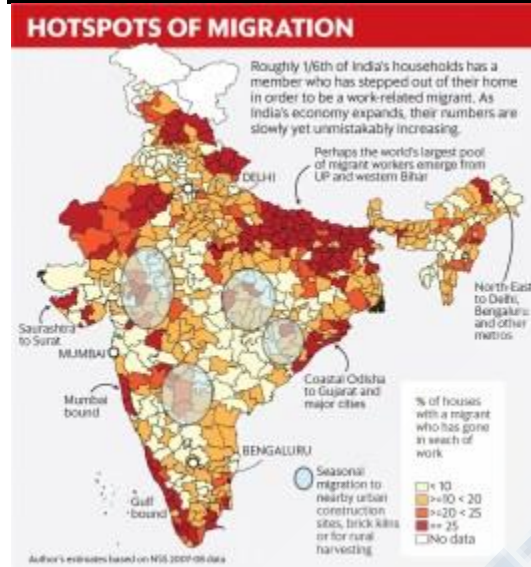
Circular migration or repeat migration: It is the temporary and usually repetitive movement of a migrant worker between home and host areas, typically for the purpose of employment. circular migrants are the backbone of our economy and contribute at least 10% of India's gross domestic product (GDP).

Improve Quality of Life: Migration enhances chances of employment and economic prosperity which in turn improves quality of life.

Social Remittances: Migration makes migrants' social lives better because they learn about new cultures, customs, and languages. This helps people get along better with each other and makes sure that people are more equal and tolerant.

Help India reach Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG-8): It will "Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all."

What are the challenges faced by Internal migrants?



Lack of social security and health benefits and poor implementation of minimum safety standards law.

Lack of access to affordable housing and basic amenities in urban areas.

Exclusion from Political Rights: Migrant workers are deprived of many opportunities to exercise their political rights like the right to vote.

Language, food and other cultural barriers: Most of the internal migrants come from rural areas. They mostly speak only their mother tongue and cannot converse sufficiently well in other regional language.

Neither the local people are conversant. Hence, communication with local people and employers, travelling, accessing government benefits, medical facilities, reading and writing and integration with the local culture and food habits are major challenges for migrants.

Exploitation, discrimination and non-payment of wage: The vulnerability of the migrants is vivid, especially when it comes to working hours, safety measures, hazardous jobs and low wages compared to the local workers.

Sexual abuse and gender violence: Women migrants are the most vulnerable. Women face double victimisation, wages are lower than that of men, and they are sexually abused and harassed.

Trafficking and bonded labour: Migrant workers are susceptible to human trafficking and become bonded labourers.

Health hazards, accidents and deaths: Migrant workers are vulnerable to health hazards and infectious diseases due to deplorable living conditions often provided by the employer at the work sites.

Xenophobia: Some examples of xenophobic tendencies are the anti-lungiwalas movement of the 1960s, the anti-bhaiya movement of the 1980s in Maharashtra, the “sons of the soil” movement in Assam, and similar anti-migrant agitations and attacks in Gujarat, Karnataka, etc.

Vulnerability to crises and disasters: Migrant workers are highly vulnerable to disasters and often migrate to cope with droughts, floods, landslides, earthquakes or cyclones.

What are the challenges in addressing internal labour migration issues in India?

No policy framework: There is a lack of a policy framework for the inclusion of internal migrant workers in India. There is inadequate coordination among states on a formal exchange of information on migrant workers.

Invisible workers: Migrant workers are not covered by protective law since India has not ratified the International Labour Organization’s Domestic Workers Convention, 2011.

Little to no emphasis on migration: A latest report observes that there has been little to no emphasis on migration within the country.

Informal arrangements: The lack of policy focus on internal migration within the country has been attributed to the presence of informal arrangements in which migrants work and due to the absence of reliable estimates on migrants.

Absence of reliable databases: Migrant workers remain un-enumerated and unrecognized at the local, regional and national levels. It is challenging for local self-governments (LSGs) and labour departments to engage with high labour mobility as it is characterized by informality and lack of documentation.

Employers incur no liability: Employers use recruiters to find and manage workers and thereby absolve themselves from any responsibility for protecting their rights and providing decent working conditions.

What are the government policies taken to protect internal migrants?

Central government Initiatives:

A Policy for Integrating Migrants with Development: The Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MHUPA), constituted the “Working Group on Migration” in 2015 and it submitted a report in 2017. The report made a number of recommendations and provides a roadmap for the better inclusion of migrants at their destinations.

Legislative arrangement: The Interstate Migrant Workmen’s Act, 1979 has been the only legislation governing the conditions of migrant workers in India. However, migrant workers have been governed by various labour laws with no focus on migration status such as the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970; the Unorganized Workers Social Security Act, 2008. In 2020, different labour laws were amalgamated into four labour codes.

Draft National Migrant Labour policy: In 2021, NITI Aayog has prepared a draft National Migrant Labour policy.

Other arrangements: Some of the other projects are the One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) project, the Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHC), the PM Garib Kalyan Yojna scheme, and the e-Shram portal.

State government Initiatives:

- In 2012, with the help of the International Labour Organisation, an MoU was signed between Odisha and Andhra Pradesh to track labourers migrating from 11 districts of Odisha to work in brick kilns in then-merged Andhra Pradesh.
- Kerala has set up facilitation centres for migrant workers whom the state refers to as “guest workers”.

Read more: [Migrants Are All Of Us](#)

What should be done to protect internal migrants?

Bring different sections together: There is a need to bring together different sectoral concerns related to migration, including social protection, housing, health and education.

Streamlining recruitments: This is to eliminate occupational vulnerability and strive towards humane working conditions in the various sectors.

Introduce outreach methods: This is to provide information, education and communication support to migrant workers.

Separate management bodies for interstate migration: This will be helpful in improving the data on migration, especially data on seasonal and circular migration.

The other necessary reforms include **a)** Ensuring financial inclusion for the migrants, **b)** Moving towards a universal social protection system; **c)** Guaranteeing dignified, safe and healthy living and working conditions; **d)** Enabling workers’ collectivisation and organisations, **e)** Bringing in technology and design innovations to address the nutrition, housing, water and sanitation needs of migrant workers, **f)** Conducting research and training to improve policy and practice.

Conclusion

In the next ten years, migrant workers in India could be the key to the country’s growth and progress. For this reason, the government and the private sector need to take more long-term steps.

Sources: [Live Mint](#), [PRS](#), DTE ([Article 1](#) and [Article 2](#)) and [ILO](#).

India-Australia relations: Challenges and Significance – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

The Australian Prime Minister (PM) is on a trip to India. During his visit, India and Australia signed an Audio-visual co-production agreement. The two Prime Ministers also discussed a range of domains to improve India-Australia relations. But to realise the full potential of India-Australia relations few concerns have to be addressed.

What are key discussions in the recent Australian Prime Minister (PM) visit to India?

– Australia wants to work with India and build a relationship in the areas of culture, economics, and security.

-Both countries signed memorandums of understanding (MoUs) for sports and audio-visual co-production agreements, and they also talked about the terms of reference for the Solar Taskforce between India and Australia.

India was worried about the damage done to Hindu temples in Australia by people who support the Khalistani government. In reply, Australia agreed to protect and keep safe the Indian community in Australia.

About the evolution of India-Australia relations in the past



HIGHLIGHTS OF BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP

- **1941:** India Trade Office in Sydney established
- **2009:** Establishment of **Strategic Partnership**
- **2014:** PM Modi's 1st official visit to Australia for G20 Brisbane Summit; became the 1st Indian to address the Australian Parliament
- **2020:** Relations upgraded to **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**
- **2021:** 1st India-Australia 2+2 Foreign & Defence Ministerial Dialogue held
- **2022:** - Mechanism for India-Australia Annual Summit Institutionalized
- 75th Anniversary of diplomatic relations

Source: MEA

Pre-Independence ties: India and Australia's relations started immediately after European arrival in Australia in 1788. All trade to and from the penal colony of New South Wales was controlled by the British East India Company through Kolkata.

Both established diplomatic relations in the pre-Independence period, with the establishment of the **India Trade Office in Sydney** in 1941. The end of the Cold War and simultaneously India's

decision to launch major economic reforms in 1991 provided the first positive move towards the development of closer ties between the two nations.

Post-Independence ties: With the passage of time, the relationship gained momentum towards a strategic relationship, alongside the existing economic engagement.

Since the elevation of the relationship in 2020, the countries have advanced practical actions on cyber and critical technologies, maritime affairs, defence ties, economic and business links and Quadrilateral cooperation.

The countries have also signed **India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (India-Australia ECTA)** in 2022. It is a path-breaking trade agreement for both countries and is expected to enhance bilateral trade.

What is the significance of Australia to India and vice versa?

Indo-Pacific Stability: Both nations aspire to a free, open, inclusive, and prosperous Indo-Pacific. The establishment of QUAD grouping and active participation by both is necessary to counter China's actions in the region.

Gateway to Pacific Countries: The growing cooperation would help India get better access to Pacific Island nations like Kiribati, Solomon Islands etc. as Australia enjoys a high degree of influence over them.

Indian Diaspora: As per the Australian Bureau of Statistics' 2016 census, 619,164 people in Australia declared that they were of ethnic Indian ancestry which made 2.8% of the Australian population. This huge number induces India to work in tandem with Australia for ensuring their well-being and development.

Upholding International Law: Both nations have a firm commitment to a rule-based international order. They believe in sovereign equality of nations and progression based on mutual respect and understanding.

Geo-Strategic Considerations: Considering Australia's proximity with the Indian Ocean, active engagement is desired for maintaining India's strong position in the Indian Ocean region. Further, Australia's support is desired for getting **membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group and bringing reforms to UNSC**.

Energy security: Australia's long-term and secure LNG supply can help diversify India's current highly concentrated import supplies from the Middle East.

Defying China: Australia is fully aware of China's desire to become the dominating force in the Indo-Pacific region. They are also aware of China's use of economic coercion and its goal to restore the Middle Kingdom. All of this is causing other countries like Australia to balance and restrain China. And India is seen as a key component in these initiatives.

Read more: [India-Australia Bilateral Relationship – Explained, pointwise](#)

What are the areas of cooperation in India-Australia Relations?



Source: MEA

Comprehensive strategic partnership: In 2020, the Prime Ministers of both the countries elevated bilateral relationship from “strategic partnership” to “comprehensive strategic partnership” during the India-Australia Leaders’ Virtual Summit.

Defence Cooperation:

- The **2+2 Ministerial Dialogue** between India and Australia took place in 2021. The **Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA)** was signed during the Virtual Summit in 2020 to enhance defence cooperation.
- **Joint military exercises:** In 2023, India, Japan, and the US will all take part in the **“Malabar” exercises**, which will be held in Australia. India has been invited to join the **Talisman Sabre** exercises in 2023.

Educational cooperation:

- The Australia-India education qualification recognition mechanism was signed in 2023. This new mechanism will mean that degrees obtained in Australia will now be recognised in India, and, vice-versa.
- Two Australian government universities, Deakin University and University of Wollongong, will be the first foreign education institutions to set up campuses in GIFT City, Gujarat

Economic Cooperation:

- Bilateral trade between the two countries stood at about US\$ 27.5 billion in FY 21.
- **India-Australia Economic Cooperation Trade Agreement (ECTA)** was in force since 2022. This has resulted in an immediate reduction of duty to zero on 96% of Indian

exports to Australia in value (that is 98% of the tariff lines) and zero duty on 85% of Australia's exports (in value) to India.

Security Cooperation: India and Australia are both members of the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) along with the US and Japan. Further Australia participated in the 2020 and 2021 editions of the Malabar Naval exercise.

Energy Cooperation:

- A Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement between the two countries was signed in 2014. The agreement provides the framework for substantial new trade in energy between Australia and India.
- In 2022, both countries signed a Letter of Intent on New and Renewable Energy for cooperation to reduce the cost of renewable energy technologies, including ultra low-cost solar and clean hydrogen.
- India announced Australian Dollars(AUD) 10 million for Pacific Island Countries under the [International Solar Alliance \(ISA\)](#).

Multilateral cooperation:

- Both are members of the Quad, Commonwealth, Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), ASEAN Regional Forum, and Asia Pacific Partnership on Climate and Clean Development, and have participated in the East Asia Summits.
- Both countries have also been cooperating as members of the Five Interested Parties (FIP) in the World Trade Organization context.
- Australia is an important player in Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and supports India's membership in the organisation.
- Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI): India, Australia, and Japan collaborated to strengthen Indo-Pacific supply chains.

Science and Technology: Australia-India Strategic Research Fund (AISRF) is a pillar of collaboration on science, technology and research. Both countries successfully conducted the 2021 India Australia Circular Economy Hackathon. Australia is also supporting India's Gaganyaan Space Program.

People to People Ties: Australia is investing in India's talented young people through a new Future Skills Initiative between education and training providers and industry. This complements the Australian government's significant new Maitri scholarships and fellowships which gives Indian students and researchers the chance to experience Australia's world class education system.

Cultural Cooperation: Australia's Indigenous peoples are custodians of the oldest continuing civilisation in the world. This is the reason the Australian government returned 29 culturally significant artefacts to India.

What are the challenges in India-Australia Relations?

Coal mine controversy: There was controversy over the Adani coal mine project in Australia, with some activists protesting against it, which created a strain in the relationship between the two countries.

Visa issues: There have been concerns over visa restrictions for Indian students and professionals seeking to work in Australia.

India's stand on the Russia-Ukraine crisis: Australia has criticized the Russian invasion of Ukraine and sided with the U.S. and western countries. However, India has refrained from criticizing Russia over the issue. This can create differences in bilateral discourse and the functioning of QUAD.

No Free Trade Agreement: Both nations have been interacting and communicating with each other for decades but have failed to create a consensus on a Free trade agreement.

China's Discontent: China is unhappy with the growing security cooperation between Australia and India. The Chinese government responded to the Quadrilateral dialogue by issuing formal diplomatic protests to its members, calling it "**Asian NATO**".

Lack of Uranium Supply: The progress on uranium supply has been very low, despite efforts from both sides. In 2017, Australia had sent its first uranium shipment to India but that was cited as "a small sample of uranium" transferred "purely for testing purposes".

Violence with Indian Diaspora: Attacks on Indian Diaspora and temples in the recent past by Khalistan supporters have been an issue of strain.

What can be done to strengthen India-Australia Relations?

Focus on economics competitiveness: India would have to work on improving its competitiveness, as in most trade sectors, it would be competing with China, ASEAN, Chile, Japan, Korea and New Zealand, which have already-functional FTAs with Australia. Australia has 16 FTAs under operation.

Reduce religious polarisation in India: Like India raised objections about Khalistani groups and their attack on temples in Australia, India should reduce religious polarisation within the country.

Active diplomatic engagement: It would be required to make Australia fulfil its promise to amend its domestic tax law in order to stop taxation of the offshore income of Indian firms providing technical services to Australia.

Collaborate on Science & Technology: India and Australia have a strong track record of collaborating in research and innovation. The Australian Government's \$1.1 billion National Innovation and Science Agenda presents new opportunities to engage with India. The agenda resonates well with India's 'Start-up India' and 'Make in India' campaign.

Encourage cooperation in Space: India can provide commercial Space applications to Australia for several of its Space initiatives.

Focus on common interests: Regular strategic dialogue should focus on common interests, including those relating to China, Pakistan, Afghanistan, terrorism and maritime security. A bilateral security declaration is needed between Australia and India. India should reciprocate Australia's overtures to engage as a priority maritime partner.

Read more: [Indo-Australian relationship. How bilateral relations among two nations can be strengthened?](#)

Sources: [DFAT](#), [MEA](#), [Indian Express \(Article 1 and Article 2\)](#), [The Hindu \(Article 1 and Article 2\)](#)

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

Silicon Valley Bank crisis: Reasons and Impacts - Explained, pointwise

Introduction

Recently, the California-based Silicon Valley Bank (SVB), a cornerstone of the US technology and startup industries, has failed. This marks the biggest bank failure since the 2008 financial crisis. The Silicon Valley Bank crisis has resulted in the subsequent seizure of SVB assets by regulators has generated a global wave of risk aversion, particularly among start-ups, including Indian startups.

About the Silicon Valley Bank Crisis



The Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) crisis explained



WHAT IS SVB?

The 1983-founded California-based SVB focusses on serving Silicon Valley startups

"IT PROVIDES MULTIPLE SERVICES TO VENTURE CAPITAL, PRIVATE EQUITY FIRMS IN ADDITION TO OFFERING PRIVATE BANKING SERVICES FOR HIGH NET-WORTH INDIVIDUALS"

HOW BIG IS IT?

SVB has business with nearly half of all the US venture-backed startups, and 44% of the US venture-backed tech, healthcare firms that went public last year

As of December 31, SVB had \$212 billion in assets

The bank's clients includes household names like Shopify, Pinterest, etc

Source: SVB, ET Research

Source: ET

- After the pandemic in 2021, the US Federal bank adopted the easy money policy and pump huge money into the market. During this period SVB deposits also increased.
- Subsequently, SVB decided to heavily invest in the bond market, where bonds had been issued at lower interest rates.
- After a period of record low-interest rates during the pandemic, central banks around the world, led by the US Federal Reserve, started raising key rates aggressively to tackle

inflation. This has dampened investor sentiments and also hit the businesses of tech and start-up-focused lenders like SVB.

- This is because investors do not like to take risks when the money available to them becomes expensive due to higher interest rates. As a result of the higher interest rates, investors in technology start-ups became reluctant to take risks.
- As higher interest rates led to a funding crunch for technology start-ups, SVB's clients started pulling out their money to meet their liquidity needs.
- Under this pressure to meet customer withdrawals, SVB sold a \$21 billion portfolio consisting mostly of US Treasuries at a huge loss of \$1.8 billion.
- Moody's immediately downgraded the bank's credit rating to Baa1 negative outlook from A3.
- This was followed by further losses to SVB. To fill this loss, SVB announced it would sell \$2.25 billion in common equity and preferred convertible stock. This sudden announcement triggered concerns about its balance sheet and its shares plummeted 60%.
- SVB also failed to find alternative sources. Hence, it ended up being shut down by regulators, following which it was handed over to the FDIC.
- The FDIC has added that it would seek to sell SVB's assets, adding that future dividend payments may be made to uninsured depositors.

What is the reason behind Silicon Valley Bank Crisis?

ET tech

WHAT WENT WRONG AT SVB: A TIMELINE



During the funding boom of 2021, SVB amassed large deposits -- \$189 billion in 2021, which later peaked to \$198 billion



It later invested heavily in bonds, which were being issued in a low-interest rate scenario. SVB's balance sheet for 2022-end showed \$91.3 billion of securities



In 2022, the US Federal Reserve started raising interest rates, which drove down the value of bond holdings issued at lower rates



Rising interest rates also led to venture capital firms cutting fewer and smaller cheques to startups triggering a funding winter



As funding depleted, deposits made by startups in institutions such as SVB also started declining, forcing the bank to sell securities at a loss to cover up



On Wednesday, SVB announced it had sold \$21 billion worth of bond assets at a loss of \$1.8 billion



It also said it was raising \$2.25 billion via a share sale



WHAT'S THE IMPACT?

Fearing insolvency, number of large investors like Coatue Management, Y Combinator, Peter Thiel's Founders Fund are advising their portfolio startups to withdraw deposits from SVB

SVB has urged its customers to not spread panic and withdraw money from the bank

Source: SVB, ET Research

Source: ET

Aggressive raising interest rates:

- Global borrowing costs have risen at the fastest pace in decades over the last year as the Federal Reserve lifted U.S. rates by 450 basis points from near zero, while the European Central Bank hiked the eurozone by 300 bps.
- Due to this, the value of existing bonds that were issued at lower interest rates has fallen. Banks, which bought these bonds are sitting on steep unrealised losses.
- Another facet of the rising interest rates was the decline in funding for startups as the venture capital ecosystem don't want to take risk.

Heavy investment in long-term government bonds: SVB's invest heavily in US government bonds. A spike in interest rates has led to a sell-off in bonds, leaving banks exposed to potential losses on the securities they hold.

A downturn in technology stocks: Silicon Valley Bank was hit hard by the downturn in technology stocks over the past year.

“Run on the bank”: The bank failed after depositors — mostly technology workers and venture capital-backed companies — began withdrawing their money in panic, creating a “run on the bank”.

Soft Regulations: In 2018, regulations were loosened for regional banks like SVB – among other things, it reduced the amount of potential loss reserves mandated for these banks.

What will be the potential impact of the Silicon Valley Bank Crisis on the World Economy?

Impacts on small businesses: According to a petition to the US government, around 10,000 small businesses with accounts in Silicon Valley Bank may be unable to pay their employees in the next 30 days, and approximately 1 lakh jobs are anticipated to be affected as a result of the collapse.

Impact the technology industry: It will immediately impact the US technology industry and US competitiveness worldwide and ultimately set back US competitiveness by a decade or more.

Can trigger a run on the bank: Its collapse has already instilled fear among founders and management teams to look for safer havens for their remaining cash, which can trigger a bank run on every other smaller bank.

Vulnerability to the rising cost of money: The SVB crisis spread concern about hidden risks in the banking sector and its vulnerability to the rising cost of money.

What will be the potential impact of the SVB Crisis on India?

According to some experts, India is **unlikely to be affected** by any contagion effects. This is because:

- Indian banks have minimal exposure to US lenders.
- In its [2022 Financial Stability Report \(FSR\)](#), the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said that macro-level stress tests for credit risk showed that domestic banks would be able to comply with minimum capital requirements even under severe-stress scenarios.
- **Improved capital-to-risk-weighted-assets ratio (CRAR):** The system-level CRAR in 2023, under baseline, medium and severe stress scenarios, is projected at 14.9%, 14% and 13.1%, respectively, the RBI said.

Note: The minimum regulatory requirement for CRAR for scheduled commercial banks is 9%. Adding on a counter-cyclical buffer, the requirement is 11.50%.

- **Improvement in NPA:** Banks have stepped up efforts to clean up asset quality and their profitability has also improved. Further, gross NPAs were at a seven-year low of 5% as of September 2022.
- The increase in the 10-year yield has been less than the policy rate hikes by the RBI.
- Banks have sharply reduced the modified duration of their bond portfolios over the last six years, according to the latest RBI data.

