

7 PM COMPILATION

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**
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- ❖ **Best cost-benefit ratio according to successful aspirants**

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Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita- Significance and Concerns- Explained Pointwise

The **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita** (BNS), the **Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita** (BNSS), and the **Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam** (BSA) replaces the **Indian Penal Code** (IPC), 1860, the **Criminal Procedure Code** (CrPC), 1973, and the **Indian Evidence Act**, 1872 respectively. These three Bills were passed in Parliament last December. In this article we will analyse the significance and the associated concerns with these Bills/sanhitas.



Source- ForumIAS

What are the additions, deletions and changes in the provisions of the Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS) and Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS)?

Addition of New Provisions in the Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS)

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| Mob lynching | Clause 103 codifies offences linked to mob lynching and hate-crime murders. It is applicable for cases when a mob of five or more individuals commits murder based on factors such as race, caste, community, language, place of birth or personal belief . The provision has punishment that extends from life imprisonment to death . |
| Organised Crime | Clause 111(1) codifies organised crime and terrorism. Organised crime and terrorism has been brought under the realm of ordinary criminal law for the first time. Unlawful Activities Prevention Act was used for terrorism, and state-specific laws such as the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act for organised crime. |
| Deceitful Promise to Marry | Clause 69 criminalises 'deceitful' promise to marry . 'Deceitful means' shall include the false promise of employment or promotion, inducement, or marrying after suppressing identity . It will be punished with imprisonment till 10 years, and will be liable for a fine. |

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| Attempt to Suicide | It criminalises attempts to commit suicide with intent to compel or restrain any public servant from discharging official duty . This provision could be invoked to prevent self-immolations and hunger strikes during protests . |
| Snatching | Clause 304 (1) adds snatching as a 'new' crime. It has been made distinct from theft . Both theft and snatching have a punishment of upto three-years in jail |

Major Deletions in the Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS)

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| Unnatural Sexual Offences | Section 377 of the IPC , which criminalised homosexuality among other 'unnatural' sexual activities, has been repealed under the Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS) . |
| Adultery | The offence of adultery, which was struck down by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional in 2018 , has been omitted under the Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS) . |
| Thugs | Section 310 of the IPC criminalises them who have been ' habitually associated with committing robbery or child-stealing ' and labels them a thug. This provision is criticised for attaching colonial notions of criminality for certain tribes . The BNS has fully omitted this provision. |

Changes in the Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS)

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| Gender Neutrality | Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS) has tweaked other laws , especially those dealing with children, to bring gender neutrality . Earlier offences like the offence of outraging the modesty of women (354A of the IPC) and voyeurism (354C) has now become gender neutral for the accused under the BNS. This means that women can also be booked under the law. |
| Fake news | The BNS introduces a new provision under the BNS which deals with hate speech, criminalising publishing false and misleading information . |
| Sedition | The BNS introduces the offence of sedition under a new name and with a wider definition. It changes the name of the offence from 'rajdroh' to 'deshdroh'. The new provision adds the following crimes to the offence of sedition- a. Aiding through financial means, acts of ' subversive activities ' b. Encouragement of ' feelings of separatist activities '. |
| Community Service | The BNS also provides for community service as a punishment for petty offences. It will be the part of penal code for the first time . |

Major Changes in the Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS)

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| Expansion of Detention in Police Custody | There has been an expansion of detention in police custody from the 15-day limit in the CrPC to up to 90 days . |
| Victim being given an opportunity of being heard | The BNSS states that in cases where the punishment is seven years or more , the victim shall be given an opportunity of being heard before withdrawal of the case by the government. |
| Trials in absentia | According to this provision added in the BNSS, a person accused of a crime can be tried and convicted in his absence , as if he was present in court and has waived his right to a fair trial for all offences. |
| Removal of Statutory bail Provisions | The BNSS removes the provision for statutory bail if an accused has more than one offence against his name. Earlier under the CrPC, an accused could be granted |

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| | statutory bail if he has served at least half of the maximum sentence prescribed for the offence. |
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What is the significance of Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA)?

- 1. Decolonisation of laws-** The passage of these new sanhitas (laws) in Parliament, represent laws that have been framed by Indians for Indians.
- 2. Revamping of criminal justice system in India-** Committees like the Law Commission of India, Bezbaruah Committee, Viswanathan Committee, Malimath Committee, Madhav Menon Committee have suggested revamping of the criminal justice system in India. These laws represent the present-day dynamics and aspirations of Indian society.
- 3. Incorporation of SC Judgments-** These new laws incorporate the supreme court judgements on contentious issues. For ex- Omission of Section 377 of the IPC which criminalised homosexuality from the Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita. This was decriminalised by the Supreme Court in the Suresh Kumar Koushal vs. Naz Foundation.
- 4. Gender Neutrality-** Introduction of gender neutrality in certain provisions of the Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS) is an important step towards updation of the IPC. Crimes against women in the BNS, comes before in Chapter V before offences against the state (like sedition). It reflects contemporary societal norms and values. Sexual intercourse with a minor wife has been brought under the ambit of rape.
- 5. Community service as an alternate form of punishment-** The introduction of Community service as an alternate form of punishment keeps first-time convicts and those convicted for minor offences out of prison. This is important as three-fourths of India's prison population are undertrials.
- 6. Acknowledgement of Hate Crimes-** The inclusion of offences for mob-lynching and hate crimes is a legislative acknowledgement of these crimes. The emphasis on video-conferencing of trials, and prescription of timelines for speedy trials will improve justice delivery.

What are the concerns with these Sanhitas?

- 1. No break from colonial legacy-** According to critics these sanhitas make minimal progress in the main objective of 'decolonisation of laws'. The sanhitas continue to rely on long-term imprisonments and the death penalty, by adding and increasing mandatory minimum sentences for certain offences, and by retaining vague definitions for offences against the state as well as for defamation.
- 2. Ambiguity in definitions-** In BNS new offence has been added that criminalises exciting secession, armed rebellion, subversive activities or encouraging separatist feelings. However, these have not been defined. The framing of this provision is very similar to that of sedition and can be misused by the government to curb dissent.
- 3. No definition of community service-** The BNS does not define what constitutes community service. It leaves it to the discretion of judges, which creates judicial ambiguity.
- 4. Cosmetic changes in sedition-** BNS has in fact introduced the offence with a wider definition. It incorporates the SC guidelines in the 1962 Kedarnath Singh case, which upheld the constitutional validity for the crime of sedition. There has been a simple name change- from rajdroh (rebellion against the king) to deshdroh (rebellion against the nation).
- 5. Lack of Transformational Changes-** According to critics except the reordering of the sections, much of the language and contents of the original laws have been retained. Some legal experts opine that although the new laws make significant changes, they do not 'overhaul' the existing laws.

6. Lack of adequate Legislative Scrutiny- The three Bills that replace the body of criminal laws in India were passed by Parliament in its ongoing session, **where more than 140 MPs were suspended**.

7. Fear of Misuse by the state- Critics argue that the **introduction of trials in absentia** under normal criminal law allows the state to forgo its duty to properly locate the accused before the trial begins.

8. Provision on Terrorism- Critics argue that **'terrorism' should not have been included** in the general Sanhita. It is punishable under special legislation. Critics argue that **grave charges such as terrorism** should not be invoked on a regular basis.

9. Marital Rape not Included as a Criminal Offence- The provision legalising marital rape has been retained.

What Should be the Way Forward?

1. Modernization and Clarity- It must be ensured that BNS laws are **clear, concise, and easily understandable by both legal professionals and the general public**.

2. Victim-Centric Approach- The provisions of the BNS **must strengthened to protect victims' rights** and ensure their access to justice. This must include **better support system, compensation, and participation in legal proceedings**.

3. Focus on Rehabilitation- There must be emphasis on **rehabilitative justice and reintegration of offenders** into society alongside punitive measures. There must be **promotion of alternate sentencing options**, especially for **non-violent offenses**, to reduce overcrowding in prisons and provide a chance for reform.

4. Technology Integration- There must be incorporation of technology to streamline legal processes, improve investigation techniques, and enhance evidence collection. This could include **digitization of records, use of forensic technology, and modernizing court procedures**.

5. Public Awareness and Education- There should be **regular conduction of public awareness campaigns** and educational programs to inform citizens about their rights and responsibilities within the criminal justice system.

6. Consultation and Stakeholder Involvement- We should **encourage active participation from various stakeholders, including legal professionals, law enforcement agencies, NGOs, and affected communities**, in the reform process **to ensure inclusivity and diverse perspectives**.

Reforming criminal laws is a complex and ongoing process that requires collaboration, thoughtful deliberation, and a commitment to upholding justice and fairness for all members of society.

Read More- [The Indian Express](#)

UPSC Syllabus- GS 2- Governance

[Yojana June 2024 Summary] Forts in India- Explained Pointwise

In the vast expanse of India's historical landscape, **Forts in India stand as silent sentinels**, guarding tales of valour, culture and conquest. These are **valiant landmarks**, which are **scattered across the length and breadth of the country**. They serve as **portals to the past**, offering us glimpses into the rich tapestry of our heritage. We will explore the different types of Forts in India, their historical evolution and significance.



Source- Yojana

What are the Different types of Forts built in India?

Fort- A fort is a strong, fortified place, usually occupied by troops, that is designed for military defense.

Key Characteristics of Fort

Some key characteristics of forts include-

- These are often **surrounded by thick walls, ditches, ramparts, and parapets for protection.**
- They are **often located on hills or in strategic locations.**
- These can be made of **stone, earth, or other materials.**
- They may have a **citadel in the center** and extra space between the walls and citadel.
- Their gates are **often large to allow elephants** and highly decorated.

Forts are historically significant structures for **defense**. These have evolved from **natural defenses** to elaborate constructions using **local resources** and **technological advancements**.

Types of Forts in India

The forts in the Indian subcontinent have been influenced by the landscape, culture, and aesthetics of the ruling classes. **Arthashastra**, an ancient Indian political treatise, **classifies forts based on their physical nature**, which remains a foundational aspect in studying Indian forts.

Arthashastra's Classification of Indian Forts

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| Dhanva Durg or Desert Fort | This type of fort is surrounded by a desert or an arid stretch of land . These forts are designed to inhibit the swift movement of enemies. |
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| Mahi Durg or Mud Fort | This type of fort is protected by earthen walls and ramparts . Walls constructed of bricks and stones can also come under this category. |
| Jala Durg or Water Fort | This type of fort is surrounded by water bodies which could either be natural (sea or rivers) or artificial (moats, artificial lakes etc.) |
| Giri Durg or Hill Fort | This type of fort is situated on either the summit of a hill or a valley that is surrounded by hills . |
| Vriksha or Vana Durg, or Forest Fort | This type of fort has a thick forest cover as a preliminary line of defense. |
| Nara Durg or fort protected by soldiers | This type of fort primarily relies on man-power . It has a strong army to defend itself. |

Other Classification of Fort

- 1. Palace Forts-** These fort complexes included palaces for **royalty** and **nobility**. These often served as military outposts & administrative and residential hubs. Hence, they served dual purposes of being **residential centres** as well as **strategic military stations**.
- 2. City Forts-** These forts were **built to fortify existing cities**. The fort complex included schools, worship areas, residential quarters, palaces, and farms. These attracted populations and led to the development of cities nearby.
- 3. Trading Forts-** These forts served as **hubs for commercial and financial activities**. These evolved from warehouses to fortified structures for protection. **For ex- Establishment and development of European forts in India.**

What has been the Historical timeline of Development of Fort in India?

Ancient Period Fort Development

The Ancient Indian History saw the rise and fall of numerous empires and dynasties across the subcontinent. The fort development was a synthesis of the indigenous architectural traditions and the changes that were introduced by the conquerors and adventurers.

1. Indus Valley Period Fort Development

Indus Valley settlements were divided into a citadel and a lower town. The citadel area was reflective of the fortified development. **For ex- Citadel area in Mohenjodaro** which was surrounded by a moat. **Kot Diji was a fortified site** with a massive wall made of limestone rubble and mud-brick.

2. Vedic Period

The Vedic Period also saw fortified settlements. The Rig Veda referred to tribes living in **fortified settlements** called **Pura**.

3. Mahajanpadas Period

The growth of the Mahajanpadas led to **increased warfare** and the **consequent need to strengthen military defenses and fortifications**. The capitals of these mahajanpadas used to be fortified cities. (Capital of Anga- Champa, Capital of Vatsa- Kaushambi, Capital of Panchala- Ahichhatra, Capital of Avanti- Ujjayini)

For ex- The ancient capital of Magadha- **Rajgir**, had **two cities stone walled fortified cities of Old Rajagriha and New Rajagriha**.

4. Mauryan Period

The Mauryan Period thrusted heavily on the importance of forts. Kautilya's arthashastra classified forts into different categories based on their terrain and defensive features, such as **desert forts, mud forts, water forts, hill forts, forest forts,** and **forts protected by loyal soldiers.**

5. Sangam Period

The construction of moats, turrets and bastions **reached an advanced stage** during the **Sangam Period.** **For ex-** The vivid description of the **grandeur of the fort at Madurai** is provided in the Sangam literature.

6. Gupta Period

The Gupta Empire saw the **development** of **several notable forts** and **fortified cities.** The Garhwa fort, dating back to the Gupta period, is a Hindu temple complex that exemplifies Gupta period fort architecture. It **features massive stone walls and fortifications** surrounding the temple structures.

Medieval Period Fort Development

Rajputs

Rajput forts stand as testament to the grand fort building exercise undertaken in Indian Architecture. The Rajput forts that stand today were mostly built during the early medieval period. **For ex- Forts of Chittorgarh, Gwalior, and Amer.**

Delhi Sultanate Period

The architectural style that developed during the Delhi Sultanate period was a **synthesis** of **indigenous traditions** and **influences from Central Asia.** Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq laid the foundation of the strong **Tughlaqabad Fort** near Delhi.

Mughal Period

The Mughal Empire (1526-1857 CE) saw extensive fort building and expansion of fortified cities across northern and central India. The fort building exercise was the development of a **syncretic architectural style,** with influences from Persian, Indian, and other regional traditions. **For ex- Agra Fort, Lahore Fort** and the **Allahabad Fort.**

Colonial Period Fort Development

European powers used forts for trade protection, and protection of their territories from the rebellion of local rulers. In due course of time these forts assumed a multi-functional role – serving as centers of commerce, military power, and colonial administration for the European powers in India.

Portuguese- The Portuguese began fortifying their settlements to protect their trade interests. They built their first fort- **Fort Emmanuel** in **Kochi in 1503.** The Portuguese also built Fort Aguada in Goa to defend against the Dutch.

Dutch- The Dutch established a trading post in Pipli, Odisha in 1630 and later in Chinsurah in 1653. The **Dutch Fort at Falta,** around 50km southeast of Kolkata, was built in the colonial era.

British- The British Raj built numerous forts across India to consolidate their power and protect their trading interests. Some of the most notable British forts in India include- **Fort St. George, Chennai, Fort William, Kolkata.**

What has been the role of Forts in Indian History?

Forts in ancient India have played a **crucial role in warfare,** and **shaping the socio-economic,** and **cultural landscape.**

1. Military Defense- The Forts served as the primary line of defense against invaders. These were **strategically located on hills or near water bodies**. They were surrounded by thick walls, clever designs (bastions, gateways), and innovative features (moats, machicolations) to repel attacks. **For Ex- Gwalior Fort** (Madhya Pradesh) and **Mehrangarh Fort** (Rajasthan).

2. Political Power- These forts were the **symbol of political authority**. Forts served as a tangible display of a ruler's power and prestige. **For Ex- The Red Fort in Delhi**.

3. Economic Hubs- Forts also served as **thriving centers of economic activities**. Trade routes often converged near or passed through forts, facilitating commerce and generating revenue. **For Ex- Cities like Agra**, initially built around **Agra Fort**, flourished due to their proximity.

4. Social and Cultural Centres- Forts also served as **Cradle of Culture**. These fostered the **blossoming of art, music, and literature**. The integration of **temples and other religious structures into fort complexes**, made them significant cultural and religious centers. **For ex- The intricate murals of Chittorgarh Fort** or the **serene Eklingji Temple within Mehrangarh Fort**.

5. Architectural Innovation- The forts served as **testing grounds of architecture**. Fort construction in India witnessed remarkable feats of engineering. **For Ex- Use of sloping walls to deflect cannonballs** during the Mughal era.

6. Enduring Legacy- The forts stand as captivating testaments to India's vibrant past. They are not only tourist destinations but also **a treasure trove of information for historians and archaeologists**.

Read More- [The Hindu](#)

UPSC Syllabus- GS 1- Art and Culture

[Kurukshestra June 2024] Tribal Art and Culture- Significance and Challenges- Explained Pointwise

The Tribal art and culture **reflects the creative energy found in rural areas** that acts as an undercurrent to the craftsmanship of the tribal people. Tribal art includes wide range of art forms such as **wall paintings, tribal dances, tribal music** etc. Tribes have rich and unique cultural traditions which includes their **own language, music, stories** and **paintings**.

In this summary of Kurukshestra, we will explore the significance of Tribal Culture, the challenges in its protection and the measures that need to be taken to preserve them.



Source- Kurukshetra

What are some of the prominent examples of Tribal Art in India?

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| Warli (Maharashtra) | Art | The warli art has evocative depictions of daily life, rituals, and folklore . It utilizes basic geometric shapes to convey harmony with nature. |
| Gond Art (Central India) | Art | It is inspired by nature and tribal folklore. Gond artists create detailed narratives featuring deities, animals, and celestial beings . It is marked by its vibrant hues, intricate patterns, and rich mythological themes . |
| Madhubani (Bihar) | Painting | Madhubani painting is a traditional art form that has been passed down through generations of Maithili women. This painting often depicts scenes from Hindu mythology and rural life. It is known for its intricate motifs, bold colors, and geometric patterns . |
| Pattachitra (Odisha) | Art | Pattachitra artworks frequently depict scenes from epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata . It is renowned for its meticulous detailing, vibrant colors, and mythological narratives . |
| Santhal Art (Eastern India) | Art | Santhal artists employ natural materials like clay, dyes, and bamboo to create artworks reflecting their deep connection to the environment and community. It features earthy tones, rustic charm, and tribal motifs . |

What is the significance of Tribal Art and Culture?

- 1. Symbolism and connection to Nature and life-** Motifs that symbolise natural elements, and spiritual elements are central to many tribal artworks. **For ex-** The Bhil tribe of Central India employs a distinctive style involving dots and dashes to narrate stories, where each dot represents a grain of millet. This **signifies prosperity and connection to their agrarian way** of life.
- 2. Medium for education and cultural continuity-** The tribal artwork fosters a sense of identity and continuity in tribal communities. Each artwork serves as a **repository of community knowledge and traditions**.
- 3. Heartbeat of tribal celebrations and rituals-** The tribal art and culture reflects the cultural expression of India's tribal communities. **For ex- The Santhal tribe of Jharkhand is renowned for its rhythmic drumming and folk dances** that narrate stories of harvest, hunting, and festivals.

4. Representation of our glorious past- The art work serves as reminder of our glorious past. It tells us about their beliefs and how they live. **For ex- Pattachitra art from Odisha** use it to tell stories from Hindu myths.

5. Source of livelihood- The tribal handicrafts and paintings are important source of livelihood for the tribal community. **For ex- Commercialisation of Worli art work printed sarees and paintings.**

6. Community Bonding- The creation of tribal artwork is **community-based approach**. It enhances individual abilities but also strengthens the bonds within the community.

What is the global relevance of Tribal artwork?

1. Emphasis on sustainability and minimal environmental impact- The emphasis on sustainability and minimal environmental impact **serves as a model for the global community**. In a world grappling with environmental issues and the pursuit of sustainable living, these art forms and daily practices of India's tribal communities offer valuable lessons in eco-friendly living.

For ex- The use of organic materials in craft, the conservation of local flora and fauna through sacred groves, and the sustainable harvesting practices all highlight an integrated approach to living that can inspire global environmental strategies.

2. Coexistence and respect for all life Forms- The tribal communities of India, through their art and lifestyle, champion a balance between human needs and environmental stewardship. This provides a **blueprint for sustainable living that the rest of the world** can learn from.

3. Maintenance of ecological balance and cultural richness- Tribal art is not only a cultural treasure but a pivotal element in the global dialogue on sustainability.

What are the government of India's initiatives for Tribal Art promotion?

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| Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs) | Seven Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs) across the country have been set up to preserve and promote various forms of folk art and culture of the tribals. |
| Documentation of indigenous practices | Ministry of Tribal Affairs provides funding for documentation of indigenous practices like tribal medicine, languages, agriculture, dances, etc. A digital repository has been developed to preserve and promote tribal cultural heritage. |
| TRIFED | TRIFED (Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India) has been organizing Adi Mahotsav festivals for the protection and promotion of tribal art and culture. |

What are the challenges Faced by Tribal Art Forms in India?

1. Lack of Preservation Efforts- **Insufficient support and recognition** has made it difficult for the tribal art forms to survive in the modern world.

2. Shifting Preferences and Globalization- The rise of contemporary and digital art forms have contributed to a decline in the popularity of traditional Indian paintings. **For ex-** The **mass production of cheap replicas** has also diminished the value and exclusivity of authentic traditional artwork.

3. Limited Exposure and Awareness- The **lack of educational initiatives, museums, and galleries** specializing in traditional art hinders the promotion and exposure of tribal art work.

4. Displacement, Marginalization, and Assimilation of Tribal Communities- Tribal communities have been facing challenges such as displacement, marginalization, and assimilation. These have have **threatened the very existence of their cultural heritage**.

What should be the strategies for Global Representation and protection of tribal art?

1. Protection of Intellectual Property- Protecting the intellectual property (IP) rights of tribal art is **critical for ensuring that tribal communities are recognised and rewarded** for their cultural contributions. Establishment and enforcement of IP rights is **essential to prevent unauthorised use and appropriation** of tribal designs, motifs, and techniques.

For ex- Introduction of geographical indication GI tags for tribal arts, such as **Warli paintings**, has proven to be an effective measure in safeguarding these cultural expressions

2. Promotion of Ethical Tourism- Ethical tourism encourages interactions that are sensitive to the cultural traditions and ecological realities of tribal communities. It **educates tourists about the rich cultural tapestry of the tribes** and **also create economic opportunities that benefit the tribal communities directly.**

3. Establishment of Living Museums- Living museums offer interactive experiences that allow visitors to engage directly with cultural practices and daily life activities of tribal communities. These museums provide a **unique opportunity for cultural education and appreciation**, bridging the gap between the past and the present.

For ex- Dakshinachitra in Tamil Nadu and the Tribal Museum in Madhya Pradesh illustrate the successful implementation of living museums.

4. Cultural exchange Programs- International cultural exchange programs, exhibitions, and collaborations can bring tribal art to a broader audience. This would ensure **that these practices are not only sustained financially** but are also appreciated as essential elements of the global cultural mosaic.

Read More- [The Hindu](#)

UPSC Syllabus- GS 1- Indian art and architecture

Stampede Disaster and its Management in India- Explained Pointwise

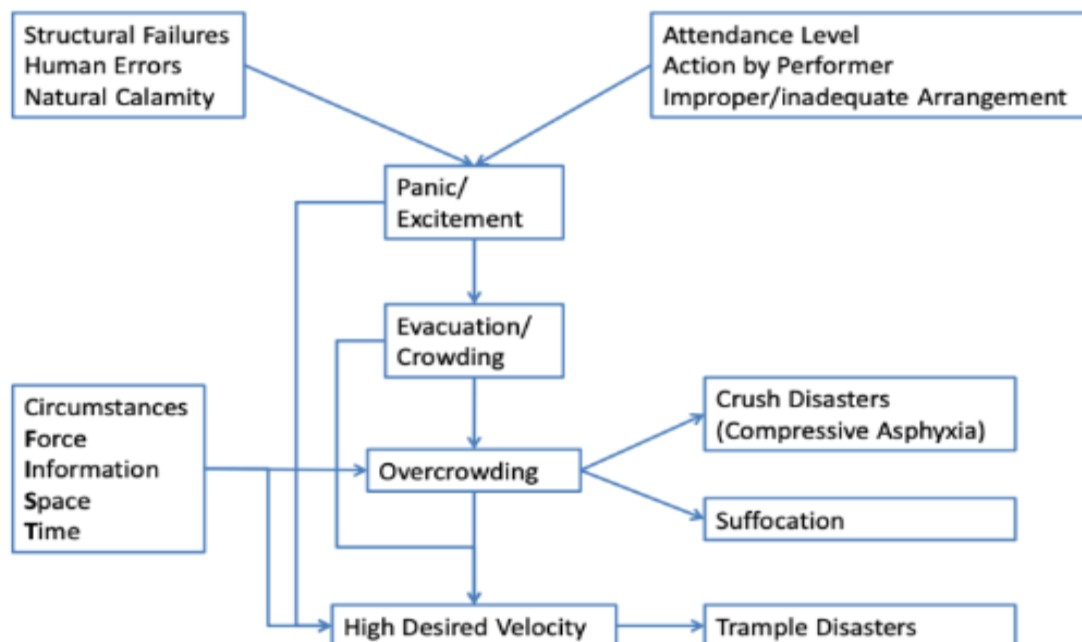
In the **recent stampede during a religious gathering** in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras district on July 2, at least 121 people (almost all women) lost their lives. This is not the first time when a large number of people have lost their lives in a stampede at a religious gathering. **79% of all stampedes in India from 1954-2012** have taken place in **religious mass gatherings.**

This calls for a detailed look into the issue of Stampede Disaster and the measures needed to be taken to manage it.

