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7 PM COMPILATION

1st to 15th December, 2023

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- ❖ **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**
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[Kurukshetra November 2023 Summary] PM Vishwakarma Yojana- Explained Pointwise

The PM Vishwakarma Scheme, launched on the occasion of Vishwakarma Jayanti on 17th September 2023, aims to provide end-to-end support to traditional artisans and craftsmen or 'Vishwakarma' to grow their business. Rural India is home to a vast pool of untapped and traditional talent. The rural artisans and craftspeople possess exceptional skills in the traditional crafts like pottery, carpentry and metalwork. Artisanal activities form a significant part of rural economies, and these artistic expressions are integral to preserving India's rich cultural heritage.

Source- Yojana

What is the PM Vishwakarma Scheme?

1. **Aim of the Scheme-** PM Vishwakarma scheme aims at improving the quality as well as the reach of products and services of artisans and craftspeople. The scheme also aims to ensure that the 'Vishwakarmas' are integrated into the domestic and global value chains.

2. **Launch of the Scheme-** Prime Minister of India has launched the 'Prime Minister (PM) Vishwakarma Scheme' on the occasion of Vishwakarma Jayanti on 17th September 2023.

3. **Type of Scheme-** PM Vishwakarma will be implemented as a Central Sector Scheme, fully funded by the Government of India, with an initial outlay of Rs 13,000 crore.

4. **Implementing Ministries-**
a. The Scheme will be conjointly implemented by the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and the Department of Financial Services (DFS), the Ministry of Finance (MoF), the Government of India.
b. MSME will be the Nodal Ministry for the Scheme and the Additional Secretary & Development Commissioner (MSME) in the Ministry of MSME will be the focal point for all aspects of implementation and coordination.

5. **Trades Covered under the Scheme-** There are 18 traditional trades covered under the scheme. These are:

Carpenter (Suthar/Badhai)	Boat Maker	Armourer	Goldsmith (Sonar)	Sculptor (Moortikar, stone

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				carver) and Stonebreaker
Blacksmith (Lohar)	Hammer and Tool Kit Maker	Locksmith	Potter (Kumhaar)	Fishing Net Maker
Cobbler (Charmkar)/ Shoesmith/ Footwear artisan	Mason (Rajmistri)	Basket/Mat/ Broom Maker/Coir Weaver	Doll & Toy Maker (Traditional)	Barber (Naai)
Garland Maker (Malakaar)	Washerman (Dhobi)	Tailor (Darzi)		

6. **Eligibility Under the Scheme**

a. Minimum age of beneficiary should be 18 years.

b. The beneficiary should be engaged in the trade concerned.

c. Should not have availed loans under similar credit-based schemes of Central Government or State Government.

d. The registration and benefits under the Scheme shall be restricted to one member of the family.

7. **Exclusion under the Scheme**

Existing beneficiaries of the PM Employment Generation Programme are excluded while beneficiaries of PM Mudra Scheme or PM-Svanidhi can apply for credit only after repayment.

8. **Lending institutions-** Scheduled Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks, Cooperative Banks, NBFCs and Micro-Finance Institutions.

9. **Registration-** The Scheme will onboard the beneficiaries on Udyam Assist Platform as 'entrepreneurs'. Enrolment of beneficiaries shall be done through Common Service Centres with Aadhaar-based biometric authentication on PM Vishwakarma portal.

10. **Benefits under the Scheme-** Scheme intends to provide end-to-end support to artisans and craftspeople through the following six interventions-

Recognition	The Beneficiaries will get a PM Vishwakarma Certificate and ID card after they are registered and verified.
Skill Upgradation	Artisans will receive basic training of 5-7 days and advanced training of 15 days or more, along with a stipend of Rs. 500 per day as wage compensation. At the end of the basic training, an independent assessment will be conducted, and National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) certification will be provided to the successful candidate.
Toolkit Incentive	At the beginning of basic training, artisans and craftspeople will get toolkit incentive of up to Rs. 15,000 through e-RUPI/e-vouchers.
Credit Support	The government will provide collateral-free loans of up to Rs. 3 lakhs in two tranches of Rs. 1 lakh and Rs. 2 lakhs, according to their requirements. These loans can be paid back in 18 months and 30 months, respectively. Loan is provided at a concessional interest rate fixed at 5%, with the Government of India subvention to the extent of 8%.
Incentive for Digital Transaction	The scheme will encourage beneficiaries to adopt digital transactions. The beneficiaries of this scheme will be given cashback incentives every time they either sell or receive a digital transaction.

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Marketing Support	A marketing strategy has been prepared to promote the products and services of these artisans in both domestic and international markets.

What is the Significance of the PM Vishwakarma Scheme?

1. **Formalisation of the Informal Artisanal Industry-** With access to formal credit support, promotion of digital transactions and inclusion in the formal MSME ecosystem, the scheme will formalise the industry.

2. **Integration with Global Value Chains-** The marketing Support provided through this scheme will help to link the local artisanal industry with the global value chains and the niche foreign markets. For Ex- Promotion of brass metal works of India in Europe.

3. **Preservation of rich Indian heritage-** The support provided through this scheme to the artisans will lead to the preservation of cultural practices, rich heritage, generational skills, and guru-shishya parampara. It will provide a sense of Identity to the artisans. **For ex-** Bangle makers of Moradabad.

4. **Empowerment of Women-** The Scheme seeks to promote the empowerment of women belonging to the marginalized or under-served groups like the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, Specially Abled, Transgenders, residents of NER states, Island Territories, and Hilly Areas.

5. **Awareness about other Schemes-** Through this scheme, efforts will be made to increase awareness among the beneficiaries to avail social security benefits under the various schemes of the Government of India and State Governments such as Prime Minister Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, Prime Minister Suraksha Bima Yojana, Atal Pension Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan Yojana.

Read more- PM Vishwakarma Scheme

What are the Other Artisans related Schemes under Implementation In India?

Currently, there are about 20 central sector schemes that seek to support and empower artisans across the country. Some major Schemes are explained in brief below

The National Handicraft Development Programme	The schemes focus on handloom and handicrafts artisans by providing them with credit, marketing, tookits, skill training, and social security support
PM SVANidhi	The scheme provides for collateral-free working capital loans with interest subsidies and incentives for digital transactions support to street-vendors/hawkers vending in urban areas.
Upgrading Skills and Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development (USTTAD)	The scheme being implemented by the Ministry of Minority Affairs provides support for the upgrading of skills and training.

Conclusion

Vishwakarmas in India are a diverse group of skilled craftsmen and artisans who have played a crucial role in the country's art, architecture, and cultural heritage. They continue to contribute to India's rich artistic and architectural traditions while adapting to the demands of the modern world. The Indian government and various organizations have recognized the importance of preserving traditional craftsmanship. PM Vishwakarma Scheme is an effort made to provide training, support, and platforms for Vishwakarma artisans to showcase their skills.

Read More- The Indian Express UPSC Syllabus- GS 2- Government Schemes for the Vulnerable Sectors

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All India Judicial Service- Explained Pointwise

President Droupadi Murmu has called for an "All India Judicial Service" to recruit judges during her inaugural address at the Supreme Court's Constitution Day celebration on Sunday (November 26). The president said that it will help make the judiciary diverse by increasing representation from marginalised social groups. The President's comment has again reignited the debate on creation of All India Judicial Service (AIJS).

All India Judicial Service

» **All-India Judicial Service (AIJS)-** The creation of All India Judicial Service (AIJS) is a reform aimed to centralise the recruitment of judges at the level of additional district judges and district judges for all states.

» **Constitutional Provisions for AIJS-** Article 312 provides the basis for the creation of AIJS on the resolution passed by Rajya Sabha by two-third majority.

» **Current System of Recruitment of District Judges-** Under Articles 233, district judges are appointed by the Governor of the State in consultation with the High Court exercising jurisdiction in relation to such State.

Need For All India Judicial Service

» Huge vacancy of judges and delay in recruitment

» Dearth of good quality judicial officers

» Lack of finances with state governments

» Lack of specialized state training institutions for adjudication

» Subjectivity in the recruitment process

Benefits

» Attract Fresh legal talents

» Accountability, transparency and objectivity in judicial recruitment process

» Representation to deprived sections and women

» Increase the Judge-to-Population ratio

» Uniformity of adjudication across the country

Objections

» Dilution of separation of power by involvement of executive in judicial appointment. It also affronts the federal structure.

» Local language, laws and customs can create challenges of effective dispensation of justice

» Possibility of misuse by the elites and might become discriminatory for weaker sections.

» Restricted promotional avenues for already appointed State officers

» State minorities and backward groups will lose out on reservation benefits if the reservation is provided based on a central list

For detailed Reading- 7 PM Link

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What is the All-India Judicial Service?

All-India Judicial Service- The creation of AIJS is a reform aimed to centralise the recruitment of judges at the level of additional district judges and district judges for all states. Like the UPSC conducts a central recruitment

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process for bureaucrats and assigns successful candidates to state cadres, AIJS will also centrally recruit judges and assign them to states.

Constitutional Provisions for the All-India Judicial Service

a. Article 312 of the Constitution, as amended by the 42nd Amendment, 1976, provides for the creation of an AIJS. The Rajya Sabha has to adopt a resolution, mentioning the necessity to create an All India Judicial Service in national interest, with a two-thirds majority present and voting. The parliament can then create the All India Judicial Service by passing a parliamentary law to that effect.

b. However, Article 312 (3) states that the AIJS cannot include any post inferior to that of a district judge, as defined in Article 236. A district judge can include a city civil court judge, additional district judge, joint district judge, assistant district judge, chief judge of a small cause court, chief presidency magistrate, additional chief presidency magistrate, sessions judge, additional sessions judge, and assistant sessions judge.

Current system of Recruitment of Judges in the lower Judiciary

1) Under Articles 233, district judges are appointed by the Governor of the State in consultation with the High Court exercising jurisdiction in relation to such State.

2) As per Article 234, appointments of persons other than district judges to the judicial service of a State is made by the Governor of the State in accordance with rules made by him in that behalf after consultation with the State Public Service Commission and with the High Court exercising jurisdiction in relation to such State.

A Brief Timeline of the Demand for AIJS

AIJS recommendations	SC's Stand on AIJS	Centre's Action
1958- The law commission first proposed a 'Centralised Judicial Service'.	**1992-** The SC directed the centre to establish AIJS (All India Judge's Association vs Union of India).	**2012**– Centre came up with a "comprehensive proposal for AIJS", which was approved by the Committee of Secretaries.
1978- The Law commission again proposed the idea of All India Judicial Service to clear the case backlogs and delays in Judicial appointment.	**1993-** The Supreme Court permitted the Centre to initiate the creation of AIJS independently.	**2013-** AIJS was included in the agenda of the Conference of Chief Ministers and Chief Justices of the High Court. No consensus could be reached on the issue of AIJS.
2006- The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law, and Justice supported the idea of a pan-Indian judicial service and prepared a draft bill.	**2017-** The Supreme Court suggested a "Central Selection Mechanism" for District Judges Appointment.	**2017-** AIJS was discussed in the Chief Justices Conference. However, it was decided that the respective HCs would evolve appropriate methods within the existing system to fill up the vacancies for appointing district judges.

What is the need for All India Judicial Service?

1. **Huge vacancy of judges and delay in recruitment-** There are large vacancies in the posts in lower judiciary across the country and a huge pendency of about 2.78crore cases in lower judiciary. One of the primary reasons is the inordinate delay in holding regular judicial recruitment exams by the states.

2. **Dearth of good quality judicial officers-** The ever continuing decline in quality of selected judicial officers through the current recruitment system have delayed delivery of justice, increased pendency of cases and

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impaired the quality of judgments. This also has a resultant effect on the competence of higher judiciary (High Courts and Supreme Court).

3. **Lack of finances with state governments-** State judicial services are not attractive for 'best talents' due to low salaries, rewards and compensations awarded by the state governments.

4. **Lack of specialized state training institutions-** Adjudication is a specialization which requires state of the art training institutes and professors. State institutes lack the capacity to allow such adjudication exposure to the selected candidates.

5. **Subjectivity in the recruitment process –** The Current judicial appointments at the lower level and upper levels suffer from subjectivity, corruption and nepotism. Hence, there is a need to reflect the social reality and diversity of the country by establishing a neutral and impartial system of recruitment.

