

Forum IAS

7 PM COMPILATION

3rd and 4th Week July, 2024

Features of 7 PM compilation

- ❖ Comprehensive coverage of a given current topic
- ❖ Provide you all the information you need to frame a good answer
- ❖ Critical analysis, comparative analysis, legal/constitutional provisions, current issues and challenges and best practices around the world
- ❖ Written in lucid language and point format
- ❖ Wide use of charts, diagrams and info graphics
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SC Ruling to prevent stereotyping and Discrimination of Persons with Disabilities- Explained Pointwise

The Supreme Court in a landmark ruling has **laid down comprehensive guidelines** to prevent stereotyping and discrimination of persons with disabilities (PwDs) in visual media, including films and documentaries. The SC laid down this comprehensive guideline while **hearing a plea to ban the film Aankh Micholi** for derogatory portrayal of people with disabilities.

SC Guidelines to prevent Stereotyping of persons with disabilities

Avoiding Derogatory Language	Words that cultivate institutional discrimination, such as " cripple " and " spastic ", and words that individualizes the impairment such as " afflicted ," " suffering " and " victim " should be avoided. These words contribute to negative self-image and perpetuate discriminatory attitudes .
Accurate Representation	Creators must provide an accurate representation of disabilities rather than mocking them. Creators should practice the principle of " nothing about us, without us ," and involve persons with disabilities in the creation and assessment of visual media content.
Creative Freedom vs Marginalizing Portrayals	Creative freedom of filmmakers cannot include the freedom to lampoon, stereotype, misrepresent or disparage marginalized communities.
Collaboration with Disability Advocacy Groups	The film makers should collaborate with disability advocacy groups to gain insights and guidance on respectful and accurate portrayals. Training programmes for writers, directors, producers, and actors should be conducted for real portrayal of challenges of PwDs.

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What are the SC guidelines to prevent stereotyping and discrimination of Persons with Disabilities?

1. Avoiding Derogatory Language- The court has emphasized on avoiding words that cultivate institutional discrimination, such as '**cripple**' and '**spastic**'. These words contribute to **negative self-image** and **perpetuate**

discriminatory attitudes. Also, language and words that individualize the impairment and overlook disabling social barriers, like 'afflicted', 'suffering' and 'victim', should be avoided.

2. Focus on Accurate Representation- The court has held that stereotyping of differently abled persons in visual media and films must end. Creators must focus on providing an **accurate representation of disabilities** rather than mocking them. Creators should practice the principle of "nothing about us, without us," and involve persons with disabilities in the **creation and assessment of visual media content.**

3. Creative Freedom vs Marginalizing Portrayals- The court has clarified that **creative freedom** of filmmakers **cannot include** the **freedom to lampoon, stereotype, misrepresent** or **disparage** marginalized communities. If the overall message of the content infringes with the rights of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), then the right of creative freedom will not be protected.

4. Collaboration with Disability Advocacy Groups- The court has emphasized on **collaboration with disability advocacy groups** to gain insights and guidance on respectful and accurate portrayals. The **training programmes** for writers, directors, producers, and actors **must be developed** to emphasize the impact of portrayals on public perceptions and experiences of PwDs.

Who are classified as Persons with Disabilities? What is the status of differently abled people in India?

According to **The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** (UN CRPD), Persons with disabilities are the ones who have **long-term physical, mental, intellectual** or **sensory impairments**, which **hinder their full and effective participation in society** on an equal basis with others.

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, uses the same definition as the UN CRPD. It further defines 'Person with Benchmark Disability' as 'A person with not less than 40% of a specified disability'.

Expansion of Disabilities- The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 has **expanded the types of disabilities** from **7** (under the Person with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995) to **21**. The act also provides the Union Government **the power to add more types of disabilities.**

Types of Disabilities

Physical Disability

- **Locomotor Disability**
 - (i) Leprosy cured person; (ii) Cerebral Palsy; (iii) Dwarfism; (iv) Muscular Dystrophy; (v) Acid Attack Victims.
- **Visual Impairment**
 - (i) Blindness; (ii) Low Vision.
- **Hearing Impairment**
 - (i) Deaf; (ii) Hard of Hearing.
- **Speech and Language Disability.**

Intellectual Disability

- (i) Specific Learning Disabilities; (ii) Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Mental Illness

Chronic Neurological Conditions

- (i) Multiple Sclerosis; (ii) Parkinson's Disease

Blood Disorders

- (i) Haemophilia; (ii) Thalassemia; (iii) Sickle Cell Disease.

Multiple Disabilities including Deaf-Blindness

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Data on Disability in India

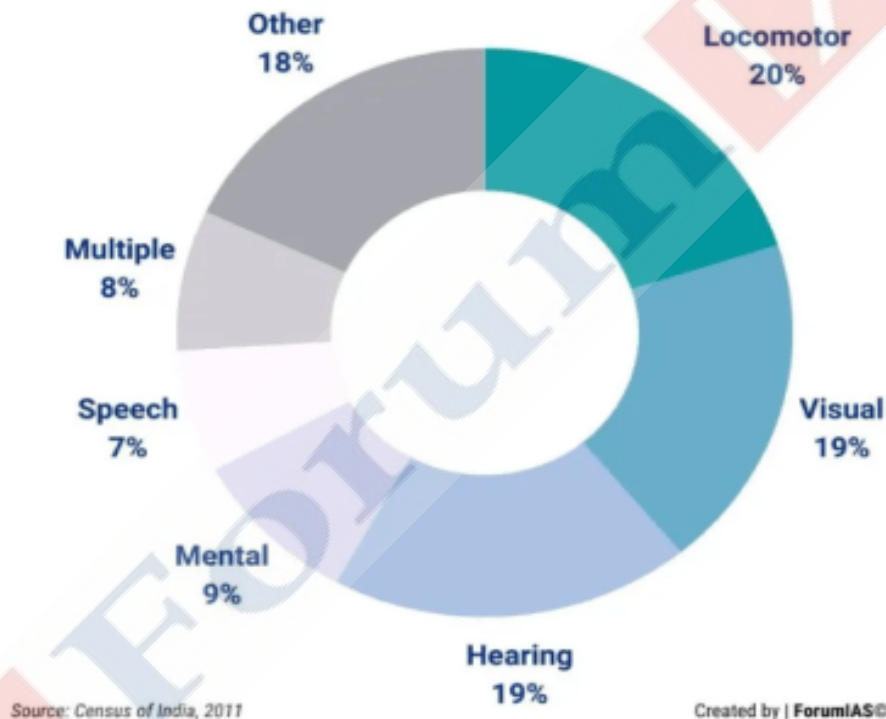
a. Number of Persons with Disability in India- In India, there are around **26.8 million** persons with disabilities. It constitutes around **2.21% of India's total population** (2011 Census). There are around **14.9 million men** (2.41% of men) and **11.9 million women** (2.01% of women) with disabilities.

Disabilities are **highest** in the age group **10-19 years** (46.2 lakh people). **69%** (18 million) **of persons** with disabilities reside in rural areas.

b. Disability % distribution- **20%** of persons with disabilities in India have a **disability in movement**, **19%** have **visual impairment**, **19%** have a **hearing impairment** and **8%** have **multiple disabilities**.

PwDs by Disability

Proportion of disabled Indian Population by type of disability



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What provisions have been made for persons with disabilities in India?

Constitutional Provisions

Preamble	The Preamble of the Indian Constitution seeks to secure social, economic and political justice to all citizens (which includes persons with disabilities) along with equality of status and of opportunity.
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Fundamental Rights	Dignity of the individual is the fundamental notion behind all the fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution. All fundamental rights are available to the persons with disabilities.
Directive Principles	Article 41 exhorts the State to make effective provisions for securing the right to work, education and to public assistance in case of unemployment, old age, sickness and disability. Article 46 provides that the state shall promote educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and protect them social injustice and all forms of exploitation.
Schedules of the Constitution	Relief of the Disabled is a State Subject (Entry 9 in List II) under the Seventh Schedule. Welfare of the Disabled and mentally retarded is listed as item 26 in the Eleventh Schedule and item 09 in the Twelfth Schedule.

Legal Provisions

The Mental Health Act, 2017	It replaced the Mental Health Act, 1987. It has been passed with the objective to provide for mental healthcare and related services for persons with mental illness and to protect, promote and fulfill their rights.
The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016	This Act came into force in April 2017, and replaced the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995. It fulfils the obligations to the United National Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). The Act has several provisions for benefit of persons with disabilities- a. It has increased the magnitude of reservation for Persons with Disabilities from 3% to 4% in government jobs and from 3% to 5% in higher education institutes. b. It stresses to ensure accessibility in public buildings in a prescribed time frame.
The Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992	It provided statutory status to the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI, established in 1986). The mandate given to RCI is to a. regulate and monitor services given to persons with disability b. standardize syllabi and to maintain a Central Rehabilitation Register of all qualified professionals and personnel working in the field of Rehabilitation and Special Education.
The National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999	It has been enacted with the objective to provide for the constitution of a body at the National level for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities. The trust aims to provide total care to persons with mental retardation and cerebral palsy and also manage the properties bequeathed to the Trust. The Trust strives to enable persons with disability to live independently by- (a) Promoting measures for their protection in case of death of their parents (b) Evolving procedures for appointment of their guardians and trustees (c) Facilitating equal opportunities in society.

Welfare Programmes

Accessible India Campaign	It aims for creation of Accessible Environment for PwDs. The aim of the Campaign is to make a barrier free and conducive environment for Persons with Disabilities all over the country. The campaign targets three separate verticals for achieving universal accessibility (a) Built up environment; (b)
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	Transportation ecosystem; (c) Information & Communication Technology (ICT) ecosystem.
Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS)	DDRS aims to create an enabling environment to ensure equal opportunities, equity, social justice and empowerment of persons with disabilities . Under DDRS, NGOs are provided with financial assistance for running their projects for the rehabilitation of persons with disability.
Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase of Aids and Appliances (ADIP)	Its aim is to assist the needy disabled persons in procuring durable and scientifically manufactured appliances . It is implemented by NGOs , National Institutes under the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, and ALIMCO (a PSU that manufactures artificial limbs). It helps promote their physical, social, and psychological rehabilitation by reducing the effects of disabilities and enhancing their economic potential.
Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre	It promotes the use of sign language and also to develop human resources in the field.
National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation (NIMHR)	It aims to work towards capacity building in the field of mental health rehabilitation . It also aims to develop community-based rehabilitation protocols for mainstreaming persons with mental illness who have been successfully cured.

What are the Challenges faced by the people suffering from disability?

1. Social Challenges- The following are the challenges faced by the people suffering from disability in India:

(a) Discrimination and Inequality: They face several types of discrimination like reluctance to hire PwDs for employment

(b) Loss of Social Status: Lack of opportunities results in lack of employment, money etc.

(c) Inhuman Treatment: People suffering from mental illness or mental retardation are subject to social exclusion

(d) Loss of Identity: The identity of PwDs becomes linked with their disability and become a subject of pity.

2. Barriers to Education- There is **lack of special schools** and **trained teachers** for children with learning disabilities. Persons with **visual impairment lack education materials** for their studies. Children with **learning disabilities** are shunned and not admitted to schools.

3. Lack of adequate Healthcare facilities- The persons with disabilities lack quality healthcare facilities which further marginalises them.

Barriers to Healthcare

According to WHO, people with disability encounter a range of barriers in accessing health care

✓ Attitudinal Barriers

- Prejudice, stigma, discrimination by health service providers.
- Service providers lack knowledge about needs of the disabled.
- Women with disability face barriers to sexual, reproductive health services and information.

✓ Physical Barriers

- Lack of appropriate infrastructure to access healthcare facilities like ramps to access passages, doorways, toilets on wheelchairs.
- Fixed-height furniture, including examination beds and chairs, can be difficult for people with disability to use.
- Lack of healthcare facilities in remote areas.

✓ Communication Barriers

- Limited availability of written material or sign language interpreters at health services for persons with hearing impairment.
- Lack of information and prescription in accessible formats, like Braille or large print for persons with vision impairment.

Source: WHO

✓ Financial Barriers

- Over half of all people with disability in low-income countries cannot afford proper health care.
- Inability to afford the costs associated with travelling to a health service and paying for medicine.

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4. Prevalence of Unemployment- Disabled persons have lower employment rates. Private sector is reluctant to hire PwDs due to stereotypes and stigma. It **impacts their ability to be financially independent and be self-sufficient.**

5. Accessibility- Lack of appropriate disabled-friendly physical infrastructure creates accessibility issues for persons suffering with disabilities. **For ex- PwDs find it difficult to commute in public transportation, or access buildings.**

Read More- [\[Yojana May Summary\] Empowering Divyangjan – Explained, pointwise](#)

What Should be the Way Forward?

1. Accommodation and Inclusion- There is a need to **identify opportunities** to better accommodate people with disabilities in Society- like **providing better education, equal opportunity in job, and initiating them to take active part in social and political decision.**

2. Greater Social Sensitisation- The focus must be on overcoming stigma is necessary in order to facilitate better integration of Persons with Disabilities into the mainstream. People need to be **educated and be sensitized about the challenges faced by PwDs.** **For ex-** Use of the term “**Divyangjan**” to address persons with disabilities.

3. Preventive Measures for early prevention of disabilities- Scaling up **The Comprehensive Newborn Screening (CNS) programme** under the **Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram** for early detection and prevention of disabilities.

4. Interventions in Public Policy- A larger portion of the budget should be allocated to the welfare of disabled people. There ought to be **budgeting for people with disabilities** in line with the **gender budget.**

Read More- [The Hindu](#)

UPSC Syllabus- GS II, Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; Mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

National Quantum Mission- Significance and Challenges- Explained Pointwise

The launch of **National Quantum Mission in 2023**, put India among the **top six leading nations** involved in the **research and development in quantum technologies**. The National Quantum Mission worth **Rs. 6,003.65 crore**, is **planned during 2023-2031**. The mission aims to strengthen India's research and development in the quantum arena. However, the mission also faces several challenges in the achievement of its objectives.

In this article, we will delve deeper into the advantages of quantum technology, the National Quantum Mission, its challenges and the way forward.



Source- The Indian Express

What is quantum computing technology? What are its areas of application and advantages?

Quantum Computing Technology- Quantum computing is a rapidly emerging technology that **leverages the principles of quantum mechanics** to solve complex problems that are beyond the capabilities of classical computers.

Principle behind Quantum Technology- Quantum computing utilizes the principles of **quantum mechanics**, which **describe the behavior of particles at the subatomic level**. This includes phenomena like **superposition**

and **entanglement**, which allow quantum bits (qubits) to exist in multiple states simultaneously and interact with each other in complex ways.

Read More- [Quantum computing technology and associated applications – Explained, pointwise](#)

Applications and advantages of Quantum Technology

Higher Problem-solving capabilities	Quantum computing has the potential to solve complex problems in areas such as cryptology, optimization, materials science, and drug discovery that are currently intractable for classical computers.
Enhanced AI Models	Quantum computing can dramatically improve machine learning algorithms , enabling more efficient and accurate AI models for various applications.
Optimization	Quantum computing optimizes complex processes, such as supply-chain management and financial portfolio optimization , by exploring multiple solutions simultaneously.
Secure Communication	Quantum computers can enable ultrasecure communication using quantum encryption , making it nearly impossible for hackers to intercept sensitive information.
New Medicines	Quantum computing can help simulate complex molecular interactions , allowing researchers to discover new drugs and optimize existing ones.

What are the Salient Features of the National Quantum Mission?

The mission will be implemented by the **Department of Science & Technology (DST)** under the Ministry of Science & Technology. The mission planned for 2023-2031 aims to seed, nurture, and scale up scientific and industrial R&D and create a vibrant & innovative ecosystem in **Quantum Technology (QT)**.

Development of Quantum Computers	The mission targets to develop intermediate scale quantum computers with 50-100 physical qubits in 5 years and 50-1000 physical qubits in 8 years .
Development of quantum materials	The mission will also support design and synthesis of quantum materials such as superconductors, novel semiconductor structures and topological materials for fabrication of quantum devices. The mission will help develop magnetometers with high sensitivity for precision timing (atomic clocks), communications, and navigation.
Secure communication	The mission aims to facilitate satellite based secure quantum communications between ground stations over a range of 2000 km within India , and Long distance secure quantum communications with other countries.
Establishment of T-Hubs	The mission aims to set up Four Thematic Hubs (T-Hubs) would be set up in top academic and National R&D institutes in the domains of Quantum Technology- Quantum computation, Quantum communication, Quantum Sensing & Metrology and Quantum Materials & Devices.

What is the significance of the National Quantum Mission?

1. Improve India's standing in new economic order- New age technologies like **quantum computing, Artificial intelligence, Internet-of-Things (IoT), machine learning** etc. are re-writing the world economic order. The National Quantum Mission will help in India's accommodation in a new economic order.

2. Economic Growth and Job Creation- According to experts, the **adoption of quantum technologies** in India can contribute **\$280-310 billion** to the economy by **2030**. The mission will help to spur job creation in research, development, and the manufacturing of quantum devices and systems.

3. Boost to Industries- The National Quantum Mission will boost the industrial ecosystem in India which includes industries in the sector of aero-space engineering, weather prediction, simulations, cyber security, advanced manufacturing, health, agriculture, and education.

4. Improvement of security infrastructure- The mission will help to secure the communication (Quantum Key Distribution) and financial transactions infrastructure in India.

5. Complement the efforts of Socio-economic development- The National Quantum Mission will complement and support other national socio-economic development programs like Digital India, Make in India, and the progress towards Sustainable Development Goals.

6. Streamline the material and device requirements for the core quantum technology- The mission will help in the fulfillment of these objectives by

- building infrastructure for new materials and devices with in-house R&D.
- synergising the diverse and geographically distributed material workforce in India to achieve mission deliverables.
- ensuring efficient resource utilisation as well as minimising redundancy and duplication of resources.

7. Solving modern age problems- The National quantum mission will help in finding radical solutions to some of the most intractable problems of our age, such as clean energy and affordable healthcare.

What are the Challenges with the Mission?

1. Lesser investment as compared to other countries- The 6000 crore (\$0.75 billion) earmarked for the mission is very low when compared to Chinese \$15 billion investment, US's \$3.75 billion.

Country	Investment (in bn \$)	Papers published (2000 to 2018)	Patents gained (2015 to 2020)	No. of graduating students*
India	0.75	1,711	339	82,110
China	15	12,110	23,335	57,693
United States	3.75	13,489	8,935	45,087
European Union	1.1	NA	NA	1,35,511

**(in areas related to quantum science)*
Source: Landscape of Indian R&D in Quantum Technologies (Citing multiple external sources)

India vs other countries in quantum technologies.

Figure 1. Source- The Indian Express

2. Less number of scientific research papers- Between 2000 and 2018, while the Indian researchers have published 1,711 papers on quantum-related science, the Chinese and American researchers have published 12,110 and 13,489 papers respectively.

Among the 10% most cited papers, the US and China again lead the way, with India languishing at the 20th rank.

3. Less quantum technology patents- Between 2015 and 2020, Chinese and American researchers acquired 23,335 and 8,935 quantum-related patents respectively. However, Indian researchers had only 339 such patents in the same period. India ranks ninth by the number of patents obtained.

4. Fewer firms in tech manufacturing- Currently nearly 12% of start-ups in India are deep tech-related. However, less than 3% of these involve manufacturing and/or materials related to quantum technologies.

5. Lack of adequate infrastructure- India does not have enough infrastructure that can support the entire chain of operation from working out the proof-of-principle to developing working prototypes.

6. Fewer and more scattered R&D community- In 2018, India had 253 full-time equivalent researchers per million of its population. This is about 11% of the researcher density of Italy.

7. Weak Industry academia linkage- Lack of strong collaborations between **academic institutions**, **research organizations**, and **industries** has slowed down the progress of quantum computing development in India.

What Should be the way Forward?

1. Identify and promote young talent- National Quantum Mission needed to identify and promote young talent. The mission should raise a **separate cadre of quantum scientists** like the atomic energy or space science establishments.

2. Well balanced R&D ecosystem- India needs to create a well-balanced R&D ecosystem where **material research for near-term goals and applications** needs to **coexist and collaborate** with **more fundamental and futuristic objectives**.

3. Increased Investment Support- Both **public and private entities** should increase funding and investment in quantum computing research, development, and innovation.

4. Improvement of infrastructure facilities- The government and private sector should invest in building state-of-the-art research facilities and providing resources for quantum computing development.

5. Promotion of Partnerships- Collaborations between academic institutions, research organizations, and industries must be enhanced to create a robust ecosystem for quantum computing development.

[Read More- The Indian Express](#)

UPSC Syllabus- GS 3 Science and technology

Local Reservation in Private Job- Demand and Challenges- Explained Pointwise

Recently, the Karnataka Cabinet cleared the draft Bill, **Karnataka State Employment of Local Candidates in the Industries, Factories and Other Establishments Bill, 2024**, to provide for local reservation in private jobs. The Bill mandates the appointment of local candidates in **50% management positions** and **70% non-management positions**, in industries, factories, and other establishments.

This proposal evoked a sharp response from businesses in Bengaluru, the centre for information technology, startups, global capability centres (GCC) and pharma industries. This has forced the Karnataka Govt to withhold the bill for a more comprehensive review.