What is stampede? What are the infamous stampede cases in India?

Stampede- Stampede is the **disruption of the orderly movement of crowds** which leads to injuries and fatalities. This **impulsive mass movement of crowd** often takes place in response to a **perceived danger, loss of physical space** or a **will to attain something as gratifying.**

Process of a Stampede



Source- NDMA Disaster Guidelines

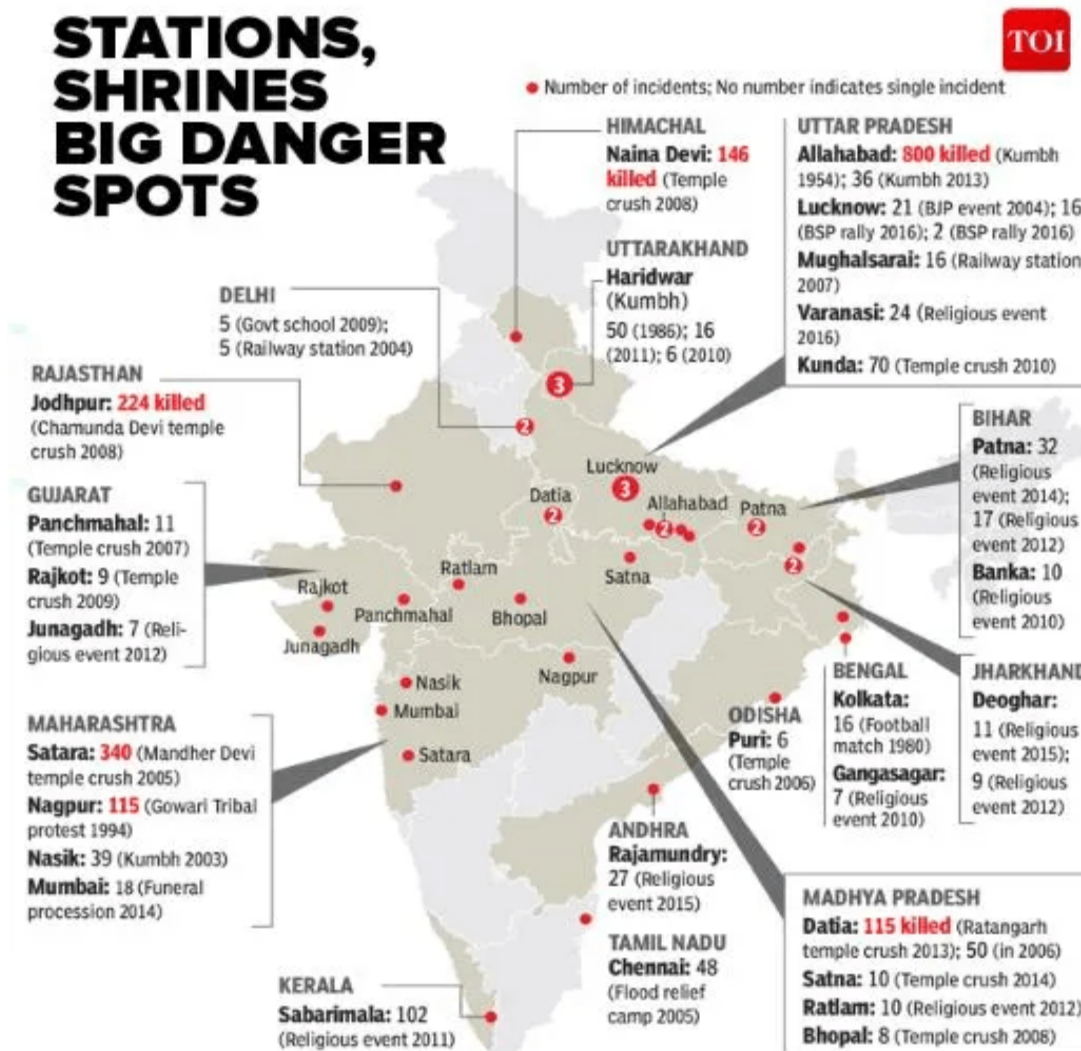
Some Notable Deadly Stampede Disasters in India

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| Allahabad Kumbh Mela Stampede (1954) | It is the most fatal Kumbh Mela stampede in history. It resulted in the loss of around 800 lives . |
| Wai Stampede (2005) | The stampede at the Mandhardevi temple in Maharashtra's Satara district resulted in the death of 340 people . |
| Naina Devi Temple Stampede (2008) | Rumors of landslide started the stampede at the Naina Devi Temple in 2008 . It resulted in the death of at least 145 people which included dozens of women and children. |
| Jodhpur Temple Stampede (2008) | The stampede at the Chamunda Devi Temple resulted in the death of at least 168 people . |
| Allahabad Railway Stampede (2013) | Last-minute change in the platform for the pilgrims who had gathered for the Khumbh Mela, created panic and resulted in a stampede. It led to the loss of around 36 lives . |
| Mumbai pedestrian bridge Stampede (2017) | The stampede at the crowded Pedestrian Bridge connecting the two Mumbai railway stations resulted in the death of 22 people and injured 32. |
| Mata Vaishnav Devi shrine (2022) | The Stampede at the Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine resulted in the death 22 people and injured 32. |

Stampede Statistics In India

According to the **National Crime Records Bureau figures**, from 2000 to 2013, **almost 2,000 people died in stampedes in India**.

A 2013 study published by International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction (IJDRR) points out that **religious gathering and pilgrimages have been venues for 79% of the stampedes in India**.



Source- TOI

What are the major causes of Stampedes in India?

Structural Causes

The stampedes occur due to structural and design failures in the buildings, bridges etc. This includes the following causes-

- Structural collapse of makeshift bridges, railings, temporary structures
- Improper and unauthorised built structures
- Railings of the bridge collapsing due to panic triggered by rumours
- Difficult terrain (famous religious sites built on top of hills that are difficult to access)
- Narrow streets with very few entry/exits
- Absence of emergency exits

Fire/Electricity causes

This includes the following causes-

- Fire in a makeshift facility or a shop, and illegal and unauthorised structure
- Non-availability of fire extinguishers in working condition

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- (c) **Building and fire code violations**, unauthorized fireworks in enclosed places
- (d) **Electricity supply failure creating panic** and triggering a sudden exodus
- (e) **Illegal electric connections** and faulty electric equipment

Crowd Behaviour

The stampedes are either triggered or made worse by panic. **Crowd behaviour plays an important role in it.** Following are some crowd behaviour causes-

- (a) Craze- In large group settings, this “craze” percolates to every member and can make them act in detriment to their own individual interests. **For ex-** One of the major causes **behind the recent Hathras Stampede** has been the rush to touch the preacher’s feet and trying to collect soil from where he walked.
- (b) Crowds **forcing to entrance/exits** a venue after the start/closing time
- (c) **Rush during distribution** of disaster relief supplies
- (d) A **large** (much more than expected) **anxious and competitive crowd** gathering at promotional events
- (f) **Unruly and irresponsible** crowd behaviour
- (g) **Last minute change in platform for train arrival/departure** resulting in lots of movements within short period of time

Security Issues

This includes:

(a) Security Personnel

- (i) **Under deployment of security staff** and deployment of untrained staff
- (ii) **Lack of adequate rehearsals** and briefing of security personnel on crowd control
- (iii) **Lack of adequate scientific planning** in making police arrangement to deal with crowd with proper sectoral deployment, and lack of proper wireless deployment
- (iv) **Ineptitude of the police** in effectively managing the crowd and enforcing prohibitory orders

(b) Surveillance

- (i) **Lack of adequate observation towers** with proper wireless communication to monitor and regulate crowd
- (ii) **Lack of adequate CCTV surveillance** of the crowd
- (iii) **Absence of public announcement systems** or effective wireless system with the police;

(c) Infrastructure

- (i) **Lack of adequate road opening parties** to secure the routes
- (ii) **Lack of adequate metal detectors** and frisking of pilgrims entering the pilgrimage area or persons entering the gathering area

Lack of Coordination between Stakeholders

This includes the following issues-

- (a) **Coordination gap between agencies** (e.g. Police and District Magistrate; PWD, Fire Service, Forest officials, Revenue officials, Medical officers etc.)
- (b) **Poor infrastructure** (Plans on paper but no implementation due to lack of funds, resources, or will)
- (c) **Inadequate water, medical assistance, public transport/parking facilities**
- (d) **Communication delays**
- (e) **Vacant/late/delayed posting** of key personnel

What are the Impact of these Stampedes?

Stampedes at religious gatherings in India have significant impacts on local communities. Mentioned below are some of the major impacts.

1. Trauma and Loss- Witnessing a stampede tragedy and the resultant deaths and injuries causes immense trauma, **especially for those who lost loved ones**. **For ex-** Deadly stampede killing 121 people in Hathras.

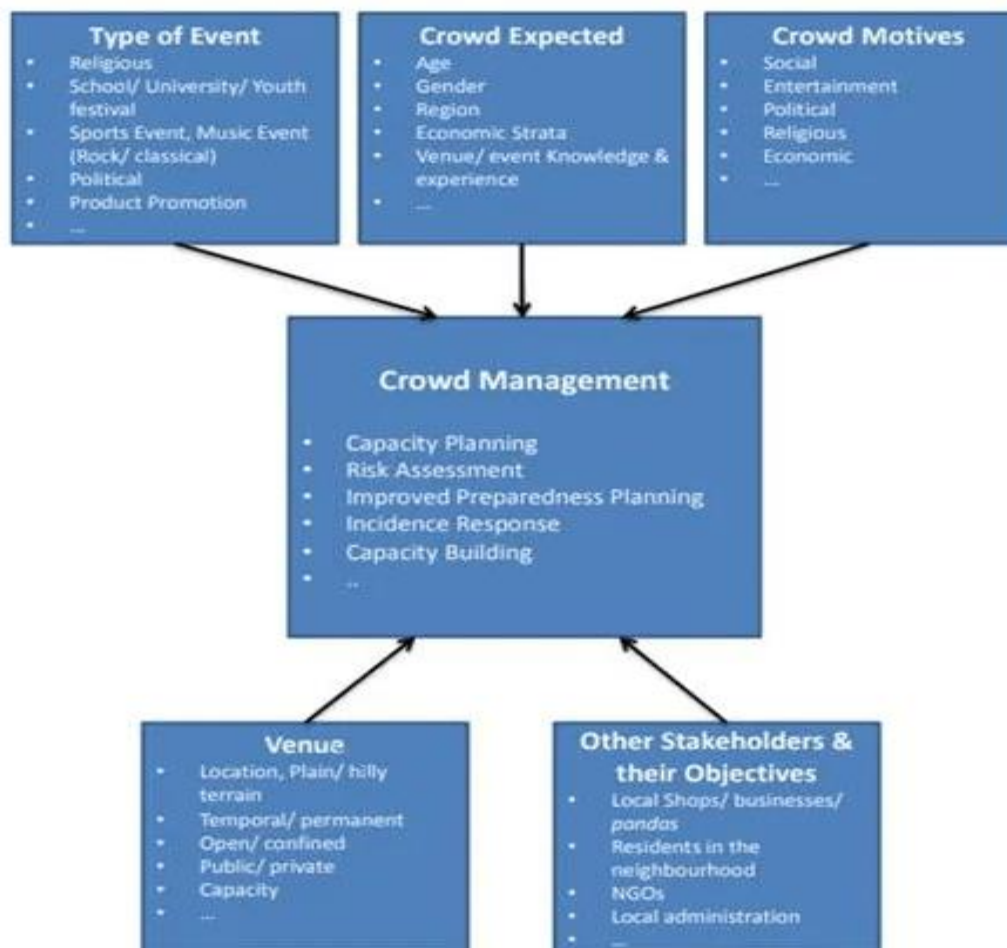
2. Economic Hardship- The majority of victims in **such stampedes come from lower castes and poor backgrounds**. Their deaths **leave families without primary breadwinners**, causing economic hardship in the community. Also the **cost of funerals and medical expenses** further strain already limited resources.

3. Erosion of Trust- Repeated stampedes at Indian religious festivals due to similar failures further **undermine faith in the ability of organizers to keep devotees safe**. **For ex-** **Gross negligence** like **poor planning**, with **insufficient exits, inadequate crowd control**, and **lack of emergency preparedness**, by organizers and authorities erodes trust in religious institutions.

4. Loss of Social and Human Capital- **Many young children and women are the victims** of these stampede tragedies. This leads to **loss of the productive social and human capital** of the country.

What are the NDMA Guidelines for the prevention of Stampedes in India?

In view of the recurring stampedes at places of mass gathering, including religious places, and typically ad-hoc responses to those, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has prepared '**Suggestive Framework for Preparation of Crowd Management Plan for Events/Venues of Mass Gathering**'.



Source- NDMA

| | |
|---|--|
| Understanding venue, visitors and stakeholders | It requires understanding of- a. Type of event (such as religious, schools/ university, sports event, music event, political event) b. Expected Crowd (age, gender, economic strata) c. Crowd Motives (such as social, academic, religious, entertainment, economic etc.) d. Venue (location, topography of area, temporal or permanent, open or closed) e. Role of other stake holders (such as NGOs, neighbours of event venue, local administrators etc.) |
| Crowd Handling | a. Proper regulation of Traffic around the mass gathering venues. b. A route map for venues along with emergency exits route maps . c. Barricade facility to control the movement of crowd queues. d. Snake line approach should be followed in case large crowd queues e. The organizers of crowded events/venue managers should discourage general admissions and have plans to handle VIP visitors . |
| Safety and Security | a. The venue Organisers should ensure authorised use of electricity, use of fire safety extinguishers as per the safety guidelines. b. Use of CCTV cameras to monitor crowds and use of mini UAV in case of big crowd spread. |
| Communication | A public address system , with loudspeakers installed at all crowded points, to communicate with the crowds. |
| Medical and Emergency care | Medical first-aid rooms and emergency operations centres to handle post-disaster emergencies should be set up |
| Role of Event Managers | The event organizers and venue managers should develop, implement, review and revise the disaster management plan in coordination with others including local administration and police. |
| Role of Civil society | Event/venue managers should involve NGOs and civil defence in traffic control, people flow control, medical assistance, sanitation and mobilization of local resources in case of disaster. |
| Role of police | The police should actively participate in venue assessment and preparedness checks and guide crowd and traffic movements . |
| Role of Media | (a) Educational- Media can educate public about the possible disaster threats, ways to prevent them and how to be better prepared in the face of a disaster (b) Critical- Media can critically evaluate the disaster management plans to highlight the gaps for correction; |
| Capacity Building | Capacity building, conduction of drills, periodic assessment of training of security personnel, police is essential to prevent crowd disasters |

Use of ICT in Stampede Management

| ICT for Disaster mitigation and Prevention | ICT in Disaster response and relief |
|---|--|
| Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GIS, Remote Sensing • Radio, Television, telephone • SMS, UMS, Cell Broadcasting, Internet/Social Media • RFID • Space based sensors and balloons | Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PA system, SMS, UMS, Cell Broadcasting, Inter-operability of mobile service providers • Emergency lighting, alarms • RFID Tags • Registration database software • Space based sensors and balloons |
| Typical Usage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early warning system, Potential Risks, Vulnerabilities • Registration of visitors, Virtual Queues, RFID • Information dissemination • To regulate flow of visitors • Prepositioning of resources | Typical Usage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure rumours do not spread • Registering missing persons • Search and rescue • Keeping track of relief organizations, Camps of displaced persons • Insurance processing • Resource inventory management |

Source- NDMA Guidelines for ICT use in Disaster Management

What are the Challenges in the implementation of these Guidelines?

- 1. Lack of adoption and implementation-** The state governments and local authorities **have not yet properly implemented the NDMA guidelines** on crowd management.
- 2. Rapidly rising population-** With rising population and rapid urbanization, urban areas have become more susceptible along with places of frequent mass gatherings like **temples**.
- 3. Greater tolerance to crowd-** According to several psychologists, there is very high tolerance for crowded places in India, because **Indians don't feel uncomfortable until it's very packed**. Hence, **large-scale events in India become more susceptible to stampedes** because of a greater tolerance for high-density crowds.
- 4. Governance and accountability-** Agencies responsible for issuing permissions/ licences for mass gatherings, events **often fail to follow the guidelines and the requirements**. Further, there is lack of accountability on part of the authorities.

What Should be the Way Forward?

- 1. Legislation, Rules and Regulations for Stampedes-** **Supreme Court in Uphaar Cinema Tragedy** observed that there is a **need for a comprehensive legislation dealing with tortuous liability of the State**.
- 2. Specialisation and Professionalism-** India needs to **emphasize effective communication, sensitive on-ground interventions, specialized personnel training, safety insurance, online customer feedback system, transparency, statutory compliances and professionalism**, to maintain the decorum of the crowd in huge events.
- 3. Use of technology-** Latest technology such as **CCTV surveillance with HD IP cameras with VMS** (Video Management Software), **mobile control room, drones for roof level surveillance** and public address system, **face recognition among crowds and robotic support** should be deployed extensively in crowded places.

4. Capacity Evaluation- There should be **proper evaluation of the capacity of a location or structure** before holding mass gatherings. Existing infrastructural problem should be addressed to avoid mishaps.

5. Crowd Behaviour Management- Every mass event must have a **public address system** for the officials to **stop rumours** from getting out of hand, **calm panicking crowds**, and **help people exit in a systematic manner**.

6. Penalties- **Stricter penalties, revocation of licenses for construction/fire safety violations, random checks and inspections**, must be adopted ensure effective compliance.

7. Engaging Civil Society- The Local Civilian Organisations like NGOs **must be actively engaged in the event for capacity building of event managers** etc, for easy mobilization of local resources, better preparedness and traffic control.

8. Learning from Global Best Practices- The learnings from Global Best Practices in Crowd Management must be adopted for effective management of Stampedes in India. **For ex- Crowd management during Haj Pilgrimage in Makkah.**

Read More- [The Indian Express](#)

UPSC Syllabus- GS 3 Disaster Management

[Kurukshehra June 2024 Summary] Agricultural Festivals- Integral Part of Tribal Culture- Explained Pointwise

The agricultural festivals form an **integral Part of Tribal Culture**. Various agricultural activities like **sowing, caring of crops, harvesting** are **dependent on nature and weather**. Any adversity in weather conditions pose a big challenge to ancient agrarian societies for their survival and sustenance. Hence, **to keep their crops safe from any natural calamity**, the tribals have started worshipping the agricultural fields and related deities with songs, dances and various offerings.



Source- Kurukshehra

What are the various agricultural Festivals celebrated by the tribal communities in India?

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Most of the agricultural festivals are celebrated twice a year, one at the beginning of cultivation and the other at the time of harvest. These are community celebrations wherein deities are worshipped along with **traditional food, music, dances**. Nowadays, tourists are also warmly welcomed into these celebrations where they experience rich and varied tribal culture of India.

Tribal agricultural festivals are celebrated in each corner of the states. These begin from Jammu and Kashmir in the north to Kerala in the south, to Gujarat in the west, and Manipur in the east. Such festivals are also part of tribal culture in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Daman & Diu and Lakshadweep.

Some of the major Tribal Festivals in India

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Bhagoria Tribal Festival | Bhagoria Haat or Bhagoria tribal festival is celebrated by Bhils and Bhilalas tribes during the month of March every year. The festival celebrates completion of harvests in fields. |
| Karma or Karam Festival | Karma or Karam is a festival largely celebrated among tribes of Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Bihar, and Assam. It is dedicated to the worship of Karam-Lord to seek his blessings for good harvest and health. |
| Hareli | Hareli is a very popular tribal festival of Chhatisgarh dedicated to crop harvests, trees and greenery. It is celebrated mainly by Gond tribe with great pomp and show on the new moon day in the month 'Shravan' (July-August). The Goddess 'Kutki Dai' is worshipped during this festival to seek blessings for good monsoon and bumper crops. |
| Redgram Week Festival | Savara and Jatapu tribals celebrate Makar Sankranti as traditional ' Redgram Week Festival ' with a set of their own rituals and customs. Newly harvested crop of redgram is first offered to God with prayers, and then cooked for family. |
| Ali-Aye-Ligang and Porag | In Assam, Mising is the major tribe which celebrates two major agricultural festivals namely Ali-Aye-Ligang and Porag . Ali-Aye-Ligang marks the beginning of cultivation while Porag is a post-harvest festival . |
| Aelong Festival | Nagaland consists of 17 tribe dwelling communities. They celebrate various agricultural activities as festivals such as the sowing of seeds, cleaning of fields after sowing, and completion of harvest . Aelong festival is celebrated after sowing of new seeds in the fields to seek divine blessings for bumper harvest. |
| Myoko | Myoko is one of the most important festivals of the Apatani tribe In Arunachal Pradesh. This festival reinforces their age-old belief that by performing the rituals they can ensure fertility, both in the fields and its people . |
| Losoong or Noomsong | Losoong or Noomsong festival celebrates the end of reaping season of crops . It also marks Sikkimese new year. |

What is the significance of agricultural festivals celebrated by tribal Communities in India?

The agricultural festivals celebrated by the tribal communities in India are significant for several reasons:

- 1. Celebration marking the end of agricultural cycle-** Harvest festivals **commemorate the end of the agricultural cycle** and **the beginning of a new year**.
- 2. Expression of gratitude for a bountiful harvest-** These festivals are a way to **recognize the hard work and labor** involved in growing crops and to give thanks for the abundance of the season.

3. Means of community celebration- The tribal community is a close knit community. These festivals help the people come together to celebrate the end of the growing season. This provides an important **social and cultural bonding experience**.

4. Religious and spiritual origins- Many agricultural festivals are linked to ancient agricultural rituals or celebrations of deities associated with agriculture. **For ex-** The Goddess 'Kutki Dai' is worshipped during the **Hareli festival** to seek **blessings for good monsoon and bumper crops**.

5. Reflective of contemporary values and needs- The celebration of harvest festivals **underscore the importance of sustainability and environmental protection** for prosperous and productive agriculture.

What are the challenges/ threats to the tribal culture of agricultural festivals?

1. Displacement, Marginalization, and Assimilation of Tribal Communities- Tribal communities have been facing challenges such as displacement, marginalization, and assimilation. These have **threatened the very existence of their cultural heritage** like **agricultural festivals**.

2. Shifting Preferences and Globalization- Rise in globalisation and shifting of preferences of the tribal communities, is threatening the tribal cultural practices. **For ex- The shift of the tribals to cities and loss of community bonding** due to increasing globalisation and interconnectedness.

3. Limited Exposure and Awareness- The lack of educational initiatives, museums, and galleries specializing in display of tribal cultural practices such as agricultural festivals.

4. Spread of monoculture crops and plantations- The spread of monoculture crops and plantations **under the garb of 'development'** as well as other displacement projects implemented without understanding the value of tribal farming. This **harms the self-reliance of tribal communities and the traditional systems** that sustain their festivals.

5. Climate Change- **Rising temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, and an increase in extreme weather events** threaten traditional food systems and make it more difficult for tribes to produce, harvest, and access the foods and ingredients needed for their festivals.

What Should be the way Forward?

1. Increased Government Support- The govt should provide **funding support for tribal research institutes to document** and study tribal agricultural practices and festivals.

Schemes like the **"Support of Tribal Research Institute"** and **"Tribal Festival, Research, Information and Mass Education"** should be strengthened to ensure quality research, training, and awareness generation about tribal cultures.

2. Community Engagement- Tribal communities **should be empowered to take a lead role in preserving their own cultural practices** through community-based conservation efforts.

Initiatives like the **Van Dhan Yojana** that form clusters of tribal self-help groups and producer companies **can help sustain traditional livelihoods** linked to agricultural festivals.

3. Protection of Intellectual Property- **Geographical Indication (GI) tags** should be used to protect and promote unique tribal products showcased at festivals.

4. Establishment of Living Museums- Living museums offer interactive experiences that allow visitors to engage directly with cultural practices and daily life activities of tribal communities. These museums provide a **unique opportunity for cultural education and appreciation**, bridging the gap between the past and the present.

5. Cultural exchange Programs- International cultural exchange programs, exhibitions, and collaborations can bring tribal art to a broader audience. This would ensure that these practices are not only **sustained financially** but are also appreciated as essential elements of the global cultural mosaic.

