



SOCIAL ISSUES



Classroom Study Material 2023

(August 2022 to May 2023)

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SOCIAL ISSUES

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 Previous Year Questions	<p>A reference sheet of syllabus-wise segregated previous year questions from 2013–2022 (for the Social Issues Section) has been provided. In conjunction with the document, it will help in understanding the demand of the exam and developing a thought process for writing good answers.</p>	
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DELHI: 15 JUNE 5 PM	27 JUNE 1 PM	6 JULY 9 AM	13 JULY 5 PM	19 JULY 9 AM	28 JULY 1 PM
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AHMEDABAD: 12 June, 8:30 AM	JAIPUR: 3 July, 7:30 AM & 5 PM
HYDERABAD: 3 July, 4 PM	BHOPAL: 30 June, 5 PM
LUCKNOW: 27 July, 1 PM	CHANDIGARH: 15 June, 5 PM
PUNE: 5 June, 8 AM	3 July, 4 PM

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A NOTE FOR THE STUDENTS

Dear Students,

- ▶ Understanding current affairs can add depth to your perception of intricate issues and help you form nuanced perspectives, especially in the context of the Mains examination.
- ▶ In light of this, Mains 365 documents attempt to simplify your study process by including features that assist in creating answers, reviewing content, and retaining information.

Here are the key features we have integrated in the document:



A Topic at Glance:

This offers a comprehensive view of the topic, seamlessly connecting current and static aspects while providing necessary data and facts.



Enhanced Infographics:

These are designed to effectively revise as well as to be readily used in your answers, making your responses more engaging and informative.



Data Banks:

To help you identify and revise the crucial datasets of topics, we have designed and integrated data banks in the articles.



Appendix:

We have added an appendix of key data and facts at the end of each document, aiming to facilitate quick revision.



Weekly Focus Document List:

A QR code linked list of relevant weekly focus documents has been added at the end of each document, ensuring a smoother journey while approaching these topics.



Previous years questions:

To facilitate efficient revision, a QR code linked syllabus-wise segregated list of previous years' questions is added.

We sincerely hope Mains 365 documents will guide you effectively in your preparation and aid you in scoring better in your Mains examination.

*"Learn everything you can, anytime you can, from anyone you can.
There will always come a time when you will be grateful you did."*

All the best! Team VisionIAS

1. WOMEN

1.1. WOMEN IN WORKFORCE

WOMEN IN WORKFORCE AT A GLANCE



Current status in India

- Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFRR) in India has **reduced to 32.8% from 42.7% in 2004-05**. For men the current LFPR is **77.2%**.
- Women are **underrepresented in white collar jobs** (high wage, high skilled) and **blue-collar jobs** (need of manual labour) and **dominated in pink collar jobs** like teaching and nannies (lower wages).



Importance of Women in Work Force

- Gender equality would increase India's **annual GDP growth by 1.4%** (McKinsey report).
- Women's **decision-making power** in the household is more if they are employed (NFHS).
- Improvement in social indicators** like Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) etc.
- A younger women workforce could help India reap the benefits of **demographic Dividend**.
- Parity with Other Countries and achieving Global Commitment** such as SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), etc.



Reason behind Low Participation of Women in Work Force

- Family responsibilities** and the need to **conform to social norms**.
- Women participation in workforce is discouraged with the rise of household income.
- Lack of opportunity as a **higher percentage of males** compared to females have received **vocational/technical training**.
- Wage disparity** as men in India capture 82% of labour income (**World Inequality Report 2022**)
 - India ranked **135 among a total of 146 countries** (**Global Gender Gap Index 2022**).
- Gender based discrimination at workplace** like low wages, sexual harassment, etc.
- Digital divide** (only 35% women use internet).



Initiatives to promote women in workforce

- Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017 enhanced paid maternity leave to 26 weeks** from the erstwhile 12 weeks.
- Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (**OSH**), **2020, allows women to work at night**.
- Code on wages prohibits discrimination** on the ground of sex.
- Enhancing skills of women** by Women's Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), National ITIs and Regional ITIs.
- Mission Shakti**: An umbrella schemes for safety, security and empowerment of women.
- Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (**PoSH**) to **enhance safety of women at workplace**.
- G20 Alliance for Empowerment and Progression of Women's Economic Representation (G20 EMPOWER)**.



Way forward

- Sound labour market information** for developing well-informed policies.
- Government should **offer incentives for better pay, training, skills acquisition and job quotas** to prospective employers to encourage the hiring of women.
- Women should be **encouraged to undertake studies and pursue occupations in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)**.
- Sensitization** about the existing stereotypes on women.
- Extend employer responsibilities to **undertake compulsory gender pay audits and develop action plans to eradicate un-fair pay practices**, involving trade unions.
- Enhances women's safety, women in leadership roles, facilitate flexible working
- Policy Making**: Sound labour market information is essential for developing well-informed policies.

1.2. PERMANENT COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

PERMANENT COMMISSION FOR WOMEN AT A GLANCE

- Permanent commission means **a career in the armed forces till retirement**. Under short service commission, the Army allows **10-year service with an option of a 4-year extension**.
- After the intervention of Supreme Court, the Centre decided to **accord permanent commission to women in defence force**.



Current status of women representation in Armed Force

- Indian **Army, Air Force and Navy** enlist only **0.56%, 1.08% and 6.5% of female candidates**, respectively.
- Women comprise 10% of the Russian Armed Forces and 16% of US.



Arguments against granting permanent commission to women

- **Low acceptance** of women leadership among male soldiers
- Women **may not meet the physical criteria** met by their male counterpart.
- Women's vulnerability to **sexual harassment, lack of physical infrastructure like separate toilet, etc.**



Way ahead

- **Accommodating women centric needs:** Ensure realistic ways to return to military service after an extended absence due to childbirth.
- **Opening combat wings for women:** It will enhance opportunity for women and act as a multiplier force for gender equality in defence forces.
- **Make military lucrative for women:** Veteran women defence candidates should spread the words about how fulfilling and honourable this service could be.
- **Training since childhood in Sainik schools** would provide adequate opportunities to girls for training and overcome the physical barriers.



Entry of women in defence forces

- **1888:** **Indian Military Nursing Services** was established.
- **1992:** Women were inducted for non-medical roles.
- **2015:** **Fighter pilot** post was opened in Indian Air Force
- **2020:** Supreme Court ruled in favour of granting permanent commission to women in **Secretary, Ministry of Defence Vs. Babita Puniya case**



Arguments for granting permanent commission to women

- Denial of Permanent Commission **violates Right to equality** and nourishes stereotype behaviour.
- **Relaxation for physical criteria** is already provided to **soldiers from hilly state**.
- Merit should be the fundamental basis for induction and promotion at **workplace**.
- **More opportunities for women** for the higher ranks of colonel, brigadier, etc. as these could only be obtained after 14 years of service.
- Improved sex ratio in higher ranking would result in **gender sensitive decisions in defence forces**.
- Enhanced **social status of women**.

1.3. WOMEN IN STEM

WOMEN IN STEM AT A GLANCE



About STEM

- ◉ STEM refers to **Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics**.
- ◉ **Relevance of STEM:** Promote critical thinking, facilitate social mobility, enhances economic productivity, creates innovators.



Representation of women in STEM

- ◉ **Globally only 18% girls in tertiary education are pursuing STEM studies** against 35% of boys (World Bank)
- ◉ **In India Percentage of women researchers:**
 - **Overall:** Approximately 18%
 - **In engineering and technology:** Approximately 14%
 - **In natural science and agriculture:** Approximately 22%
 - **In health science:** Approximately 24%



Factors perpetuating gender STEM gaps

- ◉ **Dual role syndrome:** Professional decisions of women are largely affected by their domestic responsibilities.
- ◉ **Discrimination at workplace:** Women face Gender bias at workplace in performance evaluations due to lack of women representation in leadership positions.
- ◉ **Gender Stereotypes:** STEM fields are often viewed as masculine and it is believed that women are intellectually weaker in Maths and Science.
- ◉ **Lack of suitable workplace or education benefits** like travel allowance, lodging and maternity benefits also dissuades them from pursuing careers in STEM.
- ◉ **Girls have fewer role models** in STEM to inspire their interest in these fields.



Initiatives taken by the government to promote women in STEM

- ◉ **Vigyan Jyoti** to create a level-playing field for the meritorious girls in high school to pursue STEM in their higher education.
- ◉ **Knowledge Involvement Research Advancement through Nurturing (KIRAN)** to encourage women scientists through various programmes in the field of S&T.
- ◉ **Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions (GATI)** seeks to bring about institutional reforms to facilitate women in Science, Technology, Engineering, Medicine and Mathematics (STEMM) disciplines at all levels.
- ◉ **Consolidation of University Research for Innovation and Excellence (CURIE)** provides support to women universities in improving their R&D facilities.
- ◉ **Biotechnology Career Advancement and Re-orientation Programme (BioCARE)** for Career Development of employed/ unemployed women Scientists upto 45 years of age for whom it is the first extramural research grant.
- ◉ **SHE STEM** an annual event to celebrate women in STEM Organised by Embassy of Sweden in India, Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, and German Centre of Innovation and Research.



Way ahead

- ◉ **Closing the confidence gap** through Women's Forum or Working Parents Connection.
- ◉ **Address gender biases in learning materials by including** biographies of female scientists, mathematicians, etc.
- ◉ **Paternity leave** will prevent women from bearing the brunt of career setbacks due to childbirth.
- ◉ Incentives like age relaxation in eligibility criteria for research work, public funded creche facilities, on campus housing, etc.
- ◉ **Gender Inclusion Fund and Partnerships with the private sector** for financial support to non-profit STEM initiatives.

1.4. CARE ECONOMY

Why in news?

Union Minister for Women and Child Development emphasised the significance of the care economy and its potential to create 300 million additional jobs, with 80% of them being led by women.

About Care Economy

- Care economy “consists of **activities and relations involved in meeting the physical, psychological and emotional needs** of adults and children, old and young, frail and able-bodied.
- It encompasses a range of sectors such as **education, health, and social work domestic works among others.**

Impact of care work on women

- Causes time poverty:** Deteriorates quality of life due to issues like sleep deprivation, social reclusiveness, etc.
- Generates considerable opportunity cost:** Prevents women from actively pursuing further education, employment opportunities and raising their skill-level.
- Discrimination at workplace:** Discrimination in hiring and pay, women choose employment below their skills levels and in sectors that are traditionally associated with their gender roles.
- Reinforces gender-based discrimination:** Increases hierarchy in gender relations and gender inequalities in the family, detrimental to women empowerment
- Other issues:** Increased vulnerability to environmental and **economic changes such as climate-related shocks**, austerity policies reducing social sector expenditure etc.

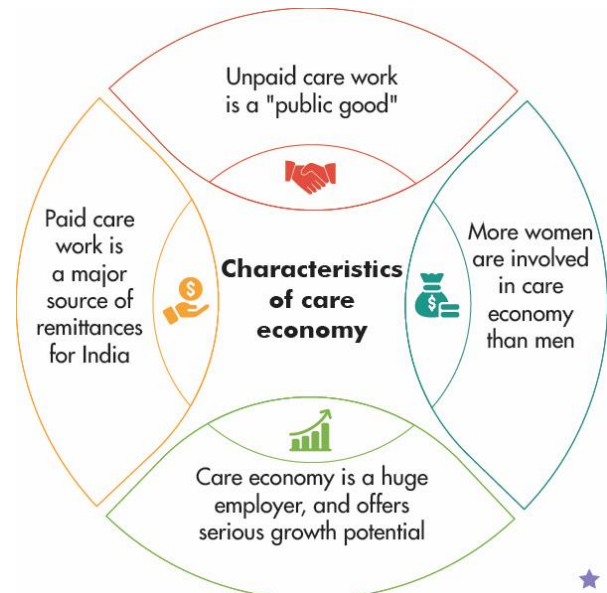
Way ahead to reduce the burden of care economy from women

- Recognition:** Measuring unpaid work and valuation of Unpaid Work in monetary units.
- Reduction:** Providing Universal access to care policies and services by building robust social infrastructure and through measures like family allowances and child benefits, investing in technological changes, etc.
- Redistribution:** Implementing gender-neutral and publicly funded leave policies, promoting flexible work schedule or teleworking, bringing behavioral changes through education.
- Identify care workers:** Define care workers, create an identification mechanism for them, allocate them job card to ensure necessary benefits reaches to them. E-Sharm portal could be leveraged in this whole process.
- Invest in care economy:** If an additional 2% of the GDP was invested in the Indian health and care sector, 11 million additional jobs could be generated.
- Address issues associated with Emotional labour.**

DATA BANK

Women and care economy

- 75% of unpaid care work is delivered by women (globally)** which is three times more than men.
- 1% of India's GDP is spent** on care economy.
- 3.1% of India's GDP is the value** of women's unpaid work.
- 80% of India men believe that child care is the primary responsibility of mother.**



Emotional Labour

- First coined in 1983, emotional labor refers to **regulating or managing emotional expressions** with others as part of one's personal and professional role.
- For example, **organising staff away days** and cards and gifts for colleagues, or **calling in-laws** to ask about their health among others.
- Emotional labor, like **physical labour**, is **effortful and fatiguing** when done repeatedly.
- Its burden **falls disproportionately on women due to gendered stereotypes** that women are more empathetic or nurturing.
- It **results in exacerbating inequality** as it goes unpaid.

1.5. WOMEN'S RESERVATION IN LEGISLATURES

WOMEN'S RESERVATION IN LEGISLATURES AT A GLANCE



Background

- The Women's Reservation Bill was first introduced in 1996 but lapsed with the dissolution of the Lok Sabha.
- Since then Bill has been reintroduced multiple times (last in 2010) but **couldn't garner majority support**.
- The bill proposes to **reserve 33% of seats in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies for women**.
- Reserved seats may be **allotted by rotation to different constituencies** in the state or union territory.



Arguments supporting the bill

- **Essential for Political empowerment of women** that will help them fight the abuse, discrimination, and inequality they suffer from.
- Critical for **sustainable progress, representative democracy, inclusive society**.
- **Encouraging experience** of reservation for women in panchayats.
- **International mandates** under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) under The Beijing Platform for Action 1995.



Arguments against the bill

- **Perpetuate the unequal status of women** since they would not be perceived to be competing on merit.
- **Helpful only for elite women**.
- **May perpetuate a "proxy culture"** or a similar concept of "sarpanch pati".
- **Diverts attention from the larger issues of electoral reform** such as criminalisation of politics and inner party democracy.



Current status:

- **Representation of women in Parliament** and in most State legislatures is less than 15%.
- **Seats are not reserved** for females either in **Parliament or in State Legislatures**.
- India **ranked 135 out of 146 countries** on the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2022.



Constraints for the participation of women in politics:

- Economic dependency,
- Patriarchal values
- Criminalisation of politics
- Lack of education and awareness
- Lack of family support



Way ahead

- Both **political commitment and rigorous evidence** is necessary to deliberate, debate and ensure its passage in Parliament.
- Bringing **change in the male dominated value system** prevalent in the politics.
- Organizing **awareness and leadership development programs** for women to boost their confidence
- **Ensuring reservation within political parties** as an alternative measure. **Countries like Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Sweden, and Norway** etc., reserve seats for women within the political parties

1.6. SARPANCH PATIS

Why in news

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj has recommended for empowering elected women to remove 'Sarpanch Patis'.

Key recommendations

- Standing Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj has made following recommendations for **empowering Women Elected Representatives (ERs)** at panchayat level
 - Training and capacity building to **curb prevalent concepts like Sarpanch Pati or Pradhan Pati** (husbands trying to act as **proxy** for elected women).
 - **Financially empower women** to facilitate them in taking **independent decisions**.
- **Problems faced by Women ERs**
 - **Low financial and digital literacy.**
 - **Lack of adequate information about their rights** and responsibilities.
 - **Inadequate managerial experience.**
 - **Social barriers** placed by traditional orthodox and parochial society etc.
- **Measures to empower Women ERs**
 - Bring **attitudinal change** in both men and women.
 - Stakeholders and government need to make **special efforts to facilitate their on-boarding.**

Women reservation in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)



Provisions under **73rd Constitutional Amendment act of 1992**: 1/3rd of **seats of PRIs** and 1/3rd offices of Chairperson at all level of PRIs (covered by Part IX) **are reserved for women (Article 243 D)**.



Many states like Bihar, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan etc. have made **legal provision for 50% reservation for women among members and Sarpanches.**



As per **Women and Men in India 2022 report**, of the over 31.8 lakh ERs, nearly 46% (over 14.5 lakh) were women.

Related news

- World Economic Forum (WEF) will consider the **participation of women at panchayat level to rank countries** in its future **Global Gender Gap reports**.
- Inclusion of data on women's participation at panchayat level will **push India's ranking up on global stage.**



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1.7. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AT A GLANCE

Any **act of gender-based violence** that results in, or is likely to result in, **physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women and girls.**



Factors underling VaW

- **Individual Factors:** High levels of inequality in relationships; Use of drugs and harmful use of alcohol; Internalised misogyny; etc.
- **Community Factors:** Rigid patriarchal gender norms; High levels of poverty and unemployment; Low presence of women in public space; Popular culture promoting toxic masculinity; Marginalisation; etc.
- **VaW increased 16.3%** in 2021 against 2020.



Challenges in India in preventing VaW

- **Issues related to implementation of laws:** Overburdened judiciary; Low conviction rates; Ambiguity in law and definitions; Apathy among police force and healthcare workers; Few female police; Under-reporting; Stereotyping and gender bias in the justice system.
- **Societal issues:** Acceptance and tolerance of violence in society; Hard to detect violations; Existence of Extrajudicial "Courts"; Lack of attention to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.
- **Other issues:** The amendments made to the criminal law are not comprehensive; Paucity of data available on crimes against women; Lack of safe infrastructure.



Way ahead

- **The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act of 2013 and 2018**
- **New IT Rules to deal with Cyber-violence against women**
- **Progressive Supreme Court judgments**
- **Establishment of National Commission for Women.**
- **Schemes/Initiatives:** Mahila Police Volunteers (MPVs); Ujjawala Scheme; Nirbhaya Fund;; Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) Scheme; etc.
- **Ratification of International Conventions:** like Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
- **State level initiatives:** Himmat app by the Delhi police, Samman Campaign by Madhya Pradesh Police, Pink Protection project by Kerala Government, etc.

1.7.1. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

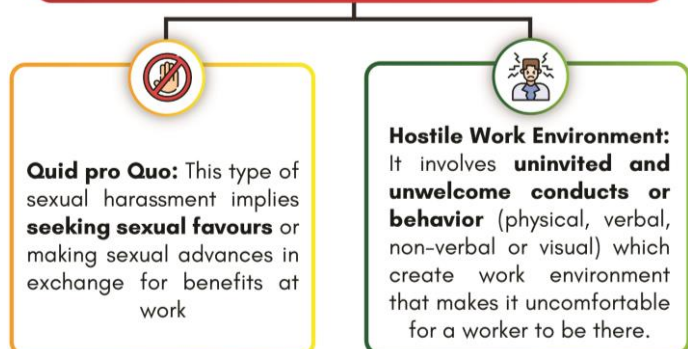
Why in news?

Recently, the Supreme Court took the cognizance of "serious lapses" and "uncertainty" in the implementation of the **Protection of Women from Sexual Harassment (PoSH) Act, 2013.**

More on the news

- The cognizance came in the backdrop of a newspaper survey revealing only **16 out of 30 national sports federations in the country had constituted Internal Complaints Committees (ICC)** mandated under the 2013 Act.

Types of sexual harassment at workplace



About Sexual harassment at workplace

- **Cost of Sexual harassment at workplace**
 - **Individuals:** Psychological suffering; behavioral change like isolation; Stress-related physical and mental illness; and Professional losses like foregoing career opportunities.
 - **Employers/Enterprises:** Low productivity, Hindered progress and innovation, Poor image of company, etc.
 - **Society:** Women’s undermined access to high-status; Legal and criminal justice expenses; Long term rehabilitation costs; etc.
- **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act or POSH, 2013’** was enacted to **make workplaces safer** for women.
 - The Act **broadened and gave legislative backing** to what are known as the **Vishaka Guidelines** laid down by the Supreme Court in a judgment passed in **1997**.



Key Provisions of POSH Act 2013

- **Definition of Sexual harassment:** Sexual harassment includes anyone or more of the **unwelcome acts** (whether directly or by implication) Physical contact or advances; a demand or request for sexual favours; Showing pornography; etc.
- **Definition of workplace:** Any place visited by the employee arising out of or during the course of employment, **including transportation**.
- **Aggrieved woman:** Covers **all women**, irrespective of their age or employment status and whether in **organized or unorganized sectors, public or private**.
- **Grievance redressal mechanism**

Complaints Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) is mandatory in every private or public organisation that has 10 or more employees. They have powers similar to those of a civil court. • District Officer to constitute Local Committee to receive complaints from organisations with less than 10 workers or if complaint is against the employer itself. • Any aggrieved victim or her legal heir may file a complaint for the ICC to take action “within three months from the date of the incident”.
Conciliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ICC may, before inquiry, and at the request of the aggrieved woman, take steps to settle the matter between her and the respondent through conciliation.
Inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ICC may either forward the victim’s complaint to the police, or it can start an inquiry that has to be completed within 90 days.
Other provisions against the Action against the perpetrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICC can recommend to the employer to take action against the perpetrator, • Appeal against the decision of ICC is available in court within 90 days, • ICC “may recommend” to the employer that it take action against the false complainant • Identity of the woman, respondent, witness, any information on the inquiry, recommendation and action taken, should not be made public

Challenges in preventing sexual harassment at workplace

- **Dismissive attitude of organisations:** Organizations often lack comprehensive and well-communicated policies and procedures to address sexual harassment.
- **Reporting barrier:** Potential repercussions such as job loss, social stigma, damage to family reputation, and so on.
- **Challenges of Cross-Cultural and Global Contexts:** Cultural norms, language barriers, and variations in legal definitions can complicate prevention efforts.
- **Shortcoming in the POSH Act:**
 - Gender specific and **protects only women**.
 - **Silent on the incidents of sexual harassment perpetrated by the same sex**.
 - Action by the employer is based on the **service rules of the company** that may vary from company to company.

Way ahead

- **Zero tolerance policy** should be adopted within code of conduct for employees to show companies' firmness against acts of sexual harassment.
- **Establish ICC in all the organizations**, regardless of size or sector, establish ICCs as mandated by law.
- **Effective Grievance Redressal** to handle complaints promptly, ensuring fair investigations and appropriate actions against perpetrators.
- **Regular training for all staff and management** to enhance **understanding of the term** sexual harassment.
- **Amending the POSH Act, 2013:**
 - **A gender-neutral law** to ensure safety, and justice for all including those of **non-normative gender identities**.
 - Address the incidents of sexual harassment **cases involving same sex**.
 - **Defined objectively action against the perpetrator**.

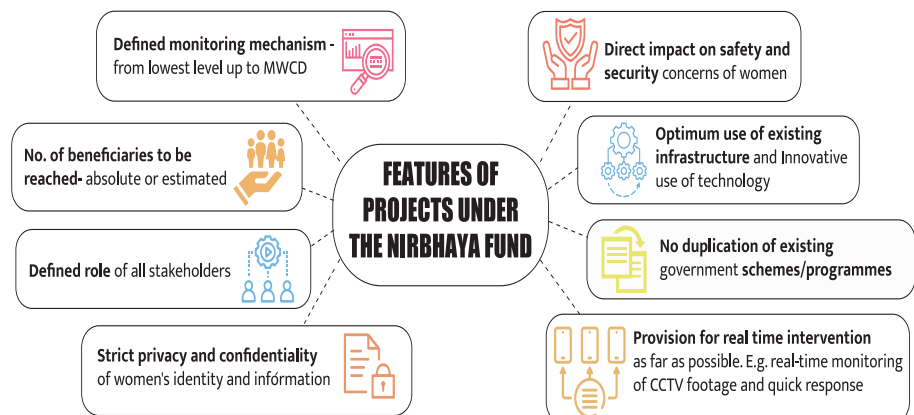
1.7.2. NIRBHAYA FUND

Why in news?

It has been reported that **only 70% of the 'Nirbhaya Fund' has been utilized** since its inception in 2012.

About Nirbhaya Fund

- Established in 2012, it is a dedicated **non-lapsable fund** for initiatives aimed at **enhancing the safety and security for women in the country**
 - Key initiatives include establishing **one stop centres, making safety devices, setting up fast-track courts, etc.**
- **Fund Management:** By the **Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance (MoF)**.
 - The **Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD)** is the **nodal Ministry** to appraise/recommend proposals and scheme.
- **Funding Pattern:**
 - 90:10 for States with difficult terrain
 - 60:40 for other States
 - 100% for UTs
 - Few initiatives receive 100% funding



Challenges in utilization of Nirbhaya Fund

- **Inter-ministerial cooperation** required for project approval.
- **Absence of proposal** on women's safety from important ministries and departments (Oxfam, 2021).
- **Reduced allocation.** For example, allocation for SAMBAL scheme under Mission Shakti is 10% less than the combined allocations for its constituent scheme in the previous year.
 - SAMBAL scheme constitutes One Stop Centre Scheme, women helpline and Mahila Police Volunteers.
- **Limitations in design** like utilization of fund to construct routine infrastructure and excessive focus on urban crimes in public spaces
- **Inadequate fund** as need for fund for preventing violence against women has been estimated at Rs 10,000 to 11,000 crores.
- **Lack of transparency in expenditure, unforeseen disruptions** due to instances like Covid-19 pandemic.

Way ahead

- **Enhance Centre's share as well as annual allocation to the fund.**
- **Establishing benchmarks** for universalization of all the Violence Against Women and Girl (VAWG) services, including numbers per population; and a consistent take for availability and quality, at the district and sub-district level.

- **Incorporate feedback** from local communities, police, NCRB, psychologist etc. to assess the **overall scenario regarding women safety** and identify effective measures that can be taken.
- **Ensuring transparency** through a robust mechanism for constant monitoring.
- **Improve the design by incentivizing** interventions in areas, such as **education, health, sanitation, etc.**
 - For instance, **Kerala, in its Gender Budget for 2021-'22**, has allocated resources for **medical care** for women victims of violence, **gender awareness in police stations**, etc.

1.8. MARRIAGE AGE OF WOMEN

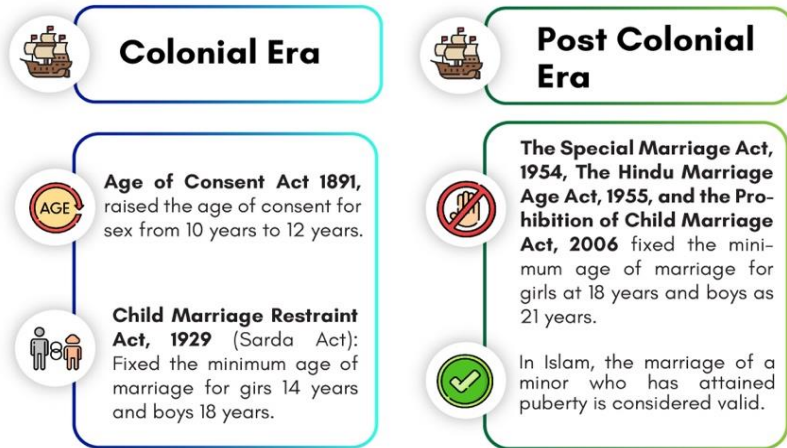
Why in news?

The Prohibition of Child Marriage or PCMA (Amendment) Bill, 2021, proposes to raise the legal age of marriage for women from 18 to 21 years was introduced in the Lok Sabha.