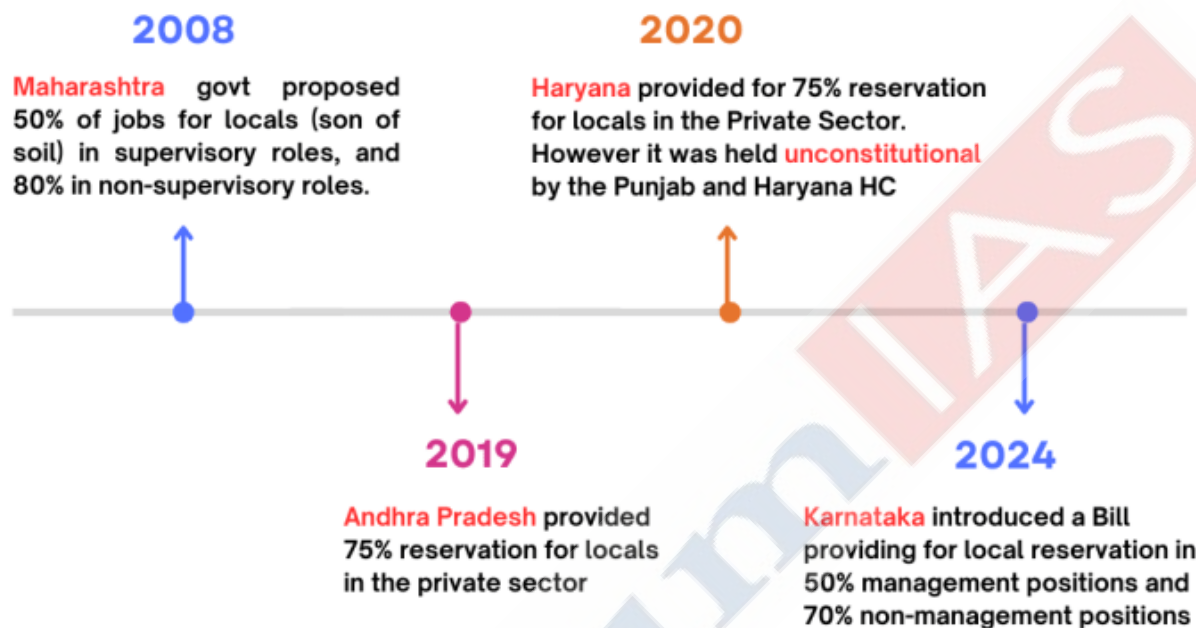
What has been the history of implementation of local reservation for private jobs?

The attempts of the state governments to introduce local reservation in private sector is a decade long story.

- The **Maharashtra state government** set the ball rolling in 2008, with an attempt to provide 80 per cent reservation to son of soil.
- The **Andhra Pradesh government** passed a law mandating 75 per cent local reservation in 2019.
- The **Haryana state government** provided for 75% local reservation in private sector in 2020. This was held unconstitutional by the Punjab and Haryana HC.

Local Reservation in Private Sector

A Historical Timeline of Implementation by Various States



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What are the arguments presented in support of local reservation in private jobs?

- 1. Protection of Right to livelihood-** The State governments contend that the local reservation law intends to protect the right to livelihood of people domiciled in the State.
- 2. Constitutional Mandate of Article 16(4)-** The state governments contend that they are empowered to provide local reservation under Article 16(4) of the Constitution. **Art 16(4)** stipulates that the **right to equality** in public employment **does not prevent the State** from **making reservation for any backward class of citizens** which are **not adequately represented**.
- 3. Solving the rising unemployment problem-** One of the central objectives stated by the state governments for providing local reservation is to empower the local youth by giving them employment. **For ex- Haryana attempted to introduce local reservation**, citing the **highest rates of unemployment (9%) in the state** as per PLFS 2021-22.
- 4. Redressal of Local Resentment-** The local reservation is attempted by the state to address the **resentment of locals against migrant workers** taking up their jobs.
- 5. Legitimate right of the State-** The proponents of local reservation argue that the states have a legitimate right to ask private sectors to adhere to the local reservation policy **as the private sector utilizes public sector infrastructures**.

6. Social Equality- Local Reservation in private sector jobs is **needed to achieve substantial social equality**, as the **proportion of public sector jobs is very low** as **compared to private sector jobs**.

7. Ends private sector's exploitation of migrant workers- Private employers often **exploit the migrant labour market as such workers tend to work long hours for low wages** with little or no social protection and benefits.

8. In line with global best practices- US (**The US Civil Rights Act of 1964**) and Canada (**The Employment Equity Act**) also provide for reservation in private jobs.

What are the arguments against local reservation in private jobs?

1. Negative effect on the Economy- Local reservation in private sector jobs **decreases inter-state mobility of skilled and unskilled labour**. This shortage of qualified workers in a state **may impact business units and thus the economy of the entire country**. **For ex-** Flight of firms from Gurugram to Noida.

2. Discourages Investment- '**Compulsory and restricted**' employment choices decreases the competitiveness of companies. It also discourages investment potential in a state by creating compliance burden. **For Ex-** Haryana's quarterly compliance report to be submitted by the companies appraising local reservation implementation.

3. Hampers Inclusive Growth- Developed States imposing '**domicile based employment restrictions**' reduces the **job opportunities of workers** from the underdeveloped states like Bihar and UP. **For Ex-** Increases in the Human development Index (HDI) gap.

4. Threat to National Unity- Local reservation **fuels the growth** of '**Sons of Soil**' feeling and **breeds antagonistic regionalism**. It also increases friction among locals and non-locals, negatively impacting the social fabric of the nation. **For ex-** Attack on Bihari workers in Maharashtra.

5. Against the reservation ceiling- The **provision of 75% reservation goes against the Supreme court's mandated ceiling of 50% reservation** as enunciated in the Indira Sawhney Judgement.

6. Dependence of industries on migrant workers- The majority of MSMEs and large companies in the construction sector are **dependent on migrant population**. Attempts of introduction of local reservation will negatively impact the growth of this sector.

7. Decreased private industry competitiveness- Private industries operating in competitive markets need the freedom to access the best talent available. **Restriction of the talent pool on parochial grounds like local reservation will negatively impinge on efficiency and productivity** of the private industry.

What has been the judgement of HC on Local Reservation?

The Punjab and Haryana High Court held the law providing local reservation by the Haryana govt as unconstitutional. The following are the observations made by the HC in its judgement-

- 1. Local Reservation Law is unconstitutional-** The law is in **contravention with the Article 19(1)(g)** of the Constitution, which provides the freedom to carry on occupation, trade or business in any part of the country.
- 2. Legislative overreach by state legislature-** **Article 16(3) provides the power to prescribe local residence** as a pre-criterion for employment **only to the parliament**.
- 3. Local Reservation law creates 'artificial walls'**- The law discriminates against individuals who do not belong to a certain State by **putting up artificial walls of local residence requirement**.
- 4. Certain provisions of the Law amount to 'Inspector Raj'**- Certain sections, like **section 6** and **section 8**

of the act which mandated the firms to **submit quarterly reports on the status of implementation of local reservation in their firms, amounts to 'Inspector Raj'**.

What should be the way forward?

1. States must Uphold Uniform Labour Rights- States should ensure that **migrant workers enjoy basic labour rights** and create a **level playing field for both the migrant and local workers**. This will also protect the migrant labours from exploitation.

2. Shift of focus from Reservation to Development- The State government must focus on **Ease of Doing Business Reforms** to attract industries, Skill Development Programs, Infrastructure Development, Education Reforms and Rural Development. It will help **solving in the unemployment problem** in the long term.

3. Supreme court must lay down the guidelines- As the supreme court laid down the ceiling of reservation in public sector jobs in the Indira Sawhney judgement, it must also **give its guidelines on the local reservation in private sector**.

4. Promotion of the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat' - The narrow parochial views of regionalism which is propagated by these local reservation **must be countered by actively promoting interstate cultural interactions** through the 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat' Scheme.

5. Greater consultation and deliberations- The legislation **providing for local reservation** must be consulted in detail and a meeting with the regular stakeholders like industry bodies must be convened to arrive at a consensus.

So far, the states in India have thrived on the multicultural talent that India has to offer. Restriction of employment for narrow political gains is akin to killing a productive golden goose.

Read More- [The Hindu](#)

UPSC Syllabus- GS Paper 2 Indian Polity – Indian Constitution. GS Paper 1 Indian Society – Regionalism.

Menstrual leaves- Demand and Challenges- Explained Pointwise

The Supreme Court of India recently **rejected a writ petition** that sought directives **for implementing policies for menstrual leave to women in India**. The petitioner had sought provisions for **menstrual leave** to be included **under the Maternity Benefits Act, 1961**. The Court emphasized that the issue of menstrual leaves is the policy matter of the executive and not of the courts.

There has been a growing demand for menstrual leaves in India. However, there are several challenges in the implementation of the menstrual leaves scheme for women. In this article we will have a detailed look into the issue of menstrual leaves in India.

TOPIC

MENSTRUAL LEAVES**FOR**

- Fulfillment of **Constitutional Mandate** under **Article 15(3)**, **Article 46**, providing for special provisions for ensuring equality and dignity of women
- Breaking Gender Stereotypes about menstruation being '**dirty**' and '**impure**'
- Reducing female Drop-outs caused by the **lack of clean toilets, running water, sanitary pads**
- Menstrual leaves leads to **increased women employee work productivity** post-menstruation
- **Alleviation of the mental stress** associated with managing work responsibilities while dealing with **painful physical symptoms** during menstruation

AGAINST

- **Non availment of leaves** due to **shame and cultural taboos**. **Only 0.9% of women** in the workforce avail menstrual leave days in **Japan**
- **Reinforcement of stereotypes** of women as being **weaker** or needing special treatment
- Disincentivise women employment and career growth opportunities, as **employers may start seeing them as liabilities**
- Critics hold the belief that **menstruation is not a handicap** that warrants special leave.
- Addition of mandatory paid leave for periods **may further widen the already widening gender gap**, which is reflected by WEF's Gender Gap Report

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What is Menstrual leave Policy? What are the international case studies of their Implementation? What have been India's efforts in this regard?

Menstrual leave policy- It is a policy that allows female employees or students to take **paid leaves** when they are experiencing menstrual pain or discomfort. It also provides **for other options** like **remote work**, a more **comfortable working space** and **longer breaks in the workday** during menstruation period. This policy aims to increase women's work performance after menstruation, and comfort their overall well-being.

International Cases of Menstrual Policy

a. **Spain** has become the first European country to pass a legislation granting paid menstrual leave to workers. Women have the right to three days of menstrual leave per month, which can be expanded to five days.

b. Japan, Indonesia, Philippines, Taiwan, South Korea, Zambia, South Korea and Vietnam also have menstrual policies in place.

Menstrual Policy Initiatives in India

State Initiatives	<p>a. The Bihar government introduced its menstrual leave policy in 1992, allowing employees two days of paid menstrual leave every month.</p> <p>b. In January 2023, the Kerala government issued an order granting menstrual leave for students in all State-run higher education institutions.</p>
Corporate Initiatives	<p>a. In 2017, two Mumbai-based companies – Gozoop and Culture Machine – became the first private companies to introduce period leave in India.</p> <p>b. In 2020, Zomato introduced menstrual leave for up to ten days a year for its women and transgender employees. Since then, other private companies like Swiggy and Byju's have also introduced similar policies.</p>

Legislative attempts for providing for Menstrual Leaves

Private Member Bill (PMB)	<p>a. The Menstruation Benefits Bill, introduced in 2018 as a private member bill, provided for two days of paid menstrual leave, four days leave for students in Class VIII and rest period for women. The bill lapsed upon the dissolution of the Lok Sabha.</p> <p>b. Since 2018, there have been five PMBs on menstruation related issues, that have dealt with access to hygiene products and menstrual leaves. All of them have since lapsed, the latest being the Right of Women to Menstrual Leave and Free Access to Menstrual Health Products Bill, 2022.</p>
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What is the need for implementation of Menstrual Leave Policy in India?

- 1. Fulfillment of Constitutional Mandates-** Various articles in the Indian Constitution such as Article 15(3), Article 46, provide for special provisions for ensuring equality and dignity of women. Menstrual policies help in fulfillment of these constitutional mandates.
- 2. Breaking Gender Stereotypes-** Menstrual policy is a step towards shattering the taboos associated with menstruation such as being 'dirty' and 'impure'. Historically, the discussion around menstruation has been stigmatised; which made it difficult for women to communicate about their experiences and needs.
- 3. Reducing female Drop-outs-** Menstrual leaves will help in reducing the drop-out rates of female students from government schools in rural India caused by the lack of clean toilets, running water, sanitary pads.
- 4. Increase in productivity-** Providing leaves to women during menstruation is likely to increase their productivity post-menstruation.
- 5. Promotes inclusion and equity-** The menstrual leave is a relief measure that accommodates the needs of those who are menstruating. This policy promotes inclusion and equity at the workplace.
- 6. Mental and Physical Well being-** Allowing menstrual leave can alleviate the mental stress associated with managing work responsibilities while dealing with painful physical symptoms. This can lead to improved overall well-being for women.
- 7. Fulfillment of the objectives of Draft National Menstrual Hygiene Policy, 2023-** The leaves during menstruation will help fulfilling the objectives of the draft policy which includes addressing social taboos, breaking barriers, elimination of stigma and fostering an inclusive and supportive environment.

What are the concerns with the implementation of the Policy?

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1. Non availment of leaves due shame and cultural taboos- Mere **0.9% of women** in the workforce **avail menstrual leave days in Japan**, which introduced menstrual leave provision in their labour law in 1947. Women do not avail it because of cultural taboos.

2. Reinforcement of stereotypes- Many women rights activists are concerned that menstrual leaves would reinforce stereotypes **of women as being weaker or needing special treatment**. It will lead to a return to **women being determined by their biology** after struggling to be seen as humans beyond their reproductive organs.

3. Disincentivise women employment opportunities- The leaves during menstruation would further stigmatise menstruation and **disincentivise employers to hire and/or promote women**. . It will strengthen the glass ceiling around women's promotion prospects, as they **may end up becoming liabilities**.

4. Health view- Many opponents of this leave policy hold the belief that **menstruation is not a handicap that warrants special leave**. This view posits that it should be managed like any regular health issue.

5. Stigma and Embarrassment- Special leave policies **could reinforce the stigma around menstruation**, making it a publicly known issue and potentially causing discomfort.

6. Further widen the gender gap- According to World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021, the global gender gap has widened (instead of shrinking). The **addition of mandatory paid leave for periods may further widen this gap**.

What Should be the Way Forward?

1. Addressing the primary issues first- The primary issues such as the **lack of proper sanitary facilities** in schools and informal sector workplaces, must be addressed first.

2. Employer's duties- The employers should allow women employees to work from home during menstruation. They must **provide menstrual hygiene products in office spaces**, and not treat the subject of menstruation as taboo.

3. Need for a 'period education'- Period education classes must be conducted among the masses regarding the incidence and effects of menstruation. This must take place at the grassroots level of society, with men, children, and coworkers **demonstrating a willingness to be engaged in the dialogue** in a both personal and professional capacity.

4. Extensive consultations- The Supreme Court's suggestion that the government undertake consultations to formulate a model menstrual leave policy, must be adhered to at the earliest. Menstrual leave should be placed alongside broader conversations on self-care and the workplace.

Read More- [The Indian Express](#)

UPSC Syllabus- GS 1- Women and associated issues

[Yojana July 2024 Summary] Food Processing- Significance and Challenges- Explained Pointwise

India with its agricultural tradition and diverse climate, holds **immense potential for the food processing sector**. This industry is not only a cornerstone for the country's economic growth but is also pivotal for ensuring food security, reducing wastage, enhancing farmers' incomes and providing employment opportunities.

In order to achieve a developed nation status in the next 25 years, the food processing sector would be **crucial in transforming India's primary agriculture sector** with enhanced productivity and profitability while ensuring sustainability and resilience.



Source- Yojana

What is Food Processing? What are the reasons behind its growing Demand in India?

Food Processing- It involves transforming raw agricultural products into consumable food items, adding value and extending shelf life. Food processing sector has been recognised as a '**sunrise sector**' and a key priority industry under the 'Make in India' initiative.

Type of Food Processing- The can be categorized into **primary** and **secondary** products.

- Primary products** are made from processed raw materials, like **fruits** and **vegetables**.
- Secondary products** are created by processing primary food items into new products, such as **jams, sauces,** and **butter**.

Main reasons behind the Growth of Food Processing sector in India

- Changing lifestyle** and **food preferences** as a result of increasing disposable income. Rising health consciousness among consumers is driving demand for processed and packaged foods that are safe and nutritive.
- High level of agricultural output**– India is the world's largest producer of milk, pulses, and jute. It is also the second largest producer of essential crops such as rice, wheat, sugarcane, groundnut, vegetables, fruits, and cotton.
- Export opportunities** such as proximity to key export destinations, increasing connectivity with the global

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economy.

d. Proactive government policy and assistance with government interventions like **Mega Food Park Scheme**.

What is the significance of the Food Processing Sector?

1. Increased Contribution to GDP- The food processing sector has emerged as an **important segment of the Indian economy in terms of its contribution to GDP**. During the last 5 years the sector had grown at an **average annual growth rate of around 8.3%** as compared to around **4.87% in the agriculture and allied sectors** (at 2011-12 prices).

Table 1: GVA by Food Processing Industries (FPI) at Constant Prices (2011-12)

		(₹ lakh cr.)								
Sr.	Economic activity	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
1	GVA-All India	85.46	90.64	97.12	104.93	111.28	120.34	127.34	132.19	135.85
2	GVA-Manufacturing	14.87	15.61	16.84	19.04	20.55	23.09	23.29	23.61	23.48
3	GVA-Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	15.24	16.09	16.06	16.16	17.36	18.40	18.79	19.82	20.48
4	GVA-FPI	1.30	1.30	1.34	1.61	1.79	1.93	2.38	2.26	2.17

Source: Annual Report 2022-23, MoFPI, Govt

Figure 2. Source- Yojana

Moreover as per the NSSO 73rd Round, 2015-16, the unregistered units of the sector supported employment for 51.11 lakh workers and constituted 14.18% of employment in the unregistered manufacturing sector.

Table 4: Number of Persons Engaged in Food Processing Sector

		(lakh persons)	
Sector	Food Processing Industry ^a	All Industries	(%) Share of FP sector
Registered (2019-2020)	20.32 lakh	144.21 lakh	12.23
Un-incorporated	51.11 lakh	360.41 lakh	14.18

Source: Annual Report- FY 2022-23, MoFPI, Govt. ^a Includes legal products and beverage segments

Figure 3. Source- Yojana

2. Employment Generation-

This sector is a major employment generator in the country. As per the latest **Annual Survey of Industries (ASI)** for 2019-20, the total number of persons engaged in the registered food processing sector was **20.32 lakhs**.

3. Large FDI inflow and market size-

FDI equity inflows into the food processing sector reached \$3.28 billion between 2019-2022. It is the fifth largest sector of the country's economy.

4. Promotes balanced regional development- This industry is a sunrise industry with a consistent demand for locally processed food. This **promotes balanced regional development in the country**.

5. Women entrepreneurship- The sector provides employment opportunities to rural women in India and also serves as a platform for entrepreneurship. **For ex- Lijjat papad venture**.

6. Nutritional Improvement- Processed foods can be **fortified with essential vitamins and minerals**, thereby **addressing malnutrition** and improving public health outcomes.

What are the Government schemes and initiatives for promotion of Food Processing Sector in India?

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY)	This Central Sector Scheme is being implemented across the country to facilitate the creation of modern infrastructure with efficient supply chain management from farm gate to retail outlet for promotion.
Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME)	It was launched in June 2020 to encourage ' Vocal for Local ' in the sector with a total outlay of Rs. 10,000 crore during the period 2020-2025. The scheme aims to enhance the competitiveness of individual microenterprises in the unorganised segment of the food processing industry and promote formalisation of the sector . This is the first ever Government scheme for Micro Food Processing

	enterprises and is targeted to benefit 2 lakh enterprises through credit linked subsidies and adopting the approach of ' One District One Product '.
Food Processing Fund	The Government of India instituted the Food Processing Fund (FPF) in NABARD during 2014-15, with a corpus of Rs. 2,000 crore, with the objective of providing affordable credit to public and private players for setting up of Designated Food Parks (DFPs)
Warehouse Corpus Fund	The fund was set up corpus of Rs. 5000 crore to support State governments , State-owned agencies, and Corporates for the creation of scientific warehouse capacity through financial support.
Production Linked Incentive Scheme	The scheme aims to generate employment for approximately 2.5 lakh persons.
Mega Food Park Scheme	Mega Food Parks are built on a 'cluster' strategy and focus on the development of cutting-edge support infrastructure in a well-defined agri/horticultural zone for the establishment of modern food processing units .

What are the Challenges faced by the Sector In India?

- 1. Low GVA despite high demand-** Despite the increasing demand for processed food and ready-to-eat food in India, the share of the sector in overall GVA has only been **1.88%** (2020-21) **as against the share of manufacturing at 17.86%** and the share of GVA in agriculture at **16.26%**.
- 2. Lack of skilled manpower and modern technology-** The availability of skilled manpower has been identified as one of the major challenges facing the industry in India. Many processing facilities use outdated technologies, reducing efficiency and product quality.
- 3. Infrastructure Bottlenecks-** Inadequate cold storage facilities, transportation systems, and processing infrastructure result in **post-harvest losses exceeding 30% of produce**. The NITI Aayog estimates annual post-harvest losses close to Rs 90,000 crore.
- 4. Informalization and Unorganized Segments-** The sector has a **high concentration of unorganized segments**, representing almost **75% across product categories**. This causes inefficiencies in the production system.
- 5. Supply Chain Inefficiencies-** Fragmented supply chains with multiple stakeholders and poor coordination lead to delays, waste, and low quality products. **For ex-** Broken supply chain in the agricultural hinterland of Bihar.
- 6. Regulatory Challenges-** Stringent sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures in export markets impede Indian processed food exports. **For ex- Rejection of Indian processed exports by the EU.**

Read More- [\[Kurukshestra Feb 2024 Summary\] Food Storage Infrastructure- Explained Pointwise](#)

What Should be the Way Forward?

- 1. Use of Smart technologies-** Internet of Things (IOT), Artificial Intelligence (AI) Applications, **Robotics** and Automation should be used in the food processing sector to increase productivity and decrease wastage.
- 2. Focus on horticulture and animal products-** Special focus must be put on making India a market leader in global trade for at least five value chains- **processed fruits and vegetables, processed fish and sea food, meat, dairy products, poultry** and **eggs** by 2047.
- 3. Skilled Manpower-** The food sector must employ more professionals **trained in food technology, quality control, processing methods, and food safety management**.