Read More- [The Hindu](#)

UPSC Syllabus- GS 1 Indian Art and Culture

RBI's Financial Stability Report- Key Highlights and Risks- Explained Pointwise

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recently released its **Financial Stability Report (FSR)** for June 2024. The report provides a **comprehensive assessment** of the **resilience and stability of India's financial system**. According to the report, **global financial system faces major risks** such as alarming levels of public debt, frequent geopolitical conflicts, and increasing economic and financial fragmentation. Amidst these global headwinds, the **Indian economy is exhibiting strength and resilience**, with strong macroeconomic fundamentals and buffers.

What is the Financial Stability Report released by the RBI?

Financial Stability Report-

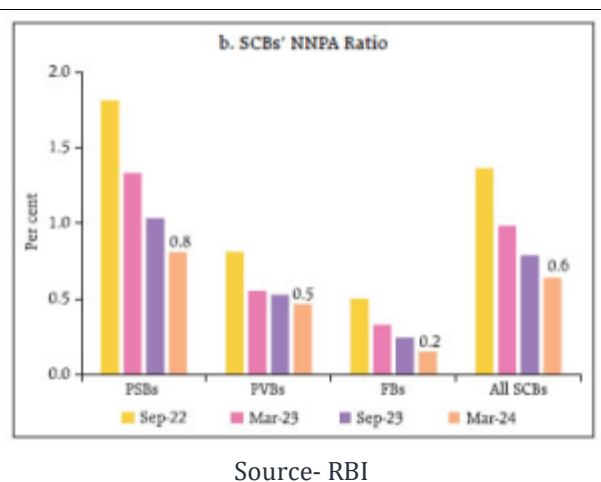
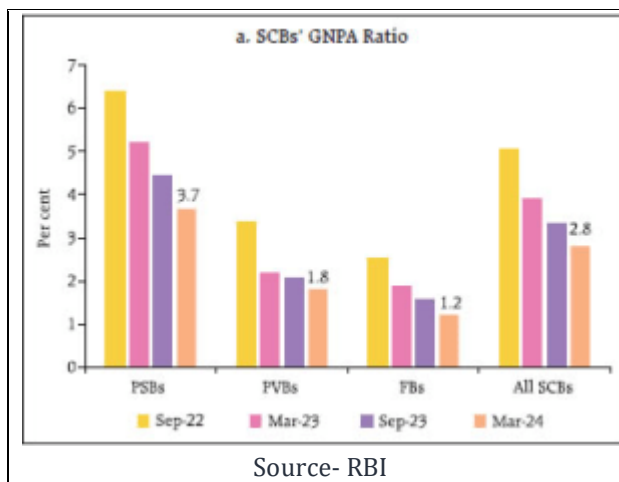
| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Released By | Financial Stability Report is released by the RBI . It is published twice a year . It reflects the collective assessment of the Sub-Committee of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC – headed by the Governor of RBI) on risks to financial stability and the resilience of the financial system. |
| Details of the Report | The Financial Stability Report details the state of financial stability in the country. It is prepared after taking into account the contributions from all the financial regulators. |
| Risk assessment | RBI conducts a Systemic Risk Survey (SRS) as part of the FSR. The opinions of the experts and market participants are taken to assess the financial system on five different types of risks . The risks which are evaluated are Global, Financial, Macroeconomic, Institutional, General . |

What are the key highlights of the Financial Stability Report?

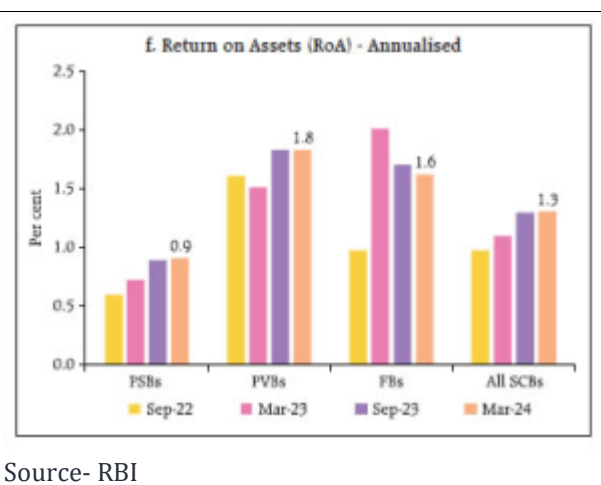
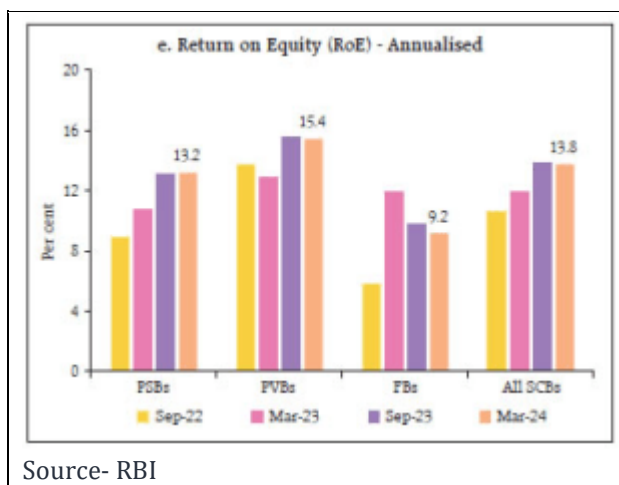
In this uncertain international economic and financial environment, **the Indian economy is exhibiting resilience** and remains the fastest growing major economy. Moreover, **India's contribution to global growth** is rising and currently stands at **18.5 per cent** in 2023-24.

1. Indian Banking System- The Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) have shown remarkable improvement in profitability and asset quality.

a. Improved Asset Quality- The asset quality of SCBs **recorded sustained improvement** and their **GNPA ratio moderated** to a **12-year low** of 2.8% in March 2024. The decline has been observed across public, private and foreign banks.

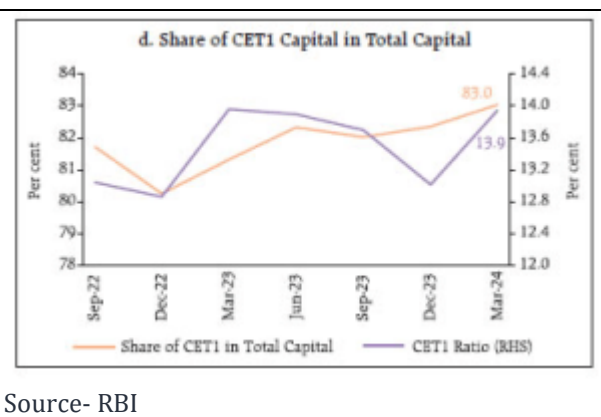


b. Increased Profitability- The Return on assets (RoA) and return on equity (RoE) have increased to **1.3%** and **13.8%**, respectively.



c. Capital Buffers- The **capital to risk-weighted assets ratio (CRAR)** and the **common equity tier 1 (CET1)** ratio stand at **16.8%** and **13.9%**, respectively. This is well above the regulatory minimum set by the RBI.

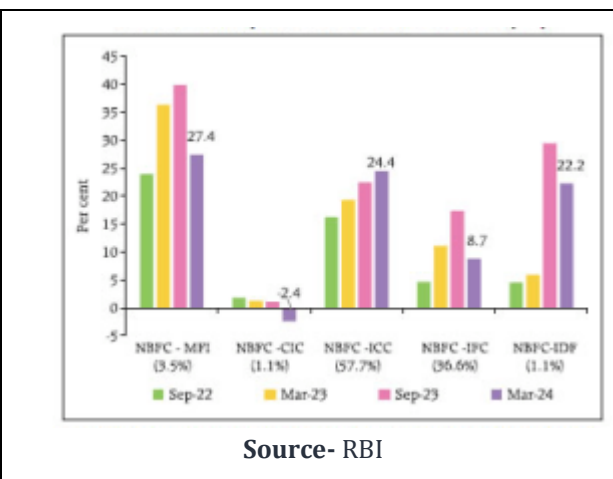
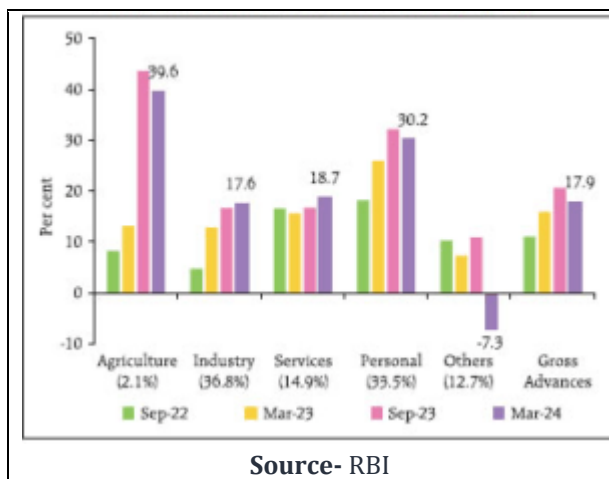
Source- RBI



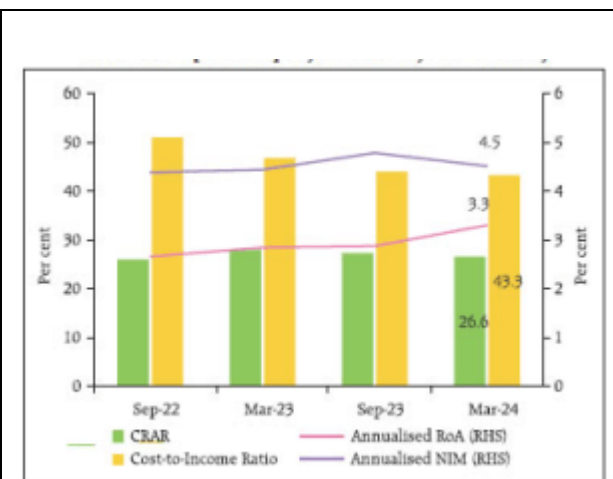
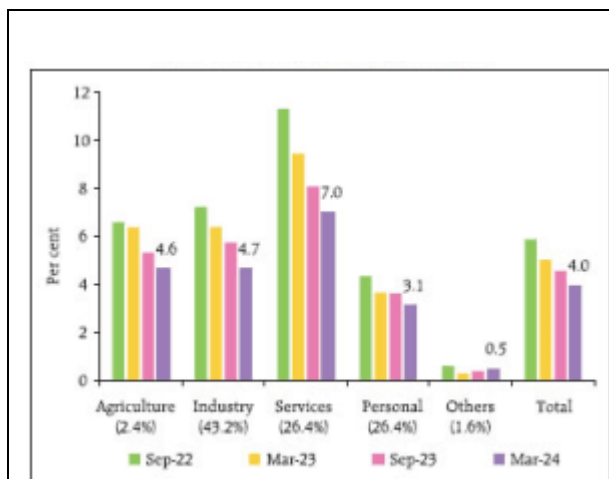
d. Positive Stress test results- The stress tests conducted to gauge the strength of bank balance sheets reveal that **SCBs are well capitalised** and **capable of absorbing macroeconomic shocks** even in the absence of any further capital infusion by stakeholders.

2. Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs)-

a. Robust Credit Growth- NBFCs maintained robust credit growth in 2023-24. Personal loan growth decelerated whereas growth in loans to industry and services accelerated. Credit growth in respect of the largest category of NBFC by activity, investment and credit companies (NBFC-ICCs), has been accelerating in the post-pandemic period

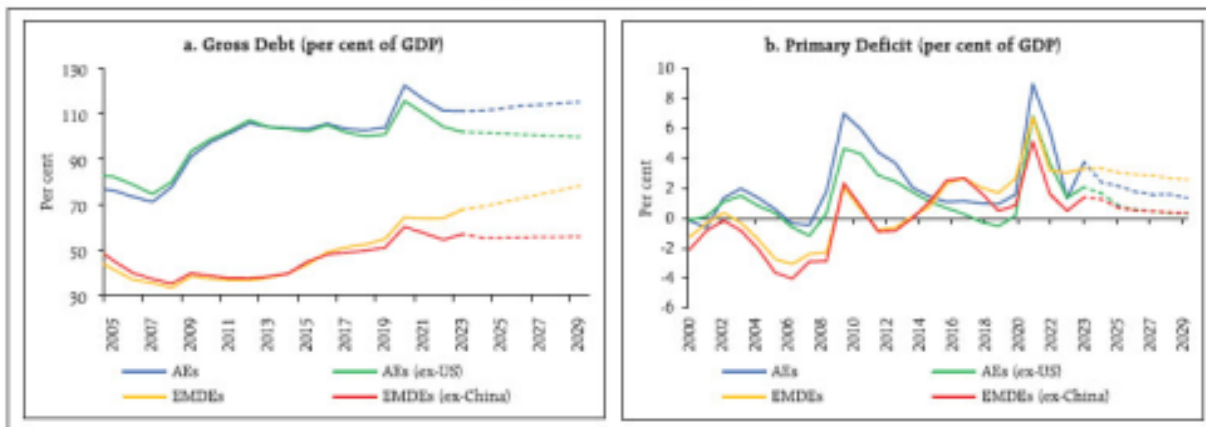


b. Healthy asset quality- The asset quality of the Non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) remains healthy. It has a CRAR at 26.6 per cent, GNPA ratio at 4.0 per cent and return on assets (RoA) at 3.3 per cent.



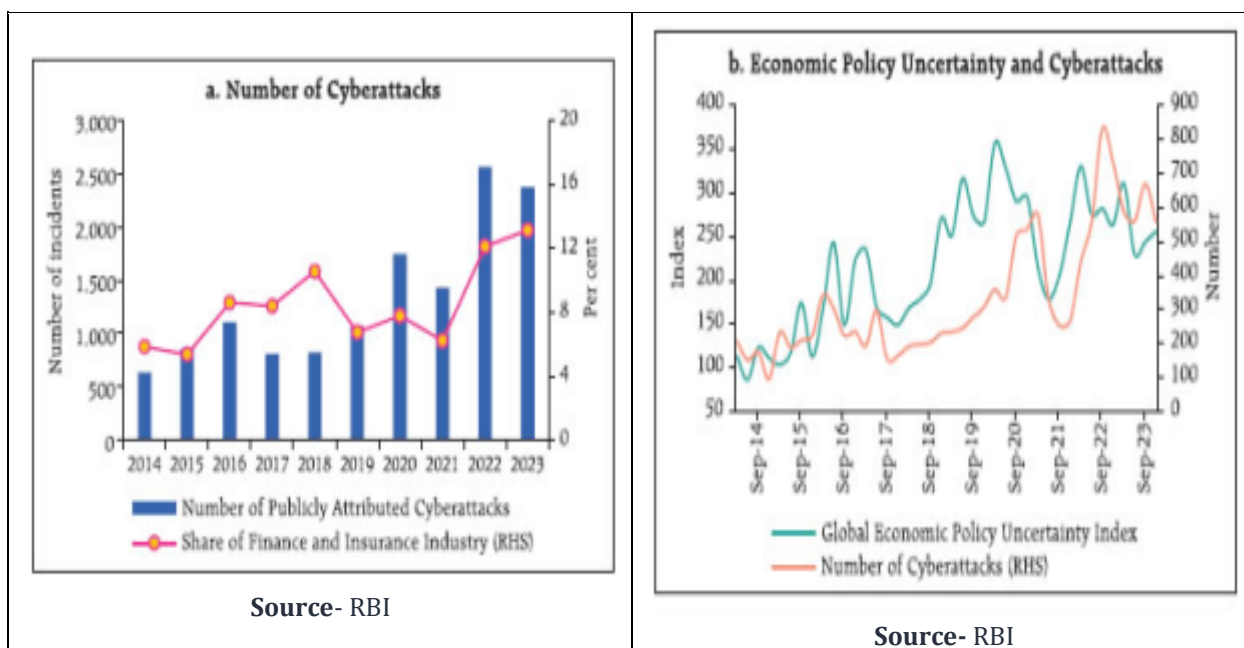
What are the risks highlighted by the Financial Stability Report?

1. Global Economic Headwinds- The global economy is facing heightened risks from prolonged geopolitical tensions, elevated public debt, and the slow progress in the last mile of disinflation. These headwinds pose challenges to the growth and stability of Indian Financial Sector.



Source- RBI

2. Increasing Cyber Risks- With increasing digitalisation of financial services, the recurring intensity of cyberattacks has dominated financial stability concerns. The number of publicly reported cyberattacks has been rising globally at an alarming pace, with the share of attacks in the financial domain increasing at a rapid pace.



Source- RBI

Source- RBI

3. Domestic Risks- Disruption of supply-chain conditions, rise in commodity prices, slack in the rural economy and uncertainties related to weather conditions are the prominent domestic risks to the Indian Financial Sector.

4. Interconnectedness and Contagion Risk- Due to increasing interconnectedness, the share of interbank exposures in the total assets of the banking system has reached a 3-year peak in September 2023. This makes the Indian financial system susceptible to contagion risk.

5. Risks in the Unsecured Retail Loan Segment- There has been a rapid growth in the unsecured retail loan segment. It has seen 23% growth in the last two years compared to 12-14% overall credit growth. This growth in the unsecured loan segment creates substantial risks for the stability of Indian financial sector.

What are the RBI initiatives for the stability of the Indian Financial System?

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The RBI has taken several measures to address the risks highlighted in the latest Financial Stability Report.

| | |
|--|--|
| Strengthening Banks' Internal Surveillance | The RBI has advised banks and NBFCs to strengthen their internal surveillance mechanisms to address the build-up of risks in the rapidly growing unsecured retail loan segment |
| Revised Prudential Framework on Stressed Assets | The revised prudential framework on stressed assets issued by the RBI on June 7, 2019 extends the stressed asset resolution framework . It also builds in incentives for early adoption of a resolution plan . |
| Large Exposures Framework | RBI introduced a revised large exposures framework (LEF) to address counterparty concentration risk in the banking sector. |
| Supervisory Mechanism for Banks | RBI has recently reviewed the structure of supervision in the context of the growing diversity, complexities and interconnectedness within the Indian financial sector. |
| Dedicated Cloud Facility | The RBI announced the establishment of a dedicated cloud facility for the financial sector in India to help banks and financial entities manage the ever-increasing volume of data . |

Conclusion

The **regulators**, including the Reserve Bank, **must remain committed** to promote innovation, financial inclusion, efficient payment and settlement systems, and a robust financial system.

All stakeholders must invest adequately to take full advantage of technological advancements like Artificial Intelligence. However, **they must also take steps to safeguard the security and soundness** of their systems.

Efforts must be made to **develop an ecosystem that puts the interests of the customer at the forefront**. Ultimately, the preservation of the trust of the customer is the cornerstone of safeguarding systemic stability.

[Read More- The Indian Express](#)

UPSC Syllabus- GS 3 Indian Economy

India-UK Relations- Significance, Challenges and The way ahead- Explained Pointwise

The **labour party** has emerged victorious in the **recently concluded elections in the UK**. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has **moved quickly to establish cordial relations with the new Labour Party Government in UK**. Indian Prime Minister has also **extended an invitation to the newly elected UK Prime Minister Mr Keir Starmer** to visit India. All eyes are now fixated on the future of the India-UK relations.

Changes expected in the India-UK relations under the Labour Party Govt

- a. Early conclusion of the India-UK FTA-** With the **new labour Party govt with a overwhelming majority** at the helm of affairs in UK, it is being expected that it will lead to **early conclusion of the the ambitious India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**. The **Labour Party manifesto** contained a **commitment** for the development of a **new strategic partnership** with India.
- b. Free and Open Indo-Pacific-** Labour plans to work with India to promote a "free and open Indo-Pacific" based on a **rules-based order**.
- c. Deepening of Cooperation across all sectors-** The labour party has committed to deepening cooperation with India in areas like **technology, climate change, and education**.
- d. Push for reforms of Multilateral Institutions-** The new labour party govt in the UK will push for multilateralism and reform of multilateral institutions like WTO.

e. Deepening of defence and security partnership- The India-UK defence and security partnership is likely to be strengthened, **building on recent momentum from the 2+2 mechanism**. The labour party has also changed its earlier stance on Kashmir, and now holds Kashmir as an internal Issue between India and Pakistan.



Source- The Indian Express

What has been the history of India-UK relations?

India and the United Kingdom share a long and complex history of relations that spans centuries.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Colonial Era (1858-1947) | After the rebellion in 1857, India came under direct British rule in 1858 . The British monarch became the Empress/Emperor of India . |
| After Independence | India decided to remain in the Commonwealth of Nations after becoming a Republic in 1950 |
| Phase of Strained Relationship | India-UK Relations were strained during the Cold War era. India pursued a non-aligned foreign policy while the UK was a NATO ally of the US . The UK opposed India's wars with Pakistan and India's nuclear tests. |
| Phase of Improvement | With the end of the Cold War and economic reforms in the 1990s, UK became more eager to build economic relations with India. This started a phase of improvement in India-UK relations . |
| Phase of Strategic Partnership | The India-UK relationship was upgraded to a Strategic Partnership in 2004 . Regular high-level visits and dialogues have strengthened cooperation in areas like trade, investment, defence, and people-to-people links. |

Today, India and the UK enjoy a modern partnership bound by strong historical ties and a shared membership in the Commonwealth. The two countries collaborate extensively across a wide range of areas and are **working to establish a comprehensive strategic partnership by 2030**.

What are the areas of Cooperation between India-UK?

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1. Geo Political Cooperation- UK supports India's proposal for **permanent membership** of the **UNSC**. The UK is also an **important interlocutor** for India in the EU, G8, G20 and global forums. India-UK political cooperation deepens through institutions and fora such as **India-UK Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Dialogue**, **India-UK JWG on Counter Terrorism** and **India-UK Foreign Office Consultations**.

2. Economic Cooperation- After the establishment of **Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO)** in 2005, the India-UK economic relations has further deepened.

a. The trade between India and the UK has "**more than doubled**" between 2007 and 2019. The India-UK bilateral trade has **increased to USD 20.36 billion** in 2022-23.

b. In 2022, India was the **UK's twelfth largest trading partner**, accounting for 2% of the UK's total trade.

c. India has invested in **120 projects and created over 5,000 jobs in the UK** to become their **second-largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI)** only behind the United States.

3. Defense and Security- India and the UK signed the **Defence and International Security Partnership (DISP)** in November 2015. It provides a **strategic roadmap and direction** to the **evolving India-UK Defence Relations**. At present, **some 70 companies in the UK supply goods for aircraft and related equipment** besides supporting platforms like the Jaguar, Mirage and Kiran aircraft.

4. Nuclear Cooperation- India and UK have signed a **Civil Nuclear Cooperation Declaration** in 2010 for the promotion and facilitation of cooperation in the nuclear field. In 2015, a **Nuclear Collaboration Agreement** was signed between the two countries as part of a comprehensive package of collaboration on energy and climate change.

5. Education- India and UK have been closely collaborating in the field of Education. This is evident in the following cases-

a. The launch of '**UKEIRI Mobility Programme: Study in India**' in 2019. Under this Britain's universities collaborate with Indian partners and send UK students to India.

b. UK is among the favoured destinations for Indian students to pursue higher education, with **around 50000 Indian students currently studying in UK**.

6. Health- India and UK have been **closely cooperating in the field of healthcare management**. The close collaboration and association are mentioned below-

a. The **successful partnership** between **Oxford University, AstraZeneca** and **SII on COVID-19 vaccine** has **demonstrated the potential of Indian and UK expertise** working together to solve international healthcare challenges.

b. The two sides are also working on pandemic preparedness, Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), digital health, Ayurveda and alternative medicines, as well as health worker mobility.

7. Climate and Environment- **India-UK Green Growth Equity Fund** has been established, which helps in the **mobilisation of institutional investments** in the renewable energy, waste management, electric mobility and environment sub-sectors in India.

8. Cultural Cooperation- India and UK have signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Cultural Cooperation in 2010. **The Nehru Centre (TNC)**, established in 1992 in London, is the **cultural outreach** of the **High Commission of India in UK**.

9. Diaspora Collaboration- Around **1.5 million people of Indian origin live** in Britain. Indian diaspora are making significant contributions to the British Society. **The representation of people from Indian Origin has increased in the British Parliament**. The outgoing PM of UK was also of the Indian Origin.

What is the Significance of the close India-UK relations?

1. Geo-Strategic- Deepening of engagement with UK **can help India to counter China's rise** in the Indian Ocean Region. The **UK can use India** as an alternative destination to China and its companies can invest in India as part of '**China plus one strategy**'. (**China Plus One Strategy-** It is the business strategy to avoid investing only in China and diversify business into other countries).

2. Geo-Political- A healthy relationship between the two is **imperative for enhancing cooperation** in the **Indo-Pacific, Afghanistan, UNSC, G20 and Commonwealth**. For ex- India welcoming the **UK's accession in the Indo-Pacific Ocean's Initiative** under the Maritime Security pillar.