What are the benefits of the All India Judicial Service?

1. **Attracting Fresh talent-** AIJS will ensure a transparent and efficient method of recruitment to attract the best talent in India's legal profession. A national service for judges, not inferior to the post of district judges, with a superannuation age of 60, will be an attractive proposition for young lawyers to apply for it.

2. **Accountability, transparency and objectivity in recruitment process-** Open competitive exam would bring accountability, transparency and objectivity in the recruitment process of judiciary by reducing discretion of selection panel.

3. **Representation to deprived sections-** AIJS will improve the judiciary's representative character by drafting in trained officers from deprived sections of society, especially women and SC/STs.

4. **Increasing the Judge-to-Population ratio and checking the pendency of cases-** In India, there are about 19 judges per 10 lakh population, against the Law Commission's recommendation of at least 50 per 10 lakh people. AIJS will ensure swift filling up of vacancies and ramping up of recruitment to the lower judiciary.

5. **Uniformity across the country-** Quality of adjudication and the dispensation of justice would attain uniformity across the country by ironing out state level differences in laws, practices and standards.

What are the objections to the creation of All-India Judicial Service?

1. **Dilutes separation of power-** The creation of AIJS will transfer control over state judiciary to Union government, by removing control of High Court on recruitment process. It would undermine the independence of judiciary and dilute the separation of power mandated under Article 50. 13 HCs are in disagreement with the All India Judicial Service.

2. **Against India's Federal structure-** A centralised recruitment process is seen as an affront to federalism and an encroachment on the powers of states granted by the Constitution.

3. **Local language problem-** Courts up to District and Sessions Judge transact their business in State language. AIJS officers would find it difficult to acclimatize themselves with local language, thus hampering dispensation of justice.

4. **Local laws and customs problem-** AIJS does not take into account the problem of wide variation in the local laws, practices and customs across States.

5. **Discriminatory for weaker sections and Possibility of elitism-** Candidates from elite legal schools and large cities may benefit from the centralised recruitment. This could be discriminatory for people from less fortunate homes and smaller communities.

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6. **Exclusion of state minorities and backward groups-** State minorities and backward groups will lose out on reservation benefits if the eservation based on a central list.

7. **Restricted promotional avenues for State officers-** The AIJS would limit the promotional avenues for the already selected officers through the current system.

8. **Uncertainty on Career Progression-** AIJS may be rendered unattractive on account of lower number of district judges elevation to the HCs as compared to the Bar.

9. **Mismanaged legal education problem-** Barring a few National Law Universities, the Curriculum followed by law universities lacks effective standards, which results into low quality legal research and scholars. This problem of lack of quality of good legal education will be unaddressed by AIJS.

Read More- Judicial Service

Conclusion and Way Forward

Before the implementation of AIJS by the Parliament, there is a need to build consensus among various associated stakeholders. NITI Aayog has proposed the creation of the All India Judicial Service and has provided the following recommendations-

1. Independence- The AIJS cadre should report to the Chief Justice of every high court to maintain judicial independence.

2. Regular examination- The AIJS examinations must be held regularly and the recruitment process must be completed in a time bound manner.

3. Use of Technology- Implementing video-conferencing to expedite justice and reduce logistical issues.

The competence and quality of the lower judiciary is crucial for revitalizing the entire edifice of Indian judiciary. All India Judicial Service is the right step in this direction.

Read More- The Indian Express
UPSC Syllabus- GS 2- Issues related to Judiciary

[November 2023 Kurukshetra Summary] Sustainability of Rural Enterprises- Explained Pointwise+ Inforgraphic

Sustainability of rural enterprises is a crucial aspect of India's economic growth and development. Rural enterprises are business entities that promote revenue generation and act as agents of social change at the grassroots level. According to official data released on April 30, 2022, India has more than 63 million MSMEs, out of which about 94% are micro-enterprises. Most of these micro-enterprises are rural enterprises.

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Sustainability of Rural Enterprises

» **Rural Enterprise-** The enterprise set up by a group of people with common economic interests like Farmers, Fisherfolk, ago-processors, tour guides, craft makers, etc. The rural enterprises are legally recognized organizations to carry out business activities.

» **Constitutional Provisions for Rural enterprises-** Article 43 of the constitution provides that the state must undertake measures to promote rural cottage based enterprises and cooperative societies.

» **Estimated Numbers of Rural enterprises-** India has more than 63 million MSMEs, out of which about 94% are micro-enterprises. Most of these micro-enterprises are located in rural areas.

Importance of Rural Enterprises

» Rural enterprises foster the appropriate utilization of local resources like raw materials and labour. Ex- Rural enterprises based on coconut.

» Rural industrialisation can solve the dual problem of unemployment and under-employment in the rural areas. Ex- ID Fresh company which produces dosa and Idly batter, employs 1,100 employees

» Social empowerment of Women and other marginalised sections. Ex-Lijjat papad enterprise provides employment to over 40,000 women

» Promotion of Rural artistic activities and conservation of Indian Heritage. Ex- Rural enterprises based on Madhubani Paintings

» Keeps a check on Social Evils like Rurban migration, unsymmetrical growth of cities and environmental pollution.

Challenges

» Inconsistent market linkages. Ex- Difficulties of FPOs in rural areas in marketing their produce.

» Prevalent societal and gender-based biases. Ex- Social Boycott of shops run by the lower castes in villages.

» Severe competition from urban markets. Ex- Local snacks maker's inability to compete with brands like Haldiram.

For detailed Reading- 7 PM Link

Way Forward

» Ensure better access to capital, infrastructure and mentoring of these enterprises by industry experts like Ratan Tata of TATA Group.

» Skilling and Entrepreneurship Development through the establishment of rural incubation centres

» Civil society groups like the NGOs, SHGs, charities, etc can further help in promoting rural entrepreneurship

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What are the types of Rural Enterprises?

Rural Enterprise means a group of people with common economic interests who have formed a legally recognized organization to carry out business activities. For example- Farmers, Fisherfolk, ago-processors, tour guides, craft makers, etc. Article 43 of the constitution provides that the state must undertake measures to promote rural and cottage based enterprises.

There are two types of Rural enterprises-

1. **Proprietial ownership**– The enterprises are run by an individual.
2. **Group entrepreneurship-** The enterprises are run by the Self Help Groups (SHGs), Cooperatives, and Producer companies.

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What is the Importance of Rural Enterprises/Entrepreneurship in India?

The Rural enterprises have the following advantages due to which they become extremely important in India:

1. **Resource Utilization-** Rural enterprises foster the appropriate utilization of local resources like raw materials and labour for productive purposes. **For ex-** Rural Farmer Producer Companies engaged in production of coconut milk, coconut oil in Southern India.

2. **Employment Generation-** Rural industries create large-scale employment openings for rural people. Rural industrialisation can solve the dual problem of unemployment and under-employment in the rural areas. **For ex-** ID Fresh company which produces dosa and Idly batter, employs 1,100 employees and produces 50,000 packets a day.

3. **Reduction in the Migration of Rural Population:** Rural entrepreneurship provides gainful and productive employment opportunities for the rural people in their own areas. It discourages rural people to migrate from rural areas to urban areas in search of jobs.

4. **Promotion of Artistic Activities-** The rich heritage of rural India is conserved by protecting and promoting handicrafts and art through entrepreneurship. **For ex-** Rural enterprises engaged in the making of Madhubani Painting's for customers.

5. **Keeps a check on Social Evils-** The growth of rural enterprises abates the unsymmetrical growth of cities, increase of slums, social tensions, social issues, environmental pollutions.

6. **Encouragement of the Rural Youth-** Rural entrepreneurship can promote the rural youth and expose them to several paths to adopting entrepreneurship and promoting it as a career.

7. **Social empowerment of Women and other marginalised sections-** The rural industries promote the empowerment of women and other marginalised sections of the society by providing them with gainful employment and securing financial independence. **For ex-** Lijjat papad enterprise provides employment to over 40,000 women.

What are the challenges faced by Rural Entrepreneurs?

1. **Inconsistent market linkages-** The rural enterprises lack the infrastructural and logistical facilities to market their products. **For ex-** Difficulties of FPOs in rural areas in marketing their produce.

2. **Lack of skill and understanding of enterprise entrepreneurship-** The rural entrepreneurs often lack the necessary enterprising skill to upgrade their businesses.

3. **Severe competition from urban markets-** The rural businesses face adverse competition from their urban counterparts which have better availability of working capital, access to latest technology and ability to transform their product range. **For ex-** Local snacks maker's inability to compete with brands like Haldiram.

4. **Prevalent societal and gender-based biases-** The rural enterprises run by the marginalised communities and women are subjected to the biases prevalent in the society and are often discriminated. **For ex-** Social Boycott of shops run by the lower castes in villages.

5. **Inadequate understanding of the government support mechanism-** Low awareness about the Government of India schemes regarding the promotion of rural enterprises is also a major bottleneck in the growth of the rural enterprises.

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What are the Government's initiatives to promote rural entrepreneurship?

Government has been undertaking several initiatives to promote rural entrepreneurship in the country. Some of these are mentioned below

Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP)	It has been initiated with the purpose of assisting entrepreneurs to establish their business enterprises in rural India. The scheme supports existing enterprises as well as new enterprises with their unit establishment at the village level.
Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs)	It provides skill and entrepreneurship development training programmes to the rural unemployed youth, assisting them in commencing their own business units.
Pradhan Mantri- YUVA initiative	Ministry of Skill Development and entrepreneurship is implementing this scheme. The main of the scheme is to capitalise on mentoring prospective entrepreneurs and help in expansion of the existing enterprises.
PM Vishwakarma Yojana	Read More- PM Vishwakarma Yojana

Conclusion and way forward

Developing rural entrepreneurship is essential for India's progress, as it augments economic and employment growth. It is fundamental to ensure that manpower, money, material, machinery, and understanding of market are complete for the development of a viable business model to better support aspiring rural entrepreneurs.

1. **Better access to capital, infrastructure and marketing-** The government must target to provide the rural industries the same facilities of easy access to manpower, material and money as their urban counterparts.

2. **Mentoring by Industry experts-** The government can work with the industry experts like TATA group's Ratan Tata to mentor these rural enterprises to scale up their operations.

3. **Skilling and Entrepreneurship Development through Project Mode-** Entrepreneurs should be selected based on their existing skills, geographic locations, and demographic traits. Post selection, the participants should be provided with skill training and handheld into scaling up of their enterprises.

4. **Establishment of incubation centres-** Ideation hackathon and establishment of rural incubation centres can promote skill development in the rural areas.

5. **Active participation of civil societies-** The civil society groups like the NGOs, SHGs, charities, etc can further help in promoting rural entrepreneurship.

> Read More- The Times of India
> Syllabus- GS 3- Industrial development policies, inclusive growth

Female Labour Force Participation Rate- Explained Pointwise + Infographic

India's Low Female Labour Force Participation rate is a big threat to India's Demographic Dividend. India still has not cracked the code of getting women to work in time. Any further delay in improving the female labour force participation in productive sector, will be detrimental to India's dream of becoming a developed nation by 2047.

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Female Labour Force Participation Rate

» Female Labour Force Participation Rate is a ratio of the number of women who are part of the labour force to the number of women in the working age (greater than 15 years of age). A woman is considered to be a part of the labour force if she/he is either employed or actively looking for work.

» Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) is consistently increasing in India over the years. It has increased from **24.5% in 2018-19** to **37% in 2022-23**.

» However, according to the World Bank, Indian women's participation in the formal economy is among the lowest in the world. India needs to improve it's low FLFPR to reap its rich demographic Dividend

Reasons for low FLFPR

» The High Degree of Informalisation discourages women from participating in the labour force. **95% of India's working women are informal workers (ILO).**

» **Missing Manufacturing sector jobs** and limited number of jobs in services for women.

» Gender Pay Gap and Glass ceiling. India has one of the **largest gender gap in median earnings** of full-time employees (ES 18)

» **Pinkification of Jobs** limit the role of women to specific job profiles like nursing, teaching, gynaecologist.

» **Unpaid care**, **child care** and **domestic chores**, has hindered women's ability to participate in the labour force

» **Educated Unemployment phenomenon-** Unavailability of jobs that match the high female education levels

» **Safety Concerns** like violence against women and sexual harrasment at workplace

For detailed Reading- 7 PM Link

Advantages of FLFPR

» Economic Boost- Gender parity in the workforce can **improve India's GDP by 27%** (IMF).