4. Better health markers- It must involve better health markers on the packets. The regulatory mechanism governing food safety must be strengthened and properly governed.

5. Tapping the popularity of agricultural products- There is also a need to tap the popularity of various food grains and **coarse grains like millets** which are gaining increasing importance due to their nutritional benefits and adaptability to various climatic conditions.

Read More- [The Hindu](#)

Yojana articles Covered- Article 1, 3, 4, 6, and 7

UPSC Syllabus- GS 3- Indian Agriculture

Economic Survey 2023-24 Highlights- Explained Pointwise

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman tabled the **Economic Survey document** in Parliament today. The Economic Survey is an **annual document presented by the Government of India's Ministry of Finance**. It is typically released a day before the Union Budget. It provides a **comprehensive review of the country's economic performance over the past year**. The survey also offers insights and recommendations for future economic policies and highlights the key challenges and opportunities facing the economy.

Chapter 1: State of the Economy – Steady as She Goes

1. Diverging Global Growth Patterns- Global economic growth has been **3.2% in 2023** as per the April World Economic Outlook. However, diverging growth patterns have emerged among countries. The stark difference in the growth performance of countries has been on account of **domestic structural issues, uneven exposure to geopolitical conflicts** and the **impact of monetary policy tightening**.

2. India carried Forward Economic Growth Despite Challenges- India's economy carried forward the momentum it built in FY23 into FY24 despite a gamut of external challenges. Indian economy has recovered and expanded in an orderly fashion post pandemic. The **real GDP in FY24 was 20 per cent higher** than its level in **FY20**, a feat that only a very few major economies achieved. The focus on maintaining macroeconomic stability ensured that **external challenges had minimal impact on India's economy**.

3. India's real GDP growth- India's **real GDP grew by 8.2 per cent in FY24**, exceeding **8 per cent mark** in three out of four quarters of FY24. Economic Survey conservatively projects a **real GDP growth of 6.5-7 per cent for FY 25**, with risks evenly balanced, cognizant of the fact that the market expectations are on the higher side.

4. Improved performance on Inflation- With deft management of administrative and monetary policies, retail inflation reduced from **6.7 per cent in FY23 to 5.4 per cent in FY24**.

5. Improved performance on CAD- Current Account Deficit (CAD) stood at **0.7 per cent of the GDP** during FY24, which is an improvement from the deficit of **2.0 per cent of GDP** in FY23.

6. Direct and Indirect Tax Collection- **55% of tax collected** accrued from **direct taxes** and remaining **45%** from **indirect taxes**.

Chapter 2: Monetary Management and Financial Intermediation- Stability is the Watchword

Steady Inflation rate- RBI maintained a **steady policy rate throughout the year** with overall inflation rate under control. Monetary Policy committee (MPC) maintained the **status quo on the policy repo rate at 6.5 per cent in FY24**. Inflation made to gradually align with its target while supporting growth.

Stellar performance of India's financial and banking sector in FY24-

Banking Sector performance- Double-digit and broad-based growth in bank credit, gross and net non-performing assets at multi-year lows, and improvement in bank asset quality highlight the government's commitment to a healthy and stable banking sector.

a. Growth in Bank credit disbursement- Credit disbursement by Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) stood at ₹164.3 lakh crore, growing by 20.2% at the end of March 2024.

b. Growth in broad money (M3)- The growth in broad money was 11.2 per cent (YoY) as on 22 March 2024, compared to 9 per cent a year ago.

Financial sector performance- The market capitalisation of the Indian stock market has seen a remarkable surge, with the market capitalisation to GDP ratio being the fifth largest in the world. Primary capital markets facilitated capital formation of ₹10.9 lakh crore during FY24 (approximately 29 per cent of the gross fixed capital formation of private and public corporates during FY23).

Financial Inclusion- Financial inclusion is not just a goal but also an enabler for sustainable economic growth, reduction of inequality and elimination of poverty. The next big challenge is Digital Financial Inclusion (DFI).

Dominance of Insurance and Microfinance sector- India poised to emerge as one of the fastest-growing insurance markets in the coming decade. Indian microfinance sector emerges as the second largest in the world after China.

Chapter 3: Prices and Inflation-Under Control

Central Government's timely policy interventions and the Reserve Bank of India's price stability measures helped maintain retail inflation at 5.4 per cent- the lowest level since the pandemic. Central Government announced price cuts for LPG, petrol, and diesel. As a result, retail fuel inflation stayed low in FY24.

Food Inflation- Agriculture sector faced challenges due to extreme weather events, depleted reservoirs, and crop damage, which impacted farm output and food prices. Food inflation stood at 6.6 per cent in FY23 and increased to 7.5 per cent in FY24. Government took appropriate administrative actions, including dynamic stock management, open market operations, subsidised provision of essential food items and trade policy measures, which helping to mitigate food inflation.

Projected Inflation- RBI projects inflation to fall to 4.5 per cent in FY25 and 4.1 per cent in FY26, assuming normal monsoon and no external or policy shocks. IMF forecasts inflation of 4.6 per cent in 2024 and 4.2 per cent in 2025 for India.

Chapter 4 : External Sector- Stability Amid Plenty

India's external sector remained strong amidst on-going geopolitical headwinds accompanied by sticky inflation.

India's share in global exports of goods and services- India is gaining market share in global exports of goods and services. Its share in global goods exports was 1.8 per cent in FY24, against an average of 1.7 per cent during FY16-FY20. India's services exports grew by 4.9 per cent to USD 341.1 billion in FY24, with growth largely driven by IT/software services and 'other' business services. The moderation in merchandise imports and rising services exports have improved India's current account deficit which narrowed 0.7 per cent in FY24.

Remittances- India is the top remittance recipient country globally, with remittances reaching a milestone of USD 120 billion in 2023.

External Debt- India's external debt has been sustainable over the years, with the external debt to GDP ratio standing at **18.7 per cent at the end of March 2024**.

Chapter 5: Medium-Term Outlook – A Growth Strategy for New India

For Indian economy to grow at 7 per cent plus, a tripartite compact between the Union Government, State Governments and the private sector is required.

Amrit Kaal's growth strategy based on six key areas- **Boosting private investment, expansion of MSMEs, agriculture as growth engine, financing green transition, bridging education-employment gap, and building capacity of States.**

Key areas of policy focus in the short to medium term- Following should be the key areas of policy focus in the short to medium term- job and skill creation, tapping the full potential of the agriculture sector, addressing MSME bottlenecks, managing India's green transition, deftly dealing with the Chinese conundrum, deepening the corporate bond market, tackling inequality and improving our young population's quality of health.

Chapter 6: Climate Change and Energy Transition: Dealing with Trade-Offs

A report by the International Finance Corporation recognises India's efforts to achieve committed climate actions, highlighting that it is the only G20 nation in line with 2-degree centigrade warming.

CAGR of GDP and emissions- India's GDP between 2005 and 2019 has grown with a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of about **7 per cent**, whereas the emissions grew at a CAGR of about **4 per cent**.

Renewable energy capacity and improved energy efficiency- India has made significant progress on climate action in terms of an increase in its renewable energy capacity and improvement in energy efficiency. As of 31 May 2024, the **share of non-fossil sources in the installed electricity generation capacity** has reached **45.4 per cent**. Further, the country has **reduced the emission intensity of its GDP from 2005 levels by 33 per cent in 2019**.

Chapter 7: Social Sector- Benefits that Empower

New Welfare Approach- The new welfare approach focuses on increasing the impact per rupee spent. The digitisation of healthcare, education and governance has been a force multiplier for every rupee spent on a welfare programme.

Nominal GDP growth and welfare expenditure- Between FY18 and FY24, **nominal GDP has grown at a CAGR of around 9.5 per cent** while the **welfare expenditure has grown at a CAGR of 12.8 per cent**.

Decline in Gini Coefficient- Gini coefficient, an indicator of inequality, has declined from **0.283 to 0.266 for the rural sector** and from **0.363 to 0.314 for the urban sector of the country**.

Healthcare and Nutrition-

More than **34.7 crore Ayushman Bharat cards have been generated**, and the scheme has covered 7.37 crore hospital admissions.

The challenge of ensuring mental health is intrinsically and economically valuable. 22 mental disorders are covered under the Ayushman Bharat – PMJAY health insurance.

'**Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi**' programme for early childhood education aims to develop the world's largest, universal, high-quality preschool network at Anganwadi Centres.

Education and R&D

Vidyanjali initiative played crucial role in enhancing educational experiences of over 1.44 cr. students facilitating community engagement and through volunteer contributions. The **rise in enrolment in higher education** has been driven by underprivileged sections such as SC, ST and OBC, with a faster growth in female enrolment across sections, **witnessing 31.6 per cent increase since FY15**. India is making **rapid progress in R&D**, with nearly one lakh patents granted in FY24, compared to less than **25,000 patent grants in FY20**.

Chapter 8: Employment and Skill Development: Towards Quality

Decline in Unemployment Rates- Indian labour market indicators have improved in the last six years, with the unemployment rate **declining to 3.2 per cent in 2022-23**. According to PLFS, youth (age 15-29 years) unemployment rate has declined from 17.8 per cent in 2017-18 to 10 per cent in 2022-23. From the gender perspective, the **female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) has been rising for six years**.

Future Job needs- Indian economy needs to generate an average of nearly **78.5 lakh jobs annually until 2030** in the non-farm sector to cater to the rising workforce. Compared to 50.7 crore persons in 2022, the country would need to care for 64.7 crore persons in 2050.

Chapter 9: Agriculture and Food Management – Plenty of Upside Left If We Get It Right

The allied sectors of Indian agriculture are steadily emerging as robust growth centres and promising sources for improving farm incomes.

Key Growth Metrics of Indian Agriculture

Agriculture and allied sector registered an average annual growth rate of 4.18 per cent at constant prices over the last five years. As of 31 January 2024, the **total credit disbursed to agriculture** amounted to **₹ 22.84 lakh Crore**. As of January 31, 2024, banks issued **7.5 crores Kisan Credit Card (KCC)** with a limit of **₹9.4 lakh crores**. An area of **90.0 lakh hectares has been covered under micro irrigation in the country** under the Per drop more crop (PDMC) from 2015-16 to 2023-24.

Importance of R&D- It is estimated that for **every rupee invested in agricultural research** (including education), there is a payoff of **₹ 13.85**.

Chapter 10: Industry-Small and Medium Matters

Growth rate of Industry- Economic growth of **8.2 per cent in FY24** was supported by an industrial growth rate of 9.5 per cent. Despite disruptions on many fronts, the manufacturing sector achieved an **average annual growth rate of 5.2 per cent in the last decade** with the major growth drivers being chemicals, wood products and furniture, transport equipment, pharmaceuticals, machinery, and equipment.

Status of India's Industries- India's pharmaceutical market stands as **world's third largest by volume** with the valuation of USD 50 billion. India is the **world's second-largest clothing manufacturer** and one of the top five exporting nations.

PLI Scheme importance- PLI schemes attracted over **₹1.28 Lakh Crore of investment until May 2024**, which has led to production/sales of ₹10.8 Lakh Crore and employment generation (direct & indirect) of over **₹8.5 Lakh**.

Chapter 11: Services- Fuelling Growth Opportunities

Service sector GVA- Services sector contribution to the overall Gross Value Added (GVA) has now reached to the level prior to pandemic i.e. about 55%. The services sector has the **highest number of active companies (65**

per cent). A total number of 16,91,495 active companies exist in India as of 31 March 2024. Globally, India's services exports constituted 4.4 per cent of the world's commercial services exports in 2022.

Service Sector Industries Status

- a. Revenue-earning freight in FY24 (excluding Konkan Railway Corporation Limited) witnessed an increase of 5.3 per cent in FY24 over the previous year.
- b. Tourism industry witnessed over 92 lakh foreign tourist arrivals in 2023, implying a YoY increase of 43.5 per cent.
- c. In 2023, residential real estate sales in India were at their highest since 2013, witnessing a 33 per cent YoY growth, with a total sale of 4.1 lakh units in the top eight cities.
- d. Global Capability Centres (GCCs) in India have grown significantly, from over 1,000 centres in FY15 to more than 1,580 centres by FY23.
- e. The Indian e-commerce industry is expected to cross USD 350 billion by 2030.

Chapter 12: Infrastructure – Lifting Potential Growth

Buoyant public sector investment has had a pivotal role in funding large-scale infrastructure projects in the recent years.

The average pace of NH construction increased by nearly 3 times from 11.7 km per day in FY14 to around 34 km per day by FY24.

Capital expenditure on Railways has increased by 77 percent in the past 5 years, with significant investments in the construction of new lines, gauge conversion and doubling. Indian Railways to introduce Vande metro trainset coaches in FY 25.

In FY24, new terminal buildings at 21 airports have been operationalised which has led to an overall increase in passenger handling capacity by approximately 62 million passengers per annum.

Chapter 13: Climate Change and India: Why We Must Look at the Problem Through Our Lens

Current global strategies for climate change are flawed and not universally applicable. The Western approach does not seek to address the root of the problem, i.e. overconsumption, but rather chooses to substitute the means to achieve overconsumption.

A one-size-fits-all approach will not work, and developing countries need to be free to choose their own pathways. India's ethos emphasizes a harmonious relationship with nature, in contrast to the culture of over consumption in other parts of the developed world. Shift towards the 'traditional multi-generational households' would create the pathway towards sustainable housing.

'Mission LiFE' focuses on human-nature harmony promoting mindful consumption than over consumption that lies at the root of global climate change problem.

Source- Economic Times

UPSC Syllabus- GS 3- Indian Express

Budget 2024-25 Highlights- Explained Pointwise

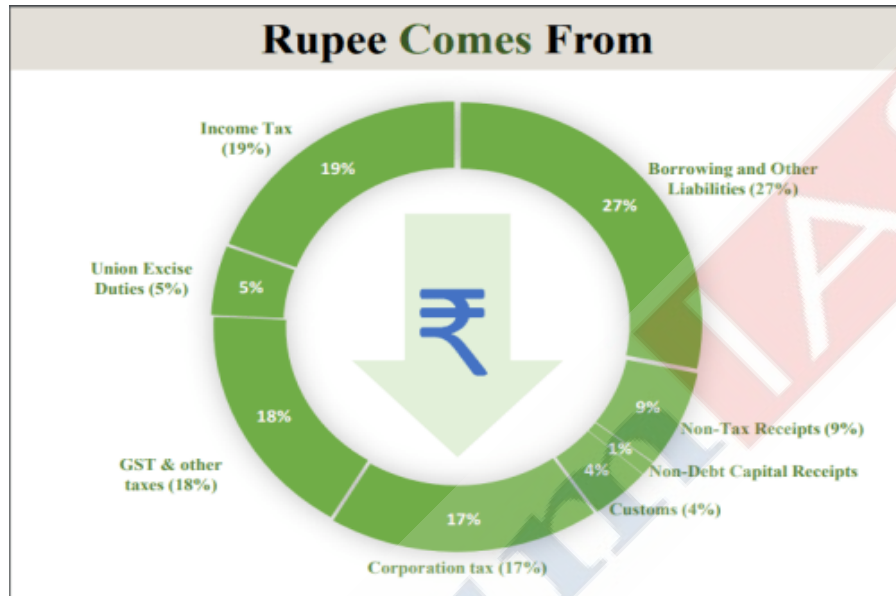
Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget 2024-25 in the Parliament. This was her 7th consecutive budget. The Budget focused on the poor, women, youth, and farmers. The budget highlighted the plan to increase government spending, generation of jobs, and offering middle-class relief.

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What is a budget? What are the basics of a Budget Document?

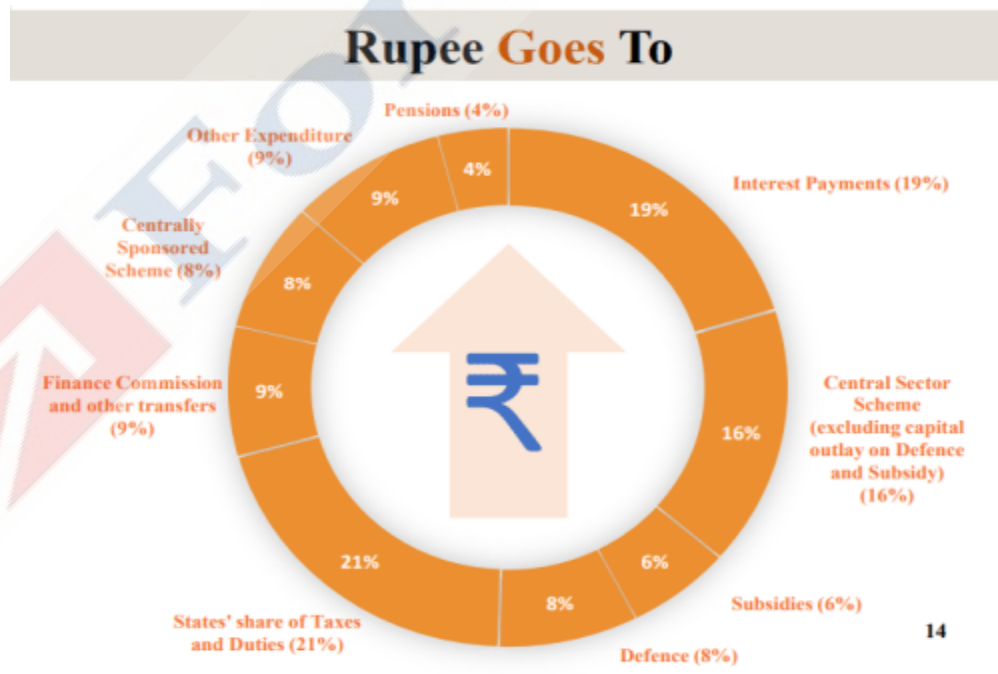
Budget- Budget is essentially a **statement of anticipated receipts and expenditure**. The annual budget covers all aspects of government finances, including revenue generation, expenditure allocations, and policy announcements.

Government Receipts



Source- India Budget

Government receipts

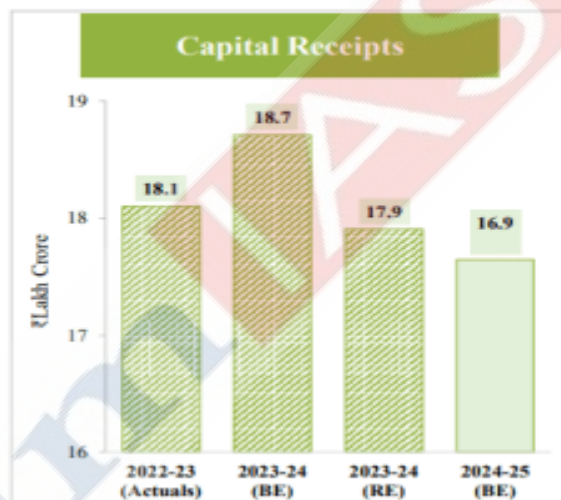
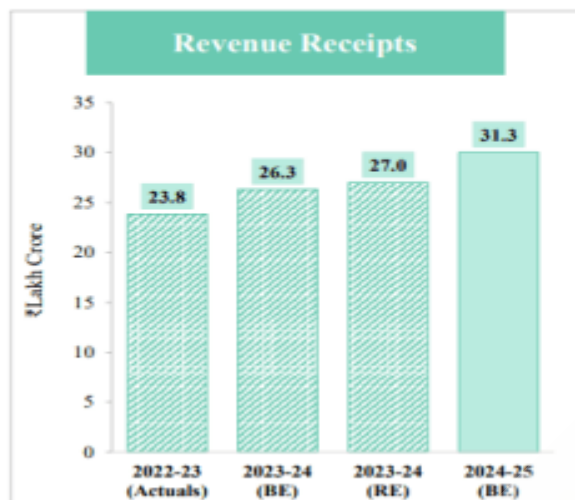


Source- India Budget

What are the macro-economic highlights of the Budget?

Total Receipts for FY 2024-25- For the year 2024-25, the **total receipts other than borrowings** is estimated to be at **Rs. 32.07 lakh crore**. The **gross** and **net market borrowings** through dated securities during 2024-25 are estimated at **Rs.14.01 lakh crore** and **Rs. 11.63 lakh crore** respectively. The **net tax receipts** are estimated at **Rs. 25.83 lakh crore**.

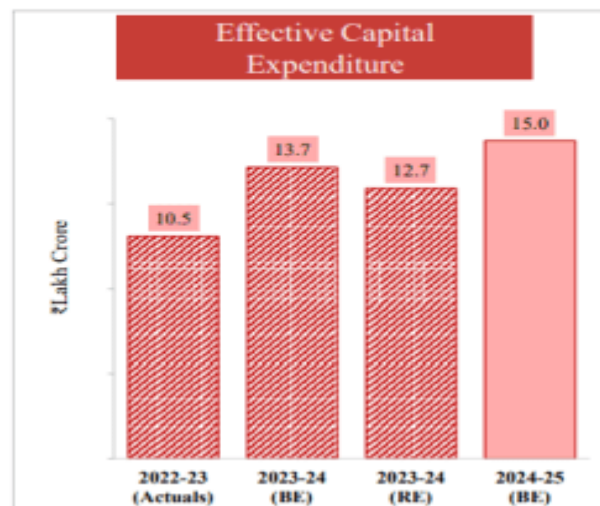
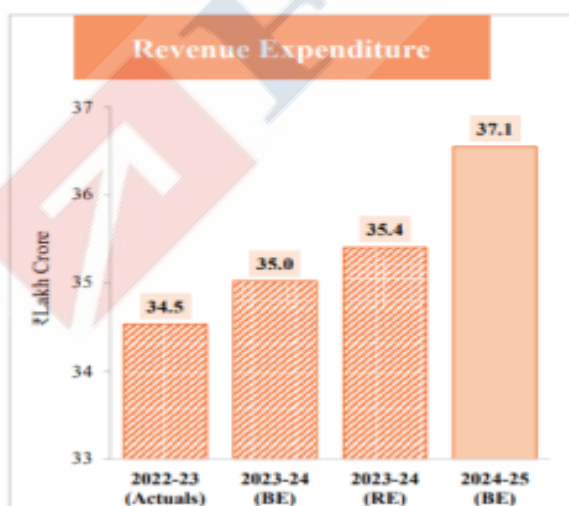
Receipts



Source- India Budget

Total Expenditure for FY 2024-25- The total expenditure is estimated at **Rs. 48.21 lakh crore**.