Note: Modified duration refers to the change in the value of a bond when interest rates change. The higher the modified duration of the bond portfolio, the more the risk of incurring losses when bond yields rise.

Benefits for the Indian economy from the SVB crisis:

- **Boom for emerging markets:** A fall in US bond yields typically improves the appeal of higher-yielding fixed-income assets in emerging markets.
- **Bring corporates back to India:** Falling US dollar rates coupled with SVB Crisis might bring back big corporates in India, who had shifted to overseas lending due to depreciation in Indian National Rupee (INR) against the US dollar.”

Impacts on Indian start-ups:

- Most of the named Indian startups got money from SVB, they are not depositors. SVB either lent them money (as venture debt) or invested in them in the form of equity. It realised its profits via a sale or got repaid by the companies, depending on the structure. Therefore, there is no impact on the start-ups themselves.
- However, some start-ups with deposits in SVB are impacted. For example, among its most notable funding was an investment of a total of \$1.7 million in One97 Communications, the parent company of Paytm. Other start-ups that had received funding from SVB include Bluestone and Carwale.

What should be done to prevent big bank failures?

Maintain constant vigil: All the stakeholders, including bank boards, auditors and the regulator have to maintain constant vigil, given the high stakes for safety and stability.

Indian banks should keep capital as measured under the current Basel regime (international standards set by bank regulators).

Ensure Cooperation and coordination: Cooperation and coordination among all central banks will be helpful in bringing transparency and accountability and also help in minimising the spillover effect of bank failure.

Ensure proper selection: The selection of the board of directors has to be prudent. The auditors' selection has to be done with care.

Board members of banks usually spend most of their meeting time on governance issues, business updates, and “problem children.” They should focus instead on the businesses that use the most capital.

Strict actions from central banks: The central bank has to continuously monitor the lending institutions on various parameters including fit and proper. While supervising the banks, the

Central bank should not avoid any loopholes in the management and should take strict action against them.

Sources: Live Mint ([Article 1](#) and [Article 2](#)), Economic Times ([Article 1](#) and [Article 2](#)), [The Hindu](#), [Business Standard](#), and [Times of India](#).

Syllabus: GS – 3: Economic development – Effects of liberalization on the economy.

[Yojana March 2023 Summary] Towards cooperative fiscal federalism – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

India is moving towards cooperative fiscal federalism by giving more money and power to state governments and decentralising its finances. Now, states get their share of taxes based on a formula instead of a grant, which gives them more spending freedom and flexibility.

In the 2023–24 Union Budget provided an Effective Capital Expenditure of INR 13.7 lakh crore (This includes provision made for the creation of capital assets through Grants-in-Aid to States). This move shows that the Union government is serious about cooperative fiscal federalism and giving states financial freedom.

What is fiscal federalism?

Fiscal federalism refers to fiscal relations between various government units, which in the Indian context means the Union Government and the State Governments. Both tiers of government need to possess adequate financial resources to discharge their respective responsibilities enshrined in the Constitution effectively.

What are the constitutional provisions that encourage cooperative fiscal federalism?

- Article 246, Article 246A and the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution delineate taxation powers between the Centre and the States.
- But the distribution of fiscal power has a centripetal bias with more buoyant tax areas assigned to the Union. The State governments, on the other hand, have more expenditure responsibilities for providing core public services.
- However, the resources mobilised by the Union Government are not meant to be used exclusively for Union activities.
- In India, the Union and the States together form an organic whole for the utilisation of these resources. So, the Constitution makers have very intelligently provided a mechanism to correct the fiscal imbalances through the Finance Commission.

Finance Commission

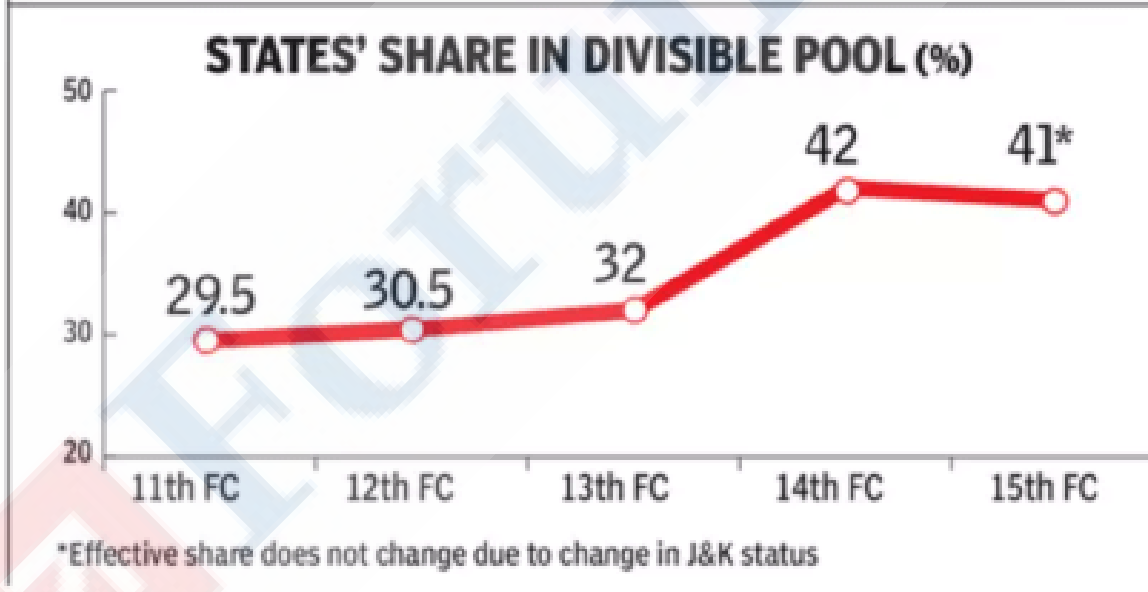
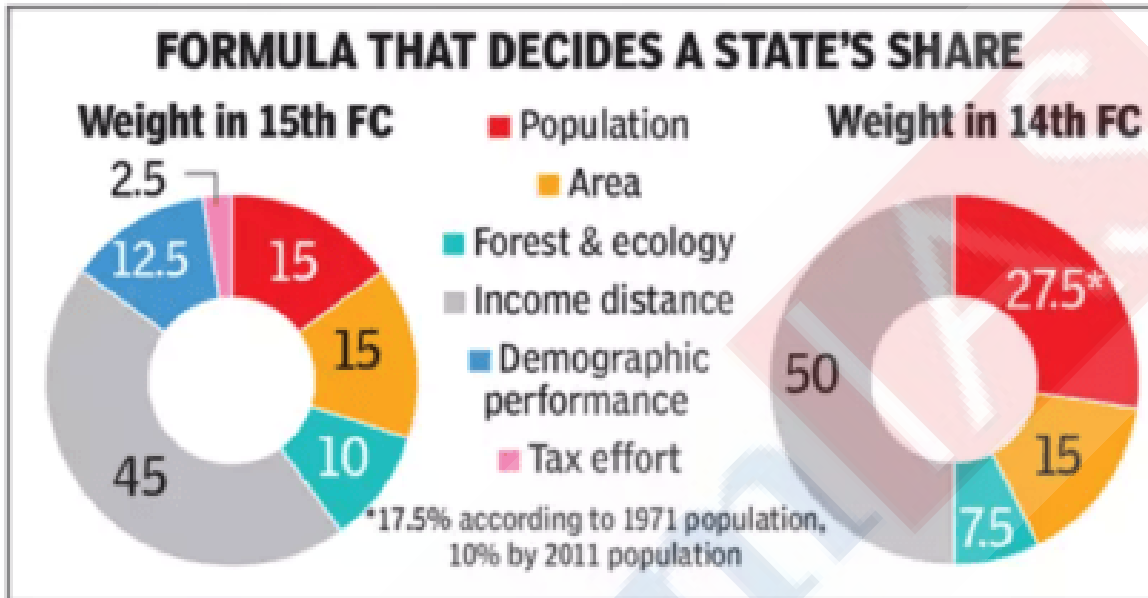
The President of India establishes a Finance Commission after every five years under Article 280 of the Constitution. The Commission makes recommendations on distribution of net proceeds of central taxes between the Centre and the States.

The Commission can also **a)** suggest the principles on which grant-in-aid of revenues, out of the Consolidated Fund of India, should be given to the States, **b)** corrects the horizontal fiscal imbalances due to States' varying capacities, costs needs, and efficiency in delivering services. Fifteen Finance Commissions have been constituted so far.

Read more: [Finance Commission](#)

What are the recent steps taken to promote cooperative fiscal federalism?

HOW THE BOOTY IS DIVIDED



Source: Yojana

The new India is ushering in a radical shift towards cooperative fiscal federalism. After 2014, the government of India repeatedly emphasized the pivotal role of state governments, calling them “**drivers of transforming India**”. States are advised to “imbibe the spirit” of cooperative federalism. To encourage cooperative fiscal federalism, the Indian government has taken a number of steps.

Marked shift in fiscal decentralisation:

- Following the recommendations of the 14th and 15th Finance Commissions, the Indian government gradually increased the amount of money transferred from the Union to the States each year. Annual transfers from the Union to the States, for example, have climbed from 4.7% of GDP in the fiscal year 2013-14 to 6.7% of GDP in updated forecasts for the fiscal year 2021-22.
- Now, the States have access to the higher central resources. This gives individual states more freedom and liberty in spending expenses based on their priorities.
- Changes in fiscal architecture have also resulted in significant changes in the style of planning and design of fiscal transfers.

NITI Aayog, a harbinger cooperative fiscal federalism:

- The Government of India, in 2015, abolished the Planning Commission and constituted NITI Aayog. The Aayog has become a proponent of cooperative federalism.
- It has provided a platform where States act together in the national interest and thereby fostering cooperative federalism.
- A corollary to the abolition of the Planning Commission was removing the distinction between Plan and Non-Plan expenditure from 2017-18. This was replaced by the universally accepted practice of classifying expenditure as revenue and capital.

Read more: [NITI Aayog](#)

Rationalisation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes:

- This was done based on the recommendations made by a Sub-Group of Chief Ministers constituted by NITI Aayog. The Union Government in 2016-17 effected a major rationalisation of the Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS). The rationalisation was a long pending demand of the States.
- The number of CSS was reduced to twenty-eight umbrella schemes, consisting of six core of the core' schemes, twenty core schemes and two optional schemes.
- Further, the medium-term framework for CSS and its sunset dates were made co-terminus with the Finance Commission cycle.

Read more: [Rationalisation of Centrally Sponsored \(CS\) schemes mooted](#)



myGov
सर्वोपयोगी

NATION TAX MARKET

GST signifies the dawn of cooperative federalism

- Fundamental reordering of federal fiscal relations
- Convergence for the cause of larger public good has been made possible with GST Council
- GST shows the strength and resolve of federal structure
- Two third voting power for states and one third for centre reflects the accommodative spirit of federalism
- Consensus reflects the spirit of "One Nation, One Aspiration, One Determination"

myGovIndia www.transformingindia.mygov.in Date : July, 2017

Source: Yojana

Introduction of GST:

- The implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) was one of the most significant structural adjustments in the indirect taxation system, substantially redefining federal fiscal relations. The GST has promoted cooperative fiscal federalism since its inception (July 1, 2017).
- States and governments have been awarded a weighted average of two-thirds of the total GST Council votes.
- India has chosen a dual GST framework. Hence, goods and services are subject to two levies: the central GST and the state GST. GST has subsumed several central and State taxes.
- It has also increased the states' taxing ability, providing them with a larger revenue base.

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

Must read: [Five years of Goods and Services Tax \(GST\)](#)**Cooperation to boost capital expenditure in States:**

- The COVID-19 pandemic had a devastating impact on economies globally. This has led to a decline in state revenue collection and a surge in demand for revenue expenditure. This has resulted in a decline in state capital expenditure, which is essential for economic growth.
- So, in the true spirit of cooperative fiscal federalism, the Union government developed an innovative scheme called “[Special Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure](#)” in 2020–21, which provided interest-free loans to States for capital projects, ongoing capital projects, and clearing pending bills, with full flexibility in project selection.
- On the demand of states, the scheme continued in 2021–22 with an allocation of Rs 15,000 crore, and in 2022–23, it was expanded and renamed the “Scheme for Financial Assistance to States for Capital Investment,” with an allocation of Rs 1 lakh crore, including Rs 20,000 crore for citizen-centric reforms.
- The state chief ministers and finance ministers demanded the continuation of the scheme in the pre-budget consultations for 2023–24.
- The Union Government not only accepted their demand but also surprised them by proposing a huge allocation of Rs 1.3 lakh crore under the scheme for the financial year 2023–24.
- The guidelines of the scheme not only aim at pushing capital expenditure in the States but also endeavour to facilitate citizen centric reforms and achieve certain national priorities.
- These include urban planning reforms, financing reforms in Urban Local Bodies, incentives for scrapping of old vehicles, construction of a “Unity Mall” in each state, augmenting the housing stock for police personnel, and setting up physical libraries in each gram panchayat and municipal ward.

Strong federal fiscal shield during the pandemic:

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Union Government followed cooperative fiscal federalism to provide resources to states to fight the contagion, boost economic activity, and maintain public services.
- The [Scheme for Financial Assistance to States for Capital Investment](#) was introduced, along with other measures to provide sufficient resources to states.
- The borrowing limit for states was increased by 2% of the gross state domestic product (GDP) in 2020–21, making financial resources of up to Rs 4.27 lakh crores available.
- A special window for borrowing was set up in 2020–21, which allowed states to borrow an amount of Rs 1.10 lakh crore as a back-to-back loan to meet the shortfall in GST compensation.

Conclusion

The Union Government of India is committed to advancing cooperative fiscal federalism in India, as seen by the announcements made in the Union Budget 2023-24 and a variety of initiatives implemented in previous years.

In the coming years, India is likely to move faster along this path. With more freedom and space in their budgets, states will be able to grow more quickly and in more ways, turning India into the “Amrit-Kaal.”

Saudi-Iranian normalisation and implications for India – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

Saudi and Iranian officials recently agreed to revive the 2016 Saudi-Iran peace deal. China-initiated two-way discussions in Beijing resulted in the Saudi-Iranian normalisation. The rivalry between these two countries has long been a source of instability in the region, and the potential normalisation deal has been a topic of speculation in recent years.

Although this deal could be complex and challenging to implement, it could have significant implications for global stability and economic growth, including India.

What are the conflicts between Iran and Saudi Arabia?

The conflict between Iran and Saudi Arabia has several root causes and has been ongoing for decades. Some of them are:

Religious differences: Iran is a predominantly Shiite Muslim country, while Saudi Arabia is predominantly Sunni Muslim. The two sects have different beliefs and practices, and this has led to tensions and conflicts between the two countries.

Political influence: Both Iran and Saudi Arabia are major powers in the Middle East and have sought to increase their political influence in the region. This has led to competition and conflicts over issues such as control of oil resources, support for different political factions and proxy wars in countries like Yemen, Syria and Iraq.

Ideological differences: Iran is an Islamic republic with a revolutionary government, while Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy with conservative religious values. These ideological differences have contributed to tensions between the two countries.

Historical grievances: Iran and Saudi Arabia have a long history of animosity, dating back to the early days of Islam. They have been involved in conflicts and power struggles for centuries.

Oil Prices: Iran and Saudi Arabia are both major oil producers, and their competition for market share has led to disagreements over production levels and prices. This has further strained relations between the two countries, particularly as oil prices have fallen in recent years.

The assassination of a famous Saudi journalist: The killing of a Saudi journalist and dissident in 2018 was allegedly carried out by Saudi agents. This has further soured relations between the two countries. Iran has condemned the killing and accused Saudi Arabia of human rights abuses.

About the Saudi-Iranian normalisation deal

Towards a new dawn

Two of West Asia's major powers, Iran and Saudi Arabia, have agreed to restore diplomatic relations in an agreement brokered by China. This map shows the range of influence each power has in the region through their allies or proxies



For stability: Saudi Minister of State and National Security Adviser Musaad bin Mohammed, meets the Iranian Rear Admiral Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, in Beijing, China on March 10. REUTERS

- Iran has direct influence in Iraq (through political parties and Shia militias), Syria (through the regime of Bashar Assad), Lebanon (Hezbollah), Yemen (Houthis) and Gaza (Islamic Jihad)

- Saudi Arabia has direct influence in Yemen (through the government of Hadi Mansour) and Lebanon (through the Sunni parties). Saudi Arabia used to support some rebel factions in Syria during the Civil War, but it's not active any more. They are trying to reach out to different Shia factions in Iraq but are not very successful



Source: The Hindu

The key outcomes of the Saudi-Iran peace deal are, **a)** Both countries plan to reopen their embassies in Riyadh and Tehran, **b)** Both countries will respect the sovereignty of other countries

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

and not get involved in each others business. For example, Saudi Arabia agreed to rein in Iran International, a satellite news channel. On the other hand, Iran has agreed to curb cross-border attacks on Saudi Arabia by Houthi rebels in Yemen, **c)** Agreed to implement a security cooperation agreement signed in 2001 and a general economic, trade, and investment agreement signed in 1998.

Apart from these measures, both countries will also get together to work out the details of the peace deal.

China will organise a conference between Iran and the six Gulf monarchies to help maintain peace in the region.

What are the various diplomatic challenges in implementing the Saudi-Iranian normalisation deal?

Reviving the Resolving regional tensions: There are ongoing rivalries and conflicts in the region, particularly between Saudi Arabia and Iran, that require diplomatic efforts to manage and reduce tensions.

Reviving the JCPOA: The **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)**, a nuclear agreement with Iran, needs to be revived and renegotiated to ease sanctions and address concerns about Iran's nuclear program. However, domestic politics in the US and Israel could pose challenges to this process.

Managing Israel's aggressiveness: Israel's actions in the region, particularly its hostility towards Iran, need to be managed to ensure regional stability.

Engaging with China: China's growing role in West Asian affairs poses challenges for Indian diplomacy. India needs to engage with China in the region and work together to further mutual and regional interests while also prioritizing the management of its ties with China.

What are the Global Implications of Saudi-Iranian normalisation?

Some of the potential implications of Saudi-Iranian normalisation are:

Regional stability: The two nations are involved in conflicts in Syria, Yemen, and Iraq, among other places. Normalisation could lead to a de-escalation of these conflicts and a reduction in regional tensions.

Global energy markets: Saudi Arabia and Iran are two of the world's largest oil-producing nations, and their relationship impacts global energy markets. Any agreement between the two nations could affect the price of oil and gas globally.

Religious divide: The Sunni-Shia divide has been a source of tension between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and it has fueled conflicts in the region. The Saudi-Iran peace deal could help ease this divide and reduce religious tensions.

Relationship with U.S.: Saudi Arabia and Iran have different relationships with the United States, and normalisation could affect the U.S. policy towards the region. For example, The US, which traditionally held significant power in the region, has deprioritised West Asia due to bigger foreign policy challenges such as Russia's war in Ukraine and China's rise in the Indo-Pacific.

Geopolitical balance: Saudi Arabia and Iran are two of the most influential countries in the Middle East, and their normalisation could shift the balance of power in the region.

China “quasi-mediation diplomacy”: China has signaled a shift in its approach towards the Middle East. It is moving away from hard security concerns towards “quasi-mediation diplomacy”. The strategy aims to promote China’s commercial, diplomatic and political interests. The recent Saudi-Iran accord is the first manifestation of this approach, reducing regional tensions and paving the way for further dialogue.

Good for Afghanistan: The successful completion of the Chabahar-Helmand-Kabul-Termiz railway line will open the vast and resource-rich Central Asian region to the Global South.

What are the Implications of Saudi-Iranian normalisation for India?

Energy security: India is one of the biggest oil consumers in the world. Most of the oil imports come from the Middle East, especially Saudi Arabia and Iran. The Saudi-Iran peace deal could help reduce tensions in the region and could lead to a more stable oil market. This will be good for India’s energy security.

Apart from this, discussions for the transportation of Iranian gas to India and Turkmen gas to Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh could be restarted.

Trade and Investment: Improved relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran could lead to increased trade and investment opportunities for India, as both countries are important trading partners for India. This could result in greater economic growth and job creation in India.

Regional stability: The normalisation of relations between these two countries could lead to a reduction in tensions and potentially help resolve some of the conflicts in the region. This would be beneficial for India as it has a significant interest in maintaining regional stability. For example, India support for [International North-South Transport Corridor \(INSTC\)](#), and Iran is also part of India’s extended neighbourhood.

Geopolitics: India has good relations with both Saudi Arabia and Iran and has been trying to maintain a balance between the two countries. The normalisation of relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran could change the dynamics of the region, and India will need to navigate the new realities to maintain its interests in the region.

China angle: India may face difficulties as a result of China’s efforts to mediate tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

What can be done to fully reap the benefits of the Saudi-Iran peace deal?

Confidence-building measures(CBM): Both countries could take steps to build confidence and demonstrate their commitment to reducing tensions. This could include diplomatic gestures, such as opening embassies or exchanging visits between officials, as well as practical steps, such as reducing military deployments or easing economic sanctions.

Diplomatic negotiations: After CBM, both could engage in formal negotiations to work out the details of a potential normalisation deal. This could involve mediation from third-party countries or international organizations to help bridge the gap between the two sides.

For example, India can play a constructive role in promoting dialogue and cooperation between these two countries, which can help in achieving regional stability.

Addressing sensitive issues: A normalisation deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran would likely require both sides to address sensitive issues, such as regional security arrangements and Iran’s

nuclear program. These issues would need to be tackled in a way that addresses the concerns of both sides and promotes mutual trust and cooperation.

Building public support: A normalisation deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran would need to be supported by both societies, as well as by the broader international community. Therefore, efforts to build public support and engage civil society actors would be critical to the success of any potential deal.

India will need to carefully monitor the situation and adapt its policies accordingly to maintain its interests in the region.

Syllabus: GS 2 – International Relations – Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India’s interests.

Sources: [Aljazeera](#), [MEPC](#), [The Hindu](#), [Indian Express](#), and [Eurasian Times](#).