» Tackle the phenomenon of **feminisation of poverty** which is a result of informalised women workforce

» Improvement in Social Indicators like the **MMR** and **IMR**

» Enables women to play a greater role in decision-making like **family planning**

» Fulfilment of Global Commitments like SDG-1, SDG-5, SDG-8

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What is Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR)?

Female Labour Force Participation Rate is a ratio of the number of women who are part of the labour force to the number of women in the working age (greater than 15 years of age). A woman is considered to be a part of the labour force if she/he is either employed or actively looking for work.

FLFPR trend in India

1. Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) is consistently increasing in India. However, it is still very less compared to the developed nations.

2022-23	37%
2021-22	32.8%

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2020-21	32.5%
2019-20	30%
2018-19	24.5%

2. The simple average of the FLFPR of the five southern Indian states (Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala) is 13% lower than the five northern states of Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand. This defies the conventional belief that southern states, with high literacy and women empowerment indices, will have high FLFPR.

3. There are only four states (Assam, Bihar, Haryana and Delhi) with an FLFPR of less than 25%. Delhi has the lowest at 14.8%.

4. According to the World Bank, Indian women's participation in the formal economy is among the lowest in the world. Only some parts of the Arab world perform worse than India in terms of FLFPR.

What are the reasons for low Female Labour Force Participation rate in India?

1. **High Degree of Informalisation**– According to a 2018 study by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), more than 95% of India's working women are informal workers. The absence of social security net in the informal sector discourages women from participating in the labour force.

2. **Missing manufacturing-** Lack of alternative employment opportunities in manufacturing and the limited number of jobs in services for women, has also suppressed FLFPR in India.

3. **Gender Pay Gap and Glass ceiling-** According to the Economic Survey 2018, India has one of the largest gender gap in median earnings of full-time employees. Such discriminatory practices at workplace adversely affects FLFPR.

4. **Pink Jobs-** The societal notions about 'gendered occupations' limit the role of women to specific job profiles like nursing, teaching, gynaecologist etc. There are tangible and intangible barriers to entry of women in multiple professions like heavy engineering, law enforcement, armed forces etc.

5. **Cultural practices-** Unpaid care, child care and domestic chores, has hindered women's ability to participate in the labour force. In a patriarchal society, many women are not allowed to work after marriage.

6. **Increase in Household Income-** The rise in household incomes in both the rural and urban areas has provided women the choice to not take up jobs.

7. **Safety Concerns-** High incidents of violence against women discourages women to work in the night like their male counterparts. Further, instances of sexual harassment at workplace induces women to opt out of labour force.

8. **Educated Unemployment-** Women are going for higher education, as seen in Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of secondary education. The lack of availability of jobs that match the high female education levels also contributes to the low FLFPR.

9. **Legally sanctioned restrictions-** Many States continue to restrict women's participation in hazardous jobs in factories and commercial establishments. For ex- women are not allowed to work on stone-cutting machines, shop floor of boilers, etc.

10. **Political Vacuum-** The current Lok Sabha has only 14.4% women, despite women constituting around 50% of Indian population. The lack of gender perspectives inhibits formulation of a comprehensive policy that encourages women participation in economic activities.

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What is the significance of enhancing Female Labour Force Participation?

1. **Economic Boost-** According to the IMF, gender parity in the workforce can improve India's GDP by 27%.

2. **Tackling poverty-** It helps to tackle the phenomenon of feminisation of poverty, which is a result of highly informalised work performed by women.

3. **Improvement in Social Indicators-** Encouraging more women to enter the formal workforce will improve indicators like Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR).

4. **Self Confidence and Dignity-** Financial independence enables women to play a greater role in decision-making like family planning.

5. **Global Commitments-** Improving FLFPR is related to achievements of SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities).

Read More- Female Labour Force Participation Rate

What steps have been taken by the Government to enhance Female Labour Force Participation?

Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017	The Act more than doubled the duration of paid maternity leave for women employees to 26 weeks. It proposed an option to work from home after this period, on mutual agreement with the employer. It made crèche facilities mandatory for establishments employing 50 or more women.
Anganwadi centres under the ICDS	They provide maternal and child nutritional security, a clean and safe environment, and early childhood education. Thus, they facilitate the ability of women to re-enter work post-childbirth.
National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013	Apart from providing affordable food, it entitles pregnant and lactating mothers to a cash transfer of at least INR 6,000. This is done to break the compulsion for early returning to work.
Stand up India	The scheme facilitates bank loans for setting up a new enterprise in manufacturing, services, agri-allied activities, or the trading sector by SC/ST/Women entrepreneurs. It provides bank loans between INR 10 lakh and up to 1 crore.
The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013	It is a legislative act in India that seeks to protect women from sexual harassment at their place of work

Conclusion and Way Forward

1. **Child Care Subsidies-** Child-care subsidies should be provided to free up mothers' time to enter the labour force, which would have significant implications in increasing female employment.

2. **Comprehensive approach to improve women labour force participation-** A comprehensive approach aimed at improving skill development, access to child care, maternity protection, and provision of safe and accessible transport, is needed.

3. **Removal of the legally sanctioned legislation-** States should review legislations like the Factory Act, Shops and Establishment Act etc. and liberalise the restrictions on women. The best practices from well performing States can be adopted across all States. For ex- Andhra Pradesh and Telangana are the only two states that allow women to work in all processes in all establishments.

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4. **Creation of Self Help Groups-** The focus should be on creation of more Self Help Groups. They are of immense reliance and drastically enhance women participation as seen in case of Kudumbashree model of Kerala.

5. **Use of innovative solutions to enhance female retention in industries-** Public crèches can be operated at worksite clusters such as near industrial areas, markets, dense low-income residential areas, and labour nakas. This model has been tested successfully by Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) Sangini in some Indian cities.

6. **Accounting for Care economy-** We need to account for care economy in the GDP calculations.

Conclusion

There is a need to take multiple steps to augment the female labour force participation in India in order to realise the numerous social and economic benefits that accrue from greater presence of women in the workforce. It can help India move from women-centric development to women-led development.

> Read More- Livemint
> UPSC Syllabus- GS 3 Inclusive Growth, GS 1 Women empowerment, GS 2 Vulnerable sections of the society

The UN Treaty on Plastic Pollution – Explained Pointwise+ Infographic

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) has been formed under the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to develop an internationally legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution worldwide. Under the UN Environment Assembly Resolution 5/14, the INC is responsible for delivering a global plastics treaty by 2025. The INC met in Nairobi from November 13 to 19 for its third round of negotiations (INC-3).

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UN Treaty on Plastic Pollution

» **UN Treaty on Plastic Pollution-** Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) has been formed under UNEP to develop an internationally legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution worldwide.

» Plastic pollution is a global problem. According to UNEP, approximately 7 billion of the 9.2 billion tonnes of plastic produced from 1950-2017 became plastic waste, ending up in landfills or dumped. Plastic accounts for 85% of all marine litter.

» INC-3 held in Nairobi focussed on the substantive contents of the treaty and debated on the zero draft of the treaty. However, several disagreements have emerged on the Zero Draft of the treaty.

Disagreements over Treaty

» Disagreement on the objective and scope under UNEA Resolution 5/14

» Some states have contended that reduction of plastic production is out of the scope of the UNEA resolution 5/14.

» Reduction in the production of primary polymers and harmful chemicals used of production of plastics

» Opposition to the imposition of a plastic-pollution fee to be paid by plastic polymer producers

» No consensus was reached with the rules of procedure of the treaty

Way Forward

» Build consensus to end plastic production

» Evolve a Financial Mechanism to compensate for plastic pollution

» Ban the polymers and chemicals of concern

» Early Finalisation of the treaty by fine-tuning the definitions, targets and adoption year

For detailed Reading- 7 PM Link

Need for the Treaty

» Grave impacts of plastic pollution on human health and environment

» Plastic pollution transcends national boundaries which end up in oceans which are global commons

» Need for a Collaborative Effort. For ex- India may ban single-use plastics, but single-use plastic materials can still enter India through imports.

» Plastic Pollution contributes to Global Warming and Climate Change. This necessitates collective effort, just like the UNFCCC framework.

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What has been the progress on the UN Treaty on Plastic Pollution?

1. The UNEA had passed the resolution 5/14 in March 2022 to formulate an international legally-binding. The INC was established to negotiate the treaty. Its first meeting was held from November 28, 2022 to December 02, 2022 in Punta Del Este, Uruguay.
2. INC-2, held in Paris IN 2023, was not a success as the entire meeting debated on the rules of procedure.
3. INC-3 held in Nairobi focussed on the substantive contents of the treaty and debated on the zero draft of the treaty.

Zero Draft Discussions- Key Takeaways

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> Zero draft as prepared by the secretariat contained strong options for an international legally binding treaty to end plastic pollution.
>
> 1. Member states managed to water down their core obligations as mandated in the Zero Draft of the Treaty.
>
> 2. Some states disagreed on the objective and scope under UNEA Resolution 5/14.
>
> 3. Reduction in the production of primary polymers was a major bone of contention. The fossil fuel and chemical sector lobbyists argued that reduction of plastic production was out of the scope of the UNEA resolution 5/14.
>
> 4. The financial mechanism for the implementation of the treaty was another point of divergence. Some member states opposed the imposition of a plastic-pollution fee to be paid by plastic polymer producers.
>
> 5. The move to reduce fossil-fuel subsidies and investments in environmentally disadvantageous technologies such as incineration and waste-to-energy plants was also blocked.
>
> 6. The ban on trade in polymers, chemicals, plastic products, and waste, which was not covered by the Basel treaty, was also blocked. The bloc contended that it impinged on the freedom and sovereignty of nations.
>
> 7. No consensus was reached with the rules of procedure to be followed for the adoption of this treaty.

What is the extent of Plastic Pollution?

1. Plastic pollution is a global problem. According to UNEP, approximately 7 billion of the 9.2 billion tonnes of plastic produced from 1950-2017 became plastic waste, ending up in landfills or dumped.

2. Plastic accounts for 85% of all marine litter. Plastic debris affects 86% of all sea turtle species, 44% of all seabird species, and 43% of all marine mammal species. For Ex- Great Pacific Garbage Patch, which is a collection of marine debris in the North Pacific Ocean.

3. According to CPCB reports, plastic contributes to 8% of the total solid waste in India. Only 60% of the total plastic waste is recycled in India.

> Read More- Plastic Pollution in India: An Overview

What is the need for the UN Treaty on Plastic Pollution?

1. **Grave impacts of plastic pollution on human health and environment-** Plastic pollution is threatening land- and marine-based ecosystems. Exposure to plastics harm human health leading to fertility, hormonal, metabolic and neurological problems.

2. **Rise in global plastic production-** Plastic manufacturing has become a global industry valued at US$ 522 billion, and is expected to double in capacity by 2040. This will further damage the environment.

3. **Plastic pollution transcends national boundaries-** A major chunk of plastic waste ends up in oceans, which are part of global commons and beyond individual jurisdictions. Microplastics have been found in pristine environments of Antarctica.

4. **Need for a Collaborative Effort-** In an increasing integrated world, actions by individual countries are rendered ineffective in the absence of commensurate efforts by other countries. For ex- India may ban single-use plastics but single-use plastic materials can still enter India through imports.

5. **Contributes to Global Warming and Climate Change-** Plastics ending up in landfills are known to contribute to Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) which lead to global warming and climate change. This necessitates collective effort, just like the UNFCCC framework.

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6. **Targeted action-** Legally binding framework, with measurable targets and periodic reviews, will force the countries to take action.

What Should be the Way Forward?

1. **Build consensus to end plastic production-** The INC-4 meeting must try to build consensus to end both plastic pollution and plastic production.

2. **Evolve a Financial Mechanism-** A consensus must be built to impose plastic production fee to compensate for the damage caused by plastic production.

3. **Finalisation of the treaty-** INC-4 must hammer down and fine tune the details related to the definitions, targets, and timelines in the treaty.

4. **Ban the polymers and chemicals of concern-** A ban on the polymers and chemicals of concern must be envisaged to stop the production of the harmful plastics.

5. **Bioplastics as Alternative-** Bioplastics produced from different biodegradable and non-biodegradable materials including weeds, hemp, plant oil, potato starch, cellulose, corn starch etc. These must be promoted as alternative to the plastics in the treaty.