Expenditure

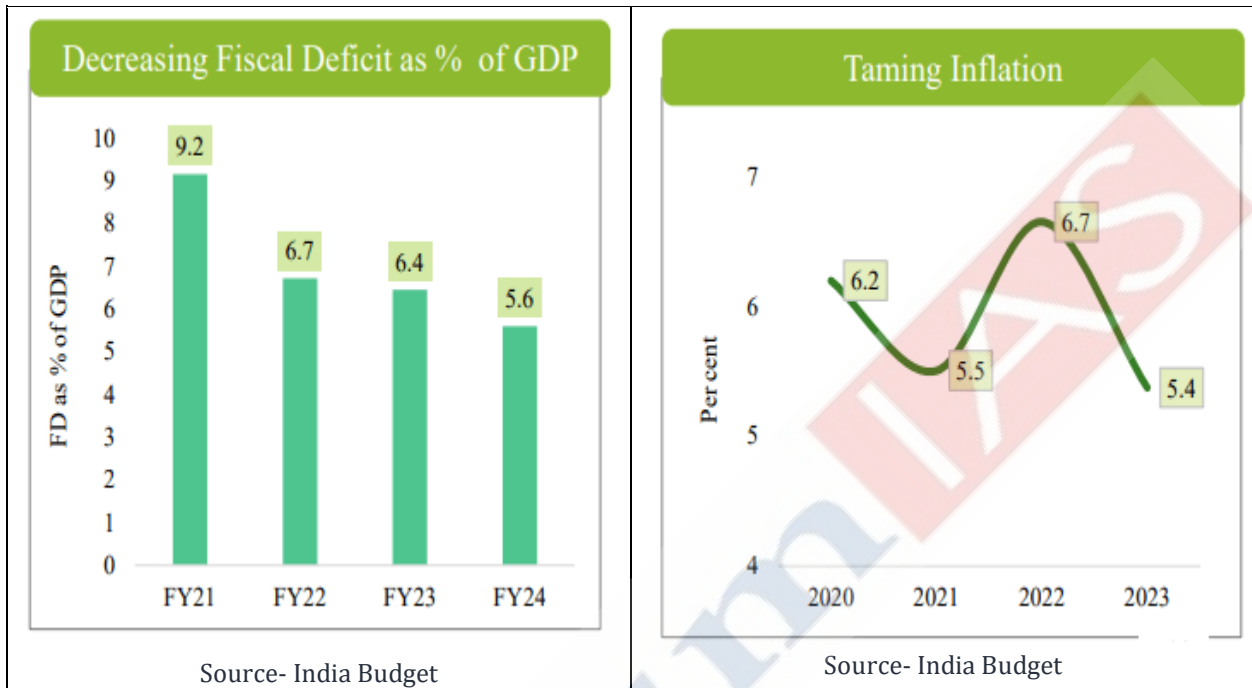


Source- India Budget

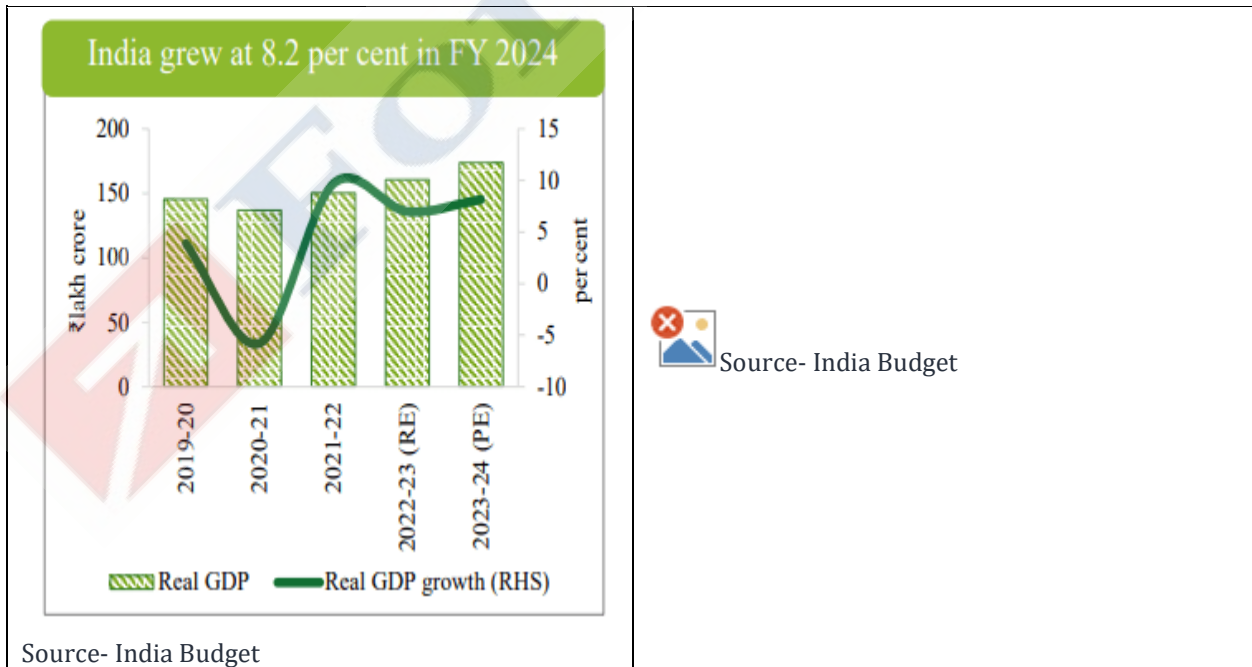
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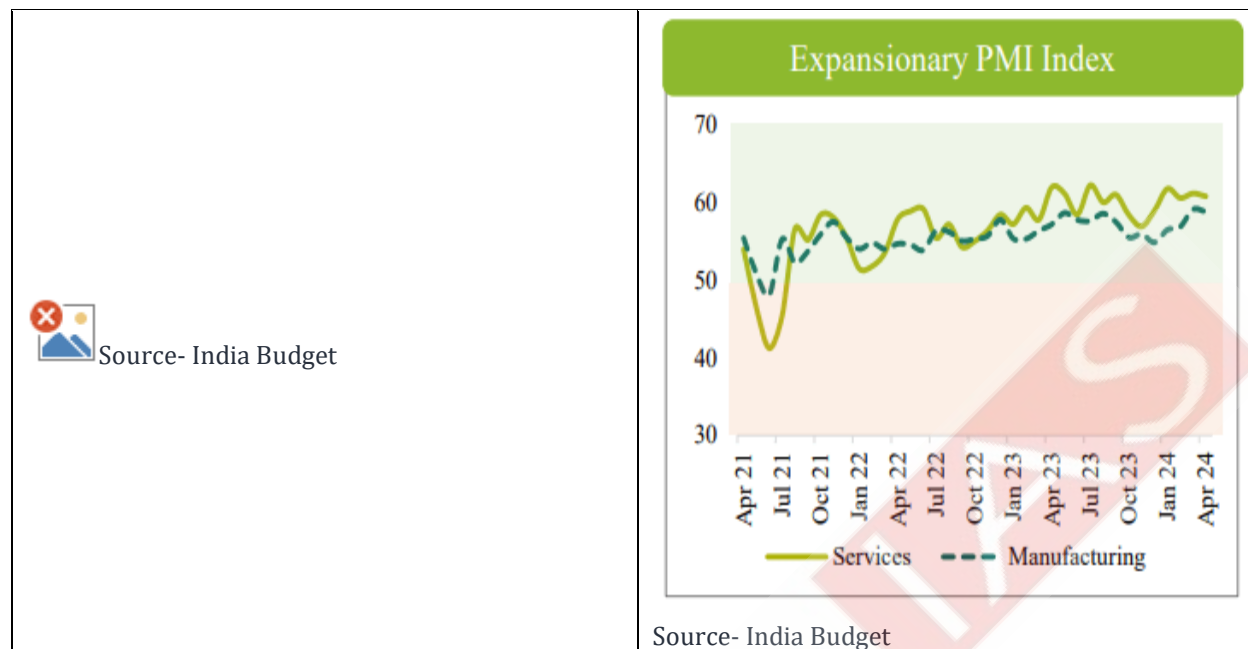
Fiscal Deficit- The fiscal deficit is estimated at **4.9 per cent** of GDP.

Inflation Target- India's inflation continues to be low, stable and moving towards the **4 per cent target**. Core inflation (nonfood, non-fuel) currently is **3.1 per cent**.



India's Growth on a robust path- India's economic growth continues to be the shining exception and will remain so in the years ahead. The performance of India on several parameters are mentioned below-





What are the 9 priority areas for the achievement of Viksit Bharat in the Budget 2024-25?

Priority 1: Productivity and resilience in Agriculture

Transforming agriculture research- The focus will be on raising productivity and developing climate resilient varieties. Funding will be provided in challenge mode, including to the private sector.

Release of new varieties- New 109 high-yielding and climate-resilient varieties of 32 field and horticulture crops will be released for cultivation by farmers.

Natural Farming- In the next two years, 1 crore farmers across the country will be initiated into natural farming supported by certification and branding. In the next two years, 1 crore farmers across the country will be initiated into natural farming supported by certification and branding.

Missions for pulses and oilseeds- A strategy is being put in place to achieve 'atmanirbharta' for oil seeds such as mustard, groundnut, sesame, soybean, and sunflower.

Digital Public Infrastructure for Agriculture- The Use of DPI in agriculture will facilitate the implementation of the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) in agriculture for coverage of farmers and their lands in 3 years. During this year, digital crop survey for Kharif using the DPI will be taken up in 400 districts. The details of 6 crore farmers and their lands will be brought into the farmer and land registries. Further, the issuance of Jan Samarth based Kisan Credit Cards will be enabled in 5 states.

Shrimp Production & Export- Financial support for setting up a network of Nucleus Breeding Centres for Shrimp Broodstocks will be provided. Financing for shrimp farming, processing and export will be facilitated through NABARD.

National Cooperation Policy- A National Cooperation Policy will be brought for systematic, orderly and all-round development of the cooperative sector.

Priorities for Viksit Bharat

Productivity and resilience in Agriculture



Transforming Agriculture Research

Comprehensive review of the agriculture research setup to bring focus on raising productivity and developing climate resilient varieties.

National Cooperation Policy

For systematic, orderly and all-round development of the cooperative sector

Atmanirbharta

For oil seeds such as mustard, groundnut, sesame, soyabean and sunflower

Vegetable production & supply chain

Promotion of FPOs, cooperatives & start-ups for vegetable supply chains for collection, storage, and marketing.

Release of new varieties

109 new high-yielding and climate-resilient varieties of 32 field and horticulture crops will be released for cultivation by farmers

Natural Farming

- 1 crore farmers across the country will be initiated into natural farming, supported by certification and branding in next 2 years.
- 10,000 need-based bio-input resource centres to be established.

Shrimp Production & Export

- Financing for Shrimp farming, processing and export will be facilitated through NABARD.

Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)

- DPI for coverage of farmers and their lands in 3 years.
- Digital crop survey in 400 districts
- Issuance of *Jan Samarth* based Kisan Credit Cards

2

Source- India Budget

Priority 2- Employment & Skilling

Employment Linked Incentive- 3 schemes for 'Employment Linked Incentive', as part of the Prime Minister's package. These will be based on enrolment in the EPFO, and focus on recognition of first-time employees, and support to employees and employers.

Scheme A: First Timers- This scheme will provide one-month wage to all persons newly entering the workforce in all formal sectors. The direct benefit transfer of one-month salary in 3 instalments to first-time employees, as registered in the EPFO, will be up to **Rs. 15,000**. The eligibility limit will be a salary of **Rs. 1 lakh per month**. The scheme is **expected to benefit 210 lakh youth**.

Scheme B: Job Creation in manufacturing- An incentive will be provided at specified scale directly both to the employee and the employer with respect to their EPFO contribution in the **first 4 years of employment**. The scheme is expected to **benefit 30 lakh youth entering employment**, and **their employers**.

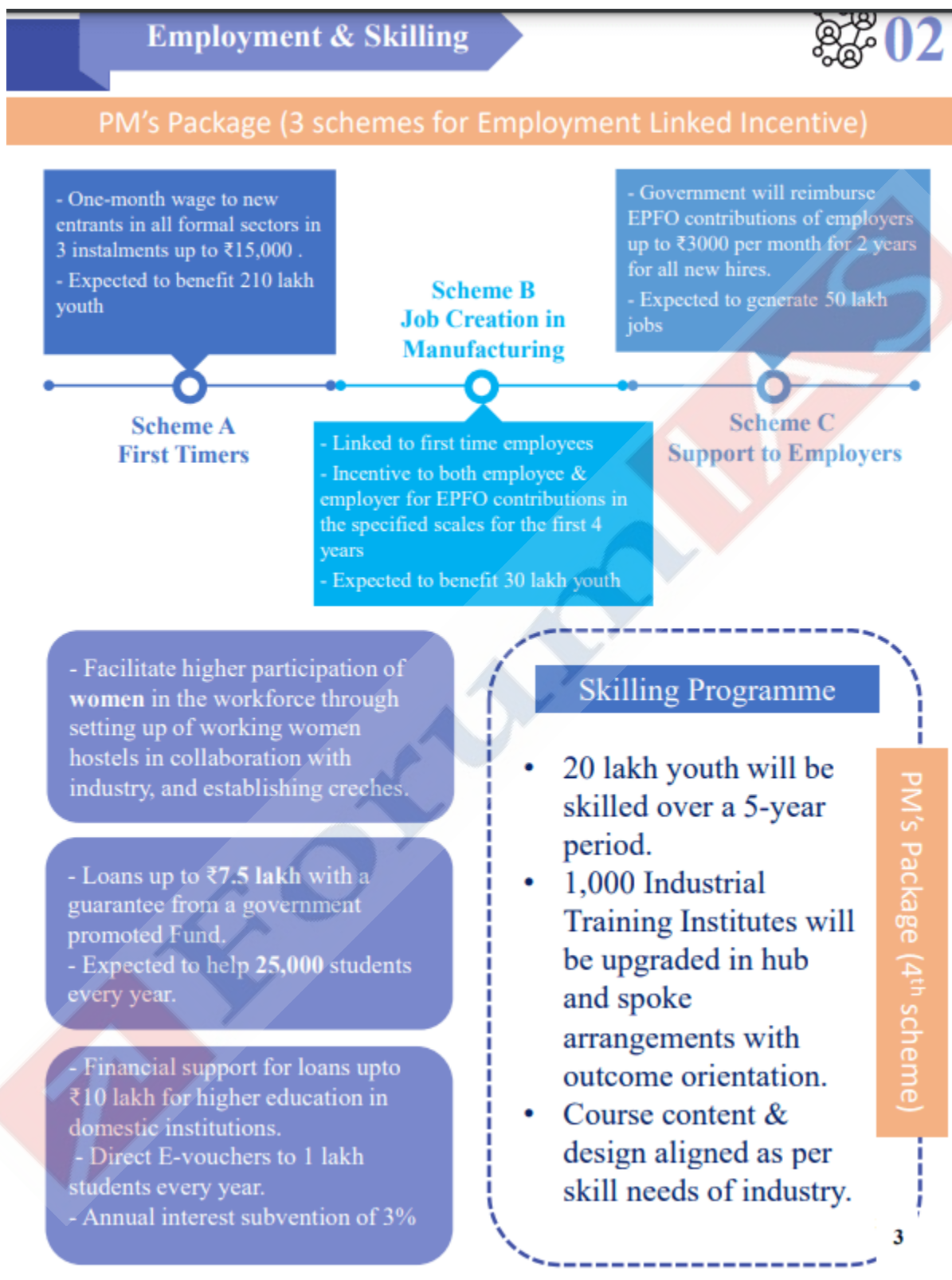
Scheme C: Support to employers- This employer-focussed scheme will cover additional employment in all sectors. All additional employment within a **salary of Rs.1 lakh per month will be counted**. The government will reimburse to employers up to **Rs. 3,000 per month for 2 years** towards their EPFO contribution for each additional employee. The scheme is expected to incentivize **additional employment of 50 lakh persons**.

Participation of women in the workforce- Facilitation of higher participation of women in the workforce through setting up of **working women hostels** in collaboration with industry, and establishment of creches. In addition, the partnership will seek to **organize women-specific skilling programmes**, and promotion of market **access for women SHG enterprises**.

Skilling programme- A new centrally sponsored scheme will be launched to **skill 20 lakh youth over a 5-year period**. **1,000 Industrial Training Institutes** will be upgraded in hub and spoke arrangements with outcome orientation.

Skilling Loans- The Model Skill Loan Scheme will be revised to **facilitate loans up to Rs. 7.5 lakh with a guarantee from a government promoted Fund**. This measure is expected to help 25,000 students every year.

Education Loans- Financial support for loans **upto Rs. 10 lakh for higher education in domestic institutions**. E-vouchers for this purpose will be given directly to 1 lakh students every year for annual interest subvention of 3 per cent of the loan amount.



Source- India Budget

Priority 3: Inclusive Human Resource Development and Social Justice

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Saturation approach- Saturation approach of **covering all eligible people through various programmes** including those for education and health will be adopted to empower them by improving their capabilities.

Implementation of schemes meant for supporting economic activities by craftsmen, artisans, self-help groups, scheduled caste, schedule tribe and women entrepreneurs, and street vendors, such as PM Vishwakarma, PM SVANidhi, National Livelihood Missions, and Stand-Up India will be stepped up.

Purvodaya- A plan, Purvodaya, for the all-round development of the **eastern region of the country** covering Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh. This will cover human resource development, infrastructure, and generation of economic opportunities to make the region an engine to attain Viksit Bharat.

The announcements related to Bihar- **Industrial node at Gaya**, connectivity projects, namely (1) Patna-Purnea Expressway, (2) Buxar-Bhagalpur Expressway, (3) Bodhgaya, Rajgir, Vaishali and Darbhanga spurs, and (4) additional 2-lane bridge over river Ganga at Buxar at a total cost of Rs. 26,000 crore.

Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act- Firm commitment to the provisions of the act. In the **current financial year Rs. 15,000 crore will be arranged**, with additional amounts in future years. Financing and early completion of the Polavaram Irrigation Project and Grants for backward regions of Rayalaseema, Prakasam and North Coastal Andhra.

PM Awas Yojana- **Three crore additional houses** under the PM Awas Yojana in rural and urban areas in the country.

Women-led development- For promoting women-led development, the budget carries an allocation of more than **Rs. 3 lakh crore** for schemes benefitting women and girls.

Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan- The abhiyan aims to improve the socio-economic condition of tribal communities, by adopting saturation coverage for tribal families in tribal-majority villages and aspirational districts. This will cover **63,000 villages benefitting 5 crore tribal people**.

Bank branches in North-Eastern Region- More than **100 branches of India Post Payment Bank** will be set up in the North East region to expand the banking services.

Inclusive Human Resource Development and Social Justice



Purvodaya: *Vikas bhi Virasat bhi*

- Plan for endowment rich states in the Eastern parts covering Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh for generation of economic opportunities to attain Viksit Bharat.
- Amritsar Kolkata Industrial Corridor with development of an industrial node at Gaya.



Allocation of more than ₹3 lakh crore for schemes benefitting women and girls.

Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan: Improving the socio-economic condition of tribal communities covering 63,000 villages benefitting 5 crore tribal people.



More than 100 branches of India Post Payment Bank will be set up in the North East region.

Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act:

- Financial support of ₹15,000 crores will be arranged in FY 24-25.
- Completion of Polavaram Irrigation Project ensuring food security of the nation.
- Essential infrastructure such as water, power, railways and roads in Koppurthy node on the Vishakhapatnam-Chennai Industrial Corridor and Orvakal node on Hyderabad-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor.



Source- India Budget

Priority 4: Manufacturing & Services

Support for promotion of MSMEs- Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs in the Manufacturing Sector, New assessment model for MSME credit, Credit Support to MSMEs during Stress Period, enhanced Mudra Loans and Enhanced scope for mandatory onboarding in TReDS, SIDBI branches in MSME clusters and 50 MSME Units for Food Irradiation, Quality & Safety Testing.

Internship in Top Companies- A comprehensive scheme for providing **internship opportunities in 500 top companies to 1 crore youth in 5 years**. They will gain exposure for 12 months to real-life business environment, varied professions and employment opportunities. **An internship allowance of Rs. 5,000 per month along with a one-time assistance of Rs. 6,000 will be provided**. Companies will be expected to bear the training cost and 10 per cent of the internship cost from their CSR funds.

Industrial Parks- Development of investment-ready “plug and play” industrial parks with complete infrastructure in or near 100 cities. Twelve industrial parks under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme also will be sanctioned.

Critical Mineral Mission- Critical Mineral Mission for domestic production, recycling of critical minerals, and overseas acquisition of critical mineral assets will be launched.

Digital Public Infrastructure Applications- DPI applications at population scale for productivity gains, business opportunities, and innovation by the private sector. These are planned in the areas of **credit, e-commerce, education, health, law and justice, logistics, MSME, services delivery, and urban governance.**

Debt recovery and IBC- Steps for reforming and strengthening debt recovery tribunals will be taken. Additional tribunals will be established. Out of those, some will be notified to decide cases exclusively under the Companies Act.



