



Mains Marathon
Compilation

1st Week Dec, 2023

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Analyze the intersection of disability with social, economic, and gender vulnerabilities in India. How does this intersectionality impact the formulation of policies for the disabled?

Introduction: Briefly describe the context of the question

Body: Analyse the intersectionality of disability with various factors and their impact

Conclusion: Way forward

Disability refers to a condition or impairment—physical, cognitive, sensory, emotional, or a combination thereof—that significantly limits an individual's ability to perform one or more major life activities. Approximately 1.3 billion individuals worldwide, or almost the whole population of India, are living with some form of disability. Individuals with disabilities have greater rates of poverty, limited access to opportunities and education, informality, and other forms of social and economic discrimination.

Analysis of the intersectionality and its impact on policy formulation

- **Social Intersectionality:** Individuals with disabilities frequently experience discrimination and social stigma, which makes them ineligible for jobs, education, and community involvement, among other facets of society. People with disabilities experience social isolation due to limited accessibility and unfavourable societal attitudes, which has an impact on their mental health and general well-being.
- **Economic Intersectionality:** Because of discrimination, inaccessible workplaces, and a lack of accommodations, people with disabilities frequently face obstacles while trying to get employment prospects. The absence of inclusive policies makes disabled people more economically vulnerable and makes it more difficult for them to become financially independent.
- **Gender Intersectionality:** Due to double discrimination based on both gender and disability, women with impairments are less able to access resources and are more susceptible to societal biases. Access to reproductive healthcare may be a barrier for women with impairments, which can create further issues with family planning and maternal health.

Impact on Policy Formulation

- **Inclusive Education:** To guarantee that people with disabilities have equitable access to education, policies must promote inclusive practices, accessible infrastructure, and the appropriate support services.
- **Employment Policies:** To improve the employability of people with disabilities, governments should create and put into place policies that support inclusive hiring practices, appropriate workplace accommodations, and skill development initiatives.
- **Healthcare Accessibility:** To ensure that people with disabilities, particularly women, have access to adequate and inclusive healthcare services, policies must concentrate on reducing healthcare inequities.
- **Initiatives for Social Inclusion:** To counteract social stigma and promote an inclusive society, it is imperative to implement initiatives that raise awareness, increase sensitivity, and facilitate community integration.

Conclusion

The goal of social justice cannot be achieved without the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all spheres of development, starting with rural areas and rural resilience. Projects like SPARK, unique ID for persons with disabilities (UDID) card, robust legal framework, and engaging the private sector are some of the ways to promote inclusive development for the disabled.

Critically examine the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs' recommendation to re-criminalize adultery on gender-neutral grounds. What are the implications of this recommendation on the legal and social fabric of India?

Introduction: Give context of the question

Body: Implications of recriminalizing adultery on gender neutral lines.

Conclusion: Way forward

Parliamentary Committee recently suggested criminalizing adultery on gender-neutral lines thereby making both men and women equally culpable under the law to safeguard the sanctity of the institution of marriage. This comes after a five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court unanimously decriminalized adultery in 2018 on several grounds including discrimination. In ***Joseph Shine vs Union of India***, a five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court unanimously struck down Section 497 (adultery provision) of the IPC on grounds that included discrimination.

How does it impact other aspects?

- **Gender Neutrality:** The goal of achieving gender neutrality is to guarantee that men and women are treated equally in the eyes of the law. Still, it's unclear if re-criminalizing adultery promotes gender equality or if it just upholds an unjust legal system that restricts individual freedoms.
- **Impact on Privacy:** Making adultery a crime raises concerns about how the government may meddle in private matters and restrict people's right to privacy. Opponents contend that these rules are excessively invasive and that the government has no business controlling consenting adult relationships.
- **Shifting Cultural Norms:** The discussion surrounding adultery laws is a reflection of cultural norms and beliefs. While opponents contend that legal frameworks should change to reflect the evolving public perspectives on partnerships, proponents of re-criminalization may argue that it is in line with traditional values and the sanctity of marriage.

Impact on legal and social fabric

- **Legal impact:** Re-criminalizing adultery could have negative legal repercussions for anyone, regardless of gender. This could involve court cases, fines, and possible effects on divorce processes.
- **Social impact:** Making adultery a crime might exacerbate social stigma and moral judgments about relationships outside of marriage. People's relationships, personal lives, and mental health may be impacted by this.
- **Increase in divorce cases:** Making adultery a crime could reduce no of divorce cases and could even lower no of suicides which are often the result of sarcastic comments of society to the spouses of parties indulged in adultery.