Plastic pollution is perhaps the biggest threat faced by the planet after climate change. UNFCCC has provided a systematic framework for collective action to address climate change. The UN Treaty on Plastic Pollution can provide a similar mechanism to combat plastic pollution. The earliest adoption of the treaty must be our imminent target.

Read More- The Hindu
Syllabus- Syllabus: GS III, Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation.

Urban Planning and Development- Explained Pointwise+Infographic

The India Infrastructure Report 2023 on Urban Planning and Development was recently released. The report covers various complex issues related to urban planning and development in India.

India is experiencing rapid economic growth. Economic development is often accompanied by urbanisation. According to the 2011 Census, the urbanisation rate in India was 31.2%, which is expected to increase to 43.2% by 2035 (UN Habitat World Cities Report). This rapid increase in the rate of urbanisation in India, has necessitated proper urban planning and development in India.

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Urban Development and Planning

» India is experiencing rapid economic growth. This rapid economic growth has been accompanied by rapid urbanisation.

» According to the 2011 Census, the urbanisation rate in India was **31.2%**, which is expected to **increase to 43.2%** by 2035 (**UN Habitat World Cities Report**). This rapid increase in the rate of urbanisation in India, has necessitated proper urban planning and development in India.

⇩ Need

» Urban centres as propellents of economic growth. Urban areas occupy just **3% of the land** but contribute to **~60% of the GDP**. Ex- Bangalore- IT hub, Mumbai-Financial Hub

» Rapid growth in Urban population, which is **expected to cross 50% of the total population** within the next two decades

» Planning for the large number of urban poor to stop the growth of unabated slums and shanties. For ex- **Slums of Dharavi**

» Improvement of the quality of urban life by ensuring access to basic services such as water and sanitation

» Enhancement of environmental sustainability by **green spaces**, **energy-efficient buildings**.

🛣 Way Forward

» Planning for optimum utilisation of urban land

» Empowerment of Local bodies by ramping up human resources

» Involvement of Citizens in Planning like '**Citizen Outreach Campaign**'

» Enhanced Role of Private Sector by **empanelling private sector consultancies**

For detailed Reading- 7 PM Link

🏃 Challenges

» **Uneven distribution of urban centres** and lack of uniformity of pace of urbanisation across the country.

» **~50% of India's statutory towns** are expanding without any master plan to guide their growth and infrastructure. (NITI Aayog)

» Local government lacks **funds**, **functions** and **functionality**. Ex- Reliance on grants from Centre.

» Sub Optimal Utilisation of Urban Land with **paradox** of **congested land parcels** co-existing with **parcels of under-utilized lands**

» Increasing Risk of Water Scarcity in Cities like **Day-Zero in Bangalore**

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What is the need for Urban Planning and Development in India?

Proper urban planning and development is key to achieving India's dream of being a Vikshit Bharat by 2047 due to the following reasons-

1. **Urban centres as propellents of economic growth-** Urban cities in India occupy just 3% of the land but contribute to ~60% of the GDP. Urban centres are economic hubs which contribute to the rapid economic development of the country. **For Ex**– Bangalore, Hyderabad, Gurugram- IT hubs, Mumbai-Financial Hub.

2. **Rapid growth in Urban population-** India is the second-largest urban system in the world, with almost 11% of the total global urban population living in Indian cities. India's urban population is expected to cross 50% of the total population within the next two decades, necessitating proper planning to ensure ease of living.

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3. **Planning for the large number of urban poor-** According to the Ministry of Finance, one in-three poor people lives in urban areas. This figure was about one-in-eight in the early 1950s. Hence, proper urban planning is necessary to stop the growth of unabated slums and shanties. **For ex-** Slums of Dharavi near the financial hub of BKC in Mumbai.

4. **Improving the quality of urban life-** Proper Urban planning ensures access to basic services such as water, sanitation, and healthcare. It also creates livable and walkable neighbourhoods that are safer and more pleasant to live in.

5. **Enhancement of environmental sustainability-** Urban planning ensures that cities are designed in a way to minimize their impact on the environment through measures such as green spaces, energy-efficient buildings, and sustainable transportation options.

What are the Challenges to Urbanisation in India?

1. **Uneven urbanisation-** There is uneven distribution of urban centres and lack of uniformity of pace of urbanisation across the country. States such as Bihar, Odisha, Assam, and Uttar Pradesh lag in urbanisation rates while states like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra are leading. This makes it difficult to implement a uniform policy for urban planning and development.

2. **Statutory Towns Growing Without 'Master Plans'-** According to the NITI Aayog Report ~50% of India's statutory towns are expanding without any master plan to guide their growth and infrastructure.

> A Statutory Town is one with a municipality, corporation, cantonment board or notified town area committee. As per 2011 Census, there are 4,041 Statutory Towns.

3. **Lack of Capability of Local Governments-** The local government lacks funds, functions and functionality for planned urban infrastructural development and service delivery. **For Ex-** reliance on grants from Centre and State for their functioning

4. **Sub Optimal Utilisation of Urban Land-** Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has noted the paradox of congested land parcels of high population densities co-existing with vast parcels of under-utilized lands. Multiple public sector organizations/agencies (ports, railways, ULBs, etc.) own land under their jurisdictions. This hinders holistic urban planning and development.

5. **Magnitude of Population Living in Slums-** According to Census 2011, 17.3% of the total urban population is living in slums. Lack of affordable housing is contributing to creation and expansion of slums.

6. **Increasing Risk of Water Scarcity in Cities-** Indian cities dominate current and future lists of global cities with the highest overall water risk (The World Wide Fund for Nature India 2020). **For Ex-** the looming fear of 'Day Zero' in Bangalore

7. **Lack of Planning for Disaster Mitigation-** The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs in its report has observed that the encroachment of lakes and riverbeds had played a major role in urban flooding in Chennai.

> Read More- Not going to down-urbanisation in India

What steps can be taken to improve the process of Urban Planning and Development in India?

NITI Aayog has provided recommendations in the 'Reforms in Urban Planning In India' Report to improve the urban planning and development in India.

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1. **Programmatic intervention for planning of healthy cities-** NITI Aayog has recommended a central sector scheme '500 Healthy Cities Programme', for a period of 5 years to ensure holistic socio-economic development of Indian cities.

2. **Planning for optimum utilisation of urban land-** All the cities/towns under the proposed 'Healthy Cities Programme' should strengthen regulations to maximize the efficiency of urban land (or planning area). There must be regular review of town and country planning or urban and regional development acts.

3. **Empowerment of Local bodies-** The local bodies must be empowered by proper devolution of funds, functions and functionalities. The NITI Aayog has also recommended ramping up of human resources of local bodies by adopting the following measures-
(a) Expediting the filling up of vacant positions of town planners.
(b) Lateral entry of town planners for positions for a minimum period of 3 years and a maximum of 5 years to close the gaps.
(c) Existing centres of excellence established by MoHUA and State-level training institutions need to be further strengthened to regularly build the skills and expertise of urban functionaries.

4. **Involvement of Citizens in Planning-** NITI Aayog has recommended a 'Citizen Outreach Campaign' for making the process of urban planning more inclusive and accessible.

5. **Enhanced Role of Private Sector-** The role of private sector must be enhanced in urban planning and development, like the empanelment of private sector consultancies.

Read More- The Indian Express, India Infrastructure Report 2023
UPSC Syllabus- GS I, Urbanization, their problems and their remedies; GS III, Infrastructure

Regulation of AI- Explained Pointwise

Calls for regulation of Artificial Intelligence has emerged stronger than ever with the recent rise in the cases of misuse of AI like proliferation of deepfakes. With the rapid advancement of AI and its potential impact on society, there is a growing consensus among experts that regulation is necessary to ensure responsible and ethical use of AI technology.

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Regulation of AI

» The global artificial intelligence market size was valued at USD 136.55 billion in 2022 and is projected to expand at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 37.3% from 2023 to 2030.

» Calls for regulation of Artificial Intelligence has emerged stronger than ever with the recent rise in the cases of misuse of AI like proliferation of deepfakes. With the rapid advancement of AI and its potential impact on society, there is a growing consensus among experts for regulation of AI.

Need

» Bias and discrimination- Facial recognition algorithms have been shown to have higher error rates for women and people with darker skin tones.

» Concerns about privacy and data protection. For ex- Lawsuits against Silicon Valley giants for data and privacy breach.

» Vulnerable to cybersecurity threats and attacks. For ex- Adversarial attacks can manipulate AI models posing risks to autonomous vehicles or healthcare.

» Artificial General Intelligence can go beyond human intelligence, which raises concerns of predictability and security.

» Challenges associated with Deepfakes like women safety (pornographic material), liar's dividend (an undesirable truth is dismissed as fake news) etc.

Way Forward

» Universal adoption of the Bletchley Declaration

» Establish comprehensive and flexible regulatory framework

» Foster international cooperation

» Invest in AI research and education

» Encourage industry self-regulation

Challenges

» Rapid technological advancement makes it challenging for regulators to keep up with the latest developments

» Increase in compliance costs may push small business and startups out of the market.

» Determination of responsibility and liability when AI systems cause harm or make erroneous decisions

» Developing consensus among different countries with varying interests and priorities is a complex task.

For detailed Reading- 7 PM Link

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What is the need for regulation of AI?

1. **Bias and discrimination**: AI systems can inherit biases from the data they are trained on, leading to discriminatory outcomes. **For ex-** Facial recognition algorithms have been shown to have higher error rates for women and people with darker skin tones.

2. **Lack of transparency-** Many AI algorithms operate as black boxes, making it difficult to understand how they reach their decisions. **For ex-** Medical AI system recommending a specific medical treatment but cannot explain its reasoning.

3. **Privacy and data protection-** AI systems rely on vast amounts of personal data, raising concerns about privacy and data protection. **For ex-** Lawsuits against Silicon Valley giants for data and privacy breach in their AI systems.

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4. **Security risks-** AI systems can be vulnerable to cybersecurity threats and attacks. **For ex-** Adversarial attacks can manipulate AI models posing risks in critical domains such as autonomous vehicles or healthcare.

5. **Ethical considerations-** AI raises ethical questions related to the impact on jobs, social inequality, and concentration of power. **For ex-** automated decision-making in hiring processes have shown to perpetuate existing biases and result in unfair outcomes.

6. **Artificial General Intelligence–** AGI can self-learn and go beyond human intelligence, raising concerns of predictability and security.

7. **Autonomous Weapons Development-** These machines have the potential to make life-and-death decisions without direct human intervention, leading to ethical dilemma regarding the value of human life.

8. **Mass State Surveillance:** AI, equipped to conduct facial recognition and analyze extensive data, will empower governments to maintain round-the-clock profiles of citizens. This will make dissenting against governments difficult.

9. **Challenges associated with Deepfakes generated using AI-** There are concerns about women safety (morphed pornographic material), liar's dividend (an undesirable truth is dismissed as fake news) and fuelling radicalisation and violence (Fake videos showing armed forces committing 'crimes in conflict areas').

> Read More- Deepfakes- Explained Pointwise

What are the challenges in regulation of AI?

1. **Rapid technological advancement-** AI is evolving at a rapid pace, making it challenging for regulators to keep up with the latest developments and effectively regulate a technology that is constantly evolving.

2. **Complexity and development-** Creating effective regulations that address the intricacies of AI systems and keep pace with technological advancements is a considerable challenge.

3. **Increased costs and competition-** Compliance with regulations may impose additional costs on businesses. This disproportionately effects smaller companies and startups, limiting their ability to compete in the AI market.

4. **Accountability and liability-** Determination of responsibility and liability when AI systems cause harm or make erroneous decisions is also a considerable challenge.

5. **International cooperation-** Developing consensus among different countries with varying interests and priorities is a complex task.

What is the status of regulation of AI in India and across the globe?

India

a. **Digital India Framework-** India is developing a comprehensive Digital India Framework that will include provisions for regulating AI. The framework aims to protect digital citizens and ensure the safe and trusted use of AI.
b. **National AI programme-** India has established a National AI Programme to promote the efficient and responsible use of AI.
c. **National Data Governance Framework Policy-** India has implemented a National Data Governance Framework Policy to govern the collection, storage, and usage of data, including data used in AI systems. This policy will help ensure the ethical and responsible handling of data in the AI ecosystem.
d. **Draft Digital India Act-** The Ministry of Information Technology and Electronics (MeitY) is working on framing the draft Digital India Act, which will replace the existing IT Act. The new act will have a specific

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chapter dedicated to emerging technologies, particularly AI, and how to regulate them to protect users from harm.