Source- India Budget

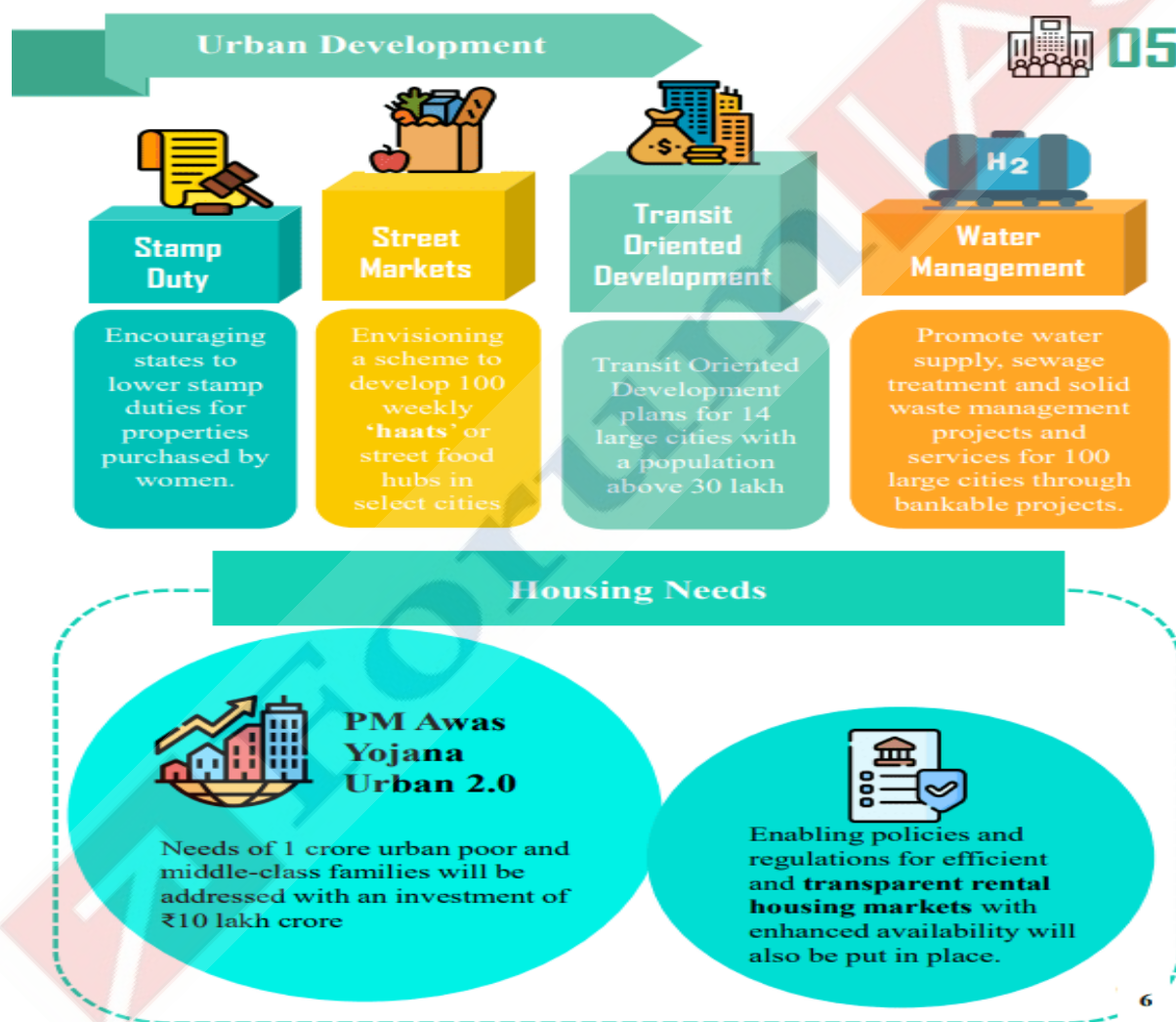
Priority 5- Urban Development

Cities as Growth Hubs and Creative redevelopment of cities- Policies will be formulated for the achievement of both these initiatives.

Transit Oriented Development- Transit Oriented Development plans for **14 large cities with a population above 30 lakh will be formulated**, along with an implementation and financing strategy.

Urban Housing- Under the PM Awas Yojana Urban 2.0, **housing needs of 1 crore urban poor and middle-class families** will be addressed with an investment of ₹ 10 lakh crore. This will include the central assistance of ₹ 2.2 lakh crore in the next 5 years.

Street Markets- The development of **100 weekly 'haats' or street food hubs** in select cities.



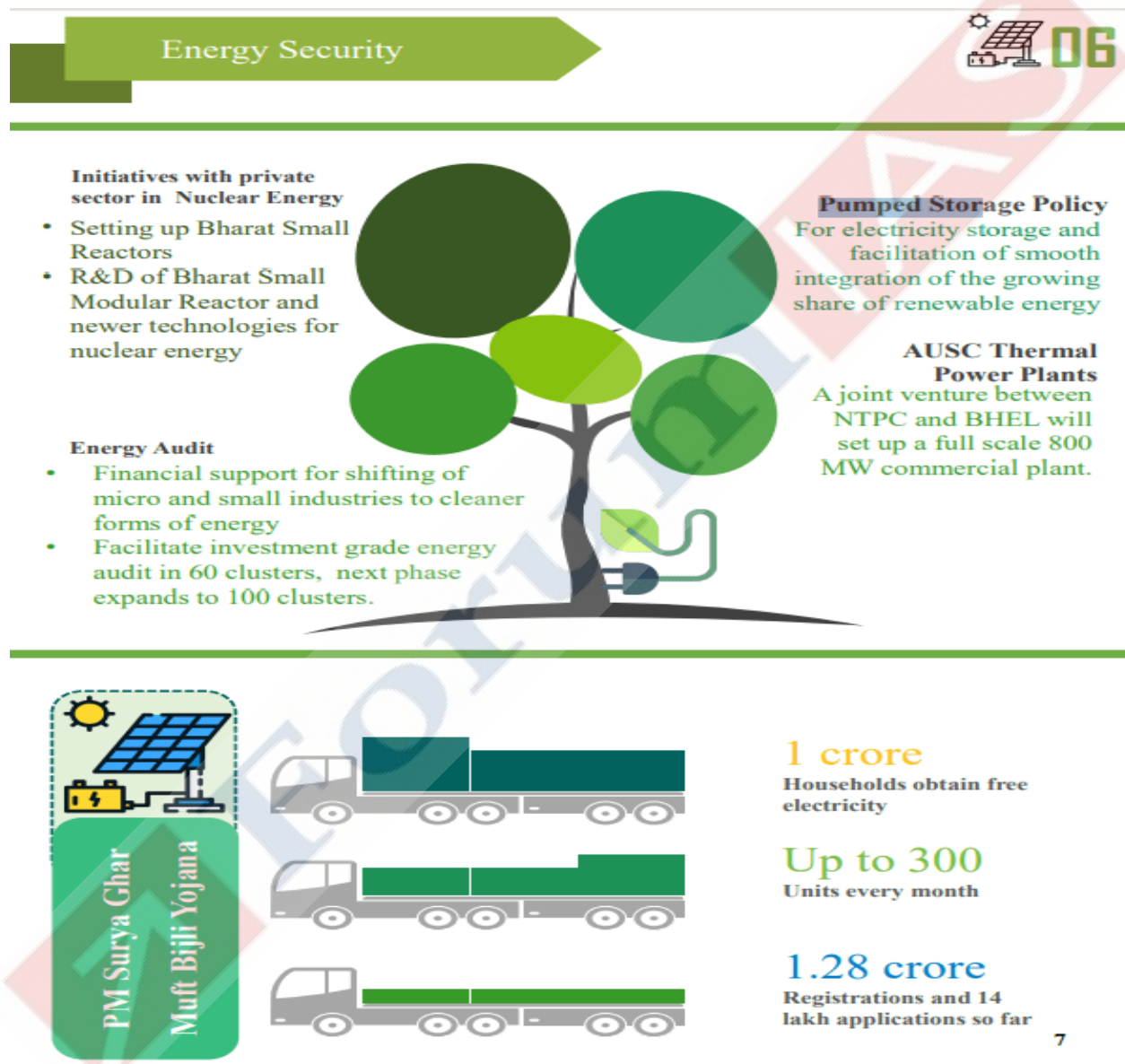
Source- India Budget

Priority 6- Energy Security

Initiatives with private sector in Nuclear Energy- Setting up **Bharat Small Reactors** and **R&D of Bharat Small Modular Reactor** and newer technologies for nuclear energy.

PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana- PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana has been launched to install rooftop solar plants to enable 1 crore households obtain **free electricity up to 300 units every month**. The scheme has generated remarkable response with more than **1.28 crore registrations** and **14 lakh applications**, and we will further encourage it.

Pumped Storage Policy- A policy for promoting pumped storage projects will be **brought out for electricity storage and facilitating smooth integration of the growing share of renewable energy with its variable & intermittent nature in the overall energy mix.**

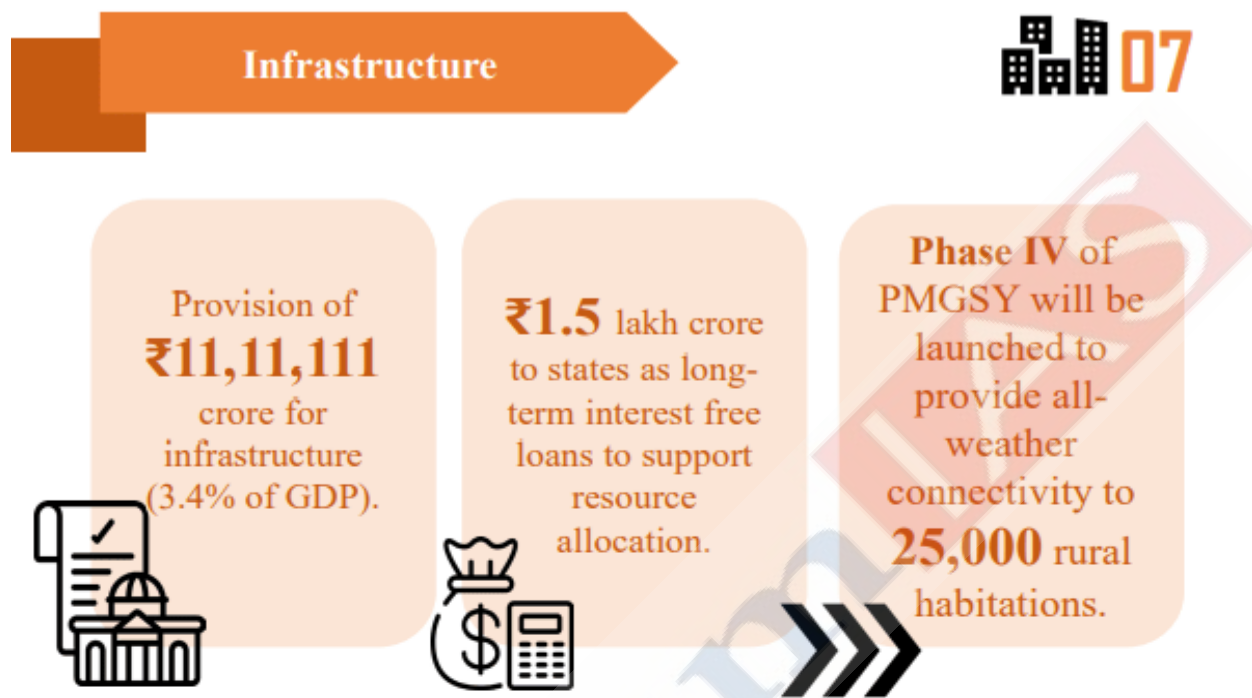


Source- India Budget

Priority 7- Infrastructure

Infrastructure provisions- Provision of **₹11,11,111 crore** for infrastructure (3.4% of GDP). Provision of **₹1.5 lakh crore to states as long term interest free loans** to support resource allocation.

Irrigation and Flood Mitigation- Financial support for projects with estimated cost of ₹11,500 crore such as the **Kosi-Mechi intra-state link** and 20 other ongoing and new schemes.



Irrigation and Flood Mitigation

Financial support for projects with estimated cost of ₹11,500 crore such as the **Kosi-Mechi** intra-state link and 20 other ongoing and new schemes

Assistance for flood management and related projects in Assam, Sikkim & Uttarakhand

Assistance for reconstruction and rehabilitation in Himachal Pradesh

Source- India Budget

Priority 8- Innovation, Research & Development

Anusandhan National Research Fund- Operationalization of the **Anusandhan National Research Fund** for basic research and prototype development.

Private Sector Driven Research- Private sector-driven research and innovation at commercial scale with a financing pool of **₹1 lakh crore**.

Space Economy- A venture capital fund of **₹1,000 crore** is to be set up



Source- India Budget

Priority 9- Next Generation Reforms

Rural & Urban land related actions- Unique Land Parcel Identification Number or **Bhu-Aadhaar** for all lands. **Land records in urban areas** will be **digitized** with **GIS mapping**.

NPS Vatsalya- A plan for contribution by parents and guardians for **minors**. On attaining the age of majority, the plan can be converted seamlessly into a **normal NPS account**.

Taxonomy for climate finance- Enhancing the **availability of capital for climate adaptation** and **mitigation** related investments.

Next Generation Reforms



Rural & Urban land related actions

Unique Land Parcel Identification Number or Bhu-Aadhaar for all lands.

Survey of map sub-divisions as per current ownership

Linkages to the farmers' registries

Land records in urban areas will be digitized with GIS mapping

Digitization of cadastral maps

Establishment of land registry

Taxonomy for climate finance: Enhancing the availability of capital for climate adaptation and mitigation related investments

FDI and Overseas Investments: Simplified to facilitate FDIs and promote opportunities for using Indian Rupee as a currency for overseas investments.

NPS Vatsalya: A plan for contribution by parents and guardians for minors.

Improvement of data governance, collection, processing and management of data and statistics.

New Pension Scheme (NPS): A solution that address the relevant issues, protects the common citizen and maintains fiscal prudence will be formed.

Source- India Budget

What are the Tax related Proposals in the Budget 2024-25?

The tax related proposals are explained through the following infographs-


Sector Specific Customs Duty Proposals- Comprehensive review of the rate structure for ease of trade, removal of duty inversion and reduction of disputes.


Rationalisation of capital Gains- Short term gains of financial assets to attract **20% tax rate**, Long term gains on all financial an non-financial assets to attract a tax rate of **12.5%** and Increase in limit of exemption of capital gains on financial assets to **₹1.25 lakh per year**.


Simplifying New Tax Regime- Standard Deduction for salaried employees increased from **₹50,000 to ₹75,000**. Deduction on family pension for pensioners increased from **₹15,000 to ₹25,000**.


Tax Proposals

Simplification in Taxes


 Review of Income Tax Act 1961


 Simplification of charities and TDS


 Litigation and Appeal


 Deepening the tax base

Sector Specific Customs Duty Proposals

Comprehensive review of the rate structure for ease of trade, removal of duty inversion and reduction of disputes

Changes in Custom Duty	Beneficiaries
Fully exempt 3 more cancer medicines from custom duties	Affordable medicines
Reduce BCD to 15% on Mobile phone, Mobile PCBA and charger	Mobile industry
Reduce custom duty on gold and silver to 6% and platinum to 6.4%	Domestic value addition
Reduce BCD on shrimp and fish feed to 5%	Enhance competitiveness in marine exports
Exempted more capital goods for manufacturing of solar cells & panels	Support energy transition
Fully exempt custom duties on 25 critical minerals	Boost to strategic sectors

Source- India Budget 12

Direct Tax Proposals

To reduce the compliance burden, promote entrepreneurial spirit and provide tax relief to citizens

Rationalisation of capital gains

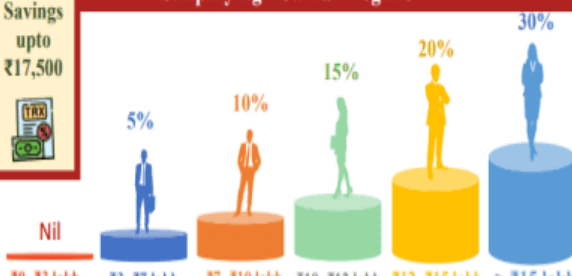
- Short term gains of financial assets to attract **20%** tax rate
- Long term gains on all financial an non-financial assets to attract a tax rate of **12.5%**
- Increase in limit of exemption of capital gains on financial assets to **₹1.25 lakh per year**

Employment and Investment

- Abolish ANGE tax for all classes of investors.
- Simpler tax regime to operate **domestic cruise**
- Provide for **safe harbour rates** for foreign mining companies (Selling raw diamonds)
- Corporate tax rate on foreign companies reduced from 40% to 35%

Simplifying New Tax Regime

Savings upto ₹17,500



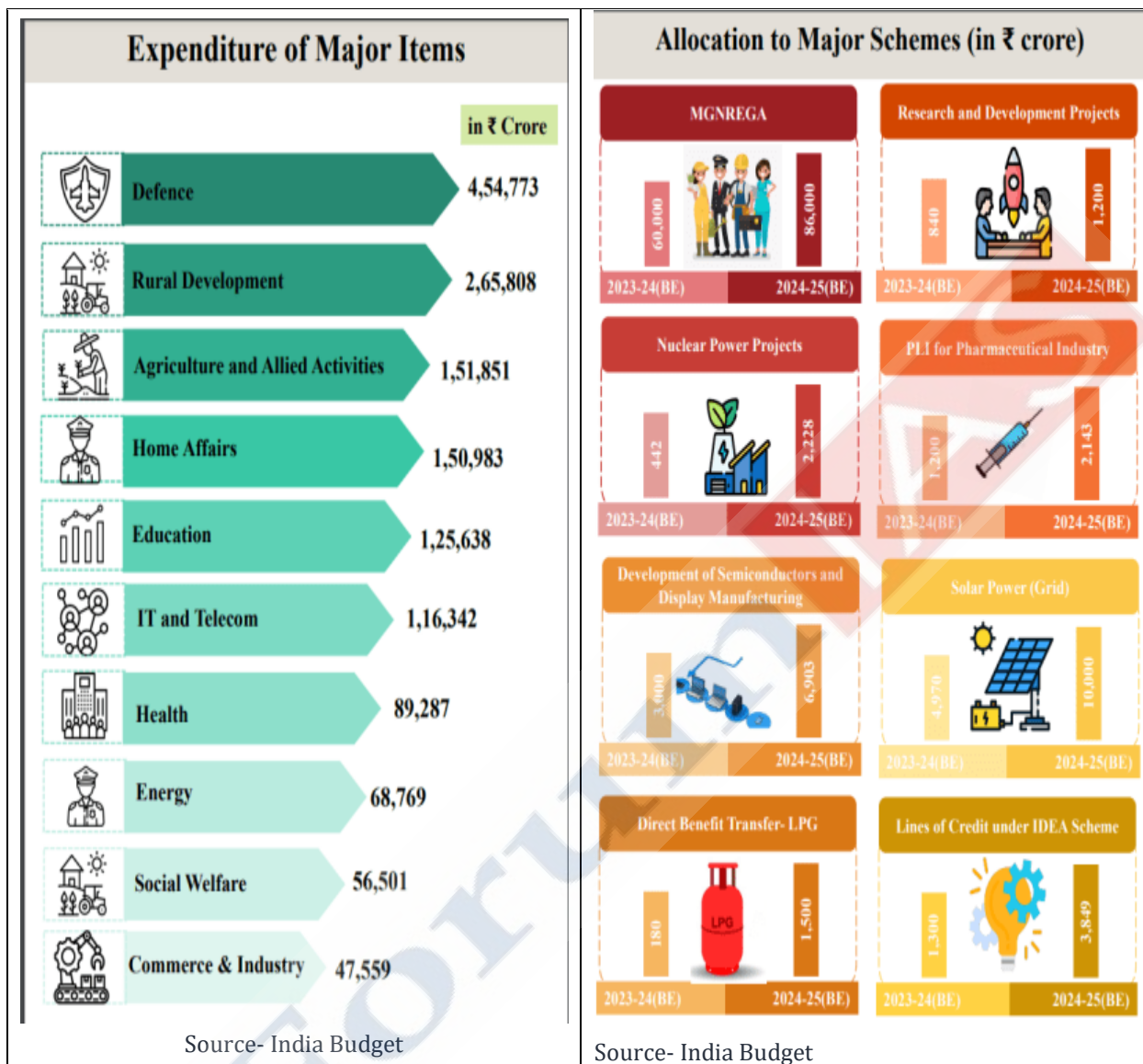
Nil | 5% | 10% | 15% | 20% | 30%
 ₹0- ₹3 lakh | ₹3- ₹7 lakh | ₹7- ₹10 lakh | ₹10- ₹12 lakh | ₹12- ₹15 lakh | > ₹15 lakh

Standard Deduction for salaried employees increased from ₹50,000 to ₹75,000

Deduction on family pension for pensioners increased from ₹15,000 to ₹25,000 11

Source- India Budget

What are the Major Allocations in the Budget?



Read More- [India Budget](#)

UPSC Syllabus- GS 3 Government Budgeting

Union Budget 2024-25- Analysis- Explained Pointwise

The Union Budget for 2024-25 was presented in the Parliament yesterday by the Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The Finance Minister asserted in her budget speech that the **focus of the government** remained on **servicing the four 'castes'**- **poor, women, youth and farmers**. It was also stressed by the Finance Minister that this year's Budget laid particular emphasis on **'employment, skilling, MSMEs, and the middle class'**.



Source- Indian Express

What are the Major announcements in the Budget?