Conclusion

The suggestion that adultery be criminalized in India based on gender would require a thorough analysis of the social, moral, and legal ramifications. Maintaining equality, upholding individual autonomy, and protecting marital sacredness all require a delicate balance. Civil society, legal professionals, and public discourse all have a significant influence on how such policy decisions are shaped and how they affect the nation's legal and social structures.

Evaluate the potential benefits of crop diversification and multi-cropping systems rooted in agroecology principles for improving soil health, biodiversity, and farmers' nutritional security in India.

Introduction: Describe crop diversification briefly.

Body: Highlight benefits of crop diversification and multi-cropping system

Conclusion: Way forward

Crop diversification is the process of adding new crops or cropping systems to a farm's agricultural output while taking into account the various returns from value-added crops with complementary marketing

prospects. By using this technique, farmers can increase their output and, consequently, their income. Crop diversification is recognized as a pro-environment, cost-effective, and reasonable approach to reducing uncertainty in agriculture, particularly due to climate change.

Benefits of crop diversification and multi-cropping systems

- **Improved Nutritional Security:** A wider variety of crops helps to fill in nutritional gaps by making a meal more diversified and nutrient-dense. Farmers can increase their overall economic stability by diversifying their revenue streams through the cultivation of a range of crops.
- **Socio-Economic Benefits:** One of the greatest options for improving the economic standing of farmers in the nation is crop diversification. The danger presented by shifting market prices is lessened by crop diversification. Reducing reliance on a single crop and fostering cooperative farming methods are two ways that diverse cropping systems foster community resilience.
- **Increased Biodiversity:** A variety of crops produces different microhabitats that are home to a variety of helpful insects, birds, and other creatures. This enhances the resilience and general health of the ecosystem. To preserve agricultural biodiversity, diverse cropping patterns can aid in the preservation of traditional and indigenous crop varieties.
- **Improved Soil Health:** A wide variety of soil organisms are drawn to a variable root exudate profile created by a diverse crop mix. As a result, the soil microbiome is healthier, and microbial diversity is increased. Improved ground cover from diverse crops with different root systems lowers soil erosion. This aids in preserving the fertility and structure of the soil.
- **Soil Fertility and Nutrient Cycling:** In multi-cropping systems, leguminous crops can fix atmospheric nitrogen, which lowers the requirement for synthetic fertilizers and improves soil fertility. Because various crops require different amounts of nutrients, there is less chance of nutrient depletion and the nutrient cycle can be sustained.

Conclusion

The implementation of agroecology-based crop diversification and multi-cropping systems has the potential to enhance India's agricultural system's sustainability, resilience, and nutritional security. These methods adhere to ecological principles and assist farmers as well as the larger ecosystem in the long run by improving the environment and the socioeconomic situation.

Critically examine the challenges faced by the transgender community in accessing healthcare in India, despite legal provisions for equal access.

Introduction: Give brief context to the question

Body: Highlight challenges faced by transgender community in accessing healthcare

Conclusion: Way forward

A Centre of Excellence for transgender healthcare is set to open at the All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS), located in New Delhi, in 2024. Structural hurdles, such as segregated infrastructure, a dearth of services, and healthcare personnel who lack proper training and sensitivity, prevent the population from accessing healthcare. In *NALSA v. Union of India* (2014), the community received legal recognition for the first time in India.

Challenges faced by the transgender community in accessing healthcare

- **Discrimination and Stigma:** A lot of medical professionals have prejudices toward transgender people, which results in prejudiced views. This prejudice may lead to poor treatment, a refusal to offer essential services or even inferior care. The stigma that transgender people frequently experience in society can be reinforced in medical settings. This stigma has the potential to discourage people from seeking medical attention and to erode their trust in medical experts.
- **Lack of Sensitization and Training:** Medical personnel frequently lack sufficient transgender healthcare training. This includes recognizing the diversity of genders, being culturally competent, and being aware of certain health requirements that could result in insufficient or improper care.

The issue may be made worse by healthcare organizations' potential lack of policies or programs to raise staff awareness and foster inclusive workplaces.