Rest of the World

1. **European Union-** The European Union is working on the draft Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act) to regulate AI from the top down.

2. **United States-** The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy has published a non-binding Blueprint for the Development, Use, and Deployment of Automated Systems (Blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights), listing principles to minimize potential harm from AI.

3. **Japan-** Japan's approach to regulating AI is guided by the Society 5.0 project, aiming to address social problems with innovation.

4. **China-** China has established the "Next Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan" and published ethical guidelines for AI. It has also introduced specific laws related to AI applications, such as the management of algorithmic recommendations.

What should be the way forward?

1. **Universal adoption of the Bletchley Declaration-** The push must be made towards universal adoption of the Bletchley Declaration by all the countries.

Read More- Bletchley Declaration

2. **Establish comprehensive and flexible regulatory framework-**: The governments should develop clear guidelines and laws that address various aspects of AI, including data privacy, algorithmic transparency, accountability, and potential biases.

3. **Foster international cooperation-** Given the global nature of AI and its potential impact, collaboration among countries is essential. International standards and agreements should be developed to promote ethical practices and ensure consistency in regulation across borders. In this respect, the **G7 Hiroshima AI Process** (HAP) could facilitate discussions.

4. **Encourage industry self-regulation-** Companies involved in AI development should take responsibility for ensuring the ethical and responsible use of their technologies.

5. **Invest in AI research and education-** Governments, academic institutions, and industry stakeholders should allocate resources to R&D, and education in the field of AI. This will help create a well-informed workforce capable of addressing regulatory challenges and ensuring the safe and responsible deployment of AI technologies.

Read More- Indian Express
UPSC Syllabus- GS 3: Science and Technology – developments and their applications and effects in everyday life

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Cyclone disaster management in India- Explained Pointwise + Infographics

Cyclone Michaung has barrelled through India's southern coast and has left Chennai city flooded and struggling to return to normal. India witnesses several cyclones throughout the year, which necessitates adequate disaster management measures to minimise the damage. 8% of the geographical area in 13 Coastal States and Union Territories (UTs) of India are affected by severe tropical cyclones year after year.

Cyclone disaster management in India

» Cyclone Michaung has barrelled through India's southern coast and has left Chennai city flooded and struggling to return to normal. India witnesses several cyclones throughout the year, which necessitates adequate disaster management measures to minimise the damage.

» There has been a 52% increase in the number of cyclonic storms over the Arabian Sea (2001-2019), compared to the previous period (1982-2000).

Need

» Loss of life and displacement. For ex- The 1999 Odisha cyclone claimed over 10,000 lives

» Damage to infrastructure. For ex- Cyclone Tauktae in 2021 caused widespread damage to roads, bridges and buildings in Gujarat and MH

» High economic losses. For ex- Cyclone Fani, which hit Odisha in 2019, resulted in losses estimated at $1.81 billion.

» Impacts on livelihood. For ex- Cyclone Amphan (2020) in WB disrupted the livelihoods causing an estimated $13 billion in damage.

» Effects on public health and Education. For ex- Outbreak of Cholera after Amphan.

Way Forward

» Strengthen early warning systems
» Improve communication and information dissemination
» Enhance preparedness and response planning
» Strengthen infrastructure and resilience
» Enhanced Community engagement and capacity building

Challenges

» Excessive Focus on management rather than prior mitigation measures

» Ignorance of cyclone warnings. For ex- During Ockhi, cyclone disaster warnings were ignored by local bodies.

» Incapacity of State disaster management forces renders golden hour response ineffective.

» Insufficient post-disaster response. For ex- During Cyclone Jawad, many farmers resorted to distress selling and premature harvesting.

For detailed Reading- 7 PM Link

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About Cyclones in India

India's North Indian Ocean (NIO) region, which encompasses the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea, witnesses high frequency of cyclones. This poses significant threat to the Indian 7,500 km coastline, along with Lakshadweep and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Cyclones from the Bay of Bengal- The Bay of Bengal has experienced an 8% decrease in cyclonic storms in the recent period (2001-2019), compared to the previous period (1982-2000). However, it still dominates in terms of cyclone frequency and intensity compared to the Arabian Sea. These cyclones often originate on the eastern side of the North Indian Ocean (NIO) Basin and initially move in a west-northwesterly direction.

Cyclones from the Arabian Sea- Cyclones in the Arabian Sea are less frequent but no less dangerous. However, there has been a 52% increase in the number of cyclonic storms over the Arabian Sea (2001-2019), compared to the previous period (1982-2000).

What are the cyclone-prone regions of India?
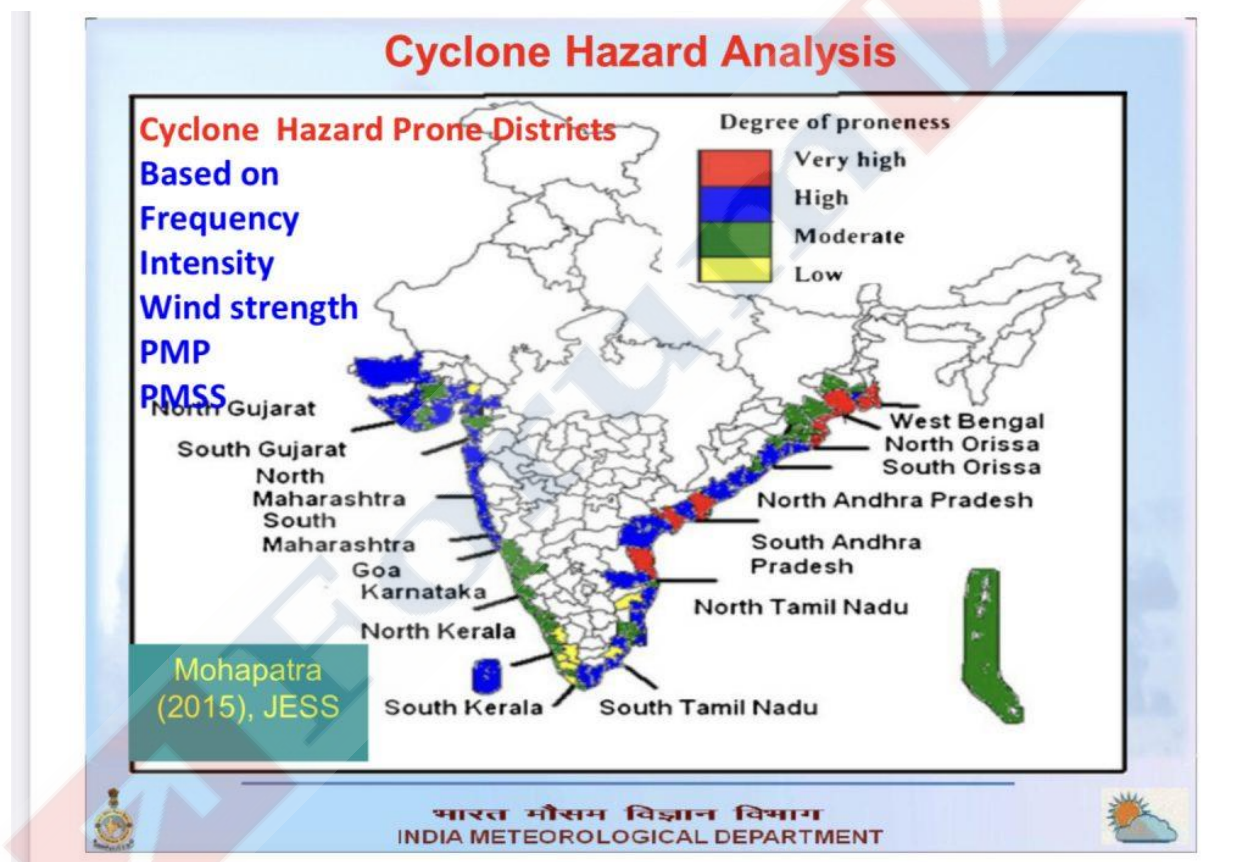
Source- IMD

What are the socio-economic impacts of cyclones in India?

Cyclones in India wreak significant havoc, leading to catastrophic socio-economic impacts. These impacts are not only direct, such as property damage and loss of life, but also indirect, affecting long-term economic development and societal well-being.

1. **Loss of life and displacement-** Historically, cyclones in India have resulted in substantial loss of life. Cyclones also often lead to mass displacement, as people are forced to evacuate their homes due to the

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imminent danger, leading to social disruption. **For ex-** the 1999 Odisha cyclone claimed over 10,000 lives. The cyclone also resulted in Mass Displacement of people.

2. **Damage to infrastructure-** Cyclones cause significant infrastructure damage. This impacts transportation, communication, electricity, and water supply. **For Ex-** Cyclone Tauktae in 2021 caused widespread damage to roads, bridges and buildings in Gujarat and Maharashtra.

3. **High economic losses-** The economic impact extends to sectors like agriculture, fisheries, and tourism, affecting the country's GDP. **For Ex-** Cyclone Fani, which hit Odisha in 2019, resulted in losses estimated at $1.81 billion.

4. **Impacts on livelihoods-** Cyclones also negatively impact livelihoods, particularly for fishermen and farmers. **For Ex-** Cyclone Amphan (2020) in West Bengal disrupted the livelihoods of millions, causing an estimated $13 billion in damage.

5. **Effects on public health-** Post-cyclone conditions can lead to the spread of waterborne diseases, creating a public health crisis. **For Ex-** Outbreak of Cholera after Amphan.

6. **Impact on education-** Cyclones often result in the closure of schools, causing educational disruption. The schools are often used as shelter homes during the cyclones.

7. **Long-term economic development-** The high cost of post-disaster recovery diverts resources from other areas of economic development. This slows down the overall economic progress of the region.

What are the Cyclone disaster management mitigation and preparedness measures in India?

1. **Early warning systems-** India Meteorological Department (IMD) early warning system help in the early detection of cyclones. This helps in issuing timely warnings that help evacuate people and limit damage.

2. **National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project (NCRMP)-** NCRMP, supported by the World Bank, aims to enhance the preparedness and resilience of coastal communities. This is achieved through the construction of cyclone shelters, infrastructure development, and improved access routes for effective evacuation.

3. **Coastal Protection Initiatives-** Natural barriers have been created like mangrove plantations and artificial barriers like sea walls and embankments to reduce the impact of cyclones.

4. **Infrastructure Retrofitting-** Indian government has initiated a retrofitting program to strengthen cyclone shelters in vulnerable areas.

5. **Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Project-** This initiative is designed to enhance the resilience of coastal areas through sustainable environmental practices. The project includes mapping vulnerable zones, promoting conservation, and implementing sustainable livelihood strategies for local communities.

6. **Colour-coding of cyclones By IMD-** The well-known colour-coding of natural disasters seeks to alert people to the risks' potential severity in advance. Green, yellow, orange, and red are the colours that IMD uses.

7. **Community-based disaster management-** These programs are implemented to raise awareness and train communities for cyclone preparedness. For ex- In Odisha, locals have been trained to effectively respond during cyclones.

8. **Use of technology-** Technology, such as Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping, have been used to help identify vulnerable zones and plan evacuation routes. This technology was notably used during Cyclone Fani in 2019.

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9. **Coordinated efforts-** Effective disaster management requires coordinated efforts among various agencies, such as the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs), IMD and local administrations.

10. **Evacuation planning-** Comprehensive evacuation plans are developed for vulnerable regions. **For Ex-** During Cyclone Amphan in 2020, these plans facilitated the evacuation of over two million people in West Bengal and Bangladesh.

> Read More- El Nino: Concept and impacts

What are the issues with Cyclone disaster management In India?

India has made considerable progress in managing cyclone disasters, especially in terms of evacuation and early warning systems. However, several challenges persist that need to be addressed for a more effective cyclone disaster management system.

1. **Excessive Focus on management-** Disaster management in India is more focused on management than prevention.

2. **Ignorance of cyclone warnings-** One-third of the population of India which lives in the coastal area is poor and marginalized, rendering it ill-prepared and unable to cope with a disaster. On a few occasions, the warnings were not taken seriously by the local communities, thereby making it more disastrous. For ex- During Ockhi cyclone disaster warnings were ignored by local bodies.