Employment	<p>3 schemes for 'Employment Linked Incentive', as part of the Prime Minister's package.</p> <p>Scheme A: First Timers- This scheme will provide one-month wage to all persons newly entering the workforce in all formal sectors. The scheme is expected to benefit 210 lakh youth.</p> <p>Scheme B: Job Creation in manufacturing- An incentive will be provided at specified scale directly both to the employee and the employer with respect to their EPFO contribution in the first 4 years of employment. The scheme is expected to benefit 30 lakh youth entering employment, and their employers.</p> <p>Scheme C: Support to employers- This employer-focused scheme will cover additional employment in all sectors. All additional employment within a salary of Rs.1 lakh per month will be counted.</p>
Skilling	<p>A new centrally sponsored scheme will be launched to skill 20 lakh youth over a 5-year period. 1,000 Industrial Training Institutes will be upgraded in hub and spoke arrangements with outcome orientation.</p> <p>The Model Skill Loan Scheme will be revised to facilitate loans up to Rs. 7.5 lakh with a guarantee from a government promoted Fund. This measure is expected to help 25,000 students every year.</p>
MSMEs	<p>Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs in the Manufacturing Sector</p> <p>New assessment model for MSME credit</p> <p>Credit Support to MSMEs during Stress Period</p> <p>Enhanced Mudra Loans and Enhanced scope for mandatory onboarding in TReDS</p> <p>SIDBI branches in MSME clusters</p> <p>50 MSME Units for Food Irradiation, Quality & Safety Testing.</p>
Middle class	<p>Standard Deduction for salaried employees increased from ₹50,000 to ₹75,000.</p> <p>Deduction on family pension for pensioners increased from ₹15,000 to ₹25,000.</p> <p>Simplification of new tax regime leading to savings upto Rs. 17,500.</p>

What are the positives to come out of Budget 2024-25?

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1. Delivering on the rising aspirations of the Youth- The incentives have been provided to first time employees and employers with an outlay of ₹10,000 crore, incentivization of internships with an outlay of ₹2,000 crore and emphasis on Skill development with state government's cooperation (Model Skill Loan Scheme).

These steps taken in the Budget 2024-25, deliver on the the rising aspirations of the Youth as recommended by the Economic Survey 2024-25.

2. Concerted Bid to address the Challenges Faced By MSMEs- The steps taken in the Budget 2024-25 like Credit Guarantee Scheme, New assessment model, Credit Support during Stress Period, are attempts to address the financial and working capital challenges faced by the MSMEs.

Read More- [Budget 2024-25 Highlights- Explained Pointwise](#)

3. Tax relief for the salaried class- The standard deduction has been raised and the tax slabs with their relevant tax rates have been revised in the Budget 2024-25. This will leave a little more money in the hands of the salaried class, post taxes. Pensioners are also set to benefit by a marginal increase of ₹10,000 in the deduction allowed on family pensions.

4. Sticking to the Fiscal Consolidation Plan- Budget for 2024-25 sticks to the government's fiscal consolidation path, with the Fiscal Deficit proposed to be pared to 4.9% of GDP. This increases the possibility of a sovereign rating upgrade of domestic bonds have embarked on a maiden journey of getting included in global bond indices. The Budget unveils the unequivocal focus on fiscal stability and continuity of sustainable growth impulses.

5. Support to the Annadata (Farmers)- The promotion of Atmanirbharta in pulses and oilseeds, focus on agriculture research (bearing in mind the realities of climate change), large-scale clusters for vegetable production, and Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) in agriculture for coverage of farmers and their lands, are all likely measures to support the Annadata (i.e., farmer).

A thriving agriculture sector will allow the government to deliver on its promise of food grains under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), which has now been extended for five years.

6. Push towards Housing for all- The outlay for Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)- Urban and Rural has seen a massive jump of 37% and 70% respectively. The Budget reaffirms that housing for all remains a key hallmark of the government.

7. Boost to PLI Scheme for Atmanirbhar Bharat- The outlay on Production Linked Incentive (PLI) was increased by 75% in the Budget for FY25. This increase accompanied by tweaks to sectoral custom duties is a bid to support domestic manufacturing and deepen local value addition.

What are the concerns with the Budget?

1. Cuts in the Social Sector Schemes- The Budget has cut the share of Social sector schemes outlays which includes school and higher education. The outlay for the rural job guarantee scheme- MGNREGA is at a nine-year low share of 1.78% of overall outlay.

2. Reduction in schemes for Minorities- The Budget has seen a reduction in the budget for education schemes for Madrasas and Minorities from ₹10 crore to ₹2 crore in 2024-25.

3. Removal of Indexation- The removal of indexation for calculating the value of the Long term asset (Real estate), is being viewed as an additional tax burden for the real estate property dealers.

4. No announcement on Indian Railways- The country's largest employer, the Indian Railways, was a glaring absence in the Budget speech of the Finance Minister. There were no announcements on the Railway sector which **continues to suffer from low freight and passenger capacity, low staff and manpower and safety issues.**

5. No announcement regarding the indirect tax system of MSMEs- The budget has failed to address the demands of MSMEs for **simplification and rationalization of the GST regime.**

6. Obsession with fiscal consolidation- Some critics hold that government's obsession with fiscal consolidation, which is visible in its bid to reduce the fiscal deficit to **4.9% of GDP in 2024-25 from 5.1% in the interim budget, may constrain government spending.**

7. Lack of a clear economic strategy or vision to tackle the economic slowdown- Critics have also pointed that the **budget lacks the clear economic strategy and vision to tackle the slowdown in aggregate demand, private investment, exports and the resulting jobs crisis.** The measures announced, like employment-linked incentives, seem too small to have a meaningful impact.

What should be the way Forward?

1. Measuring the performance of the employment schemes announced in the budget- All the employment schemes need to be measured against the backdrop of the fact that **India needs to generate 78.5 lakh non-farm jobs annually until 2030**, as per the Economic Survey, to largely to absorb the workforce exiting agriculture.

2. Achieving Fiscal Consolidation by raising revenues than compressing Expenditure- Our fiscal deficit reduction approach **must target on raising revenues rather than reducing expenditure**, as expenditure multipliers tend to be higher in an economy than revenue multipliers.

3. Strategic Asset sales Programme- Asset monetisation will **help in raising govt. revenues as the market condition remains buoyant.** This will help in bringing down fiscal deficit without the need of reducing government expenditure.

4. Increased expenditure on health and education- The social sector expenditures by the govt. **must be increased** for achieving the goal of Inclusive Development.

5. Passing the baton to the private sector- With its initial push by increasing the Capex, the government must pass on the baton of infrastructural development to the private sector **by reducing the crowding out effect in the economy.** Crowding out effect can be reduced when the govt. reduces its fiscal deficit and achieves its FRBM 2003 target of fiscal deficit being 3% of the GDP.

Conclusion

Most of these measures announced in the Budget dovetail handsomely with the macro focus of pushing a job-led growth in the medium term. Commendably, the government has succeeded in maintaining the fiscal discipline whilst extending a wide gamut of measures to stimulate the economy.

Read More- [The Indian Express](#)

UPSC Syllabus- GS 3- Government Budgeting

President and Governor immunity under Article 361- Explained Pointwise

A three-judge Bench headed by the Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud has been hearing a case **against** the blanket '**criminal immunity**' provided to the President and Governors under Article 361 of the constitution. The court has **impleaded the Union government** and sought assistance from the Attorney General of India to decide if a '**blanket**' immunity from criminal proceedings granted under Article 361 to the President and Governors while in office, undermines fairness, constitutional morality and violates fundamental rights to equal protection of the law and fair trial.

The question regarding blanket criminal immunity under Article 361, **has come up in a petition filed by a contractual woman employee with the Raj Bhavan** who has accused West Bengal Governor C.V. Ananda Bose of sexual harassment and molestation.



Figure 4. Source- Live Law

What are the provisions of Immunity for the President and Governor under Article 361 of the Constitution?

The President and Governor are **provided immunity under Article 361 of the Constitution**. The following are the provisions dealing with immunities-

Article 361(1)	The President, or the Governor, shall not be answerable to any court for the exercise and performance of the powers and duties of his office . However, a. The conduct of the President may be brought under review by any court, tribunal or body appointed or designated by either House of Parliament for the investigation of a charge under Article 61 (violation of the constitution) . b. The immunity cannot stop a person from suing the Centre or State concerned .
Article 361(2)	No criminal proceedings whatsoever shall be instituted or continued against the President, or the Governor of a State , in any court during his term of office.
Article 361(3)	No process for the arrest or imprisonment of the President, or the Governor of a State, shall issue from any court during his term of office.
Article 361(4)	No civil proceedings against the President, or the Governor of a State, shall be instituted during his term of office in any court in respect of any act done or purporting to be done by him in his personal capacity, until the expiration of two months next after notice in writing has been delivered to the President or the Governor.

What are the arguments in support of the immunity under Article 361 of the Constitution?

1. To maintain the dignity and independence of the high offices- The immunity is intended to **shield the President and Governors from frivolous and malicious prosecutions** that could undermine their ability to discharge their constitutional duties without fear or favor.

2. To prevent misuse of legal process- The immunity aims to protect the President and Governors **from being harassed through vexatious litigation** and **to ensure that they are not distracted from their official responsibilities** by having to constantly defend themselves in courts.

3. To uphold the principle of separation of powers- The immunity recognizes the President and Governors as the heads of the executive branch and seeks to **maintain a balance of power** between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government.

4. To ensure continuity in governance- The immunity provides **stability and continuity in governance** by ensuring that the **President and Governors can function without the threat of criminal prosecution** during their term of office.

However, the immunity is not absolute, as it can be lifted for impeachment proceedings against the President and through civil suits against the government for actions done in a personal capacity. The Supreme Court is currently examining whether the **immunity should be interpreted more narrowly to allow for criminal proceedings in cases** involving **violations of fundamental rights**.

What are the arguments raised against the blanket criminal immunity provided to the Governor and the President?

1. Attack on citizen's fundamental right- Critics contend that the bar on criminal proceedings under Article 361(2) should not extend to illegal acts or those which 'strike at the roots' of a citizen's fundamental rights. The acts which **infringe upon her right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution** should not be given a blanket protection.

2. Impediment to Justice- The immunity effectively **delays any investigation or legal proceedings** against a sitting governor, which **could compromise with the integrity of evidence**, the trial process and **can lead to a denial of timely justice for victims**.

3. Against Modern democratic Principles and Constitutional Morality- The immunity clause has been **criticized as being rooted in outdated notions**, such as the idea that **'the king can do no wrong'**. This perspective is increasingly viewed as **incompatible with modern democratic principles** and **constitutional morality**, which **demand accountability** and **transparency** from all public officials.

4. Scope of Immunity should not extend to illegal acts- There is a growing argument that the **scope of immunity should not extend to illegal acts that do not pertain to the official duties of the governor**. Actions such as sexual harassment are not part of the governor's constitutional responsibilities and should therefore not be protected by Article 361.

5. Impairment of Police powers of investigation- The **immunity provided to the Governor and the President** impairs the police's powers to investigate offence or even name the perpetrator in the complaint/FIR in **heinous crimes done in personal capacity**.

What are the various Judgements on the immunity powers of the Governor and President?

<p>Rameshwar Prasad vs. Union of India (2006)</p>	<p>This landmark judgment clarified that while Governors enjoy complete immunity under Article 361, this does not prevent judicial scrutiny of their actions, especially if those actions are alleged to be taken in bad faith (malafides).</p>
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Ram Naresh vs. State of Madhya Pradesh (2015)	The HC court ruled that Governor Ram Naresh Yadav had ‘ absolute protection ’ under Article 361(2) from malicious publicity while in office. However, the immunity does not impede the police’s powers to investigate offenses .
State vs. Kalyan Singh (2017)	In this case regarding the Babri Masjid demolition, the Supreme Court ruled that then-Rajasthan Governor Kalyan Singh was entitled to immunity under Article 361 as long as he remained in office. The court indicated that criminal proceedings could only commence after he ceased to be Governor , reinforcing the notion of immunity during the term of office
Telangana High Court Judgment (2024)	HC observed that “there is no express or implicit bar in the Constitution which excludes the power of judicial review in respect of an action taken by the Governor”. Further, the court stated that Article 361 immunity is personal and does not exclude judicial review .

What Should be the Way Forward?

1. Appointment of persons with eminent public life- **Sarkaria commission** (1988), **NCRCW** (2002) and **Punchi Commission** (2010) have recommended appointment of persons with eminent public life as Governors. This would help prevent the misuse of immunity.

2. Judicial Scrutiny and Interpretation- The Supreme Court’s willingness to review the interpretation of Article 361 reflects a recognition that the existing provisions may require re-evaluation. The court is considering **whether the immunity should be absolute or if it should allow for judicial scrutiny in cases where fundamental rights are at stake**. This indicates a potential shift towards a more balanced approach that respects both the dignity of the office and the rights of individuals.

The ongoing legal proceedings and debates surrounding the immunity of governors in India underline the **tension between constitutional protections for high officeholders and the imperative for accountability in cases of alleged misconduct**. The Supreme Court’s examination of this issue may set significant precedents for the interpretation of constitutional immunity and the protection of individual rights in the face of alleged abuses of power.

Read More- [The Hindu](#)

UPSC Syllabus- GS 2- Issues related to Executive

SC verdict on state’s power to tax mining activities- Explained Pointwise

The **9 judge bench of the Supreme Court (SC)** in its recent judgement has held that **Indian states** have the **power to tax mining activities** and collection of ‘royalties’ from mining leaseholders is not a tax. The judgment effectively **overturns the Supreme Court’s previous position** established in the **1989 case of India Cements Ltd. v. State of Tamil Nadu**, which had classified royalty as a form of tax.

SC Verdict on state’s power to tax mining activities explained

- 1. Parliament** through the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act of 1957, **cannot limit the power of State legislatures to tax mineral-bearing lands and quarries**. It **frees the states from the restrictions imposed by the Centre**, which is in tune with the federalist principles of governance.
- 2. Royalty is not a tax.** Royalty is a contractual consideration paid by the mining lessee to the lessor for enjoyment of mineral rights.

3. Central Government can amend royalty rates, but **it cannot impose taxes on mineral rights** under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act (MMDR Act).

Implications of the Verdict

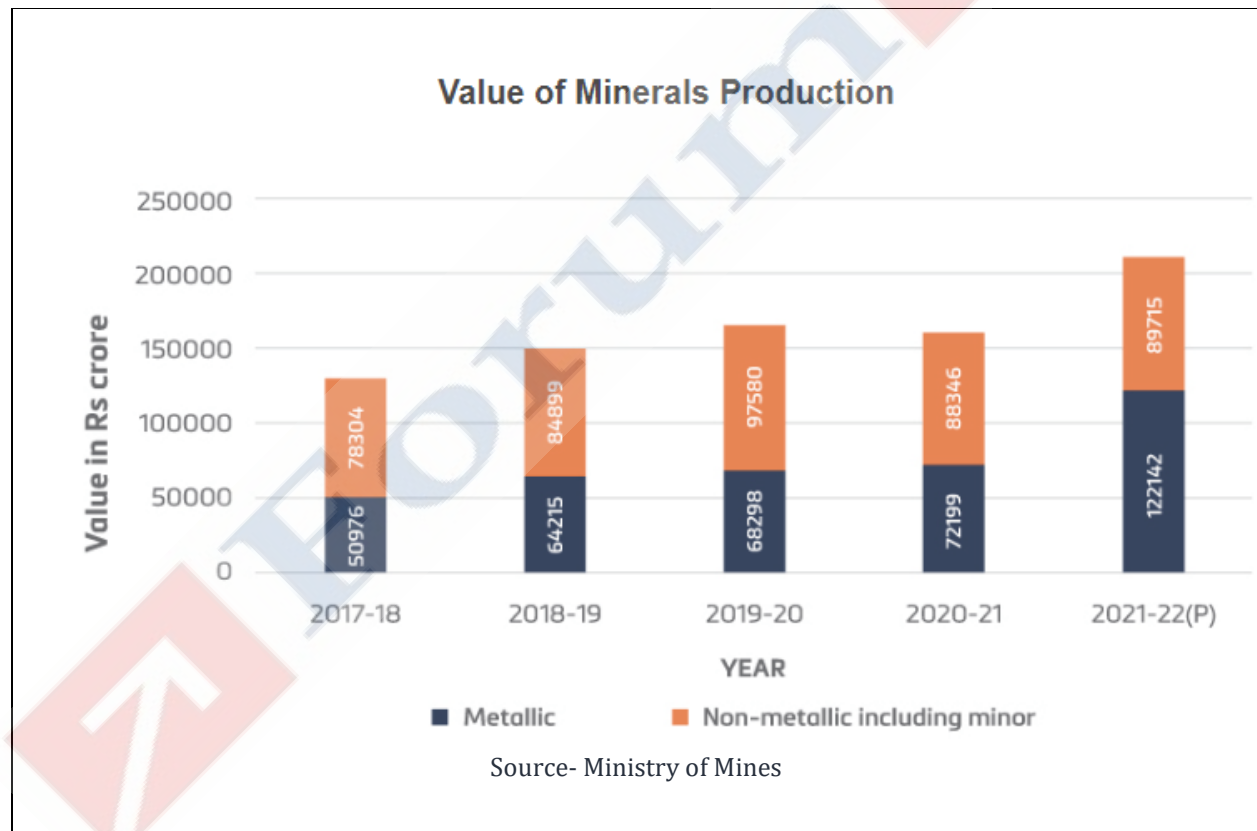
1. The ruling is a **victory for mineral-rich states** like Odisha, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh, as it **allows them to impose additional levies on mining companies** operating within their territories. This could enhance their revenue from mineral extraction activities.
2. The verdict further would **embolden fiscal federalism** and **help in raising government revenues** to invest in physical infrastructure, health, education, human capacity, and research and development.

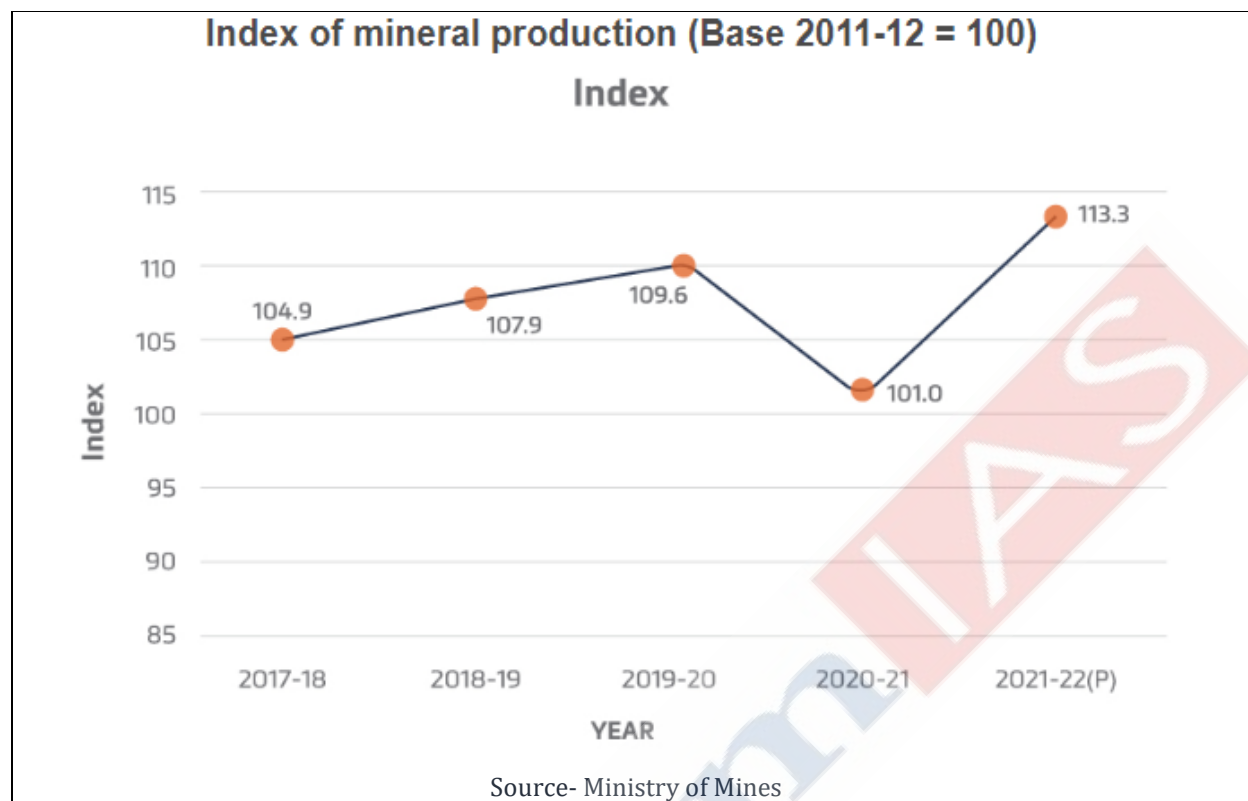
The article also discusses in detail about the mining sector in India.

What is the Status of Mining Sector in India?

The Mining sector in India is one of the core industries of the economy. India is a major producer of numerous metals and minerals.

The total Value of mineral production (excluding atomic and fuel minerals) during 2021-22 has been estimated at **Rs. 2,11,857 crore**. There has also been an increase in the Index of mineral production, which suggests robust increase in the mineral mining activities in India.





Mines in India

Number of Reporting Mines

Sector	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22(P)
Metallic Minerals	602	608	545
Non-Metallic Minerals	783	767	774
AllMinerals: Total*	1385	1375	1319

*Excluding atomic minerals, fuel mineral and minor minerals.

Source- Ministry of Mines

The **economic reforms of 1991** and the **National Mining Policy of 1993** have both contributed to the expansion of the mining industry in India.