[Kurukshestra March 2023 Summary] Development Directions in Budget – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

The Economic Survey 2022-23 gave a positive outlook for India’s economic growth in FY 2023-24, citing the country’s resilience in the post-COVID era. The survey emphasised the importance of agriculture and rural development for the growth of everyone.

Over the past six years, the agriculture sector has shown steady growth. In the Union Budget 2023-24, the Indian government has given top priority to a number of areas related to agriculture, rural jobs, and rural ways of making a living.

This article attempts to explain the inbuilt policy direction and socioeconomic intent of the Government by discussing a few agriculture and rural livelihood and employment-related focus areas as prioritised in the Budget 2023-24.

Development directions in Budget – Refocusing Priority Areas

S.No	Subject	BE	RE	Variation- RE over BE(in%)
1	Rural Employment	73,000	89,400	22.46
2	Crop Husbandry	1,22,137	1,40,651	15.15
3	Food storage and warehousing	2,15,643	2,89,329	34.17
4	Housing	12,072	20,990	73.89

Source: Kurukshestra

The Budget speech emphasised seven priority areas and underscored the Union Government’s intentions to achieve goals linked to the prioritised domain. Ensuring complementarity, the Budget has outlined to achieve **(i)** inclusive development; **(ii)** connecting targeted clients and reaching the last mile; **(iii)** boosting infrastructure and investment; **(iv)** bringing in innovation, technology for unleashing the latent productive potential; **(v)** meeting climate change effects by

developing and focusing green growth-led strategic action; **(vi)** identifying and consolidating the power of youth and enhancing their participation in the economic growth; and **(vii)** strengthening financial sector for effective financial inclusion.

The Budget announcements have emphasised on making agriculture future ready and inclusive while envisioning youth participation and encouraging rural employment and income growth.

An overall review of Development Directions in Budget

Expenditure and Budget Allocation for Select Schemes		
S.No	Schemes	Allocations in 2023-24 over 2022-23 (in %)
1	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)	-17.8
2	National Social Assistance Programme	-0.2
3	Blue revolution	7.1
4	Jal Jeevan Mission	16.7
5	National Health Mission	-1.0
6	National Livelihood Mission (NLM) - Aajeevika	-0.8
7	Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)	65.8
8	Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)	0.0
9	Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY)	0.0
10	Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen)	117.4
11	Computerisation of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies	176.6
12	National Mission on Natural Farming	-

Source: Kurukshetra

A review of the Revised Estimates (RE) and Budget Expenditure (BE) of 2022-23 indicates that rural employment initiatives, crop husbandry, including farming and the raising of livestock, poultry and other activities, food storage and warehousing and housing got higher allocations. These increased resource allocations aimed at stimulating economic growth along with job creation, income and wealth generation and enhancement of overall consumption demand in rural India.

Rural areas and the agriculture sector are seen as important for growth, with investments planned for job creation and development in these areas. Rural development saw a decrease in allocation. This suggests the potential to allocate resources to other emerging sectors.

The budget allocation for rural housing, fishery activities, and water and sanitation has increased in 2023-24 compared to 2022-23. A new sub-scheme of [Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana](#) aims to improve value chain efficiencies in the fishery sector and expand its market.

Additionally, a new Scheme, National Mission on Natural Farming, with Rs. 459 crore budget allocation has been launched to promote natural and organic farming practices and reduce dependency on chemical-based fertilizers.

Development Directions in Budget – Rural Employment Programmes

- The Union Budget 2023-24 has allocated Rs. 60,000 crores to MGNREGA and Rs. 14,129 crores to National Rural Livelihood Mission (NLM) to generate wage and self-employment opportunities in rural areas. However, the allocation to both schemes has reduced from the previous year.
- To make the implementation effective, the planning process at the Village Panchayat level needs to be reviewed and revived, and a professional cadre of quality experts needs to be raised at the community level to guide the outcome-based public works planning and monitoring.
- The focus on utilising MGNREGA funds for fodder production and implementing notified activities would help the livestock sector and enhance farm income.
- NLM has two important self-employment schematic interventions viz. [Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushal Yojana \(DDU-GKY\)](#) and [Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihood Mission \(DAY-NRLM\)](#).
- The Budget has announced the revamping of the credit guarantee scheme for Micro, Small, Medium enterprises (MSMEs).
- The village entrepreneurship development approach of DAY-NRLM is aimed at creating a catalytic local entrepreneurial ecosystem and improving rural livelihoods and income by converging rural development efforts with agri-infrastructure.
- The new and innovative rural enterprises scheduled to be established and facilitated under NLM during 23-24 will assure financial inclusion, increase household income, and facilitate farm logistics at the community level.

Read more: [National Livestock Mission \(NLM\)](#)

Livelihoods and Employment through Agri- development

A number of measures have been suggested in the budget to increase production, productivity, farm and non-farm profits and farmers' income. In order to achieve the expected goals of the government, there is need to ensure active participatory actions towards **(a)** reducing water stress by comprehensive water planning; **(b)** promoting natural and organic farming practices **(c)** ensuring balanced use of fertilisers; **(d)** strengthening operation green initiatives through promotion and nurturing of [Farmer Producer Organisations \(FPOs\)](#), cooperatives and other rural collectives in agriculture, dairy and fisheries; **(e)** establishing and enhancing agri-logistic facilities like agri-warehousing, cold storage, reefer vans; **(f)** mapping and geo-tagging existing agri-logistics and ensuring viability funding for setting up such infrastructure at taluka level through public-private partnerships; **(g)** enhancing holding capacity and reducing logistic costs of farmers through construction and operation of community-led village storages; **(h)** connecting unconnected areas, building and sustaining a national cold supply chain; **(i)** integrating - negotiable warehousing receipts with e-NAM; **(j)** developing fodder farms through [Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act \(MGNREGA\)](#); **(k)** developing, promoting and making profitable fisheries sector through collectivised effort; **(l)** doubling milk processing capacity by ensuring creation of primary dairy cooperatives in each panchayat/village; and **(m)** successfully utilising enhanced farm credit target of Rs. 20 lakh cr.

Development Directions in Budget – Digital Infrastructure Push

- The Budget 23-24 has prioritised building the digital infrastructure for agriculture as an open source and interoperable public good to improve access to relevant and timely information services for crop planning, crop health, and agri-development.
- This initiative aims to incentivize banks and financial institutions to roll out end-to-end digital solutions and attract educated and unemployed local youth to provide agri-services.

Additionally, an agriculture accelerator fund will encourage agri start-ups and the provision of affordable and location-specific solutions to the problems faced by farmers.

- The cluster-based and value-chain approach through Public Private Partnership is planned to enhance the productivity of cotton crops and increase the income of cotton growers.
- The Aatma Nirbhar Horticulture Clean Plant Program aims to boost the availability of disease-free, quality planting material for high-value horticulture crops.

Development Directions in Budget – Encouraging Nutri-Cereals

- The Budget 2023-24 focuses on promoting millets as a superfood, acknowledging their nutritional benefits and potential to improve the welfare of small and marginal farmers.
- The UN's announcement of 2023 as the [International Year of Millets](#) is also highlighted as an opportunity to drive this promotion.
- The Budget aims to make India a global hub for millets by supporting best practices, research, and technologies, and encouraging the integration of biodiversity, agroecology, nutrition, and health.
- To achieve this, the Budget proposes immediate actions to identify, preserve, and multiply quality millet seeds through community seed cooperatives, create specialized seed cooperatives at the village level, and set up small-scale seed processing and distribution units.

Development Directions in Budget – Reposing Faith in Cooperatives

- The Budget aims to create grain storage facilities in every panchayat through Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) to provide storage and warehouse services to farmers at an affordable cost, helping them avoid distress sales and realise better prices.
- It also aims to promote village-level community-led economic growth by facilitating the creation of multi-purpose cooperative societies, primary fisheries and dairy cooperatives in uncovered panchayats/villages in the next five years.
- The Ministry of Cooperation is taking various initiatives, such as computerisation of PACS, creating a national cooperative database and promoting multi-purpose cooperatives.
- The registration of new multi-state cooperatives in the areas of quality seed production, organic farming and exports is expected to address issues of availability of quality seeds and promote natural and organic farming practices.
- The government is promoting and nurturing new cooperatives in underdeveloped areas by offering special concessions and exemptions such as a lower tax rate for new manufacturing cooperatives and increasing applicable limits for tax deduction at source on annual cash withdrawals, amongst others.

Read more: [What are Primary Agricultural Credit Societies?](#)

Conclusion

The 7-point priority agenda of the Budget was the need of the hour to ensure a self-reliant, prosperous and US \$5 trillion economy.

The Budget 23-24 aims to make agriculture smart, modern, future-ready, and inclusive by focusing on rural employment, agri-infrastructure, and community-led cooperative development. The government aims to increase employment and income in rural areas through wage employment and self-employment schemes and encourage rural entrepreneurship.

The initiatives aim to re-orient the rural economy by ensuring innovative and participatory investment opportunities through public, private, and community participation. The real challenge is to converge development efforts and create an enabling ecosystem for rural/farm enterprises and start-ups to ensure sustainable livelihoods and gainful employment avenues in rural areas.

Legalising Same-sex marriages in India and associated challenges – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

The Supreme Court received petitions to allow same-sex marriage under the Special Marriage Act. The court sent notices to the government and took over similar cases that were already in other high courts. In response to it, the government filed an affidavit expressing its view on the matter.

At the same time, the Supreme Court of India has referred the petitions seeking legal validation of same-sex marriages to a five-judge constitutional bench for adjudication. Same-sex marriage is a sensitive issue in India, with the potential to pose legal, socioeconomic, and ethical concerns.

What is same-sex marriage?

A same-sex marriage is a legal union between two people of the same gender. The government usually recognises it and grants them the same legal rights and protections as heterosexual couples. It is also known as homosexual marriage or gay marriage.

Note: LGBTQ+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or sometimes questioning), and others. The “plus” represents other sexual identities including pansexual and Two-Spirit.

What is the global acceptance of same-sex marriages?

It's a 21st century feeling

33 countries recognise same-sex marriage and civil unions

The **Netherlands** was the first, in **2001**

Momentum is growing — **2022** has seen **Chile, Slovenia, Switzerland** and **Mexico** join the club

In November, the US Senate passed a same-sex marriage protection bill with bipartisan support — **70% of Americans** now support same-sex marriage

Also in November, **Singapore's parliament** decriminalised sex between men. Its **Section 377A** grew especially untenable after Indian SC read down Section 377



Japan is the only G7 country that does not allow same-sex marriage. But recently a Tokyo district court underlined the infringement of the human rights of same-sex families

Taiwan is the only Asian country to have legalised same-sex marriage. Its parliament approved the landmark decision in 2019. Its constitutional court struck down the Civil Code's definition of marriage as being only between a man and a woman in 2017

Source: TOI

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

As of 2023, marriage between same-sex couples is legally performed and recognised in 34 countries, with the most recent being Andorra. Most countries in North and South America and Europe have legalised same-sex marriage.

Read more: [The practice followed in other countries on rights of LGBTQ community](#)

About the case and Centre's affidavit on legalising Same-sex marriages in India

Read here: [Same-sex marriages can rock societal values: Centre](#)

What are the issues in the centre's affidavit on legalising same-sex marriages?

Read here: [About legalising same-sex marriages: Inaction and intervention: On the handling of social issues](#)

What are the arguments in favour of legalising same-sex marriages?

Marital rights same-sex couples do not enjoy in India



Source: TOI

There are several arguments in favour of legalising same-sex marriages in India:

Providing Equality: Legalising same-sex marriages is crucial in promoting equality and non-discrimination. All individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, should have the right to marry and have their relationships recognised under the law.

This is supported by Articles 14 and 15 of the constitution, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. The Supreme Court has even interpreted “sex” to include “sexual orientation” in the Navtej Singh Johar (2018) case. Thus, denying same-sex couples the right to marry is a clear case of discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Ensure Right to privacy: The right to privacy encompasses the ability to make choices regarding one's body and intimate relationships. This applies to same-sex couples as well. The Supreme Court's Puttaswamy verdict in 2017 acknowledged this as part of the right to life and liberty under Article 21 of the Constitution. This right should be respected without any discrimination or persecution towards individuals.

Enlarge Human Rights: Same-sex marriage is a human rights issue. The United Nations has recognised the importance of LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) rights and has called for the protection of the human rights of LGBT individuals, including the right to marry.

Love and commitment: Same-sex couples are just as capable of loving and committing to each other as heterosexual couples. They deserve to have their love and commitment recognized and protected under the law.

Provide Legal protection: Legalising same-sex marriages would provide legal protection and recognition for same-sex couples, including access to benefits such as inheritance, joint ownership of property, and healthcare.

Promote Social acceptance: Legalising same-sex marriages would promote social acceptance of LGBT individuals and relationships, and help reduce discrimination and stigma.

What are the arguments against legalising same-sex marriages?

Some arguments against legalising same-sex marriages in India include:

Against religious and cultural beliefs: As different from many liberal democracies, in India, aspects of marriage, succession and adoption are governed by religious personal laws. As far as marriage is concerned, the Hindu, Christian and Shariat laws, in addition to customary law, govern religious marriages with heterosexual couples alone.

Against the definition of marriage: The traditional definition of marriage is between a man and a woman, and changing this definition could have negative consequences for society.

Marriage is a matter of policy: The Union government, in its affidavit to the Supreme Court, has argued that recognizing same-sex marriages could cause havoc in the system of personal laws. The government has also claimed that marriage is a matter of policy to be decided by Parliament and the executive alone.

Children's rights: Some argue that children are better off being raised by opposite-sex parents, and that legalising same-sex marriages would harm the welfare of children.

Has legal complications: Legalising same-sex marriages could lead to legal complications. For example, issues related to adoption and child custody still be there.

Create social unrest: Same-sex marriage is not widely accepted in Indian society and legalising it could create social unrest and have the potential to disrupt social norms and values.

What are the challenges in legalising same-sex marriages?

There are several challenges in legalising same-sex marriages in India, including:

Legal hurdles: The current legal framework in India does not recognise same-sex marriages, and amending the existing laws could be a lengthy and difficult process.

Absence of SC's direction in civil rights issues: In 2018, the Supreme Court ruled that being gay is no longer illegal, but they did not talk about civil rights issues. As a result, while same-sex partnerships are legal, civil rights like marriage, inheritance, and adoption are not guaranteed to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex populations.

Cultural and religious attitudes: India is a culturally and religiously diverse country, and many people still hold conservative beliefs about same-sex relationships, which could make legalising same-sex marriages a challenging task.

Lack of political will: Some politicians may be hesitant to support the legalisation of same-sex marriages due to fear of losing support from conservative voters.

Social stigma and discrimination: Despite efforts to promote LGBT rights, many LGBT individuals still face discrimination and stigma in Indian society. This could create barriers to legalising same-sex marriages.

Public opinion: While attitudes towards LGBT rights have been changing in India, many people still do not support same-sex marriages. This could make it difficult for politicians to pass legislation legalising same-sex marriages.

What should be done?

Recognition by the government: The government needs to recognise that denying same-sex couples the right to marry is a violation of their constitutional rights to equality and privacy. The government needs to acknowledge that the right to marry is not just a policy matter but an important legal and social issue that requires attention and action.

Amendment in the Special Marriage Act: This will require changes in language to make it gender-neutral and remove references to the terms “husband” and “wife.” The courts can either accept this reinterpretation of the Act or declare a right to same-sex marriage and direct the state to recognise them under the Act.

Expand the institution of marriage: The reform of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 to include self-respect marriages is a significant step towards dismantling caste-based practices within the institution of marriage. Likewise, it is crucial to recognise same-sex marriage and expand the institution of marriage to include all gender and sexual identities.

Address the concerns of opponents: The government needs to address the concerns raised by opponents of same-sex marriage. The argument that same-sex marriage disrupts the sanctity of marriage is a religious one and does not apply to secular laws like the Special Marriage Act. Similarly, the argument that same-sex marriage goes against prevailing social values is not a valid reason to deny constitutional rights to a minority group.

Education and awareness campaigns: There needs to be a shift in societal attitudes towards same-sex marriage. Education and awareness campaigns need to be launched to help people understand that same-sex relationships are natural and normal. The media can play an important role in promoting positive representations of LGBTQ+ individuals and couples.

Sources: [LiveMint](#), [Business Standard](#), [The Hindu](#) and [Indian Express](#)

Syllabus: GS 2 – Social Justice: Mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of vulnerable sections.

[Yojana March 2023 Summary] Banking: focus on new responsibilities and good governance – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

Banks have been traditionally known for accepting deposits and giving loans. However, the definition of a bank has expanded beyond just a physical building. Today, the banking system has evolved into a secure and robust medium that offers innovative deposit schemes, secure money storage, and quick loan transactions.

Banks are no longer just a conglomerate of traditional banks but have also incorporated new forms of banks such as payment banks, small finance banks, and even the general banking system of post offices and non-banking financial companies.

Banking provisions in the budget



Source: PIB

Discussions about the banking provisions in budgets have broadened to include topics like tax concessions, capital provisions, and the role of these new forms of banks in the financial system. The General Budget 2023-24 for the banking sector can be analysed by dividing it into five parts:

- New savings schemes and changes in existing savings schemes
- Sources of Government Borrowing
- Campaign to promote digital transactions
- Loan for a specific sector
- Reforms in banking governance

Banking provisions in the budget: Deposit Schemes

The Budget 2023-24 includes measures to promote savings among women and secure the future of the elderly through savings.

Mahila Samman Savings Certificate: It is a new small savings scheme, which will be available until March 2025. This scheme will offer a deposit facility of up to Rs 2 lakh for women or girls for two years at a fixed interest rate of 7.5 percent with a partial withdrawal option. This is aimed at encouraging economic empowerment of half the population and providing them with a secure medium to save their money.

Read more: [Women get a one-time small savings scheme](#)

Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana: It is a special scheme for girls launched in 2015, under the 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' initiative. Its aim is to encourage families to invest in their education and save for marriage expenses. Parents of girls under 10 years can open up to two (three in case of first girl child twins) Sukanya Samriddhi accounts with a maximum deposit of Rs 1.5 lakh annually. The scheme is "EEE" (Exempt-Exempt Exempt, i.e. tax exemption at the time of investment, tax exemption on the increase in investment, and tax exemption at the time of withdrawing the entire amount of investment including interest).

Senior Citizen Savings Scheme: Under this, the maximum deposit limit for this scheme has been increased from Rs 15 lakh to Rs 30 lakh. The interest rates of the scheme are reviewed quarterly.

Monthly Income Account Scheme: The maximum deposit limit for this scheme has been increased from Rs 4.5 lakh to Rs 9 lakh for a single account and from Rs 9 lakh to Rs 15 lakh for a joint account. The interest rates of the scheme are also reviewed quarterly.

Note: *While the announcement regarding the savings schemes in the budget is beneficial for the common people, it will also be helpful for the government. To bridge the fiscal deficit the government has kept a target of raising more than Rs 4.71 lakh crore through small savings schemes.*

Banking provisions in the budget: Sources of government borrowing

The Union Budget 2023-24 estimates net market borrowing from dated securities at Rs 11.8 lakh crore against a fiscal deficit of Rs 17.87 lakh crore.

- Banks play a crucial role in fulfilling this estimate as they invest a large amount of money in these bonds, aiming to meet statutory requirements and take advantage of market conditions. To actively participate in this system, banks must have sound financial conditions.
- Currently, all 12 public sector banks and major private banks are profitable, and their deposits are continuously increasing, making it easier for them to participate in the government's borrowing.

Read more: [Union Budget 2023-24: Key Highlights – Explained, pointwise](#)

Banking provisions in the budget: Promoting digital transactions

- Banks are competing to provide fast, secure, and accessible digital transaction services.
- **Incentive scheme:** After the success of last year's programme, which led to a 76% increase in digital transactions and a 91% increase in their value, the government has decided to keep offering incentives for the financial year 2023–2024.
- Under this scheme, approval has been granted for giving Rs 2600 crore to banks to promote Point-of-Sale (POS) and e-commerce transactions using RuPay Debit cards and low-value BHIM-UPI transactions.
- This provision will be beneficial for banks, which are striving to offer competitive digital payment solutions to their customers.

Banking provisions in the budget: Sector-specific loans

The banking sector keeps an eye on credit targets for different sectors. In fact, banks get some facilities with these targets such as the provision of a part of the interest rate by the government or the credit guarantee fund. It helps the banks to give their loans to a specific sector.

Agricultural sector:

- The budget focuses on the agriculture sector and provides a provision of Rs 23,000 crores for small farmers to continue benefiting from the [Kisan Credit Card](#).
- The **agricultural loan target** has been increased to Rs 20 lakh crore, with a focus on animal husbandry, dairy, and fisheries.
- The government offers **short-term crop loans** up to Rs 3 lakh at a 4% effective interest rate if repaid on time, and for allied activities such as fisheries, animal husbandry, and dairy, loans up to Rs 2 lakh are available at the same interest rate.
- In addition, if the bank gives **agricultural loans** through its resources, then they get 2 percent assistance.

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME):

- The **Credit Guarantee Scheme** for MSMEs will be renewed with an additional Rs 9,000 crore, commencing from April 01, 2023. This will enable collateral-free loans of an additional Rs 2 lakh crore and bring down the cost of credit by about one percent.

- Due to the guarantee factor, banks will not have to worry much about the loss in case of loan default and it will be easier for small and medium businessmen to get loans.

Banking provisions in the budget: Reforms in Banking Governance

- The budget has proposed amendments to the Banking Regulation Act, Banking Companies Act, and Reserve Bank of India Act to reform the governance of banks and increase investor protection.
- Although the details are not disclosed, new guidelines are expected to be drawn for the bank's board of directors, including eligibility, tenure, and reappointment. The aim is to improve the banking system, which has expanded in recent years.

Conclusion

Based on the changes in the banking system, the approach for analyzing the general budget for the banking sector has also evolved. The budgets for the financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24 do not include any provisions for the recapitalization of public sector banks. The main reason for this is that the financial health of public sector banks has improved a lot, bad loans have come down, and the situation is likely to remain the same in the future.