3. Economic- The India-UK FTA will give a further boost to India's labour-intensive sectors, increase Indian service exports, and diversify Indian trade partners. The FTA will boost **UK's beverage and automobile industry** and **UK's investment in India**.

Read More- [India-UK FTA- Explained Pointwise](#)

4. Climate Change- The deepened India-UK relations **will be helpful to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement and to implement the Glasgow Climate Pact**. **For ex-** India and UK have agreed to work for **early operationalisation** of the **Global Green Grids-One Sun One World One Grid Initiative (OSOWOG)** under **ISA**.

What are the Challenges in the relations?

1. Delay in the conclusion of India-UK FTA- The India-UK FTA which will be **win-win situation for both India and UK**, has been delayed and has missed several deadlines. The deal **has missed** the '**Diwali Deadline**' which was set last year.

2. Different stands on Russia Ukraine conflict- The U.K **has openly criticized** the Russian invasion while the same has not yet been done by India. This may **emerge as a potential bottleneck in future**.

3. UK's closeness to Pakistan and China- The **UK's ties with Pakistan** complicate the process of building a closer defence and security with India. U.K. governments have simultaneously supplied India and Pakistan with weapons or curbed weapons exports.

UK and India have also **sometimes diverged** in their **positions towards China's role** in the Indian Ocean. While India has been concerned with **China's growing influence** in the Indo-Pacific region through the **Belt and Road Initiative project**, the UK by contrast has engaged **substantially with Belt and Road**.

4. Khalistan Issue- The allegations regarding **UK harbouring the issues surrounding Khalistan and Sikh separatism** remain as a formidable challenge for deepening of India-UK relations.

5. Slow progress in deepening of Defence Ties- The UK has been slow to adapt to the Indian government's increasingly preferred method of acquisition- through **Government-to-Government (G2G)** agreements or Foreign Military Sales (FMS) for deals.

6. Extradition Rigidities- Both the countries have an extradition treaty between them. However, **speedy expedition is still a far-fetched dream**. India has not been able to extradite Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi and other fugitives from London.

7. Illegal Migrants- There are more than 1 lakh of illegal Indian immigrants in the UK. The UK government has put pressure to send them back but both the countries have not yet signed the migration and mobility agreement.

8. Anti-colonial resentment against Britain- India still suffers from the legacy of Partition like the **problem with Pakistan** and **the issue of Kashmir**.

What Should be the Way Forward?

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- 1. Early materialization of the proposed FTA-** The early finalisation of the FTA under the new UK government, will be a **stepping stone** to a comprehensive agreement that **will help revive investments and jobs**.
- 2. Jointly reviving multilateralism and multilateral institutions-** India and UK must shed their differences in the stand in the **multilateral bodies** like **WTO** and **UNFCCC**. UK government should stand with the causes of the underdeveloped and developing countries instead of siding with the developed countries.
- 3. Agreement on “migration and mobility”-** India and Britain should explore an agreement on “migration and mobility” to **facilitate the legal movement of Indians into Britain**.
- 4. Streamlining the extradition process-** UK should live up to its commitment to the extradition of Indian fugitives. **For ex- Nirav Modi should be extradited** as his extradition process is almost completed.
- 5. Deeper defence and security engagement-** The UK and India’s convergence of interests in the Indian Ocean region offers an important opportunity to increase engagement on defence and security. Hence, both nations **should promote standards of transparency** and **sustainability for infrastructure projects** in the **Indian Ocean region**.
- 6. Better balancing of relations-** The UK should take care for ensuring **stronger ties with China and Pakistan** are **not at the expense of a deeper partnership with India**. This will improve India UK relations further.

Read More- [Livemint](#)

UPSC Syllabus- GS 2- India’s relation with the developed nations

Indus Water Treaty- Significance and Concerns-Explained Pointwise

Indus Water Treaty **negotiated in 1960** between India and Pakistan is a **landmark transboundary water-sharing mechanism**. However, disagreements have persisted among both India and Pakistan over the treaty.

India had called for amendments in the treaty last year due to its **dissatisfaction over the dispute resolution process**, blaming Pakistan’s continued ‘**intransigence**’ in implementing the treaty. Pakistan has also raised objections regarding India’s construction of **Kishenganga** and **Ratle** hydroelectric projects.

This calls for an analysis of the provisions of the Indus Water treaty, the associated concerns and the Way Forward to address these concerns.

INDUS WATER TREATY

Key Provisions

| | |
|---|--|
| River Water Distribution | Eastern Rivers- Ravi, Sutlej, and Beas with India. Western Rivers- Chenab, Indus and Jhelum with Pakistan India's Share- 20% and Pakistan's Share- 80% |
| Western River Water utilization permitted for India | Non Consumptive Use of Western River Water like construction of Run of River Hydroelectric Plants Permitted to India. |
| Dispute Resolution Mechanism | 3 stage Dispute Resolution Mechanism Stage 1- Permanent Commission Stage 2- Neutral Expert (NE) Stage 3- Court of Arbitration |

Significance of the Treaty

- Successful Model-** **Only cross border water sharing treaty** between two nations in Asia. Treaty between two rivals.
- Generous towards lower riparian state-** Pakistan's share is about **90% greater** than Mexico's share in the **1944 treaty with US**.
- Passed the Crisis test-** The Permanent Commission has met even during the **1965 and 1971 wars**.

Concerns with the Treaty

India's Concerns

- Dispute over India's Hydroelectric Projects-** Pakistan has raised objections on **Ratle and Kishanganga Projects**.
- Climate Change Impact-** Indus River System is the **most water stressed** according to NASA.
- Loss to Indian States in the Indus Basin-** J&K and Punjab Complain of million dollar losses

Pakistan's Concerns

- Lower Riparian Concerns-** infrastructure developments will **reduce downstream flows**
- Accusations of 'Water Terrorism'-** Pakistan has raised objections regarding the **Shahpurkandi barrage project**.

Way Forward

- Integration of Ecological Perspectives and Recognition of Climate Change Impacts.**
- Enhanced Water Data-Sharing**
- Incorporation of International Legal Standards like 1997 UN Watercourses Convention and 2004 Berlin Rules on Water Resources for sustainable water use**
- Pro activeness on India's Part in utilization of allocated water share like desilting of canals and run-off river hydroelectric plants.**

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What is the History behind the introduction of the Indus Water Treaty? What are its main provisions?

History Behind the Indus Water Treaty

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Pre Independence | Preceding partition , the six rivers of the Indus basin , which originated in the Himalayas/Tibet (Indus, Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, Jhelum and Chenab) was a common network, for both India and Pakistan. |
| At the Time of Partition | The partition of India raised questions about the distribution of water between the two nations . Since the rivers flowed from India, Pakistan felt threatened by the prospect of control of river waters by India. |
| Inter-Dominion accord (May 4, 1948) | The Inter-Dominion accord of May 4, 1948 laid out that India would release enough water to Pakistan in return for annual payments (by Pakistan). However, |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| | the problems of this arrangement were soon realized and it was considered necessary to find an alternative solution. |
| Indus Water Treaty 1960 | India and Pakistan signed the Indus Water Treaty with the intervention of the World Bank in 1960. Precise details were laid out regarding the way in which the waters would be distributed. |

Main Provisions of the Indus Water Treaty

| | |
|--|--|
| Eastern Rivers with India | Under the Indus treaty, all the waters of 3 eastern rivers namely Ravi, Sutlej, and Beas (with a mean annual flow of 33 Million Acre-feet (MAF)) were allocated to India for exclusive use. |
| Western Rivers with Pakistan | Pakistan gets control of 3 Western Rivers (Chenab, Indus and Jhelum) with a mean annual flow of 80 Million Acre-feet (MAF) . |
| Western River Water utilization permitted for India | The Indus River treaty allows India to utilize the waters of Western Rivers for a. Limited irrigation use b. Non-consumptive use - For applications such as power generation, navigation etc. This, allows India to generate hydroelectricity through a run-of-the-river projects (without the storage of waters) on the western rivers, subject to specific criteria for design and operation. c. Storage level permitted - India can store up to 3.75 MAF of water of the Western Rivers for conservation and flood storage purposes. |
| Water Division Ratio | The Indus Water treaty gives India 20% of the water from the Indus River System and the rest 80% of the water to Pakistan. |
| Dispute Resolution Mechanism | The Indus Water Treaty provides a three step dispute resolution mechanism . a. Permanent Commission - The disputes of the parties can be resolved at the Permanent Commission , or can also be taken up at the inter-government level . b. Neutral Expert (NE) - In case of unresolved questions or ' differences ' between the countries on water-sharing, such as technical differences , either side can approach the World Bank to appoint a Neutral Expert (NE) to come to a decision. c. Court of Arbitration - If either party is not satisfied with the Neutral Expert's decision or in case of 'disputes' in the interpretation and extent of the treaty , matters can be referred to a Court of Arbitration. |

What has been the significance of the Indus Water Treaty?

The Indus Waters Treaty has been **largely successful in maintaining water cooperation** between India and Pakistan for over 60 years, despite periods of political tensions and conflict between the two countries.

- 1. Only cross border water sharing treaty in Asia**- The Indus water Treaty is the **only cross border water sharing treaty** between two nations in Asia.
- 2. Generous towards lower riparian state**- It is the only water pact that compels an upper riparian state to defer to the interests of a downstream state. **Pakistan** has been given **80% share** in the river water system. This is **90 times greater volume of water** than **Mexico's share under a 1944 pact** with the US.
- 3. Passed the Crisis test**- The **Permanent Commission** set up as a part of the Dispute Resolution Mechanism under the treaty **has met even during the 1965 and 1971 wars** between India and Pakistan.

4. India's Generosity- India's respect for the **values trans-boundary river treaty** is also a major factor behind the successful functioning of the treaty. India chose not to invoke the **Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties**, to withdraw from the Indus Water Treaty in the face of terror attacks like **Indian Parliament** in 2001, **Mumbai** in 2008, **Uri** in 2016 and **Pulwama** in 2019.

5. Successful Model- The Indus Water Treaty serves as a successful model of cooperation between two rival countries.

What are the concerns with the Indus Water Treaty?

India's Concerns

1. Most Generous treaty- Experts have termed this the **most generous water sharing** treaty. The treaty has resulted in unequal sharing of the waters with **80% allotment to Pakistan**. It is the **only water-sharing pact in the world** that **compels upper riparian State** to defer to the interests of the downstream State.

2. Prevents India from building any storage systems on Western Rivers- Despite the Indus water treaty providing for **certain exceptional circumstances** for **building storage systems on Western Flowing Rivers**, Pakistan has deliberately stopped such efforts. The extensively technical nature of the treaty allows Pakistan to stall legitimate Indian Projects.

3. Dispute over India's Hydroelectric Projects- In recent times disputes over the **Kishenganga** and **Ratle hydroelectric projects** have intensified, with **Pakistan** directly seeking arbitration at The Hague, **bypassing treaty-compliant proceedings**.

4. Climate Change Impact- The Indus basin, which has been **ranked as the world's second most over-stressed aquifer by NASA in 2015**, has been severely **affected by climate change**. India seeks renegotiation and amendments to the treaty for sustaining its burgeoning population.

5. Loss to Indian States in the Indus Basin- There have been substantial economic losses to the Indian States in the Indus River Basin. **For ex- According to J&K Govt's hired consultant report, J&K has been suffering economic losses to the tune of hundred of millions annually** due to the Indus Water Treaty.

Pakistan's Concerns

1. Lower Riparian Concerns- As a lower riparian state, **Pakistan fears infrastructure developments** will **reduce downstream flows**.

2. Accusations of 'Water Terrorism'- Pakistan accused India of "water terrorism" for the **Shahpurkandi barrage project**, despite the project's compliance with the IWT.

3. Environmental Flow Issues- Pakistan insists on **maintaining environmental flows**, supported by the **2013 Permanent Court of Arbitration ruling on India's obligation** to release flows downstream of the **Kishanganga project**.

Read More- [Need to amend the Indus Waters Treaty](#)

What are the Concerns with the termination or abrogation of the IWT?

Renegotiating or abrogating the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) between India and Pakistan could have serious consequences for the region:

1. Escalation of Geopolitical Tensions- Attempts at renegotiating the treaty or abrogation of the treaty is likely to escalate political tensions between India and Pakistan. This might heighten the **risk of water conflicts** between the **two nuclear-armed neighbors**.

2. Threat to Regional Stability- The Indus river basin is shared by **India, Pakistan, China** and **Afghanistan**. Instability in the IWT could have **ripple effects on water cooperation in the wider region**.

3. Damage to India's International Standing- Unilaterally suspending or withdrawing from the IWT **could damage India's image as a responsible global power**. It may be a **setback for future negotiations of water treaties**, like the **Teesta Water Treaty** with countries like Bangladesh.

What Should be the Way Forward?

1. Integration of Ecological Perspectives- The ecological perspectives must incorporate Environmental Flows (EF) to sustain the Indus Valley ecosystems, as suggested by the **Brisbane Declaration** and the **2013 Permanent Court of Arbitration ruling on Kishanganga**.

2. Recognition of Climate Change Impacts- Strategies must be developed to manage climate change effects. **India should explore** the **possibility of using climate change** as a **'change in circumstances'** to initiate conversation on renegotiation of the IWT.

3. Enhanced Water Data-Sharing- A World Bank-supervised, legally binding data-sharing framework should be established to monitor water quality and flow changes. Such estimates **would add to the accuracy of each side's dependence on the other** in sharing the waters of these rivers.

4. Incorporation of International Legal Standards- The treaty provisions must be aligned with the **1997 UN Watercourses Convention** and the **2004 Berlin Rules on Water Resources** for sustainable water use.

5. Pro activeness on India's Part in utilization of allocated water share- As suggested by the **standing committee of water resources**, the **canal systems in Punjab and Rajasthan** should be **repaired to increase their water carrying capacity**. Also, India should take steps to **completely utilize its entitlement of waters** of Western Rivers.

6. Use of pressure tactic in case of escalation- As suggested by some experts, in case of escalation of hostilities by Pakistan in future, India can suspend the meetings of Permanent Commission. If the first state of dispute redressal is not functional, the subsequent two steps of 3-tier dispute redressal don't kick in.

[Read More- The Indian Express](#)

[UPSC Syllabus- GS 2 India and its neighbourhood Relations](#)

India-Russia Relations- Significance and Challenges- Explained Pointwise

PM Narendra Modi visited Russia in his **first Bilateral Visit** in his **third term**. This is also the first time that the **Indian PM Narendra Modi** and the **Russian President Vladimir Putin** met in person after the Russia invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

The visit to Russia is a **statement of the importance New Delhi accords** to its **relationship with Moscow**. The visit underlines India's foreign policy priority and the importance of deepened India-Russia Relations.

In this article, we will analyse the significance of India-Russia relations, the challenges this relation faces and the way forward for further strengthening of the relation.

Key Highlights of the Recent 22nd India-Russia Annual Summit

- a. **Increasing the Bilateral Trade-** India and Russia agreed to increase bilateral trade to **\$100 billion dollars** by **2030**. This includes the use of national currencies to circumvent Western sanctions.
- b. **New connectivity routes-** India and Russia agreed on completion of new connectivity routes like the **Chennai-Vladivostok maritime route**, **Northern Sea Route** and the **International North-South Transport Corridor** via Iran.
- c. **Increasing investment in priority areas-** India and Russia agreed on enhancing investments in the **energy sector** including nuclear energy, infrastructure development.
- d. **MoUs between institutions-** India and Russia signed a number of MoUs between institutions on **climate change**, **polar research**, **legal arbitration** and **pharmaceutical certification**.
- e. **Streamlining Defence Cooperation-** The delay in **defence supplies was discussed**. Both parties have committed to exploring more areas of co-production of defence equipment such as the **India-Russia joint venture for assault rifles**.
- f. **Facilitation of the Indian Prime Minister-** Prime Minister accepted Russia's highest civilian honour, the Order of St Andrew the Apostle.



Figure 1. Source- The Indian Express

What is the history of India Russia Relations?

Russia has been a **longstanding** and **time-tested partner** for **India**. Development of India-Russia relations has been a key pillar of India's foreign policy. It is pertinent to look at the historical

development of India-Russia relations.

India and Russia (formerly the Soviet Union) have had a longstanding and strategic relationship since the **establishment of formal diplomatic ties in April 1947**, just months before India's independence. The relationship **has evolved over the decades**, with **periods of both cooperation and tension**.

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Early Years (1947-1955) | Initial relations between the newly Independent India and Soviet Union were negligible due to ideological differences . Soviet Union under Stalin viewed India's independence movement with suspicion . However, this began to change in the 1950s, with key visits by Indian PM Nehru to Moscow in 1955 and Soviet leader Khrushchev to India later that year . The steel plants at Bhilai and Bokaro were direct outcomes of these visits. |
| Cold War Era (1955-1991) | India and the Soviet Union developed a strong strategic, military, economic and diplomatic relationship during the Cold War. The Soviet Union became a major supplier of arms and military equipment to India, strengthening its defense capabilities. It played a crucial role in various conflicts, including the 1962 Sino-Indian War and the 1971 Indo-Pak War . The Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation signed in 1971 was a key milestone . |

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|---------------------------------------|--|
| | in India-Russia relations. It included a security provision for mutual consultations in the event of a threat to either country. |
| Post-Cold War (1991-2000) | Post Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, India-Russia relations weakened due to economic challenges and the changing global landscape . The Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed in 1993 attempted to revive ties between India and Russia. However, the cooperation in most areas declined. |
| Phase of Strategic Partnership | Signing of the ' Declaration on the India-Russia Strategic Partnership ' in 2000 elevated the India-Russia ties to a new level . This strategic partnership has enhanced cooperation in political, security, defense, trade, economy, science, technology and culture. High-level engagements like the annual India-Russia Summit have further strengthened the relationship. |

What are the areas of Cooperation between India and Russia?

1. Geopolitical Cooperation-

- India and Russia have close geopolitical cooperation
- Engagement of India and Russia in regional forums like **BRICS, SCO** and the **G20**.
 - India **refrained from adverse voting in the UN**, and **disregarded Western threats of sanctions on its energy imports from Russia**.
 - India and Russia champion the establishment of a multi-polar world order.
 - Strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and all terrorist "safe havens" by both the Countries.

2. Defense Cooperation-

- Russia is a major defense equipment supplier to India.
- Military Hardware and Technology Transfers-** Licensed production of **T-90 tanks** and **Su-30 MKI** aircraft in India; agreements for the supply of **S-400 Triumf** mobile surface-to-air missile systems, **MiG-29K aircraft**, **Kamov-31 helicopters**, and upgrade of **MiG-29 aircraft**; Joint development and production of military platforms like the **BrahMos supersonic cruise missile**; and establishment of **Indo-Russia Rifles Private Limited (IRRPL)** to produce **AK-203 rifles** in India under "Make in India".
 - Joint Military Exercises-** Tri-service military exercise '**INDRA**', **Avia Indra** joint air force exercise.
 - Institutionalized Mechanisms for Defense Collaboration-** Establishment of India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Military Technical Cooperation (**IRIGC-MTC**) at the apex level; and **2+2 Dialogue mechanism** involving the Defense and Foreign Ministers in 2021.

3. Economic Cooperation-

- India and Russia share close economic relations. These are explained below-
- Trade and Investment-** The bilateral trade between India and Russia stands at around **\$65 billion**. **India's imports of Russian crude at discount** has **surged** in after the **invasion of Ukraine** led to the oil sanctions by the U.S. and Europe.
 - Cooperation in the Russian Far East-** India provides financial and personnel assistance to develop the resource-rich but sparsely populated Russian Far East region bordering China. A **5-year program of cooperation in the Far East for 2021-2025** is being finalized between **NITI Aayog** and **Russia's Ministry for Development of the Far East**.
 - Close Business Cooperation-** India and Russia have both **institutionalised CEO's Forum**. **Indian companies** invest in Russia, **especially in natural resources** such as coal, fertilizers, hydrocarbons, minerals, rare earth metals.
 - Banking and Financial Links-** India and Russia have explored on deepening banking and financial links such as **ruble-rupee trade**; and **collaboration between financial institutions** like **SBI and VTB Bank**.

4. Scientific and Research Cooperation-

- Since the cold war era, Russia has been a major scientific and research partner of India.
- Civil nuclear energy Cooperation-** India and Russia jointly developed **Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant**

(KKNPP). India and Russia have jointly signed agreements on the **construction of 12 nuclear power plants in India** during the coming decades.

b. **Space relations-** Russia and India have signed an agreement to **train Indian astronauts** for India's first manned space mission (Gaganyaan). **C-DAC** and **GLONASS** have signed the agreement for cooperation in technologies based on **satellite navigation**.

c. **Health-** India approved Russian Vaccine **Sputnik V** under emergency use authorization.

5. Diaspora and Cultural Relations- India and Russia have a deep diaspora and cultural relation. The following are the areas of engagement between India and Russia.

a. **Respect for languages and Culture-** **Hindi**, and **other languages** such as Tamil, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Urdu, Sanskrit and Pali are taught in Russian Institutions. Organizations like the **Indian Cultural Centre in Moscow** and the **Indian Students' Association** promote Indian culture and heritage in Russia.

b. **Indian Diaspora-** The Indian diaspora in Russia is estimated to be **around 30,000-40,000**, which consists of mostly professionals, students and businesspeople.

c. **Extension of line of Credit for Russian Far East-** India has extended **\$1 billion as a line of credit** for the development of the Russian Far East.

What is the significance of India Russia Relations?

1. Geopolitical- Deepened strategic partnership with India holds a lot of geopolitical importance for India.

a. **Russian support on critical Issues-** Russia supports **India's demand for permanent seat in the UNSC**. It has also supported **India's stand on the Kashmir Issue**.

b. **Counterbalancing Chinese Aggression-** Russia can help in defusing rising tensions with China.

2. Defense- Russia still remains a critical defense supplier for India with **60-70% of India's defense equipment** estimated to be of Russian and Soviet origin. Though **India has diversified its defense imports** from countries like US, France, it **still cannot alienate Russia** especially in the face of Chinese aggression at the border.

3. Economic- The purchase of **large amounts of Russian oil at a discount**, cushions India from the inflationary impact of rising crude prices. India is contemplating a **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** with the **Eurasian Economic Union** led by Russia.

4. Strategic Balancing-

a. Smooth India-Russia relations **offers India a better bargaining chip** in negotiations with the western powers. It also offers India to **strategically balance** and **align with the powers according to its national interest**. **For ex-** PM Modi's visit is taking place when leaders of the 32 nations in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) gather in Washington DC to celebrate 75 years of the anti-Russia military alliance.

b. Close India-Russia relations provides New Delhi the opportunity to **offset the Chinese advantage in Eurasia**.

What are the Challenges in the relation?

1. Deepening of India-US relations- The India-US relations is rapidly deepening especially in the defense sector, which is exemplified in the **India-US nuclear deal in 2008**, **US emerging as the top arms supplier** to India by overtaking Russia and **India-US Foundational agreements** such LEMOA, COMCASA, BECA.

Due to these developments, Russia changed their decades-old policy and start supplying China with weapon systems like Sukhoi 35 and the S-400 missile defence system.

2. Russia's growing dependence on China- Moscow and Beijing have forged the closest possible ties in their history. This has generated fears that **Russia will become a subordinate partner** given the growing economic, demographic and technological asymmetry between them. This could **jeopardize Moscow's neutrality on Sino-Indian tensions**.

3. Russia's increased engagement with Pakistan- Russia has been increasing its economic and defence cooperation with Pakistan, like **conduction of bilateral exercise Friendship**. The RCP axis (Russia, China, Pakistan) will be detrimental to India's national interest.

4. Trade Imbalances- Even though the bilateral trade between the two nations has increased in the face of crude oil imports, there is considerable trade imbalances between India and Russia. **Of the total trade of \$65 billion**, India's exports **constitute less than \$5 billion**.

5. Defense Delays- There have been considerable delays in the delivery of **military spares** and big-ticket weapon systems like the **S-400 Triumf surface-to-air missile systems**, to India due to the Ukraine War.

6. Ukraine Crisis- The continuing Russia-Ukraine war has put India into a diplomatic tightspot. India has been facing **significant criticism** for **not condemning the invasion** and **continuing energy and economic cooperation** with Moscow.

What Should be the Way Forward?

1. Neutral Player in the resolution of Ukraine Crisis- India must continue to maintain its positioning as a neutral player that could be a mediator between the two sides in the resolution of the Ukraine Crisis. India must continue to appeal to both sides to **'abide by the international rules and conventions'**.

2. Addressing defense supply chain shocks- India and Russia must explore setting up **joint venture partnerships** to address the shortage of critical defense spare parts.

3. More diplomatic and financial investments- India and Russia must invest more diplomatic and financial resources to finish the pending works for the **International North-South Transport Corridor**. Both sides should expedite discussions on the **Free Trade Agreement with the Eurasian Union** for better trade and commerce.