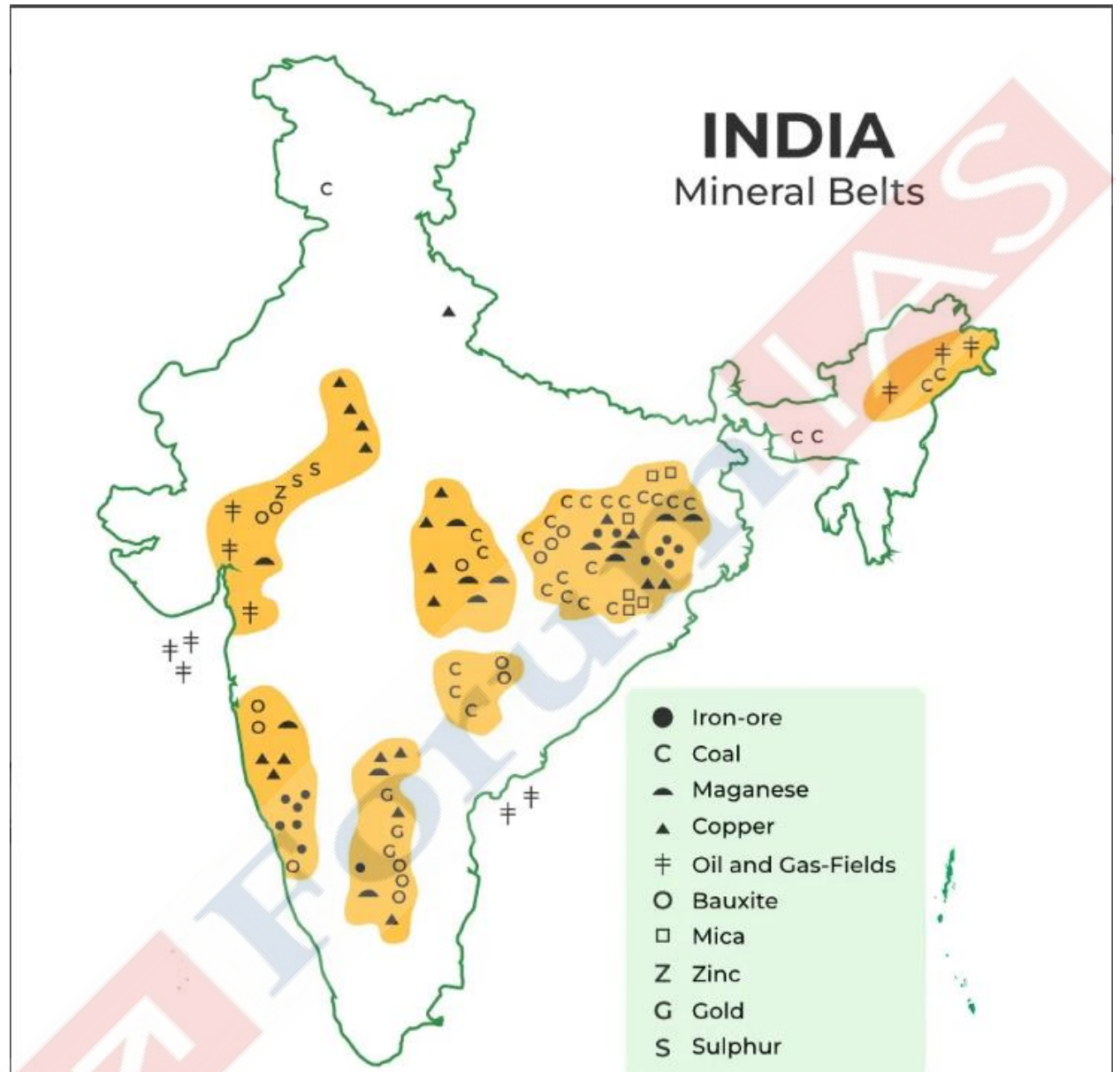
India produces as many as 95 minerals, which includes 4 fuel, 10 metallic, 23 non-metallic, 3 atomic and 55 minor minerals (including building and other materials). Status of some of the major mined minerals in India are the following-

Coal Production	India is the second largest producer of coal . The All India production of coal stood at 777.31 MT (P) in 2021-22. Coal India Limited, a PSU engaged in the extraction of coal, is the world's largest coal producer today.
Iron Ore Production	India is among one of the largest iron ore producers in the world. National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC) is among one of the largest iron ore producer in India.
Major Minerals Extraction	India is one of the largest producers of chromium, bauxite, zinc, manganese, lead

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Non Metallic Minerals Extraction	India is one of the largest producers of limestone, phosphorite, magnesite, graphite etc..
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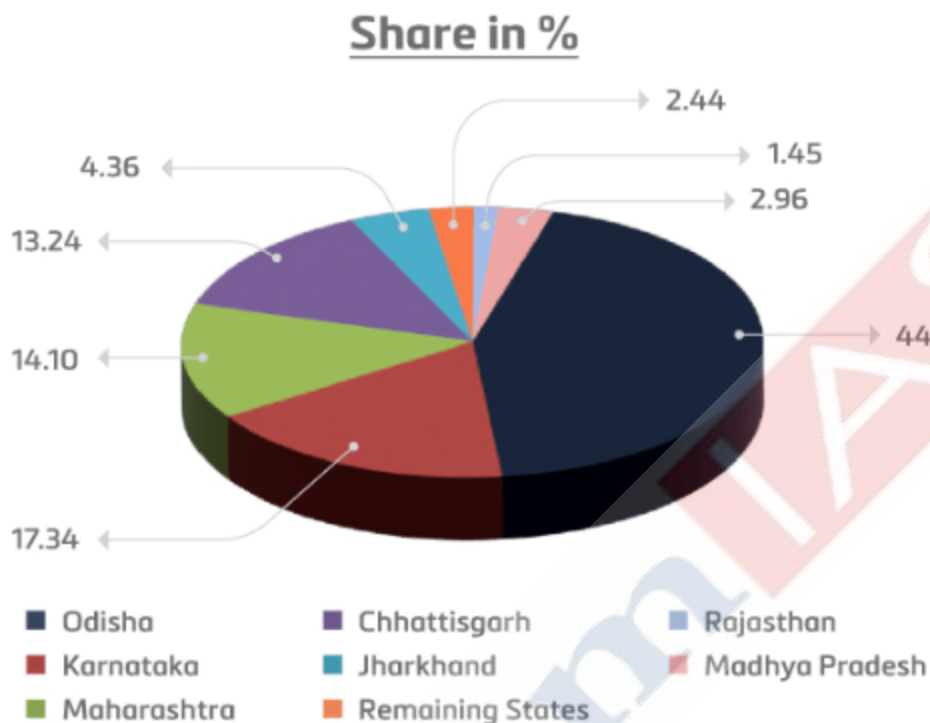
Mineral Distribution in India



Source- Map of India

Share of States in Mineral Production

Share of States in Value of Mineral Production 2021-22



Source- Ministry of Mines

What is the Significance of mining Sector in India?

- 1. Economic Contribution-** The mining sector contributes approximately **2.2-2.5% to India's GDP** and is a significant driver of economic growth. It **fuels the growth of industries** like infrastructure and automobiles, leading to increased demand for power and steel.
- 2. Job Creation-** Mining **generates more employment compared to other sectors**. According to the 12th Five Year Plan, **mining sector creates 13 times more jobs than agriculture** and **six times more than manufacturing** per percentage point of economic growth.
- 3. Economic Diversification and Strategic Global Positioning-** Investment in the mining sector diversifies India's economy, **reducing reliance on traditional sectors like agriculture**. By entering the global mining race, India can position itself as a key player in the critical minerals market.
- 4. Support for Electric Vehicle Industries-** Mining **critical minerals like lithium** aids the burgeoning electric vehicle industry, which is crucial for the transition from oil to electric mobility.
- 5. Increase in the FDI and FPI inflows-** The allocation of mines to the private players **enhance the possibility of huge FDI and FPI investment** in the Indian Economy. Further, the increase in mining activities in India **reduce the import bill of the Indian economy** and reduce the Current Account Deficit.
- 6. For the development of Renewable Energy Sector-** Minerals such as **aluminium and copper** are crucial for the **development of solar power** and **wind power sector equipments**. These will help India in achieving its **Panchamrit goals**.

What initiatives have been taken by the Govt to increase the contribution of Mining Sector in India?

Post liberalisation Policy shift to auction based allocations	National Mineral Policy of 1993 paved the way for private investment for mineral exploration in India. However, exploration permits in India were under the First Come First Serve (FCFS) system . Objections were raised by SC regarding FCFS system as it held it to be susceptible to manipulation, favouritism and misuse. 2015 Amendment to the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act) replaced the FCFS basis of mineral allocation with auctions .
MMDR Amendment Act of 2015	The act introduced Mineral Concessions Grant through auctions to bring transparency and remove discretion; The District Mineral Foundation (DMF) to address the longtime grievance of the people affected by mining; and the National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET) for incentivizing regional and detailed exploration to fill the gaps in exploration in the country.
National Mineral Exploration Policy 2019	It encourages the private sector to take up exploration, on a revenue sharing model, transfer of mining leases and creation of dedicated mineral corridors . It also aims to develop a long term import-export policy for mineral and harmonise taxes, levies, and royalty with the world benchmarks.
FDI up to 100% under the automatic route	Mining and exploration of metal and non-metal ores including diamond, gold, silver, and precious ores. Coal and Lignite mining for captive consumption by power projects, iron and steel cement units.
Minerals Security Partnership (MSP)	India joined Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) as its 14th member. It is a US-led alliance launched in June 2022. The elite critical minerals club is also known as the ' Critical Minerals Alliance '.
Critical Minerals Mission	Critical Minerals mission has been announced by the Government for the development of critical minerals capability of the country.

Read More- [Lithium Reserves in India](#)

What are the Challenges in the Mining sector in India?

- 1. High Import Dependency of critical minerals-** India heavily relies on imports for many critical minerals, such as lithium, cobalt, and rare earth elements. **For ex- India imported worth \$22.15 million in 2021-22.**
- 2. Government-Led Exploration-** The majority of exploration projects are carried out by government agencies like the **Geological Survey of India** and **PSUs**, with minimal private sector involvement, leading to inefficiencies.
- 3. Regulatory Challenges:** The **Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act** despite several **amendments** in 1957, in 2015, 2021 and 2023, has not fully liberalized the mining sector for private investment.
- 4. Low cost benefit on Exploration Risks-** Exploration of minerals is a high-risk venture, requiring specialized, time-intensive operations. **For instance, aerial surveys and geological mapping are costly and often yield less than 1% commercially viable mines.** Hence, the private sector miners in India do not participate with full vigour.
- 5. Impact of Global Events-** Global events, such as the **Russian invasion of Ukraine**, significantly affect India's mineral supply chains, demonstrating vulnerability to external shocks.

6. Environmental Concerns- Mining activities can be harmful to the environment, necessitating a balance between ecological protection and mining. **For ex-** Damodar river has been severely polluted by coal mining.

7. Displacement and rehabilitation issues- The mining projects are often associated with the Human Rights violations in the form of mine-related deaths, inadequate rehabilitation, and developmental steps, etc. **For ex-** Massive local protests against mining in Niyamgiri Hills of Odisha, POSCO in Odisha, Sterlite protest in T.N.

8. Bureaucratic and Judicial Hindrances- Judicial interventions and bureaucratic hurdles lead to long delay and losses for investors. **For ex-** SC imposed a heavy penalty on illegal mining without green clearances in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, and Odisha in 2017.

9. Safety and collapse concerns- Mining also puts the lives of miners at risk due to the rudimentary ways adopted and the absence of adequate safety gear and protocols. **For ex-** Mine related accidents at Ksan coal mine in Meghalaya-Jaintia Hills (2018), Chasnala near Dhanbad in 1975.

What should be the way forward?

1. Increase Exploration- Expand exploration beyond the current 10% of India's landmass to uncover more mineral resources.

2. Strengthen Mining Regulations and strict implementation- There is a need for robust environmental, labor, and land laws to regulate mining and prevent exploitation. Stringent implementation of mining-related rules is needed especially regarding the ban on Rat-Hole and unscientific mining to prevent mine-related accidents.

3. Balance Environmental Concerns- Strive for a middle ground between mining development and ecological conservation.

4. Transparency in allocations- Transparency in block allocations and rule-based order should be established. Technology should be used for a better way of mineral exploration and surveillance systems.

5. Ensure minimal damage to society and environment- Proper environmental impact assessment (EIA) and social impact assessment (SIA) must be conducted before allocating the projects. Proper rehabilitation of the displaced population, the tribal rights need to be respected in accordance with the law.

6. Proper utilisation of DMF- District mineral Fund must be properly utilised to construct physical & social infrastructure for the local population in the process.

7. Adoption of Global best Practices- We must adopt global best practices in operations and ensuring safe working conditions for workers in the mining sector. We must undertake measures to avoid occupational hazards.

Read More- [The Hindu](#)

UPSC Syllabus- GS Paper 1 Economic Geography – Distribution of key natural resources across the world (including South Asia and the Indian subcontinent).

GS Paper 3 Industrial policy.

[Kurukshetra July 2024 Summary] Enhancing Innovation in Rural India- Explained Pointwise

Innovation is central to the **economic growth and development of any country**. In the context of rural India, innovative approach provides new ways to solve the problems of rural people and create new opportunities for entrepreneurship development. The focus on enhancement of innovation in rural areas can help in solving the challenges to rural development including inadequate infrastructure, limited access to markets, environmental degradation, lack of education and healthcare facilities, and insufficient financial resources.



Source- Kurukshetra

What are some of the Jugaad Innovations which are transforming Rural India?

Jugaad innovations refer to **frugal innovations** at which take place at the grassroots level. These **ingenious solutions**, are born out of necessity and resource constraints, empower rural communities, address their unique challenges, and bridge the socio-economic divide.

Some of the Jugaad Innovations taking place at the grassroot level

Multi-Purpose Food Processing Machine	The specialty of this machine is that it can process many types of fruits like aloe vera, rose, jamun, basil, guava, mango, orange, and other medicinal crops and make products like gel, juice, extracts, etc.
Mitticool	It is a refrigerator that runs without electricity. It is made up of earthen clay based material.
Low-Cost Drip Irrigation Innovation	Utilisation of discarded PVC pipes and plastic bottles for drip irrigation. Its impact is that it has led to 50% increase in water-use efficiency.
Micro-Hydro Power Generators	It uses locally fabricated turbines to harness small streams for power generation. It's impact is that it has provided renewable energy to 25,000 households in hilly and remote areas.
Bio-Char Stoves	It is a low cost stove that uses agricultural waste to produce bio char, improving fuel efficiency and soil fertility.
DIY Water Filtration Systems	These are affordable water filtration units using sand, charcoal, and locally available materials. Its impact is that it has provided clean drinking water to 70,000 rural households .

Recent Rural Innovations in the Agricultural sector

Soil Health Card (SHC)	Helps producers understand the fertility status of soil on which and with which they are working so as to promote judicious use of supplementary nutrition in the form of inorganic or organic fertilisers. They curtail the indiscriminate use of chemicals on soil.
Sensor-Based Soil Moisture Meter, Leaf Colour Chart (LCC)	These help the farmers in understanding the nutritional needs of their crops at different stages of growth
Pusa Decomposer	Helps in rapid situ decomposition of paddy residues , thereby helps in promoting cleaner environment by curtailing the incidences of crop residue burning
Meghdoot and Damini App	Meghdoot and Damini App launched by the Ministry of Earth Sciences have also brought innovation in the agriculture sector.

What is the significance of rural innovations in India?

1. Increasing agricultural Production- The rural innovations have helped to increase the productivity of agriculture which is the main stay of rural economy in India. **For ex- Use of Soil health cards, Drones for fertiliser and pesticides spraying.**

2. Empower rural communities- Jugaad innovations empower rural communities to create **practical solutions tailored to their specific needs**. **For ex-** Farmers, **faced with resource constraints and harsh climatic conditions**, are developing cost-effective agricultural tools like seed planters made from bicycle parts and irrigation systems from discarded PVC pipes.

3. Rural economic growth- Innovation-driven entrepreneurship is a key catalyst for rural development. The **rise of agri-tech start-ups** and **rural enterprises** is creating jobs and stimulating economic growth.

4. Financial Inclusion- Mobile banking and fintech solutions like **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** have revolutionized financial inclusion, **making banking services accessible to the unbanked population**. This has not only facilitated savings and investments but also fostered entrepreneurial activities.

5. Quality education delivery- Education is a cornerstone of rural development. Innovations in this domain, such as the **use of digital classrooms** and **learning platforms**, has democratized access to quality education.

6. Improvement of Health care delivery- Healthcare in rural India has seen significant improvements due to innovative approaches. **Telemedicine** and **mobile health clinics** have made healthcare services accessible to remote areas.

7. Improving the energy access- **Solar lanterns, home lighting systems**, and **mini-grids** are providing reliable and **affordable electricity to villages**, which in turn reduces their dependence on conventional energy sources.

What are the Government initiatives for the promotion of rural innovation in India?

Rural Technology Action Group (RuUTAG)	Rural Technology Action Group (RuUTAG) started by the Principal Scientific Advisory Council (PSA) of the Government of India in 2003, is a major initiative to encourage innovation in rural India . The RuTAG center identifies the need for innovations among specific rural geographical areas and communities and presents innovative solutions accordingly.
Startup India and the MUDRA loan	Government schemes like Startup India and the MUDRA loan scheme provide the necessary financial support and infrastructure to nurture rural entrepreneurs .
National Innovation Foundation (NIF) India initiatives	The National Innovation Foundation (NIF) India fosters grassroots innovation by scouting, supporting, and scaling up rural innovations to enhance livelihood opportunities and sustainable development across the country.
National Agricultural Research and Education System (NARES)	The National Agricultural Research and Education System (NARES), which comprises of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and State Agricultural Universities (SAU), is the primary force to push agricultural innovations in the rural areas.

What are the Challenges with rural Innovations in India?

1. Financial accessibility for rural Innovative startups/ideas- Rural startups face financial accessibility issues such as **reluctance of lending by financial institutions**, limited availability of banking services in rural areas. **Urban startups in Bangalore, Delhi and Mumbai have collectively accounted for 92% of startup funding over the past nine years**. Rural startups often face ignorance on the part of the venture capitalists and angel investors.

2. Lack of Support System- The **absence/lack of mentorship, networking opportunities, and incubation centres** have impeded the growth of innovative rural startups.

3. Difficulty in Finding Early Adopters in Rural Areas- The rural startups have faced **issues of limited communication channels, lower income, and lower digital penetration** to find early adopters in rural areas.

4. Insufficient training capacity- Nearly **90% of agricultural workers in India have no formal training** to use the innovative agricultural products like drones and technology.

5. Rural-Urban Tele Divide- There exists a **rural-urban tele divide in India** with respect to reach and speed of the Internet. There is low internet penetration in rural India. This also hampers the rapid growth and development of innovation in rural India.

Read More- [Fostering Innovation and Entrepreneurial Skills among Rural Youth – Explained, pointwise](#)

What Should be the way Forward?

1. Convergence of all stake holders- The **convergence of innovative technologies, government initiatives, and community participation** will pave the way for holistic rural development in India. These innovations will not only address the traditional challenges faced by rural areas but also unlock new opportunities for growth and prosperity.

2. Efforts towards addressing rural-urban tele divide- Schemes like the **Prime Minister Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (PM WANI)** which envisages provision of Broadband through public Wi-Fi Hotspot providers and also helps to increase internet penetration in rural areas, should be promoted to address the rural-urban tele divide.

3. Policy Support- Focus must be on framing policies that address the **unique challenges faced by innovative rural startups** such as infrastructure gaps, access to finance, and skill development.

4. Financial support- There must be a collaboration with government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other stakeholders to align efforts and financial resources for innovative rural startup development.

By continuing to foster innovation and investing in scalable solutions, India can ensure that its rural population is not left behind in its journey towards becoming a global economic powerhouse. The future of rural India is bright, and with sustained efforts, it will continue to shine even brighter.

Read More- [Vikaspedia](#)

Kurukshetra Chapters Covered- Chapter 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7

UPSC Syllabus- GS 3- Indian Economy

Reservation for persons with Disabilities- Significance and Implementation Challenges- Explained Pointwise

The recent **controversy surrounding Puja Khedkar**, accused of fabricating her disability and caste to receive benefits, has sparked a **debate on reservations for persons with disabilities (PwDs)**. The issue gained further momentum when a **former chief executive officer of NITI Aayog** tweeted that reservations for persons with disabilities (PwDs) should be reassessed.

This calls for a deep introspection in the Issue of Reservation for persons with disabilities in India. The article discusses the arguments in favour of these reservations, the issues in the implementation and the way ahead to prevent any possible misuse.



RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Source- Live Law

Who are the persons with Disabilities in India? What are the provisions of reservations for persons with Disabilities?

According to **The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** (UN CRPD), Persons with disabilities are the ones who have **long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments**, which hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016- This Act came into force in April 2017, and replaced the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995.

Definition of Disability	It uses the same definition as the UN CRPD to define persons with Disabilities. 'Person with Benchmark Disability' - It further defines 'Person with Benchmark Disability' as 'A person with not less than 40% of a specified disability' .
Reservation Provisions Guaranteed under the Act	The Act increased the magnitude of reservation for Persons with Disabilities from 3% to 4% in government jobs and from 3% to 5% in higher education institutes .

Supreme Court Judgments mandating reservation for Persons with Disabilities

The Supreme Court of India has also made several significant rulings regarding reservations for persons with disabilities (PwD) in employment, particularly focusing on the applicability of such reservations in promotions.

Indra Sawhney v. Union of India (1992)	The Supreme Court established the framework for reservations in India , distinguishing between "vertical" and "horizontal" reservations. SC
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	noted that reservations for persons with disabilities should be considered horizontal reservations under Article 16(1) of the Constitution , which allows for a separate quota of 3% for persons with disabilities across various employment sectors. This ruling clarified that such reservations do not interfere with the overall ceiling of 50% for vertical reservations.
Govt. of India vs Ravi Prakash Gupta (2010)	The Supreme Court held that the reservation policy for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) must be implemented in all government jobs , including those at the civil services level. The court clarified that the 3% reservation must be applied to all stages of employment, including promotions .
Union of India vs National Federation of the Blind (2013)	The Supreme Court directed the government to ensure a 3% reservation for PwDs in all categories of public sector employment . The court emphasized the need for the government to identify posts suitable for PwDs and implement the reservation effectively.
Vikas Kumar vs Union Public Service Commission (2021)	The Supreme Court ruled that the government must provide reasonable accommodations for PwDs in competitive exams, including providing extra time and necessary facilities. This decision reinforced the principle of equality and non-discrimination in access to education and employment opportunities .

What is the significance of introduction of reservations for persons with Persons with Disabilities?