Source: Yojana

Syllabus: GS 3: Economic development – Government Budgeting.

Controlling Fake News in India and associated challenges – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

The spread of fake news has become a major concern in today's digital age. Recently, a malicious disinformation campaign led to law-and-order issues in Tamil Nadu, where false claims about violence against migrant workers from Bihar were propagated through social media. Though the Tamil Nadu police responded quickly and countered these false claims with factual reports, the incident highlights the potential for fake news to destabilise democratic institutions.

What is fake News?

“Fake news” is “fabricated information that mimics news media content in form but not in organisational process or intent. Fake news outlets, in turn, lack the news media's editorial norms and processes for ensuring the accuracy and credibility of information. Fake news overlaps with other information disorders, such as misinformation (false or misleading information) and disinformation (false information that is purposely spread to deceive people).”

What are the causes of Fake News spread In India?

Social media: The rise of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp has made it easier for fake news to spread quickly and widely.

Political polarisation: India's political landscape is highly polarised, and this has contributed to the spread of fake news that reinforces people's preconceived beliefs and biases.

Lack of media literacy: Many people in India have limited media literacy skills, which makes them more susceptible to believing and sharing fake news. For example, according to the India Inequality Report 2022, among the poorest 20% of households, only 2.7% have access to a computer and 8.9% to internet facilities.

Sensationalism in the media: Some news outlets in India prioritize sensationalism over the accuracy, which can lead to the spread of false information.

Religious and communal tensions: India has a history of religious and communal tensions and fake news that fuels these tensions can quickly go viral.

Financial incentives: Some people and organizations spread fake news for financial gain. For example, Social media platforms pay content creators based on views, and divisive content can

garner significant attention. Therefore, there will always be a possibility that content creators may attempt such mischief again.

What are the effects of fake news?

Spread of misinformation: Fake news can spread false or misleading information that can be harmful to individuals, communities, or society as a whole. For example, in 2017, a fake news story claiming that the Indian government was planning to introduce microchips in new currency notes to track black money led to widespread panic and confusion.

Undermining trust and credibility in institutions: When fake news is spread by mainstream media or government sources, it can erode trust in these institutions and create confusion among the public. For example, the false claim that the COVID-19 vaccine causes infertility in women. This claim was circulated on social media and other platforms, despite being completely unfounded and not supported by any credible scientific evidence.

Fueling communal tensions: Fake news that targets specific communities or religions can exacerbate existing tensions and lead to violence or discrimination. For example, false information about a particular religious community's involvement in a terrorist attack or a criminal act can fuel hatred and anger towards that community. Similarly, fake news that spreads misinformation about a particular community's cultural practices or values can create negative perceptions and increase tensions between different communities.

Political polarisation: Fake news can contribute to political polarisation by reinforcing existing biases and promoting a narrow, one-sided view of events. For example, the extensive use of social media in influencing public opinion in the US Presidential election.

Economic impact: Fake news can have an economic impact, particularly on businesses or industries that are targeted by false information. For example, Chit fund schemes introduced the concept of online fraud through spam emails.

Health impact: During the COVID-19 pandemic, fake news about cures or treatments for the virus has led to people taking unsafe or ineffective remedies.

Societal impact: Fake news affects the spirit of common brotherhood and increases intolerance in the country. For example, a mass exodus of North-Easterners from Bangalore in 2012 was based on false online threats.

Must read: [Threat of Deepfakes in India](#)

What are the challenges in controlling Fake News?

Scale: With a population of over 1.3 billion people, India has a vast and diverse media landscape, making it difficult to monitor and regulate all sources of information. For example, according to the National Crime Records Bureau, the number of cases filed under Section 505 of the Indian Criminal Code (IPC) against those 'circulating fake/false news/rumours' climbed by 214% in 2020.

Political pressures: India's political climate can make it challenging to enforce regulations on media and communication platforms without being seen as biased or suppressing free speech.

Limited resources: Regulators and law enforcement agencies in India do not have the necessary resources, technology, or expertise to effectively track and combat the spread of fake news.

Technological advancements: Advances in technology, such as deep fakes and other forms of synthetic media, make it increasingly difficult to distinguish between real and fake information.

Lack of trust: Many Indians have a general lack of trust in traditional media sources, which can make it easier for fake news to spread.

Cultural and linguistic diversity: India has a wide variety of cultures and languages, making it challenging to effectively communicate and enforce regulations across the country.

Limited media literacy: Many Indians may not have sufficient media literacy skills to distinguish between real and fake news, making them more vulnerable to believing and sharing false information.

Regulatory issues: Internet users frequently communicate across international borders, thus regulating it raises its own legal concerns.

Read more: [Are law and technology a solution to fake news?](#)

What are the Legal remedies available for controlling Fake News?

Legal remedies available for controlling Fake News in India are:

Defamation laws: Indian law (IPC Section 499, 500 and 505) recognises the right to reputation and allows individuals or organizations to seek legal recourse against those who spread false information that damages their reputation.

IT Act: The Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 provides for penalties for publishing or transmitting obscene or defamatory material on the internet, including fake news.

The Disaster Management Act 2005 and the Epidemic Diseases Act 1897: They helped (especially during Covid-19) regulate the circulation of fake news or rumours that can cause panic among citizens.

IPC: (IPC Sections 153A and 295) The Indian Penal Code (IPC) has provisions that can be used to prosecute those who spread false information with the intention of causing harm or creating public unrest.

The Constitution Provision: Article 51A (h) of the Constitution, which states that “It shall be the duty of every citizen to develop the scientific temper, humanism, and spirit of inquiry and reform” offers a long-term solution.

Broadcasting Content Complaint Council (BCCC): It can receive complaints about problematic TV material or fake news.

Contempt of Court: Those who spread fake news that interferes with the administration of justice can be held in contempt of court, which is punishable under Indian law.

Cyber Crime Cells: Several Indian cities have established cyber crime cells that investigate cases related to fake news and other forms of cybercrime.

Press Council of India: The Press Council of India is a statutory body that regulates the print media and can take action against newspapers or journalists that violate ethical guidelines.

Fact-checking initiatives: Several fact-checking organizations have emerged in India that seek to verify the information and debunk fake news through independent journalism and research. For example, the PIB launched its fact-checking division in 2019.

Read more: [The forecast after a fake news campaign in Tamil Nadu](#)

What are the global initiatives for controlling Fake News?

Several countries are taking steps to combat disinformation, like:

- The European Union (EU) has implemented a **Code of Practice on Disinformation**. This includes measures like transparency in political advertising, support for fact-checkers and researchers, tools to identify disinformation, and measures to reduce manipulative behaviour.
- The United Kingdom is considering an **Online Safety Bill**, which would require social media platforms to monitor problematic content.
- The Parliament of Turkey adopted the ‘**disinformation law**’, the law has provision to jail terms of up to three years for social media users and journalists for spreading ‘disinformation’.

What should be done to control Fake News?



Source: Cornell Library

Controlling fake news is a complex issue that requires a multi-faceted approach involving various stakeholders. Some steps that can be taken to control fake news are:

Strengthen media literacy: Media literacy programs should be promoted to help people distinguish between reliable and unreliable news sources. These programs should also teach critical thinking skills to help people evaluate the veracity of news stories.

Regulate social media: Social media platforms should take responsibility for preventing the spread of fake news on their platforms. This can be achieved by creating algorithms that detect and flag false information, and by removing fake news content from their platforms.

Strengthen journalism: Traditional media should maintain high standards of journalism and should be encouraged to fact-check their stories before publishing them.

Promote fact-checking websites: Fact-checking websites can be useful in verifying the accuracy of news stories. People should be encouraged to use these websites to verify the veracity of news stories they encounter.

Punish offenders: There should be penalties for those who deliberately spread fake news. This will act as a deterrent and discourage the spread of fake news.

Encourage responsible sharing: People should be encouraged to share news stories responsibly. They should only share stories from reliable sources and should verify the accuracy of the information before sharing it.

Read more: [Policy discussions involving the public as well as tech solutions, would help fight fake news.](#)

Sources: The Hindu ([Article 1](#) and [Article 2](#)), [The Hindu BusinessLine](#), [The Print](#), [The Quint](#).

Syllabus: GS 3: Security Issues – The role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges.

[Kurukshetra March 2023 Summary] Inclusive Development in Education – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

The new reality of the twenty-first century has altered the objectives and standards of education everywhere. Inclusive Development in Education now include Information technologies, especially digital skills and literacy, have become fundamental to daily life. The teacher of the twenty-first century must be adaptable and constructive, continually raising his or her bar, looking for answers, and resolving issues.

What is the Importance of Quality Education?

Education is not just about gaining knowledge, but also about developing critical thinking, collaboration, and resource management skills.

It is essential for improving employability, breaking the cycles of poverty and social exclusion, and promoting equality. The UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG-4) aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for everyone by 2030.

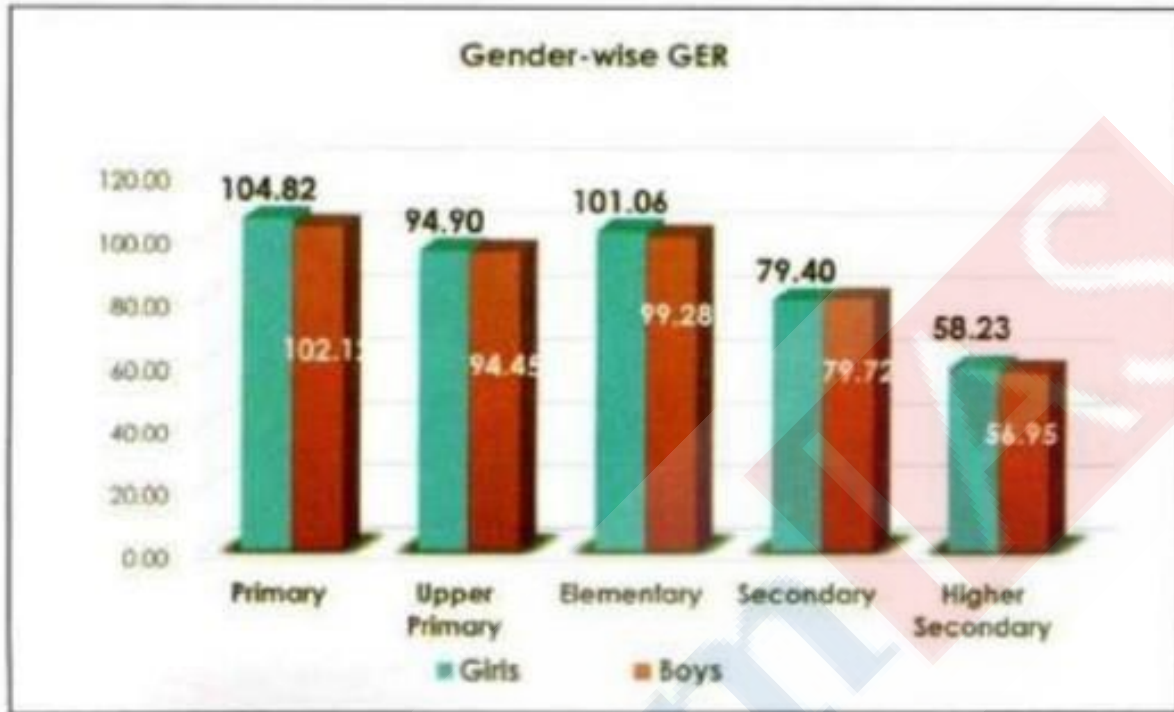
The [National Education Policy 2020](#) is a policy that aims to address the developmental needs of the country by promoting youth skill acquisition and all-around development in a welcoming, open, and multilingual environment.

About School Educational Scenario in India

Despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and prolonged school closures, there have been positive trends in the education sector. For example, access to education is now recognized as a non-negotiable part of a child's right to education, which is enshrined in law and widely accepted in practice in India.

Consequently, in 2021-22 the Gross Access ratio (GAR) of schooling facilities at the primary level is 97.49% habitations, 97.01% at the upper primary level, and 95.48% at the secondary level.

What are the UDISE+ findings on Inclusive Development in Education?



Source: Kurukshetra

The Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE+) and economic survey reported that **a)** 26.5 crore children were enrolled in schools, **b)** The enrolment of Children With Special Needs (CWSN) increased by 3.3% in the year 2021-22, **c)** The number of students dropping out of school has also decreased across all grade levels.

This achievement is attributed to programmes like Samagra Shiksha, RTE Act, improvements to school infrastructure, residential hostel buildings, teacher availability, regular training, free textbooks, uniforms, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, and the PM POSHAN Scheme.

Most government schools now have basic facilities, including toilets, drinking water, and hand-washing stations, thanks to the Swachh Bharat Mission and the Samagra Shiksha Scheme.

The government also provides funding for the construction of smart classrooms and ICT labs, as well as support for hardware, instructional software, and e-content for classrooms. The GER (Gross enrolment ratio) of girls is higher or equal in all stages of school education, ensuring equitable access to education.

None: Instructional Software (IS) programs include pictures, sounds, animations, and other various stimuli used to enhance the development of skills such as reading, writing and problem solving. IS programs provide individualised experiences used to enhance the general curriculum and mastery of skills through extra practice, simulations, and problem solving opportunities.

Must read: [Ministry of Education released a detailed Report on Unified District Information System for Education Plus \(UDISE+\) 2021-22](#)

What are the various initiatives taken recently to ensure Inclusive Development in Education?

[PM Schools for Rising India \(PM SHRI\)](#)

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for Foundational Stage: The NCF aligns with the NEP 2020 and the 5+3+3+4 curricular structure, which includes early childhood care and

education for children aged 3 to 8. It emphasises the importance of “play” in curriculum organization and the child’s overall experience, with a focus on enhancing developmental outcomes through support from communities, parents, and teachers.

PRASHAST: It is a mobile app for disability screening. It covers 21 impairments, including the benchmark impairments listed in the 2016 Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act.

The National Credit Framework (NCrF): It incorporates the National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF), National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF), and National School Education Qualification Framework. It is an umbrella framework for skilling, re-skilling, up-skilling, accreditation, and evaluation.

In addition to the above, other initiatives like toy-based pedagogy guidelines, starting Balvatikas in Kendriya Vidyalayas, Vidyanjali- an initiative for improving the quality of school education through community and various intervention under Samagra Shiksha were undertaken to improve the quality of school education sector.

Must read: [Year End Review –Ministry of Education](#)

How India’s FY 2023-24 Budget made Inclusive Development in Education a Priority?

The budget for FY 2023-24 aims to boost education, skill development, entrepreneurship, R&D, digital infrastructure, green growth and job creation. It is critical for transforming India into a technology-driven knowledge-based economy and achieving Sustainable Development Goals. The budget focuses on promoting an equitable and inclusive education system and implementing the National Education Policy 2020. It allocates 13% more funds for education than the previous year. With a young population of 52.3 crores, the budget aims to provide education to all sections of society and transform India into a technology-driven society. Overall, the budget focuses on inclusive growth and development to create a prosperous and inclusive India.

The major announcements of the budget 2023-24 for the education sector are as below:

Inclusive Development in Education: School Education

Pandemic-related school closures have severely impacted India’s school-going children, particularly in government schools and rural areas. The education sector is now focusing on learning recovery, with the budget providing priority areas to be emphasized, like:

Re-envisioning Teachers’ Training: The NEP 2020 emphasizes the importance of training teachers to improve primary education and ensure high-quality teacher preparation. District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) will play a crucial role in this by providing pre-service and in-service teacher training and becoming centers of excellence for research and dissemination of best practices. The budget has allocated more funds for teacher training, including new pedagogy, ongoing professional development, and the use of ICT.

National Digital Library for children and Adolescents: NEP emphasizes the importance of reading and the availability of diverse books for all students. To achieve this, a national digital library will be created with books by reputable Indian and international authors, including Braille and Braille translation tools. States will also be encouraged to establish physical libraries and provide access to the digital library’s resources.

The National Book Trust and Children’s Book Trust will donate non-curricular books to these libraries to foster a reading culture and compensate for pandemic-related learning loss. NGOs and financial organizations will also be involved in promoting literacy and financial literacy.

Aspirational Blocks Programme: The government has launched this Programme to provide public services, such as health, education, and infrastructure, in 500 blocks prioritizing tribal groups and disadvantaged pupils. This builds on the success of the Aspirational Districts Program.

Eklavya Model Residential Schools: Over the next three years, the government will appoint 38,800 teachers and support personnel for the 740 Eklavya Model Residential Schools, which serve 3.5 lakh tribal students, to improve access to education for the last mile.

Inclusive Development in Education: Higher Education

This budget clearly reflects the Indian Prime Minister's vision of "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan, Jai Vigyan, and Jai Anusandhan." The government has laid emphasis on new age technologies, like:

Centres of Excellence for Artificial Intelligence: To achieve the goal of "Make AI in India" and "Make AI work for India," the government plans to establish three Artificial Intelligence Centres of Excellence in prestigious educational institutions. This will foster a robust AI ecosystem, promote multidisciplinary research, and address scalable issues in various sectors.

Lab Grown Diamonds (LGDs): A research and development grant for indigenous production is given in recognition of the ITs' pioneering role in the nation's research excellence. One of the IITs will get equipment and seeds from Lab Grown Diamonds (LGD) for a period of five years.

5G Services: The government plans to set up 100 labs in engineering schools across India to develop apps using 5G services in areas like healthcare, education, and transportation. This aims to revolutionize engineering education, boost employment, and encourage innovation and entrepreneurship among young engineers.

National Data Governance Policy: To unleash innovation and research by start-ups and academia, a National Data Governance Policy will be brought out. This will enable access to anonymised data.

In addition to the above announcements, Multidisciplinary courses in medical devices and programmes to promote research in pharmaceuticals, with both industry and government funding will further strengthen the 'Jai Anusandhan' motto.

Conclusion

India has made notable progress in ensuring access to primary education and is striving to achieve equitable, inclusive, and quality secondary education for all by 2030. The Union Budget 2023-24 aims to support these efforts and advance the objectives of NEP 2020 and SDG 4 by promoting infrastructure improvements, educational technology developments, and raising the standards of instruction and learning. This will create new opportunities for teachers, students, and researchers, and revolutionize K-12 (K stands for Kindergarten and 12 stands for 12th grade) and higher education in a positive way.

Source: Kurukshetra

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

IPCC Synthesis Report of the Sixth Assessment Cycle (AR6) – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its final report of the sixth assessment cycle, titled "AR6 Synthesis Report: Climate Change 2023". It emphasises the dangers that climate change brings to human and planetary well-being. The report synthesises findings from multiple working groups and special reports and underscores the urgency of taking more ambitious action to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all.

What is an IPCC Synthesis Report?

The Synthesis Report (SYR) is the culmination of a cycle of reports (the Sixth Assessment) that have been published over the past five years.

Must read: [Synthesis Report: IPCC meet in Switzerland: The significance, likely impact](#)

About the IPCC and their reports

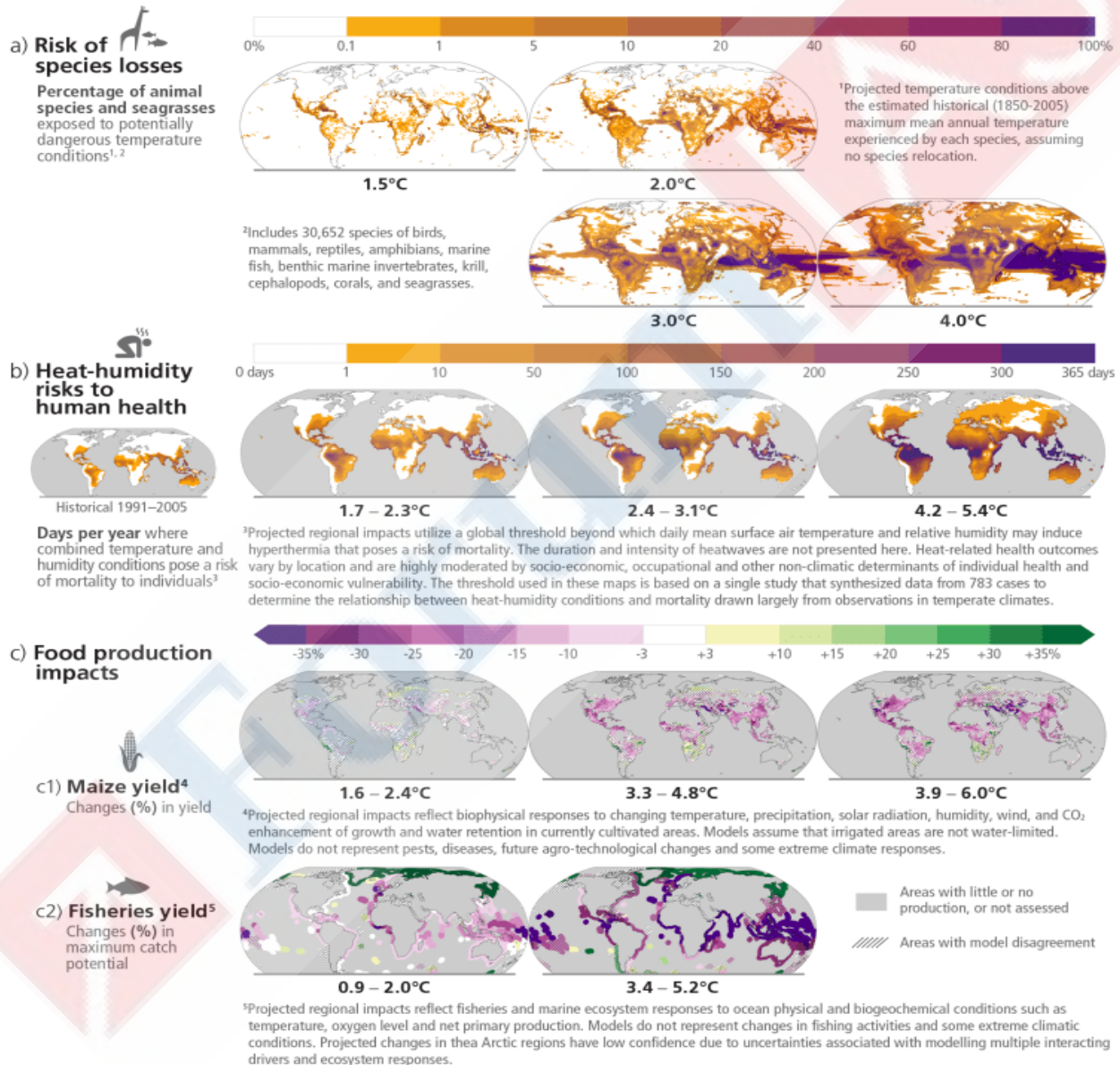
The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) produces assessment reports that are the most comprehensive scientific evaluations of the state of the earth’s climate.