More on news

- The bill is based on recommendations submitted to NITI Aayog in December 2020 by **the Centre's task force**, headed by Jaya Jaitly.
- The committee was constituted to examine matters pertaining to
 - age of motherhood,
 - imperatives of lowering MMR (Maternal Mortality Rate),
 - improvement of nutritional levels and related issues.
- **Key highlights of the draft Bill**
 - The draft bill would **amend the PCMA, 2006**.
 - **Aim:** To bring women on a par with men in terms of **marriageable age** overriding all existing laws, including any custom, usage or practice governing the parties pertaining to marriage.
 - **Definition of child:** "Child" means a male or female who has **not completed 21 years of age**'.
 - **Different personal laws of various religion on marriages will be superseded.**

Historical perspective of Age of Marriage in India



Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), 2006



Positive aspects of raising the marriage age	Criticism of raising the age of marriage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender-neutrality in marriage age. • Enhanced awareness about the repercussion of child marriages and reducing the same further. • Women empowerment: Women would get more time to pursuing higher education and participate in workforce. • Improved health: Women could avoid early age pregnancies and psychological burden of household responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average age to marry for women is 22.7 years largely due to enhanced education. Hence there is no need of law. • Despite the age bar of 18 years, child marriages continue to prevail in India. So, law may not be effective • May not address the social and cultural patriarchal norms that hinder women empowerment. • Safest age for pregnancy is 20 years to 24 years (roughly those marrying at ages 18 years and higher) • Fear of abuse of law against marginalised communities, such as the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes, making them lawbreakers. • Contradicts with other laws: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A person upon reaching the age of 18 could vote but could not exercise the right of choice to marry. ○ As per the 2013 Criminal Law Amendment Act, age of consent for sexual activity is 18 years. ○ The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) (Amendment) Act, 2016 allows adolescent in the age group of 14-18 years to work except in hazardous occupations and processes.

Way ahead

- **Comprehensive public awareness campaign be chalked out** to encourage social acceptance of the decision.
- **Empowerment of women through** access to education, sex education be formalised and introduced in the school curriculum.
- **Targeted approach for reducing Child marriage:** Girls belonging to socio-economically weak families are forced into child marriages and providing them financial support will automatically raise the age of marriage among women.
- **Alternative way of ensuring gender neutrality:** In 2018, the Law Commission of India had suggested decreasing the minimum legal age of men from 21 to 18 years and recommended keeping both the genders' minimum legal age to marry as 18 years.

1.9. SURROGACY

Why in news?

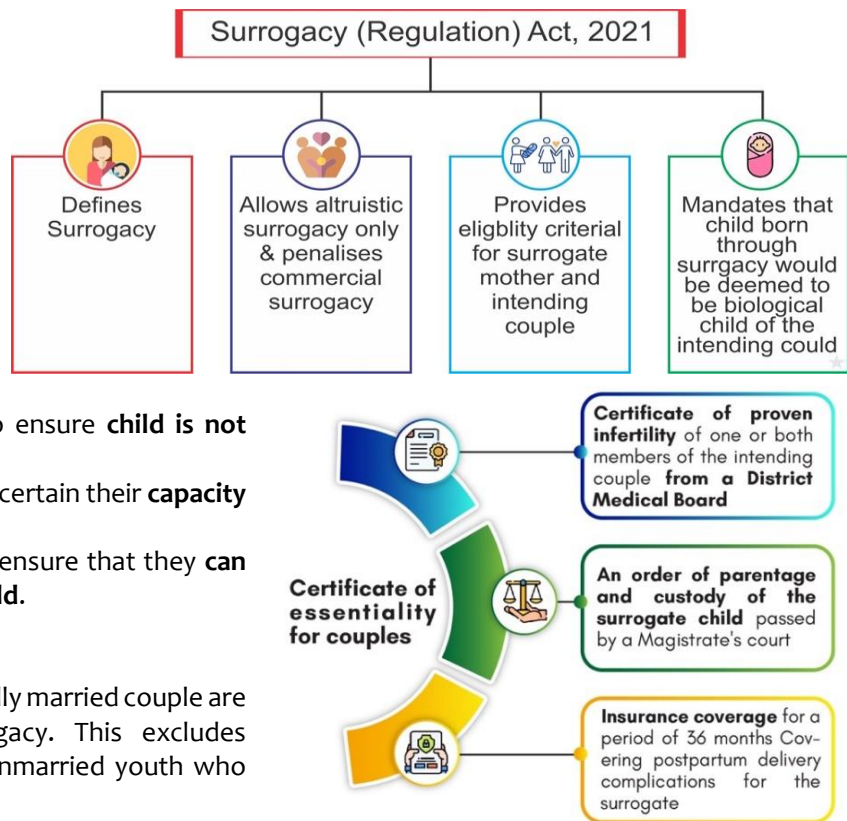
Karnataka High Court has evolved "triple tests" to help a couple facing legal hurdles to have a surrogate child under provisions of Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021.

More on news

- **The triple test entails:**
 - **Genetic test** for husband to ensure child is not born with any disorder.
 - **Physical test** for couple to ascertain their capacity to manage the child
 - **Economy test** for couple to ensure that they can protect the future of the child.

Issues with the act

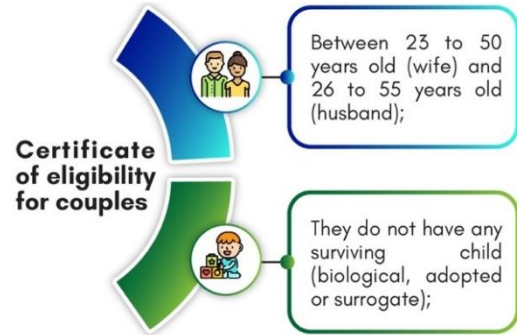
- **Exclusionary in nature:** Only legally married couple are allowed to choose for surrogacy. This excludes transgenders, live-in partners, unmarried youth who also wants to parent a child.
 - In **Devika Biswas v. Union of India**, the Apex Court held that Right to Reproduction was an essential facet of the 'Right to Life' under Article 21.



- **Restrictive definition of 'infertility':** Infertility is **restricted to failure to conceive**. It does not cover other issues that a women may face in delivering a child.
- **Hampers the source of livelihood:** Banning commercial surrogacy denies a legitimate source of income of the surrogate.

Way forward

- **Taking care of Post-Partum depression:** Government must take into account postpartum depression and make provisions for it, and that maternal benefits should be extended to both mothers.
- **Rescinding the time-frame for IVF treatment:** The government should remove the time limit for IVF treatment before permitting surrogacy, considering the medical conditions and fears preventing some women from childbirth.
- **Overtime expanding the option of surrogacy to include commercial surrogacy:** Expanding the surrogacy market with proper safeguards overtime will help those deprived of the love of a child.



1.10. ABORTION LAW IN INDIA

Why in News?

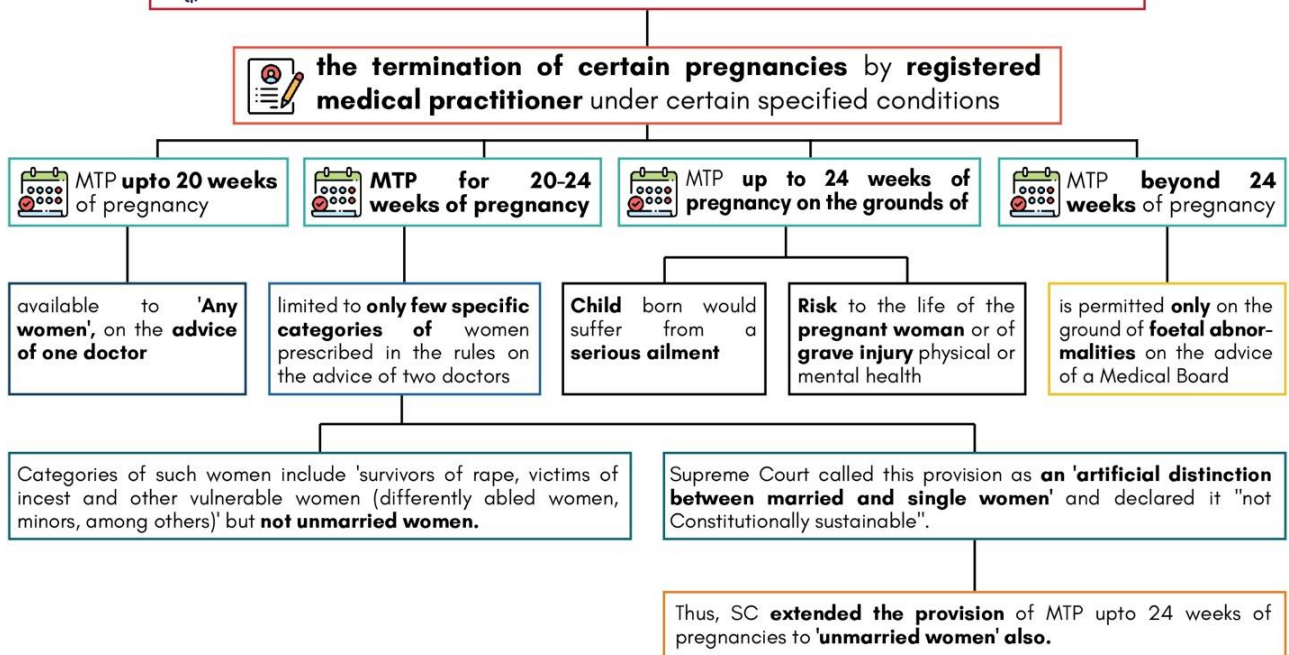
The Supreme Court (SC) extended the right to safe and legal abortion up to 24 weeks of pregnancy to all women in the country, regardless of marital status.

Abortion Laws in India

- In India carrying out abortion is illegal under Section 312 and 313 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), unless it is performed in the manner prescribed under the **Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971**.
 - Abortion is the **deliberate termination of a pregnancy** by surgical or other medical means.
- The Act was **amended in 2021** to make the MTP more accessible to women (refer infographics).



MEDICAL TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY (MTP) ACT, 1971



Significance of Supreme Court Judgment

- **Constitutional rights:** Judgment states that distinction among women on the grounds of marital status is violation of the **right to equality under Article 14 and Right to life under Article 21**.
- **Acknowledges marital rape:** SC ruled that **pregnancy** of a married woman due to **forcible sex** by her husband can be treated as **“rape” under MTP Act**.
 - Women can go for **an abortion without the requirement of anybody else’s consent**.
- **Expands the definition of ‘women’:** Judgment clarifies ‘woman’ includes cis-gender women also **people for the purpose of safe abortion**.
- **Protects the privacy of minors:** SC allowed minor females to abort their pregnancies from consensual sex without disclosing their identity to the police under the **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO)**.

Other Challenges in abortion in India

- **Shortage of qualified doctors:** As per National Health and Family Survey, 2015-16, only 53% of abortions are performed by registered medical doctors in India.
- **Religious Opposition:** Several inscriptions and religious texts oppose the idea of abortion which hinders development of social acceptance.
- **Social stigma** attached to **unmarried women becoming pregnant**, loss of privacy victims of rape etc.
- **Ethical dilemma:** The abortion debate asks whether it can be morally right to terminate a pregnancy before normal childbirth.

Pro-Choice Movement (Focus on Mother)	Pro-Life Movement (Focus on Child)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woman alone has the right over her body. • Birth defects (genetic abnormalities) which are lethal or lead to lifelong suffering takes heavy toll on parents. • State can’t overlook the age (minor) and mental health of women (mentally ill). • No child should be brought unwanted (particularly in rape cases) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foetus rights of personhood should be upheld. • Misuses of prenatal diagnosis for sex-determination. The birth defects may get treated in future • Against humanity and state has an obligation to protect all life including foetus. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E.g. Texas anti-abortion law (banning abortion if medical professionals can detect cardiac activity).

Way ahead

- **Education and financial independence** will make women more assertive in demanding their sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- **Eliminating social stigma** through media, campaign by famous personalities, awareness programmes by local leaders.
- **Increasing financial allocations for health sectors** to improve the accessibility of Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services to all.
- **Dealing with the ethical issues:**
 - **Make people realize value of human life** to avoid any misuse.
 - Engage **religious leaders to make people sensitive** about the rights of women.
 - Medical professionals should help pregnant women make an **informed decision about their pregnancies**.
 - **Privacy of women choosing for abortion** should be respected

Conclusion

Abortion laws in India have become progressive over the years. In the same spirit, the current judgement has not only affirmed the right to abortion for all women irrespective of marital status, but also attempted to remove hurdles for women and girls to get access to safe and legal abortion.

1.11. WASH AND GENDER INEQUALITY

Why in news?

According to a recent report by the **UN Women and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs**, in India, in a **quarter of rural households’ women and girls** devote more than 50 minutes per day to collecting water.

About Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

- WASH is a collective term for **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene** relating to:
 - Access to safe drinking water;
 - Improved sanitation facilities;
 - Maintaining basic level of hygiene.
- WASH and Gender inequality:** Gender inequality in access to WASH facilities affect a wide range of other human rights, including women and **girls' rights to health, to adequate housing, to education and to food.**
 - For example, women and girls who hold their urine for long periods of time have a higher risk of bladder and kidney infections.

Reasons for gender inequality in WASH

- Knowledge gap:** Women and men often have differentiated access, use, experiences, and knowledge of WASH.
- Accessibility gap:** When water and sanitation sources are at a minimum, the specific needs of women and girls are often not considered.
- Affordability gap:** Due to women's lower access to financial.
- Water cut-offs may excessively affect women** as family caretakers, in particular in poor female-headed households.
- Other challenges in WASH**
 - Budgets for financing WASH remains low. Private sector investment is also insufficient.
 - Lack of accountability:** Few WASH programmes are reviewed for their impact using high-quality evaluations.

Steps to strengthen WASH system and removing gender inequality

- Affordability:** Safe and hygienic menstruation materials should be subsidized or provided free of charge when necessary.

DATA BANK

Gender Inequality

380 million women and girls live in **extreme poverty globally.**

1 in 3 women face **food insecurity globally.**

50 minutes per day is spent by Indian women in 25% rural household for collecting water.

Significance of WASH

<div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> </div> <h3 style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Prevention of disease</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A prerequisite to prevent infections like cholera, diarrhea (the 2nd leading cause of childhood mortality in India), and neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) 	<div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> </div> <h3 style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Achieving SDGs</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An important component of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 2030 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDG3: Good health and well-being SDG 6: Ensuring availability and sustainable management of water sanitation for all. 	<div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> </div> <h3 style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Economic benefits</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the 2020 analysis by the World Resources Institute: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Securing water for communities across the world by 2030 could cost just over 1% of global GDP. It would take India 3.2% of the GDP to deliver sustainable water management by 2030.
<div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> </div> <h3 style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Initiatives takes by India for WASH</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jal Jeevan Mission: Launched in 2019 to provide every rural household with water supply by 2024 Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM): Over one lakh villages have declared themselves as ODF (open defecation free) Plus under SBM-G Phase II Namami Gange program: Holistic program on cleaning the Ganga. Swachhotsav campaign aims at galvanizing participation and leadership of women to realize the goal of 'Garbage Free Cities (GFCs)'. 	<div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> </div> <h3 style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">International initiatives for WASH</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WHO WASH Strategy, 2018-25: Its vision is to substantially improve health through the safe management of water, sanitation and hygiene services in all settings. UNICEF strategy for WASH 2016-2030: Its purpose to guide UNICEF's organization-wide contribution to achieving SDG 6 by 2030. UN Sanitation and Hygiene Fund (SHF): Launched in 2020 to provide accelerated funding to countries with the heaviest burden of diseases stemming from lack of sanitation services. Sanitation and Water for All (SWA): A global partnership of governments, civil society organizations, etc. that coordinates on improved accountability and resource allocation. It is being hosted by the UNICEF. 	

- **Accessibility:** Prioritise WASH provision to households not yet served and scale up the construction of safe and nearby community toilets.
- **Gender sensitive building code:** Community water and sanitation facilities should include sex segregated cubicles, closeness to the house and lighted pathways to and at facilities.
- **Gender sensitive legal guarantee for WASH** that addresses the different experiences of men and women.
- **Women participation and empowerment** to enable them make individual choices and to control their own lives
- **Build local governments' capacities, coordination among stakeholders** (private sector and civil society).
- **Evaluation of various plans and policies** at the country, regional and global levels.

1.12. URBANISATION AND WOMEN

Why in news?

Recently the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) released a report titled 'Cities Alive: Designing Cities That Work for Women' Report.

Urbanisation and Women

- Cities are **vital centers of innovation, productivity, and diversity**, but without inclusive planning, urbanization deepens societal gaps.
- Among the **most vulnerable are women** in both wealthy and socio-economically disadvantaged urban contexts across the globe.
- **Without a gender-responsive approach to urban planning, cities often compound gender inequalities.**

Challenges faced by women in urban space

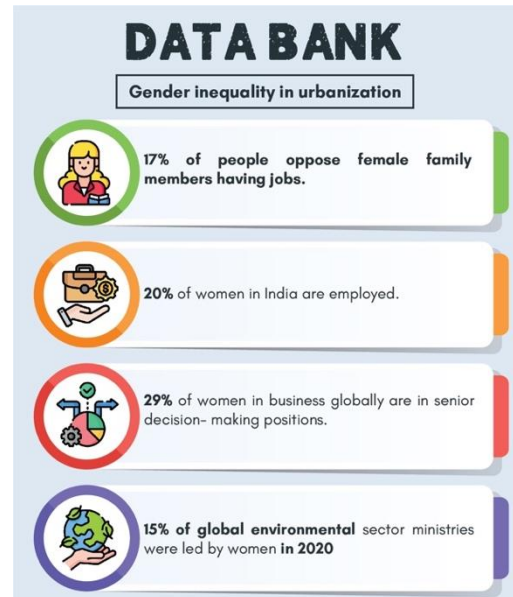
- **Gender biased urban planning:** A cohort of mostly male planners, designers and city leaders have created urban spaces which **prioritise men's mobility, health, safety, leisure and economic wellbeing** over women's.
- **Prejudice:** Urban spaces do not reflect and celebrate women in statues, road names and other monument, Data sources are gender-biased towards male experiences.
- **Gender-based discrimination:** Higher rates of poverty, unemployment, unpaid care duties, barriers to education, and experiences of violence and street harassment
- **Health and wellbeing:** Sexual violence and harassment in urban public spaces adversely impacts the wellbeing, urban spaces often inadequate toilets and sanitation facilities for women.
- **Disproportionate burden of Climate change:** Women have fewer resources to withstand, and recover from, large-scale climate change-related events.

Way ahead

- **Participatory urban designing:** This will help making cities inclusive where whole community can access the opportunities offered by cities, and it generates wider social, economic and environmental benefits.
- **Justice and equity:** Support women participating in urban governance at all levels, Support the collection of gender disaggregated data, protect women's right to land and property.
- **Safety and security:** Incorporate violence prevention in laws, Design spaces through a safety lens, improve lighting design in streets and public spaces, and raise awareness and share knowledge around public safety.
- **Health and wellbeing:** Raise the standards of sexual and reproductive healthcare, provide high-quality water and sanitation facilities, create caring, green and active environments.
- **Women leadership in climate action:** improving gender equity contributes to policy and funding choices that lead to better environmental governance and make the resilience measures more effective.

Conclusion

Adopting a gender-responsive approach to urban planning and design goes beyond serving only women. It ensures the whole community can access the opportunities offered by cities, and it generates wider social, economic and environmental benefits.



1.13. HUMAN TRAFFICKING

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AT A GLANCE



The United Nations defines human trafficking as: **“Human trafficking involves recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, for the purpose of exploitation.”**



The 3 most common types of human trafficking are **sex trafficking, forced labour and debt bondage.**



Causes of Human Trafficking

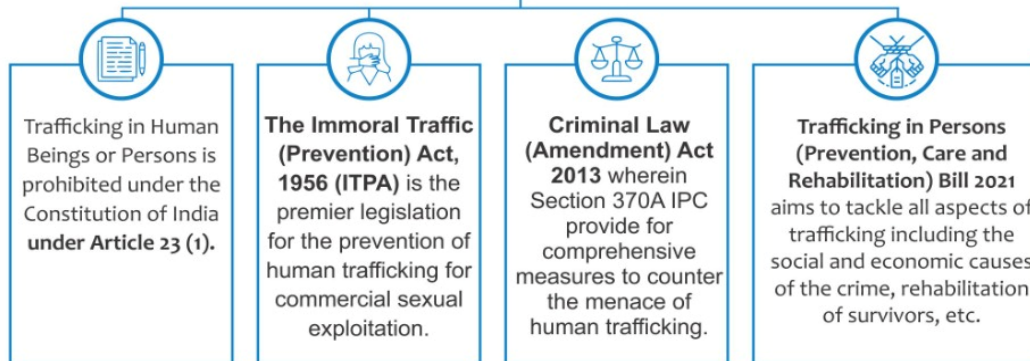
- ⊖ Poverty
- ⊖ Social/cultural practice of devaluing women & girls
- ⊖ Migration
- ⊖ Pandemic
- ⊖ Porous borders
- ⊖ Rise in industries employing forced labourers



Impact of human trafficking

- ⊖ **Mental disorders** including depression and anxiety for the victims.
- ⊖ Women and girls are always at the risk of **unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), HIV/AIDS, maternal mortality, etc.**
- ⊖ **Stigmatization, Intolerance and Social Inclusion acts as a deterrence for the victims** to reintegrate to their former society.
- ⊖ **Trafficked Children are deprived of their basic rights** such as the right to life and education

Legislations in India



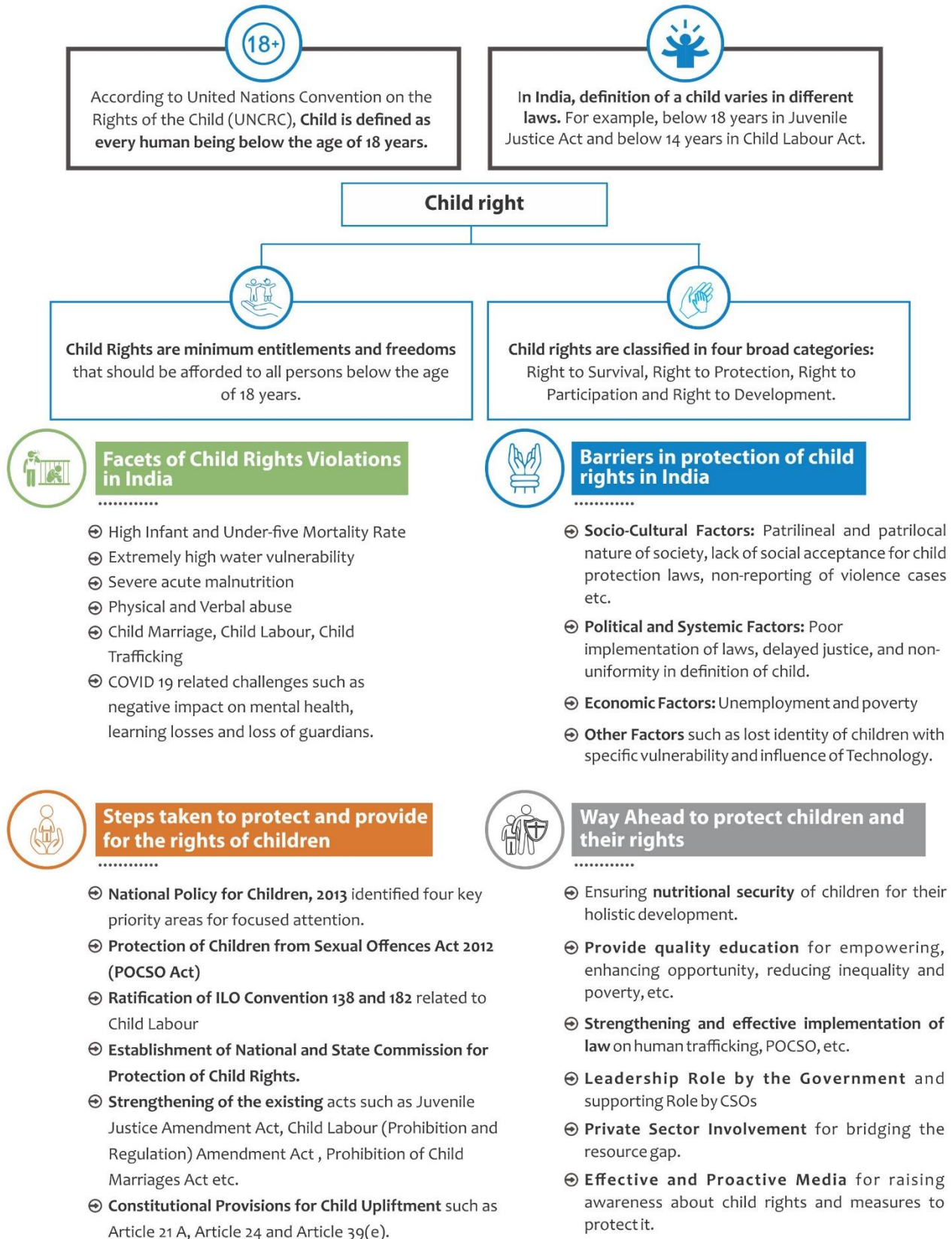
Way Forward to prevent human trafficking

- ⊖ **Draw a line between prostitution (voluntary sex service) and sex trafficking.**
- ⊖ **Ensure proper data sharing**, internally in an administration or between agencies like the police or the NGOs, or between the different countries as well.
- ⊖ **Proper enforcement of the existing laws**
- ⊖ Society needs to be made **sensitive toward victims of human trafficking.**

2. CHILDREN

2.1. CHILD RIGHTS

CHILD RIGHTS AT A GLANCE



2.2. CHILD LABOUR

CHILD LABOUR AT A GLANCE



- **Child labour:** It is the work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential, and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development (ILO).
- **Worst forms of child labour:** It comprise all **forms of slavery**, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage, and forced labour.
- There are **160 million child labour globally and 10.1 million in India.**



Constitutional provisions on against child labour

- **Article 21-A and 45:** Every child has a right to full time elementary education in a formal school until they complete the age of fourteen years.
- **Article 23:** Prohibition of **traffic** in human beings and **forced labour**.
- **Article 24:** Prohibits employment of child below the age of fourteen years in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment.
- **Article 39 (e):** Directs the state to ensure that the tender age of children are not abused.



Initiatives for eradication of child labour

- **Gurupadswamy Committee, 1979:** It was formed to study the issue of child labour and recommended policy approach.
- **India ratified ILO Convention 182** on the Worst Forms of Child Labour and **Convention 138** on the Minimum Age of Employment.
- **Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act 2016:** It prohibits the 'engagement of children (under 14 years) in all occupations and of adolescents (under 18 years) in hazardous occupations and processes.
- **National Child Labour Project (NCLP) Scheme:** Special Schools/Rehabilitation Centres for the rehabilitation of child labourers, supplementary nutrition and stipend to rescued children.
- **Web portals: PENCIL** (Platform for Effective Enforcement for No Child Labour) for rescuing and rehabilitating victims of child labour and **TrackChild** (for Missing/Found Children).
- **Mission Vatsalya:** To secure a healthy & happy childhood for each and every child in India.



Factors driving Child Labour in India

- **Lack of reliable data on child labour:** The latest data on child labour is a decade old the Census 2011.
- **Abuse of legal law:** Law allows children to do some specific works.
- **Lax implementation of law:** Conviction rate is very low and close to 95% of the amount in the Child Labour Rehabilitation Welfare Fund (CLRWF) is lying unutilized.
- **Prevalence of illegal economic activities:** Like rat hole mining in Meghalaya, Mica mining in Jharkhand.
- **Informal economy, Industrialist -Political-bureaucratic- nexus, child labour is a means of survival for homeless or abandoned children.**



Way ahead to eliminate child labour

- **Improve law enforcement machinery:** Judicial reforms, police reforms is needed for effective implementation of laws and regulations.
- **Reinvigorate the labour law:** All the children under 18 years should be prohibited from working.
- **Labelling products about involvement/non-involvement of child labour:** It would help common people make informed choice about products they use.
- **Data Collection:** Collect and update the data that make child labour visible.
- **Integrated system:** Strengthen child protection, eliminate poverty and inequity, improve access to quality of education and mobilize public support for respecting children's rights.
- **Role of community:** Community at large should be sensitizing to be vigilant against the child labour.