4. Enhanced focus on Eurasia- India and Russia have to explore their opportunities in the Eurasian region. India can study the possibility of expanding Russia's idea of **'extensive Eurasian partnership'** involving the EAEU(Eurasian Economic Union) and China, India, Pakistan, and Iran.

5. Unequivocal message to the Western countries- India must send unequivocal message to the West that **Russia occupies a pivotal place in India's strategic calculations**. It must be conveyed that the **West needs India just as much as India needs the West**.

[Read More- The Hindu](#)

[UPSC Syllabus- GS 2 International Relations- India's Relation with Developed Countries](#)

India's Demographic Dividend- Significance and Challenges- Explained Pointwise

The World Population Day which is observed on **July 11 every year**, was instituted in **1989 by the United Nations** after the renowned demographer Dr. K.C. Zachariah proposed it. The day was instituted after the global population crossed the **five billion mark** and **challenges** such as **poverty, health** and **gender inequality** were plaguing the world, and developing countries in particular.

The population is now estimated to be **8.1 billion**. India has become the most populous nation with **~1.44 billion** population, which is slightly more than China. The exponentially increasing population levels in the 1970s, predicted a doom for India and the World. However, the Indian Population growth story **has belied the prediction of doom**. With **drop fertility rates** (which is now below the replacement levels today), **significant**

reductions in maternal and child mortality rates, India's demography has entered into a phase of 'demographic dividend'.

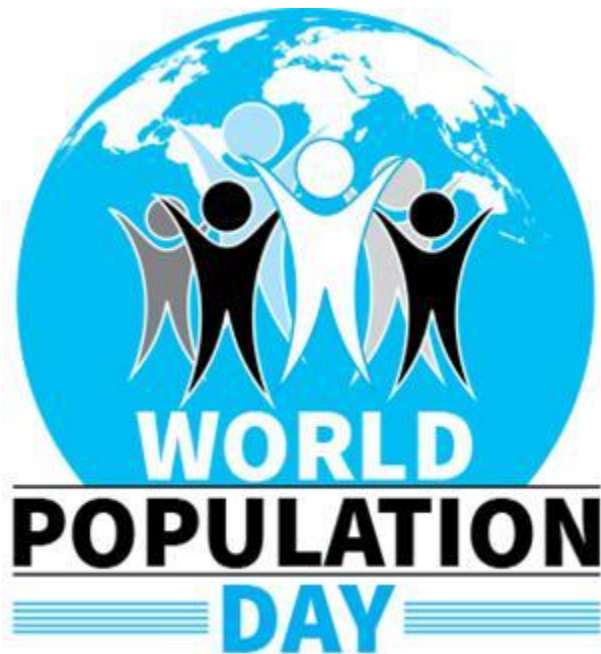


Figure 2. Source- The Hindu

years, with the total fertility rate (TFR) declining to 2 in 2020-2021 from about 3.4 in the early 1990s. A TFR of 2.1 is necessary for a country to attain population stability.

Population projections- India's population is forecast to grow to 1.67 billion in 2050 and peak at 1.7 billion in 2064 before settling at 1.53 billion in 2100.

Potential demographic dividend- Two-thirds of India's total population are between the ages of 15 and 64. It presents a potential demographic dividend if education, skill development, and opportunities are provided, particularly for youth from disadvantaged sections and women.

What factors have resulted in India's demographic dividend phase?

Three factors which have played a pivotal role in shaping India's demographic landscape are mentioned below-

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Fertility | India has made significant strides in reducing its fertility. According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-5, India's total fertility rate (TFR) decreased from 3.4 to 2 between 1992 and 2021, dropping below the replacement level of 2.1 |
| Mortality | All the critical mortality indicators have seen steady declines. The Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) decreased from 384.4 in 2000 to 102.7 in 2020. The mortality rate for children under five reduced significantly post 2000s. The infant mortality rate also reduced from 66.7 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2000 to 25.5 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2021. |
| Migration | The rural to urban migration of the Working age population has led to increased labour force in the Urban areas. |

What are the opportunities with demographic dividend in India?

1. Increased Supply of Labour- The rapidly rising young population results in the increased labour supply, as more people reach working age.

What is demographic Dividend? What is India's Demographic Status?

According to United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), demographic dividend means, the economic growth potential that can result from shifts in a population's age structure. The demographic dividend leads to an increased labour supply that increase the production of goods and boost savings and investment. India has one of the youngest populations (62.5% of its population in the age group 15-59) in an aging world.

India's Demographic Status

According to the State of World Population Report 2023, published by the UNFPA, India has surpassed China as the most populous country, with a population of 142.86 crores compared to China's 142.57 crores.

Slowing population growth- India's population growth has slowed down significantly in the past 10

2. Economic growth- Demographic Dividend results in better economic growth brought about by increased economic activities due to higher working age population and lower dependent population. Demographic dividend has **historically contributed up to 15 % of the overall growth in advanced economies.**

3. Capital formation- The **propensity of saving increases** with the **decrease in the number of dependents.** This **increases national savings rates, increases the stock of capital in developing countries** and provides an opportunity for **enhanced capital formation** through investment.

4. Creation of Infrastructure- Increased fiscal space created by the demographic dividend **enables the government to divert resources** from spending on children to investing in physical and human infrastructure.

5. Increase in Female Human capital- Decrease in fertility rates result in healthier women and fewer economic pressures at home. This provides an opportunity to engage more women in the workforce and enhance human capital.

6. Innovation and entrepreneurship- A young population can lead to increased **innovation and entrepreneurship**, with more **startups** and **unicorns emerging in various sectors** like healthcare, education, agriculture, and financial services.

7. Climate action and sustainability- A **young and educated population** can drive sustainable development by prioritizing climate action and adopting environmentally friendly practices.

8. Increase in Global influence- India's rising population, combined with its position as the world's largest democracy and a major economy, can help it become a global manufacturing hub, startup capital, and **exporter of skilled manpower.**

What are the Challenges that can turn this Demographic Dividend into a Demographic Disaster?

1. Poor human capital- Poor human capital formation is reflected in low employability among India's graduates and postgraduates. **According to ASSOCHAM, only 20-30 % of engineers find a job suited to their skills.** Thus, low human capital base and **lack of skills** is a big challenge.

2. Low human development- India ranks **134 out of 189 countries** in **UNDP's Human Development Index.** The Life expectancy at birth, and the mean years of schooling is much lower than other developing countries.

3. Hunger and Malnutrition- In the Global Hunger Index (2023), **India was ranked at 111 out of 125 countries.** The nutrition, stunting, wasting and underweight among children below five years and anaemia among women pose serious challenges. According to **India's epidemiological trajectory**, India faces the double burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases (NCD).

4. Informal economy- Informal nature of economy in India is another challenge in reaping the benefits of demographic transition in India. The workers in the Informal economy are **underpaid** and **devoid of social security benefits.**

5. Jobless growth- As per the **NSSO Periodic Labour Force Survey 2017-18**, India's labour force participation rate for the **age-group 15-59 years is around 53%.** This means that around half of the working age population is jobless. There are future concerns of further jobless growth due to **deindustrialization, de-globalization, the fourth industrial revolution** and **technological progress.**

6. Low Women workforce Participation rate- According to the latest Periodic Labour Force Survey (2022-23) female LFPR is around 37.0%. This poses a serious challenge in effectively reaping the demographic dividend.

What should be the Way Forward?

1. Building human capital- We must invest in healthcare, quality education, jobs and skills to build human capital. This is key to **reaping demographic dividend** which can in turn **support economic growth**, end extreme poverty, and create a more inclusive society.

2. Investment in Skilling- India's labour force needs to be empowered with the right skills for the modern economy. Government has established the **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)** with the overall target of skilling/ up skilling 500 million people in India by 2022..

3. Investment in Education- India, which has almost **41% of population below the age of 20 years**, can reap the demographic dividend only if with a better education system. Enhancing educational levels by properly investing in primary, secondary and higher education is the need of the hour.

4. Improvement of Health and Nutrition- Improvement in healthcare infrastructure would ensure higher number of productive days for young labour-force. This increases the productivity of the economy. Hence we must focus on the successful of schemes like **Ayushman Bharat** and **Integrated Child Development (ICDS)** programme.

5. Job Creation- The nation needs to **create ten million jobs** per year to absorb the addition of young people into the workforce. Promoting businesses' interests and entrepreneurship would help in job creation to provide employment to the large labour-force.

Read More- [The Hindu](#)

UPSC Syllabus- GS 1- Population and associated Issues

SC verdict on right to maintenance of Muslim Women- Explained Pointwise

In a **landmark judgment** on the right to maintenance of Muslim Women, the Supreme Court (SC) bench of Justice B.V. Nagarathna and Justice Augustine George Masih has held that a **divorced Muslim woman** can seek **alimony** from her husband under **Section 125** of the **Code of Criminal Code (CrPc)**. The court held that Section 125 of CrPC is a "**religion neutral**" provision that applies to all married women, including Muslims.

Post the enactment of **The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act 1986**, which provided **maintenance rights to Muslim women during the Iddat Period**, there has always been an **ambiguity**, on whether the **Muslim Women could seek remedy under Section 125 of the CrPC**. Several High Court judgments took different views on whether Muslim women should avail of **Section 3 of the 1986 Act** or **Section 125 of CrPC**.

Now the **verdict settles this question** by holding that the **codification** of a **Muslim woman's maintenance rights** in the 1986 Act, **was only in addition to and not in derogation** of her right to **seek maintenance like a woman of any other religion**, provided under Section 125 of the CrPC.



Source- The Hindu

What is the historical background of the evolution of laws on Muslim Women's right to maintenance?

| | |
|------|---|
| 1973 | Section 125 of the CrPC codified the laws governing maintenance for destitute wives, children, and parents. It holds that a divorced woman has the right to seek maintenance/monthly allowance from her husband until her remarriage. It is a religion neutral provision which was universally applicable to all women belonging from different religions. |
| 1985 | In the famous Shah Bano case, Supreme Court (SC) upheld a Muslim woman's right to seek maintenance from her divorced husband under Section 125 of the CrPC. The verdict was perceived by many to be an affront to religious personal laws. |
| 1986 | The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986 was enacted to overturn the SC verdict in the Shah Bano Case. It is a religion-specific law that provides for a procedure for a Muslim woman to claim maintenance during divorce. Section 3 of the Act a. Period of maintenance- Section 3 of the Act guarantees the payment of maintenance to a divorced Muslim woman by her former husband. However, the maintenance will be provided during the period of <i>iddat</i> . (It is a period, usually of three months, which a woman must observe after the death of her husband or a divorce before she can remarry). b. Maintenance Amount- The maintenance amount shall be equal to the amount of <i>mahr</i> or dowry given to her at the time of her marriage or any time after that. c. Recourse after the end of Iddat Period- After the completion of the Iddat period, a woman can approach a first-class magistrate for maintenance in case she has not remarried and is not in a position to take care of herself financially. |
| 2001 | In the Danial Latifi v. Union Of India (2001) case, the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of the 1986 Act. It, however, reduced the period of maintenance to the completion of <i>iddat</i> . |
| 2009 | In the Shabana Bano v. Imran Khan, SC division bench reiterated a divorced Muslim woman's right to claim maintenance under Section 125 of the CrPC until her remarriage. |

| | |
|------|--|
| | It further highlighted that such a relief would be extended even <i>after the expiry of the iddat period</i> . |
| 2019 | Patna HC's verdict underscored that a divorced Muslim woman has the option to avail of maintenance both under the CrPC and the 1986 Act. |

Case Question- There prevailed an **ambiguity** whether **Muslim Women could claim maintenance rights** under **Section 125 of the CrPC**, after claiming their **rights under Section 3 of the Muslim Woman's (Protection of rights on Divorce) Act, 1986**.

SC Verdict-

- The Muslim Women **can claim remedy under Section 125 of the CrPC**, despite claiming the **remedies** provided under Section 3 of the **Muslim Woman's (Protection of rights on Divorce) Act, 1986**.
- The SC held that a **Muslim woman's right to claim maintenance under criminal law (CrPC) cannot be extinguished even if she has claimed her rights in personal law** (Muslim Women' Protection of Rights on Divorce Act, 1986).
- A **parallel remedy** in law that **applies universally (CrPC) cannot be taken away by religious custom** despite the latter being codified as legislation.

What are the four main pillars of the SC Verdict?

1. Social justice measure must be insulated from applicable personal laws- The SC held that **Section 125 of CrPC** was introduced as a measure of **social justice** to protect women and children. The provision manifested the **constitutional commitment** of **social justice** under **Article 15(3)**, which provided for special measures to ensure a life of dignity for women at all stages of their lives.

A claim under Section 125 CrPC is maintainable, irrespective of the applicable personal laws of the parties.

2. Equivalent rights of maintenance- The SC held that both- **the secular provision of Section 125 of the CrPC** and the **personal law provision of Section 3 of the 1986 Act**- provide equivalent rights of maintenance in their distinct domains.

The SC held that passage of the 1986 Act did not '**militate against or dilute**' relief under Section 125 of the CrPC. The intent of the Parliament behind the 1986 Act was to provide an **additional remedy for divorced Muslim women**.

3. Harmonious Interpretation- The SC has held that the **two conflicting statutes** should be **harmoniously and purposively interpreted**. SC has held that a divorced Muslim woman is entitled to seek recourse to either or both the provisions.

The **choice lies** with the **Muslim woman** to **apply for maintenance** either under **Section 125 of the CrPC** or the **1986 Act**. If the woman is unable to provide for herself, she can seek remedy under Section 125 of the CrPC. If she is financially independent, **she can seek maintenance under the 1986 Act** till the expiry of the iddat period.

4. Muslim women divorced through triple talaq entitled to relief- The SC has held that Muslim women who have been divorced through **illegal methods** such as **triple talaq** are entitled to maintenance under **Section 125 of the CrPC**.

What is the Significance of the Verdict on Muslim Women right to maintenance?

The Supreme Court's recent verdict affirming a divorced Muslim woman's right to seek maintenance under Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code, irrespective of her religion, is likely to have several significant implications for the future of personal laws in India-

1. Primacy of Secular Law over Personal Law- The judgment has firmly established that the 'religion neutral' provisions of secular law take precedence over personal law provisions. The verdict reaffirms the supremacy of the Constitution and secular law in matters of gender equality, overriding restrictive personal law interpretations.

2. Maintenance as a Right and not a Charity- The court has framed maintenance as a 'facet of gender parity and enabler of equality, and not charity' for all married women, which includes Muslim women. This shift in perspective from maintenance being a religious obligation to a legal right can have far-reaching consequences.

3. Benchmark for challenging Discriminatory practices in other Laws- The verdict can serve as a precedent for challenging discriminatory practices in other personal laws, such as the Hindu Succession Act, Christian personal laws, and Parsi personal laws. This may lead to more reforms to align personal laws with constitutional principles of equality.

4. Upholding the Constitutional Values- The verdict protects the spirit of the Constitution and its promise of equality, guaranteed by Article 14. It further protects and emboldens the value of social justice for women provided by Article 15 (1), Article 15 (3) and Article 39 (e) of the Constitution.

5. Socio-economic safety net to women- The verdict offers a socio-economic safety net to married women who often sacrifice employment opportunities to nurture the family, pursue child rearing, and undertake care work for the elderly.

Conclusion

The Supreme Court's verdict is a testament to the Court's ability to employ a harmonious interpretation to broaden the scope of rights and secularize access to remedies. In the process, the Court has also neutralised the perception that the right of Muslim women to seek maintenance under secular provisions stood extinguished since 1986.

The ruling has significantly strengthened the rights of divorced Muslim women and is likely to have far-reaching implications for the future trajectory of personal laws in India. It may potentially lead to more challenges to discriminatory practices and greater alignment with the Constitution's principles of equality and justice.

Read More- [The Hindu](#)

UPSC Syllabus- GS 2- Issues related to Constitution, GS 1- Issues Related to Women

India-Austria Relations- Significance and Challenges- Explained Pointwise

Recently, the India-Austria relations has assumed significance with the visit of the Indian PM to the European Country. The recent visit of PM Narendra Modi's visit to Vienna was the first by an Indian Prime Minister to Austria since June 1983, when Indira Gandhi travelled to the country. This was the Prime Minister's first visit to Austria and that of an Indian Prime Minister after 41 years. This year marks the 75th year of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The Prime Minister's decision to travel to Vienna immediately after he met President Vladimir Putin in Moscow was significant, as Austria is a European country that is not a part of NATO.

Highlight of PM's Visit to Austria

a. Enhanced economic and technological cooperation- Both PM Modi and Chancellor Nehammer identified stronger economic and technological ties as a strategic goal between India and Austria. They welcomed the first high-level bilateral Business Forum and discussed opportunities for collaboration in areas like green and digital technologies, renewable energy, water management.

b. India-Austria Startup Bridge- India-Austria Startup Bridge was launched to foster innovation and entrepreneurship between countries.

c. Alignment on global and regional issues- Both countries affirmed their commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific region and peaceful resolution of Ukraine conflict.

d. Cooperation on climate action and sustainability- Both countries pledged to collaborate on renewable energy, with a specific focus on Austria's Hydrogen Strategy and India's Green Hydrogen Mission. Both the countries expressed support for EU's target for climate neutrality by 2050, Austria's goal for 2040, and India's aim for net zero emissions by 2070.

e. Strengthening cultural and people-to-people ties- The leaders appreciated the rich tradition of cultural exchanges and the growing interest in yoga and Ayurveda in Austria. They encouraged efforts to promote bilateral cultural ties and tourism.

f. Coordination on global governance- The leaders reiterated their commitment to achieving comprehensive reforms of the United Nations, including its Security Council. India reiterated its support for Austria's UNSC candidature for 2027-28, while Austria expressed support for India's candidature in 2028-29. India invited Austria to join the International Solar Alliance.



Source- The Indian Express

What is the History of evolution of India-Austria Relations?

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| | |
|--|---|
| Establishment of Diplomatic Relations | Diplomatic relations between India and Austria were established in 1949 by India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Austria's first post-World War II Chancellor Leopold Figl . |
| India's Intervention in the State Treaty of Austria | In 1953 , India intervened in favour of Austria during its negotiations with the Soviet Union on the State Treaty of Austria that resulted in the independence of Austria in 1955 . |
| State Visits | The visits by the leaders of the two states have strengthened the India-Austria Relations. Prime Minister Nehru visited Austria in 1955, which was the first Prime Ministerial visit. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi visited Austria in 1971 and 1983 . Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky visited India in 1980 . Austrian Chancellor Fred Sinowatz visited India in 1984. President K.R. Narayanan visited Austria in 1999, with President Pratibha Patil visiting in 2011. |
| Recent State Visit | In the recent state visit, PM Modi and Chancellor Nehammer discussed for upgradation of bilateral partnerships , focusing on infrastructure, renewable energy, e-commerce, fintech, and media. |

What are the areas of cooperation between India and Austria?

India and Austria have a **multifaceted partnership** spanning political, economic, sectoral, and cultural domains, with regular high-level exchanges and growing cooperation across various areas. The main areas of Cooperation between India and Austria are explained below-

1. Political Cooperation- The India Austria political relations have been strengthened by the high level political exchanges by the **heads of the states, ministerial level engagements and visits, parliamentary level exchanges**.

2. Economic Cooperation- India-Austria economic and commercial cooperation constitutes an important dimension of the bilateral relationship. The two sides have taken steps to strengthen and deepen bilateral economic cooperation.

a. Establishment of The Indo-Austrian Joint Economic Commission (JEC)- The **Indo-Austrian Joint Economic Commission (JEC)** was established in **1983**. It provides a forum for bilateral interaction between the governmental Ministries and Chambers of Commerce and Industry. There have been **more than 200 collaborations**, including **100 technical collaboration** and **60 joint ventures** between Indian and Austrian firms especially in the fields of steel, manufacturing technology, railway and transport, equipment and metallurgy.

b. Indo-Austria Bilateral Trade- In 2022, the bilateral trade is **USD 2.84 billion** with and increase on **14.97 %** over the **2021 levels**. For 2021, Indian exports to Austria were **USD 1.29 billion** and imports were **USD 1.18 billion**.

Indian key exports to Austria: Electronic Goods, Apparels, Textile, Footwear, Rubber articles, Vehicles & Railways parts, Electrical machinery and Mechanical appliances.

India's key imports from Austria: Machinery, Mechanical appliances, Railway parts, Iron and Steel etc.

Annual Trade Data (India- Austria)*Source: Statistik Austria*

| Year | Austria's Import from India (Billion US\$) | Austria's Export to India (Billion US\$) | Total Trade (Billion US\$) |
|------|--|--|----------------------------|
| 2017 | 0.93 | 0.85 | 1.78 |
| 2018 | 1.08 | 1.06 | 2.14 |
| 2019 | 1.14 | 1.02 | 2.16 |
| 2020 | 1.06 | 0.99 | 2.05 |
| 2021 | 1.18 | 1.29 | 2.47 |
| 2022 | 1.61 | 1.23 | 2.84 |

Source- MEA

c. Investment- The **key Austrian investors in India** include – Plassner & Theurer (Railways track laying machines), Andritz (machines for hydroelectric power plants), AMS Semiconductors (semiconductors). The **key Indian Investors in Austria** include Wipro Technologies, Shilpa Medicare, VA Tecg Wabag Ltd, KTM-Bajaj Auto. In December 2021, **Indian Edutech company Byju's** acquired an Austrian start-up Geogebra for about USD 100 million.

3. Science and Technology Cooperation- **Austria's first two satellites TUGSAT-1/BRITE and UniBRITE** were launched by India's PSLV-C20 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota on 2013. The two satellites are developed in **collaboration** with the **Institute of Communication Networks and Satellite Communications (IKS)** at the Technical University of Graz (TUG), **Institute for Astronomy of the University of Vienna**, and the **Space Flight Lab (SFL)** at the University of Toronto Institute Of Aerospace Studies (UTIAS).

4. Cultural Cooperation- The Indo-Austrian cultural relations have a long tradition dating back to 16th century when Balthasar Springer traveled from Tyrol in 1505 to India along with the third Portuguese fleet.

a. Visit of Rabindranath Tagore- The visit of India's philosopher-poet and Nobel Laureate **Rabindranath Tagore** twice to Vienna – in **1921** and **1926** was one of the **crucial bridges** of **cultural and intellectual exchange** between **India** and **Austria**. Gurudev's famous lecture in 1921 '**The religion of the forest**', portrayed the value of getting closer to nature and learning union and compassion.

b. Contemporary Indian Culture- There is a lot of interest in contemporary Indian literature and theater. **Ayurveda**, the Indian **traditional system of medicine** has been widely acknowledged and practiced in Austria. The holistic approach of Yoga in health care and well being has led many Austrians to embrace Yoga and is testified by the **presence of many Yoga schools in Vienna and other Austrian cities**.

5. Diaspora Connection- There are an estimated over **31,000 Indians** (majority from Kerala and Punjab) living in Austria. The Indian diaspora mainly consists of professionals working primarily in the Health Care sector and in the multilateral UN bodies, businessmen and self-employed self-employed individuals.

What is the significance of India Austria Relations?

1. Geo-political Significance- Both countries **share values of democracy and pluralism**, and have cooperated on global issues like UN Security Council reforms. Austria has supported India's bid for a permanent UNSC seat, recognizing India's growing global role.

2. Economic Significance- Austria is one of the richest countries in the European Union. It is an **important link for India** in its relationship with Europe, especially with **countries of central and Eastern Europe**.

3. Technological Significance- Austria has expertise in Green Hydrogen and other renewable technologies. Austrian expertise can be of **immense significance for India's Green Hydrogen Mission**, and **India's aim for net zero emissions by 2070**.

4. Shared Global Perspectives- Both countries' have adopted balanced approaches to the **Russia-Ukraine conflict**, maintaining **diplomatic and commercial relations** amidst global tensions. Austria has adopted **neutral stance** which is established by the 1955 Austrian State Treaty.

What are the Challenges in India Austria Cooperation?

India and Austria have generally maintained cordial diplomatic relations, but there are several challenges that have affected their relationship.

1. Geographical Distance- India and Austria are **geographically distant** from each other. This has **limited the frequency and depth of bilateral engagements**.

2. Trade Imbalance- There exists a **significant trade imbalance in favor of Austria**. India mainly imports high-value goods like machinery, pharmaceuticals, and chemicals from Austria while exporting relatively less.

3. Differences in Economic Structures- India's economy is primarily driven by services and agriculture, whereas Austria has a strong industrial and manufacturing base. This difference in economic structures have **led to low trade bilateral trade penetration**.

4. Delay in Visa Issues- The **slow and delayed Visa policies and procedures** for travel between the two countries can impact people-to-people contacts, business travel, and tourism.

What Should be the Way Forward?

1. Mobility Partnership Agreement- The signing of "**Comprehensive Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement**" between India and Austria will help in the redressal of the Visa and Mobility issues between the two nations.

2. Enhancement of Cooperation- India and Austria must enhance cooperation in areas such as **renewable energy, technology, and education**.