Must read: [About the IPCC and their reports](#)

What are the key findings of the IPCC’s Synthesis Report?

Future climate change is projected to increase the severity of impacts across natural and human systems and will increase regional differences

Examples of impacts without additional adaptation



Source: IPCC

The key findings of the IPCC’s Synthesis Report of the Sixth Assessment Cycle (AR6) are **Carbon dioxide(CO2) emissions:** a) Emissions reductions have been less than emissions increased from rising global activity levels in the industry, energy supply, transport, agriculture

and buildings, **b)** Least developed countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) have much lower per capita emissions (1.7 tCO₂-eq and 4.6 tCO₂-eq, respectively) than the global average (6.9 tCO₂-eq), **c)** The 10% of households with the highest per capita emissions contribute 34–45% of global consumption-based household GHG emissions, while the bottom 50% contribute 13–15%.

Impact of Human-induced climate change: **a)** Increasing weather and climate extreme events have caused millions of people to suffer from acute food insecurity and reduced water security, especially in Africa, Asia, Central and South America, LDCs, small islands, the Arctic, and globally for Indigenous Peoples, small-scale food producers, and low-income households, **b)** Human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land. Global mean sea level increased by 0.20 [0.15–0.25] m between 1901 and 2018, **c)** Evidence of observed changes in extremes such as heat waves, heavy precipitation, droughts, and tropical cyclones, and, in particular, their attribution to human influence, has further strengthened since AR5.

Lowered agricultural productivity: Although overall agricultural productivity has increased, climate change has slowed this growth over the past 50 years globally, with related negative impacts mainly in mid- and low-latitude regions but positive impacts in some high-latitude regions.

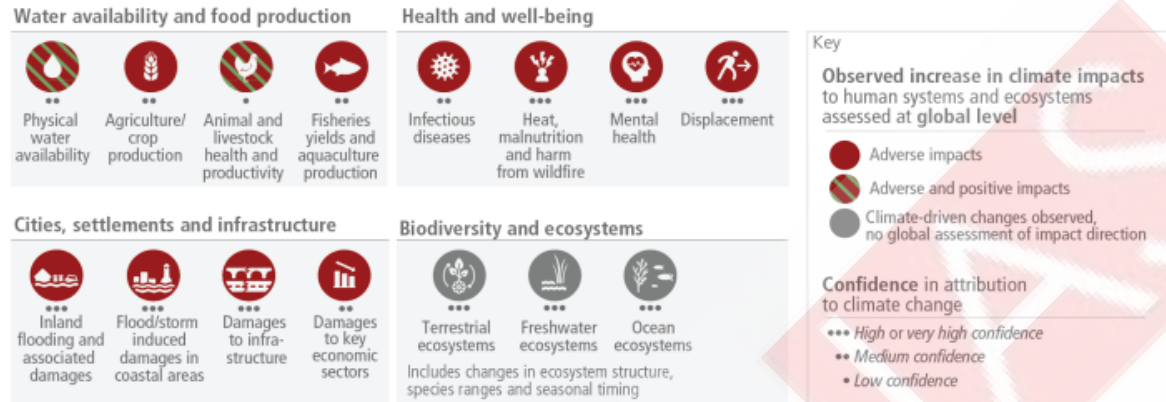
Adverse impact on health: Climate-related food-borne, water-borne, and vector-borne diseases have increased. Some mental health challenges are associated with increasing temperatures, trauma from extreme events, and loss of livelihoods and culture.

Economic damages: It has been detected in climate-exposed sectors, such as agriculture, forestry, fishery, energy, and tourism. Individual livelihoods have been affected through, for example, destruction of homes and infrastructure, loss of property and income, human health and food security, with adverse effects on gender and social equity.

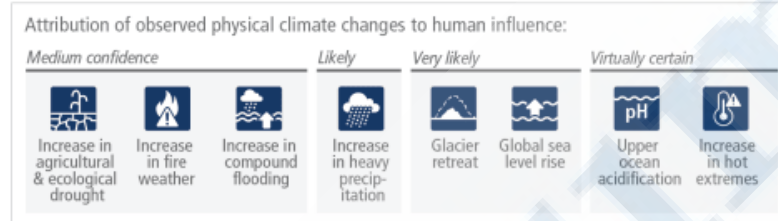
Impact on the urban ecosystem: Extreme and slow-onset catastrophes have damaged urban infrastructure, including transportation, water, sanitation, and energy systems, causing economic losses, service interruptions, and well-being issues. Urban poor are most affected.

Adverse impacts from human-caused climate change will continue to intensify

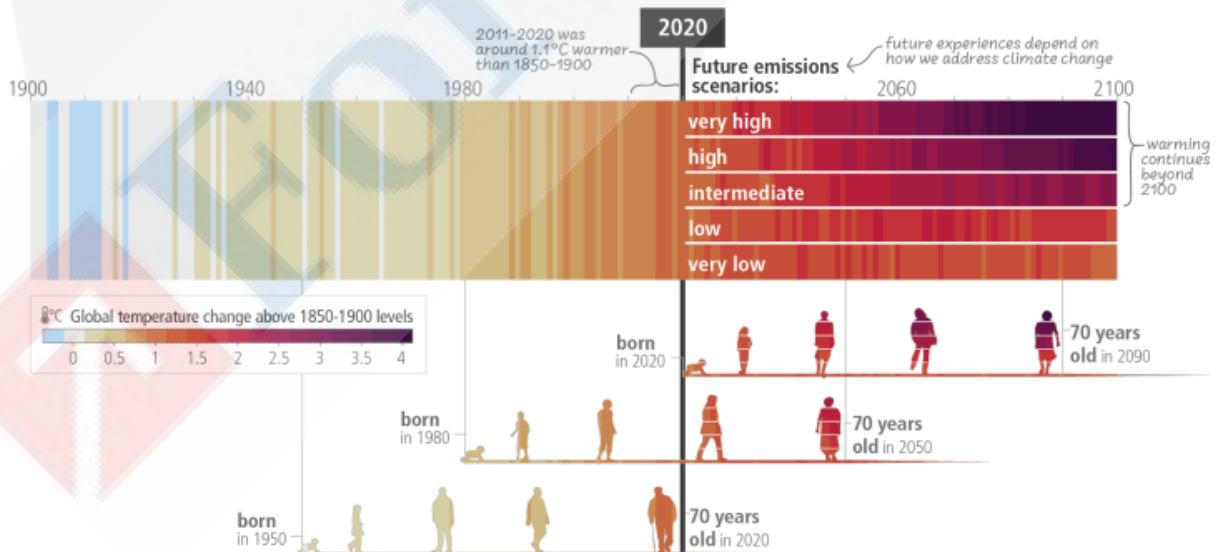
a) Observed widespread and substantial impacts and related losses and damages attributed to climate change



b) Impacts are driven by changes in multiple physical climate conditions, which are increasingly attributed to human influence



c) The extent to which current and future generations will experience a hotter and different world depends on choices now and in the near-term



Source: IPCC

Current progress in Adaptation: a) Progress in adaptation planning and implementation has been observed across all sectors and regions, generating multiple benefits, b) Ecosystem-based adaptation measures such as urban greening, restoration of wetlands, and upstream forest

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

ecosystems have been helpful in decreasing flood hazards and urban heat, **c)** Combinations of non-structural measures like early warning systems and structural measures like levees have reduced the loss of life in cases of inland flooding, **d)** Key barriers to adaptation are limited resources, lack of private sector and citizen engagement, insufficient mobilisation of finance, low climate literacy, lack of political commitment, limited research and/or slow and low uptake of adaptation science, and low sense of urgency.

Climate finance: **a)** The majority of global climate financing went to mitigation, while a small part went to adaptation, **b)** Although global monitored climate finance has increased since AR5, current global financial flows for adaptation, including public and private sources, are insufficient and limit adaptation alternatives, especially in developing countries, **c)** Public and private finance flows for fossil fuels are still greater than those for climate adaptation and mitigation

Current Mitigation Progress: Several mitigation options are becoming increasingly cost-effective and are generally supported by the public. For example, from 2010–2019, there have been sustained decreases in the unit costs of solar energy (85%), wind energy (55%), and lithium-ion batteries (85%) and large increases in their deployment, e.g., >10x for solar and >100x for electric vehicles (EVs), varying widely across regions.

Read more: [IPCC AR 6 Synthesis Report](#)

What are the key findings of the IPCC's Synthesis Report on India?

Key finding of the IPCC Synthesis Report on India are : **a)** India faces the highest risk from the impact of climate change, despite contributing less than 5% of historical greenhouse gas emissions, **b)** The impacts of climate change are already being felt in melting glaciers, heat waves, and cyclones, which have affected wheat output and led to milk shortages, **c)** India is the world's third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases, primarily from coal, and its per capita emissions have increased by 36% since 2011, **d)** While India is taking action to invest in green hydrogen and renewable energy, policy flip-flops and fluctuating gas prices have slowed progress, **e)** RE sources account for only about 11 per cent of power generation, though they are a little over 40 per cent of the installed capacity, and **f)** [India's net-zero commitment by 2070](#) remains uncertain.

What are the suggestions provided by the IPCC's Synthesis Report?

General Suggestions of the IPCC's Synthesis Report are,

Follow the principles of climate justice: Urgent and rapid climate actions are needed by developed countries based on the principles of climate justice and equity, both in terms of emissions reduction and the mobilization of finance and technology to developing countries.

Requires deep and rapid reductions CO2: CO2 is the primary greenhouse gas and needs to be drastically reduced. Reaching net zero CO2 or GHG emissions requires deep and rapid reductions in gross emissions of CO2, as well as substantial reductions of non-CO2 GHG emissions.

Need International cooperation: It is a critical enabler for achieving ambitious climate change mitigation, adaptation, and climate-resilient development. Climate-resilient development is enabled by increased international cooperation, including mobilizing and enhancing access to finance, particularly for developing countries, vulnerable regions, sectors, and groups, and aligning finance flows for climate action to be consistent with ambition levels and funding needs.

Need, effective, and equitable mitigation and adaptation actions: Climate change increasingly threatens ecosystems, biodiversity, and the health and wellbeing of current and future generations. Accelerated mitigation and implementation of adaptation actions in the near term would reduce projected losses and damages for humans and ecosystems.

Find other avenue of finance: Apart from public finance (includes the promised but never received \$100 billion), other avenues including private finance, local finance, national and international, bilateral, and multilateral finance need to be explored.

Diversified knowledge: The strategies to counter climate change needed to be rooted in diverse values, including scientific knowledge, indigenous knowledge and local knowledge.

What are the suggestions provided by the IPCC's Synthesis Report for India?

Incentivize investment: India needs to incentivize investment in green hydrogen, renewable energy, and natural gas to reduce emissions.

Strengthen its policy framework: Because its policy flip-flops have sharply curtailed renewable energy potential.

Relax import duties: The government needs to relax import duties on solar equipment imports and expand the Approved List of Modules and Manufacturers to accelerate the addition of solar capacity.

Minimise the coal use: India needs to address its reliance on coal and work towards transitioning to cleaner energy sources.

Conclusion

IPCC Synthesis Report highlights the urgent need for rapid climate actions based on the principles of climate justice and equity. The report reiterates India's stance that development is the first line of defense against climate change. It emphasises that the developed countries must take the lead in reducing emissions and mobilizing finance and technology for developing nations. The report recognizes the interdependence of climate, ecosystems, biodiversity, and human societies and emphasizes the importance of international cooperation to achieve ambitious climate change mitigation and adaptation. The report also supports the idea of promoting environmentally friendly lifestyles to protect and preserve the environment.

Sources: [IPCC Report](#), [IPCC](#), PIB, [The Hindu](#), Business Standard([Article 1](#) and [Article 2](#)) and [Times of India](#).

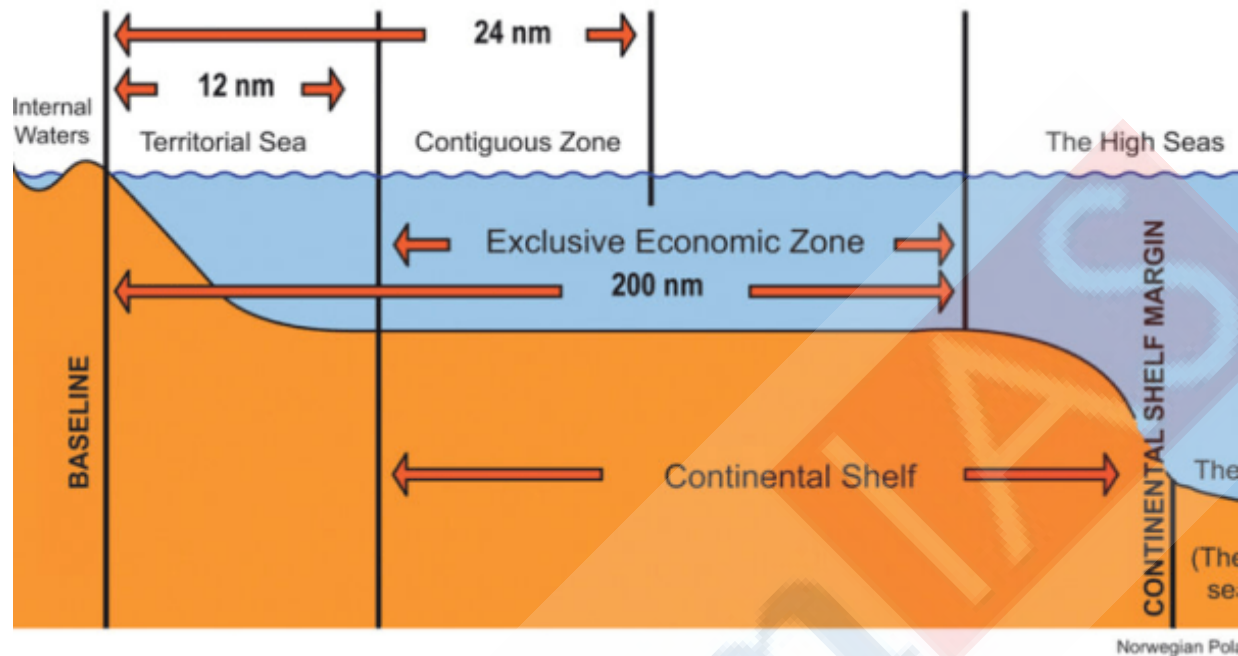
Syllabus: GS 3: Environment and Bio-diversity – Conservation.

The UN High Seas Treaty: challenges and significance – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

The UN High Seas Treaty was agreed upon after more than ten years of negotiations during the Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity of **Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)** held in New York. The treaty, once formally adopted and ratified, will be legally binding and will ensure the sustainable use of the world's oceans outside national boundaries.

What is the UN High Seas Treaty?



Source: ILSS

The High Seas Treaty is a new global treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources on the high seas. The high seas are open ocean areas that are outside the jurisdiction of any country. The treaty is also known as the agreement on “biodiversity beyond national jurisdictions” or BBNJ.

The treaty has four main objectives. Such as **a)** demarcation of marine protected areas (MPAs), **b)** sustainable use of marine genetic resources and equitable sharing of benefits arising from them, **c)** initiation of the practice of environmental impact assessments for all major activities in the oceans, and **d)** capacity building and technology transfer.

The High Seas Treaty will work as an implementation agreement under the UNCLOS, much like the Paris Agreement works under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

What is the need for the High Seas Treaty?

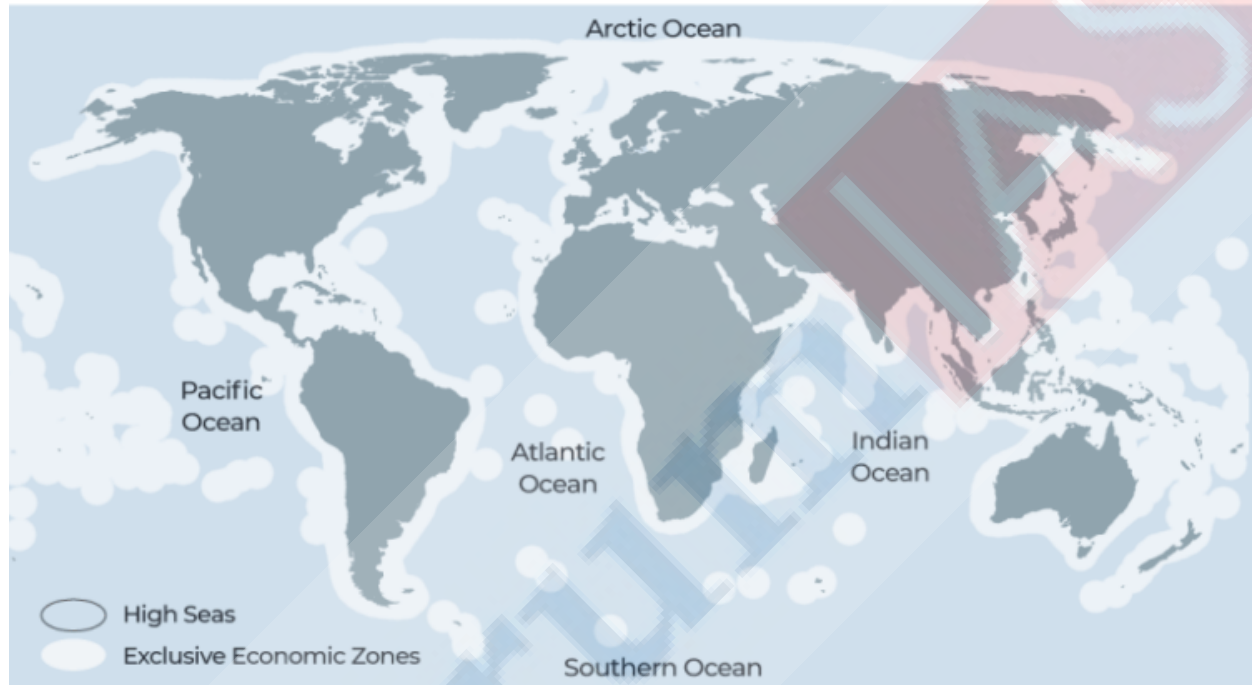
Read here: [The UN High Seas Treaty – Explained, pointwise](#)

What are the significant provisions of the High Seas Treaty?

ENVIRONMENT

Ocean treaty: Historic agreement reached

UN member states have agreed on a legal framework to protect the world's oceans. The High Seas Treaty places 30 percent of the seas into protected areas by 2030, aiming to safeguard and recuperate marine nature.



Oceans cover more than
70 percent
of our planet's surface

The ocean has absorbed
90 percent
of the world's excess heat

Every year at least
8 million
tonnes of plastic waste end
up in the world's oceans



Source: IUCN.org | March 5, 2023

@AJLabs ALJAZEERA

Source: Aljazeera

Regulation of Human Activities: The treaty seeks to regulate all human activities in the high seas to ensure that ocean resources, including biodiversity, are utilized in a sustainable manner and their benefits are shared equitably among countries.

Protection of Biodiversity: The treaty seeks to protect the biodiversity of the high seas, which is home to about 2.2 million marine species and up to a trillion different kinds of microorganisms. The creation of marine protected areas (MPAs) will ensure that ocean systems, including biodiversity, are under stress, either due to human activities or climate change.

Achieving global targets: The UN High Seas Treaty is very important for reaching the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework that have to do with the ocean. The treaty will make it possible to carry out the major decision made at the 15th Conference of Parties to the Biodiversity Convention in

2022. At that meeting, it was decided that marine protected zones should cover 30% (currently only 1.4%) of the ocean space on Earth by 2030.

Sustainable Use of Marine Genetic Resources: Oceans host diverse life forms, many of which can be useful for human beings in areas like drug development. The treaty seeks to ensure that any benefits arising out of the use of marine genetic resources, including monetary gains, are equitably shared amongst all.

Environmental Impact Assessments: The treaty requires commercial or other activities that can have significant impacts on the marine ecosystem or can cause large-scale pollution in the oceans to undergo an environmental impact assessment to be done, and the results of this exercise have to be shared with the international community.

Capacity Building and Technology Transfer: The treaty lays emphasis on capacity building and technology transfer, especially for small island states and landlocked nations, to meaningfully participate in the conservation efforts, or to take benefits from the useful exploitation of marine resources.

Access- and benefit-sharing committee: It will be formed to frame guidelines for developing countries' access to benefits from the commercialisation of resources extracted from the ocean.

Rights of Indigenous people and local communities: marine resources in areas beyond national jurisdiction can only be accessed with their free, prior and informed consent or approval and involvement.

What are the advantages of the High Seas Treaty?

Promotes cooperation: The High Seas Treaty promotes cooperation among nations in the use and management of the oceans and seas. It provides a legal framework that allows nations to work together to address common challenges and ensure the sustainable use of marine resources.

Protects the marine environment: The treaty includes provisions that require nations to protect the marine environment from pollution and other harmful activities. This helps to ensure that the ocean remains a healthy and productive ecosystem.

Provides legal certainty: The High Seas Treaty provides a clear and comprehensive legal framework for the use and management of the oceans and seas. It clarifies the rights and obligations of coastal states, flag states, and other actors in the marine environment, promoting legal certainty and reducing the likelihood of conflicts.

Promotes economic development: The High Seas Treaty promotes economic development by establishing rules and principles for the sustainable use of marine resources. It provides a legal framework for the exploration and exploitation of mineral resources in the international seabed area and the conservation and management of living resources such as fish stocks.