2.3. PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL OFFENCES (POCSO) ACT, 2012

Why in news?

Chief Justice of India (CJI) appealed to the Parliament to **examine the age of consent** issue under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012.






More on news

- CJI made the appeal as POCSO Act, 2012 poses **difficulties for judges examining cases of consensual sex involving adolescents.**
- CJI referred to 'India analysis of Judgements of Special Courts in West Bengal, Assam and Maharashtra - Romantic Cases under POCSO Act Study' by Enfold Proactive Health Trust and UNICEF-India. As per this study,
 - **One in every four cases** under POCSO Act constituted romantic cases.
 - **93.8% cases** ended with acquittals.
 - In 46.6% cases, **girl** was between **16 to 18 years.**

About POCSO, 2012

- POCSO Act is a **comprehensive law** to protect **children** (any person below age of 18 years) from **offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography.**
 - In 2019, it was amended to **impose stringent punishment for sexual crimes against children.**
 - It provides for **establishment of Special Courts** for trials for early disposal of cases.

Difference between Section 354 IPC vs. POCSO Act, 2012

Specifics	Section 354 IPC	POCSO, 2012
 Age of the victim	Punishment for the offence irrespective of age of the victim.	For the protection of children only.
 Gender of the victim	Female.	Gender neutral.
 Definition of sexual assault	Definition is generic.	The Act for the first time, defines " penetrative sexual assault ", " sexual assault " and " sexual harassment ".
 Burden of proof	Lies on the prosecution. The accused in ' deemed to be innocent until proven guilty '.	Lies on the accused. The accused is ' deemed to be guilty until proven innocent '.
 Punishment	Minimum 1 year this may extend to five years along with a fine.	Minimum 3 Years this may extend to 5 years , in addition to a fine.

Key Features

Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To children (under the age of 18) from the offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography
Applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only to child survivors and adult offenders • In case two children have sexual relations Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000, will apply.
Special Court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It shall complete the trial, as far as possible, within a period of one year from the date of taking cognizance of the offence.
Child-friendly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child-friendly mechanisms at every stage of the judicial process like reporting, recording of evidence, investigation, etc.
Punishment to persons in positions of trust of authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also punishes criminals who are in positions of trust of authority like public servants, staff of educational institutions, police etc.
Amended in 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defines child pornography • Widens the scope of aggravated penetrative sexual assault • Increases the minimum punishment for certain assaults

Challenges/Concerns related to POCSO Act, 2012

- **High pendency** particularly after Covid-19 (approximately 85%) and **low conviction rate** (around 14% only).
- **Absence of exclusive Special Courts** and Special Public Prosecutors.
- **Procedural lapses in investigation** and lack of victim protection and support
- Several High Courts raising **issue of higher age of consent under the act.**

Key Recommendations

- **Decriminalise consensual sexual acts** involving adolescents above 16 years.
- **Introduction of comprehensive sexuality education** to help adolescents make informed decisions.
- **Establishment of adequate number of Fast Track courts (FTCs)** and equipping them with sufficient human and physical resources.

- Raising awareness about the ACT.

2.4. ASSESSMENT OF CHILD SUSPECTS

Why in news?

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) issued guidelines for assessment of child suspects under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act (JJ ACT), 2015.

More on news

- In compliance with Supreme Court directive (in Barun Chandra Thakur vs Master Bholu, 2022 case), Guidelines will enable Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) to conduct Preliminary Assessment to
 - Determine whether a child should be treated as a minor or not in criminal cases which come under “heinous” offences category of JJ ACT, 2015.

Key highlights of Guidelines

- **General Principles:** Follow fundamental principles which guide JJ Act implementation (refer to the infographics).
- **Preliminary Assessment Purpose:** Determine age and four determinants, i.e. Physical capacity of child, mental capacity, circumstances, and ability to understand consequences of alleged offence.
- **Role of JJB:** solely responsible for assessment and can take assistance from child psychologists etc.
- **Completion of Preliminary Assessment:** Within a period of three months.

ABOUT JUVENILE JUSTICE (CARE AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN) ACT (JJ ACT), 2015



Definition of child: A person who has not completed 18 years of age.

Treating child as adult: A child in age group of 16-18 years could be tried as an adult in case of heinous offenses.



Assessment of children: To determine whether to try such a child as an adult or a minor.

Principles followed for the implementation of JJ Act: Principle of participation, safety, right to privacy, presumption of innocence, etc.



Fulfills India's commitment as a signatory to the UN Convention on the rights of the child, 1989 and Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in respect of Inter-country Adoption (1993).

2.5. CHILD ADOPTION IN INDIA

Why in news

Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice, presented the 118th Report on the Subject ‘Review of Guardianship and Adoption Laws’.

- Key highlights of the report

Area	Observations	Recommendations
Review of Laws on Adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, 1956 (HAMA) (applicable only to Hindus) and the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 (JJ Act) (all religion) both deal with adoption yet have differing criteria. • Parents adopting a child under HAMA are not required to register with Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA). • Parents are willing to adopt a child, but there are not many children available for adoption. • Unregistered Child Care Institution (CCI) and their poor functioning led to death of 762 children. • Adoption related matters are being dealt by Ministry of Law and Justice and Ministry of Women and Child Development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmonize both the Laws and bring out a Uniform and comprehensive legislation on adoption. • New legislation should cover LGBTQ community. • Make registration with CARA mandatory. • A district level survey of orphaned/abandoned children. • A third-party study of all CCIs and empower DM to take down unregistered CCIs. • Need to bring Adoption Laws under a single Ministry for better monitoring and implementation.
Review of Laws on Guardianship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act makes use of the term ‘illegitimate’ in reference to a child born out of wedlock. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word ‘illegitimate’ should be omitted as no child is illegitimate.

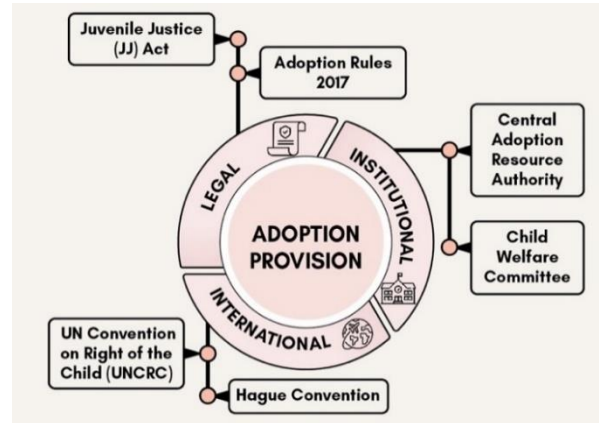
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend HMGA and accord equal treatment to both mother and father as natural guardians.
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About adoption

- Adoption means the **process through which the adopted child** is permanently separated from biological parents and **becomes the lawful child of the adoptive parents** with all the rights, privileges and responsibilities.
- It is estimated that there are **29.6 million stranded, orphaned and abandoned children** in India. **Just 3-4,000 get adopted annually.**

Reasons underscoring low adoption rate

- A large number of orphaned children are **not placed under institutionalised care** due to existence of unregistered childcare institution (CCI)
- Centralized CARINGS system** hinders adoptions of suitable kids with desired prospective parents.
- High instances of disruption** (children being returned at an advanced stage of adoption) due to **lack of preparedness and proper counselling** of parents and children.
- Availability of legal alternatives** like Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Law, 1956 for adoption.
- Prejudices surrounding adoption** particularly adoption of older children, and those with disabilities.
- Discriminatory adoption rules like** current rules **do not allow homosexual couples, trans couples and single men** (who cannot adopt a girl child) to legally adopt a child.
- Impact of COVID-19 pandemic** including travel restrictions on home visits, delay in the medical examination of children at hospitals, etc.



INITIATIVES TO EASE THE ADOPTION

2021 amendment Act to the JJ Act, 2015

- ▶ Empowers District Magistrates (DMs) and Additional DMs to **authorise orders of adoption.**
- ▶ Allows **CARA** to carry out the functions of the **Central Authority under the Hague Convention** on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Inter-country Adoption.

Easing inter country adoption

- ▶ **Amendment to Adoption Regulations 2021** allows **CARA** to issue the **'No- Objection Certificate (NOC)'** to prospective parents who opt for **inter-country adoption** under the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act (HAMA), 1956.
- ▶ **Two-year mandatory period that an adoptive family would have to stay in the country** for constant monitoring by CARA and other authorities has been waived off.
- ▶ The **Indian missions will monitor the progress and security of the adopted child.**

Other

- ▶ **Mission Vatsalya** to upscale institutional care and services for children in difficult circumstances.
- ▶ **Online registration portal CARINGS** (Child Adoption Resource Information and Guidance System)
- ▶ **Ratification of Hague Convention on Inter- country Adoption, 1993** that establishes safeguards to ensure that intercountry adoptions take place in the best interests of the child.

Way Forward

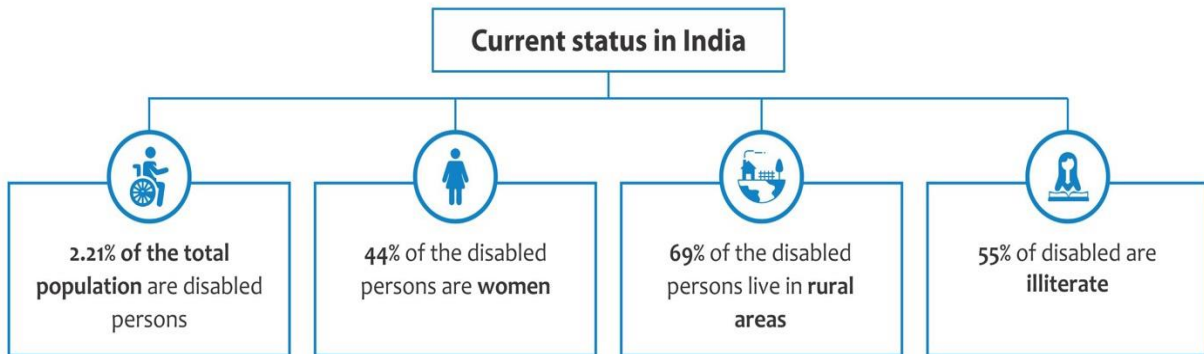
- Give choices to prospective parents** to adopt a child belonging to their respective states.
- Counselling prospective parents** to prepare them for what it is like to live with a kid, especially with an older kid. Also, **older kids** should be given for adoption to families who live in the **areas for which they have a sense of familiarity.**
- Mandatory registration of Child Care Centres (CCCs).** Around 28% of the CCCs are not registered with CWC. They must be mandated to get themselves registered in a time bound manner. Failure to do so, must lead to closure of such centres.
- The adoption **process needs to be made more transparent.**
- Special assistance to families in rural areas** who are not aware of legal adoption procedures or don't like to follow the legal procedure.
- Nationwide IEC campaign** to eliminate the prejudice and social stigma attached for adoption.

3. OTHER VULNERABLE SECTIONS

3.1. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PWDS)

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PWDS) AT A GLANCE

PwDs means a person with **long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment** which in interaction with various barriers may **hinder their full and effective participation in society** on an equal basis with others.



Challenges faced by PwDs

- ⊕ **Stereotype:** PwDs have to face stigma, prejudice, and discrimination at multiple levels.
- ⊕ **Accessibility:** Design and construction of indoor and outdoor facilities can prevent them from going to school and hospitals, shopping, etc.
- ⊕ **Communication challenges:** Faced by people having disabilities for hearing, speaking, reading, writing, and/or understanding.
- ⊕ **Policy barriers:** Lack of awareness or enforcement of existing laws which are meant to ease the life of PwDs.
- ⊕ **Poverty and disability reinforce one another:** Poor health and nutrition can lead to disability and viceversa.



Initiatives takes for mainstreaming PwDs

- ⊕ Signing of United Nations **Convention on Rights of Person with Disabilities (UNCRPD)**, **Biwako Millennium Framework** and **Adoption of Incheon Strategy** “to make the Right Real” for PwDs in Asia and Pacific.
- ⊕ **Right to free education** for every PwD child up to 18 years of age.
- ⊕ Enactment of **Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPD) Act, 2016**, recognises **21 disabilities**, prescribes **4% and 5% reservation** in government employment and education (respectively) .
- ⊕ In **Siddharaju v. State of Karnataka, 2020**, Supreme Court had confirmed that PwDs have a **right to reservation in promotions** as well, and not just in recruitment.
- ⊕ **National education policy (NEP), 2020** enables **barrier-free access for all children** with disabilities.
- ⊕ **ADIP Scheme** (Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of Aids and Appliances)
- ⊕ **National Fund for PwDs**, Accessible India Campaign, Unique ID for PwDs project, etc.



Way forward for mainstreaming and easing life of PwDs

- ⊕ **Attitudinal Change:** People need to be sensitised for supporting PwDs to live independent and dignified lives.
- ⊕ **Early diagnostic and intervention centres:** It can help in primary prevention (prevention of the manifestation of the disability) and Secondary prevention (reducing the duration or severity of disability).
- ⊕ **Improving access to social protection:** In addition to disability-specific social protection, PwDs should have access to other programmes—including child and family allowances, unemployment benefits and social assistance schemes.

3.2. ELDERLY IN INDIA

ELDERLY IN INDIA AT A GLANCE

Elderly refers to the people who are in **an advanced stage of life (over 60 years of age)**. However, many experts prefer to call such persons as 'older' or 'senior' since they believe that the term 'elderly' carries negative connotations



Status of Elderly population in India

- **Share of elderly in total population:** 9% in 2016 reaching to 20.5% by 2050
- **Women among elderly:** 48.2%
- **Elderly living in rural areas:** 75%
- **Interstate disparity** in proportion of elderly and their socio-economic conditions exists.



Contribution by elderly in National Development

- Economic development through silver economy
- Unpaid care work and social capital
- High political participation
- Promote Sustainable development and conservation



Challenges due to rising old age population

- Smaller age of working population
- Rising dependency ratio
- Need for long-term palliative care facilities
- Inadequate availability of geriatric care



What are the major issues faced by senior citizens in India?

- **Health Issues** due to reduced immunity, poor health and morbidity impacting the quality of life
- **Income insecurity** due to retirement lowers the self-esteem, aggravates problems of costly health care
- **Inadequate legal protection** under 2007 Maintenance and welfare Act
- **Higher vulnerability to crime**, violence and abuse
- **Increasing isolation and loneliness** due to migration of children, ageism, generation gap
- **Inadequate care and support system** due to nuclear households, ruralisation of elderly, etc.
- **Other emerging issues** like feminisation of elderly, limited adoption of technology, vulnerabilities to climate change, etc



What steps have been taken in India for the betterment of old age persons?

- **Constitutional mandates:** Articles 38 (1), 39 (e), 41 and 46 mandates for public assistance in old age.
- **Legislative mandates:** Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 makes it legally binding for all children to maintain parents.
- **Signatories to global initiatives:** UN principles of older persons, proclamation on ageing, Madrid plan of Action, SDG, UN Decades of healthy ageing.
- **Atal Vayo Abhyudaya Yojana:** It takes care of the top four needs of the senior citizens viz. **financial security, food, health care and human interaction /life of dignity**
- **Other schemes and initiatives:** Accessible India Campaign, Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund, etc.



What more should be done to prepare India better for an aged population?

- **Wellness through active ageing** like combating ageism through education awareness, Connecting old-age homes & orphanages, emulating palliative care model of Malappuram district of Kerala, etc.
- **Reaping second demographic dividend** through greater investment in human capita (health, education) and promoting sustainable retirement
- **Strengthening the legal framework** by covering all elderly under the 2007 Maintenance and Welfare and capacity building for the effective implementation
- **Village development** to enhance the quality of life of elderly most of whom are living in rural areas
- **Inclusion of elderly in the SDGs** which promises to 'leave no one behind' and to reach the furthest behind first.
- **Improving the perception around Retirement homes**

3.3. TRANSGENDERS

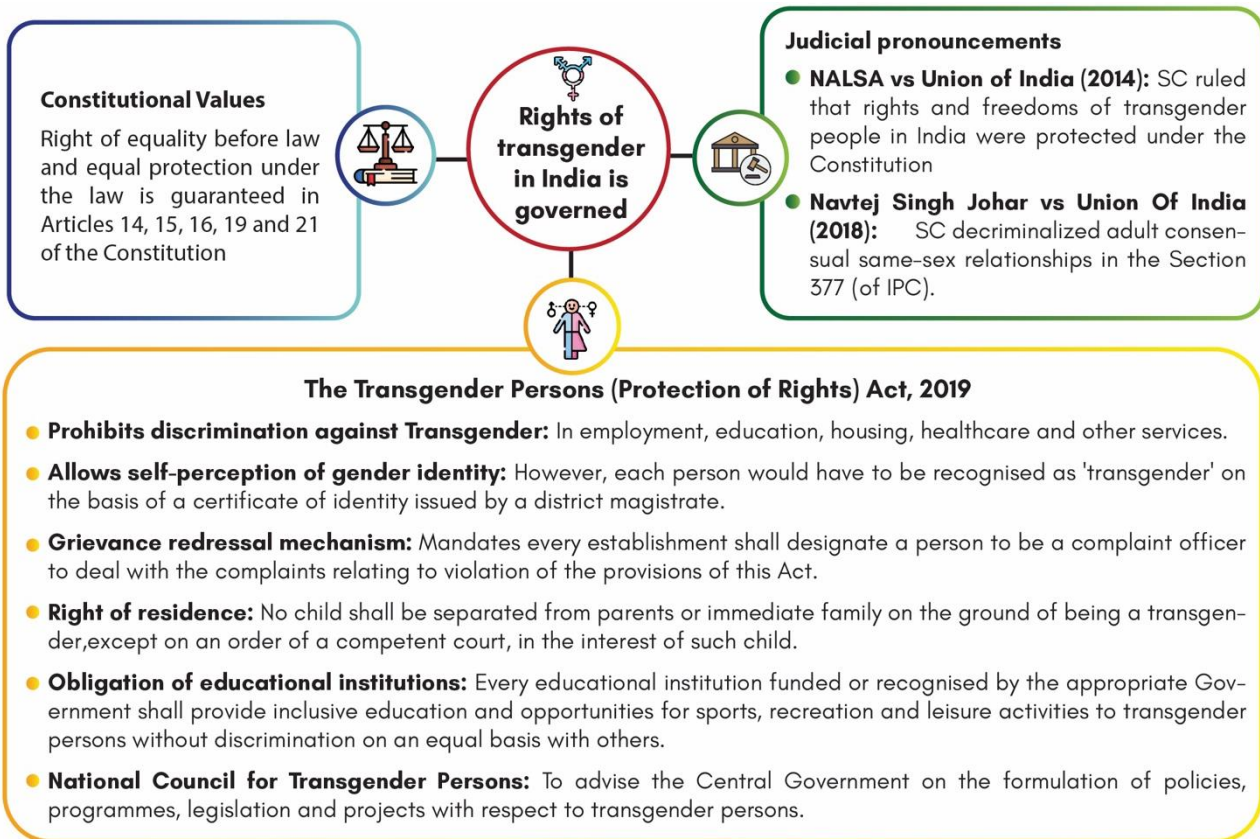
Why in news?

The Supreme Court issued notice to Centre on petition to grant **legal recognition to same sex marriages and alliances between LGBTIQ+ community under Special Marriage Act (SMA), 1954.**

More on news

- Earlier, petitioners had submitted that issue is sequel to **Navtej Singh Johar and Puttaswamy judgments.**
 - Under **Puttaswamy case**, privacy was declared as a fundamental right and **Navtej Singh Johar case** decriminalized consensual Homosexuality in 2018.
 - SC held that **LGBTQ+ persons enjoy right to equality, dignity and privacy guaranteed by Constitution** on same ground as all other citizens.
- However, **legal framework governing marriage institution** in India **does not presently allow members of LGBTQ+ community to marry** the person of their choice.
 - This is **violative of fundamental rights** including Articles 14, 15, 19(1)(a).

About Transgender community



- **The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019** defines a Transgender person as one **whose gender does not match the gender assigned at birth.**
 - It includes trans-men and trans-women, persons with intersex variations, gender-queers, and persons with socio-cultural identities, such as kinnar and hijra.
- Since the transgender community **does not fit into the general category of 'male' or 'female'**, they face various challenges which render them as **the most marginalised communities in the country.**

Challenges faced by the transgender communities:

- **Marginalization and Social Exclusion** due to racism, sexism, homophobia etc. which could lead to **homelessness also.**
- **Low education** due to poverty, insensitive attitude of teachers/staff etc.
- **Low accessibility to health care** due to lack of providers with expertise in transgender medicine, financial support, clinic facilities etc.

- **Discrimination at Workplace** as most of the transgenders are denied jobs and forced to take low paying work for livelihood.
- **Transphobia** leads to physical attacks, discrimination, negative media representation hampering integration of such people.
- Violation of rights due to ambiguity in their identity abysmal participation in electorate, etc.

Way ahead

- **Systemic changes in policy making**, like focus on establishing linkages with livelihood programs, literacy programs and other development programs.
- **Address the basic needs** of Transgender such as housing, food and employment.
- Introduction of **scholarships for gender non-conforming persons** at state and national level.
- **Sexual harassment mechanisms should be gender neutral** and domestic violence based on gender should be recognized as a separate offense
- Pass an **Anti-Discrimination Bill** that penalizes discrimination and harassment on the basis of gender.
- **Awareness to tackle trans-phobia** by engaging role models, civil society to mainstream third gender.

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3.4. INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AT A GLANCE

Current Status: Indigenous peoples in India comprise an estimate population of **104 million** (8.6% of the national population), almost **90%** of them living in rural areas.

 Inherent rights to indigenous people	 Constitutional provision to protect their rights	 Legal provision to protect their rights
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Collective and individual rights to their ancestral land, territories, and resources■ Self-government by their own institutions■ Fair and equitable benefits sharing from conservation and development actions■ Conserve, develop, use and protect their traditional knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 5th schedule for administration and control of Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes residing in any State except 4 (Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram)■ 6th schedule for administration of tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Amendment) or LARR Act, 2013 mandates consent of land owners for development projects.■ Scheduled Tribes And Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition Of Forest Rights) Act, or FRA 2006 recognizes the rights of the forest dwelling tribal communities and others to forest resources



Challenges for indigenous people in India

- ⊖ Threats to **traditional knowledge practices** as they are undervalued and ignored.
- ⊖ **Land dispossession** due to economic policies, globalisation, etc.
- ⊖ **Human rights violation** as they strive to protect undue exploitation of natural resources.
- ⊖ **Lack of access to education** due to their geographic and politically marginalized status.
- ⊖ **Health issues** such as illnesses from pesticides and extractive industries, malnutrition, etc.



Way ahead to protect rights of indigenous people

- ⊖ **Address legal loopholes** to effectively implement the Forest Rights Act, the LARR Act.
- ⊖ National Action Plan for implementation of the **UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights** to prevent human rights abuses in company operations and provide remedies if such abuses take place.
- ⊖ **Effective, accessible and affordable dispute resolution.**
- ⊖ **Community-based education** and language programs.
- ⊖ Integrate needs of indigenous peoples into **health programmes, plans, projects, and policies.**

3.5. PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TRIBAL GROUPS (PVTG'S)

Why in News?

In the 2023-24 Union Budget, **Pradhan Mantri PVTG (Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups) Development Mission (PMPDM)** was announced for the socioeconomic development of the group.

About PMPDM Mission

- It has been launched as part of '**Reaching the Last Mile**', one of the **seven Saptarishi priorities** enlisted in the Budget.
- It will empower the particularly vulnerable tribal groups with **safe housing, clean drinking water, education, nutrition, road and telecom connection and livelihood.**

Need of the PMPDM for the PVTG's

- **Social:** PVTG's are trapped in the various social problems like low illiteracy (ranging from 10% to 44%), displacements etc.
 - Due to **development projects** such as dams and mineral exploration, they are forced to be displaced from their ancestral land.
- **Declining population:** Some PVTG's are on the edge of extinction such as **Onge** and **Andamanese**.
- **Economic:** The main source of their livelihood includes food gathering, Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP), etc. However, due to **degradation of forest** and **several restrictions from the forest authorities** their livelihood is threatened
- **Cultural:** The **distinct cultural identity** of the PVTG's has been eroded over the period of time due to globalisation etc.
- **Politico-administrative:** Their representation in **political sphere** and **administration is minimal** (Both at national and state level).
- **Environmental/Ecological:** PVTG's are the biggest sufferer of the of **climate change** and **other related issues**.
- **Other:** The **Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006** provides for only **4 hectares land allocation** to them.
 - **Ownership is only for land that is actually being cultivated** by the concerned family and no new lands will be granted.
 - Also, the **PESA (Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas Act)** has not been operationalised **adequately** in areas with PVTGs.

About Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)

- PVTG (earlier known as Primitive Tribal Groups) is the category within Scheduled Tribes created on the recommendation of **Dhebar commission (1973)**.
- In **1975, Government of India declared 52 tribal groups as PVTG's**. While in 1993 an additional 23 groups were added to the category, making it a total of 75 PVTGs out of 705 Scheduled Tribes.
- PVTGs reside in 17 States and UT of Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
- The highest number of PVTGs are found in **Odisha (13)** followed by **Andhra Pradesh (12)**.

Criteria and Identification of PVTG's

```

graph TD
    A[Criteria and Identification of PVTG's] --> B[Pre-agricultural level of technology]
    A --> C[Low level of literacy]
    A --> D[Economic backwardness]
    A --> E[A declining or stagnant population]
            
```

Other Initiatives for PVTG's

- **Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention, 1957** has been adopted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).
- Programmes and initiatives have been launched under Five Year Plans such as **Community Development Program, Multipurpose Tribal Blocks, Tribal Development Block, Tribal sub-Plan (TSP)** etc.
- **Restricted Area Permit** system was implemented under the **Foreigners (Restricted Areas) Order, 1963**.
- **Scheme for Development of Primitive Vulnerable Tribal Groups (2008)** provides for a long-term **Conservation-cum-Development Plan for five years** for each PVTG to be established by States.

Way Forward

- **Fair Implementation:** The mission should be implemented in letter and spirit. **PVTG's needs to be consulted before** the implementation of the Mission.
 - Considering their notion or meaning of development is necessary.
- **Extensive Surveys:** As regular census is not conducted, State governments must urgently conduct extensive surveys to gather **accurate demographic** and **socio-economic figures** of the PVTGs.
 - This will help in policy formulation.
- **Update of PVTG List:** Some of the PVTGs are distributed in more than one State. The Birhor are recognised as a PVTG in four States, while 10 other groups are PVTG in two States, namely the Sahariya, Kurumba, Koraga, Korwa, JenuKuruba, Kattunayakan, Katkari/Kathodi, Kharia, Kolam, and Lodha.
- **Recognition of Rights:** The rights pertaining to their land and customary rituals need to be recognised by the government. It helps them in building trust on government and connecting with the main stream society.

3.6. DENOTIFIED TRIBES (DNTS)

DENOTIFIED TRIBES (DNTS) AT A GLANCE



- DNTs (Denotified Tribes) are a **heterogeneous group**, the most vulnerable and deprived, **engaged in various occupations** such as transportation, key-making, salt trading, and entertainment (acrobats, snake charmers, jugglers), as well as pastoralists.
- They were **'notified' as being 'born criminal'** during the British regime under **Criminal Tribes Act, 1871** which was repealed by **Habitual Offenders Act, 1952**.
- Several DNTs were included in **Scheduled Tribe (ST), Scheduled Caste (SC) and Other Backward Caste (OBC)** lists because they come from diverse social backgrounds.



- As per Renke Commission, 2008, there are nearly **1,500 nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes and 198 Denotified tribes**, comprising 15 crore Indians.
- **31 August** is celebrated as **Vimukta Jatis day** in India by the DNTs communities.



Issues associated with DNTs?