- **Social Stigma and Family Rejection:** Transgender people may experience mental health problems as a result of societal stigma and family rejection, which may make mental health care more urgent. These difficulties may be made worse by a lack of transgender-inclusive mental health resources.
- **Documentation and Identity Issues:** Getting access to gender-specific healthcare services may be hampered by inaccuracies in the gender markers on identification documents. Gender identification and legal documents that are not aligned can result in denial of care and humiliation.
- **Geographic Disparities:** Access to transgender-inclusive healthcare is frequently concentrated in urban areas, resulting in limited or non-existent access to essential services for persons living in rural or isolated places.
- **Absence of Data:** It is difficult to address particular needs and create focused interventions when there is a lack of data on transgender health issues.

Conclusion

Despite strict guidelines of Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2019, which emphasizes the role of governments in providing holistic healthcare services to the community, there has not been much progress in their human development. A comprehensive strategy including legal reforms, education and training for medical professionals, awareness campaigns, and the active participation of the transgender community in policy-making processes is needed to address these issues. Furthermore, promoting an inclusive healthcare environment depends on society de-stigmatizing transgender identities.

Analyze the position of major countries, including India, in the global efforts to reduce plastic pollution. How do economic interests and environmental concerns intersect in these negotiations?

Introduction: Give brief context to the question

Body: Position of various nations to curb plastic pollution and the intersection between economic and environmental concerns

Conclusion: Way forward

Recently, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC), under the UNEP came together to negotiate a "zero draft" which proposes an international legally binding treaty to end plastic pollution. The zero draft contains options such as imposing a plastic-pollution fee to be paid by plastic polymer producers, and another on reducing the financial flow into projects with a high carbon footprint.

Position of different countries to reduce plastic pollution

- **India:** India has shown a growing awareness of the environmental impacts of plastic pollution. The country has implemented various measures, such as bans on single-use plastics in certain regions, and it has expressed its commitment to tackling plastic waste. Plastic Waste Management Rules have established a framework that assigned responsibilities for plastic waste management to the urban local bodies.
- **China:** China has seen serious pollution problems, and the effects of plastic waste on the environment are becoming more widely acknowledged. The nation has responded to this problem by imposing limitations on the importation of plastic garbage.
- **European Union & USA:** When it comes to international measures to reduce plastic pollution, the EU and USA have taken the lead. It has put up plans to outlaw single-use plastics, established high recycling goals, and placed a major focus on sustainable practices and the circular economy.

Intersection of Economic Interests and Environmental Concerns

- **Difficulties with Regulation:** One of the main difficulties with regulation is determining how to cut plastic pollution efficiently without negatively affecting economies and industries.

- **Innovation and Alternatives:** Fostering innovation in sustainable practices and plastic substitutes is often necessary to strike a balance between economic interests. This may open up fresh business prospects.
- **Global Supply Chains:** To combat plastic pollution, worldwide cooperation is required due to the interconnectedness of global supply chains. Countries may be concerned about maintaining their competitiveness in a global market.

Conclusion

It is essential that views of the African group of countries and Small-Island Developing States (SIDS) are carefully taken into account as they championed the voices of waste-pickers and indigenous peoples, and approached the plastic pollution problem from a human-rights and public health perspective. It takes cooperation and subtlety to strike a balance between economic interests and environmental sustainability. Governments must collaborate to create laws that take into account the financial effects on all parties involved in addition to reducing plastic pollution.

Evaluate India's stance on coal usage in the context of its commitments to renewable energy expansion by 2030. How does this position reflect the broader global dilemma in transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy?

Introduction: Give brief context to the question

Body: Give India's position on the usage of coal and dilemma it faces in the transition from fossil fuel to renewable energy.

Conclusion: Way forward

India recently underlined the core principles of its climate diplomacy—equity and justice—while restating its commitment to reducing global warming on the fringes of COP 28 in Dubai. India has made it clear how important coal is to its economy, and it will not yield to outside pressure at the expense of its progress. Coal-fired plants are responsible for nearly 70% of India's greenhouse gas emissions.