3. **Incapacity of State disaster management forces-** State disaster response forces lack the capacity and preparedness to effectively respond to disasters. As they are ill-prepared to respond, the onus of response always falls on the NDRF rendering golden hour response unavailable.

4. **Insufficient post-disaster response-** There is a noticeable lack of attention given to post-disaster response in India. **For ex-** During Cyclone Jawad, many farmers resorted to distress selling and premature harvesting.

5. **Inadequate infrastructure-** Many buildings, including cyclone shelters, lack the capacity to withstand the impact of a severe cyclone with high storm surges.

6. **Communication barriers-** Language barriers, illiteracy, and the lack of access to communication tools in rural and marginalized communities hinders the effective dissemination of early warnings and instructions.

What should be done to ensure proper cyclone disaster management in India?

To ensure effective cyclone disaster management in India, several measures and actions can be taken. Here are some key steps that can be implemented:

1. **Strengthen early warning systems-** Strengthen early warning systems by investing in advanced technologies, such as weather radar systems and satellite imagery, to improve cyclone tracking and prediction.

2. **Improve communication and dissemination-** Multiple mediums, including mobile networks, radio, television, and social media, should be used to ensure widespread dissemination. **For Ex-** Odisha Disaster Management.

3. **Enhance preparedness and response planning-** Regular drills and exercises must be conducted to test the effectiveness of response mechanisms. Coordination among various stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, and the public must be improved.

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4. **Strengthen infrastructure and resilience –** Investment in the construction and retrofitting of cyclone-resistant infrastructure, including cyclone shelters, coastal embankments, and resilient housing must be increased.

5. **Community engagement and capacity building –** Regular training programs and workshops to build the capacity of communities, local leaders, and volunteers in disaster management techniques must be conducted.

6. **Integration of technology –** technological advancements, such as remote sensing, geospatial mapping, and early warning systems must be leveraged, to enhance cyclone monitoring, forecasting, and response.

Read More- Indian Express
UPSC Syllabus- GS 3: Disaster Management: Disaster and disaster management.

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75 Years of Universal Declaration of Human Rights- Explained Pointwise+ Infographics

Seventy-five years ago, on 10th December 1948, the UN General Assembly approved the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at a meeting in Paris. This laid one of the foundation stones of the international order that emerged following the horrors of World War II.

The declaration was proclaimed as "a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations." However, in practice, it has not turned out the way it was conceived.

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Universal Declaration of Human Rights

» The UN General Assembly approved the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, on 10th December 1948, at a meeting in Paris. This year marks the Seventy-five years of UDHR.

» It is a document that acts like a global road map for freedom and equality. It protects the rights of every individual, everywhere.

» The declaration is not a treaty and is not legally binding in itself. The principles set out in the Declaration have been incorporated into many countries' laws. It is viewed as the basis for international human rights law.

Significance

» Inspiration for different Freedom Movements. For ex- Decolonisation movements in Africa and South East Asia.

» Inspiration for new social movements like anti-apartheid movement, LGBTIQ+ movement and the anti-racism movements. For ex- Civil Right movement in the USA

» Apolitical and secular document that transcends all barriers based on culture, gender, religion and political ideologies

» Introduction of "Rule of Law"

» Foundation of fundamental rights in constitutions. For Ex- Fundamental rights part in the Indian constitution.

Way Forward

» Focus on Human rights abuse in Underdeveloped and Developing Countries

» Alignment of territorial laws with UDHR. For ex- Public flogging in the Middle East.

» Active Role of UNSC in protection of Human Rights. For ex- Torture of Uighurs in China.

» Enactment of domestic human rights law and domestic human rights institutions. For ex- NHRC in India

Challenges

» Recent geopolitical conflicts like Israel-Hamas War, Russia's war in Ukraine.

» Misuse and exploitation for political gain. For ex- Rwandan Genocide.

» Abuse of Human rights of women. For ex- Invasive vaginal examinations In Afghanistan

» Abuse of Right to live with dignity. For ex- Manual Scavenging, Rag picking.

» Corruption in Governance. For ex- Misuse of anti-terror laws.

For detailed Reading- 7 PM Link

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What is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

It for the first time asserted universal protection of human rights. The UDHR was discussed by all members of the UN Commission on Human Rights and finally adopted by the General Assembly in 1948. It is a document that acts like a global road map for freedom and equality. It protects the rights of every individual, everywhere.

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THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

1 Equality
Everyone is born **free** and **equal** in **dignity** and with rights.

2 Freedom from Discrimination
You should never be discriminated against for any reason.

3 Life, Liberty and Security
Everyone has the right to life, liberty and personal security.

4 Freedom from Slavery
No-one shall be held in slavery or servitude.

5 Freedom from Torture
No-one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel or degrading treatment.

6 Recognition as Person Before Law
You have the right to be treated as a person in the eyes of the law.

7 Equality Before the Law
You have the right to be treated by the law in the same way as everyone else

8 Remedy by Tribunal
Your have the right to remedy by competent tribunal.

9 Freedom from arbitrary arrest
No-one shall be subject to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

10 Fair Public Hearing
You have the right to a fair public hearing.

11 Innocent until Proven Guilty
You have the right to be considered innocent until proven guilty.

12 Privacy
No-one has the right to interfere with your privacy, family, or home.

13 Freedom of Movement
You have the right to freedom of movement in and out of the country.

14 Asylum
You have the right to seek asylum in other countries from persecution.

15 Nationality
You have the right to a nationality.

16 Marriage and Family
You have the right to marriage and to raise a family.

17 Property
You have the right to own property.

18 Freedom of Belief
You have the right to freedom of belief and religion.

19 Freedom of Opinion
You have the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

20 Freedom of Assembly
You have the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

21 Take Part in Government
You have the right to take part in the government of your country.

22 Social Security
You have the right to social security.

23 Work
You have the right to desirable work and to join trade unions.

24 Rest and Leisure
You have the right to rest and leisure.

25 Adequate Living Standard
You have the right to a decent life, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care.

26 Education
You have the right to education

27 Participate in Cultural Life
You have the right to Participate in the Cultural Life of Community.

28 Social Order
You have the Right to a Social Order that Articulates this Document.

29 Mutual Responsibility
We all have a responsibility to the people around us and should protect their rights and freedoms.

30 Freedom from State or Personal Interference
There is nothing in this declaration that justifies any person or country taking away the rights to which we are all entitled.

HRE USA
Human Rights Educators USA
A national network dedicated to building a culture of human rights.
hreusa.org

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION is a lifelong process of teaching and learning that helps individuals develop the knowledge, skills, and values to fully exercise and protect the human rights of themselves and others; to fulfil their responsibilities in the context of internationally agreed upon human rights principles; and to achieve justice and peace in the world. HRE USA strives to promote human dignity, justice, and peace by cultivating an expansive, vibrant base of support for Human Rights Education (HRE) in the United States.

Source- HRE USA

Read More- State of Human Rights in India -Explained, Pointwise

What is the Significance of Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

1. **Gave fillip to the different Freedom Movements-** The UDHR supported the decolonisation movement by enunciating the ideals of basic human dignity and freedom. **For Ex-** Decolonisation movements in Africa and South East Asia.

2. **Foundation of fundamental rights in constitutions-** The human rights declaration has become the foundation for fundamental rights and individual liberty in different national constitutions and regional and multilateral agreements. **For ex-** Fundamental rights part in the Indian constitution.

3. Inspiration for new social movements- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights also inspired the anti-apartheid movement, LGBTIQ+ movement and the anti-racism movements across the globe. **For Ex-** Civil Right movement in the USA.

4. **Apolitical and Secular Document-** It is an apolitical and secular document that transcends all barriers based on culture, gender, religion and political ideologies.

5. **Introduction of "Rule of Law"-** The widely used phrase "rule of law" was first used in the document of UDHR. According to the principle of rule of law, human beings are equal in the eyes of the law irrespective of territorial, jurisdiction and political ideologies.

What are the Challenges to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

1. **Geopolitical conflicts-** The recent geopolitical conflicts like Israel-Hamas War, Russia's war in Ukraine, internal conflicts in Myanmar and Sudan, have emerged as major challenge to Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2. **Misuse and Abuse-** The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been misused and exploited for political gain. **For Ex-** Rwandan Genocide (instigated by the military coup in Rwanda under the garb of protection of human rights).

3. **Abuse of Human rights of women-** Women are considered weak in our society and are often denied basic human rights. They are subjected to violence in society whether it is within four walls of the house or at workplace. **For Ex-** Invasive vaginal examinations in Afghanistan.

4. **Abuse of Right to live with dignity-** The right to live with dignity has been challenged by the socio-economic malpractices like manual scavenging, rag picking etc.

5. **Corruption in Governance-** Corruption threatens the rule of law, democracy and human rights and undermines good governance. **For Ex-** Misuse of anti-terror laws.

6. **Non-enforceable nature of the Declaration**– As the UDHR is a non-binding document, it renders it ineffective in checking human rights violations.

What should be the way forward?

1. **Alignment of territorial laws with UDHR**– The existing legislations and provisions should be aligned according to the UDHR. **For Ex-** Public flogging in the Middle East.

2. **Active Role of UNSC-** The UNSC must rise over partisan interests and play an active role in the protection of the UDHR principles. **For Ex-** Torture of Uighurs in China.

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3. **Enforcement of Domestic Human Rights Law-** Countries must enact human rights laws in consonance with the UDHR principles and establish institutions for effective monitoring of violation of human rights. **For Ex-** NHRC in India.

4. **Ethical Importance of Human Rights-** Human rights are inalienable to human existence. Abuse of human rights is an abuse to humanity. Ethical considerations of human rights protection must be the guiding light for ethical governance.

John F Kennedy once said that "**The rights of every man are diminished when the rights of one man are threatened**". So the governments have to understand that and ensure proper enforcement of human rights. After all, denying human rights is a challenge to humanity itself.

> Read More- Business Standard
> UPSC Syllabus- Important International Institutions, agencies and fora- their Structure, Mandate

SC Verdict on Article 370- Explained Pointwise+ Infographic

The Supreme Court in a 5-0 unanimous ruling upheld the Centre's abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution. Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud presided over the Bench, which also comprised the four other most senior judges of the court- Justices S K Kaul, Sanjeev Khanna, B R Gavai, and Surya Kant.

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SC Verdict on abrogation of Art 370 Explained

SC Verdict

» **On the sovereignty of Jammu and Kashmir-** The SC held that merger of J&K with India was the same as the other princely states in India. The state of Jammu and Kashmir didn't enjoy any internal sovereignty.

SC Rationale
1. SC cited that Karan Singh's proclamation, issued by the son of the J&K's then ruler Hari Singh, on November 25, 1949, accepted the supremacy of the Indian Constitution and surrendered the J&K sovereignty to it.
2. SC also cited that Section 3 of the J&K constitution held J&K as an integral part of India. Section 147 of the J&K Constitution prohibited any amendment to Section 3.

» **On whether Art 370 is temporary or permanent-** SC held Art 370 that Article 370 was a temporary provision.

SC Rationale
1. SC contended that Art 370 as an interim arrangement until the Constituent Assembly of the State was formed. Art 370 served as a temporary legal bridge between J&K and India.
2. The provision was adopted because of the special circumstances in the state, which was experiencing war conditions at that time.

» **On the legality of the abrogation of Article 370-** SC upheld the legality of presidential proclamations CO 272 and CO 273 used to abrogate Article 370.

SC Rationale
SC clarified that, after the Constituent Assembly of the state ceased to exist, the President could have always unilaterally abrogated Article 370.

» **On the action that was taken under President's rule-** SC upheld the action of state reorganisation of J&K during president's rule.

SC Rationale
SC held that the decision taken during the President's rule to bifurcate the state of Jammu and Kashmir and to convert it into UT, was not malafide. Hence no judicial review of the decision was required.

For detailed Reading- 7 PM Link

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What is Article 370 of the Indian Constitution?

Article 370- Article 370, was added to the Indian constitution, as a 'temporary provision', on October 17, 1949. It permitted the state of J&K to draft its own Constitution. The Constituent Assembly of Jammu & Kashmir was empowered to recommend which articles of the Indian Constitution should apply to the state. It restricted the Indian Parliament's legislative powers in the state.