3. Enhancing Geopolitical Coordination- India and Austria must align on a **free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific** and support peace efforts in regions like Europe and the Middle East.

4. Leveraging Complementarities- India must leverage Austria's position as a neutral European power and India's role as a geopolitical bridge-builder for mutual benefit. India and Austria must explore synergies between **India's development priorities and Austria's technological and industrial capabilities**.

Read More- [The Indian Express](#)

UPSC Syllabus- GS 2 India's Bilateral Relations

Fiscal Federalism in India- Significance and Challenges- Explained Pointwise

Recently, the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin alleged that the Union government was withholding funds for the State's Metro rail completion and other vital projects. States of Southern India have also raised the **issue of reduced fiscal devolution** despite higher contribution in the Gross tax revenues. Several **state governments** have **alleged** that **Central Government's tax policies have reduced aggregate financial transfers to States**, and has weakened cooperative fiscal federalism in India.



Figure 3. Source- The Hindu

What is Fiscal Federalism? What are the constitutional provisions which provide for Fiscal Federalism in India?

Fiscal Federalism- Fiscal federalism refers to the **division of financial powers and**

responsibilities between the **central government** and state governments in India.

Constitutional Provisions- The Indian Constitution defines the taxation and expenditure powers of the central and state governments through various provisions

a. Seventh Schedule- The Constitution **assigns specific tax bases** to the central and state governments, listed in the **Union List** and **State List** respectively.

b. Article 270- Article 270 of the Indian Constitution provides for the **distribution of net tax proceeds** collected by the Union government between the Centre and the States.

c. Article 280- The **Finance Commission** which is a constitutional body under Article 280, recommends the **sharing of tax revenues** and **grants-in-aid to the states**.

d. Article 275- It provides for the grants-in-aid system which involves discretionary transfers from the Centre to states for specific purposes.

Examples of Cooperative Fiscal Federalism

a. Introduction of GST- The introduction of Goods and Services Tax (GST) through the 101st Constitutional Amendment is a **historic example of cooperative fiscal federalism in India**. The GST act has **transformed India's indirect tax landscape**, and **fostered Centre-State cooperation**.

b. Passage of FRBM Act- The Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act 2003 aims to promote fiscal discipline at the central and state levels. **21 states enacted their own FRBM Acts**, incentivized by debt and interest rate relief provided by the 12th Finance Commission. This is a historic example of **centre-state cooperation in maintenance of Fiscal prudence**.

c. Introduction of performance based grants- Performance-based grants are being used to incentivize states to achieve developmental targets. This has led to **competitive and cooperative federalism** between the Centre and States in the sphere of finances and public expenditure.

What are the Challenges to Fiscal Federalism in India?

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- 1. Reduced Financial Transfers to the States-** The **share of states in the gross tax revenue** (total tax revenue collected, which includes cess and surcharges) has decreased from **35% in 2015-16** to **30% in 2023-24**.
- 2. Disproportionate Growth between Union Govt's & State Govt's Revenue-** From 2015-16 to 2023-24, while the **Union government's tax revenue** has increased by **2.3 times** from ₹14.6 lakh crore to ₹33.6 lakh crore, the **states' share in the tax revenue** has **only doubled** from ₹5.1 lakh crore to ₹10.2 lakh crore. This indicates a **disproportionate growth** between **Union Govt's** and **State Govt's Revenues**.
- 3. Decrease in Grants-in-Aid to the states-** Direct financial support to states, in the form of grants-in-aid, has **declined from ₹1.95 lakh crore in 2015-16** to **₹1.65 lakh crore in 2023-24**.
- 4. Increase in the share of non-devolvable cess and surcharge-** The share of collected cess and surcharge (which are not shared with states) has increased from **Rs. 85,638 in 2015-16** (5.9% of the Union government's tax revenue) to **Rs. 3.63 lakh crore in 2023-24** (10.8% of the Union Govt's tax revenue).
- 5. Centralisation of Public Expenditure-** **Out of the combined allocation of ₹19.4 lakh crore** for Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) and Central Sector Schemes (C Sec Schemes) in 2023-24, **only ₹4.25 lakh crore was devolved to States**. These are **tied grants** and **the states have no autonomy to plan their expenditure**.
- 6. Interstate Inequality in public Finances through CSS schemes-** The Union government compels the State to commit more or less an equivalent quantum of financial resources in the implementation of CSS schemes. **Wealthy States can afford to commit equivalent finances** and leverage Union finances inwards through the implementation of CSS. However, **less wealthy States will have to commit their borrowed finances in these CSS**, thus **increasing their own liabilities**. It has created inter-state inequality in public finances.
- 7. Increase in Conditional Transfers-** Several grants to states are contingent on fulfilling certain conditions, including **the insistence on specific labelling**, which imposes Union government preferences over state priorities.
- 8. Erosion of State Taxation Autonomy on account of implementation of GST-** The **ability of states to set tax rates on their own revenue sources** has been **significantly diminished** due to the implementation of GST. **For ex-** State VAT have been subsumed under GST.
- 9. Issues with GST-** The compensation of **revenue loss to states** on account of GST implementation, have not been properly addressed. **For ex-** **Discontinuation of GST compensation cess**.

[Read More- On the Issues with Fiscal federalism](#)

What is the Significance of Fiscal Federalism?

- 1. Addressing Diversity and Disparities-** Fiscal federalism allows the central and state governments to **address** the **regional imbalances** through mechanisms like **tax sharing**, **grants-in-aid**, and **performance-based incentives**.
- 2. Promotes cooperation and consultation between states-** Fiscal federalism encourages cooperation and coordination between the Centre and states, as they negotiate the sharing of resources and responsibilities. **For ex-** The **GST Council brings together the Centre and states** to jointly administer the Goods and Services Tax.
- 3. Ensuring Fiscal Discipline-** Fiscal federalism frameworks like the **Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act** promote fiscal discipline at both the central and state levels. This helps **maintain macroeconomic stability and sustainability**.

4. Enabling Decentralized Governance- Fiscal federalism **supports decentralization** by empowering state and local governments with financial autonomy and resources. This **strengthens grassroots democracy** and **responsive governance** closer to the people.

5. Undertaking Economic Reforms- Fiscal federalism helps to adapt to changes like the shift towards a market-oriented economy (**1991 economic reforms**), and undertake taxation reforms like **the introduction of GST**.

What are the finance commission recommendations for Fiscal federalism?

The Finance Commissions have made several important recommendations over the years to promote fiscal federalism in India-

a. Vertical Tax Devolution- The 14th Finance Commission radically increased the share of states in the central divisible pool of taxes from 32% to 42%, **the biggest ever increase in vertical tax devolution**. This enhances the fiscal autonomy and resources of state governments.

b. Horizontal Distribution Formula- The 15th FC used criteria like income distance (45%), population (2011) (15%), area (15%), demographic performance (12.5%), and forest and ecology (10%) **to determine each state's share**. This helps **equalize fiscal capacities and addresses horizontal imbalances** between states.

c. Grants-in-Aid- The Finance Commissions **provide grants-in-aid to specific states or sectors** that are in need of assistance or reform. This promotes the spirit of competitive and cooperative fiscal federalism.

d. Fiscal Consolidation- The finance commissions have suggested maintenance of fiscal prudence by the states. The **12th FC recommended a multi-dimensional restructuring** aimed at both qualitative and quantitative aspects of managing government finances

What should be the way Forward to strengthen Fiscal Federalism in India?

1. Enhanced devolution by the 16th Finance Commission- The 16th Finance Commission (FC) must look to **enhance the state's share in the net taxes from 41%** (currently awarded by 15th FC). Further, **the principles of Vertical and Horizontal devolution, must be relooked** to ensure equitable distribution of taxes among the states.

2. Rationalisation of Public Expenditure by Central Govt- A mechanism must be instituted for thorough **financial rationalisation of the Central Sector and Centrally Sponsored schemes**, in collaboration with state governments.

3. Addressing the GST related Concerns- The **anomalies in GST like the Integrated GST** which favours the consuming states like UP and Bihar, rather than the producing states of TN, Gujarat **must be corrected**. Also, efforts must be undertaken to **open more avenues for revenue generation** by broadening the scope of GST to include petrol, diesel etc.

4. Revisiting Article 246 and the Seventh Schedule- The **taxation powers listed in the seventh schedule** must be relooked in the context of fiscal federalism.

5. List of Taxation for Third Tier of Govt- Specific taxation powers **must be devolved to the local self governments** to help them raise their own resources and **reduce their dependence on grant-in-aids**. This will help in achieving fiscal federalism in its true sense.

6. Reduction of Borrowing Constraints on States- The Union government should revisit the borrowing constraints placed on state investment funds, as suggested by Kerala.

7. Reduction in Cesses and Surcharges- The Union government should reduce the degree to which it uses cesses and duties to **expand its share of tax collections**.

8. Minimisation of the discretionary aspect of transfers to states- Some of these transfers can be made automatic. For other transfers, clear and non-discriminatory methods should be followed.

Read More- [The Hindu](#)

UPSC Syllabus- GS 2- Issues related Centre State Relations

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

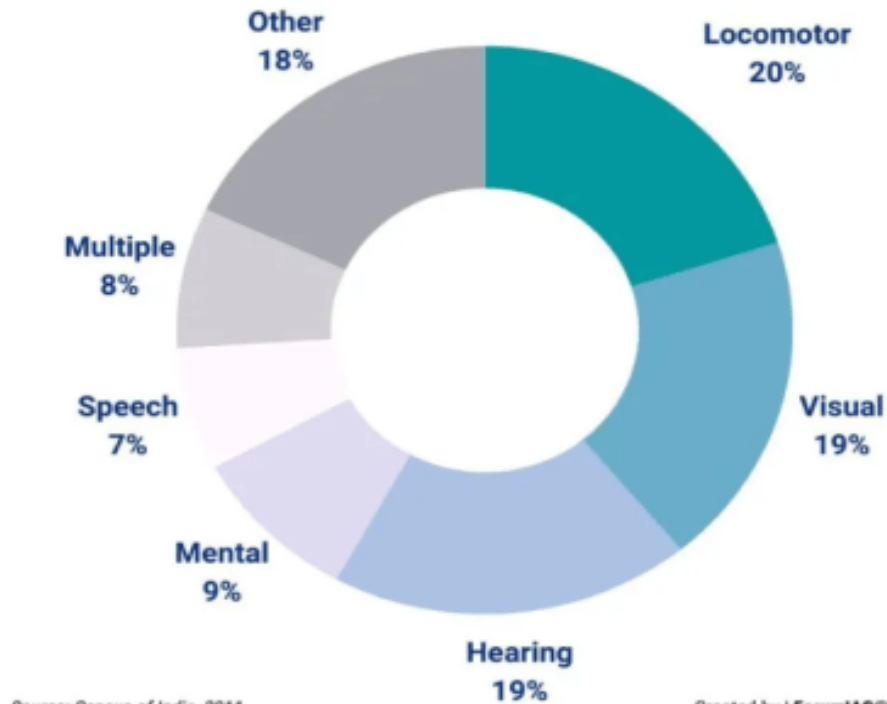
a. Number of Persons with Disability in India- In India, there are around **26.8 million** persons with disabilities. It constitutes around **2.21% of India's total population** (2011 Census). There are around **14.9 million men** (2.41% of men) and **11.9 million women** (2.01% of women) with disabilities.

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



Created by Forum IAS

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

Constitutional Provisions

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| 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. |
| 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. |

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Legal Provisions

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| 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) 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 cryptography, 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
 - a) building infrastructure for new materials and devices with **in-house R&D**.
 - b) **synergising the diverse and geographically distributed material workforce in India** to achieve mission

deliverables.

c) **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 4. 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.

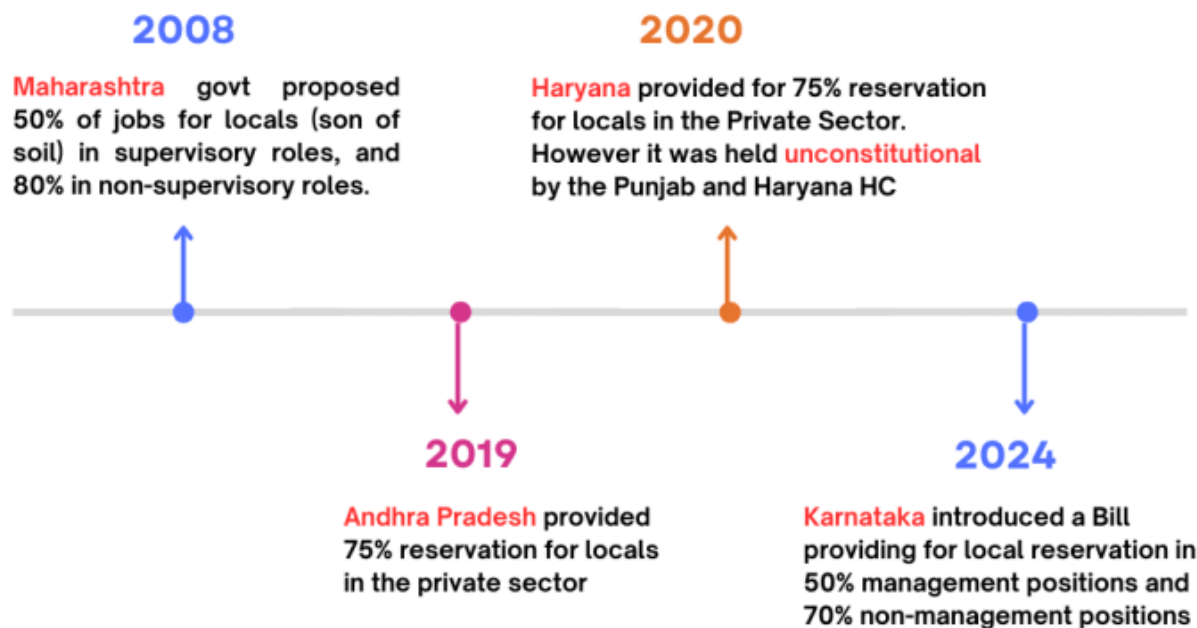
What has been the history of implementation of local reservation for private jobs?

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

- a. The **Maharashtra state government** set the ball rolling in 2008, with an attempt to provide 80 per cent reservation to son of soil.
- b. The **Andhra Pradesh government** passed a law mandating 75 per cent local reservation in 2019.
- c. 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 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

Created By Forum IAS

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> |
|----------------------------------|--|

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 5. 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* | All Industries | (%) Share of FP sector | |
| Registered (2019-2020) | 20.32 lakh | 144.21 lakh | 12.22 | |
| Un-incorporated | 51.11 lakh | 360.41 lakh | 14.18 | |

Source: Annual Report- FPI 2022-23, MoFPI, Govt. *Includes food products and beverage segments

Figure 6. 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- [\[Kurukshetra Feb 2024 Summary\] 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 disbursal- Credit disbursal 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

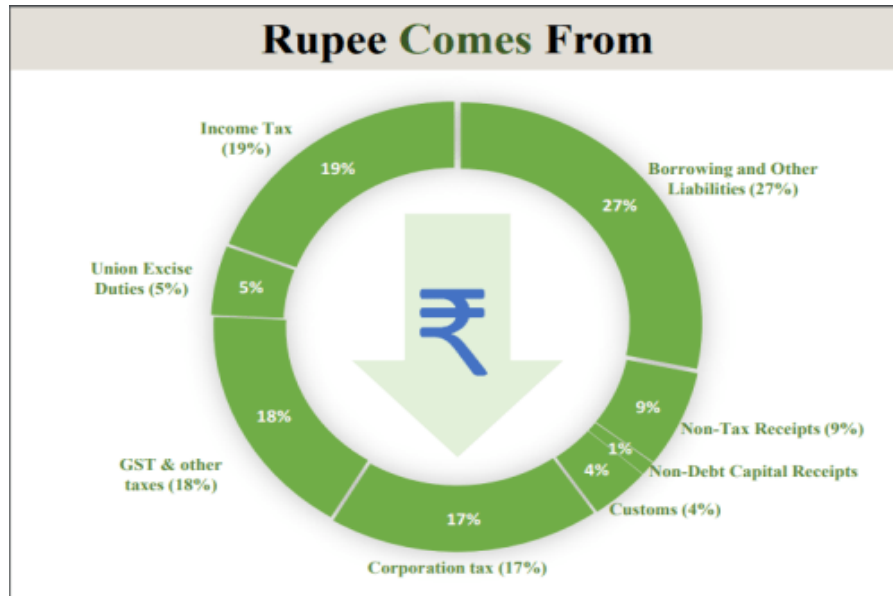
Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** presented the **Union Budget 2024-25** in the Parliament. This was her 7th consecutive budget. The Budget focused on the **poor, women, youth, and farmers**. The budget highlighted the plan to increase government spending, generation of jobs, and offering middle-class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

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

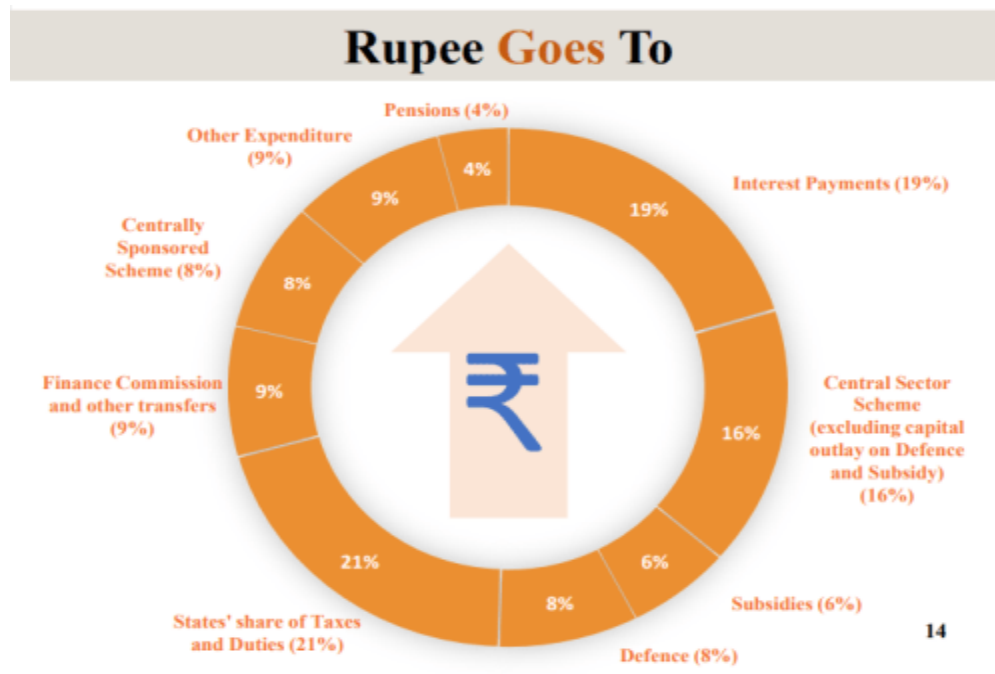
Budget- Budget is essentially a **statement of anticipated receipts and expenditure**. The annual budget covers all aspects of government finances, including revenue generation, expenditure allocations, and policy announcements.

Government Receipts



Source- India Budget

Government receipts

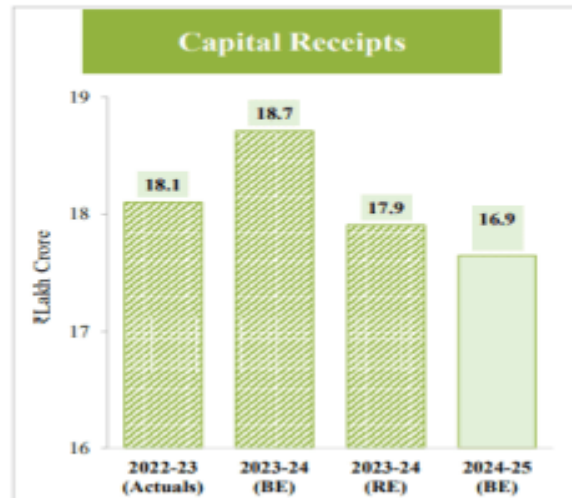
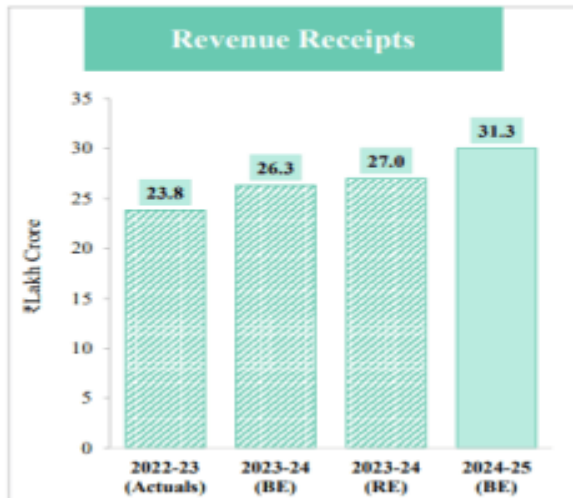


Source- India Budget

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**.

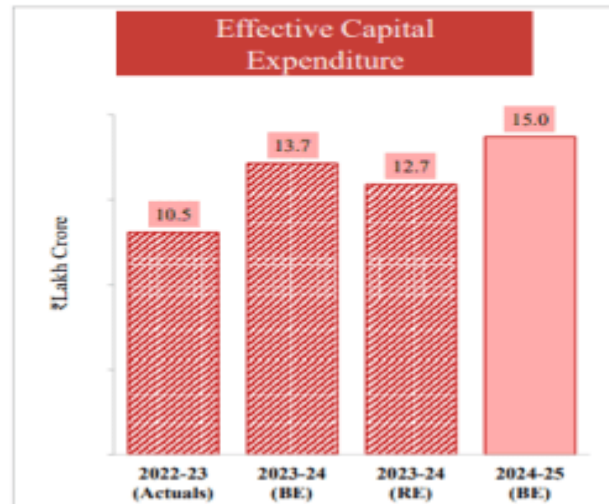
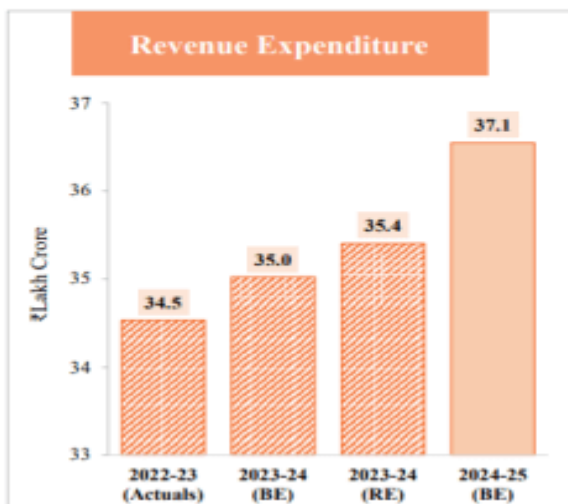
Receipts