Resolves disputes: The treaty provides a mechanism for resolving disputes between nations over the use of the ocean and its resources. This helps to prevent conflicts between nations and promotes peaceful cooperation in the management of the ocean.

Facilitates scientific research: The treaty recognizes the importance of scientific research in the management of the ocean and facilitates international cooperation in this area. It allows for the free exchange of scientific information and promotes the development of marine science and technology.

What are the challenges in implementing the High Seas Treaty?

Fishing and industrial expansion: The treaty does not adequately address threats to ocean biodiversity posed by fishing and deep-sea mining.

Social inclusivity: The treaty focuses on the fair and equitable sharing of genetic resources, but does not address the sharing of other resources.

Enforcement: There is no identified international enforcement agency to monitor and enforce the treaty's regulations, and no financial commitment has been negotiated.

Negotiations: The treaty is the result of 20 years of negotiations, and the details of major provisions, including environmental impact assessments and mobilization of conservation funds, are still to be worked out.

Unaddressed issues: The mechanisms for policing protected areas, the fate of heavily polluting projects, and dispute resolution remain unaddressed.

Ratification: The process of ratifying the treaty is expected to be difficult and time-consuming, as seen with UNCLOS and the Kyoto Protocol.

Conflicting interests: Conflicting interests among coastal states, flag states, and other actors can impede the effective implementation of the treaty's provisions.

What are the implications of the High Seas treaty for India?

Territorial waters: The treaty establishes a framework for the delineation of maritime boundaries and the extent of territorial waters. This has an effect on India's territorial waters, especially when it comes to maritime disputes with Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

Political stability: By implementing vessel-monitoring systems throughout international fishing operations, the High Seas treaty could help secure fisheries and promote political stability.

Marine resources: The treaty sets rules for the conservation and management of marine resources, such as fisheries and minerals. This has implications for India's coastal and offshore fisheries and its exploration and exploitation of mineral resources in the international seabed area.

Sustainable "Blue Economy": By regulating national and international fishing efforts within and outside Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ), the High Seas Treaty could help secure sustainable fisheries and a "Blue Economy".

Pollution in the ocean: The treaty has rules to stop, reduce, and control pollution in the ocean. This has an effect on India's efforts to clean up pollution in the ocean, such as oil spills and dumping trash in the Indian Ocean.

Security at sea: The treaty has rules about security at sea, including ways to stop piracy and other illegal activities at sea. This could affect India's efforts to keep the seas in the Indian Ocean safe, like when it takes part in international naval operations.

Scientific research: The treaty encourages scientific research in the marine environment and makes it legal for scientists to share information freely. This affects India's marine science research and its ability to take part in international research projects.

What should be done?

The treaty needs to be officially adopted and become effective once it is legally passed in at least 60 countries.

To protect ocean life and ourselves, everyone across all sectors must work together to celebrate, implement and monitor the effectiveness of the new High Seas Treaty.

Developed countries will be required to give yearly contributions to the special and voluntary funds created to assist developing countries in implementing the treaty.

Although the agreement is a positive step forward, states and existing organizations need to take additional actions to ensure its success.

Sources: Indian Express ([Article 1](#) and [Article 2](#)), [The Hindu](#), [Tribune](#), [DTE](#) and [NPR](#)

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

Eliminating tuberculosis (TB) in India by 2025 – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

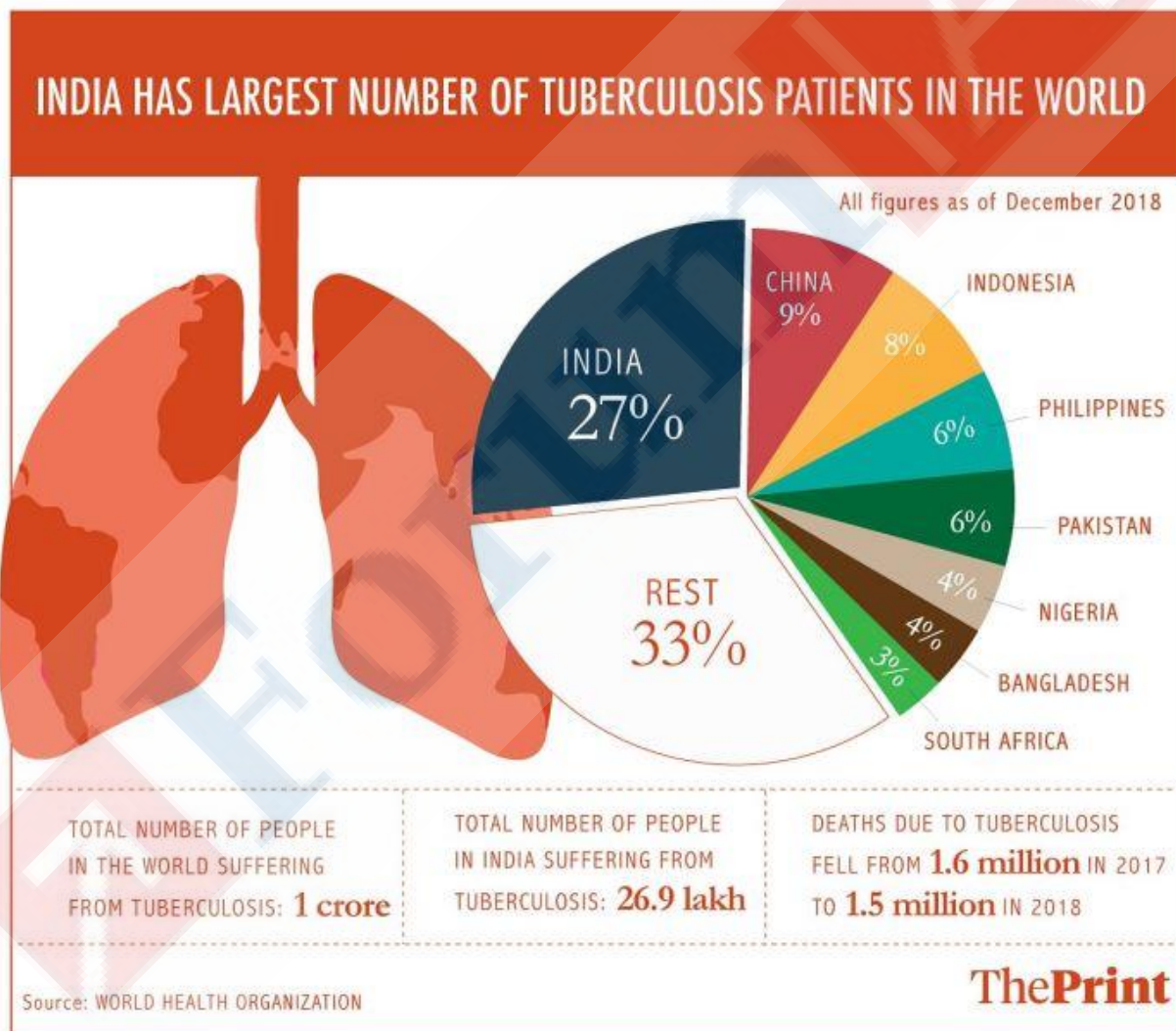
India has set an ambitious target to eliminate tuberculosis (TB) by 2025, five years ahead of the global target. The government, scientists, entrepreneurs and the community at large are working towards achieving this goal. Despite being the largest contributor to global TB cases, India has seen a decline in the number of cases in 2021, with improvements in reporting and a reduction in drug-resistant TB cases.

What is Tuberculosis (TB)?

Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious airborne bacterial disease caused by Mycobacterium tuberculosis. It most commonly affects the lungs but can also damage other parts of the body.

Read here: [What is Tuberculosis \(TB\)?](#)

What is the current status of TB?



Source: The Print

In the decade between 2010-20, 1.5-2 million individuals died every year because of tuberculosis. TB disproportionately affects people in low-income nations, the poor and the vulnerable. According to WHO's Global TB report 2021, with 25.9 lakh TB cases, India is home to 25% of the

global tuberculosis cases. India has reported more than 20% decline in case notifications. The country reported 18 lakh tuberculosis cases in 2020 as compared to 24 lakhs in 2019.

Read more: [India's Tuberculosis fight may get a shot in the arm](#)

What is the need for Eliminating TB earlier in India?

Eliminating TB earlier in India is crucial for a number of reasons, including:

Health: TB is a major cause of illness and death in India, and eliminating the disease would significantly improve the health and well-being of the population.

Economic impact: TB has a significant economic impact, as it can lead to loss of income and productivity for individuals and families. Eliminating TB would reduce this impact and help to boost the economy.

Poverty reduction: TB disproportionately affects people living in poverty, and eliminating the disease would help to reduce poverty and promote economic development.

Global health: TB is a global health concern, and eliminating the disease in India would contribute to the global effort to control and eventually eliminate TB.

Sustainable Development Goals: Eliminating TB is an important target under the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and achieving this goal in India would contribute to overall progress towards the SDGs.

Social justice: Eliminating TB would help to promote social justice by reducing the burden of the disease on vulnerable and marginalized populations, such as those living in poverty or with limited access to healthcare.

What are the global efforts taken to reduce the incidence of TB?

Read here: [The road to ending tuberculosis](#)

What are the government's steps for Eliminating TB in India?

National Strategic Plan (NSP)
ensuring quality diagnosis, treatment, and support to every TB patient

- Target for India to **eliminate Tuberculosis (TB)** by 2025 (5 years before the Global target)
- Free of cost diagnosis and treatment** facilities including anti-TB drugs to all TB patients under Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP)
- ₹12,000 crore** allocated for next 3 years
- ₹500** per patient per month for the nutritional support to all TB-affected patients under RNTCP

Source: MyGovIndia

www.transformingindia.mygov.in Date : 24th Mar, 2018

India has implemented a number of steps to eliminate tuberculosis (TB) as a public health problem in the country. Some of the key measures are:

Strengthening the healthcare system: The government has increased healthcare facilities, employees, and TB diagnosis instruments. The government has increased access to more accurate molecular **diagnostic tests like CB-NAAT and TureNat**. The government has also implemented a **universal drug susceptibility test**, meaning that antibiotic susceptibility of the mycobacterium is determined for all newly diagnosed cases.

Improvements in treatment protocols: Injectable kanamycin, which caused kidney failure and deafness, has been replaced by Bedaquiline and Delamanid. These new pharmaceuticals have also been included in the new National List of Essential Medicines, giving the government the authority to control their market pricing.

Recently, the government also rejected U.S. pharmaceutical giant Johnson & Johnson's (J&J) attempt to extend its monopoly on the manufacturing of the anti-tuberculosis drug Bedaquiline in India beyond July 2023.

Implementing the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Program (RNTCP): The RNTCP is a national program that provides free diagnosis and treatment for TB patients. The program has been expanded to cover the entire country.

Use of GeneXpert technology: The government has introduced the use of GeneXpert technology, which allows for rapid diagnosis of TB and drug-resistant TB.

Engaging with private healthcare providers: The government has engaged with private healthcare providers to improve the quality of TB care and ensure that TB patients receive appropriate treatment.

A MASS CAMPAIGN TO ELIMINATE TB
Take Pledge to Help Persons with TB
Join as Ni-Kshay Mitra

I urge every person, every organization and representatives associated with the civil society to take up this resolution of playing an active role in building a TB free India.
- Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

**PRADHAN MANTRI
TB MUKT BHARAT ABHIYAAN**

Join as Ni-Kshay Mitra and take pledge to help persons with TB.
Any Individual, NGO, Elected Representative
or Corporate Institute can become Ni-Kshay Mitra.

TO JOIN AS NI-KSHAY MITRA

- ▶▶ Log on <https://communitysupport.nikshay.in>
- ▶▶ Click on "Pradhan Mantri TB MukT Bharat Abhiyaan"
- ▶▶ Fill-up Ni-Kshay Mitra Registration Form
- ▶▶ Choose persons with TB you would like to support
- ▶▶ Contribute by providing monthly Nutrition Kit, Diagnostic Help and Vocational Support

Ni-Kshay Helpline
1800-11-6666

Scan to know more about Ni-Kshay Mitra Abhiyaan

For more information, contact ASHA/A.N.M. or visit your Primary Health Centre

#nikshaymitra #pradhanmantritb #nikshaymitra #pradhanmantritb #nikshaymitra #pradhanmantritb #nikshaymitra #pradhanmantritb #nikshaymitra #pradhanmantritb

Source: PIB

Targeting high-risk populations: The government has targeted high-risk populations, such as people living with HIV/AIDS, migrants, and those living in poverty, to improve TB diagnosis and treatment. An online Ni-kshay portal has been set up to track the notified TB cases.

Target setting: The national strategic plan 2017-2025 sets the target of India reporting no more than 44 new TB cases or 65 total cases per lakh population by 2025. It also aims to reduce the mortality to 3 deaths per lakh population by 2025. The plan also aims to reduce catastrophic costs for the affected family to zero.

Promoting TB awareness: The government has launched public awareness campaigns to promote the importance of TB prevention, diagnosis, and treatment.

Adopting a patient-centric approach: The government has adopted a patient-centric approach to TB care, with a focus on providing patient-friendly services and improving patient outcomes.

Community engagement programme: The government launched the community engagement programme where Ni-kshay mitras can adopt TB patients and provide them monthly nutritional support.

What are the challenges in Eliminating TB in India?

High burden of TB cases: India accounts for 28% of all TB cases in the world, according to the Global TB Report 2022. This makes it difficult to identify and treat all cases in a timely manner.

Drug-resistant TB: India has a high burden of drug-resistant TB, which is more difficult and costly to treat than regular TB. Inadequate use of antibiotics and poor adherence to treatment regimens have contributed to the emergence of drug-resistant strains.

Limited access to healthcare: Many people in India, particularly in rural areas, do not have access to quality healthcare facilities or cannot afford to seek medical care. This can result in delays in diagnosis and treatment, and may also lead to the spread of TB.

Stigma and discrimination: TB is still stigmatized in India, and many people are reluctant to disclose their illness or seek treatment due to fear of discrimination or social isolation.

Poor living conditions: Overcrowded living conditions, poor sanitation, and lack of access to clean water can increase the risk of TB transmission.

Limited awareness: Many people in India are not aware of the signs and symptoms of TB or the importance of completing the full course of treatment. This can lead to delays in diagnosis and treatment and contribute to the spread of TB.

Insufficient funding: Despite being a major health problem in India, TB often receives insufficient funding and attention from policymakers and healthcare providers.

What should be done for eliminating TB in India?

Implement a comprehensive TB control program: The Indian government should develop and implement a comprehensive TB control program that includes early diagnosis, effective treatment, and follow-up care.

Expand access to healthcare: Efforts should be made to expand access to healthcare facilities, particularly in rural areas where access is limited.

Increase funding: TB prevention and treatment should be a priority for the government and policymakers, and funding should be increased to support research, prevention programs, and treatment efforts.

Targeted prevention programs: Programs aimed at preventing TB in high-risk populations, such as healthcare workers, people with HIV, and people who are homeless, can help to reduce the overall burden of the disease.

Increase public awareness: Public awareness campaigns can help to increase knowledge of TB symptoms, transmission, and prevention. This can be done through mass media, community outreach, and social media.

Reduce stigma and discrimination: Efforts should be made to reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with TB. This can involve working with community leaders, healthcare workers, and affected individuals to promote acceptance and understanding.

Improve living conditions: Efforts should be made to improve living conditions, particularly in overcrowded and impoverished areas, to reduce the risk of TB transmission.

Invest in research and development: Investment in research and development can help to identify new diagnostic tools and more effective treatments for TB. For example, The recent development of artificial intelligence software for detecting hot spots in the lungs from digital chest X-rays is a promising tool for mass active case finding of TB in the community.

Collaborate with other countries and organizations: Collaboration with other countries and international organizations can help to share best practices, knowledge, and resources for TB control.

Read more: [The way to control tuberculosis](#)

Sources: [Indian Express](#), [Business News](#), [CNBC](#)

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

Criminal defamation in India – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

The Surat court has sentenced the Congress leader and a Member of Parliament was sentenced with two years jail term in a 2019 defamation case. The court also granted him bail and suspended his sentence for 30 days to allow him to appeal. The conviction has led to questions over his status as a Member of Parliament, but there are wider concerns about the laws regarding criminal defamation in India and its impact on free speech.

What is Criminal defamation?

Criminal defamation is a type of crime where a person makes a false statement about someone else that harms their reputation and does so intentionally or with reckless disregard for the truth. This false statement must be communicated to others, either in writing or verbally.

Read more: [What is Criminal Defamation](#)

What is the need for Criminal defamation in India?

There are several reasons why Criminal defamation is considered necessary in India. Here are some of them:

Protecting Reputation: Defamation laws, including criminal defamation, exist to protect the reputation of individuals from false and baseless attacks that can cause significant harm to their personal and professional life.

Deterrence against false news: Criminalising defamation serves as a deterrent against people who might want to spread false information and rumours with malicious intent.

Preventing public disorder: Defamation laws can prevent public disorder by ensuring that false information doesn't incite violence or cause unrest.

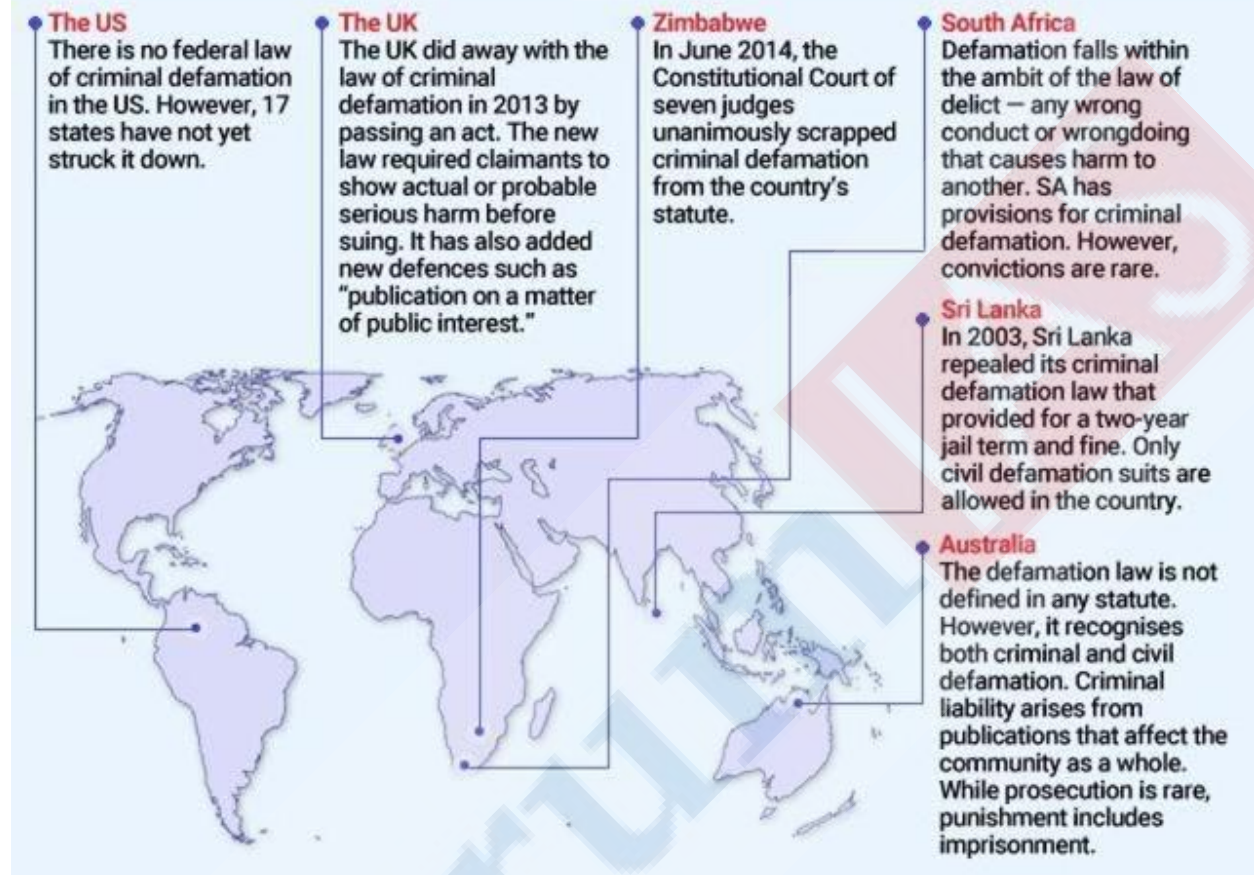
Fairness: Defamation laws provide a legal remedy for individuals who have been defamed, allowing them to seek justice and clear their name.

Promoting social cohesion: Defamation laws promote social cohesion by maintaining social norms and moral values that support the peaceful coexistence of different groups in society.

Read more: [How can an MP be disqualified and How does an appeal against the conviction impact disqualification?](#)

What are the laws regulating Criminal defamation in India?

LEGAL POSITION IN OTHER COUNTRIES



Source: Hindustan Times

In India, Criminal defamation is regulated by the following laws:

Indian Penal Code (IPC): Sections 499 and 500 of the IPC define defamation as a criminal offence.

Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC): This law outlines the procedure for prosecuting criminal offences, including criminal defamation.

Indian Evidence Act: This act outlines the rules for presenting evidence in court, including in cases of criminal defamation.

Information Technology Act (IT Act): This act includes provisions related to online defamation and cybercrime, which can be used to prosecute cases of criminal defamation that occur on the internet.

Right to Information Act (RTI Act): This law allows citizens to access government records and information, which can be used to gather evidence in cases of criminal defamation.

These laws work together to provide a legal framework for prosecuting cases of criminal defamation in India. Individuals who have been defamed can seek legal remedy through either civil or criminal defamation, or both, depending on the circumstances of the case.

Must read: [Criminalisation of government criticisms: Laws and issues](#)

What are the judicial interventions on Criminal defamation in India?

Constitutionality: In the Subramanian Swamy v. Union of India case, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of criminal defamation laws in India, stating that they are necessary to protect the reputation of individuals.

Right to free speech: The Supreme Court has also recognized that the right to free speech and expression is important, but it is not absolute and must be balanced with the right to reputation.