Article 35A- Clause 3 of the article 370 gave the President of India the power to amend its provisions and scope. Article 35A stemmed from Article 370 and was introduced through a Presidential Order in 1954, on the recommendation of the J&K Constituent Assembly. Article 35A empowered the Jammu & Kashmir legislature to define the permanent residents of the state, and their special rights and privileges.

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Presidential Proclamation Abrogating Article 370- On 5th August 2019, President of India in the exercise of the powers conferred by Clause (1) of Article 370 of the Constitution had issued the Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 2019. The laws of the Parliament will now be applicable to the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

What will be the benefits of the SC judgement on Article 370?

1. **Promotion of National Integration-** Allowing a separate constitution, flag and powers to Jammu and Kashmir had created a sense of separate identity among the people of the state. This had been used to misguide youth and create a demand of separatism among them. The verdict paves a way for the National Integration of J&K with rest of India.

2. Aid in the fight against Terrorism- Owing to cross border terrorism, around 42 thousand people have lost lives in the state. The special status was considered an impediment in fight against terrorism. The verdict has bolstered the powers of the central government in its fight against terrorism in the valley by allowing the application of stringent anti-terror laws like UAPA.

3. **Reduction of Corruption and graft-** Article 370 resulted in poor anti-graft architecture in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Anti-corruption agencies could not enter the state, which resulted in massive corruption, money laundering and hawala transactions. With the SC seal on the abrogation of Article 370, the PMLA and FEMA act can be stringently applied.

4. **Promotion of economic development-** Due to the application of Article 370, the land in the state could only be sold and bought by the permanent residents of the state. As a result, large businesses houses did not invest in the region owing to land concerns. The final stamp of SC, on Article 370, will attract greater investment in the state of J&K.

5. **Effective implementation of affirmative policies-** Various affirmative legislations such as Right to Education, Right to Information were not available to the citizens of Jammu and Kashmir. Also, the reservations benefits, to OBCs, SCs, STs were not available to the marginalised sections of the state. The SC Verdict will help in effective implementation of these affirmative policies.

Read More- Impact of abrogation of Article 370 in India

What challenges can emerge with the SC verdict on Art 370?

1. **Misuse of the President Rule-** The majoritarian governments at the centre can misuse the President's rule to bring irrevocable changes to the states like bifurcation of the state without consulting the state legislative assemblies. The president's rule was imposed and the Parliament used its power to bifurcate of the state of J&K into two UTs of J&K and Ladakh, without consulting the state legislative assembly.

2. **Undermine the federal principles-** The Parliament can use its amending powers to undermine federalism and democratic processes. **For ex-** A backdoor amendment to an article of the Constitution by amending another article. Article 367 was amended to give effect to abrogation of Art 370.

3. **Threat to Regional Identity-** One of the primary rationales behind Article 370 was to respect and preserve the unique identity, history, and culture of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. This can raise insecurity among the regional communities being accorded special treatment or protection

4. **Harmonious Relations-** The provision was intended to promote harmonious relations between the region of Jammu and Kashmir and the rest of India. The separatist elements can use this verdict to fuel separatism and radicalism in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

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5. **Against the principle of Asymmetric federalism-** Asymmetric federalism is enshrined in the Indian constitution, with some special provisions granted to certain states like North-Eastern States and Socio-economically backward states (Art 371). The Verdict has impinged upon the settled principle of asymmetric federalism.

What Should be the Way Forward?

Since Art 370 has become a thing of the past, with SC upholding the abrogation of Art 370, we must look forward to restoring normalcy in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

1. **Set up Truth and Reconciliation Commission-** The government of India must set up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as directed by the SC, to look into alleged violations of human rights by both state and non-state actors in J&K. It should be based on a dialogue and not become a criminal court.

2. **Conduct Elections and restore the statehood of J&K-** The Central government must ensure normalcy in the Valley for peaceful conduction of democratic elections and restoration of the statehood of J&K.

3. **De-radicalization-** More aggressive attempts must be made towards de-radicalization of youth in the valley.

4. **Check the misuse of AFSPA-** AFSPA provisions must be withdrawn in a phase bound manner from the areas which attain normalcy.

5. **Focus on Development-** The imminent focus of the government must be on promoting inclusive economic development of the region by effective implementation of the affirmative policies of the government.

> Read More- Indian Express
> UPSC Syllabus- GS 2- Indian Constitution—Historical Underpinnings, Evolution, Features, Amendments, Significant Provisions and Basic Structure.

India and Global South- Explained Pointwise + Infographic

Right from India's independence in 1947 to its presidency of the G20 in 2023, India shared a vision of being the voice of the Global South. India ensured to walk the talk with its focus on raising concerns of the Global South. The issues of Global South remain unaddressed as the countries of Global South are under-represented in the global forums.

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India and Global South

» The Global South refers to countries often characterized as developing, less developed, or underdeveloped, primarily located in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. These nations have higher levels of poverty, income inequality, and challenging living conditions compared to the wealthier nations of the Global North.

» Throughout its presidency of the G20, India shared a vision of being the voice of the Global South. India ensured to walk the talk with its focus on raising concerns of the Global South.

» The issues of Global South remain unaddressed as the countries of Global South are under-represented in the global forums.

India's Historical Relations

» India played an active role in establishment of NAM. NAM represented the socio-economic and political priorities of the Global South.

» India also played a key leadership role in the establishment of G-77, to present a single voice of the Global South at the UNGA, and all UN committees.

» India's key leadership role in the Stockholm conference 1972, led to the evolution of the principles of Sustainable Development & CBDR

However, with the end of the Cold War and a domestic economic crisis, India started placing it's own national economic and security interests above the ideals of justice and equity for Global South

Challenges

» India's neglect of NAM and G-77

» Conflict in UNSC Membership with the coffee club consisting of Global South opposing India's membership

» Locking horns with China to emerge as the leader of Global South.

» After launching summits with regions of Africa and Indo-Pacific, India has failed to engage with them on a constant basis

Current Developments

» New Delhi Declaration of G-20 inlcuded the issues of the Global South

» India's push for expansion of G-20 by inclusion of African Union.

» Regular Voice of Global South Summit by India to build solidarity among the Global South countries

» Vaccine Maitri of India saved the lives of many in the Global South Countries by supplying free vaccine

» India's leadership role in climate negotiations to promote the interests of Global South. For ex- Loss and Damage Fund at COP 28.

For detailed Reading- 7 PM Link

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What is Global South?

1) The Global South refers to countries often characterized as developing, less developed, or underdeveloped, primarily located in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

2) These nations have higher levels of poverty, income inequality, and challenging living conditions compared to the wealthier nations of the Global North.

3) The Global North are richer nations that are located mostly in North America and Europe, with some additions in Oceania and elsewhere.

The Brandt Line divides the countries of Global North and the Global South

1) The Brandt Line was proposed by Willy Brandt in the 1980s.

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2) It is an imaginary line that divides the world into richer countries (mainly in the Northern Hemisphere) and poorer countries (mostly in the Southern Hemisphere).

3) The line basically shows the socio-economic divide between northern countries and southern countries.

Figure 1Source- Wikipedia

Read More- Fallacy, fantasy, Global South

What is India's Historical Association with Global South?

India shared its roots of colonial struggles and underdevelopment with the countries of Global South. Hence, under the leadership of PM Nehru, the newly Independent India took a leadership role in putting across the issues of the Global South.

1. **Establishment of Non Alignment Movement**– India played an active role in establishment of NAM. It represented the socio-economic and political priorities of the Global South. India also played a leadership role in drafting the NAM's agenda of New International Economic Order to counter the dominance of Bretton Woods organisations.

2. **Establishment of G-77-** India also played a key leadership role in the establishment of G-77, which is a coalition of 134 developing nations at the UN. The main aim of G-77 was to present a single voice of the Global South at the UNGA, and all UN committees.

3. **Stockholm Conference of 1972-** India played a key role in voicing the concerns of Global South against Climate Change. India's key leadership role in the conference led to the evolution of the principles of Sustainable Development (Brundtland Report), Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) and the Polluters Pay Principles.

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However, with the end of the Cold War and a domestic economic crisis, a new-found pragmatism began to emerge in the Indian foreign policy. India placed it's own national economic and security interests above the ideals of justice and equity for Global South. This is indicated by the following examples-

1. **Neglect of NAM after the Cold War-** India sent NAM into a state of abeyance. In recent years, India's engagement at NAM Summit has not been at the highest political level, with the Indian PM choosing to skip the 18th NAM Summit in 2019.

2. **Deeper strategic relations with Global North-** India has started developing closer strategic ties with the countries of Global North like US, EU, Japan. **For Ex-** India-US Civil Nuclear Deal.

3. **New Multilateral Forum-** India deepened its engagement with new multilateral fora like BRICS, SCO, ASEAN at the cost of G-77 and NAM.

However, with the growing economic and geopolitical heft of India, it has emerged as the Voice of Global South Once again.

How is India becoming the Voice of the Global South?

1. **New Delhi Declaration-** India used the G-20 presidency to build consensus among the G-20 members to include the issues of the Global South like debt financing, climate justice and gender equality in the New Delhi Declaration.

2. **Expansion of G-20-** India played a key role in giving Voice to Global South Members at the high table of G-20 by inclusion of African Union.

3. **Voice of Global South Summit-** India has been conducting the Voice of Global South Summit to build solidarity among the Global South countries, amidst the unprecedented challenges these countries are facing.

4. **Vaccine Maitri-** In the wake of COVID-19, India has played a key role in saving the lives of many in the Global South Countries by supplying free vaccine and medicines.

5. **More representative multilateral fora-** India has also played a key role in making other multilateral fora like BRICS, SCO more representative by inclusion of countries from the Global South. **For Ex-** BRICS transforming into BRICS PLUS.

6. **Climate Justice-** India has been playing a key leadership role in climate negotiations to promote the interests of Global South. **For Ex-** Recently established Loss and Damage Fund at COP28.

What are the headwinds which inhibit India from becoming a leader of the Global South?

1. **UNSC Membership-** India's campaign for a permanent seat at UNSC as part of the G-4 group is opposed by the Coffee Club members which consist of Global south countries from Africa and Asia.

2. **India's neglect of NAM and G-77-** India has been neglecting the oldest grouping of Global South, which has often caused breakdown of effective communication between the countries of Global South.

3. **China Factor-** China with its deep pockets has been splurging economic aid and developmental assistance to the countries of Global South. India has been locking horns with China to emerge as the leader of Global South.

4. **Lack of Consistent Engagement-** After launching summits with regions of Africa and Indo-Pacific, India has failed to engage with them on a constant basis. **For Ex-** No India-Africa Summit has been held since the three summits from 2015-2018. India also failed to show up at the Pacific Island Summit in Papua New Guinea in 2023.

5. **Big Brother Attitude-** India has been accused of meddling in domestic politics of the countries of Global South. This has attracted mistrust among these countries regarding India's leadership role. **For Ex-** 'India Out Campaign' in the Maldives.

6. **Delays in Project Implementation-** India's aim to become the 'Voice of the Global South' is also challenged by India's incapacity to deliver on the development projects within the agreed time frame. **For Ex-** delays in Kaladan Project, Asia Africa Growth Corridor, etc.

What Should be the way Forward?

1. **India's own Development Bank-** India must establish its own Development bank to provide development assistance to the Global South and emerge as an alternative to China.

2. **Revival of NAM-** India must revive the NAM forum in the post COVID world, which is seeing increased ideological divide & geopolitical conflicts like Ukraine-Russia War and Israel-Hamas wars.

3. **Improved capacity to deliver projects-** India must invest its energy and resources to improve the quality and timely delivery of its purported projects.

4. **Shed the big brother attitude-** India must shed its big brother attitude and build ties based on mutual trust and respect with the countries of Global South.

5. **Continued summits-** India must engage with the African nations and the Indo-Pacific nations by regularising the Indo-Africa summit.

> **Read More-** Indian Express
> **UPSC Syllabus- GS 2**- Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

COP 28 Outcomes and Shortcomings- Explained Pointwise+ Infographics

Recently, Conference of Parties 28 (COP 28) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was concluded in Dubai, UAE. The COP 28 climate meeting delivered some important outcomes. However, like all previous COPs, it still remained an underachiever, particularly in galvanising more ambitious climate action in the immediate term.