Source- India Budget

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

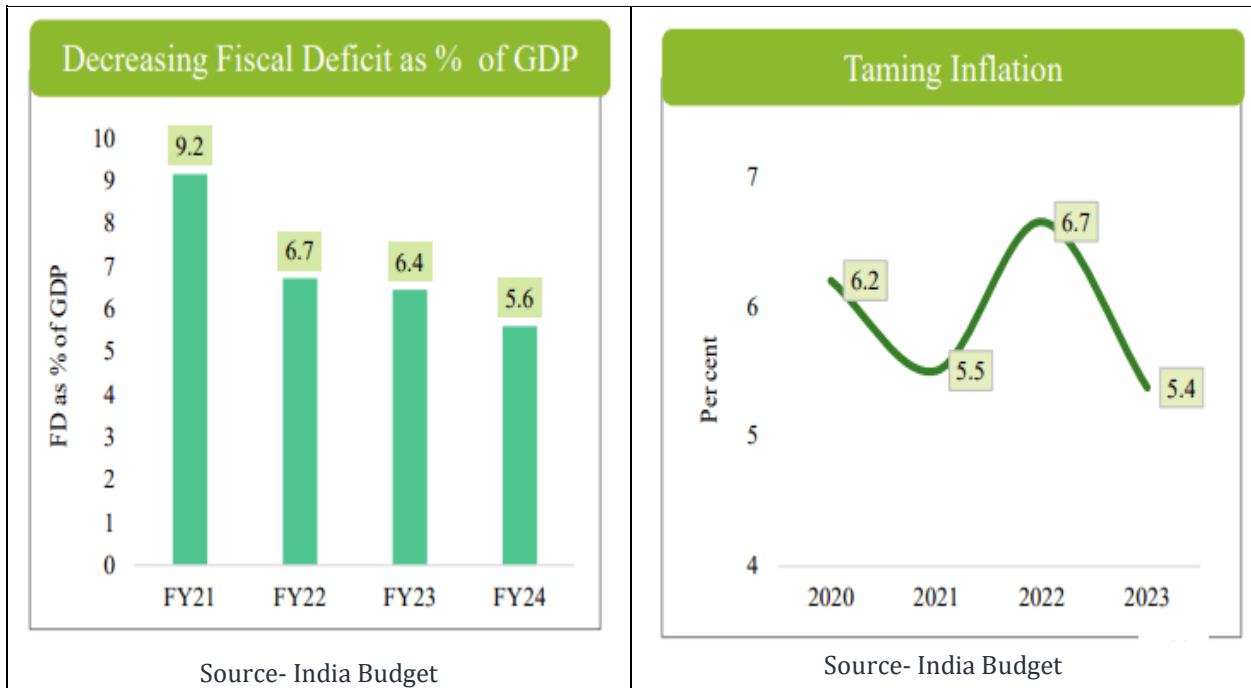
Expenditure



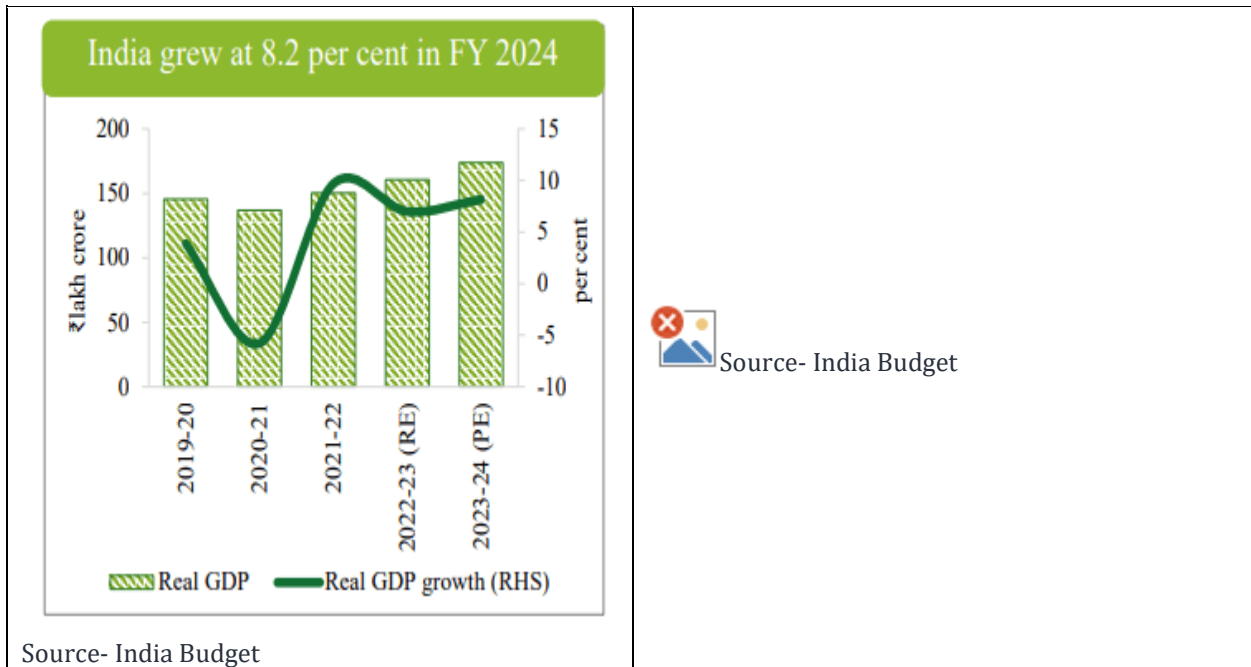
Source- India Budget

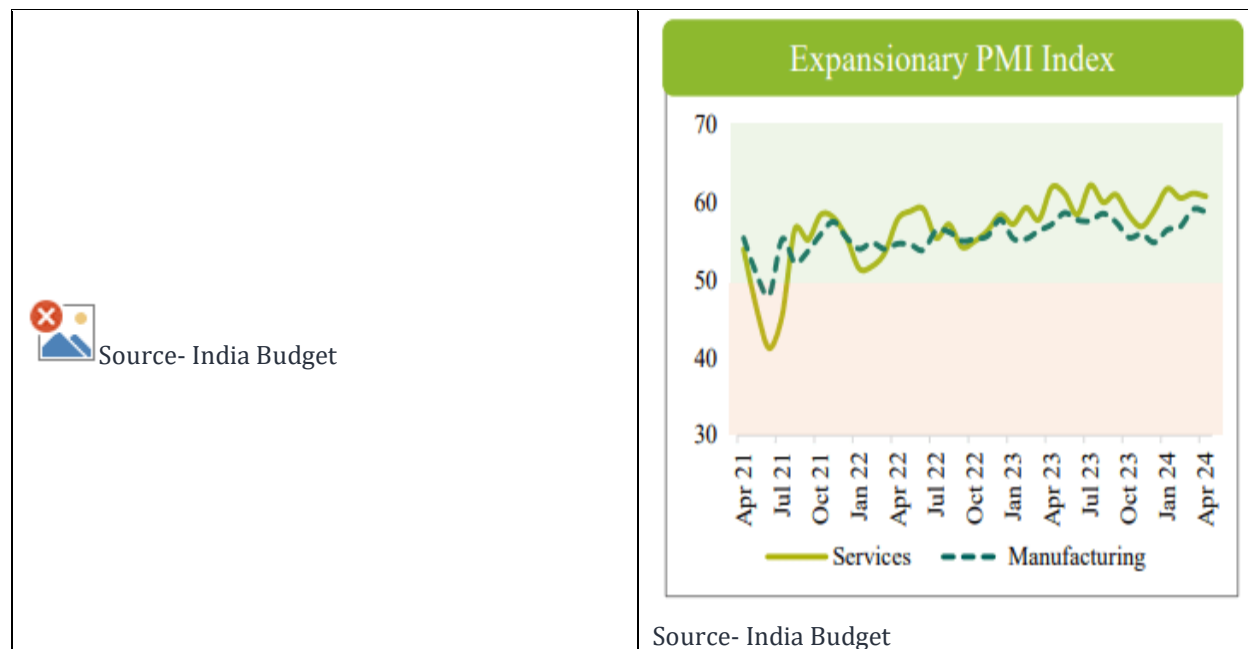
Fiscal Deficit- The fiscal deficit is estimated at **4.9 per cent** of GDP.

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**.

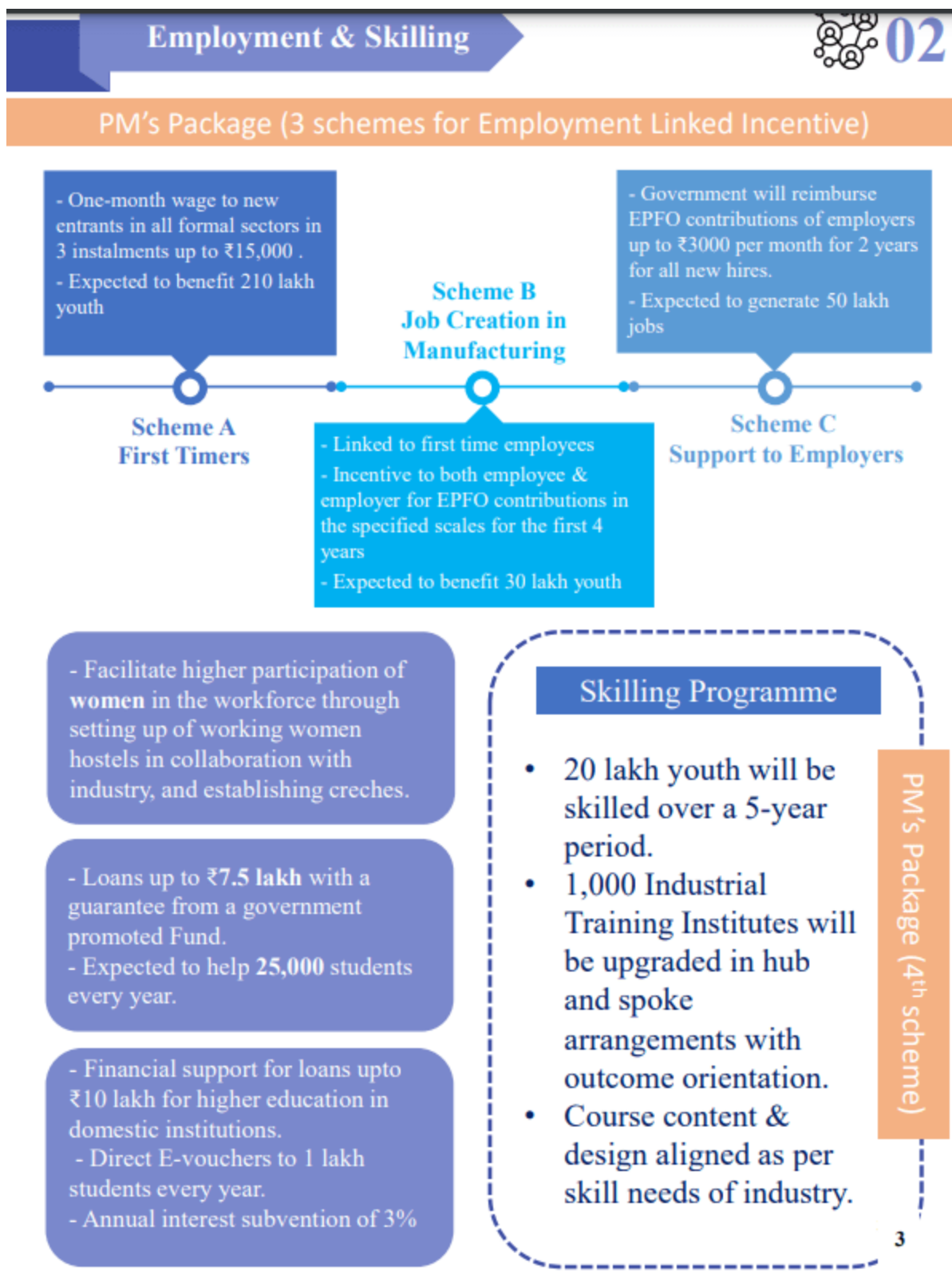
Scheme C: Support to employers- This employer-focussed scheme will cover additional employment in all sectors. All additional employment within a **salary of Rs.1 lakh per month will be counted**. The government will reimburse to employers up to **Rs. 3,000 per month for 2 years** towards their EPFO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

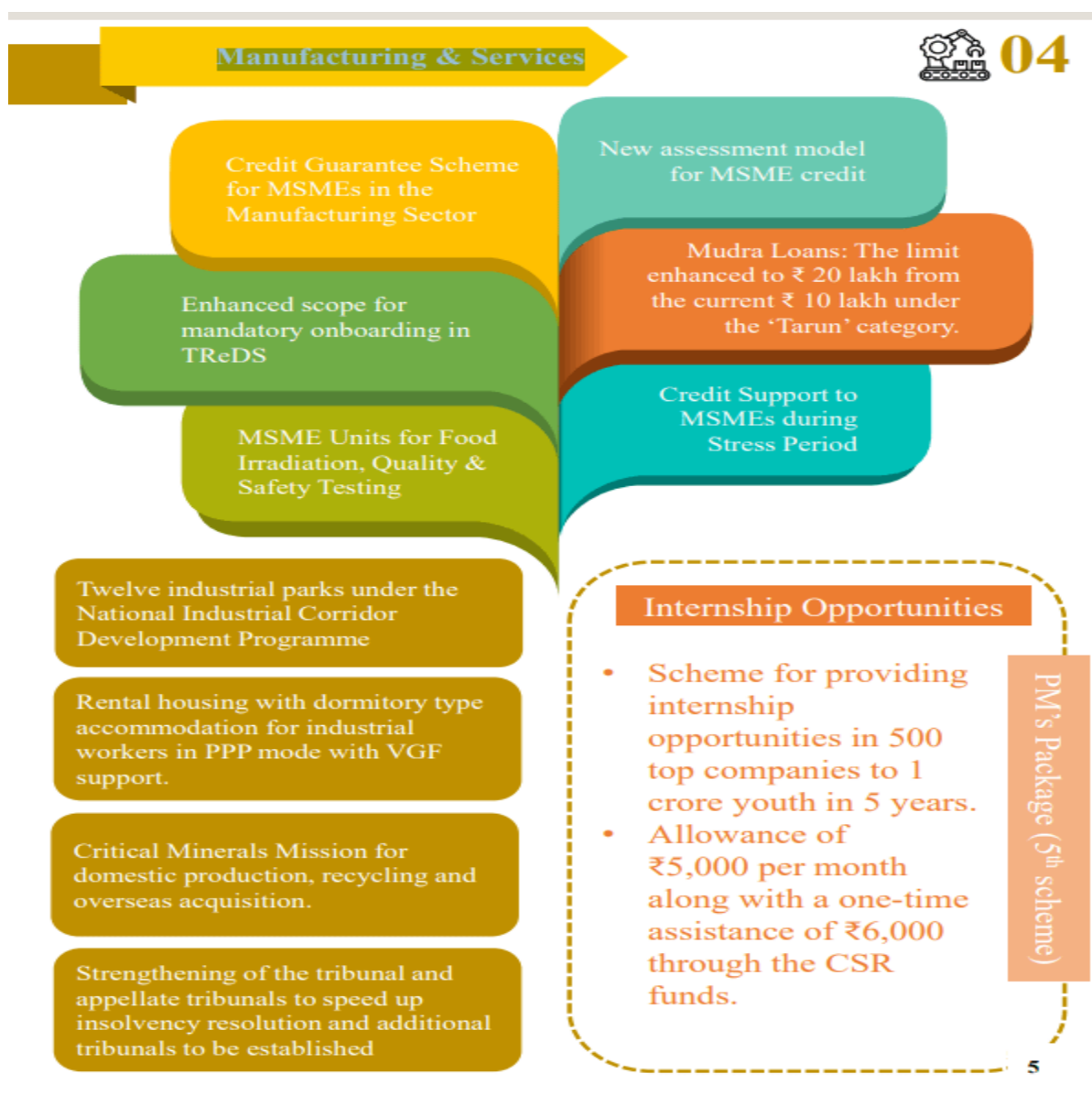
Internship in Top Companies- A comprehensive scheme for providing **internship opportunities in 500 top companies to 1 crore youth in 5 years**. They will gain exposure for 12 months to real-life business environment, varied professions and employment opportunities. **An internship allowance of Rs. 5,000 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

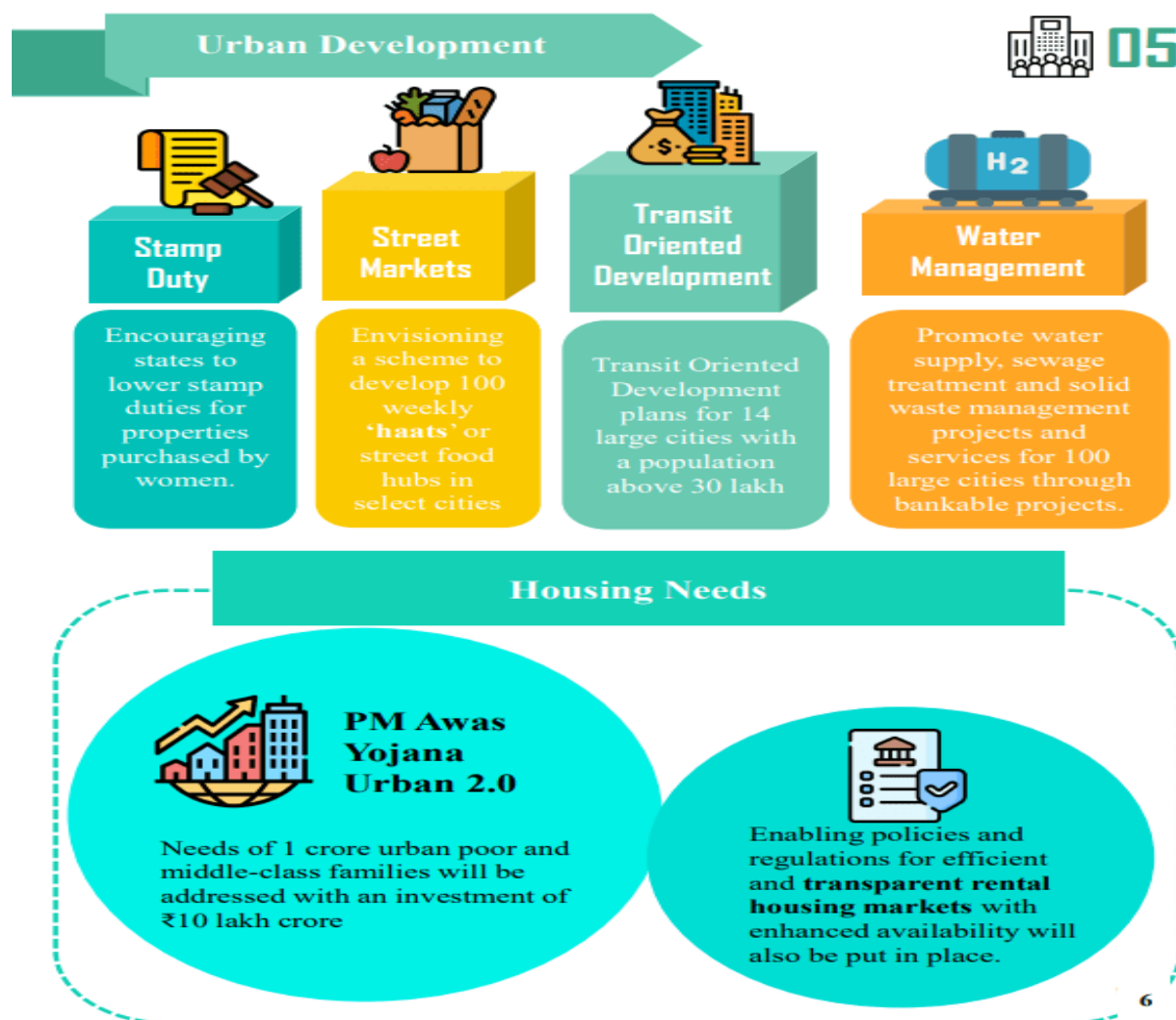
Priority 5- Urban Development

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.



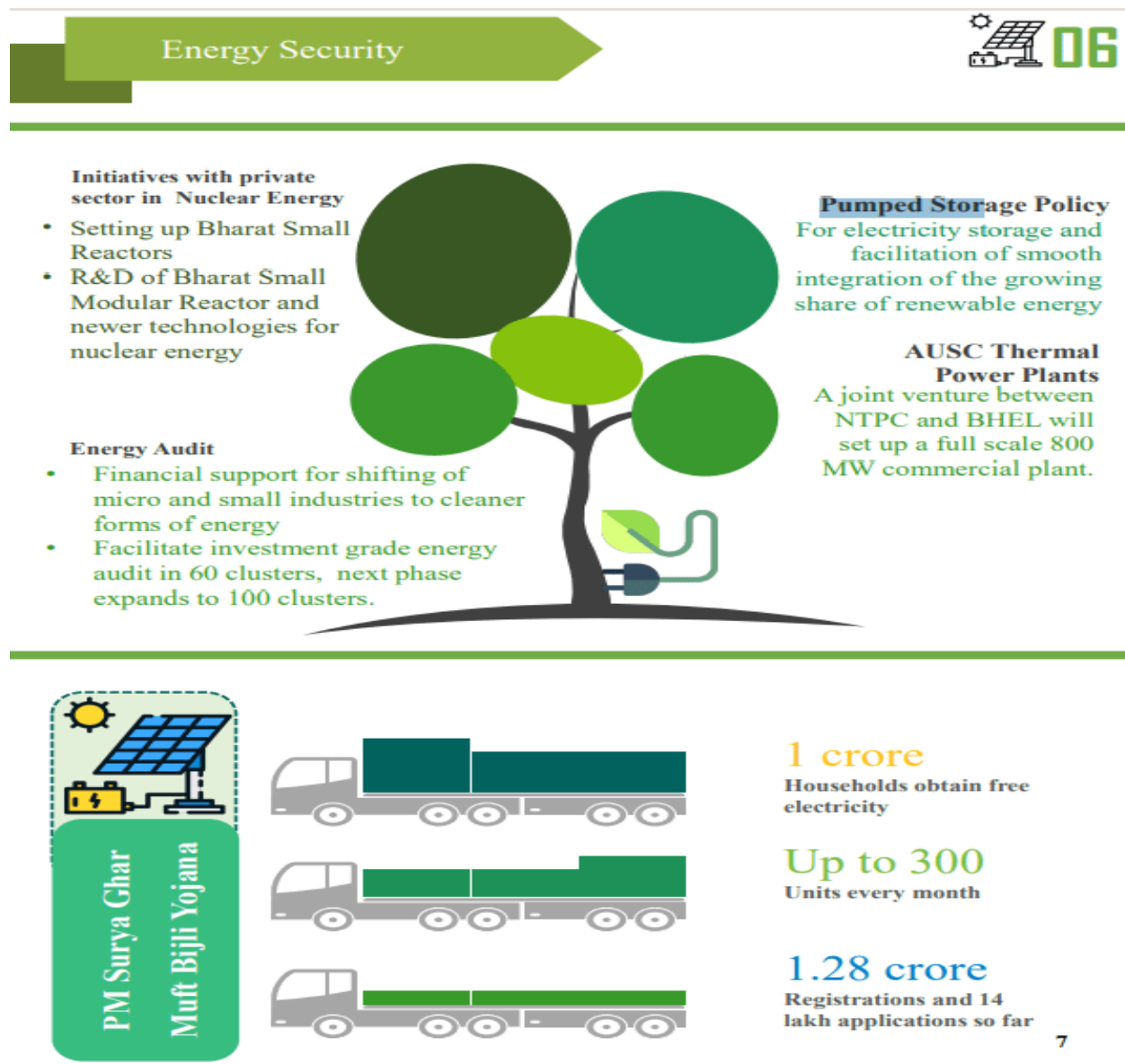
Source- India Budget

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**.