Interpretation of provisions: The courts have interpreted the provisions of criminal defamation laws, such as what constitutes a “public setting” and the scope of the defences available to the accused.

Remedies: The courts have provided remedies for those who have been defamed, including compensation and punishment for the offender. For example, In Arun Jaitley v. Arvind Kejriwal case, the Delhi High Court held that the statements made by Arvind Kejriwal against Arun Jaitley were defamatory and ordered him to pay damages.

Fair criticism: In the Ram Jethmalani v. Subramanian Swamy case, the Supreme Court held that there is a difference between fair criticism and defamation, and that criticism is not defamation unless it is made with the intent to harm the reputation of the person.

Social media: The courts have also addressed cases of criminal defamation on social media and the internet, including the responsibility of intermediaries like social media companies.

Overall, the judicial interventions on criminal defamation in India have been aimed at balancing the right to free speech with the need to protect an individual’s reputation. The courts have also addressed the evolving nature of defamation in the digital age and provided guidance on how to handle cases of online defamation.

Read more: [Sedition law in India: Arguments for and against- Explained, pointwise](#)

What are the challenges associated with Criminal defamation in India?

Effect on free speech: The use of criminal defamation laws can have a chilling effect on free speech, as individuals may be hesitant to express their opinions or criticisms for fear of being accused of defamation.

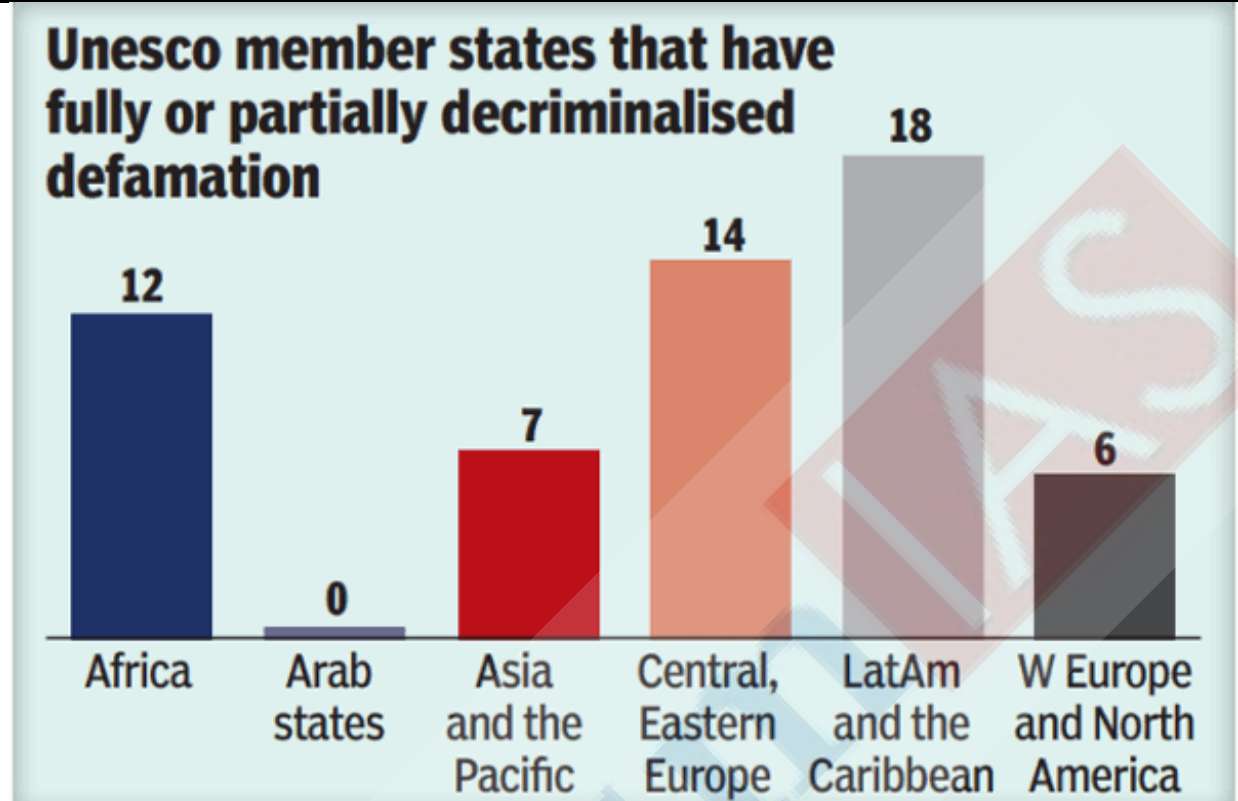
Misuse of laws: Criminal defamation laws can also be misused by powerful individuals or institutions to silence their critics and suppress dissent.

Delayed justice: Criminal defamation cases can take a long time to resolve in India’s overburdened court system. This can lead to delayed justice and harm to the reputations of those involved.

The burden of proof: The burden of proof in criminal defamation cases lies with the accused, which can make it difficult to defend oneself against false allegations.

Vagueness of laws: The provisions of criminal defamation laws in India, including what constitutes a “public setting” and the scope of the defences available to the accused, can be vague and open to interpretation.

What should be done?



Source: TOI

Repealing or amending criminal defamation laws: Repeal or significantly amend Sections 499 and 500 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), which currently criminalise defamation and provide for imprisonment and fines as punishment. This could include redefining what constitutes defamation or limiting the scope of criminal penalties.

Promoting alternative dispute resolution: Encouraging parties to resolve defamation disputes through alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, such as mediation or arbitration, could help reduce the burden on the court system and provide a quicker resolution for all parties involved.

Providing clearer guidance on interpretation: Providing clearer guidance on the interpretation of criminal defamation laws could help to reduce the vagueness of the provisions and ensure a more consistent application of the laws.

Increasing awareness and education: Increasing awareness and education on the consequences of defamation, both for the accused and the victim, could help to reduce the incidence of defamation and promote more responsible speech.

Improving the legal process: Improving the legal process for criminal defamation cases, such as by reducing delays and ensuring a fair trial, could help to promote justice and protect the rights of all parties involved.

Promote media literacy and ethical journalism practices: It will help to reduce the incidence of false or defamatory reporting.

Engage in dialogue: Engage in dialogue with civil society groups, legal experts, and media professionals to ensure that any reforms to defamation law reflect the interests and values of the Indian people.

Read more: [Shooting messengers: Criminal defamation must go from IPC. Effective civil libel law is enough for protecting reputations](#)

Sources: The Hindu ([Article 1](#) and [Article 2](#)), Indian Express ([Article 1](#) and [Article 2](#)), Times of India ([Article 1](#) and [Article 2](#)) and [Hindustan Times](#)

Syllabus: GS 2: Indian Constitution and Polity – Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges.

[Yojana March 2023 Summary] India's post-pandemic healthcare system – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has made healthcare very important in India. The government wants to use money and resources to enhance India's post-pandemic healthcare system. The budget for 2023–24 has some ideas to make things better. But it might not be enough.

What is the Budget proposal for India's post-pandemic healthcare system?

Budget Proposal for Post-Pandemic healthcare system in India are:

Mission to Eliminate Sickle Cell Disease by 2047: The government has announced a new mission to eradicate Sickle Cell Disease, a genetic condition that is prevalent in tribal populations in India. The mission aims to identify and treat the disease early to improve the health of affected individuals.

Opening of New Nursing Colleges and Multidisciplinary Courses for Medical Devices: To address the shortage of healthcare professionals, the budget has proposed opening 157 new nursing colleges in districts where medical colleges have been recently established. Additionally, dedicated multidisciplinary courses for medical devices will be introduced.

Emphasis on Health Research: The government aims to promote health research by opening up ICMR labs for research by public and private medical college faculty. The private sector is also encouraged to collaborate with the government for research and innovation in the pharmaceutical industry.

Other Proposals: a) The budget also proposes the establishment of centers of excellence in Artificial Intelligence (AI) with health as one of the core sub-themes, b) The Aspirational Blocks Programme will cover 500 blocks for the saturation of essential government services, including health sub-components and c) The National Calamity Contingency duty (NCCD) on cigarettes has been increased by 16% to discourage smoking.

Financial Allocation: The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has received a nominal increase of around 3.5% in financial allocation from BE 2022-23. The allocation for the National Health Mission has remained nearly unchanged at around Rs 29,000 Cr. The allocation for [Ayushman Bharat- Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana](#) has increased by 13% to reach around Rs 7,200 Cr.

What are the challenges faced by the post-pandemic healthcare system in India?

These include,

-The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that disinformation is a health sector issue. Misinformation has caused vaccine reluctance and rejection and decreased immunisation coverage in various populations.

-COVID-19 reminded that immunisation is important not only for children but also for adolescents and adults.

-In India, health is a state matter, although there are several government programmes and schemes that address various aspects of public health. After seventy-five years of independence, it is time to reconsider the role of federalism in health policy.

-The total number of doctors might be enough, but 90% work in the private sector and only 10% work in the public sector. These things affect the government sector's ability to provide health services. It is not enough to have skilled doctors.

What should be the priorities of the government for India's post-pandemic healthcare system?

India's post-pandemic healthcare should focus on the following,

Effective, timely and science-based communication is integral to health services: Government health initiatives must include timely, evidence-based, and reliable communication. Provide real-time mechanisms to debunk health misconceptions. Continuous interventions would assure great coverage.

Vaccination is not only for children: Other vaccines, such as hepatitis-B, meningococcal, and pneumococcal, can prevent adult illnesses. For vulnerable adult populations, these are useful. The government prioritises and vaccinates at-risk adults in 2023.

India has developed a low-cost [HPV \(Human Papilloma Virus\) vaccination](#) to prevent adolescents against [cervical cancer](#) and other diseases. It's time for India to offer this vaccine through a government plan and cover all eligible populations.

Importance of Well-functioning primary health care services (PHC): Covid-19 has emphasised the importance of stronger health services and well-functioning primary health care services (PHC). The PHC services should be built around the people, where it is not just the treatment of disease but attention is on preventive and promotive services as well.

Considered 'neglected tropical diseases': India has 11 "neglected tropical diseases" such as filariasis, kala-azar, snake bites, and others that need policy and programmatic attention. Programmatic interventions, vaccinations, and medicinal research focused on public health interventions are needed to combat these diseases.

Improve the health data quality and availability: Covid-19 pandemic has also taught us the importance of timely, granular and accurate health data. Such data is useful for health decision-making and for dispelling myths and rumours.

Bring health issues to the fore globally: India has been elected to the G20 chairmanship for the year 2023. The G20 presidency provides a chance for India to bring global health issues to the forefront. In particular, the country must take the lead in drawing attention to and maintaining it on the challenge of "antimicrobial resistance," the coordinated global response to epidemics and pandemics, neglected tropical diseases, and a focus on "one health" (the health of humans, animals, and the environment are all interconnected). The G20 nations should adopt such coordinated actions to avoid future vaccine disparities, as seen in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Move towards stronger health systems: It is time to move towards stronger health systems, building upon the Ayushman Bharat Programme, and health and wellness centers initiative. These platforms should be used to strengthen school health services, augment the provision of post and long Covid services and enhance community engagement in health.

Strengthen Cooperative federalism in the matter of public health: It is time to consider how cooperative federalism might be reinforced in the field of public health. The recently established public health management cadre must also be implemented in all Indian states.

Ensure equitable distribution of the health workforce: In the time after a pandemic, the availability and fair distribution of health workers must be a top priority. Incentive-based systems should be investigated to promote equal distribution of the health workforce.

Strengthen India's disease surveillance system and public health testing capacity: Disease surveillance systems and public health initiatives must be maintained. After the COVID-19 pandemic, India has taken some real steps to improve its disease surveillance system and its ability to test for public health problems. Because of some of these efforts, many new viruses,

like monkeypox, were found early on in Indian states. But it is still hard for the government to collect, analyse, share, and use data about diseases. This needs to change quickly.

Tackle anaemia and bridge the gaps in other nutrition policies: Malnutrition and anemia in women and children continue to be challenging. The National Family Health Survey -5 (NFHS-5) shows that despite decades of implementation of a range of schemes for women and children, malnutrition and anemia rates remain high, and the rate of improvement is very low. It demands urgent interventions to revive the efforts to tackle anemia and bridge the gaps in other nutrition policies.

Improve mental health services: Two urgent health problems that need to be fixed right away after a pandemic are mental health and long-term effects of Covid. Even before the pandemic, it was hard to take care of mental health. Mental health and long-term Covid must be addressed post pandemic. Pre-pandemic mental health was difficult.

The National Mental Health Survey 2015– 16 found that one in eight Indians needed mental health services. Due of stigma, the issue was ignored. Post-pandemic mental health issues have increased. Luckily, mental health stigma has decreased during COVID-19, making people more likely to seek assistance. At the same time, mental health services are rapidly expanding. The government should invest in post- and long-term care, especially primary care.

Investment in research and development on vaccines and therapeutics: India, which is a pharmacy for the whole world, needs to take responsibility and invest more in the research and development of vaccines and medicines. This is especially critical for emerging and reemerging diseases, as well as numerous neglected tropical diseases that impact low- and middle-income nations.

Read more: [Neglecting the health sector has consequences](#)

Conclusion

As India emerges from the pandemic, its health sector is grappling with complex challenges, including workforce shortages, inadequate infrastructure, and financial constraints. Nevertheless, there is a silver lining as the crisis has catalysed significant reforms in the sector. Increased investment in digital health technologies and stronger public-private partnerships can accelerate the progress towards equitable access to quality healthcare for all.

Source: Yojana

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

Disqualification of Legislators in India – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

Recently, the disqualification of legislators has been widely discussed due to two events. The first is the disqualification of a Member of Parliament after being sentenced to a two-year jail term by a Surat court in a 2019 defamation case. The second is an ongoing hearing by the Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court of India on a petition filed during the political crisis in Maharashtra last year (2022).

The Supreme Court has observed that any member of the Legislative Assembly who goes against the party's in-house may face disqualification. These events have brought the debate on the disqualification of legislators to the forefront of public discussion.

What are the constitutional provisions for the disqualification of legislators?

Articles 102 & 191: The basic disqualification criteria for an MP are outlined in Article 102 of the Constitution, while those for an MLA are outlined in Article 191. Article 102 empowers the Parliament to enact legislation governing the conditions of disqualification.

Grounds for disqualification under the Constitution: These include conditions such as holding a profit-making position in the Government of India or a state government, Being of unsound mind, being an unpaid insolvent, not being an Indian citizen, or acquiring citizenship of another country.

Read more: [Anti-defection Law: What can disqualify a legislator](#)

Tenth Schedule: A person is ineligible to serve as a member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) or the Legislative Council (MLC) if: **a)** An elected official voluntarily withdraws from a political party, **b)** An elected member votes or abstains from voting in such House in defiance of any direction issued by his political party or anyone authorised to do so.

Note: *The power to decide on the disqualification of legislators under the tenth schedule rests with the Speaker of the Lok Sabha (Lower House of Parliament) and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly concerned. However, the decision of the Speaker can be challenged in a court of law.*

Read more: [Criteria for Disqualification of MLAs in India](#)

Is there legal protection available against the disqualification of legislators?

The legal protection available against the disqualification of legislators in India:

Judicial Review: If a legislator is disqualified by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha or the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the decision can be challenged in a court of law through the remedy of judicial review.

High Court and Supreme Court: If a legislator feels that he/she has been wrongly disqualified or that the decision to disqualify him/her is arbitrary or mala fide, he/she can file a petition in the High Court or the Supreme Court challenging the decision of the Speaker. For example, The Kerala High Court's order suspending the disqualification of the Lakshadweep MP was notified by the Lok Sabha Secretariat

Examination of facts: The court can examine the facts of the case and the legality of the decision and can set aside the decision if it is found to be illegal or unconstitutional.

Protection against arbitrary or illegal disqualification: While the power to disqualify legislators rests with the Speaker of the Lok Sabha or the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly concerned, the courts act as a check on the exercise of this power and provide legal protection to legislators against arbitrary or illegal disqualification.

What are the Important Supreme Court Judgements regarding the disqualification of legislators?

There have been several important Supreme Court judgments regarding the disqualification of legislators in India. Some of the notable ones are:

Kihoto Hollohan vs. Zachillhu and Others (1992): In this case, the Supreme Court upheld the validity of the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution. The court ruled that the decision of the Speaker on the question of disqualification of a member is subject to judicial review, but the courts should not interfere unless the decision is mala fide, arbitrary or violative of the Constitution.

Jaya Bachchan vs. Union of India and Others (2006): In this case, the Supreme Court held that the appointment of Jaya Bachchan as a member of the Rajya Sabha (Upper House of Parliament) was invalid as she was holding an office of profit at the time of her appointment. The court observed that the disqualification of a legislator on the ground of holding an office of profit

is not limited to offices which involve the receipt of a salary or a fee, but includes any office which carries with it the right to remuneration or profit.

Ravi S. Naik vs. Union of India and Others (1994): In this case, the Supreme Court held that the power of the Speaker to disqualify a member under the Tenth Schedule is a quasi-judicial power and that the Speaker must give the affected member an opportunity to be heard before passing an order of disqualification.

Rajendra Singh Rana vs. Swami Prasad Maurya and Others (2007): In this case, the Supreme Court held that a legislator can be disqualified under the anti-defection law even if he/she abstains from voting in the House. The court observed that abstention from voting on a motion of confidence or no confidence is not a neutral act, but is a conduct which facilitates the success of one side or the other.

In Lily Thomas v. Union of India (2013): The SC held that Section 8(4) of The Representation of the People Act, 1951 is unconstitutional which allows MPs and MLAs who are convicted to continue in office till an appeal against such conviction is disposed of. The court held that MP/MLA convicted for two years or above would be disqualified immediately.

Krishnamurthy v. Sivakumar & Ors (2015): The SC held that disclosure of criminal antecedents (especially heinous crimes) of a candidate at the time of filing of nomination paper as mandated by law was a categorically imperative.

Lok Prahari v Union of India (2018): In this case SC clarified that a disqualification triggered by a conviction will be reversed if the conviction is stayed by a court. **Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay vs. Union of India and Others (2021):** In this case, the Supreme Court directed the central government to expedite the process of setting up special courts to try cases against MPs and MLAs, including cases related to the disqualification of legislators.

Sachin Choudhary vs. Rajiv Singh and Others (2021): In this case, the Supreme Court held that a legislator cannot be disqualified on the ground of non-disclosure of criminal cases pending against him/her at the time of filing the nomination papers, as the law requires disclosure only of convictions and not pending cases.

Read more: [The curious case of the disqualification of a politician](#)

What are the provisions available for the removal of disqualification?

Provisions available for the removal or disqualification of Indian legislators are as follows:

Application to the President/Governor: A disqualified legislator can make an application to the President or the Governor, as the case may be, for the removal of disqualification. For example, in 2018, the Karnataka Governor received an application from a disqualified MLA seeking the removal of disqualification. The Governor referred the matter to the Election Commission for its opinion.

Election petition: A disqualified legislator can also file an election petition in the appropriate court challenging the election of the winning candidate. If the election petition is successful, the disqualification is automatically removed.

For example, in 2019, an MLA was disqualified from the Karnataka Assembly on charges of anti-party activities. He filed an election petition challenging the election of the winning candidate, and the Karnataka High Court set aside his disqualification.

Legislative pardon: The legislature can pardon a disqualified legislator by passing a resolution with a two-thirds majority. The resolution must be passed in both Houses of Parliament or the State Legislature.

For example, in 2019, the Maharashtra Legislative Council passed a resolution pardoning an MLA, who was disqualified for submitting a false affidavit.

Court order: A disqualified legislator can approach a court of law challenging the disqualification. If the court finds that the disqualification was illegal, the disqualification is removed.

SC in its ruling in Lok Prahari v Election Commission of India & Ors (2018), clarified that a disqualification triggered by a conviction will be reversed if the conviction is stayed by a court.

What are the challenges associated with the disqualification of legislators?

Legal challenges: Disqualifications can be challenged in courts of law, which can lead to a prolonged legal process. For example, in 2017, the Delhi High Court set aside the disqualification of 20 Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLAs, who had been disqualified on charges of holding offices of profit. The case went on for several months before the court finally gave its decision.

Political challenges: Disqualifications can have political implications, and can lead to accusations of political vendetta.

Enforcement challenges: Enforcing disqualifications can be a challenge, especially if the disqualified legislator refuses to vacate their seat. For example, in 2017, the Election Commission of India disqualified a political leader from Tamil Nadu Assembly but refused to vacate his seat, leading to a legal tussle.

Impact on voters: Disqualifications can impact the voters who elected the disqualified legislator, who may feel that their mandate has been nullified. For example, in 2019, the disqualification of 17 MLAs in Karnataka led to a sense of disillusionment among their voters, who felt that their elected representatives had been unfairly targeted.

What should be done?

Clear guidelines: There should be clear and unambiguous guidelines outlining the grounds for the disqualification of legislators, to ensure that the process is fair and transparent.

Time-bound process: The process for disqualification of legislators should be time-bound, to ensure that it does not drag on indefinitely. For example, in 2018, the Delhi High Court directed the Election Commission of India to conclude the disqualification proceedings against AAP MLAs within three months.

Strengthening the legal framework: The legal framework for the disqualification of legislators needs to be strengthened to ensure that it is clear, consistent and in line with democratic principles. This could include ensuring that the disqualification process is independent, impartial and non-partisan and that it provides for a fair hearing to the legislator concerned. For example, the Supreme Court of India has recommended that the disqualification process should be carried out by an independent authority, such as an ombudsman.

Political neutrality: The disqualification process should be free from political interference, and should not be used as a tool for settling political scores. The process should be based on objective criteria, and should not be influenced by political considerations. For example, the Supreme Court of India has emphasised that disqualification should not be used as a means of political vendetta.

Transparency: The process for disqualification of legislators should be transparent, and the public should be informed about the reasons for disqualification.

Strict enforcement: Once a legislator is disqualified, strict enforcement measures should be put in place to ensure that the disqualification is enforced in a timely and effective manner. This would help to prevent disqualified legislators from continuing to hold office and to ensure that the will of the people is respected.