- **Identity:** DNTs are not recognised as a separate social category under the Constitution.
- **Absence of reliable data:** It hampers policymaking.
- **Displacement:** It leads to denial of human rights, including the right to livelihood.
- **Economically Vulnerable:** As per Renke committee more than 85% of the DNTs and NTs doesn't own any land
- **Political representation:** As per Renke Commission, DNTs lack leadership and the patronage of a national leader.
- **Social issues:** DNTs and suffer from illiteracy and ignorance, poor access to educational and health, etc.



Way Forward

- **Identification:** To address the concern of DNTs identification, it is necessary to **issue Caste Certificates expeditiously** in a time-bound manner by District Administration.
- **Education:** Awareness programs are necessary to attract DNTs children to schools along with opening primary schools in areas predominantly inhabited by DNTs.
- **Reservation:** Constitution may be amended to include "Scheduled Communities" under Article 330 and Article 332 to enable DNTs to be eligible for **reservation of seats in the House of People and in Legislative Assemblies of the States**.
- **Legal protection:** **Extension of the Prevention of Atrocities against SC/ST Act to DNTs** to address discrimination faced by the DNTs.



About Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes

- All **nomadic tribes (NTs) are not DNTs, but all DNTs are NTs**.
- Nomads and Semi-Nomads are **social groups who undertakes a fairly frequent, usually seasonal physical movement** as part of their livelihood strategy and moves from one place to another.



Steps taken by Government for DNTs

- **National Commission for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (NCDNT)** headed by the Balkrishna Sidram Renke .
- **Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNT Communities (SEED)** to provide free competitive exam coaching to DNTs students, provide health insurance to families, , etc.
- **Development and Welfare Board for DNTs, NTs and Semi-Nomadic communities.**
- **Dr. Ambedkar Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship and Nanaji Deshmukh Scheme** of construction of Hostels for DNTs Boys and Girls

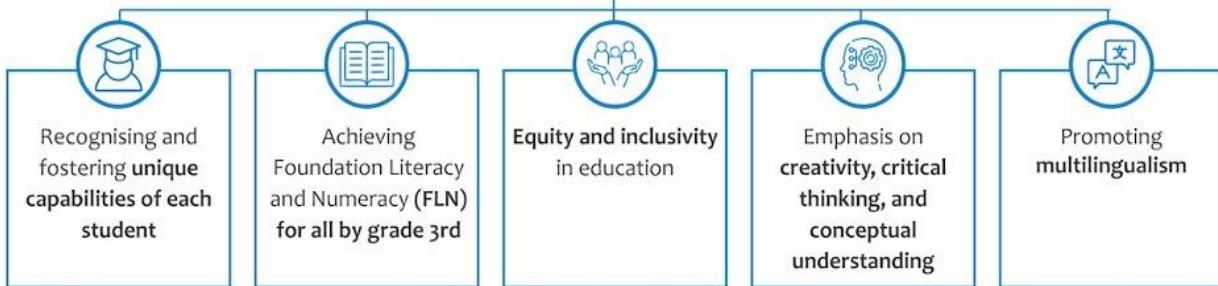
4. EDUCATION

4.1. NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (NEP) 2020

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (NEP) 2020 AT A GLANCE



Key principles of the NEP, 2020



Key Specification for school

- ⊕ **Migration from 10+2 to 5+3+3+4:** 5 years of foundational education, 3 years of preparatory, 3 years of middle and 4 years of secondary school.
- ⊕ **Multi stream:** Flexibility to choose subjects across streams; all subjects to be offered at 2 level of proficiency.
- ⊕ **Diluted board examination:** Board exams to test core competencies only; and will be offered twice a year.
- ⊕ **Multilingual:** 3 language policy to continue; instruction in local language till class 8 (preferably).
- ⊕ **10 bag-less day per year:** During these days students would be offered informal internship.



Key Specification for college

- ⊕ **SAT like entrance exam:** National Testing Agency (NTA) to conduct common college entrance exam twice a year
- ⊕ **4 years under graduation degree:** Multidisciplinary bachelor's degree to be preferred; mid-term drop out to be given choice to complete the degree after the break.
- ⊕ **Graded autonomy to colleges:** Over the next 15 years, affiliation of colleges and Deemed University status would end. Colleges will have autonomy to award degree.
- ⊕ **Fee cap:** Cap on fee charged by the private institution of education
- ⊕ **Foreign Higher Education Institutions (FHEIs):** Top rated global universities would be encouraged to come to India; Indian institutions could be encouraged to go global.



Initiatives taken so far under the NEP, 2020

- ⊕ **School education:** ECCE in Balvatika, NIPUN Bharat, Vidya Pravesh, examination reforms and innovative pedagogy like art integrated education, toy-based learning, etc.
- ⊕ **Multidisciplinary higher education:** Launch of Academic Bank of Credit on Digilocker platform.
- ⊕ **Multi modal education:** SWAYAM, SWAYAM PRABHA, DIKSHA, virtual lab, for study material in multiple languages including sign.
- ⊕ **Innovation and startups:** Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievement (ARIIA) for creating a culture of research, incubation and startups.



4.1.1. FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY (FLN)

Why in news?

The second edition of the FLN report of the **Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)** has been released.

About the report

- It was prepared by the **Institute for Competitiveness (IFC)** — the Indian wing of the Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness at Harvard Business School.
- Report presented an **index on the overall state of FLN among children aged below ten years**.
- It compares states based on **36 indicators across five key domains** that have been mapped with key Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs also (refer to the infographics).

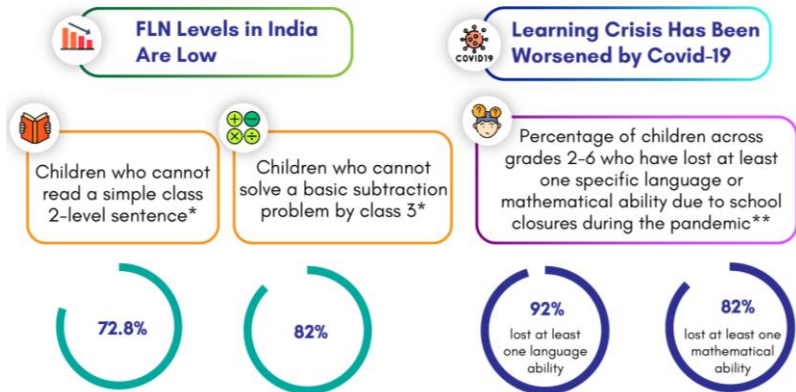
SDGs and FLN

SDG	PILLAR
 SDG 2 Zero Hunger	Basic Health
 SDG 4 Quality Education	Access to Education
	Educational Infrastructure
 SDG 3 Good Health and Well-being	Learning Outcomes
	Basic Health

About Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN)

- It is the ability to **read and understand a basic text and perform simple mathematical calculations by the end of grade 3**.
- This becomes **the foundation for all future learning** upon which other skills are built (refer to the infographics).
- NEP 2020** accords the **highest importance** to the achievement of FLN.
- The Ministry of Education (MoE) has launched a national mission for FLN ‘**NIPUN Bharat** (National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy)’.
 - Foundational Learning Study (FLS) 2022**” was conducted by the **MOE and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)** to set the baseline for NIPUN Bharat Mission.

Current status of FLN in India

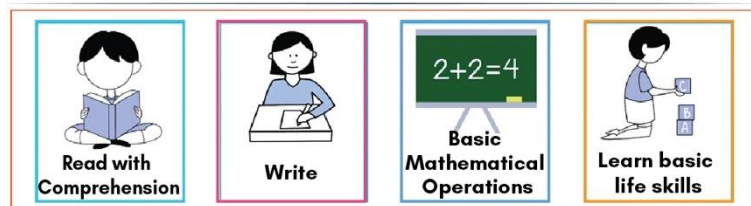


*ASER 2018

**Loss of learning during the pandemic (2021), Azim Premji University

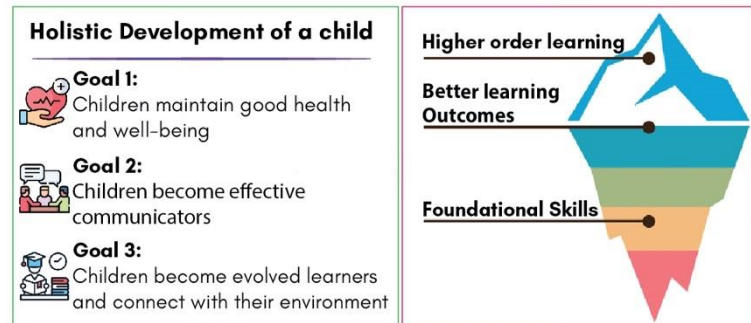
NIPUN Bharat Mission

The Education system aims to achieve Foundational Literacy and Numeracy by 2026-27, where, by Grade 3 every child can.





Challenges in achieving FLN

- Lack of convergence between NEP and NIPUN Bharat Mission** regarding what FLN entails and up to what grades does it cover.
- Priority is given to English language** even at preschool level is being given in many private schools
- 19% of the teaching positions lie vacant in India**. In rural areas, the vacancy is 69% (2021 ‘State of the Education Report for India’, by UNESCO).
- Malnutrition** during early childhood can lead to lifelong developmental delays and disabilities affecting the learning abilities.
- Poor infrastructure like inadequate** availability of basic amenities like drinking water, toilets, etc.
- Other issues** like Historical negligence, digital divide, learning loss due to pandemic, etc.



Way ahead to achieve universal FLN

- **Familiar language as medium of instruction** i.e., due consideration to both **mother tongue and second language learner**.
- **Interpersonal interactions between the teacher and the child** is particularly useful for children from demographically diverse homes.
- **Recruiting skilled teachers from different communities and capacity building of existing teachers and Anganwadi workers.**
- **Improving nutrition** through initiatives like Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 scheme.
- **Expanding the scope of FLN beyond grade 3** for students suffering from learning loss due to pandemic.
- **Promote home learning** on the line of Turkey's intensive parenting intervention, **enhance Internet penetration, improving infrastructure, etc.**

FLN in NEP Vs. NIPUN Bharat Mission	
NEP	NIPUN BHARAT
 3 years of pre-school + Early primary education up to grade 2	 1 year of pre-school + Formal schooling up to grade 3.

Related news

1st Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Test (FLNAT) held this year

- The FLNAT under **Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram** (New India Literacy Programme, or NILP) was held across 10 States and UTs to **assess the basic Reading, Writing and Numeracy skills of the neo-literates.**
 - **Non-literates of 15 years and above age group participated** in the event so that they can be **declared as literates on qualifying.**

Functionally Literate District

- **Mandla district**, a tribal dominated region in **Madhya Pradesh** has been reported as **fully 'functionally literate' district.**
- A person can be called functionally literate **when he or she is able to write his or her own name, to count and read and write.**

Learning Losses

- According to UNICEF learning loss due to Covid-19 pandemic **could cost this generation of students close to \$17 trillion in lifetime earnings**
 - **In India**, according to 2021 National Achievement Survey **average performance of students had dropped to 9% as compared 2017.**
 - Also, **limited access to digital devices, low connectivity** severely constrained remote learning.

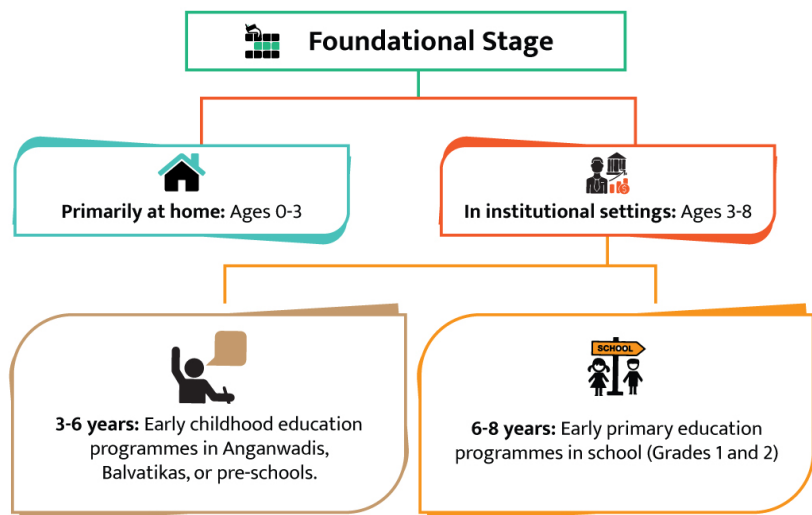
4.1.2. NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK (NCF) FOR FOUNDATIONAL STAGE

Why in News?

Union Minister for Education and Skill Development launched the NCF for Foundational Stage.

About National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for Foundational Stage

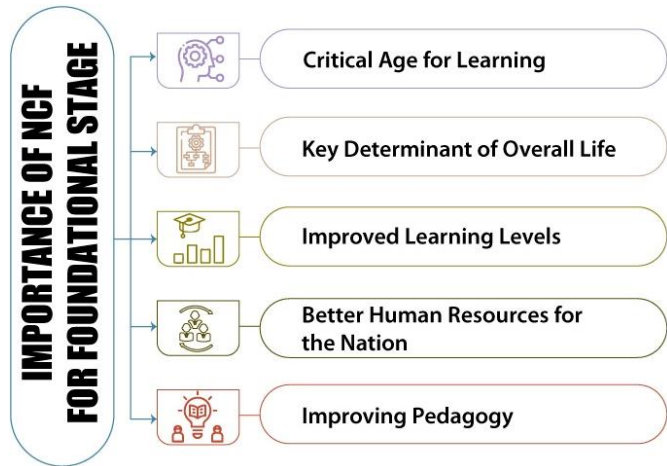
- **As per the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, following four NCFs will be developed**
 - National Curriculum Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCFECE)
 - National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE)
 - National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE)
 - National Curriculum Framework for Adult Education (NCFAE)
- NCF, under NCFECE, for foundational stage **is the first ever integrated Curriculum Framework for children between ages 3-8 in India.**
 - This is the **first Stage in the 5+3+3+4 Curricular and Pedagogical restructuring of School Education** and will be an **integral part of the of the overall NCFECE, covering education for children up to the age of 18.**



- Objective is to help in positively transforming the school education system as envisioned in NEP 2020, through corresponding positive changes in the curriculum including pedagogy.
- It will be the basis for all pedagogy adopted by schools, pre-schools and anganwadis for children studying between nursery and Class 2.
 - 'Jadui Pitara'-a play-based LTM tailored for children between the age group of 3- has also been developed under NCF for Foundational Stage.

Key highlights of NCF for Foundational Stage

- Students should be taught exclusively in their mother tongue until the age of eight.
- No prescribed textbooks for the children aged three to six, and instead NCF recommended simple worksheets for curricular goals and pedagogical needs.
- Introducing an ethics component to build character, lead productive and happy lives, and contribute positively to society.
- Avoid promotion of stereotypes in textbooks such as owls and snakes as evil, or dark-skinned people as scary, etc.
- Balanced gender and community representation through use of stories, characters, and pictures.
- Panchakosha system for education
 - It comprising physical development (sharirik vikas), development of life energy (pranik vikas), emotional and mental development (manasik vikas), intellectual development (bauddhik vikas) and spiritual development (chaitisik vikas).
 - The Panchakosha description is in the Taittiriya Upanishad.



Conclusion

Just as we would not build a house without solid foundations, we cannot expect a child to thrive without solid foundational skills.

This curriculum framework aims to help change practices in education and not just ideas, that will enable positive transformation of overall learning experiences for students and building a better foundation for them.

4.1.3. NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL EDUCATION (NCFSE)

Why in News?

The Ministry of Education (MoE) released the pre-draft of the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) for public feedback.

About Proposed NCF for School Education (NCFSE)

- NCFSE is intended to guide the development of textbooks and curriculum in accordance with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
 - The NCFSE was last revised in 2005 and the existing sets of NCERT text books were prepared using it.
- Proposed NCFSE is for the age group 3 to 18 years.

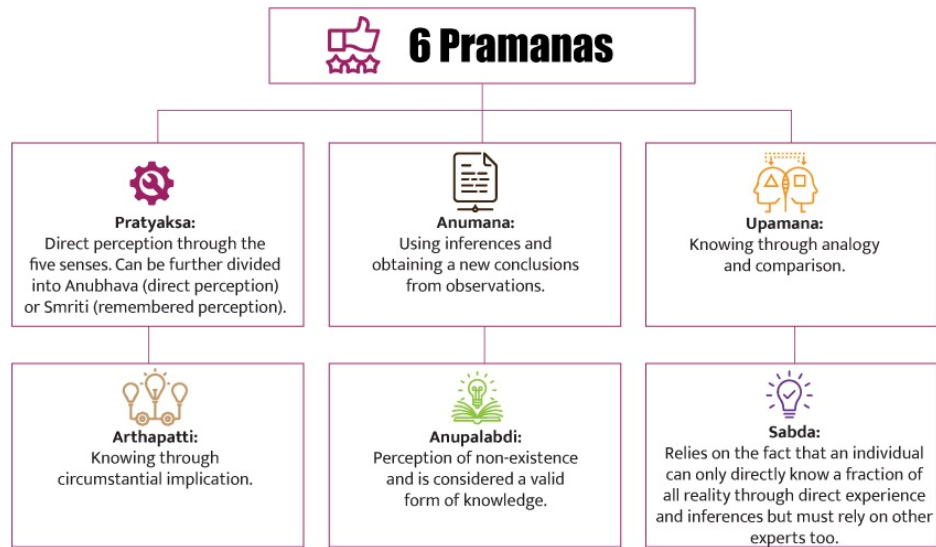
Importance of NCF for School Education

- Holistic in nature:** Students are provided the opportunity to pursue a variety of subjects under different streams.
- Imbibes Cultural Connect:** The curriculum's goal is to make the students understand their cultural connect better, so as to relish and propagate it better.
- Imparts Equality:** It advocates against the discriminations based on caste, gender, religion, socio-economic conditions, student performance in the campus.
- Improved learning levels:** The Semester based approach reduces the anxiety created due to one-time board exams and helps the students prepare and learn better.
- Ideal for the Country's future:** The pedagogy is not only designed to make the student learn better but also to make him a law abiding ideal citizen.

Proposed Curriculum Changes

- Class wise approach
 - For Children aged 3-8 (preschool to class II), a play based pedagogical approach using toys, puzzles, etc.

- For the middle stage (class VI, VII, VIII), natural as well as social sciences will be introduced. The textbooks are to play a central role from the Middle Stage.



- For class IX and X, the students are to study 16 courses categorised under eight varied curricular areas and will have to clear eight papers to obtain the final certification.

✓ **Key curricular areas** are Humanities (that includes languages), Mathematics & Computing, Vocational Education, Physical Education, Arts, Social Science, Science, and Inter-disciplinary Areas.

- For class XI and XII, choice based courses from the same disciplines are provided and **semester system of examination with cumulative grade points is to be introduced for class XII.**

- **No hard separation among arts, humanities, and sciences.**
- **Academic year** should be 180 school days or 34 weeks across all stages of education.
- Proposes **the integration of ancient Indian knowledge systems**, such as the 6 pramanas (ways of acquiring knowledge) and the **Panchakosha system** for Moral Development

Conclusion

The draft has proposed ways through which the Indian education system could be fine-tuned to meet the needs of the current and future trends, without missing away from our roots but adapting ourselves to the growing demands of a pluralistic world.

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4.2. QUALITY OF SCHOOLS EDUCATION

QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SCHOOL AT A GLANCE



Though there is **no standard definition** of quality education, it is commonly understood as one that focuses on the **social, emotional, mental, physical, and cognitive development** of each student. It **prepares the child for life** and not just for testing.



Characteristics of quality education

- Adequate facilities
- Well-designed curriculum
- Safe and secure learning environment
- Values and Ethics
- Well trained and motivated teachers
- Sufficient and quality infrastructure



Advantages of quality education

- **Crucial for development** of productive individual
- **Escape from poverty** and enhances resilience for communities
- **Reduces socio-economic inequality**
- **Women empowerment**
- Achieving **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**



Issues plaguing School education system

- **Focus on enrolment ignoring** learning outcomes, teachers' absenteeism, etc. **even though** we have achieved near-universal school enrolment.
- **Poor pedagogy due to** focus on **rote-based learning, one-size-fits-all** teaching model, and **unhealthy competition** affecting students' mental health and **self-esteem**.
- **Engagement of teachers in non-teaching tasks** (only ~19% of a teacher's annual school hours are spent on teaching (NIEPA report)).
- **Shortage of qualified teachers** as many teachers are themselves **scoring <60-70% in papers of the grades that they teach** (NITI Aayog)
- **Inadequate provisions for fundamental facilities** like drinking water, power, **study materials, etc.**
- **Little or no focus on life-skills.**



Way ahead to improve quality of education

- **Capacity building of teachers** through training and supported with modern teaching aids and tools like smart classrooms.
- **Enhancing accountability through transparent and credible accreditation mechanism** for teacher education as well as schools.
- **Reshaping pedagogy: Experiential learning** like arts-integrated education, **story-telling-based pedagogy; Experienced learning** by Involving community and alumni as volunteers; **Enhanced learning** by improving assessment tools.
- **Improving infrastructure: Providing basic facilities** like safe drinking water, separate toilets, etc.
- **Effective implementation of NEP, 2020** that stress on quality of education, skill development and vocational training.

4.3. ACCREDITATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Why in news

The **Dr K Radhakrishnan Committee's** report on reforms in accreditation system of India's Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) has been put in public domain.

More on news

- This overarching Committee headed by former ISRO chief Dr K Radhakrishnan was **set up for:**
 - **strengthening the assessment and accreditation** processes and
 - preparing a **road map for the National Accreditation Council (NAC)** envisioned in the National Education Policy, 2020.
- ✓ NAC is **one of the four verticals of Higher Education Commission of India (HECI).**

- ✓ It has been envisaged as the **'meta-accrediting body'**, with responsibility for overseeing and supervising an independent ecosystem of accrediting institutions.

Significance of Accreditation



Students: They can select the best institutions and programmes.



Employer: Helpful in determining the programme credibility and knowledge level of the student.



Institution: Student retention, better planning for resource allocation, attracting investment.



Funding agency: They could get objective data to assess the eligibility of the institution for funding.



Country: Enhances opportunities for improving ranks in international ranking.

About India's accreditation of HEIs

- Accreditation is **assessment of the quality of education**.
- **University Grants Commission (UGC)** accords recognition to the HEIs under the provisions of the **'UGC Act 1956'**
- **Multiple agencies** within the ambit of the Union Government (and even some States, lately) have been mandated for **periodic approvals, assessment, accreditation and ranking** of HEIs.

Challenges in India's accreditation system

- **Centralized system:** Regulation and accreditation in India are centralized with **poor outreach in the states**.
 - Also, these systems have **not kept pace with the growing number of HEIs in India**.
- **Low participation:** The low level of willingness of HEIs to volunteer for this process continues to be a cause of concern.
 - **For example**, there are 1,113 universities across the country out of which only 418 universities are accredited by NAAC.
 - ✓ To **enhance the participation** of HEIs in accreditation, UGC launched the **Paramarsh Scheme**.
 - ✓ Under the scheme, **some of the best-performing institutes** were identified to **serve as mentors** to at least five institutes aspiring to get accredited.
- **Duplication and overlapping:** Presently, **multiple agencies** within the ambit of the Union Government (and some States, lately) have been **mandated for periodic approvals, assessment, accreditation and ranking of HEIs**.
 - Each of these agencies collects **information from the responder HEIs that may be the same or similar**.
- **Challenging procedure:** Process for collection of the information sought by the accrediting agencies (that too at different periodicity) are cumbersome and tiresome.
- **Manual/hybrid systems:** This brings a higher degree of subjectivity and inconsistencies between assessment by different agencies.
- **Alleged corruption:** For example, recently the possibility of vested interests, malpractices under the NAAC accreditation system have been highlighted.

Key recommendations for improving India's accreditation system of HEIs

- **Composite Assessment System (CAS):** Include **all HEIs and every programme** in the newly proposed assessment and accreditation system.

Accreditation of school

- In India, there is **no mandate from the government on regular school evaluations**.
- The NEP 2020 visualizes an effective **quality self-regulation or accreditation system for all stages of education** including pre-school education.
 - It also recommends a **separate School Quality Assessment and Accreditation Framework** be developed by State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs).
- **National Accreditation Board for Education and Training (NABET)** is offering an accreditation programme called **'Accreditation standard for Quality School Governance'**.
 - NABET is the **constituent Board of the Quality Council of India (QCI)**.
 - **The standard has three basic sections:**
 - ✓ School Governance
 - ✓ Educational and Support Processes
 - ✓ Performance Measurement & Improvement
- **PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development)** has been launched **as part of the NEP**
 - PARAKH will be responsible for **conducting large-scale assessments**, including National Achievement Survey (NAS), State Achievement Survey (SAS) and monitor achievement of learning outcomes.

- **Amalgamate Programme-Accreditation and Institution Accreditation**, considering their inter-dependency and evolve a **CAS**.
- **Binary Accreditation System:** The Committee proposed a transition from the present 8-point grading system of NAAC to an Binary Accreditation System viz. **Accredited and Not Accredited**.
 - **Committee proposed, two sub- divisions in the Non-accredited category i.e. Awaiting Accreditation** (for those who are close to the threshold level) and **Not Accredited** (for those who are far below the standards for accreditation).
 - It further **proposed to mentor the Institutions** falling ‘far below the standards for accreditation’.
- **Technology-driven systems:** To ensure transparency and credibility:
 - Upgrade the **‘One Nation One Data Platform’** to provide adequate access control and security features, ingestion of harmonised data, etc.
- **Other proposals:**
 - **Enable Choice-based Ranking System for diverse Users** (students, funding agencies, industries etc.).
 - **Initiate a robust outreach mechanism** in tandem with effective methods of handholding the potential entrants.
 - Rather than a one-size-fits-all model in vogue currently, **categorise the HEIs based on their orientation/vision and heritage/legacy**.
 - **Simplify the Accreditation process**, especially for the first cycle, and **bring down periodicity for Re-accreditation to three years**.

4.4. NATIONAL CREDIT FRAMEWORK (NCrF)

Why in News?

The **University Grants Commission (UGC)** has recently released the **National Credit Framework (NCrF)**.

Background of NCrF

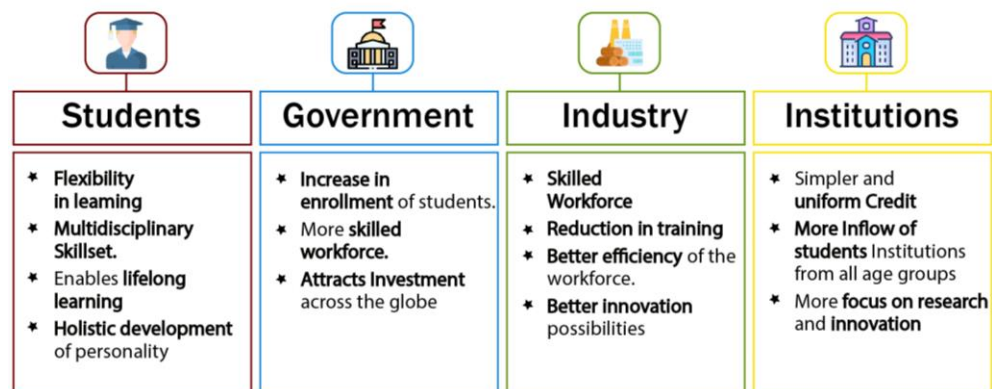
- NCrF has been proposed to achieve the objectives of NEP, 2020.
- **NCrF has been jointly developed by a High-Level Committee** with members from UGC, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVT), NCERT, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, CBSE, etc.

About National Credit Framework (NCrF)

- It **seeks to integrate the credits earned** through school education, higher education and vocational & skill education to **ensure flexibility and mobility among them**.
- It shall encompass
 - **National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF)**
 - **National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF)**
 - **National Curriculum Framework (NCF)/ National School Education Qualification Framework (NSEQF)**
- It **makes the education more holistic** by enabling broad based, **multi-disciplinary education** across sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities and sports.



Benefits of NCrF



- It will provide the guideline to be followed by schools, colleges and universities in adopting the credit system.