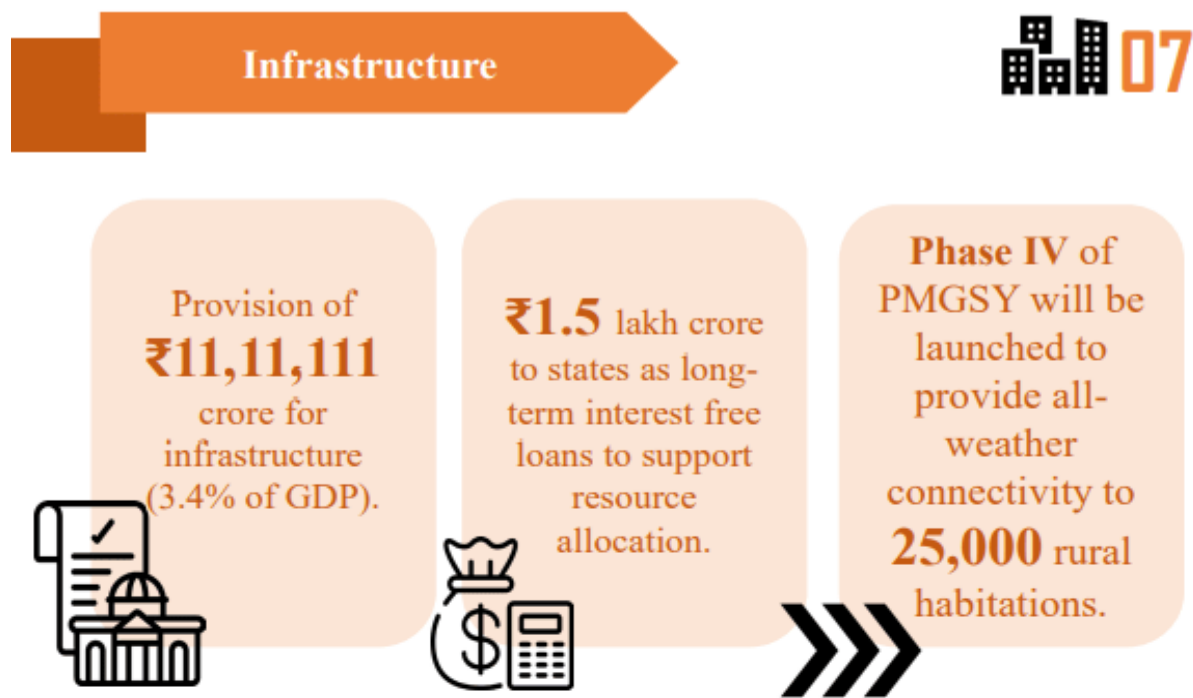


Source- India Budget

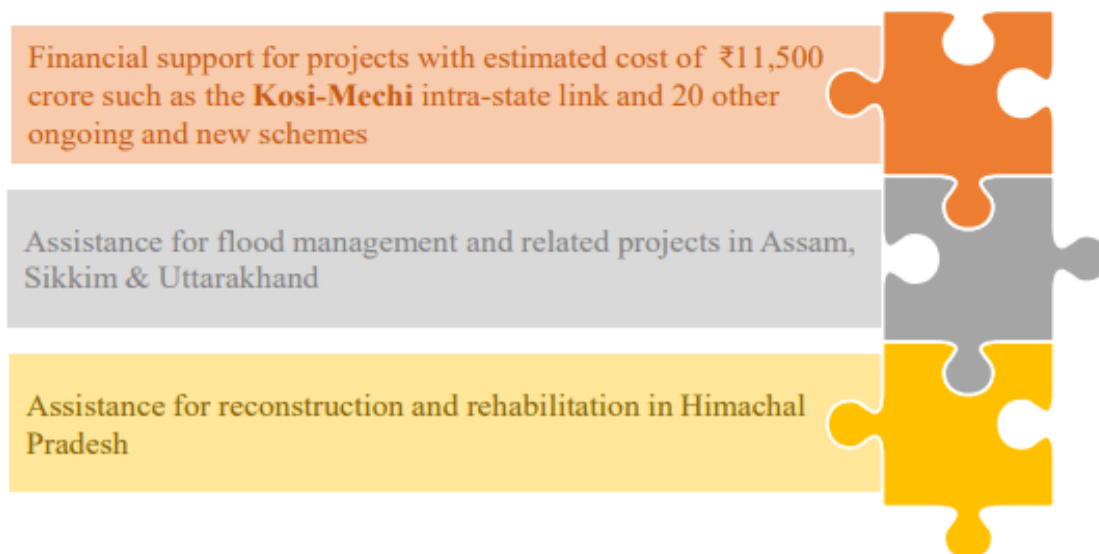
Priority 7- Infrastructure

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



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

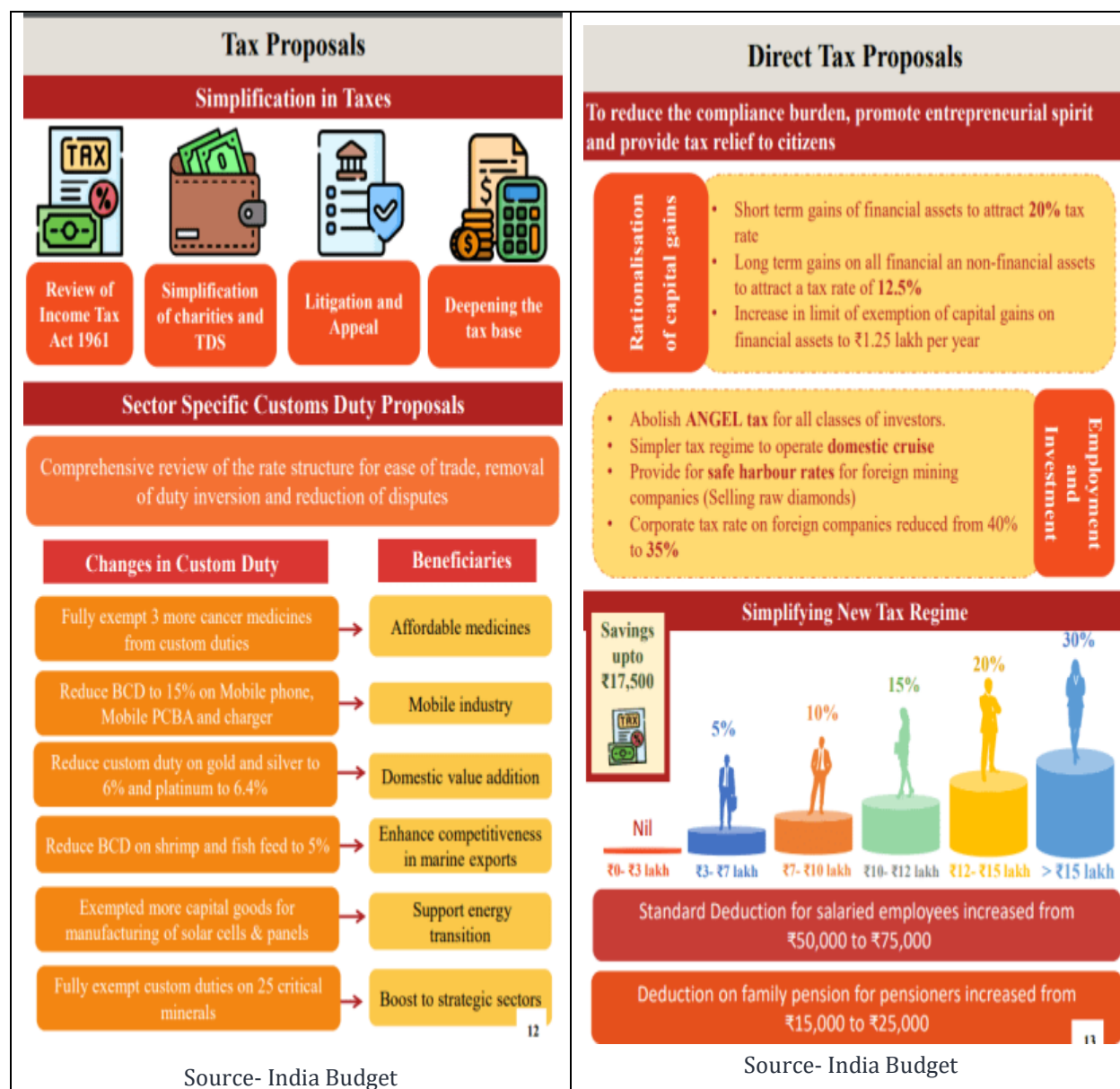
What are the Tax related Proposals in the Budget 2024-25?

The tax related proposals are explained through the following infographs-

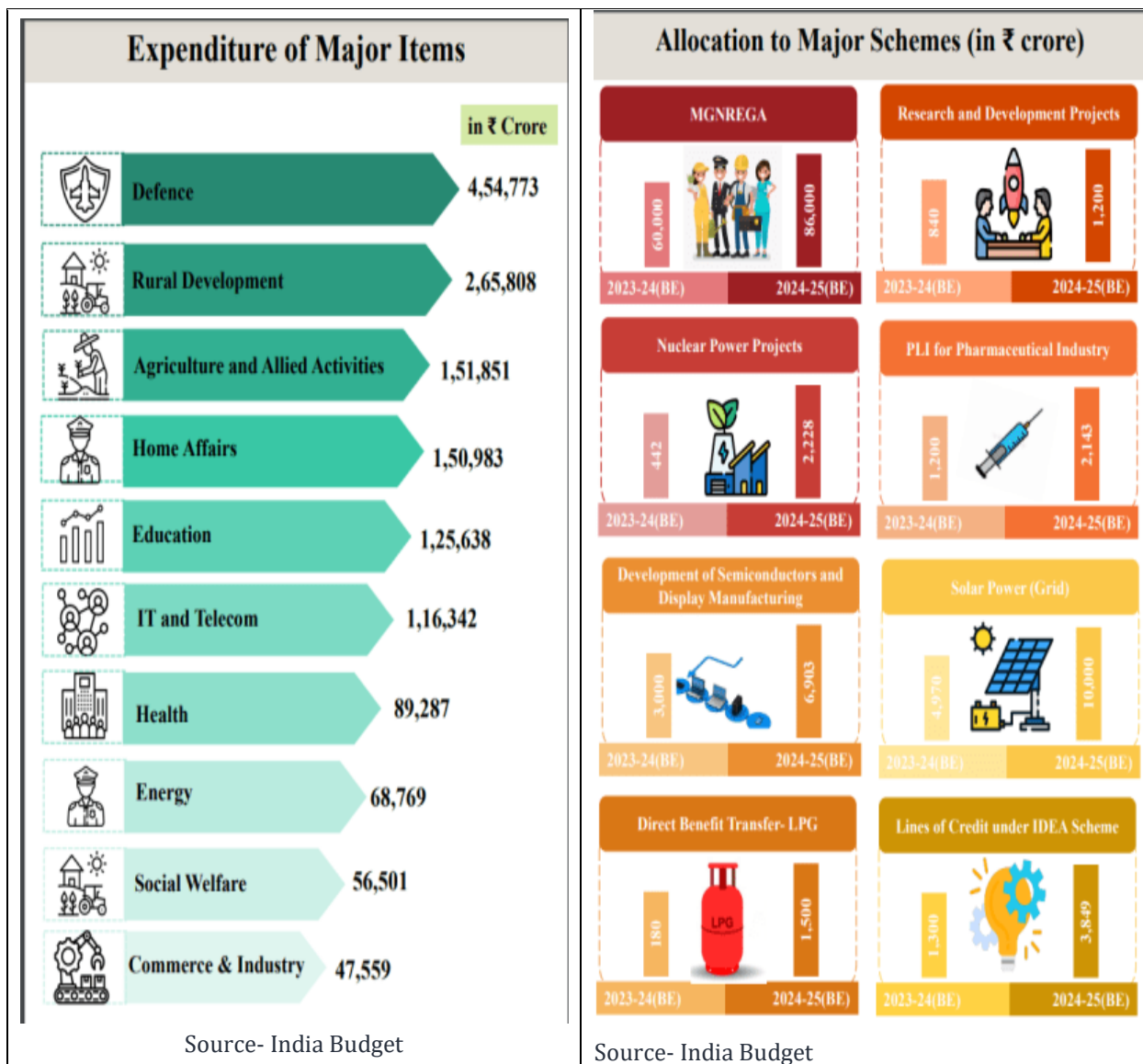
Sector Specific Customs Duty Proposals- Comprehensive review of the rate structure for ease of trade, removal of duty inversion and reduction of disputes.

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**.



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 7.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?

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| <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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| | |
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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

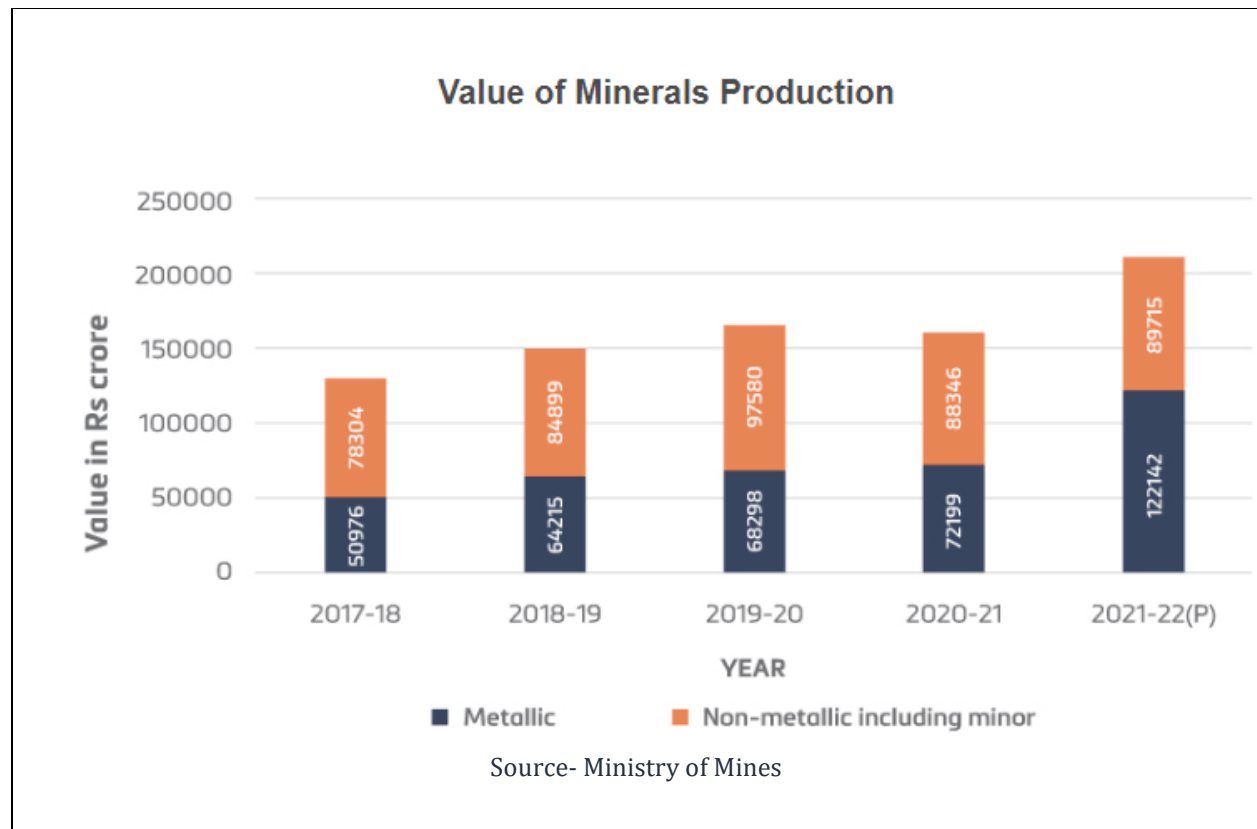
1. The ruling is a **victory for mineral-rich states** like Odisha, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh, as it **allows them to impose additional levies on mining companies** operating within their territories. This could enhance their revenue from mineral extraction activities.
2. The verdict further would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

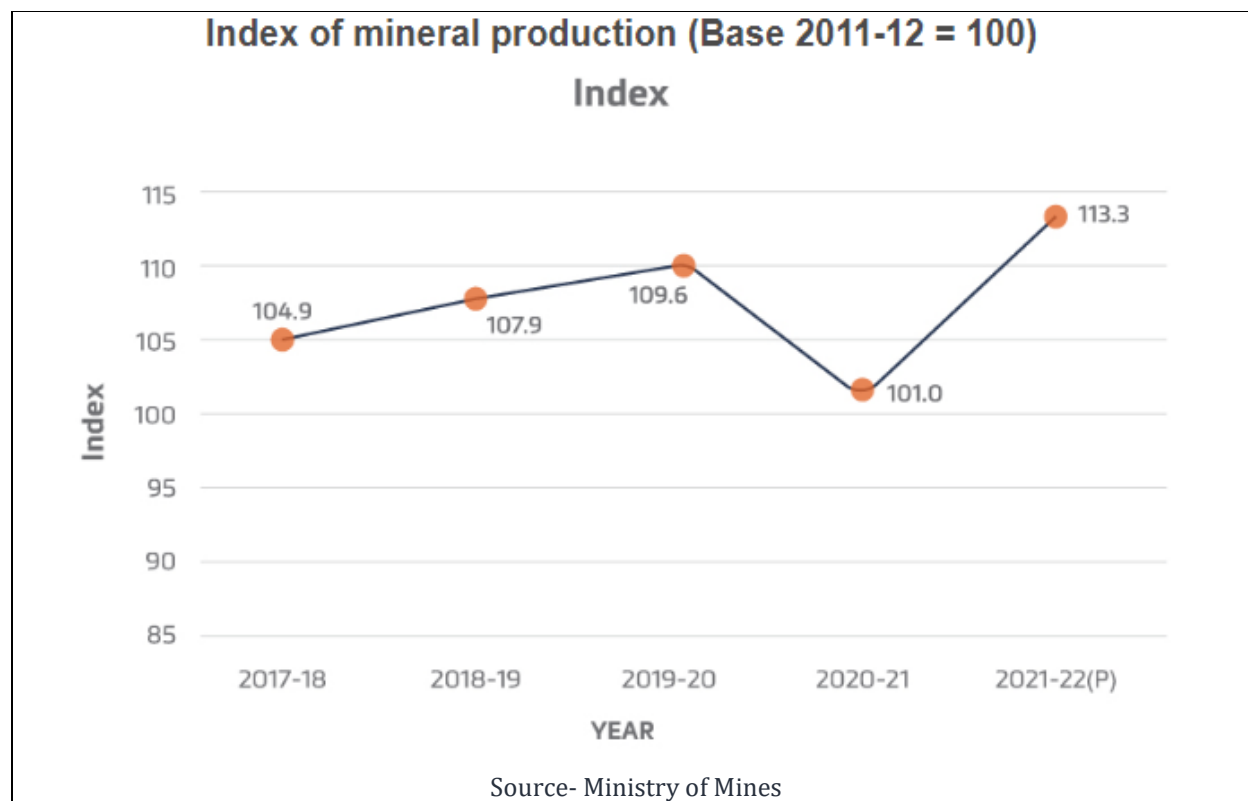
The article also discusses in detail about the mining sector in India.

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

| Sector | Number of Reporting Mines | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------|------------|------|
| | 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.

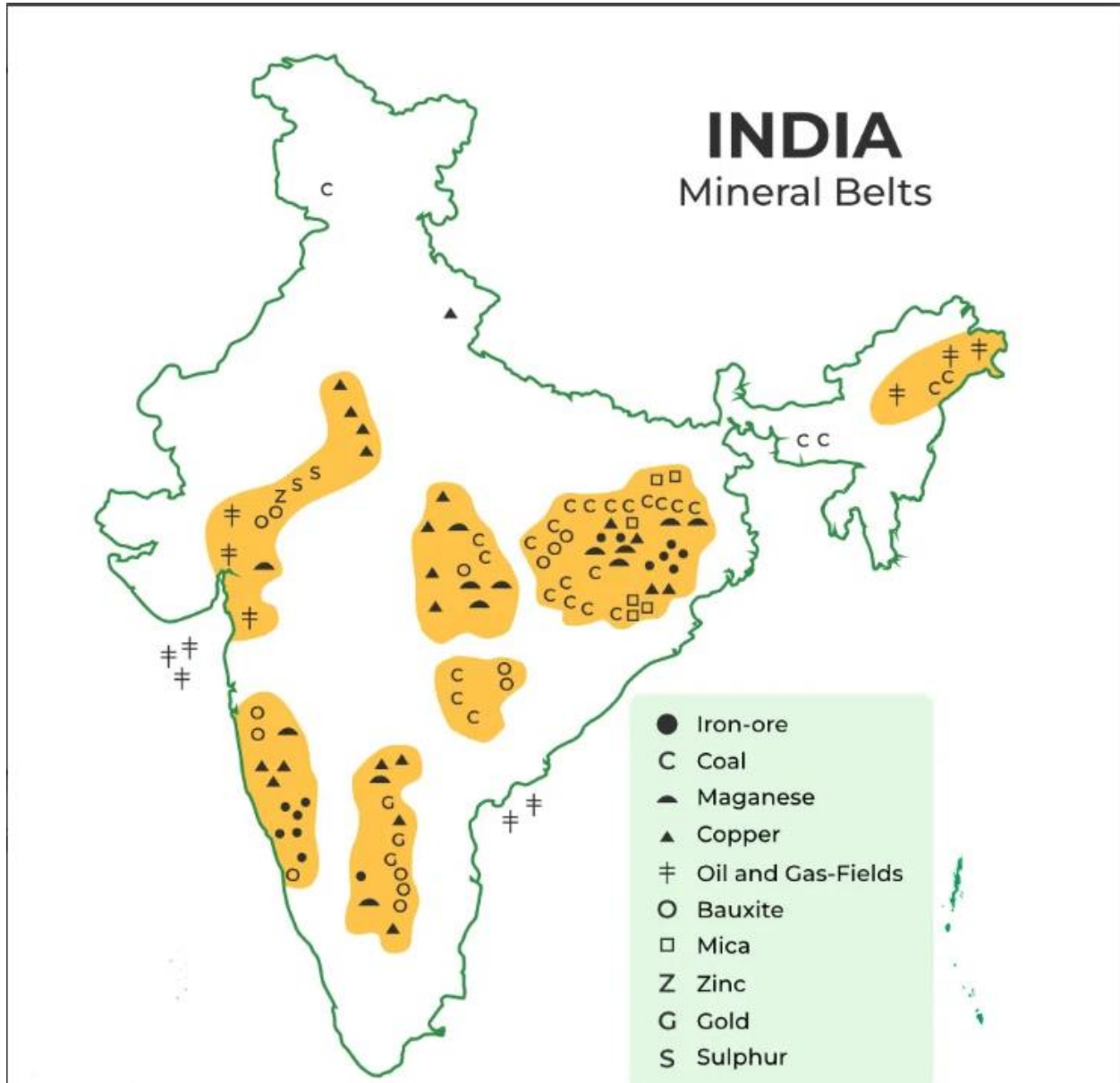
India produces as many as 95 minerals, which includes 4 fuel, 10 metallic, 23 non-metallic, 3 atomic and 55 minor minerals (including building and other materials). Status of some of the major mined minerals in India are the following-

| | |
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| 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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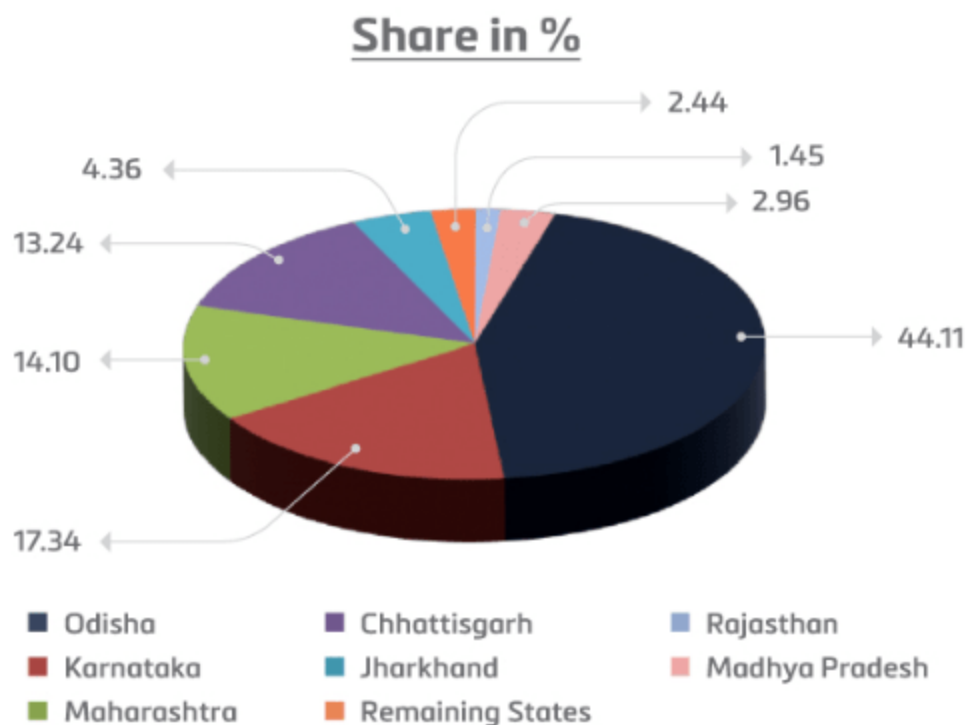
Mineral Distribution in India



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?

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| 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 to 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.

[Kuruksheetra 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- Kuruksheetra

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

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| 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

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| 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?

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| 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.



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.

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| 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.

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| 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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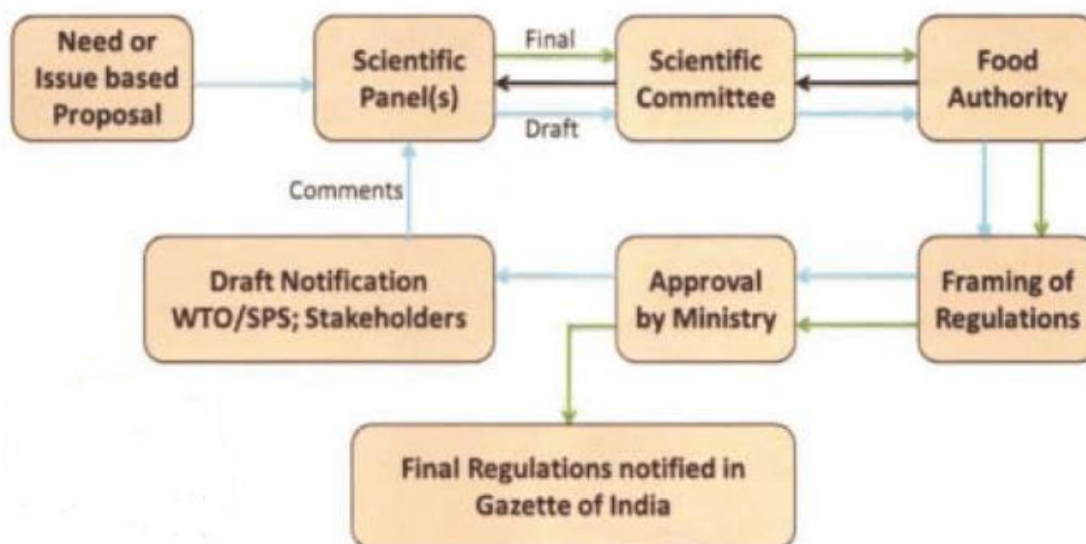
Role of FSSAI

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?

- 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.
- 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.
- 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'.
- 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.
- 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.