India's Stance on Coal Usage

- **Commitments to Renewable Energy:** As part of its commitment to the Paris Agreement, India has set high goals for renewable energy. By 2030, the nation wants to generate 40% of its electricity from non-fossil fuel sources. To meet its goal of increasing renewable energy capacity from the present 170 GW to 500 GW, India has been actively investing in solar and wind energy projects. Additionally, the capacity of renewable energy installations has increased significantly.
- **Problems with Coal:** India still significantly depends on coal to meet its energy demands, and the country's energy security policy is based on it. A significant amount of India's electricity is produced by coal-fired power stations. Reducing reliance on coal necessitates tackling financial difficulties, such as probable employment losses in the coal industry.
- **National Electricity Plan:** India's National Electricity Plan outlines a gradual reduction in the share of coal in the energy mix. The plan emphasizes the expansion of renewable energy capacity while recognizing the need for a balanced approach to ensure grid stability.

Global Dilemma in Transitioning

- **Economic Concerns:** Historically, the development of economies in many nations, particularly rising economies, has depended on the use of fossil fuels like coal. Shifting away from these sources necessitates a major reorganization of the economy, potentially affecting sectors and jobs.
- **Technological Difficulties:** Energy storage and grid dependability are affected by the intermittent nature of renewable energy sources. Technological developments in energy storage are necessary to ensure a smooth transition.
- **Energy Access and Equity:** Developed and developing countries have different energy transition difficulties. Developed nations may possess the financial means to allocate resources toward renewable energy, but underdeveloped countries may encounter challenges concerning accessibility and price.

- **Financial and Technological Support:** To enable a quicker and more seamless transition, numerous developing nations—including India—have stressed the significance of financial and technological support from industrialized nations. It's critical to have access to inexpensive green technologies.

Conclusion

India faces the difficult challenge of reconciling its environmental obligations with its socioeconomic goals, especially in light of its coal-dependent economy. Global cooperation, technological advancements, and supportive policies are essential elements in navigating the transition to a sustainable and low-carbon energy future.

India's energy distribution is skewed towards coal. This dependence on coal may impact India's commitments under the Paris Accord. Analyse.

Introduction: Give a brief description of India's commitment to the Paris Agreement.

Body: Highlight concerns and challenges in meeting international commitments.

Conclusion: Way forward

India's significant reliance on coal for energy production has several ramifications, particularly in light of its obligations under the Paris Agreement. With attempts to keep the increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius, the 2015 Paris Agreement seeks to keep global warming far below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. Like many other nations, India has committed to lowering its greenhouse gas emissions and moving toward a low-carbon, more sustainable economy.

Several concerns and challenges in meeting International commitments

- **High Carbon Emissions:** Burning coal emits a considerable amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) into the atmosphere, making it a fossil fuel with high emissions. India's high reliance on coal for electricity generation raises the country's carbon footprint considerably. To fulfill the targets outlined in the Paris Agreement, reducing emissions from the energy sector is essential.
- **Impact on Air Quality and Health:** Burning coal releases air pollutants such as particulate matter, Sulphur dioxide (SO₂), and nitrogen oxides (NO_x) that are hazardous to human health in addition to being a key cause of climate change. In addition to being a local environmental issue, addressing air quality concerns supports more general sustainable development objectives.
- **Economic and Energy Security:** By lowering reliance on a single energy source, diversifying the energy mix can improve energy security. India's high reliance on coal exposes it to changes in the price of the commodity as well as interruptions in supply. A more secure and robust energy system can benefit from having a diverse energy portfolio that includes renewable energy sources.
- **International Cooperation and Reputation:** To combat climate change collectively, the Paris Agreement promotes international cooperation. India's standing in the international world depends on its commitment to cutting emissions and moving away from coal. India can enhance its standing and make a valuable contribution towards a more sustainable future by harmonizing its energy policies with the worldwide climate goals.
- **Policy and Regulatory Framework:** Robust policy measures and regulatory frameworks are necessary to achieve the shift away from coal. India must put laws into place and uphold them that encourage the use of renewable energy sources, increase energy efficiency, and progressively phase out the production of electricity from coal.

Conclusion

India's reliance on coal as a source of energy has a big impact on its obligations under the Paris Agreement. Making the switch to greener, more sustainable energy sources is crucial for achieving climate goals as well as for improving energy security, addressing regional environmental and health concerns, and promoting global collaboration in the fight against climate change.

Dealing with cyclones requires a holistic multi-sectoral approach involving urban development, public awareness, sound infrastructure, etc., rather than working in silos. Discuss in the context of the havoc caused by Cyclone Michaung in Chennai.