Key Highlights of NCeR

- Credit system:** It divides education into 8 levels where levels 1-4 refer to the School Education and 4-5-8 refers to Higher education and for Vocational education & training from level 1 to 8.
- Academic Bank of Credits (ABC):** The credits earned after the completion of academic education, vocational education, training & Skill education - the collected credits will be stored in the ABC.
- Multiple Entry and Exit Options** that facilitates lifelong learning.
- Notional Learning Hours:** It refers to the time that an average student needs to attend all classes, appear for tests and submit assignments.
 - The total notional learning hours for school, college, vocational and skill education is fixed at 1200 Hrs/Year.

Conclusion

NCeR is a necessary step to make the NEP more effective, so that the real benefits of the demographic dividend can be reaped to transform India in all aspects.

4.5. NATIONAL DIGITAL UNIVERSITY (NDU)

Why in news?

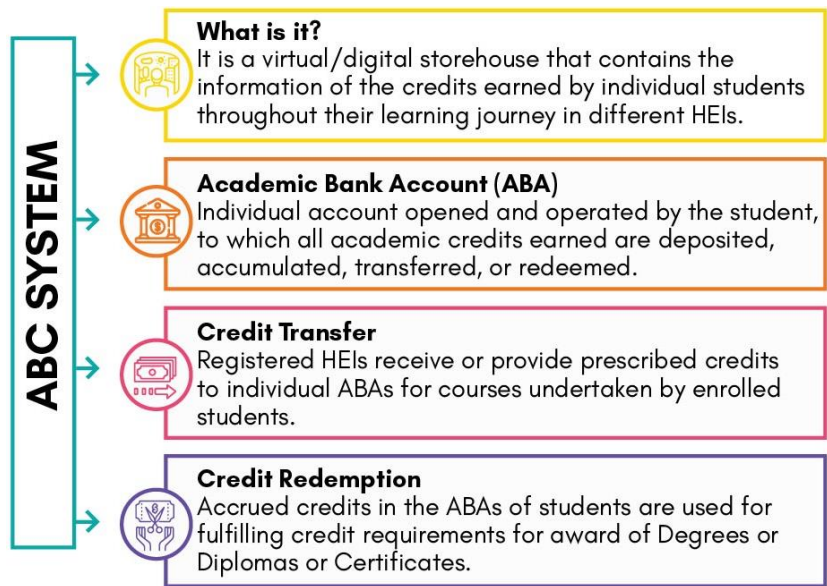
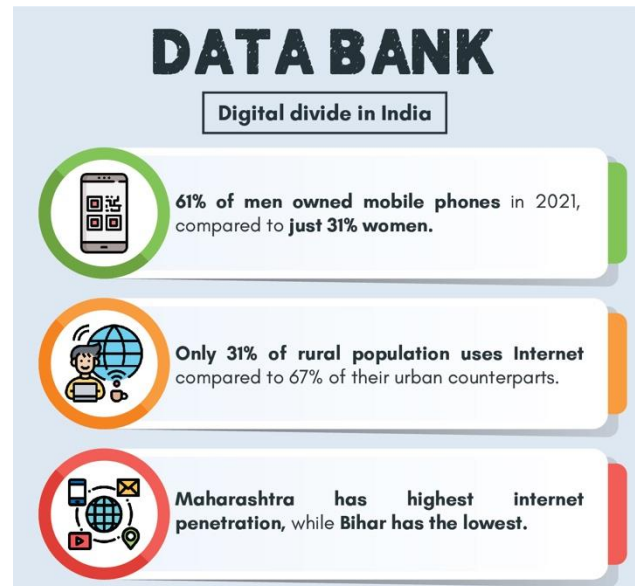
Framework of National Digital University (NDU), as envisioned under the National Education Policy, 2020 was revealed.

What is NDU and its framework?

- NDU is a university designed to bring together various higher educational institutions (HEIs) for providing online higher educational courses.

Framework for NDU

- Exclusively online courses without any limit on number of seats will be offered.
- certificate, diploma, or degree courses will be offered.
- Hub-and-spoke model where courses will be made accessible to students from the single platform - SWAYAM portal.
- Credit based university degree:** Courses will hold a certain number of credits, and students will be eligible for a degree from a particular institute on accumulating 50% of the credits.
- NDU degree:** If a student earns credits from multiple institutions and crosses the credit threshold, the degree awarded will be by NDU.
- Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) system** established by the UGC will be used by the NDU.
- No limits on number of seats** for course.
- IT and administrative services will be provided through the government's Samarth portal



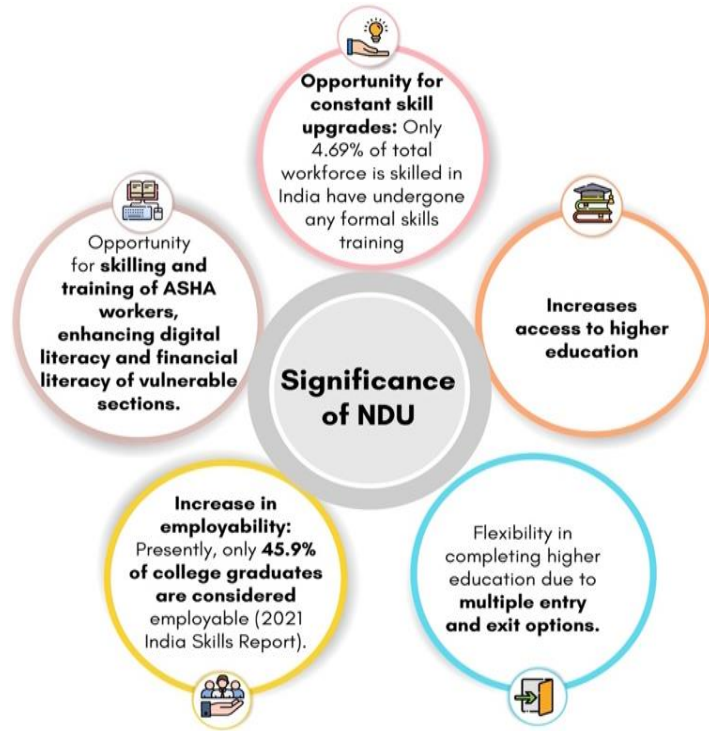
- This portal **allows HEIs to deploy a digital framework** for planning, management, delivery, and monitoring of education services in a seamless manner.

Challenges with NDU

- **Ambiguity on whether industry recognizes equivalence** between traditional degree programs and digital degree programs or not.
- **Difficulties in standardised evaluation** to be carried out for a large number of students and different course combinations.
- **Potential compromise in quality of education** due to the concept of unlimited number of seats.
- **Lack of skills and personality development** in the absence of a physical institution and lack of interactions with fellow students and professors.
- **Digital divide** due to geographical and gender disparity.

Way Forward

- **Strengthening Industry-academia linkages in the NDU** for ensuring higher employability and skill recognition.
- **Peer learning communities** can be formed, which promote feedback and competition among students.
- **Digital India Initiative** can be effectively leveraged for accessibility and affordability of digital infrastructure among vulnerable sections and rural areas.
- **Collaborations with edtech platforms to incorporate emerging technologies** and promoting **personalized learnings** through Artificial Intelligence.
- **Communication network and engagement mechanisms** between students and counsellors/faculties/ professionals should be established to emulate the offline mode to a greater degree.



4.6. FOREIGN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (FHEIS) IN INDIA

Why in news?

Recently, **University Grants Commission (UGC)** released **draft regulations** for establishment of foreign universities in India.

More on news

- In line with **NEP 2020**, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has released draft **UGC (Setting up and Operation of Campuses of Foreign Higher Educational Institutions in India) Regulations, 2023**.

Key highlights of the draft regulations

- **Mandatory approval by UGC:** for setting up FHEIs in India. Approval granted for 10 years.
- **Eligibility:** Foreign university placed in **top 500 in global ranking** and reputed FHEIs in its home jurisdiction.
- **Advantage to FEIs:** Autonomy in faculty recruitment, admission process and fee structures.
- **Applicability of FEMA:** Cross border movement of funds by FHEIs is allowed as per the provisions of Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999.
- **Courses to be offered:** Only **full time courses in offline mode**.
- **Recognition of Qualification awarded:** Qualification awarded by the FHEIs in Indian campuses will be equivalent with those awarded in their home country.
- **Rights of UGC:** Can inspect the campuses and its operations at all time to ascertain the infrastructure, academic programme and overall quality.

- These regulations will **regulate the entry and operations of Foreign Universities/Institutions in India** to conduct higher educational programmes and award degrees, diplomas, and certificates in all disciplines.

India's current interaction with the global education ecosystem

<p>From India to the World</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indian students studying abroad: According to Ministry of Education (MoE), over 6.5 lakh Indian students went abroad in 2022 to pursue higher education. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most Indian students preferred Canada, the USA and UK to pursue degree courses. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Collaboration</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign HEIs (UGC Regulations 2022)</p> </div>
<p>From the World to India</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brand India: India is promoting overseas operations of IITs with the brand name “India International Institute of Technology”. Study in India (SII): It is a flagship project of MoE to encourage international students to study in premier Indian institutes. 	

Significance of FHEIs in India

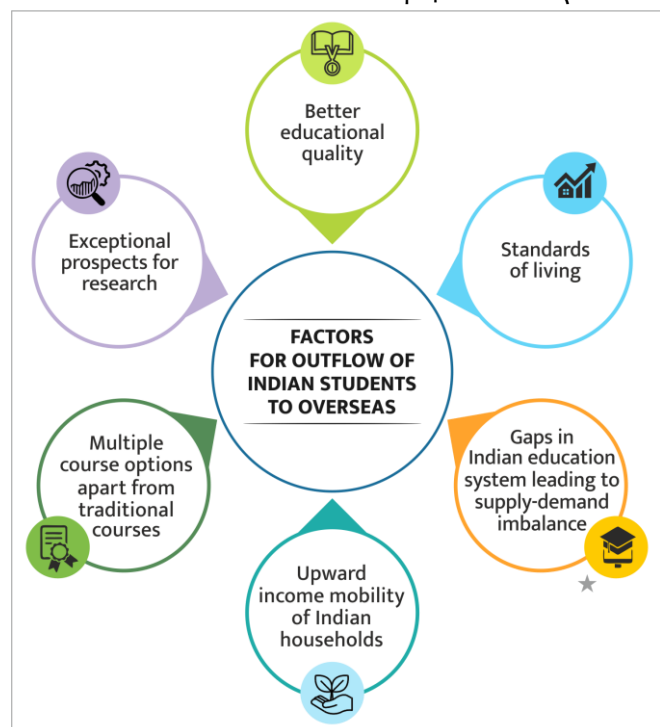
- Foreign HEIs will help achieving **50% Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education by 2035** as envisaged in the NEP 2020.
- Control of brain drain and Make India a hub for higher education**
- Reduction in foreign exchange outflow** due to students studying abroad (₹5 billion was lost in FY 2021-2022).
- Improvement in Indian HEIs global ranking** (only 8 Indian universities made it to top 400 in the QS World University Rankings 2022).
- Increases in R&D in India and faculty to faculty research collaboration** among various universities.
- Arrival of international students** and associated economic benefits such as rental housing, restaurants, part-time job opportunities, etc.
- Strengthening of Industry-academia linkage**

Concerns from FHEIs

- Commodification of higher education** due to possible cultural shift towards a profit-making ideology.
- Exclusion of vulnerable sections** due to high cost of learning in the absence of reservation and quota-based scholarships.
- Competition for** with Indian HEIs for teachers, researchers, technicians and other resources may cause issue of scarcity in some Indian HEIs.
- Pushback for language-inclusive higher education** as FHEIs will impart education only in English
- Repatriation of profits** earned from India to their home countries.
- Western influences** provoking erosion of cultural and linguistic diversity.

Way Forward

- Collaborative structure between Indian Universities and FHEIs** to ensure they complement each other vis-à-vis research, industry engagement or academic competitions etc.



- **Collaboration among Indian Institutions** for effective resource management, better research possibilities, financial prowess etc.
 - Such collaboration can be seen in other countries such as **Ivy League in USA, Russell Group in UK, C9 League in China** etc.
- **International accreditation for Indian HEIs** to boost their international reputation.
- **Scholarships to students from backward classes and marginalized sections** for studying in Indian campuses of FHEIs.
- Proposed **Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)** should determine standards and uniform guidelines on Indian and Foreign HEIs.
- **NAAC's benchmark** for assessing universities can be extended to FHEIs.

4.7. PROMOTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN REGIONAL LANGUAGES

Why in News?

Recently, Union Minister of Home Affairs launched the Hindi version of MBBS course books in Madhya Pradesh.

Development of Education in different mediums during British rule

- **East India Company faced an Orientalist-Anglicist challenge** regarding the medium of education
 - **Orientalists** advocated Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian as the medium of education.
 - **Anglicists** advocated the imparting of western education through the medium of English.
- **Macaulay's minute of 1835** batted for English education and suggested 'downward filtration theory'.
- **Wood's Despatch (1854)** recommended primary education in vernacular languages for the masses, but secondary and higher education exclusively in English.

Post-Independence Development

- **Radhakrishnan Committee report of 1948-49** recommended that **English be replaced by an Indian language** as the medium of instruction for higher education.
- **Official Language Commission, 1956**, asked for progressive use of the Hindi language for all official purposes of the Union.
- **Emotional Integration Committee (1962), National Education Policies (1968, 1986)** also discussed about medium of instruction in higher education.

Concerns related to promoting higher education in regional language

- **Large number of regional languages:** Difficulty in delivering lectures having students from diverse regional languages



Initiatives taken to promote higher education in regional language

- **National Education Policy (NEP) 2022** calls for study material in universities in regional languages.
- **Engineering textbooks in various regional languages** by the AICTE.
- **Artificial Intelligence - powered tool by the AICTE** to translate books, academic journals and videos.
- **Panel by the Bar Council of India** for translating legal books in regional languages.
- **National Translation Mission (NTM)** provides for text books in Universities in all Languages of the 8th Schedule.
- **M.B.B.S. books in Hindi in Madhya Pradesh.**

- **Impact of English-medium legacy:** Attracting and retaining quality teachers who are willing and able to teach in regional languages would be a challenge.
- **Reduced opportunities or graduates:** Difficulty in industry placements or in finding opportunity in global labour and education markets.
- **High Initial Cost** because of the additional cost of developing new learning material and trained teachers especially for languages that have not been standardised.

Way Forward

- **Build foundation first**, for instance, through grants to popularise science and technological education in the regional language, etc.
- **Hiring teachers with multilingual capabilities** including the English language compulsorily can effectively add to the internationalization of higher education.
- **Technological interventions** to serve as aids to teachers, and developing or translating enjoyable books into regional languages and making these available in colleges and digital libraries.
- **Incentives for teachers who know local languages** especially in areas with high dropout rates and an overhaul of the curriculum to make it more engaging and useful.

4.8. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN EDUCATION (AIED)

Why in news?

Recently, UNESCO launched ‘State of the Education Report for India, 2022: Artificial Intelligence in Education’.

Key highlights of the report

- **India’s current status in AI**
 - India has the **highest relative AI skill penetration rate** (3.09 times the global average).
- AI in Education systems have **contributed to reach US\$7.8 billion by 2025 at a rate of 20.2% CAGR.**

Challenges in the adoption of AI in the education sector

- **Lack of comprehensive policy** for integrating AI in the education sector.
- **Inadequate States capacity and human resources availability** to cope with the speed of innovation in the field of AI.
- **Low expenditure on Education** which is **under 3.5% of GDP** compared to a global average of 4.2%.
- **Digital divide** like 54% of the population in India does not use the internet.
- **Ethics and transparency** and **possibility of algorithmic biases, digital or data colonialism**



Initiatives taken by India to Promote research in AI

- **Responsible AI for Youth:** It was created by the **Ministry of Electronics & IT** in collaboration with **Intel India** and the support of the **Ministry of Education**.
 - It is open to **school students studying** in classes 8-12 across India to **foster a deeper understanding of AI-tech** and encourage youngsters to become human-centric designers.
- **US-India Artificial Intelligence Initiative:** To foster AI innovation by sharing ideas and experiences, identifying new opportunities in research and development, and bilateral collaboration.
- **National Artificial Intelligence (AI) Mission:** It was launched by the Prime Minister's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council (**PM-STIAC**).
 - It works with extensive academia-industry interactions on developing core research capability at the national level including international collaborations.
- **AI in Schools:** As part of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, AI will now be a part of the Indian school curriculum.

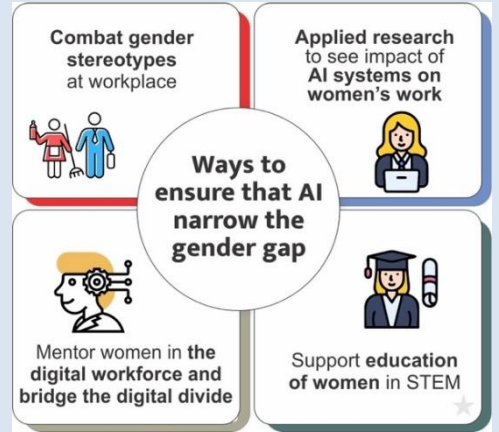
(controlling of data by a few countries), misuse of data generated.

Way ahead

- **A comprehensive State policy** to make India world's centre of AI innovation to have robust regulatory framework to prevent data misuses, ensure privacy and transparency.
- **Harness basic technologies in a smart way** like providing AI-powered learning tools via short messaging service (SMS).
- **Intelligent tutoring systems**, a computer-based learning system that uses AI to track student progress, and help them learn new skills.
- **Public-private partnership** to **strengthen AI training and research**, facilitate **sharing of material and financial resources**, aligning educational programmes with **labour market needs**.
- **Data anonymity and promoting algorithmic fairness** by data cleaning and editing before entering them to AI.

AIED and women in India

- The advancement of automation may result in the **disappearance of up to 2/3rd of all current jobs** in developing countries (UNCTAD).
- Hence, **women need to acquire new skills to remain ready for the jobs** of the future
- **Current status**
 - India was ranked **at the top for relative skill penetration by gender**, with **women exhibiting a higher rate than men** in the country (2022 Artificial Intelligence Index)
 - **22% of India's AI talent pool and 33% of AI-related scientific publications** goes to women.
- **Challenges**
 - Leveraging **AI-based education** in India requires **preparing women for technology in the classroom**.
 - However, only **85% of adolescent girls** in don't have a **laptop** at home, and **83% got less than an hour** at their school computer labs **per week**.
 - The **lack of access to technology in early education** for women could be **leading to lost potential**.



Conclusion

AI is a dual-use technology. A variety of AI-powered education tools offer opportunities across many aspects of education such as formal and informal learning, teaching, evaluation, etc. However, it also entails challenges related to AI use and management which needs to be addressed first, both at the global level and at the national level in India.

फाउंडेशन कोर्स

सामान्य अध्ययन

प्रारंभिक एवं मुख्य परीक्षा 2024

इनोवेटिव क्लासरूम प्रोग्राम

- प्रारंभिक परीक्षा, मुख्य परीक्षा और निबंध के लिए महत्वपूर्ण सभी टॉपिक का विस्तृत कवरेज
- सीसैट कक्षाएं
- मौलिक अवधारणाओं की समझ के विकास एवं विश्लेषणात्मक क्षमता निर्माण पर विशेष ध्यान
- PT 365 कक्षाएं
- एनीमेशन, पॉवर प्वाइंट, वीडियो जैसी तकनीकी सुविधाओं का प्रयोग
- PT टेस्ट सीरीज
- अंतर - विषयक समझ विकसित करने का प्रयास
- मुख्य परीक्षा टेस्ट सीरीज
- योजनाबद्ध तैयारी हेतु करंट ओरिएंटेड अप्रोच
- निबंध टेस्ट सीरीज
- निबंध लेखन - शैली की कक्षाएं
- नियमित क्लास टेस्ट एवं व्यक्तिगत मूल्यांकन
- करंट अफेयर्स मैगजीन

DELHI: 21 जून, 1 PM | 25 जुलाई, 9 AM

LUCKNOW: 22 जून, 9 AM

JAIPUR: 3 जुलाई, 7:30 AM & 4 PM

BHOPAL: 5 जुलाई

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लाइव/ऑनलाइन कक्षाएं भी उपलब्ध

5. HEALTH

5.1. UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE (UHC)

UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE (UHC) AT A GLANCE

- ⊕ According to WHO, Universal health coverage (UHC) means that **all people have access to the health services they need**, when and where they need them, without financial hardship.
- ⊕ Thus, it facilitates enforcement of **Right to Health (RTH)**.



Benefits of UHC

- ⊕ UHC can generate **economic returns at least ten times** the initial investments.
- ⊕ **Enhancing community resilience** by reducing susceptibility to infectious diseases and anti-microbial resistance.
- ⊕ **Reduction in poverty and inequality** by reducing Out of Pocket expenditure on health.
- ⊕ **Improves opportunities in life** for poor, women and other vulnerable sections.
- ⊕ **Demographic dividend** by producing a healthy workforce



Steps Taken to achieve UHC in India

- ⊕ **National Health Policy 2017** provides for UHC, and asks to raise public financing of health sector to **2.5% GDP by 2025**
- ⊕ **Ayushman Bharat scheme** launched in 2018 to achieve the vision of UHC.
- ⊕ **Rapid strides towards digital health and telemedicine** as 70% of population residing in rural and remote areas where health care facilities are not available.
- ⊕ In **Bandhua Mukti Morcha v Union of India & Ors**, 1984 the Supreme Court interpreted the RTH under Article 21 which guarantees the right to life



Challenges in implementing UHC

- ⊕ **Chronic Underfunding** which is around 1.5% of India's GDP.
- ⊕ **Weak Primary health care (PHC) sector:** 60% of PHCs in India have only one doctor while about 5% have none.
- ⊕ **Regional disparity in accessibility:** About 80% doctors and 60% hospitals are present in urban areas where only 1/3rd population lives.
- ⊕ **Predominance of private healthcare** (caters to around 70% of India's population)
- ⊕ **Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs):** They do not get adequate attention by pharma industry.
- ⊕ **Low penetration of insurance policies** (more than 80% in rural & urban areas do not have insurance coverage).
- ⊕ **Inadequate infrastructure** i.e., shortage of healthcare workers, hospitals, supply of drugs, equipment's, etc.
- ⊕ **Low health awareness like** knowledge regarding breastfeeding practice, benefits of hygiene & sanitation, etc.



Way ahead

- ⊕ **Enhance funding:** Expenditure on health should be at least 3% of GDP.
- ⊕ **Cooperative federalism:** Decentralisation of power and funds to states.
- ⊕ **"Health" in all policies approach:** For example, ensuring mid-day meals to avoid malnutrition.
- ⊕ **Incentivizing wellness-seeking behaviour through** Initiatives like Poshan Abhiyaan, Fit India Movement.
- ⊕ **Other initiatives** like harnessing the potential of Digital health, effective regulation of private sector, and community Participation.
- ⊕ **Comprehensive law for RTH:** It must ensure achieving core components of RTH i.e.,
 - **Availability** of high-quality public health care facilities
 - **Accessibility** which includes affordability and non-discrimination.
 - **Quality** health services which is safe; effective; people-centred, timely, etc.
- ⊕ **Digitize healthcare system:** This would ensure **evidence based planning** and decision making

5.2. AYUSHMAN BHARAT

Why in news?

Nearly 22 crore beneficiaries have been verified under the **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri – Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) Scheme** till 4th January 2023 highlights the Economic Survey 2022-23.

About Ayushman Bharat scheme

- It was **launched in 2018** as recommended by the **National Health Policy (NHP) 2017**, to achieve the vision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC).
- It is an attempt to **move from a sectoral and segmented approach** of health service delivery to a **comprehensive need-based health care service**.
- Comprises **two interrelated components**:
 - **Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs)** to provide **Comprehensive Primary Health Care**.
 - **Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)**
- **Achievements**
 - **1,54,070 AB-HWCs** have been operationalized across the country by upgrading the SHCs and PHCs in rural and urban area

About PM JAY

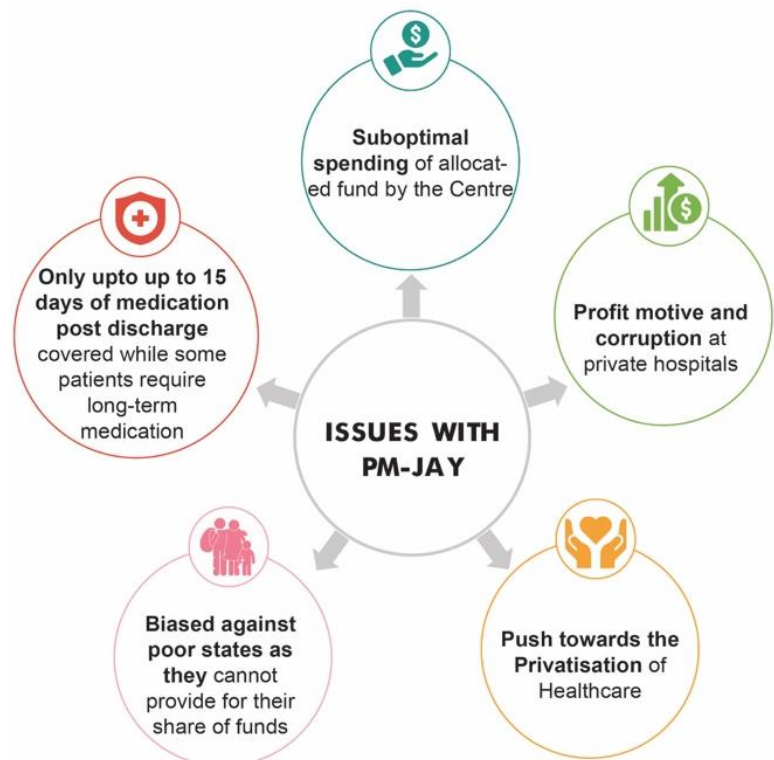
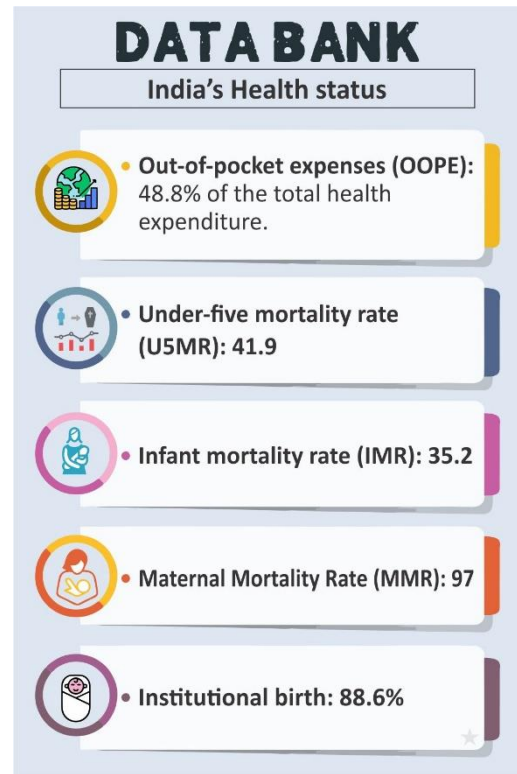
- **World's largest Health Insurance scheme**: It aims at providing a **health cover of Rs. 5 lakhs per family per year** for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization to the **bottom 40% of the Indian population**.
- **Identification of beneficiary households**: Based on the deprivation and occupational criteria of SocioEconomic Caste Census 2011 (SECC 2011).
- **Cashless and paperless access to services**: For the beneficiary at the point of service in any (both public and private) empanelled hospitals across India.

Significance of PM-JAY

- Help India progressively achieve **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)** and **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**.
- Ensure improved **access and affordability of quality secondary and tertiary care services**.
- Significantly **reduce out of pocket expenditure** for hospitalization.
- **Strengthen public health care systems** through infusion of insurance revenues.
- Enable **creation of new health infrastructure** in rural, remote and under-served areas.
- **Improvement in population-level productivity** and efficiency thus leading to improvement in quality of life.