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COP 28 - Important Outcomes

Major COP Outcomes Explained

» **Transition Away From Fossil-Fuel-** Nearly 200 countries agreed to "transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems" at the COP28. The agreement is the first time countries have made this pledge.

» **Global Renewables and Energy Efficiency Pledge-** Signatory countries to work together to triple the world's installed renewable energy generation capacity to at least 11,000 GW by 2030. The countries must collectively double the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements from around 2% to over 4% every year until 2030.

» **Loss and Damage Fund-** Operationalization of the Loss and Damage (L&D) fund aimed at compensating countries grappling with climate change impacts. Commitments worth about US$ 800 million had been made to the Fund. The World Bank will be the "interim host" of the fund for four years.

» **Global Goal on Adaptation-** The draft text on the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) was introduced at COP 28. It aims to enhance climate change adaptation by increasing awareness and funding towards countries' adaptation needs in the context of the 1.5/2°C goal of the Paris Agreement

» **The Global Cooling Pledge-** 66 national government signatories committed to working together to reduce cooling-related emissions across all sectors by at least 68% globally relative to 2022 levels by 2050.

» **Declaration to Triple Nuclear Energy-** The declaration launched at COP28 aims to triple global nuclear energy capacity by 2050. It was endorsed by 22 National Governments.

» **Coal Transition Accelerator-** France, in collaboration with various countries and organizations, introduced the Coal Transition Accelerator. The initiative aims to leverage best practices and lessons learned for effective coal transition policies.

» **CHAMP Initiative-** Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnership (CHAMP) for Climate Action was launched at COP 28. This initiative aims at efficient planning, financing, implementation, and monitoring of climate strategies

» **Climate Finance-** Under the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) for climate finance, wealthy nations owe developing countries USD 500 billion in 2025.

India Led Initiative at COP 28

» **Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA)-** The GRCA is a unique alliance covering 275+ global river-cities in 11 countries. GRCA highlights India's role in sustainable river-centric development.

» **Green Credit Initiative-** Global platform for exchange of innovative environmental programs related to water conservation and afforestation.

For detailed Reading- 7 PM Link

What have been the Positive Outcomes of COP-28?

1. **Global Climate Stocktake-** Based on the global stocktake review at COP28, countries would be required to submit raised emissions reduction targets by mid-2025 for finalisation at COP30. This stocktake can guide our future climate action.

2. **Operationalisation of Loss and Damage Fund-** The operationalisation of the fund will help in ensuring climate justice to the developing and underdeveloped countries which have suffered tremendous loss and damage due to climate change.

3. **Fossil fuel role in Climate Change-** In COP-28, the role of fossil fuels in causing global warming has been formally acknowledged for the first time. Fossil fuels which contribute to 75% of all greenhouse gases and about 90% of global carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions, took centre stage at COP28. This marks the beginning of the end of fossil fuel usage in the world.

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4. **Phase-down of coal-** The COP-28 document singles out coal amongst other fossil fuels by calling for phase down.

5. **Emission reduction with enhanced focus on renewable energy-** The Global Renewables and Energy Efficiency Pledge, adopted at COP 28, has the potential to avoid emissions of about 7 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent between now and 2030. This reduction of emissions will be more than the combined emission reduction due to all the other climate actions being currently taken.

6. **Increased Focus on Adaptation-** COP 28 resulted in the identification of some common adaptation goals, which are important for the entire world. Before COP 28, adaptation measures had largely been a local endeavour.

7. **Need for enhanced Climate Finance-** The COP 28 conference also highlighted the need for enhanced climate finance to combat the climate change consequences. According to the report by UNCTAD, wealthy nations owe developing countries USD 500 billion in 2025 under the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) for climate finance.

8. **Diverse participation-** The COP 28 saw the participation of activist groups, indigenous groups, big and small business, consultancies, traders and media. These diverse groups enhance the transparency of the Climate change negotiations.

Read More- Loss and Damage Fund- Explained Pointwise

What are the Shortcomings of COP 28?

1. **Lack of Ambitious Climate Action-** Despite the various pledges, no binding ambitious climate action was launched.

2. **Issues with the Fossil Fuel Pledge-** No time schedules and targets have been fixed for the phase out of fossil fuel.

3. **Issues with the Renewable Energy Pledge-** Under the pledge, tripling of global renewable energy has been made a global target. However, there is no clarity as to how this would be achieved as no binding individual targets were made.

4. **Issue with Phase Down of Coal Usage-** COP 28 failed to resolve the impasse over the proposal that no new coal-fired power plants could be opened without an in-built carbon capture and storage facility.

5. **Impasse over Methane Emission Cuts-** Several countries, including India, are extremely opposed to any binding commitment to cut methane emissions. Cutting methane emissions could involve tweaking agricultural patterns, which could pose concerns for food security in developing countries like India.

6. **Lack of Financing Mechanism-** COP 28 has failed to set up a financial mechanism to finance the Global Goal on Adaptation. The Draft of COP 28, did not express any concern over the failure of commitment on developed nations to provide $100 bn climate finance per year by 2020. The loss and Damage funding has been made voluntary.

7. **Misuse of the loose definitions in the COP 28 Draft-** The inclusion of the terms like "low-carbon fuels", "low-emission" technologies, "low-carbon hydrogen", and "transitional fuels", can be misused by the EU and US as they use these terms to describe natural gas. Natural gas is a major fossil fuel and contributes to global warming and climate change.

8. **No mention of CBDR-** The term Collective But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) and Polluter's pay principle have been missing from the draft of the COP 28.

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What Should be the Way Forward?

Though the COP-28 has introduced new goals and pledges, substantial follow-up actions need to be undertaken to fulfil these goals.

1. **Introduction of New Indicators-** New tangible indicators need to be identified to measure progress on each of the global goals established at COP 28.

2. **Establishment of Financial Mechanism-** Financial mechanism to raise $500 bn as estimated by the UNCTAD must be established at the earliest. Developed nations must not be given leeway to cut down on their financial obligation.

3. **Binding commitments**– Efforts must be taken to make the renewable energy pledges binding on all the member countries.

4. **Clarity on phase down of Fossil Fuel-** Clarity on the timeline and targets for fossil fuel phase down must be on the highest agenda of the future COPs.

5. **Climate Justice-** Common but Differentiated Responsibility (CBDR) must remain the guiding light in upcoming climate negotiations.

> **Read More-** Indian Express
> **UPSC Syllabus- GS 3-** Climate Action and Climate Change, Conservation

Climate Negotiations and India- Explained Pointwise+Infographic

India has generally been at the forefront in the Climate Change negotiations like the Conference of Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). India has also taken several initiatives and pledges over the years for ensuring Climate Justice. However, with a long development path ahead, India has adopted a cautious approach in the recent climate change negotiations at the COP 28 to protect its own national interest.

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Climate Change Negotiations and India

» India has generally been at the forefront in the Climate change negotiations at the Conference of Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). India has taken several initiatives and pledges over the years for ensuring Climate Justice.

» However, with a long development path ahead, India has adopted a cautious approach in the recent climate change negotiations like the COP 28 to protect its own national interest.

Leadership Role

» The ambitious INDC targets adopted by India has nudged developed nations to take up more ambitious targets. For ex- Mission Life of India

» Indian initiatives to address the vulnerability of the agricultural sector to climate change impacts. For ex- Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA) and Green Credit Initiative (GCI).

» India has enhanced its renewable energy targets to 500 GW by 2030. This has inspired the "Global Renewables and Energy Efficiency Pledge" at COP 28.

» The International Solar Alliance (ISA), Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA) showcase India's proactive role in fostering international cooperation for sustainable energy solutions.

Way Forward

» Decoupling economy from fossil fuel. For ex- Shift from coal to EV Battery manufacturing.

» Technology transfer to the smaller developing countries. For ex- IIT-Madras campus in Zanzibar

» Transition of its role from a drawer to contributor of the Loss and Damage Fund

» India must ensure that CBDR remains the guiding light in upcoming climate negotiations.

Cautious Approach

» India has been against the phase out of coal usage as it is a major source of revenue and energy needs.

» India has been concerned about the phase down of fossil fuel as it is inextricably linked to its economic growth.

» India is opposed to any binding commitment to cut methane emissions as it could involve tweaking agri-production patterns and cause food insecurity.

» India has not committed any contribution to the Loss and Damage Fund (LDF).

» India has been against any mandatory emission reduction, which is a demand of developed contries.

For detailed Reading- 7 PM Link

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What has been the positive role of India in the climate change negotiations over the years?

India's leadership in global climate change negotiations has been marked by a distinctive blend of environmental responsibility and a steadfast commitment to inclusive development. Several tangible examples underscore India's leadership role in shaping the discourse on climate change-

1. **Ambitious INDC targets-** India's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) under the Paris Agreement emphasize a reduction in emissions intensity while allowing for economic growth. The ambitious targets adopted by India has nudged developed nations to take up more ambitious targets.

2. **Commitment to the Principles of Climate Justice-** India has consistently advocated for the principles of "common but differentiated responsibilities, polluters pay principle, compensation for loss and damage" to be

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the guiding light in all climate change negotiations. India's stance has aimed for equity in sharing the burden of climate action.

3. **Renewable Energy Leadership-** Renewable energy, if tripled, has the potential to avoid emissions of about 7 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. Recognizing this, India has enhanced its renewable energy targets to 500 GW by 2030, three times of the current renewable energy capacity of 177 GW.

4. **Innovative Policy Initiatives-** The International Solar Alliance (ISA), Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA), Green Credit Initiative (GCI), showcase India's proactive role in fostering international cooperation for sustainable energy solutions.

5. **Active role in COP Meetings-** Through diplomatic efforts at the COPs, India has sought to bridge the gap between developed and developing nations. It has advocated for a consensus on critical issues such as finance, technology transfer, and adaptation. **For Ex-** Loss and Damage Fund established at COP28.

6. **Nudging Pro-Climate Lifestyle-** India launched Mission LiFe during COP26 as a global mass movement to nudge individual and community actions to protect and preserve the environment.

What is the inward looking stance of India at the recent Climate Change Negotiations?

1. **Against Phase out of Coal-** India has been against the policy of phase down of coal usage as it is a major source of revenue and energy needs. The developed countries have proposed that no new coal-fired power plants could be opened without an in-built carbon capture and storage facility. India has opposed the proposal.

2. **Phase Down of Fossil Fuel-** India has been concerned about the phase down of fossil fuel as it is inextricably linked to its economic growth.

3. **Methane emission cuts-** India is opposed to any binding commitment to cut methane emissions. Cutting methane emissions could involve tweaking agricultural patterns, which could pose concerns for food security in developing countries like India.

4. **Mandatory emission reduction-** India has been against any mandatory emission reduction which is being demanded by the developed countries.

5. **No Contribution to LDF-** India has not committed any contribution to the Loss and Damage Fund (LDF). The expectations of Pacific nations and other vulnerable island countries has been that India, which will soon be a $3 trillion economy, must contribute to the Loss and Damage Fund.

6. **Refusal to sign Pledges at COP28-** India has not signed The Global Renewables and Energy Efficiency Pledge as well as the Declaration on Climate and Health at the recently concluded COP28. It has claimed that the pledges go against India's developmental interests by focusing on de-carbonisation of crucial sectors.

Read More- COP 28 Outcomes and Shortcomings- Explained Pointwise

What Should be the Way Forward?

India must take up the following route to become the true leader of Climate Change negotiations and actions.

1. **Decoupling economy from fossil fuel-** India must decouple its economic growth and livelihood from the fossil fuel and coal usage. Alternative employment opportunities must be created in the renewable energy sector. **For ex-** EV Battery manufacturing.

2. **Technology transfer to the smaller developing countries-** India must ensure that it is able to transfer its learnings to other economies. **For ex-** IIT-Madras campus in Zanzibar.

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3. **Contribution to LDF-** India must ensure that it transitions its role from a drawer to contributor of the Loss and Damage Fund.

4. **Use of the NDMA expertise-** The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) expertise can be used for capacity building of the vulnerable island nations and make them climate resilient.

5. **Ensure Climate Justice-** India must ensure that Common but Differentiated Responsibility (CBDR) remains **the guiding light in upcoming climate negotiations.**

> **Read More- The Hindu**
> **UPSC Syllabus- GS III- Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment**

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