Introduction: Give brief context of the question

Body: Highlight key aspects of multi sectoral approach to deal with cyclone

Conclusion: Way forward

Cyclone Michaung is a tropical cyclone as formed over the Bay of Bengal & moved westward and intensified into a severe cyclonic storm. It caused widespread damage in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Cyclones or any similar natural disaster, demands a comprehensive and multi-sectoral approach for effective preparedness, response, and recovery.

Key aspects of a holistic multi-sectoral approach

- **Urban Development and Planning:** It's critical to have a robust infrastructure that can resist cyclone effects, such as storm surges and intense rains. This entails including cyclone-resistant elements into the construction of roadways, buildings, and other vital infrastructure. The impact on vulnerable communities can be reduced by implementing and enforcing zoning restrictions that prohibit construction in high-risk regions, such as coastal zones susceptible to storm surges.
- **Public Education and Awareness:** Keeping the public informed about approaching cyclones requires the establishment and upkeep of efficient early warning systems. Early warnings lower the chance of casualties by allowing people to flee to safer locations. Community readiness and resilience are increased by regularly holding training sessions and drills to inform the public about emergency shelters, evacuation protocols, and fundamental first aid techniques.
- **Community Engagement and Social Support:** Involving local communities in decision-making processes and disaster risk reduction initiatives empowers them to actively participate in building resilience. Developing social safety nets and support systems to assist vulnerable populations, including those who may face displacement or loss of livelihoods due to cyclones.
- **Emergency Services and Healthcare:** It's critical to fortify the healthcare system to meet the surge in demand that occurs during and after storms. Making sure hospitals and other healthcare facilities are resistant to natural catastrophes is part of this. preparing and supplying specialist emergency response teams to manage medical crises, conduct search and rescue missions, and evacuate populations that are deemed vulnerable.
- **Protection of Critical Infrastructure:** Keeping key services operational both during and after cyclones depends on the resilience of critical infrastructure, such as communication networks, water supply systems, and power grids.
- **Government Coordination and Policy:** To guarantee a coordinated response to cyclones, coordination procedures between different government agencies, such as meteorological departments, disaster management authorities, and local administrations, must be established. Long-term resilience can be increased by incorporating climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction techniques into urban planning and development regulations.

Conclusion

Dealing with cyclones like Michaung requires a collaborative, holistic approach across urban development, public awareness, healthcare, infrastructure resilience, and international cooperation.

India's fertilizer subsidy bill has been rising continuously due to a variety of reasons. What are the issues with India's fertilizer subsidy regime? What reforms, in your opinion, can be undertaken to counter the ill effects arising due to it?

Introduction: Give brief context to the question

Body: Highlight issues with the fertilizer subsidy regime and measures to improve it.

Conclusion: Way forward

The rising fertilizer subsidy bill which has increased from Rs 81,124 crore in 2019-20, to Rs 1,53,758 crore in 2021-22, Rs 2,51,339 crore in 2022-23, and a budgeted Rs 1,75,100 crore this year has raised concern for the Government as it impacts the finances and farmers directly.

Issues with India's fertiliser subsidy regime

- **Skewed NPK Ratio:** The overemphasis on urea and DAP, which are nitrogen and phosphorus-rich fertilizers, has led to an imbalanced Nitrogen-Phosphorus-Potassium (NPK) ratio in the soil. The ideal ratio for healthy plant growth is approximately 4:2:1 (N:P: K).
- **Soil Health and Crop Productivity:** Imbalanced nutrient ratios can result in nutrient deficiencies or excesses, affecting the overall health of the soil. This, in turn, can lead to reduced crop productivity, poor crop quality, and increased susceptibility to pests and diseases.
- **Groundwater and Surface Water Pollution:** Overuse of fertilizers can lead to the leaching of excess nutrients, such as nitrogen compounds, into groundwater. This contamination can also find its way into surface water bodies through runoff. The pollution of water sources with nitrates can have detrimental effects on aquatic ecosystems.
- **Health Impacts:** High levels of nitrates in drinking water, which can result from the overuse of nitrogen-based fertilizers, pose health risks. Infants who consume water or foods with elevated nitrate levels may be at risk of developing methemoglobinemia, commonly known as Blue-Baby Syndrome.