Way forward

- **Exclude public hospitals** from PMJAY as services there are already free of cost.
- **Penalising unethical practice** in hospitals indulging in unethical practices
- **Continuous Quality Improvement** efforts to be undertaken in PM-JAY network hospitals.
- **Real time data** should be available in the available in the public domain for researchers to analyse, and make recommendations to plug gaps in the scheme.



Related news**Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)**

- Recently, the National Health Authority (NHA) invited comments on the Consultation Paper on ‘Operationalising Unified Health Interface (UHI) in India’
- UHI is envisioned as a **foundational layer** of the **ABDM**.
- It will remove the fragmentations in **digital health ecosystem in India** through an **open interoperable network** to connect various End User Applications (EUAs) and Health Service Provider Applications (HSPAs).
- It will **facilitate** Search & Discovery, Payment & Settlement processes, Rules around Cancellation & Rescheduling, Grievance redressal mechanism, etc.
- **About ABDM**
 - Launched in **2021**, ABDM aims to **develop the backbone necessary to support the integrated digital health infrastructure** of the country.
 - It bridges the existing gap amongst **different stakeholders of Healthcare ecosystem** through digital highways/components such as:
 - **ABHA (Ayushman Bharat Health Account) Number**
 - **Healthcare Professionals Registry (HPR)**
 - **Health Facility Registry (HFR)**
 - **ABHA Mobile App (PHR)**

Pradhan Mantri-Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM)

- World Bank (WB) Signed a **\$1 Billion Program to Support India’s Health Sector**.
- PM-ABHIM (2021-22 to 2025-26) is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** with some Central Sector Components, for **implementation of Atmanirbhar Bharat Package** for health sector.
- Objective is to **fill critical gaps in health infrastructure, surveillance and health research** – spanning both urban and rural areas.
- WB support will also **prioritize health service delivery in seven states** including Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Meghalaya, Odisha, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh.

DAKSHA MAINS MENTORING PROGRAM 2024

(A Strategic Revision, Practice, and Enrichment Mentoring Program for Mains Examination 2024)

DATE
4th July

DURATION
5 Months

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PROGRAMME

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly experienced and qualified team of mentors Scheduled group sessions for strategy discussions, live practice, and peer interaction Well-structured revision and practice plan for GSMains, Essay & Ethics Access to Daksha Mains Practice Tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on score maximization and performance improvement Personalized one-to-one sessions with mentors Subject-wise strategy documents based on thorough research Continuous performance assessment, monitoring and smart interventions
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5.3. DIGITAL HEALTHCARE

DIGITAL HEALTHCARE AT A GLANCE



- Digital healthcare refers to the **integration of medical knowledge with IT applications or IT technologies**, with the aim of improving the medical care and supervision of patients.
- Digital healthcare includes **Telemedicine, Robot-assisted surgery, self-monitoring healthcare devices, electronic health records, e-pharmacies, e-insurance etc.**



Advantages of Digital Healthcare

- Addressing the **human resource gap**
- **Improve access** to rural and remote areas
- **Accessibility** to healthcare services even during pandemics
- **Reduces costs** on transportation
- Efficient utilisation of **time and improve diagnostics**
- Make medicine **more personalized for patients**
- **Portability** of healthcare services
- **Informed decision making** on real time basis



Challenges to digitalisation of healthcare

- **Federal issues:** Health is a state subject, hence bringing all the state on board for reform would be difficult.
- **Underdeveloped infrastructure:** With a few exceptions, little computerization is in place in the public health sector, especially at Primary Health Centres (PHCs).
- **Fragmented healthcare delivery:** Prevalence of a large number of small facilities with poor economies of scale and with limited technological capacity.
- **Lack of dominant HIT (Health IT) entrepreneurs:** Dominant players are more likely to be adequately capitalized, thus being able to finance continual innovation.
- **Other challenges:** Internet accessibility, Data Safety, information standards etc.



Initiative taken to promote digital healthcare

- **Ayushman Bharat Yojana (ABY)** to deliver a comprehensive healthcare services
- **National Digital Health Mission (NDHM)** for developing the backbone for a unified digital health infrastructure.
- **National Digital Health Blueprint (NDHB)** to transition into integrated digital services in a comprehensive and holistic manner.
- **States are supported under National Health Mission (NHM)** for services like Telemedicine, Tele-Radiology, Tele-Oncology, Tele-Ophthalmology and Hospital Information System (HIS).
- **Telemedicine Practice Guidelines, 2020** for regularization and diversification of tele-consultation services across the country.
- Digital applications like **eRaktkosh, eSanjeevani, CoWIN etc.**



Way ahead

- **Identification of existing appropriate Technologies** that can be scaled-up across regions to achieve improved health outcomes.
- **Defining potential funding mechanisms**, role of global institutional frameworks and establishing Cross-border Public Private partnerships for driving digital health.
- **Developing a framework for health data governance** and protect patient data from cyber threats.
- **Big Data Analytics** to derive intelligent insights for timely prevention, diagnosis and cure.
- **Keep the interfaces simple** and more user friendly.

5.4. DRAFT NATIONAL MEDICAL COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL-2022

Why in News?

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) has **proposed a draft amendment, to the existing National Medical Commission (NMC) Act-2019.**

Key Highlights of the draft bill

- It proposes for setting up a **Fifth Autonomous Board**, namely **Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences**, under the NMC.
- It proposes to bring the accreditation of the diploma, diploma and postgraduate fellowship, and super-specialty fellowships institutes under the proposed **Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences**.
- It aims to alter the jurisdiction of **cases filed, by Medical Colleges or institutions**, in matter related to NMC and bring them all **under jurisdiction of Delhi High Court (HC) only**.
- **In cases of medical negligence**, a new provision for patients and their relatives is provided by making the **Ethics and Medical Registration Board or the NMC as the appellate body** against decisions of the State medical council.

Reasons for the introduction of amendments

- **To Streamline the process:** The proposed board is to replace the existing **National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences**, which currently conducts the **NEET-PG and the Exit tests**.
- **To reduce the delays:** Due to the delays in PG admission cycles, various Resident Doctors Associations have requested to set up a separate body to reduce the delays.
- **To facilitate introduction of NeXT:** The proposed Board will facilitate the common exit test, which is for all the final year students and for the students from abroad, to get them registered in the National register of licensed practitioners.
- **To ease the litigation burden:** By altering the jurisdiction limits to Delhi HC, the Commission which is marred with litigations from various parts of the country can function better.
- **To appeal against State Councils decisions.**

About National Medical Commission (NMC)

- It was constituted under the **NMC Act, 2019**.
- It **succeeded Medical Council of India (MCI)** which was constituted under the MCI Act, 1986.
- **Functions of NMC**
 - Frame **policies for regulating medical institutions and medical professionals**.
 - **Assess the requirements** of healthcare related **human resources and infrastructure**.
 - Exercise **appellate jurisdiction** with respect to the decisions of the **Autonomous Boards**.
 - Ensure **compliance by the State Medical Council**.
 - Frame **guidelines for the determination of fee for upto 50% of the seats in private medical institutions and Deemed Universities** which are regulated under the Act.

Issues in NMC and its functions

- **Limited role of states:** The **nomination of important functionaries of the NMC rests exclusively with the Centre** and this reduces the role of states in the commission.
- **Lack of autonomy to NMC:** It is argued that the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare may interfere with the decisions of NMC
- **Accreditation standards:** The accreditation process **emphasizes on documentation of infrastructure and human resources** (head counting) rather **than measuring the quality of medical education** and outcomes.
- **Lack of Co-ordination between various bodies:** The exam is currently a multi-headed process, which makes it cumbersome for students who reattempt the entrance exams.
 - **The National Testing Agency conducts NEET-UG, National Board of Examination conducts NEET-PG and Screening tests**, while the **admission counselling is carried out by Medical Counselling Committee** which is independent of NMC.

Way forward

- **Creating a separate autonomous body for Medical admission Counselling:** A separate **'Board of Counsellors or Counselling'** should be constituted under NMC, for medical admission process and eliminate confusion.
- **Voluntary and grade based NEXT exam:** So, if a MBBS practitioner wants grade-accredited, he/she could have taken it, as is the precedent in some countries.
- **Ease of practice for students from abroad:** Facilitate students from abroad to return and serve the country. Also provide a backup plan to help students like those who returned from Ukraine.
- **Timely audits:** Regular Inspection **of the institutes and professionals** should be done to keep it corruption free.

- **Participative decision making:** Enhance stakeholder’s involvement to ensure fair decision.
- **Other reform:** Create an efficient accreditation system; promote an equal distribution of resources, redesign curricula with improved assessment methodologies.

5.5. UNIVERSAL IMMUNISATION

Why in news?

The **State of the World’s Children (SOWC) 2023: For Every Child, Vaccination Report** released by UNICEF.

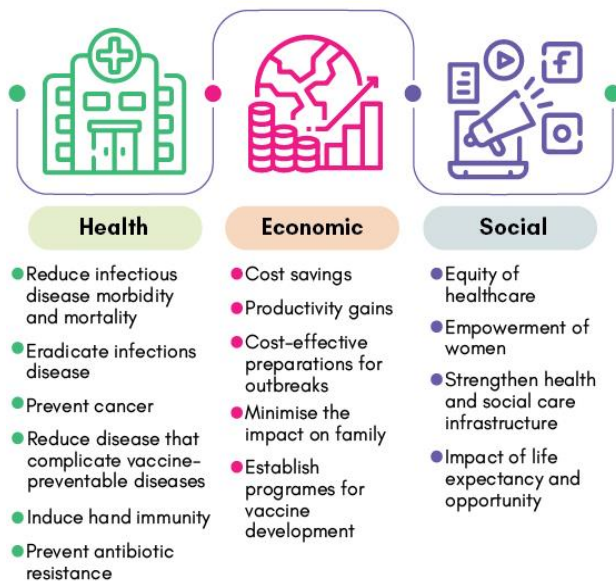
About the report

- **Building on global strategies** outlined in **Immunization Agenda 2030** and **Gavi Strategy 5.0** to promote equity and sustainably scale up immunization coverage, report presents an agenda to put childhood vaccination first.
- **Key priorities identified**
 - **Vaccinate every child, everywhere by**
 - ✓ **Catching up on vaccination of children missed** during the pandemic.
 - **98% of the population in India** currently perceive **vaccines as important for children**.
 - ✓ **Identifying zero-dose (unreached or missed out) and under-vaccinated** children.
 - **India was among top 20 countries** with the largest numbers of **zero-dose children**.
 - **Strengthen demand for vaccination, spend more on immunization** and health **by investing in primary health care, build resilient systems by improving data collection** etc.
 - In India, **digital health platform TeCHO+** (Technology Enabled Community Health Operations) and **electronic vaccine intelligence network (eVIN)** **increased vaccination coverage** while enhancing data entry efficiency.

Immunization Agenda 2030 (IA2030): A Global Strategy to Leave No One Behind

- **WHO and UNICEF are working with Gavi**, the Vaccine Alliance and other partners to deliver the IA2030.
- IA2030 envisions a world **where everyone, everywhere, at every age, fully benefits from vaccines** to improve health and well-being.
- It aims to **maintain hard-won gains in immunization, recover from the disruptions caused by COVID-19**, and achieve even more – by leaving no one behind, in any situation or at any stage of life.

IMPACT OF VACCINES



Way forward

- **Assured financial resources through effective partnership** between Government, private sector and international organisations like WHO. UNICEF.
- **Awareness programmes** to dispel vaccine hesitancy by countering fears and elicit community participation.
- **Focus on vulnerable section** like migrant workers.
- **Political commitment** to ensure adequate, and affordable supplies of vaccines of assured quality.

Accelerate innovation to improve programme performance, surveillance and quality and to increase access to data.

5.6. SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH (SRH)

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH (SRH)



SRH can be defined as a **person's right to a healthy body, autonomy, education and healthcare to freely decide** who to have sex with and how to avoid sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or unintended pregnancy including the spacing and timing of children. These are human rights - universal, indivisible, and undeniable.



Importance of SRH

- Gives young people **vital information about their sexualities, sensuality and gender identities** and expression
- Can **decrease child marriage, teenage pregnancies** and transmission of STIs like HIV, AIDS etc.
- Facilitates right to make **autonomous decisions** about ones' own body and reproductive functions
- **Attaining SDGs like** gender equality, women wellbeing, improve maternal health etc.
- **Stabilizes population**, achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC), etc.



India's Initiatives taken to improve SRH

- **Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Amendment Act, 2021** increases limit for termination of pregnancy up to 24 weeks .
- **Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021** seeks to prohibit commercial surrogacy.
- **Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karykram 2014** to improve knowledge, behaviour, in relation to SRH.
- **Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA)** for assured, antenatal care to all pregnant women
- **Mission Parivar Vikas for increasing the access to contraceptives** in 146 high fertility districts with TFR of 3 and above



Ways to improve SRH

- **Conversations around menstruation could be started in schools and local communities** by including menstrual health and hygiene in sessions on reproductive health.
- **Budgetary allocations and financing strategies need to be recognized** to achieve good health outcomes, universal health coverage and cost-effectiveness of service delivery.
- At societal level, there is a **need to promote laws, policies and institutional practices supportive of SRHR** of women.
- **Improve accessibility to contraceptives, STIs testing** etc. through both physical and technological infrastructure.
- **Gender neutral care and counselling for all who have suffered violence** that threatens their SRH including menstrual problems, fertility and sexual dysfunction etc.
- **Effective integration of services** for HIV and AIDS and SRH to build on a strong health.



Challenges faced by people in SRH

- **Cultural norms and ideological** opposition to Family Planning and abortion
- **Chronic underfunding of reproductive healthcare** in areas like safe abortion and family planning.
- NFHS-5 indicated that **18 percent in 15-19 age group had unmet need for family contraception.**
- **Lack of sex education** due to absence of a comfortable environment at home/school where healthy conversations could take place.
- **Gender-based violence** and its **debilitating impact on SRH outcomes.**



Global level initiatives for SRH

- **Nairobi Summit, 2019 (aka ICPD+25)**, India supports its commitment to integrate SRH into UHC at primary healthcare level, equalising access, and improving quality.
- **Human Reproduction Programme** focuses on Family planning, Safe abortion, Sexual health, Adolescent SRHR etc.
- **Beijing Platform for Action, 1995** states that human rights of women include their right to have control over SRH, free of discrimination and violence.

5.7. MENTAL HEALTHCARE

MENTAL HEALTHCARE AT A GLANCE



- **Mental health** as a state of **well-being**, where an **individual realises their capabilities**, can cope with the normal stressors of life, work productively, and is **able to contribute to their community**.
- Mental illness, also called mental health disorders, refers to a **wide range of mental health conditions** like **depression, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, eating disorders and addictive behaviors**.



Current status of mental illness in India

- **People living with mental illness:** 1 in 7
- **People can't access treatment:** More than 80%
- **Prevalence of Suicide in India:** 1.30 lakh in 2019
- **Cost of mental health issues borne by Indian firms:** \$14 billion/year



Key initiatives to deal with the issue of Mental illness

- **KIRAN helpline** to provide early screening, first-aid, psychological support, distress management, etc.
- **Tele MANAS** to provide **free tele-mental health services** all over the country **round the clock**.
- **MANODARPAN** to provide **psychosocial support to students** for their Mental Health and Well-being.
- National Mental health programme and '**REDS**' path for **suicide prevention**.
- **Mental Health Care Act, 2017:** Decriminalises suicide, bans treatment of minors by electric shock, disallows seclusion of patients, monetary penalty and 6 months imprisonment for violation, etc.



Challenges in tackling mental illness

- **Challenges faced by patients:** Social stigma, higher cost, and long duration of treatment.
- **Inadequate doctors:** Only 0.75 psychologists per lakh population.
- **Regional disparity:** Inadequate resources in rural and remote areas.
- **Rehabilitation issues:** Inadequate community-based rehabilitation facilities.
- **Underutilisation of funds:** Less than 40% of funds allocated from 2015 to 2020 under the District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) were utilised.
 - **Kerala is the only state with 10% DMHP.**



Way ahead

- **Careful mapping and research** to produce quality data, that is essential to understand the size of the problem.
- **Awareness programme** to counter the social stigma and enhancing the understanding of mental illness.
- **Enhance** budget allocation and **effective utilization of the financial resources**.
- **Affordability** by regulating underwriting norms in **insurance policies**, **cost** of counselling sessions, etc. should be **regulated**.
- **Better intersectoral coordination** between mental health and social welfare departments of the government is needed.
- **Shifting care from institution to community**.

5.7.1. STUDENT SUICIDES

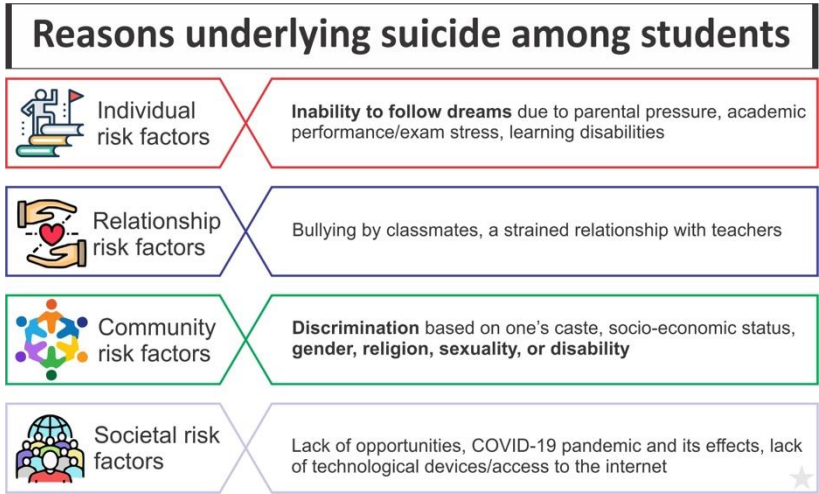
Why in news?

As per data, recently presented in Rajya Sabha by the Ministry of Education, **33 students died by suicide** across the IITs since 2018.

Challenges in preventing suicide among students

- **Under reporting:** Many of the grievances of bullying, discrimination, etc. remain unreported causing alleged victims to suffer in silence.
- **Suppression of facts:** When suicidal risk factors in educational institutions are brought to light, they may be sensationalised leading to suppression of vital facts.

- **Adolescence phase:** Adolescence marked by physical, psychological, and interpersonal changes because of which guidance in challenging situations can be difficult for adolescents leading to self-harm
- **Adjustment to new way of life:** In premier institutes, in addition to academic pressure, students encounter challenges, such as life away from home, cultural shock, dietary adjustments, and imposter syndrome (doubting one's ability).
- **One-size-fits-all approach for cure:** Physiotherapy and generally ignores social, cultural, economic, political and historical contexts which adds complexity to every suicide case.
 - Thus, preventive role of physiotherapy and suicide helpline number is reduced.



Way ahead

- **Parents' participation:** The institutes should share student performance profiles with their parents to **reduce expectation mismatch and improve communication** between parent and child.
- **Early detection and alert generation:** The peers and wing-mates could flag changes in behavioural traits such as missed classes, skipped meals, decreased interaction with others, etc.
- **Remedial teaching and graceful exit:** **Academic load per semester may be reduced** for slower-paced learning. **Facilitate a graceful exit** with a lateral transfer to another institute.
- **Third-party grievance redressal:** The third-party will interact with the student and the concerned institute's officials/faculty and handle the issue with empathy and compassion.
- **Promotion of wellness and life skills:** Ensure mental wellbeing through counsellors, psychiatrists, and encouraging students to socialise and engage in community services to enrich their lives and avoid isolation.
- **Community-led approach:** For example, Suicide Prevention & Implementation Research Initiative (SPIRIT) in Gujarat is school-based suicide prevention program among students who are 14-16 years of age.

ABHYAAS

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 VISAKHAPATNAM

5.8. RARE DISEASES

RARE DISEASES AT A GLANCE



Rare diseases are also called 'orphan diseases' and drugs to treat them are called 'orphan drugs.'



80% of rare diseases are genetic and 1.4% of newborn children are affected by them. All pediatric cancers are rare.



Rare Diseases as a public health issue in India

.....

- ⊖ **Absence of standard definition:** It creates confusion and inconsistencies and has implications for access to treatment and for research and development.
- ⊖ **Lack of epidemiological data:** It impedes understanding of the extent of the burden of rare diseases and development of a definition.
- ⊖ **Marginalisation in policy making:** Interventions that address health problems of a larger number of persons by allocating are prioritized over rare diseases.
- ⊖ **Suboptimal R&D:** R&D is difficult as the patient pool is very small and it often results in inadequate clinical experience.
- ⊖ **Unavailability of treatment:** Less than 5% of rare diseases have therapies available to treat them.
- ⊖ **Other issues:** Late diagnosis, prohibitive cost of treatment, lack of awareness, etc.



Initiatives taken for rare diseases in India

.....

- ⊖ **Exemption of all foods and drugs for rare diseases imported** by people for personal use from customs duty.
- ⊖ National Policy for Rare Diseases (NPRD), 2021 for promotion of **R&D for diagnosis and treatment of rare diseases.**
- ⊖ **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Pharmaceuticals** covers Orphan drugs manufacturers.
- ⊖ **National Registry** by the ICMR for collecting epidemiological data for rare diseases and other inherited disorders.
- ⊖ **Digital Portal for Crowd funding** and Voluntary donations for Patients of Rare Diseases.



Way forward

.....

- ⊖ **Define rare diseases:** Standard definition will help the research, local drug development activities, and the long-term plan for the Rare Disease Community.
- ⊖ **Establishing Centers of Excellence:** It can provide specialized care, research, and support for patients and families.
 - **Only 11 CoEs have been identified till date.**
- ⊖ **Improving Diagnosis:** Measures such as newborn screening, genetic testing, and increased awareness among healthcare providers can help to improve diagnosis rates.
- ⊖ **Tax benefits:** Crowdfunding amount should be exempted under Section 80G of the Income Tax Act for tax benefits.
- ⊖ **Global Cooperation:** Policies should expedite **scientific innovation and advanced clinical research**, and enable key stakeholders including patients and doctors to easily interact with one another.



5.9. NEW ORGAN TRANSPLANTATION GUIDELINES

Why in News?

For improving the organ donation and transplantation system in India, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW) has **introduced several changes to the National Organ Transplantation Guidelines.**

New Guidelines

- Citizens **don't need domicile** for registering for organ donation in any state
- **Even those above 65 years of age can register to receive** an organ for transplantation from **deceased donors,**
- **No registration fees from patient** for organ transplants.
- These developments come in the backdrop of MoH&FW is working on **One Nation-One Policy for organ donation and transplantation.**

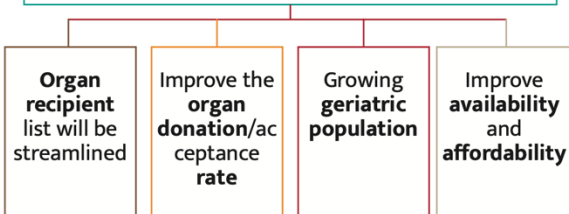
Organ Donation and Transplantation in India

- ✦ **Organ donation and transplantation** is removing an organ from one person (the donor) and surgically placing it in another (the recipient) whose organ has failed.
- ✦ Organ donation can either be **from a living donor** or a deceased donor.

Present Status

- › **3rd-largest country** in terms of the number of transplants
- › **17.8% of all transplants** organs from deceased donors
- › **1.5-2 lakh people** need a kidney transplant each year

Need of One Nation-One Policy for Organ Donation & Transplantation in India



Law and Regulation

- ✦ **The Transplantation of Human Organs Act, 1994** regulates the removal and storage of human organs, as well as the transplantation of organs for therapeutic purposes and to prevent the illicit trade of human organs.
 - › **Accepted brain death** as a form of death and made the sale of organs a punishable offence.
 - › Establishes the **National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO)** and **State Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (SOTTO)** to oversee organ transplantation.
- ✦ **Transplantation of Human Organs (Amendment) Act, 2011** and the rules were notified in 2014.
 - › National Network for coordination needs to be set up for registered hospitals and maintenance of a data bank of donors and prospective recipients.
 - › Widens the donor pool by including grandparents and grandchildren.
 - › Appointment of Transplant coordinator in every registered hospital.
 - › Regulation of the hospitals where removal, storage or transplantation of human organs are performed.

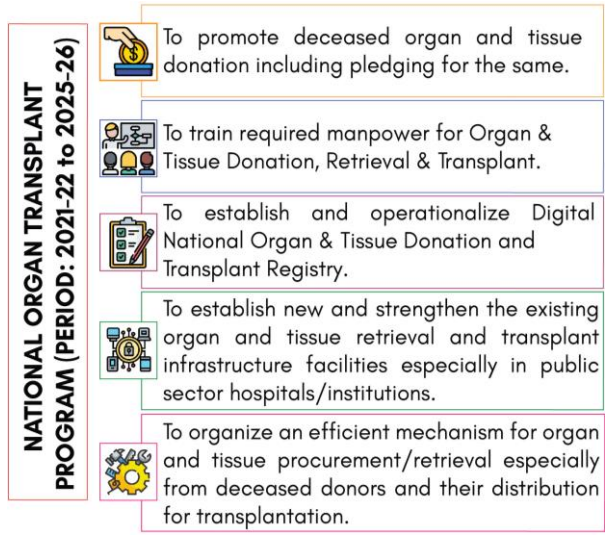
Issues in Organ Donation and Transplantation in India

- **Health a state subject:** Hence, it can be challenging to get all states to accept and implement new regulations.

Ethical Issues involved in organ transplantation

- **Justice versus benefit in allocation:** Due to shortage of donors, the question of who should get the organs - the **one who is the sickest** or the **one who is waiting for long**, or the one **who can get benefited the most** or to the **richest person in queue** – becomes an ethical dilemma.
- **Individual beliefs system:** The treatment of body and its parts **after death** has great significance for an individual for religious, spiritual, cultural and social reasons.
- **Monetizing body parts:** Selling an organ for the need of money raises question of ethics and exploitation of poor sections.
- **Coercion & Non-informed donation:** Scandals of trafficking of organs raise issues regarding informed consent of the donor.
- **Potential risks of donation:** At times, donors are unaware of the potential risks and aftereffects they may undergo.
- **Non-universality:** The development and use of technology related to organ and tissue transplants is quite expensive and beyond the means of many people.

- **Low organ donation rate:** Many citizens are not willing to pledge their organs due to social, cultural, and religious beliefs
- **Regional disparities:** Such as the North-South divide, with most critical/specialized hospitals being located in South India.
- **Limited specialized hospitals:** Organ transplantation is specialized service limited to certain hospitals only.
- **Family sentiments:** In cases of brain dead donors, the family members go through various emotions and grief, while the window of opportunity for organ transplant begins to shrink rapidly.
- **Acceptance of organ transplants:** Doubt prevails about the **quality of care** the patient will receive **after an organ transplant**, as well as **how long the patient will survive** after the transplantation.
- **Black market:** It **creates a trust deficit** among needy families and hinders organ donation in India.



Suggestion

- **Open dialogue about organ donation** starting from school curriculum for elimination stigma and prejudice.
- **Awareness** through advertisement or Role model.
- **Better coordination among various governance levels:** Like NOTTO at the national level, SOTTOs at the state level and ROTTOs.
- **Engaging with all stakeholders** especially with local stakeholders and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).
- **Expand the number of institutions** where surgeries and transplants are undertaken.

5.10. ACCREDITED SOCIAL HEALTH ACTIVIST (ASHA)

Why in News?