- 1. Level playing field by providing equitable opportunities to PwDs-** Reservations aim to provide equal opportunities in employment for PwDs, who often face discrimination and barriers that hinder their access to jobs. This **aligns with Article 16 of the Indian Constitution**, which guarantees equality of opportunity in public employment
- 2. Low employment rate for Persons with Disability-** According to the **76th round of the National Sample Survey in 2018**, only 23.8% of PwDs were employed in India, against the national average of Labour Force Participation Rate of 50.2%. Hence, reservation becomes an important tool to ensure their adequate representation.
- 3. Structural issues of Discrimination-** The PwDs often face structural discrimination such as stigma and biases at the hiring stage; and lack of reasonable accommodation at the workplace. **For ex-** The education system, exam curricula and formats have been designed to be used and suit able-bodied individuals.
- 4. Challenging the notion of Ableism-** Reservations help challenge the **deep-rooted ableism in society** by promoting the inclusion of PwDs in various roles. This helps in **normalizing their presence** in the workforce and **reducing stigma** associated with disabilities.
- 5. Career Progression-** Allowing reservations in promotions ensures that PwDs have the opportunity to advance in their careers. This helps in **preventing stagnation and frustration** that can arise from **limited career progression** options. This is **crucial for their economic independence and self-esteem**.
- 6. Backing of Legislative Framework and Judicial Endorsement-** The **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016**, **explicitly mandates reservations for PwDs**. The **various SC judgements** in cases like Indra Sawhney case, National Federation of the Blind case, **have supported the reservation for persons with disabilities** by holding them as necessary components of inclusive governance.

Read More- [SC Ruling to prevent stereotyping and Discrimination of Persons with Disabilities](#)

What are the Challenges in fair implementation of reservation for PwDs?

- 1. Significant flaws in India's certification system for disabilities-** The **practice of quantifying disabilities by percentage followed in India is outdated**. It is not supported by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- 2. Structural challenges in assessment of Disability-** **Lack of specialists** to evaluate various disabilities, makes the disability certification process inaccessible and time consuming. Further, the **complicated assessment guidelines** prescribed by the state are often **unrealistic to be examined at the level of district hospitals**, which are constrained in terms of both infrastructure and resources.
- 3. Outdated certification system for Psychosocial disabilities-** The psychosocial disabilities **whose assessment is relatively more subjective**, are assessed based on the **outdated IDEAS** (Indian Disability Evaluation and Assessment Scale) **scale**. Persons with invisible, hidden, or less apparent disabilities, such as blood disorders, often face rejection because they "do not look disabled", with tests not conducted properly.
- 4. Unconscious Ableism Bias-** There exists unconscious bias of ableism (physical fitness for fulfillment of duties) that exists within the public servants and corridors of public service which hinders effective implementation of reservation policies for PwDs. **For ex- Kartik Kansal and Ira Singhal cases** of delay in allotment of service citing disability, despite both of them clearing the UPSC examination.
- 5. Exploitation of Benefits-** Incidents of individuals allegedly misrepresenting their disabilities to gain benefits have raised concerns about the integrity of reservation policies. **For ex- Puja Kedkhar case** has jeopardised the reservation for PwDs.

What Should be the Way Forward?

- 1. Change in the assessment criteria of Disability-** **Functional limitations, rather than medical percentages**, should be the basis for assessment of disability and issuance of disability certificate and Unique Disability ID (UDID).
- 2. Addressing the structural limitations-** The **shortage of adequate medical staff, infrastructure at local hospitals must be addressed** to make it convenient for the persons with disabilities to obtain their certificates.
- 3. New model for assessment of Psychosocial disabilities-** A new model for the assessment of psychosocial disabilities must be developed to **replace the old and outdated IDEAS scale** (Indian Disability Evaluation and Assessment Scale).
- 4. Regularly review and updates-** The list of specified disabilities must be regularly reviewed and updated to align with international standards and best practices. This would ensure that the system remains inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of PwDs.
- 5. Establishment of a robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism-** A robust tracking mechanism needs to be developed **for detection of fraud cases of disability**. This can include regular audits, data collection, and stakeholder consultations.

By adopting a comprehensive and collaborative approach that addresses the legal, administrative, and social aspects of the issue, India can move closer to ensuring fair and effective implementation of reservation for persons with disabilities in public employment.

Read More- [The Hindu](#)

UPSC Syllabus- GS 2- Governance and Social Issues. Govt schemes for the Vulnerable sections

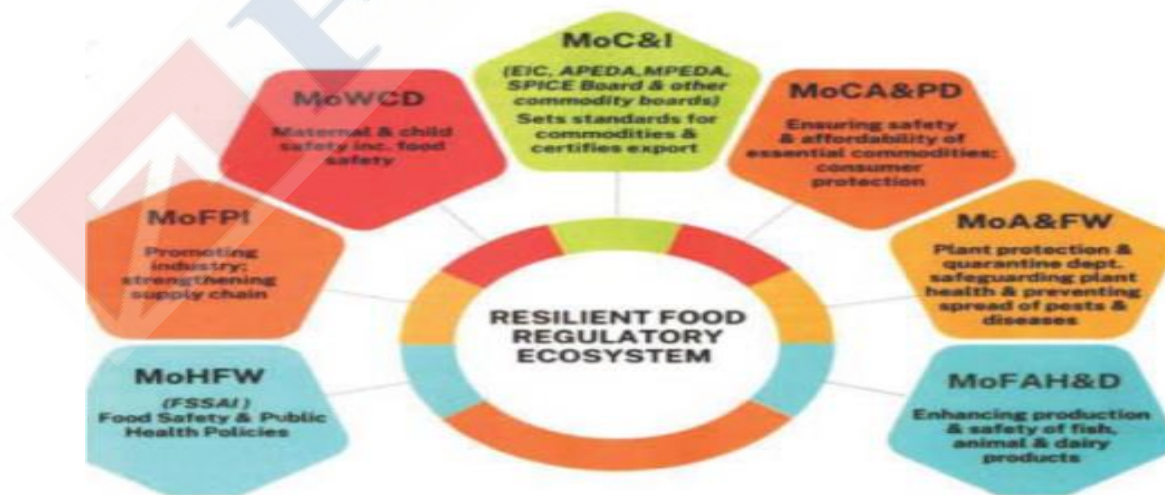
[Yojana July Summary-2] India's Food Safety Regulatory Landscape- Explained Pointwise

India's food regulatory landscape has undergone a transformative journey with the enactment of the Food Safety and Standards Act (FSSA), 2006. This comprehensive Act replaced the erstwhile fragmented and outdated laws and established the apex food regulator of the country, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). A stringent and vigilant food regulatory system is necessary for ensuring food safety in the country.

What is the Organisational structure regulating food safety in India?

The Government of India diligently works towards establishing a strong, transparent, predictable, and risk-based regulatory framework for ensuring safe food for consumers. This includes the coordinated efforts of various ministries and departments-

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)	Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), is a robust regulatory body established in 2006 under the aegis of MoHFW . It is at the forefront of India's food safety ecosystem . Its mandate encompasses setting comprehensive science-based standards for food products and overseeing their production, storage, distribution, and import.
Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoC&I)	Department of Commerce, through several autonomous organisations like Export Inspection Council (EIC), Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), Spices Board, Tea Board, is responsible for regulating the export of food products.
Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare	The Plant protection and quarantine department of the Ministry safeguards plant health and prevents the spread of pests and diseases .
Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI)	Promotes safe food processing industries & strengthens their supply chain.
Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution (MoCA&PD)	Ensures safety and affordability of essential commodities and ensures consumer protection.



Source-Yojana

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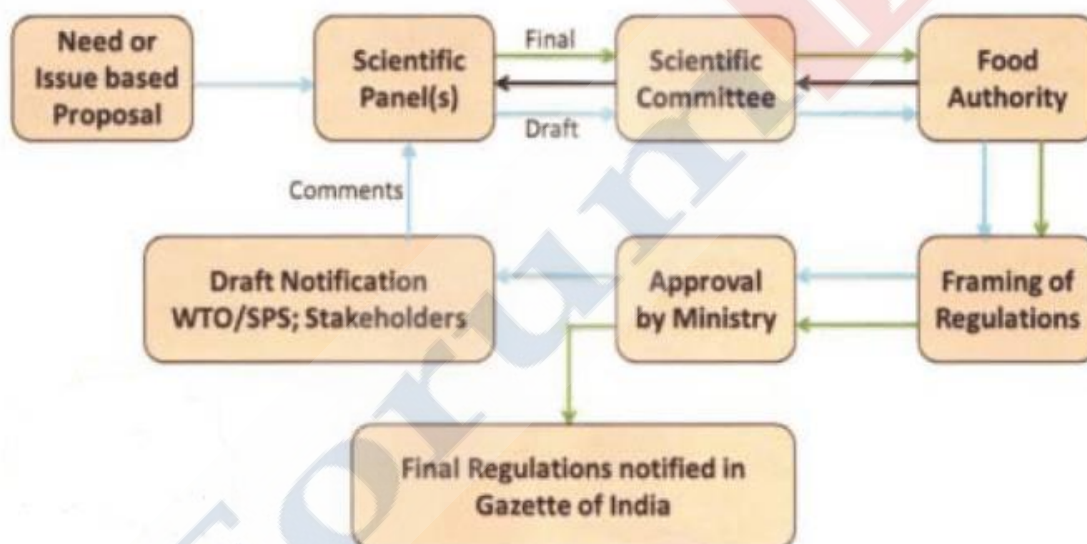
Role of FSSAI

a. Standard Setting Process and Harmonisation

The FSSAI develops food safety guidelines in line with the international guidelines, particularly those established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission. This harmonisation ensures alignment with global best practices, facilitates international trade, and promotes higher levels of food safety.

The Food Authority lays down science-based standards for articles of food with the support of its subsidiary bodies- Scientific Panels (SPs) and the Scientific Committee (SC). These standards include provisions for food additives, limits on contaminants, toxins, antibiotic residues, pesticide residues, microbiological criteria, packaging and labelling requirements.

The regulations are then finalised after appropriately addressing the stakeholder comments and subsequently endorsed by the Scientific Committee and Food Authority. These regulations are notified after legal vetting by the Department of legislative Affairs and subsequent approval by the MoHFW for implementation as a final standard.



Source- Yojana

b. Enforcement Machinery and Regulatory Oversight

The Food Safety Compliance System (FoSCoS) serves as an integrated online platform for licensing, registration, and monitoring FBOs capacity and compliance. There are different sets of good hygiene and manufacturing practices specified according to the risk and product matrix.

FSSAI has developed a Risk-Based Inspection System (RBIS) that targets Food Business Operators (FBOs) based on risk matrices, optimising regulatory efforts.

c. Capacity Building and Promoting a Culture of Self-Compliance

Food Safety Training and Certification (FoSTaC) programme which aims to build the capacity of food handlers and ensure the presence of trained Food Safety supervisors in food establishments.

Third Party Ecosystem: FSSAI has also recognised third-party auditing agencies to conduct mandatory food safety audits for high-risk food categories.

The **Hygiene Rating Scheme**, is a voluntary initiative, which encourages foodservice and retail businesses (bakery, meat, and dairy) to assess their compliance and improve their food hygiene and safety levels.

d. Managing the Import of Food Products

The **Food Import Clearance System** (FICS) ensures that all imported food products meet the required safety and quality standards. At present, FSSAI has **notified authorized officers** at **156 points of entries** to facilitate food import clearance.

e. Food Testing Ecosystem and Surveillance

FSSAI has established a network of primary laboratories, referral laboratories, and **National Reference laboratories** (NRL) to support food analysis and surveillance activities. **239 primary food testing labs, 22 referral**

labs, and 12 reference labs, along with over **264 Food Safety on Wheels** (FSW) have been positioned strategically across the nation.

What is the significance of ensuring food safety in India?

- 1. Protection of public health-** Stringent food safety standards help in reducing the risk of food-borne illness by **protecting consumers** from **unsanitary, unwholesome, mislabeled, or adulterated food**.
- 2. Economic Growth and Development-** India's Food safety regulatory landscape contributes to economic development by **maintaining consumer confidence in the food system** and **providing a sound regulatory foundation** for domestic and international trade in food.
- 3. Boost to India's Food exports-** The food safety regulations align with global food safety standards. It helps in **avoiding trade barriers** and **rejections** due to non-compliance with safety regulations. **For ex- Rejection of Indian rice by EU food regulators.**
- 4. Food Security-** India's food regulatory landscape **mitigates risks** related to **food contamination and adulteration** that could threaten food availability. It supports food security by ensuring that food supplies are safe.
- 5. Promotion of Innovation and Research-** It encourages research and innovation in food technology and safety measures. It also provides a **framework for developing new food safety solutions** and improving existing practices.

[Read More- Food safety violations in India](#)

What are the challenges with food safety regulatory landscape in India?

- 1. Rampant Adulteration-** Widespread and rampant adulteration of food products which includes milk, spices, and edible oils, remains a grave challenge to food safety in India. **For ex- A 2012 study conducted by the FSSAI across 33 states** found that **milk in India was adulterated with diluted water, detergent, fat and even urea**.
- 2. Feeding of 'empty calories'** - Major packed food brand products contain items that **have no nutritive value** like **added sugar**. These are major causes of diabetes, cardio vascular diseases and obesity in India.
- 3. Weak Enforcement and Accountability-** The enforcement of food safety regulations is often lax in India. Many food businesses **operate without proper licenses** and continue to **compromise on safety standards**.

4. Corrupt practices on part of FMCG players- The Fast Moving Consumer Goods industry players are often found to indulge in **violation of the labelling requirements** about the ingredients in their products. **For ex- Maggi noodles ban due to high levels of lead and MSG.**

5. Lack of Infrastructure and Resources- The food safety standards domain in India suffers from the challenge of **shortage of laboratories, trained personnel**, and **funds** necessary for regular and stringent food inspections. **For ex- Use of synthetic sweetener in cake** leading to death of teenage girl in Punjab.

6. Limited Public Awareness- A significant proportion of the Indian population remains unaware of food safety practices, including proper food handling, storage, and hygiene. **For ex- Over use of pesticides and fruit ripening agents in agriculture cause cancer.**

7. Complex Regulatory Framework- The complex regulatory framework for food safety makes it **difficult for small and medium enterprises businesses**, to **adhere to the necessary standards**. These also lead to regulatory gaps and inconsistencies in enforcement.

What should be the way Forward?

1. Strengthen Infrastructure and Resources- There must be an increase in the **investment in food safety infrastructure**, including laboratories, training facilities, and regulatory bodies. Adequate funding and resources are needed to conduct regular inspections and ensure compliance with safety standards.

2. Simplification of Regulations- The regulatory framework for food safety **should be made more accessible and business-friendly**. Simplification and streamlining of regulations can encourage compliance, especially among small and medium-sized enterprises.

3. Strict Enforcement and Accountability- Regulatory bodies must rigorously enforce food safety standards. This includes imposing **stringent penalties for violations** and **taking legal action** against non-compliant businesses. **For ex- Specification of an upper limit for added sugars.**

4. Enhancement of Public Awareness- A **comprehensive public awareness campaign** on food safety should be launched targeting both consumers and producers regarding the importance of food safety.

5. Encouragement of Responsible Agricultural Practices- Promoting responsible and sustainable agricultural practices **can reduce contamination risks** at the source. Encouraging the **use of organic farming, reducing pesticide usage, and implementing proper waste management** are essential steps.

Source- Yojana (Chapter India's food Regulatory landscape)

Read More- [The Hindu](#)

UPSC Syllabus- GS 2- Government Intervention and regulation of various sectors

Broadcasting Regulation Bill 2024- Significance and Concerns- Explained Pointwise

Recently, concerns have been raised by several by the digital creators against the **Broadcasting regulation bill 2024**. The draft Bill seeks to regulate broadcast of news and current affairs programmes (excluding print news). Such programmes will have to comply with the prescribed programme code and advertisement code.

According to the **CSDS Lok-Niti survey**, 29% of respondents consume political material every day on digital platforms. However, critics have been raising concerns that the **Bill can lead to digital authoritarianism** in order to control online narratives.

What are the highlights of the Broadcasting Regulation Bill 2024?

Some of the key features of the Broadcasting Regulation Bill 2024 are mentioned below-

Regulating Mechanism	Multiple types of broadcasters and broadcast network operators. The regulation will depend on their type. Television broadcasting networks will have to register with the central government, while OTT platforms must provide an intimation after meeting a certain threshold of subscribers.
Unified Regulatory Framework for Broadcasting	The bill aims to replace the Cable Television Networks Act of 1995 . It also extends the regulatory purview to cover broadcasting of the over-the-top (OTT) content and digital news and current affairs, currently regulated through IT Act, 2000.
Programme Code and advertisement Code	The Bill seeks to regulate broadcast of news and current affairs programmes (excluding print news). Such programmes will have to comply with the prescribed programme code and advertisement code .
Self Regulation	The Bill provides for a self-regulatory structure to ensure compliance with the programme and advertisement codes. This includes: (i) self-regulation (ii) constituting self-regulatory organisations, and (iii) establishing a Broadcast Advisory Council.
Content Evaluation Committee (CEC)	Each broadcaster will have to also set up an internal Content Evaluation Committee (CEC) . All broadcast content must be certified by the CEC.
Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities	1) The Bill promotes the use of subtitles, audio descriptors, and sign language for persons with disabilities. 2) The Bill provides for the appointment of Disability Grievance Officer .
Penalties	1) Prescribes penalties such as advisory, warning, censure, or monetary penalties for operators and broadcasters. 2) Reserves imprisonment and/or fines for severe offences, like obtaining registration with a false affidavit.
Infrastructure sharing provisions	The Bill introduces provisions for infrastructure sharing among broadcasting network operators.
Dispute resolution	The Bill establishes a structured dispute resolution mechanism.

What is the significance of the Broadcasting Regulation Bill 2024?

- 1. Consolidation and Modernisation-** The Bill replaces outdated **Cable Television Networks Act, 1995**. The Bill adopts a unified, future-focused approach by adapting to the dynamic world of OTT, Digital Media, DTH, IPTV.
- 2. Promotes 'ease of doing business'**- The bill seeks to promote '**ease of doing business**' by incorporating **provisions for Dispute Resolution mechanism** in the broadcasting domain.
- 3. Further Push to 'Digital India'**- The bill seeks to **promotes technological advancement** and service evolution in the broadcasting domain, which will give a further push to our goal 'digital India'.
- 4. Provides for 'Right of Way'**- The Bill provides for 'Right of Way' which **would enable cable operators to easily obtain permissions from various local agencies** to roll out their network in a new city.
- 5. Promotes infrastructure sharing-** The broadcasters would be benefit from the infrastructure sharing, in the same way as the **telecom operators benefited from sharing cellular towers and spectrum**.

6. **Empowers Broadcasters by providing for self-regulation mechanisms-** The Bill provides provisions for the establishment of **Content Evaluation Committees which would be a self-certification body of the broadcasters**. This would provide autonomy to the broadcasting industry in matters of obtaining certification.

7. **Promotes 'ease of living'**- The bill **promotes 'ease of living' by enhancing the accessibility** of broadcasting services for persons with disabilities by promoting the use of subtitles, audio descriptors and sign language.

What are the concerns with the Broadcasting Regulations Bill 2024?

1. **Threat of Digital Dictatorship-** The Bill expands the scope to classify individual commentators as '**Digital News Broadcasters**' and content creators as '**OTT Broadcasters**'. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting can prescribe and change thresholds for subscribers or users, which, when met, require registration. The Bill increases the Union Government's **command and control over digital media**.

2. **Additional compliances for online platforms-** It establishes a **new safe harbor regime** independent of the **Information Technology Act, 2000**. In addition to the **IT Rules, 2021**, the government can demand **registration, enforce censorship**, and even require platforms such as YouTube to frame special compliances not only for news channels but also for creators.

3. Issues with the Content Evaluation Committees (CEC)-

a. The government will **prescribe the criteria for the constitution of CEC**, which raises questions of its independence.

b. The **requirement of disclosure of personal details** of the members of the CEC to the government and public, is **against the Right to Privacy**. It also contradicts the provisions of the Digital Personal Data protection legislation.

c. Disclosure of personal details also puts them at risk of **physical or online harassment**, for approving a content which may offend an individual or a group.

4. **Issues with the Broadcast Advisory Council (BAC)-** All the members of the proposed Broadcast Advisory Council (BAC) will be nominated by the Centre. Since the BAC will have a final say on censoring content across all broadcasting mediums, government may push for content censorship through BAC.

5. **Selective targeting of Journalists-** Critics fear that the bill may be misused to selectively target the journalists by the govt, like the **IT Rules 2021 are being misused to arrest media personnel**.

6. **Potential Impact on Minority Communities-** There are concerns of **misuse of the vague language** in the bill for erasure or **selective representation of Indian minority communities** and promotion of a universal majority identity of India.

7. **Conflict of Interest-** The bill does not address the conflict of Interest and opaque issues in media regulation, such as the **unholy nexus involving cable operators, politicians, entrepreneurs, and broadcasters**.

8. **Oligopoly in Media Ownership-** The unbridled power provided to government officials in the broadcast media regulation may lead to collusion between the government and media houses to create oligopolistic media ownership.

9. **Reduced autonomy of OTT platforms-** Application of the stringent rules and codes of cable or radio to "OTT" broadcasting services, may **increase the financial and compliance burden for OTT broadcasters**. This will end up negatively impacting the user experience, choice, and costs borne by the users.

Conclusion and Way Forward

We must also seek to explore these ways for addressing the challenges of the Bill and for better media regulation-

1. **Stakeholder Consultation-** Extensive Consultations with industry experts, content creators, broadcasters, and the public can give extensive feedback to the government regarding their concerns on the Bill.
2. **Promotion of Media Literacy-** Investment in media literacy programs to educate the public about responsible media consumption like Singapore and Australia.
3. **Responsible Media-** The media must uphold its duty of being the 4th pillar of the Indian democracy and ensure that journalistic ethics are not compromised.
4. **Ensuring the independence of the CEC and BAC-** The government must nominate members from the broadcast industry and from civil society to keep the CEC and BAC independent and impartial.

Read More- [The Hindu](#)

UPSC Syllabus- GS Paper 2 Indian Polity – Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.