By taking these steps, it is possible to ensure that the process for disqualification of legislators is fair and transparent and that it upholds the principles of democracy and the rule of law.

Sources: Indian Express ([Article 1](#), [Article 2](#), [Article 3](#) and [Article 4](#)), The Hindu ([Article 1](#) and [Article 2](#)) and [Hindustan Times](#)

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

Execution of death penalty in India – Explained pointwise

Introduction

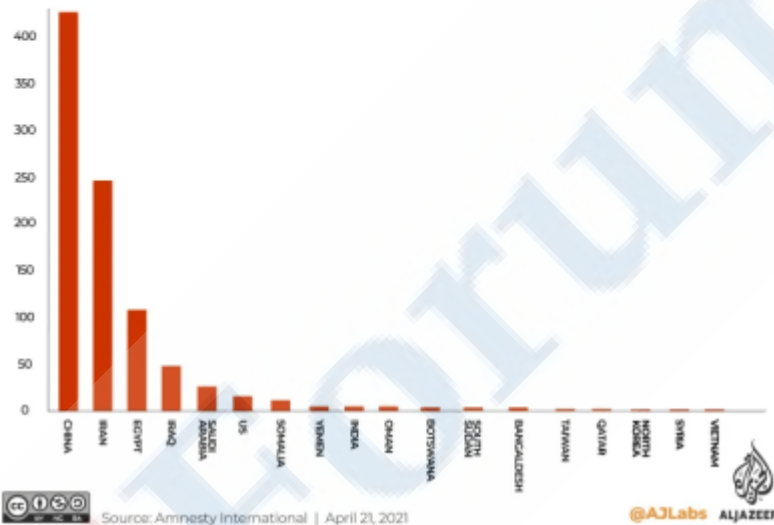
The constitutionality of death by hanging as a mode of execution has been challenged in India's Supreme Court. The petitioner has claimed that hanging is "cruel and barbarous" and there is a need for a more "humane, quick, and decent alternative." The court has asked the government to provide data on less painful and socially acceptable methods of execution of death penalty.

What is the present mode of execution of death penalty in India?

DEATH SENTENCES AND EXECUTIONS 2020

Top six executing countries

UNKNOWN CHINA <small>Classifies the total number of executions and death sentences as a state secret and provides independent scrutiny.</small>	246+ IRAN	107+ EGYPT	45+ IRAQ	27 SAUDI ARABIA	17 UNITED STATES
---	--------------	---------------	-------------	--------------------	---------------------



Source: Aljazeera

The present mode of execution of death penalty in India is hanging by the neck until the person is dead. This is carried out in jail by an executioner appointed by the government. The method used is the same as it was during British colonial rule, and there have been no changes to the mode of execution since then.

Indian courts in 2022 awarded a record 165 death sentences, the highest in over two decades, according to the Annual Death Penalty Report published by Project 39A, an advocacy group with the National Law University, New Delhi.

Note: The Supreme Court last addressed and upheld the constitutionality of hanging in September 1983, over four decades ago (*Deena v. Union of India*). The Law Commission of India recognised the constitutional impossibility of hanging death in its 2003 report (the 187th Report) and urged that India should consider utilising lethal injections instead.

Read more: [SC Bench seeks data on alternatives to hanging](#)

What are the challenges in changing the mode of execution in death penalty cases?

Must Read: [The Supreme Court puts the spotlight on the mode of execution in death penalty cases](#)

What are observations made by the Supreme Court of India on the execution of death penalty?

Death sentence should be awarded only in the rarest of rare cases where the crime is brutal, heinous, and barbaric: For example, in the case of Nirbhaya gangrape and murder, the Supreme Court upheld the death penalty for the four convicts, stating that it was a “rarest of rare” case.

The right to life is a fundamental right, and the courts should interpret the law in a manner that protects this right: In the case of Mohd. Arif Ashfaq v. The Registrar, Supreme Court of India, the Supreme Court commuted the death sentence of a man convicted of involvement in the 2000 Red Fort attack, stating that there was no direct evidence linking him to the crime and that his right to a fair trial had been violated.

The courts should take into account mitigating factors such as age, mental illness, and socioeconomic background while deciding whether to award the death penalty: In the case of Santosh Kumar Satishbhushan Bariyar v. State of Maharashtra, the Supreme Court commuted the death sentence of a man convicted of murdering six members of a family, citing his young age and lack of criminal history.

The execution of death sentences should be carried out in a humane manner, in accordance with established protocols and guidelines: In the case of Shatrughan Chauhan v. Union of India, the Supreme Court laid down guidelines for carrying out executions, including the requirement for a “dignified” and “professional” approach, and the provision of adequate medical facilities to the condemned prisoner.

Importance of fair trial: In the case of M.A. Antony vs. State of Kerala (2001), the Court noted that a death sentence cannot be awarded on the basis of vague or general allegations and that the prosecution must prove the case beyond reasonable doubt.

Need for judicial review: In the case of Bachan Singh vs. State of Punjab (1980), the Court held that the imposition of the death penalty must be subject to a rigorous process of judicial review, and that the courts must consider both the aggravating and mitigating circumstances of the case.

Read more: [Approach to death penalty: Why Supreme Court has decided to settle differences among judgments](#)

What are the arguments in favour of execution of Death Penalty?

Deterrent effect: The death penalty acts as a strong deterrent to would-be offenders by instilling fear of capital punishment in their minds.

Retribution: Death penalty provides a sense of closure and retribution for the victim’s family and friends.

Cost-effective: Death penalty is more cost-effective than life imprisonment because it eliminates the need for long-term incarceration.

Justice: The death penalty is seen as a just punishment for heinous crimes such as murder, terrorism, and treason.

Prevention of Recidivism: Executing convicted criminals ensures that they will never have the opportunity to commit more crimes in the future.

Public Safety: Death penalty helps to maintain public safety by removing dangerous criminals from society.

Respect for Law: The death penalty reinforces respect for the rule of law by demonstrating that serious crimes will not go unpunished.

What are the arguments against the execution of Death Penalty?

The risk of executing innocent people: There is always a risk of executing an innocent person, and this is an irreversible mistake. With the flaws in the justice system, wrongful convictions can happen, and innocent people can be sentenced to death.

Does not deter crime: There is no conclusive evidence that the death penalty deters crime more effectively than long prison sentences. In fact, some studies have suggested that the death penalty may actually increase crime rates by brutalizing society.

Discriminatory applications: The death penalty is applied disproportionately to people who are poor, mentally ill, or members of racial and ethnic minorities. This raises serious concerns about fairness and equal treatment under the law.

Studies have shown that the death penalty is more likely to be awarded to those from lower socio-economic backgrounds and marginalized communities.

Arbitrary application: There is a lack of consistency in the application of the death penalty, with some convicts being sentenced to death for similar crimes while others receive lesser punishments.

Expensive in India: The cost of a death penalty trial and subsequent appeals is much higher than the cost of keeping someone in prison for life. This is because of the complex legal procedures and the need for specialized lawyers and experts.

Violates human rights: The death penalty is a violation of the right to life, as recognized by many international human rights treaties. It is also considered to be a cruel, inhuman, and degrading punishment.

The possibility of rehabilitation: Some offenders, especially those who commit crimes when they are young, may be able to reform and lead productive lives. The death penalty denies these individuals the opportunity for rehabilitation and a second chance.

The death penalty does not promote healing or closure: Some argue that the death penalty provides closure and healing for victims' families, but studies have shown that it often does not. Instead, it can prolong the grieving process by keeping the case in the public eye for years, if not decades.

The death penalty undermines the moral authority of the state: By taking a life, the state is sending a message that killing is an acceptable way to solve problems. This undermines the state's moral authority and can contribute to a culture of violence.

Effective alternatives exist: There are several alternatives to the death penalty, including life imprisonment without the possibility of parole, which are seen as more humane, cost-effective, and less prone to error.

Overall, the arguments against the death penalty suggest that it is a flawed and ineffective system that should be abolished in favor of alternative forms of punishment that are more humane, equitable, and effective in reducing crime.

Read more: [The death penalty and humanising criminal justice](#)

What should be done?

Review the death penalty laws: India should consider reviewing its death penalty laws to ensure that they are in line with international human rights standards. For example, the law should provide for fair trial rights, prohibit the use of the death penalty against juvenile offenders and people with mental disabilities.

Improve legal aid services: Legal aid services should be improved to ensure that people facing the death penalty have access to competent and effective legal representation. For example, legal aid lawyers should receive proper training and resources to represent their clients effectively.

Address issues with the criminal justice system: India should take steps to address the systemic issues with its criminal justice system that contribute to wrongful convictions and unfair trials. For example, the police should be held accountable for fabricating evidence, and judges should be trained to identify and reject coerced confessions.

Increase transparency: The government should increase transparency around the use of the death penalty. For example, the government should publish statistics on the use of the death penalty, including the number of people on death row and the number of executions carried out.

Conduct a public debate: The Indian government should conduct a public debate on the use of the death penalty in the country. This would allow for a constructive dialogue on the issue, and could lead to the development of more effective and humane policies.

Read more: [Abolition is the way: On the higher judiciary's move on the death penalty](#)

Sources: [Indian Express](#), [Times of India](#), and [Death penalty India report](#)

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

The Issue of Stray dogs in India – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

Lately, Stray dogs have been in news, due to their attacks on children and men, in multiple incidents. In Telangana's Khammam district, a five-year-old boy died after being attacked by a stray dog while playing outside. This is the second dog attack incident in less than a month. A few incidents involved the death of the victim. These incidents have ignited the debate among the people raising concerns against the rising population of dogs and the dog lovers. Therefore, it becomes important to know about the reasons behind rising dog attacks in India and the policy steps that can be taken to handle this situation.

Some facts regarding the stray dog population in India

In 2019, it was stated in Lok Sabha that the stray dog population went down by 18 lakhs in 7 years from 1.71 crores to 1.53 crores. Some independent studies suggest the population is much higher as many go unaccounted for.

Globally, dog-mediated rabies causes an estimated 59,000 human deaths annually. **According to WHO, India accounts for 36% of the global deaths due to rabies.** India also accounts for 65% of the deaths due to rabies in the South-East Asia region. The National Rabies Control Program reported 6644 clinically suspected cases and deaths of human rabies between 2012 and 2022.

According to the National Institute of Communicable Diseases, **almost 96% of rabies cases in India are caused by stray dogs – and so India leads the world in rabies deaths.**

What are the reasons for the increasing stray dog crisis in India?

Lack of proper animal birth control programs: There are not enough animal birth control programs in place to control the population of stray dogs. For example, in some areas, dogs are often left unsterilised, which leads to more puppies and an increasing population of stray dogs.

Irresponsible ownership: Many people in India often abandon their pets on the streets when they are no longer wanted, or they let their dogs roam free without proper supervision. This leads to an increase in the stray dog population.

Poor waste management: Stray dogs often scavenge for food in garbage dumps, which are not properly managed in many areas of India. This leads to an increase in the number of stray dogs in these areas.

Lack of awareness: Many people in India are not aware of the importance of responsible pet ownership or the dangers of abandoning their pets. This lack of awareness contributes to the increasing stray dog crisis.

Religious beliefs: Some communities in India believe that killing or sterilizing dogs is against their religious beliefs. This can make it difficult to implement effective animal birth control programs and control the population of stray dogs.

Inadequate animal welfare laws: The current animal welfare laws in India are not strong enough to protect animals from abuse and neglect. This leads to an increase in the number of stray dogs, as there are no penalties for irresponsible ownership or abandonment.

Read more: [Understanding the street dogs-human conflict](#)

What are steps taken by the government to address the stray dog crisis?

Animal Birth Control (ABC) program: The ABC programme wherein dogs are sterilised, vaccinated and replaced in their original areas is the only effective method to reduce street dog population, end biting and eliminate rabies. For example, in 2019, the government of Kerala sterilized over 87,000 stray dogs under this program.

Vaccination drives: The government conducts vaccination drives to protect stray dogs against diseases such as rabies. For example, in 2020, the government of Tamil Nadu conducted a vaccination drive for stray dogs in the city of Chennai.

Awareness campaigns: The government conducts awareness campaigns to educate people on responsible pet ownership and the importance of controlling the stray dog population. For example, the Delhi government launched a campaign called “Be a Human, Save a Life” to encourage people to adopt stray dogs and help control their population.

Legal framework: The government has enacted laws to protect animals from cruelty and abuse, and to regulate the management of stray dogs. For example, In India, stray-dog management comes under the purview of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960 and State Municipal Acts. The Animal Birth Control (Dogs) Rules, 2001, provide guidelines for the management of stray dogs.

Collaboration with NGOs: The government collaborates with NGOs and animal welfare organizations to implement programs for the management of stray dogs. For example, the government of Maharashtra has partnered with animal welfare organization, the Blue Cross Society, to conduct sterilization and vaccination drives for stray dogs.

Read more: [Is India in the grip of a ‘stray dog’ crisis?](#)

What are the arguments in favour of confining stray dogs?

Public safety: Stray dogs can pose a risk to public safety by attacking people or other animals. Confining facilities or culling of stray dogs can reduce the risk of such incidents.

Control of diseases: Stray dogs can carry diseases that can be transmitted to humans, such as rabies. Confining facilities stray dogs can help to control the spread of such diseases.

Nuisance: Stray dogs can cause a nuisance by barking loudly, damaging property, and creating a mess. Confining facilities or killing stray dogs can help to reduce such problems.

Population control: It can help to control the population of stray dogs, which can become a problem when their numbers are too high.

What are arguments against the confining stray dogs in facilities?

Cruelty: Confining or culling of stray dogs is often viewed as cruel, especially if the dogs are healthy and have not caused any harm.

Ethical concerns: Many people believe that all animals have a right to life and that killing or confining them goes against this principle.

Ineffectiveness: It is often seen as an ineffective solution to the problem, as it does not address the root causes of the issue. As per the WHO’s Expert Committee on Rabies, there is no evidence

that the removal of dogs has a significant impact on dog population densities and the spread of rabies.

Lack of resources: In many areas, there are not enough resources or facilities available to confine or euthanize all stray dogs, making it an impractical solution.

Alternatives: There are alternative solutions, such as animal birth control programs and responsible pet ownership, which are often seen as more humane and effective.

Legal issues: In some countries, killing or confining stray dogs is illegal, and proponents of animal rights argue that enforcing these laws is important for protecting animal welfare.

Read more: [Sterilisation is the best way to address stray dog problem](#)

What should be done to address the stray dog crisis?

The effective strategy would be the implementation of the **ABC (Animal Birth Control) Programme by municipal bodies** in accordance with the new ABC Rules of 2023.

A proactive approach would be to **encourage the adoption of Indian dogs**. If one person out of every 100 people adopts a dog from the street, there would be no dogs on the roads.

The native breeds of dogs should be promoted. Native dogs have better immune systems and make great pets.

Promoting responsible pet ownership: Encouraging pet owners to keep their pets on leashes, spay or neuter them, and provide them with adequate food and shelter can help prevent dogs from becoming strays.

Reports of dog attacks must be tested on the benchmark of proof. Recently, it was reported that two children had been killed by dogs in Vasant Kunj in New Delhi. Still, it has not been proven.

Begin sheltering or euthanizing unowned dogs while encouraging dog-owners to sterilize their pets to protect people, livestock, wildlife, and dogs themselves from suffering and homelessness.

Publicly feeding stray dogs should be prohibited and penalized as it encourages them to congregate and threatens public spaces, and it is against WHO guidelines and ecological science.

Education and awareness: Educating people on the importance of animal welfare and responsible pet ownership can help reduce the number of strays.

Sources: [Blog 1](#) | [The Hindu](#) | [Indian Express](#) | [Deccan](#) | [The Hindu](#) | [Indian Express](#) | [Indian Today](#)

Institutions of Eminence (IOE) scheme and issues with higher education – Explained, pointwise

Introduction

The Parliamentary standing committee submitted a report outlining the shortcomings of the current IOE (Institutions of Eminence) scheme and higher education institutions. They recommended several measures to improve the status of these institutions and enhance the IOE scheme.

About Institutions of Eminence (IOE) Scheme



MISSED OPPORTUNITY

- > The objective of the 'institution of eminence' (IOE) scheme is to enable institutions to emerge as centres of world-class teaching and research
- > About **114** institutions applied for the IOE tag
- > Initially, the UGC had decided on selecting **10 public and 10 private institutions** for the tag
- > However, on the recommendation of the expert committee, a list of **30 institutes— 15 public and 15 private** was put out
- > The selected public institutions will get **₹1,000 crore** over a period of five years
- > IIT-Bombay, IISc-Bangalore and IIT-Delhi were selected under the public institution category
- > Jio Institute, BITS Pilani and Manipal Academy of Higher Education were selected under the private institute category

Source: TOI

The Institution of Eminence scheme is a scheme of Ministry of Human Resource Development pertaining to higher education institutions (HES) in India.

Under this scheme, selected universities are granted greater autonomy and funding to pursue academic and research goals. The scheme aims to put these institutions on par with the best in the world and encourage them to become centers of excellence in research and teaching.

IOEs are expected to attract the best talent from around the world, foster collaborations with other leading institutions, and contribute to the country's economic and social development.

Read more: [Institution of Eminence](#)

What is the need for IOE Scheme?

To enhance global ranking: The IOE plan will support and build top universities that can compete on a global scale and rank among the top 500 schools in the world.

To encourage research: It will help universities do research by giving them the money, infrastructure, and freedom they need.

Attracting foreign students: IOE universities will bring in students from other countries, which will boost India's soft power and give students from other countries a chance to study in India.

Fostering innovation: IOE universities will work to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship in many different fields. This will help India's economy grow and develop.

Improving the quality of education: The scheme will improve the quality of education in Indian universities by providing them with the necessary resources and infrastructure to ensure that they offer world-class education.

About the analysis of the IOE scheme

Thus far, 12 institutions have been granted IOE status (8 public and 4 private). So far, Rs 3,428 crore has been allocated to eight public institutes, with IISc Bangalore receiving the largest part (Rs 620.59 crore). It has helped eight public universities speed up their ambitious reforms and growth by giving each one a financial boost.

Unfortunately, many of the selected private campuses have yet to reap the scheme's promised benefits. The government is delaying the recognition of two public and five private HEIs as IOEs. The lack of an EEC is impeding the process.

What are the challenges faced by the IOE scheme?

Criticism of elitism: The IOE scheme has faced criticism for being elitist and favoring already established institutions while ignoring the needs of smaller universities.

Funding constraints: While the selected institutions receive special funding from the government, it may not be enough to fully achieve the program's goals, and budget constraints may limit the impact of the scheme.

For example, under the scheme, the government institutions, in addition to more autonomy from regulatory control, are entitled to financial assistance up to Rs 1,000 crore, over and above the regular annual budgetary grants. The private IOEs are promised autonomy, not funds.

Implementation challenges: The implementation of the IOE scheme may be challenging due to bureaucratic hurdles and resistance from stakeholders who are resistant to change. For example, only four of the 10 private higher education institutions selected for the IOE status have received official recognition to date (March 2023).

Capacity building: Some of the selected institutions may lack the necessary capacity and resources to fully realize the potential of the IOE scheme, requiring additional investments and support.

Measuring impact: It may be difficult to measure the impact of the IOE scheme on the Indian higher education system, and whether it has truly improved the quality of education and made Indian universities more competitive globally.

Inadequate representation: There has been criticism that certain regions or types of institutions have been underrepresented in the selection of IOEs, leading to concerns of bias and uneven development.

Maintaining autonomy: While IOEs enjoy greater autonomy under the scheme, it remains to be seen how much of this freedom will be protected and whether institutions will be able to truly chart their own path without undue influence from external factors. For instance, While the IOEs university can start new programmes and schools with just an intimation to UGC, it has to comply with the Bar Council of India's regulations for law programmes.

Must read: [Institutions of Eminence, mired in red tape](#)

What are the issues with higher education?

Lack of access: Access to higher education is limited, particularly for students from marginalized communities and those living in rural areas.

Low quality of education: The quality of higher education in India is often criticized, with concerns about outdated curricula, inadequate teaching standards, and a lack of focus on research.

Brain drain: India faces a challenge with 'brain drain', where many talented students and scholars migrate to other countries for higher education and career opportunities.

Affordability: Higher education can be expensive, especially for students from lower-income families, who may struggle to afford tuition fees and living expenses.

Gender disparity: There is a significant gender disparity in higher education, with a lower percentage of female students and a lack of adequate support and facilities for women on campuses.

Infrastructure: Many higher education institutions lack adequate infrastructure and resources, such as modern labs, libraries, and IT facilities.

Governance and regulation: There are concerns about the governance and regulation of higher education in India, with criticisms of a lack of accountability, politicization, and corruption in the sector.

Industry linkages: The linkages between higher education institutions and industry are often weak, leading to a mismatch between the skills and knowledge of graduates and the needs of the job market.

What should be done to reform IOE scheme and improve higher education in India?

Accelerate the process of granting status: The parliamentary standing committee report recommended the ministry to accelerate the process of granting status in the case of the identified eligible institutions.

Introduce courses on Indian heritage and culture: To attract more foreign students to Indian universities, there is a need for the introduction of courses on Indian heritage and culture, such as Vedic mathematics, Yoga, and Ayurveda.

Revision of the Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA): Accelerate the reform of the HEFA scheme and notify it as soon as possible to broaden the scope of financing available under it. Make serious efforts to approve more loans under the HEFA plan, ensure prompt disbursement of sanctioned loans, and meet targets on time during 2023-24.

Fill up the vacancies: Take a proactive approach towards filling up over 34,000 teaching and non-teaching posts that are vacant in central universities, IITs, IIMs, NITs, and other institutions. Conduct special recruitment campaigns to fill up the vacancies as far as possible with permanent faculties by the end of 2023.

The **formation of a higher education umbrella body**, as well as **simplified visa requirements for foreign faculty in these institutes**, will aid in the faster realisation of the IOE scheme's objectives.

India can bring **the IOE programme in line with the National Education Policy, 2020**.

Sources: Indian Express ([Article 1](#) and [Article 2](#)), [Hindustan Times](#), [The Week](#), [Financial Express](#) and [EPW](#).

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