Potential Reforms for the Subsidy Regime

- **Nutrient-Based Subsidy (NBS) System:** The government should swiftly bring urea under the nutrient-based subsidy regime, deregulate its Maximum Retail Price (MRP), and extend this decontrol to other fertilizers. By providing a per-tonne subsidy linked to nutrient content, farmers would be incentivized to consider alternatives to urea, fostering a more diversified and balanced use of fertilizers.
- **Extend the subsidy on a per-hectare basis:** The next measure involves extending the subsidy on a per-hectare basis. The government should permit farmers to purchase any fertilizer using this subsidy. This approach will compel companies to introduce innovative, cost-effective fertilizer products tailored to specific crops, soils, and agro-climatic regions.
- **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT):** Implementing a system of direct benefit transfer to farmers can help target subsidies more effectively, ensuring that the intended beneficiaries receive the support.
- **Promoting Organic Farming:** Encouraging and incentivizing organic farming practices can reduce the dependency on chemical fertilizers and promote sustainable agriculture.

Conclusion

Union Government should engage stakeholders, including farmers, state government, and fertilizer companies in the reform process for the success and sustainability of any changes to the fertilizer subsidy regime.

Recent geopolitical happenings in the case of Maldives point to China's growing influence in India's neighbourhood. Explain how this is a threat to India's aspirations as a strong regional power. What should India's foreign policy look like in this regard?

Introduction: Give brief context to the question

Body: What are the threats posed by China; 's influence and response from India to mitigate these threats?

Conclusion: Way forward

India's foreign policy is facing a significant challenge in its relations with the Maldives, highlighted by the recent presidential elections in which Dr. Mohamed Muizzu emerged victorious over Ibrahim Mohamed

Solih. The election was perceived as a contest between India First and India Out campaigns, and Muizzu's win is viewed as a triumph for the India Out faction.

Threat to India's aspirations because of China's growing influence in the region

- **Growing Chinese Influence:** China has enhanced its influence in Maldives. Maldives is an essential 'pearl' in China's 'String of Pearls' initiative in South Asia. With the return of the pro-Chinese government in Maldives, India's diplomatic space will reduce in the region.
- **Economic Dependency:** India may find itself in a situation where neighbouring countries become economically dependent on China due to China's investments in infrastructure projects and economic aid. The political clout that can result from this economic power could potentially damage India's standing in the region.
- **Security Concerns:** India may have security concerns due to China's military presence or strategic alliances in the area. It may challenge India's security interests and alter the balance of power.
- **Effect on Security in the Indian Ocean:** India considers the Indian Ocean to be strategically significant, and China's influence and presence in the area may pose a threat to India's interests in maritime security.

Response to India's foreign policy

- **Increase in Development Assistance:** India ought to augment its development assistance to the Maldives, focusing on projects with a substantial impact on the general population. This strategic approach will not only foster goodwill among the Maldivian people but also counter concerns that have fueled the 'India Out' campaigns.
- **Timely Completion of Infrastructure Projects:** Ensuring the timely completion of infrastructure projects, such as the Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP), is imperative. This will provide a credible and attractive alternative to Chinese initiatives, reinforcing India's commitment to delivering tangible and beneficial outcomes for the Maldives.
- **Prioritize Youth Employment:** India's High Impact Community Development Projects (HICPs) in the Maldives should incorporate initiatives focused on enhancing youth employability and fostering entrepreneurship. This strategic emphasis aims to mitigate the risks of radicalization and extremism originating within the region.
- **Cooperation with the new government:** India needs to actively connect with the newly elected Maldivian government, addressing their concerns. Emphasizing that ongoing projects like the Hanimadhoo redevelopment aim to boost tourism by enhancing runway and terminal capacities is crucial, as tourism is vital to the Maldivian economy.

Conclusion

India's foreign policy should be flexible, adaptive, and driven by a comprehensive understanding of the geopolitical landscape to effectively navigate and mitigate challenges arising from the growing influence of China in its neighbourhood.

Evaluate the effectiveness of India's drug regulatory framework in controlling the proliferation of unapproved FDCs. Suggest reforms needed to strengthen the regulatory mechanisms.

Introduction: What are FDC

Body: Highlight the effectiveness of India's drug regulatory framework

Conclusion: Way forward

Fixed-dose combination (FDC) refers to a pharmaceutical formulation that contains two or more active ingredients combined in a fixed ratio of doses within a single dosage form, such as a tablet or capsule. A recent study in the *Journal of Pharmaceutical Policy and Practice* documents that in the year 2020, 60.5% of FDCs of antibiotics were unapproved and another 9.9% were being sold despite being banned in the country.