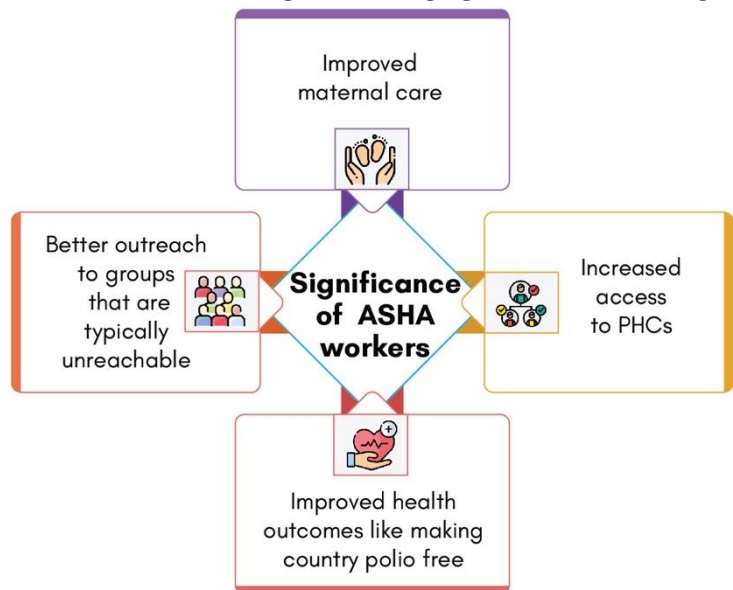
Grassroot Soldiers: Role of ASHAs in the COVID-19 Pandemic Management in India" Report was released by the MoH&FW, National Health Systems Resource Center, and Institute for Competitiveness.

Key highlights of the report

- **Critical role played by ASHA during COVID-19 Pandemic**
 - **Conducting community-level surveillance, contact tracing,** encouraging behaviour change, monitoring of isolations and quarantine norms etc.
 - **Providing non-COVID-19 essential health services** by giving doorstep delivery of medicines for TB, HIV, etc.
 - Spreading **awareness about vaccine and getting eligible beneficiaries vaccinated.**

About Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) Workers

- ASHA workers are **female community health workers** instituted as community-based health functionaries **under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)** launched in 2005.
- The core of the ASHA programme has been an intention **to build the capacity of community members in taking care of their own health** and being partners in health services.



- In most cases, **women from the village itself** are selected as ASHA workers who operate within the local community.

Difficulties faced by ASHA Workers

- Inadequate Compensation:** Since they are considered “volunteers”, governments are not obligated to pay them a salary and their honoraria or task-based incentive are often below minimum wages).
- Patriarchal hurdles:** Initiating community action at the village level is not very feasible for ASHA due to a lack of female representation in the village council and limited involvement in decision-making.
- Poor infrastructure:** Remote villages have poor roads. ASHA worker gets demotivated because of the transportation difficulties.
- High Workload:** ASHAs routinely take on other work (from other government departments) beyond the scope of their roles.
- Other demotivating factors:** Shortage of medicines, lack of training, family disapproval, attitude of health staff at the referral centers, and non-cooperation of the auxiliary nurse midwife/Anganwadi Worker.

Way Forward

- Develop mechanisms for higher and timely incentives** followed by fixed monthly payment for ASHAs and making ASHAs permanent employees.
- Ensure universal coverage of ASHAs** to all areas, as they are currently primarily located in slum/slum-like areas and pockets of vulnerable populations only.
- Leveraging technology** to ease job of ASHA.
- Facilitate a whole of government approach** by improving community’s literacy, physical infrastructure and access to basic services at the grassroots level.
- Community sensitization** by enhancing awareness about the jobs and responsibilities of ASHA workers.
- Enhance security of community health functionaries.**

5.11. EUTHANASIA

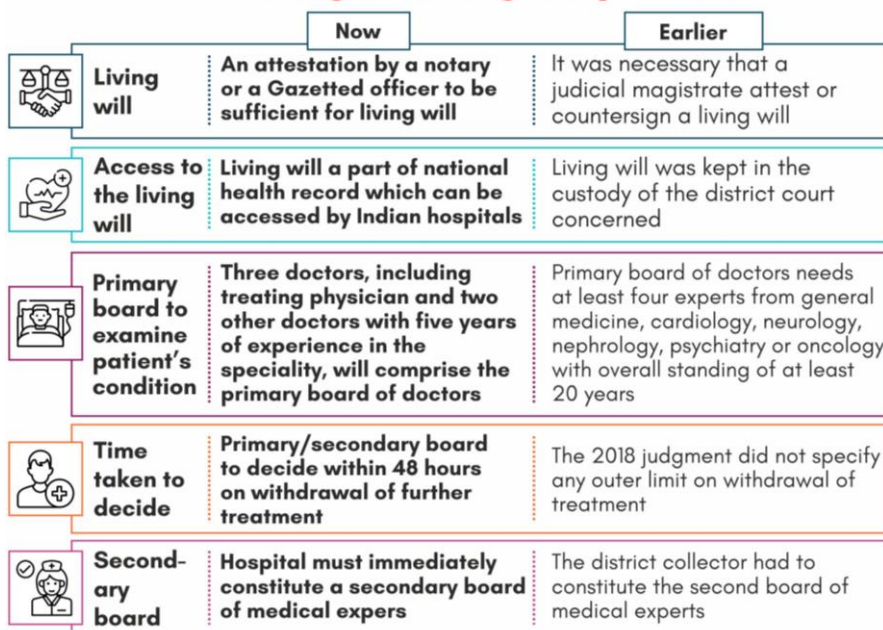
Why in News?

Recently, Supreme Court (SC) simplified its rules on passive euthanasia.

Background

- In **Common Cause v Union of India** a 2018 judgement (Common Cause v Union of India), SC had recognised the **right to die with dignity** as an **inextricable facet of the right to live with dignity** under **Article 21 of the Constitution**.
 - It had, accordingly, **upheld the legal validity of passive euthanasia**.
- However, the **directions had become virtually unenforceable** owing to the complexity of the procedure prescribed by SC.
 - Thus, **necessary amendments were sought** to make the judgement ‘workable’.

The changes brought by the SC



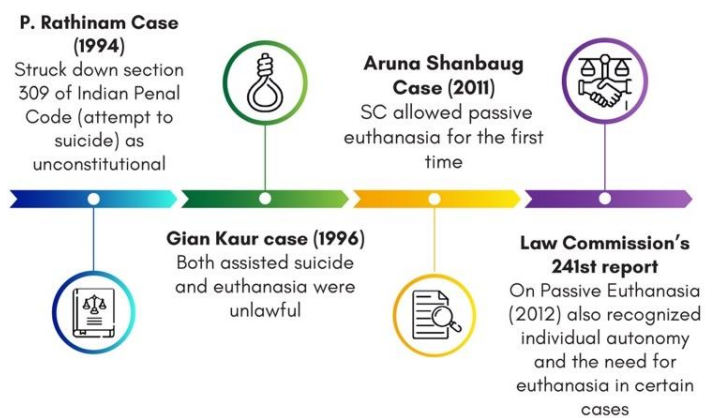
Other aspects of the Judgment	Now	Earlier
Surrogate decision-maker	More than one guardian or close relative can be named. Before a final decision consent of all the nominees will be taken.	Only one guardian or close relative was to be named.

		Before a final opinion, the consent of the guardian or close relative was also be taken.
Role of district court registry	This requirement has been deleted.	Judicial magistrate to forward a copy of the document to the registry of the jurisdictional district court, which would have to retain the document in the original format.
Ascertaining authenticity	Treating physician to execute the advance directive after ascertaining its authenticity with reference to the digital records of the executent, or from the custodian of the document appointed by the local government body.	Treating physician had to execute the advance directive after ascertaining its authenticity from the judicial magistrate.
Appeal before High Court	If permission to withdraw treatment was denied a writ petition at the jurisdictional High Court can be filed.	If permission to withdraw treatment was denied a writ petition at the jurisdictional High Court can be filed.

About Euthanasia

- Euthanasia is a practice of **ending life of a patient to limit his/her suffering.**
- It could be administered **only by a physician** and can be **active** (ending life with substance of lethal injection) or **passive** (Withdrawing life support).
 - Advanced medical directives or living will** communicate preference regarding medical treatment, end-of-life care and designates a **surrogate decision maker**, before being incapacitated.

Timeline of Euthansia



Arguments in favour of Euthanasia	Arguments against Euthanasia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Right to self-determination: Especially true if one is facing a terminal illness from which there is no chance of recovery. Caregivers burden: It includes financial, emotional, time etc. Right to die with dignity: It is kinder than forcing the patients to continue their lives with suffering. Encouraging organ transplantation: It provides an opportunity to advocate for organ donation. Can be regulated: If it's legal then the process can be controlled, and misuse could be prevented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Misuse: If we embrace 'the right to death with dignity', people with incurable and debilitating illnesses will be excluded from our civilised society. Malafide intention: Euthanasia could be pursued for malafide intent like inheriting property of the patient. Devaluation of life: Euthanasia weakens society's respect for the sanctity of life. Commercialisation of health care: Healthcare system may serve death sentence to many disabled and elderly citizens of India for meagre amount of money. Against Hippocratic oath that commits the health professionals to uphold the ethical principles.

Conclusion

Euthanasia is something that cannot be always just looked at logically; there are many emotions involved as well. Each individual also has the right to make their own decisions when it comes to something of such a severe nature.

6. NUTRITION AND SANITATION

6.1. GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS

GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS AT A GLANCE



- Sustainable food system is a food system that **delivers food security and nutrition for all** without compromising need of future generations.
- It encompasses **entire range of actors and their interlinked value-adding activities** involved in production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption, etc.



Emerging challenges to global food systems

- **Climate change:** Global warming, erratic weather, increasing risk of pest and diseases, etc. reduce food production and productivity.
- **Deforestation:** Farmland expansion is responsible for 90 percent of deforestation around world which hurts food production of existing farmland.
- **Poor agricultural practices:** Indiscriminate use of chemical inputs, and deforestation resulting in degradation.
- **Rapid Urbanisation:** Changing consumption pattern, Overconsumption, inadequate distribution, food waste put pressure on food system.
- **Other issues:** Increased Biofuel Production, supply side shock like Ukraine-Russia war, etc.



Measures taken to address challenges with food system

- **National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA)** provides for adaptation and mitigation strategies
- **National Food Security Mission (NFSM)** to improve production and productivity of wheat, rice and pulses.
- **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013** to provide subsidised food grains eligible households through Targeted PDS.
- **Food irradiation centres** to improve shelf- life and cut post-harvest losses.
- **Food and Land Use Coalition**, a self-governing coalition of over 30 organizations established to transform global food and land use systems.
- **High-Level Task Force on Global Food and Nutrition Security** to achieve global food and nutrition security.
- Use of technology like satellite imagery, drones , etc. to **monitor crop growth and practice precision farming.**



Way ahead to build resilient food systems for future

- **Sustainable Agriculture: Reducing food loss and waste**, which account for 8% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions globally.
- **Address triple challenge:** Ensure food and nutrition security; incomes security and environmental sustainability.
- **Common Food Policy (CFP):** To reshape entire agricultural and food market chain.
- **Restructuring agricultural support:** Shifting away from market price support to direct payments to farmers.
- **Investing in technology:** Investing in **sustainable agricultural techniques** by adopting measures to strengthen and develop resilient food supply chains.
- **Ensure inclusive and equitable food systems:** By improving productivity and efficiency of regional food system must be improved.

6.2. GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX

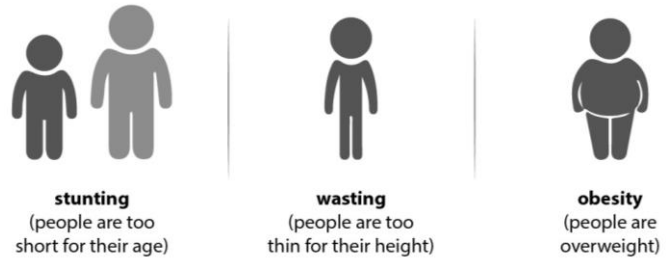
Why in News?

India has **slipped to 107th position in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2022 of 121 countries**, from its 101st position in 2021.

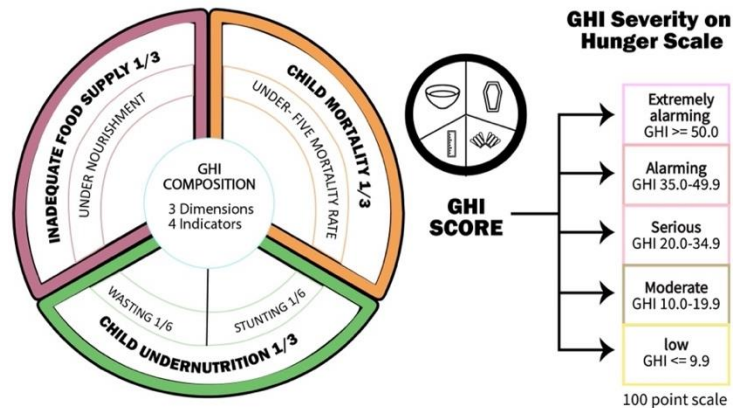
About the Global Hunger Index

- Annually published by **Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe**.
- It was first introduced in 2006. The 2022 edition marks the 17th edition of the GHI.
- Key Global Findings**
 - Global progress** against hunger has largely stagnated and is likely to worsen due to overlapping global crises—**conflict, climate change, and economic fallout of COVID-19 pandemic**.
 - As many as **828 million people** were undernourished in 2021.
- Findings related to India**
 - With a score of **29.1**, India has a level of hunger that is serious.
 - Ranked behind all South Asian countries except Afghanistan.
 - Child wasting** (low weight for height) rate is highest for any country in the world. **Prevalence of undernourishment has also risen.**
 - Shown improvement in **child stunting** (low height for age) and **child mortality** indicators.

MALNUTRITION COMES IN MANY FORMS



GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX (GHI)



Reasons for the rising hunger and malnourishment

- Multidimensional nature of hunger:** Safe drinking water, sanitation, access to food items, gender, caste, age, etc. determine hunger and related malnutrition.
- Rice wheat-based policy:** India's food security policy gave excessive focus to rice and wheat for many decades.
- Decline in the Purchasing Power:** Stagnant farm income, low employment rate, recession and rise in inflation, poverty (28%) has adversely impacted the purchasing power capacity.
- Underutilisation of funds:** For example, less than 50% of the total allocated funds to the ICDS were utilised in 2018-19).
- Food Wasteage:** As per FAO reports, nearly 40% of the food produced in India is wasted every year due to fragmented food systems and inefficient supply chains.

Government of India Stand

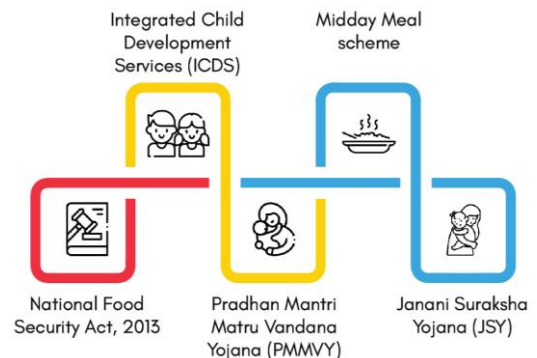
The Ministry of Women and Child Development said that index is an erroneous measure of hunger and suffers from serious methodological issues.

- The methodology used is unscientific.
- Estimate of Proportion of Undernourished (PoU)**, population is based on an opinion poll conducted on a **very small sample size of 3000** based on "Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)" Survey Module.
- Wasting and stunting are outcomes of complex interactions of various other factors** like drinking water, sanitation, genetics, environment and utilisation of food intake **apart from hunger**.

Hidden Hunger in India

- It is a form of under-nutrition that occurs when **intake or absorption of vitamins and minerals is too low to sustain good health** despite getting adequate calories.
- In India as per the reports of UNICEF, **over 80 per cent adolescents suffer from "hidden hunger"**.

OTHER INTERVENTIONS FOR TACKLING MALNOURISHMENT



Way forward

- Multisectoral approach:** Inclusion of water, education, sanitation, agriculture, nutrition etc. should be undertaken by governments, civil societies and market forces
- Diversify food basket:** Production and distribution of nutrient rich commodities such as millets, leafy vegetables, milk, and eggs need to be encouraged under the NFSA.

- **Haryana** is providing financial incentives of ₹7,000/acre to farmers for shifting from paddy to pulses, oilseeds, and cotton.
- **Enhancing production:** Transforming Agriculture by making it more efficient, sustainable, climate-smart and nutrition-sensitive.
- **Reduce wastage:** Supply chain management reforms including robust transportation infrastructure and cold storage is needed.
- **Awareness:** Diverse stakeholders including NGOs, academic institutions, PRIs, SHGs, etc., along with governments, should promote public awareness on nutritional security and food wastage.

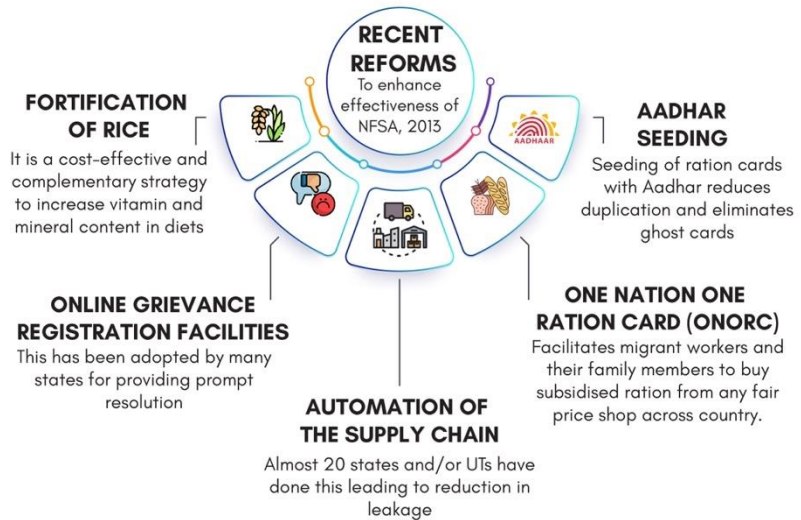
6.3. NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY ACT (NFSA), 2013

Why in news?

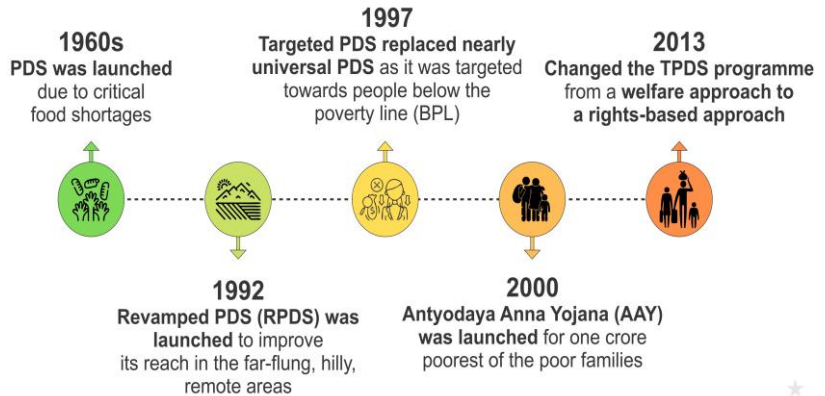
The Centre to provide **free of cost food grains for a year** under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013.

More on news

- **Rice, wheat and coarse grains shall be provided free of cost for all eligible households** (both Primary HouseHolds and Antodaya Anna Yojana) under section 3 of the NFSA from **January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023.**
 - Until now beneficiaries were paying the subsidised price called **Central Issue Price (CIP) worth Rs.1, Rs.2 and Rs.3 for Coarse-grains, wheat and rice respectively.**
 - The **subsidised prices** are specified in Schedule-1 of the NFSA 2013, which the **government can change by executive order.**
- However, there will be **no changes in the issue prices of food grains supplied to States for other welfare programmes** like mid-day meals (MDMs).
- Earlier, In 2020 the PM GKAY was launched to provide **5 kg of free food grains to NFSA beneficiaries in addition to their monthly entitlement** (35 kg to a Antyodaya household and 5kg per person in a Priority Household) of **subsidized food grains** under the NFSA Act.
 - Now, **this scheme has been discontinued.**



EVOLUTION OF PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM (PDS) IN INDIA



Challenges in NFSA

- **Identification of beneficiaries:** Usage of **different criteria by States** leads to errors.
 - For instance, **destitution being recognised as inclusion criteria is only followed by 16 states** and UTs.
- **Poor public grain management system:** Government maintains buffer stock of more than the mandated 21.4 million tonnes which increases the storage cost, result in inflation and wastage.
- **Massive leakages in the PDS:** As per the Shanta Kumar committee leakages in PDS ranged from 40%-50%, and in some states go as high as 60%-70%.
- **Financial unviability:** The CIP was initially fixed for three years. However, although cost of production has increased in the last decades CIPs have remained unchanged resulting in **doubling of food subsidy bill during 2014-22.**

- **Environmental sustainability:** Rice-Wheat biased procurement of cereals has led to **depleting the water table, depletion of soil nutrients** in many states while also preventing crop diversification.
- **Challenges in WTO:** India's subsidised food security system is considered as 'price distorting norm' under the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Way ahead to ensure food security for all

- **Identification:** Adopt standardised criteria for identification and selection of PHH to ensure rightful targeting and evolving dynamic data base.
- **Rationalise beneficiary:** Reduce the number of beneficiaries from 67% to 40% as suggested by the Shanta Kumar Committee.
- **Revise CIP:** Since value of RS 3, 2, and 1 is not the same as it was when the Act was in 2013. Also, MSP of various crops have increased so selling prices should also be revised upward.
- **Ensure efficient markets:** Allow private players to procure and store food grains, stopping bonuses on minimum support price (MSP) paid by states to farmers.
- **Digitalisation:** Issues related to denial of food due to lack of Aadhar seeding need to be addressed on an urgent basis.

NFSA SALIENT FEATURES

<p>Food Security Allowances in case of non-supply of food grains/meals and Penalty (in case of failure)</p>	<p>Up to 75% Rural Population and 50% Urban Population coverage under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)</p>	<p>Uniform entitlement of 5 kg per person per month (35 kg per household per month for Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households)</p>
<p>State-wise coverage is decided by the Centre based on NSS Household Consumption Survey data for 2011-12</p>	<p>Subsidised prices of 3/2/1 per kg for rice, wheat and coarse grains</p>	<p>Identification of Eligible Households by States/UTS</p>
<p>Nutritional Support to Women and Children including Maternity Benefit and Women Empowerment by eldest woman (above 18 years) as head of the household for it</p>		<p>District and State level Grievance Redressal Mechanism</p>

Conclusion

According to the Shanta Kumar Committee, the Government can save Rs 33,000 crores by restructuring the scheme. This money could be used for addressing issues like health, education, poverty eradication, etc. that have direct bearing on food security.

6.4. POSHAN (PRIME MINISTER'S OVERARCHING SCHEME FOR HOLISTIC NOURISHMENT) ABHIYAAN

Why in News?

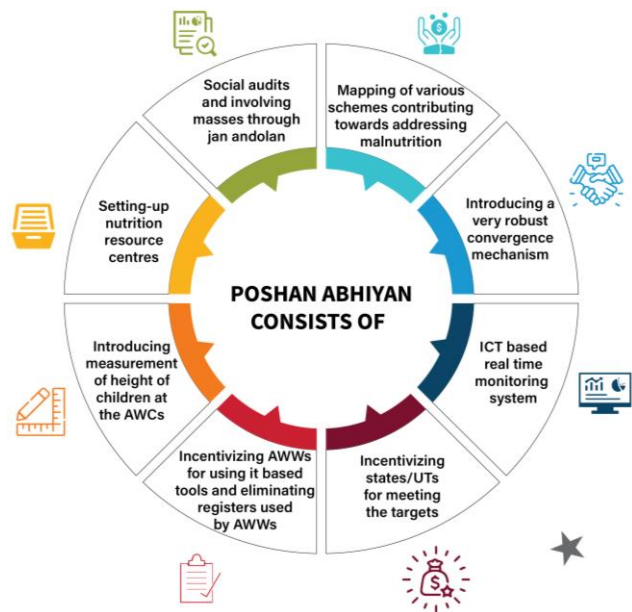
NITI Aayog released 4th progress report on POSHAN Abhiyaan.

More in News

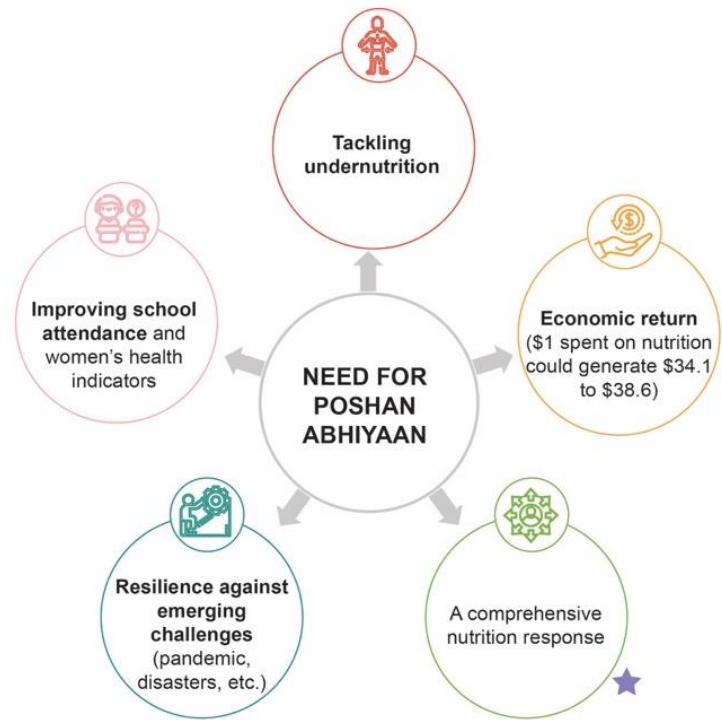
- Fourth report **assesses program implementation, impact of COVID-19 pandemic** on nutrition and health services and provide **insights on service delivery restorations** across India.

About POSHAN Abhiyaan

- It was launched in 2017 to **monitor, supervise, fix targets and guide the nutrition** related interventions across the Ministries.
- The objective of POSHAN Abhiyaan is to **reduce stunting** in identified Districts of India with the highest malnutrition burden **by improving utilization of key Anganwadi Services**.
- It aims to ensure **holistic development and adequate nutrition** for pregnant women, mothers and children.



- In 2021, Central Government merged schemes like the Supplementary Nutrition Programme under Anganwadi Services, Scheme for Adolescent Girls and POSHAN Abhiyaan and re-aligned them as ‘Saksham Anganwadi and POSHAN 2.0’ for maximising nutritional outcomes.
- Poshan 2.0 will integrate several key strategies to fulfil its objectives, viz., Corrective strategies, Nutrition Awareness strategies, Communication strategies and the Creation of green eco-systems.
- It is being supported by ‘Poshan Tracker’, a new, robust ICT centralised data system which is being linked with the RCH Portal (Anmol) of MoHFW.



Saksham Anganwadis

- It is a targeted intervention for improving the AWCs. They will be strengthened, upgraded and rejuvenated across the country for enhancing the overall efficiency and effectiveness.
- Apart from the given goals for Anganwadi, Saksham Anganwadis would additionally focus on-
 - Adolescent Girls (14 to 18 years) in Aspirational Districts and North Eastern Region (NER).
 - Early Childhood Care and Education [3-6 years] and early stimulation for (0-3 years).
- Under it, two lakh AWCs, 40,000 each year will be strengthened to make requisite upgrades.
 - It will undertake activities like smart learning aids, audio-and-video tools, water purifiers and devices such as rain-water harvesters.



Challenges in the implementation of POSHAN Abhiyaan

- **Infrastructure at Anganwadi centres (AWCs):** Inadequate provisioning of drinking water, toilet facilities and electricity supply across the States and UTs.
- **Underutilization of fund:** Less than half of funds utilized in 23 States and UTs (NITI Aayog report).
- **Impact of COVID-19:** Pregnant and lactating women and millions of babies born in 2020 have likely missed several essential interventions in health and nutrition in the critical 1000-day window.
- **Lack of real-time data on nutrition:** Unavailability of real-time data on stunted and wasted children in the country continues to be a challenge for decision-makers and program implementers.
- **Procedural delays:** Poshan Abhiyan requires quite a few ministries to work together. This not only delays matters, but also increases scope of irregularities.