Effectiveness of India's Drug Regulatory Framework

- **Unapproved FDCs:** India has faced challenges in regulating the market for FDCs, with concerns about the safety and efficacy of many combinations. Some FDCs entered the market without adequate scientific rationale or approval from regulatory authorities. Since FDCs are not covered under the Drugs (Prices Control) Order (DPCO) (which enables the government to fix the prices of individual drugs), manufacturing FDCs is a way to escape the ambit of the DPCO.
- **Regulatory Delays:** Delays in the approval process and inadequate monitoring mechanisms have contributed to the proliferation of unapproved FDCs. The backlog of pending approvals and the slow pace of regulatory decisions have allowed some questionable combinations to remain in the market.
- **States' inability to implement norms:** State drug controllers continue to ignore legal provisions and issue manufacturing licenses for FDCs not approved by the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI).

Reforms to Strengthen Regulatory Mechanisms

- **Improved Approval Procedures:** Delays can be avoided by streamlining and speeding up the FDC approval process while upholding strict scientific review. Ensuring that only combinations with demonstrated therapeutic benefits and safety profiles are permitted on the market requires the establishment of strong approval criteria.
- **Boosting Post-Marketing Surveillance:** To keep an eye on the effectiveness and safety of medications once they are on the market, a strong post-marketing surveillance system must be put in place. Manufacturing facilities can benefit from routine audits and inspections to help guarantee continuous adherence to quality standards.
- **Regular Review and Update of Regulations:** To stay up to date with evolving medical needs and scientific discoveries, regulations should be reviewed and updated regularly. The regulatory framework's weaknesses and potential areas for improvement can be found through periodic assessments.

Conclusion

As pointed out in the study Ministry of Health needs to regulate FDCs, otherwise this unapproved FDC may end up contributing to the AMR problem in India. These reforms need to be implemented in a coordinated manner, involving collaboration between regulatory bodies, healthcare professionals, industry stakeholders, and the public to ensure the safety and efficacy of drugs in the Indian market.

Discuss the potential benefits and challenges associated with the proposed land connectivity project between India and Sri Lanka in the context of regional economic integration.

Introduction: Give brief context to the question

Body: Highlight benefits and challenges associated with the project

Conclusion: Way forward

The Sri Lankan Government has put forward a proposal to establish land connectivity with India by linking Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu with Talaimanar in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka.

Potential benefits associated with the project

- **Increased Economic Integration and Trade:** Enhanced land connectivity has the potential to promote trade and economic integration between India and Sri Lanka by easing the movement of people and goods between the two countries.
- **Development of Infrastructure:** The project may result in the construction of roads and bridges, among other transportation infrastructure, which would improve connectivity and boost the economy as a whole.

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- **Lower Transport Expenses:** Effective land connectivity can lower transportation costs, increasing trade's profitability and stimulating the economies of the two nations.
- **Travel and Intercultural Communication:** Increased connectivity can boost travel and cross-cultural interactions, which will be economically advantageous to both nations and strengthen ties between individuals.
- **Creation of Jobs:** Projects aimed at developing the local infrastructure frequently result in the creation of jobs for the local populace.

Challenges associated with the project

- **Political and Geopolitical Considerations:** Political and geopolitical factors can have an impact on projects of this kind, and disputes between countries may hinder the initiative's advancement and success. Eg, China has used its geoeconomics to achieve its geopolitical objectives in Sri Lanka.
- **Environmental Issues:** Projects involving infrastructure may have an impact on the environment. It is important to take precautions to guarantee that the development is environmentally friendly and sustainable.
- **Financing and Funding:** It can be difficult to secure funding for significant infrastructure projects. Such initiatives must have sufficient funding and a well-defined financial plan to be implemented successfully.
- **Public Opposition:** Local communities like Sinhalese Buddhists may have concerns about the impact of the project on their livelihoods, environment, or cultural heritage. Addressing these concerns and ensuring community involvement is crucial.
- **Security Concerns:** Ensuring the security of the infrastructure and the safety of goods and people traveling through the land route is paramount. Cooperation on security measures is essential.

Conclusion

India's relationship with Sri Lanka is framed within India's "Neighbourhood First" policy and "SAGAR" framework. The India-Sri Lanka relationship is multi-dimensional and deeply rooted in historical ties which can aid in regional economic integration, encompassing both nations and generating more opportunities for economic growth.