Way Forward

- **A Poshan-Plus strategy,** suggested by NITI Aayog, that should not only focus on strengthening the core pillars of POSHAN but also on other social determinants such as sanitation, education, poverty alleviation etc.
- **Expand coverage and improve quality of essential health and nutrition interventions** by continuing to strengthen ICDS and health platforms.

- **Active surveillance, enhancement of resources** for nutrition programming, and micro-level participatory planning as well as monitoring, are necessary.
 - **State- and District-focused diagnostic work are required** to understand determinants of poor nutrition.
- **Ensure strong linkages between counselling and take-home rations** in ICDS and ensure that they reach all the households with a child below two years.
- In urban areas **engaging private health care providers and other actors** who can help create healthier food environments for a range of consumers is going to be essential.
- Existing movements like the **Eat Right and Fit India movements must be connected strongly with the POSHAN Abhiyaan's** mission of improving diets for all stakeholders.

6.5. ANGANWADI SYSTEM

Why in news?

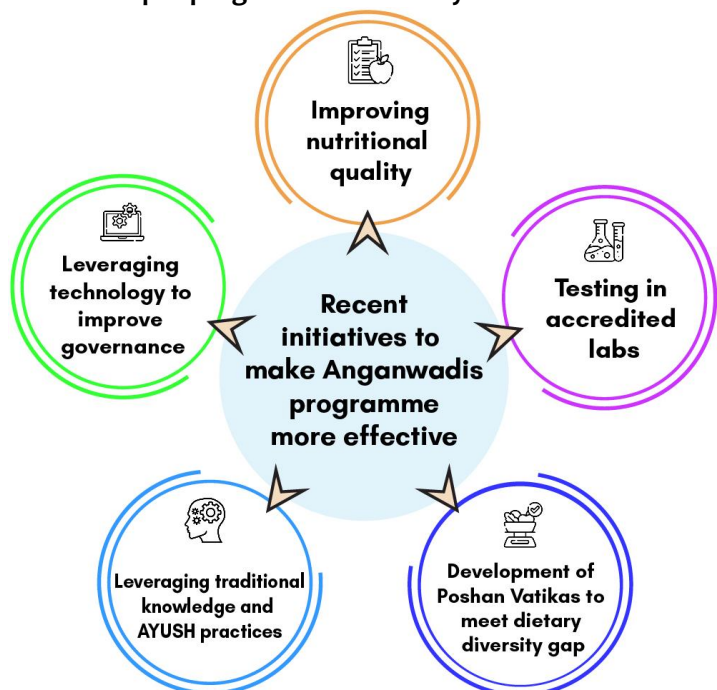
The Ministry of Women & Child Development (MoWCD) has recently informed the Parliament that it has spent over Rs.18,000 crores in the last financial year to **strengthen the Anganwadi system.**

About Anganwadi system

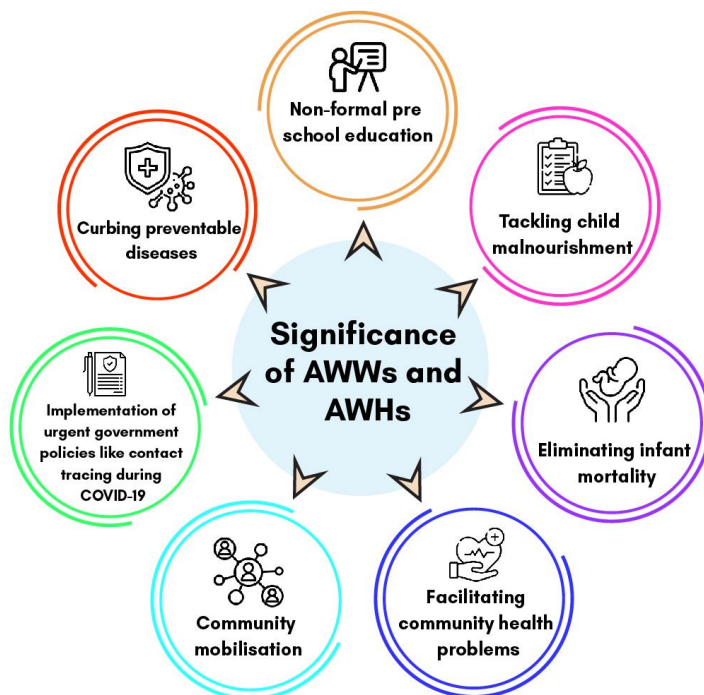
- The Anganwadi system, launched under the **Anganwadi Services Scheme** (now renamed as Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0), is an integral part of the **Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) scheme** (refer to the infographics).
 - The Anganwadi Services Scheme is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** under MoWCD.
 - It represents one of the **world's largest and unique programmes for early childhood care and development.**
 - The scheme aims to
 - ✓ **improve the nutritional and health status of children (0-6 years), pregnant women and lactating mothers, and**
 - ✓ **reduce the incidences of mortality, morbidity and malnutrition.**
- The system serves to 906.17 lakh beneficiaries through
 - **Anganwadi Centres (AWCs):** There are around 13.89 lakh AWCs across the country that provide a **platform** for rendering all services under the scheme.
 - **Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) and Anganwadi Helpers (AWHs):** There are around 13.14 lakhs AWWs and 11.74 lakhs AWHs.
 - ✓ They are the **basic functionaries** of the ICDS who run the AWCs and implement the ICDS scheme.

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme

Serving Children of 0-6 years and Pregnant & Lactating Mothers



- ✓ **One village/ area** is managed by a **single Anganwadi worker (AWW)**, who is chosen from the community and has been trained in areas such as **health, nutrition and childcare**.
- AWCs are also **digitally strengthened** with smartphones for POSHAN tracking systems, and monitoring devices.
 - The ‘Poshan Tracker’ is a **job-aid to the AWWs** for efficient delivery of services along with reflection of their efforts.
 - This mobile based application is being leveraged for dynamic **identification of stunting, wasting, under-weight prevalence** among children and last mile tracking of nutrition service delivery.
- **Compensation:**
 - The AWWs and AWHs are **paid fixed honorarium per month** as decided by the Government from time to time.
 - ✓ Honorarium of the AWWs by the Centre has been enhanced to **3500 rupees per month**.
 - AWWs are also allowed a **performance linked incentive of Rs. 500/- per month** for using **ICDS-CAS under POSHAN Abhiyaan**.
 - ✓ ICDS-Common Application Software (CAS) facilitates the **capture of data by frontline functionaries**.
 - ✓ It’s a six-tier **dashboard** that replaces registers with smartphones
 - Also, most of the **States/UTs are paying additional honorarium** to these functionaries from their own resources.
 - **Insurance coverage:** AWWs and AWHs have been covered under:
 - ✓ Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima yojana (PMJJBY)
 - ✓ Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima yojana (PMSBY)
 - ✓ Anganwadi Karyakartri Bima yojana (AKBY)
 - **Other benefits:** Paid leave, reservation in promotions, uniforms and other incentives and awards for rendering exemplary services.



Community health workers at grassroots			
Specification	Anganwadi workers (AWW)	Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM)	Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA)
Scheme	• ICDS under MWCD	• National Rural/Urban Health Mission (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW))	
Based at	• Anganwadi center	• Health sub-center and additionally visits villages also	• Village level
Key roles	• Providing early childhood care and development of the beneficiaries	• Create awareness on factors that determine health status • Counsel women, families, and adolescents on birth preparedness • Curative care and supplies.	• Focuses on promotion of Maternal and Child Health , including immunizations and institutional-based deliveries
Incentives	• Honorarium as decided by the Centre and performance linked incentive	• Honorarium as decided by the Centre	• Receive performance-based incentives

Challenges in Anganwadi system

- **Financial:** The scheme suffers from inconsistency in percentage increase in budget allocations over the years.

- There are also issues of **improper planning and implementation and non-adherence of financial and physical targets.**
- **Inadequate number of AWCs:** There is a gap between sanctioned and operational number of AWCs across various states that ranges anywhere from 2% to 8.37%.
- **Inadequate basic amenities at AWCs:** Many operational AWCs lack access to basic amenities of drinking water and toilets.
 - For example, in Meghalaya only 30.85% AWCs have drinking water facilities.
- **Accessibility to technology:** Although availability of smartphones is a necessity for ICDS-CAS, many AWWs have not received smartphones affecting their functioning.
- **Inadequate human capital:** In many States/UTs, like Telangana, Bihar, Karnataka, a large number of posts of Supervisors, AWWs and AWHs have been lying vacant.
- **Remuneration:** The remuneration of the AWWs and AWHs is **still meagre in comparison to the services** being rendered by them especially in the remote and rural areas.

Way Ahead

- **Expand the Coverage:** Remove the bottlenecks hindering the operationalization of sanctioned AWCs/Mini AWCs in States and **have more AWCs in urban areas.**
- **Basic amenities:** Creating drinking water and toilet facilities in AWCs should be taken on priority basis if quality services are to be rendered to the beneficiaries.
- **Improve service condition:** It is imperative to provide **enhanced remunerations and better service conditions** to them.
- **Effective deployment of technology:** Many AWCs suffer from lack of availability of a height and weight measuring instrument which needs immediate attention.

Conclusion

Anganwadi system is a testament of the government's commitment to its children and nursing mothers to break the vicious cycle of malnutrition. However, to ensure the system achieves its goal, a holistic review of the system is needed.

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हिन्दी माध्यम में भी उपलब्ध

7. POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

7.1. MANUAL SCAVENGING

Why in news?

Kerala became the first state in the country to use robotic technology to clean all its commissioned manholes.

More on news

- The **robotic scavenger ‘Bandicoot’** to clean sewages functions in a similar way such as a person.
- It enters the manhole, removes sewage using robotic hands, and releases it at the designated site.
- Also, it has features of being **waterproof, HD vision cameras, and sensors that can detect harmful gases** inside the manholes.

About Manual scavenging

- Manual scavenging is the **dehumanising practice of manually cleaning and handling of human excreta** from dry latrines, sewers, septic tanks, railway lines, etc. **with basic tools like brooms.**
- It is a **primarily caste-based-forced occupation** in India.
- There are at present approximately **58,098 “eligible manual scavengers”** across the country.
- Eradication of manual scavenging is a very crucial factor for attaining various **Sustainable development Goals (SDGs).**
- It not only goes against various international conventions but also **India’s legislative as well as constitutional mandates** (refer to the infographics).

Reasons underlying persistence of the practice of manual scavenging

- **Informal economy:** This makes their identification and providing associated rights difficult.
- **Weak law:** Cleaning of human excreta with the help of protective gear is not considered manual scavenging under the MS Act, 2013.
- **Ineffective implementation:** The practice of manual scavenging was banned in 1993. However, due to lax implementation of law, this practice is still prevalent.
- **Water scarcity:** Some of the rural settlements in India lack proper water supply because of which people are forced to manually remove excreta from the toilets.
- **Restoration and rehabilitation:** Complexity of procuring loan through different schemes of NSKFDC further alienates them from taking loans for restoration and rehabilitation.
- **Lack of voice:** People involved in the act of manual scavenging are not organised into some right groups like trade unions.

SDGs and Manual Scavenging



MANUAL SCAVENGING VIOLATES

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS	CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS	LEGAL PROVISIONS
<p>Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR): Mandate dignity, equality fair remuneration and social security.</p> <p>International Convention for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR): Envisages equality, and decent living standard for women.</p> <p>Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW): Eliminate violence and discrimination against women</p>	<p>Article 15: State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.</p> <p>Article 17: "Untouchability" is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden.</p> <p>Article 21: No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.</p>	<p>Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 of (MS Act, 2013)</p> <p>Scheduled Caste and Schedules Tribes Amendment Act 2015 (SC/ST Act)</p>

- Also, they come from a highly deprived section of the society which perpetuates their exploitation.

- **Absence of mechanisation:** Septic tanks are designed in such a way that they could be cleaned only manually.

Way ahead for eradicating manual scavenging

Eliminate the demand

- **Scientific waste disposal:** People throw bottles and all kinds of trash in the toilet that ends up clogging the sewer line. Awareness campaign is needed against such disposal.
- **Replicating Kerala model:** It is being seen as a major step towards the use of technology-driven solutions for manhole cleaning.
- **Behavioural change:** Information, Education and Communication (IEC) along with effective implementation of the law is critical for enticing positive response from people against manual scavenging.
 - Adequate provision for WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) is also necessary for such behavioral changes.

Eliminate the supply

- **Identification:** Data in government surveys and other reports contradict in terms of people engaged in this work.
 - Therefore, proper identification of such people is necessary to address the gravity of the problem.

Manual Scavenging In India

Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (MS Act, 2013)

<p>Definition 'Manual scavenger' refers to any person employed to handle, without appropriate protective gear, undecomposed human waste from an insanitary latrine, open drain or pit or railway track.</p>	<p>Prohibition and punishment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No person or agency can engage or employ any person for manual scavenging. ● Violation of the Act is punishable with imprisonment upto 2 years or fine upto Rs. 1 Lakh or both. 	<p>Responsibilities of local authorities</p> <p>Local authorities are mandated to identify manual scavengers, demolish 'insanitary latrines' as well as building and maintenance of the community sanitary latrines.</p>	<p>Rehabilitation</p> <p>Rehabilitation of manual scavengers through training in alternate employment, financial help and help with purchasing property.</p>
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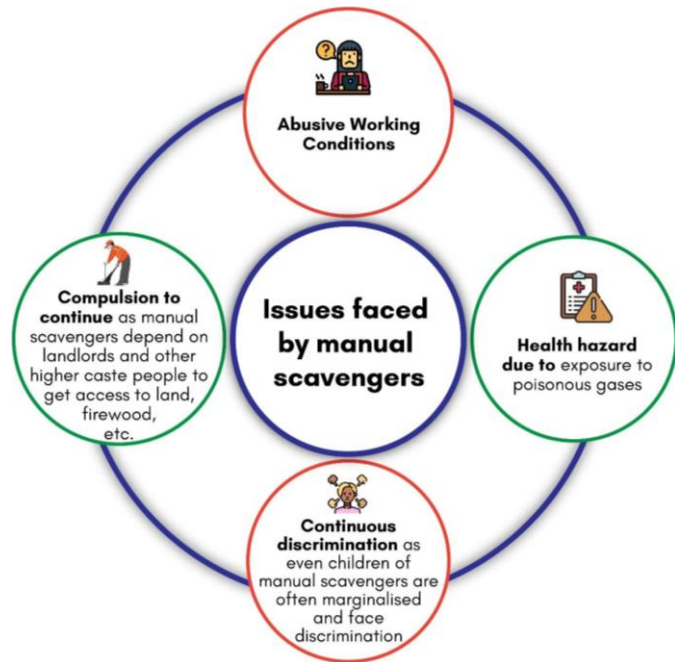
Other Key initiatives taken to prevent manual scavenging

- In **Safai Karamchari vs Union of India, 2014** the Supreme Court ruled that manual scavenging is in **blatant violation of Article 17**.
- **National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC)** provides financial assistance at concessional rates for their upliftment.
- **National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE)** to promote mechanisation; rehabilitation, provision of training and protection gear, health insurance, etc.
- **Swachh Bharat Mission:** Safe collection, conveyance, treatment and disposal of all faecal sludge and sewage, and to achieve safe sustainable sanitation for all.
- **Swachhata Abhiyaan App** to capture the data of insanitary latrines still existing and manual scavengers associated with their cleaning.
- **Prohibiting** use of the word '**manhole**' anymore and instead using only '**machine-hole**' to support the government's decision to eradicate manual scavenging.
- **Jan Sahas** founded in 2000, started the **Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan** the National Campaign for Dignity and Eradication of Manual Scavenging.

Manual Scavenging VS Hazardous Cleaning of Sewers

- **Hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks is different from manual scavenging** that has been banned under the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013
 - Hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks has led to at least 351 deaths since 2017 but manual scavenging no longer exist in the country.
 - All manual scavengers had been accounted for and enrolled into the rehabilitation scheme.
 - NAMASTE will merge with and replace Self-Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS) which provides assistance to manual scavengers and their dependents.

- **Women empowerment:** While working to rehabilitate and support manual scavengers, one of the first steps should be to recognise the women engaged in this work and prioritise their needs.
- **Ease of rehabilitation:** Provisions of loan and skill development should be easily accessible also there should be a proper mechanism for easy legal help in case of violation of the Act.
- **Giving voice to voiceless:** Manual Scavengers should be mobilised into trade unions, self-help groups, co-operatives and pressure groups to safeguard the interest of the workers.
- **Inclusive policy making:** People with first-hand experience can reveal the loopholes in the system. Hence, manual scavengers should be made the active stakeholders in policy making.



7.2. INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

Why in news?

Recently, **UNDP** in collaboration with Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) has published a report titled “**Turning the tide on internal displacement: A Development Approach to Solutions**”.

About internal displacement

As per UNFCCC, **displacement** is a particular form of migration, in which individuals are forced to move against their will.

- **Internal displacement** refers to the **forced movement** of people **within the country** they live in.

- **Internally displaced persons (IDPs)** are- Persons who have been **forced to flee to leave their homes in order to avoid** the effects of armed conflict; situations of generalized violence; violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters.

Issues affecting IDPs and other internal migrants

- **Inadequate data:** This hinders informed decision making
- **Vulnerability of Labour Market:** Nearly 60% of migrant are vulnerable workers (outside agriculture) who face problems of low wages, high risk jobs and the fear of being fired.
- **Lack of Social Security:** Apathy of states prevents migrants from accessing welfare entitlements.
- **Poor education:** 57.8% of female and 25.8% of male migrants are illiterate (Census, 2011). About 80% of seasonal migrant children in major destinations lack access to education near work sites.

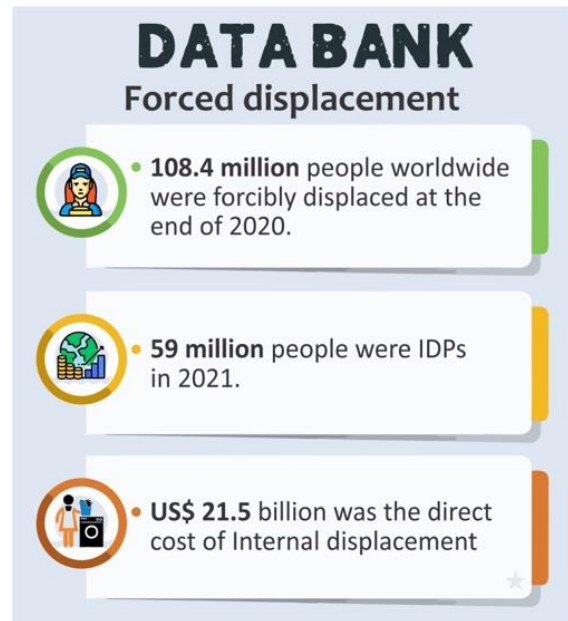
About Forced displacement

- Forced displacement occurs when people **have been forced to flee their homes or places of habitual residence** to avoid the effects of events or situations such as **armed conflict, generalized violence, human rights abuses, disasters**, etc.
- **Types of forced migration:** Refugees; Internally displaced persons (IDPs); Climate refugees
- **Impacts of forced migration**
 - **Country of origin:** Political fragility may increase if forcibly displaced remain engaged in the conflict; demographic shifts & loss of capital and human resources.
 - **Host countries:** Demographic shock, stress on infrastructure, security risk, increase in social problems. demographic solutions to ageing populations of the host country.
- **Steps to mitigate the impacts of Displacement**
 - **The UN 1951 Refugee Convention and its subsequent 1967 Protocol** define refugees and set out the Government responsibilities in this matter.
 - **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 1950** to promote voluntary repatriation; local integration; and resettlement.
 - **The first Global Refugee Forum (GRF), 2019:** To bring the international community together.
- **India:** it is not a signatory of the UN convention yet provides shelters to 1000s of refugees.

- **Health:** Most low-income internal migrants live in slum that lack access to basic amenities like sanitation and water.
- **Political Participation:** Interstate migrants cannot exercise voting right since voting is determined by one's inclusion in the local constituency's electoral roll.

Way ahead

- **Fill the research gap:** Revise design of Census to adequately capture **sex disaggregated data** on migration.
- **Targeted policy framework:** For migrants within public services and government policies.
- **Institutional reforms:** Build capacity of Panchayats to **maintain a database of migrant workers**, establish '**migrant labour cell**' in each state and create **inter-district and inter-state coordination committee** to improve service delivery.
- **National Minimum Social Security Scheme for Informal Workers** as recommended by the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS).
- Strict compliance with **Panchayat (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), 1996; the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006;** and Land Transfer Regulations in Schedule V (Tribal) Areas to minimize development induced displacement.
- **Sensitize** policymakers, employers and financial institutions regarding issues faced by migrants.



INITIATIVES TAKEN FOR BETTERMENT OF IDPs AND OTHER INTERNAL MIGRANTS

- **1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement** stipulate right to return to former homes.
- **Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) Framework on Durable Solutions for displacement** in 2010.
- **National policy for rehabilitation and resettlement 2007** to minimize large-scale displacement.
- **Project Changathi**, by the Kerala government to teach migrant children Malayalam.
- **Enhancing accessibility to welfare schemes** like 'One Nation One Ration Card', Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana 2.0, Ayushman Bharat



7.3. WORLD POPULATION GROWTH

Why in news?

According to the UN, recently the world population reached 8 billion and will peak at **10.4bn sometime between 2080 and 2100.**

World population growth

- The global population is growing at its **slowest rate since 1950.**
- Population growth will be **driven by Low Income Countries (LICs).**
 - About **half the world's projected population growth** between 2022 and 2050 will occur in **just eight countries: Africa** (Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Tanzania) and **Asia** (India, Pakistan and the Philippines).
- **Now, India has overtaken China** as the world's most populous country, and it is likely to retain top spot till 2100.

Population growth in India vs China

- Since 1950 **India and China** have provided **35% of the world's population growth.**
- However, China's strict **one-child policy** implemented since 1980 drastically **reduced its birth rate and** now its population is about to decline.

- China is loosened its one child policy a 2 child policy in 2016 and a 3 child policy in 2021.
- India's population, meanwhile, will continue growing and is expected to peak at 1.7bn in 2064.
 - Although, India has attained 'replacement level' total fertility rate (TFR) which is 2.0 currently.

Declining demography

- The **global population growth rate is falling fast**. In 1963 total population rose by 2.3% and only 0.8% in 2022 the lowest rate since the 1950s.
 - The global TFR has plunged from 3.3 in 1990 to 2.3 now, only slightly above the "replacement rate (2.1).
- Between 2022 and 2050, the populations of 61 countries are expected to shrink by over 1%.
- Population growth in Europe and Northern America, which in 1960 accounted for over a quarter of the world population is now close to zero.
- Some countries in Asia like Japan and South Korea are also seeing demographic decline.
- **Reasons underscoring demographic decline:** Improved nutrition, healthcare, living conditions and education and expanded choices for women led to lower child mortality, longer lives and fewer births per women.

Consequences of declining demography

- **Fiscal constraints:** Ageing population would reduce both saving and investment, implying higher taxes or lower spending on the elderly.
- **Declining fluid intelligence:** younger people have more fluid intelligence i.e., the ability to think creatively so as to solve the problem in entirely new ways.
 - Older people have more 'crystallised intelligence' a stock of knowledge about how things work built up over time.
- **Entrepreneurial vacuum:** Older countries and their youth are less enterprising and less comfortable in taking risk.

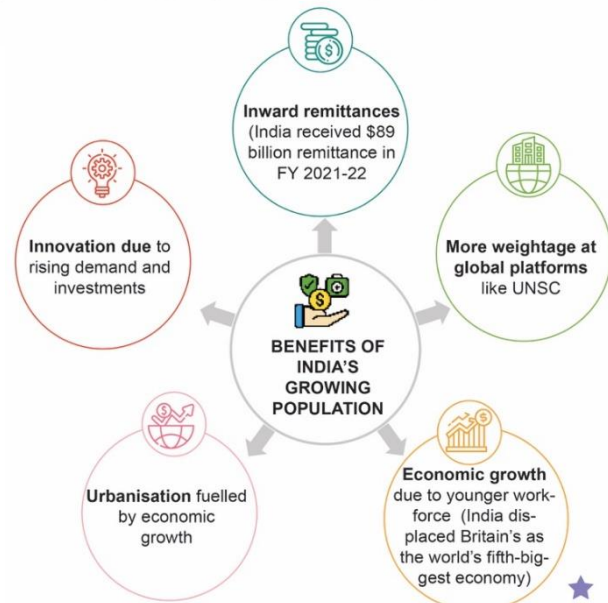
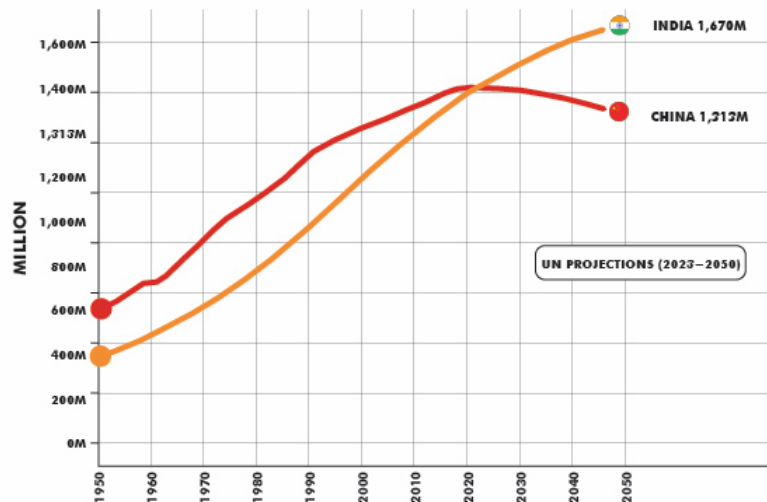
Factors responsible for India's population growth

- **Falling mortality:** The IMR has decreased from 40.7 in 2015-16 to 35.3 in 2019-21.
- **Increasing Life expectancy at birth:** It reached to 69.7 years in the 2015-19 period from 31 in 1947.
- **Unintended pregnancies:** 1 in every 7 unintended pregnancies of world occur in India.
- **Lack of female education,** child marriage and early marriages, etc.

Challenges caused by growing population

- **Pressure on resources:** As India has only 2.45% of the global surface area and 4% of the water resources.
- **Pandemic outbreaks:** Due to increasing urbanization and expansion of humans in wild habitats.
- **Disruption and Conflicts:** Due to rise in struggle for finite resource.
- **Decline in social indicators:** Due to suboptimal public expenditures on health and education may not be possible.
- **Pressure on economy:** Due to low skilled workforce, stagnant economy, unemployment, etc.

POPULATION GROWTH IN INDIA AND CHINA



- **Widening gender gap:** If expenditure on health and education decline, women would suffer the most.

Way ahead to harness the benefits of population growth

- **Supporting Reproductive Justice:** Provisions of safe and effective methods of family planning and freedom to make the best reproductive choice.
- **Education for all:** Educational attainment, particularly of girls, enhances intergenerational formation of human capital and has a positive impact on demographic behaviour with respect to nuptiality, fertility, health, etc.
- **Foster Inclusive Growth** developing democratic institutions to facilitate equity in the society.
- **Facilitate migration** to bridge the demand and supply of the workforce.
- **Investment in green technology and social innovations** to adapt to and mitigate climate and environmental changes.
- **Better geriatric care, health insurance and pension facilities** for 65+ age category.

MEASURES TAKEN BY INDIA FOR POPULATION CONTROL



National Programme for Family Planning: It was launched in 1952



National Population Policy 2000: National Commission on Population was formed.



Mission Parivar Vikas: For increasing access to contraceptives in 146 high fertility districts in 7 high focus states.



India Family Planning 2030 vision document for reducing Childbearing and early/ child marriage among others.



Postpartum Intrauterine contraceptive device (PPIUCD) incentive scheme: PPIUCD services are provided post-delivery.



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8. MISCELLANEOUS

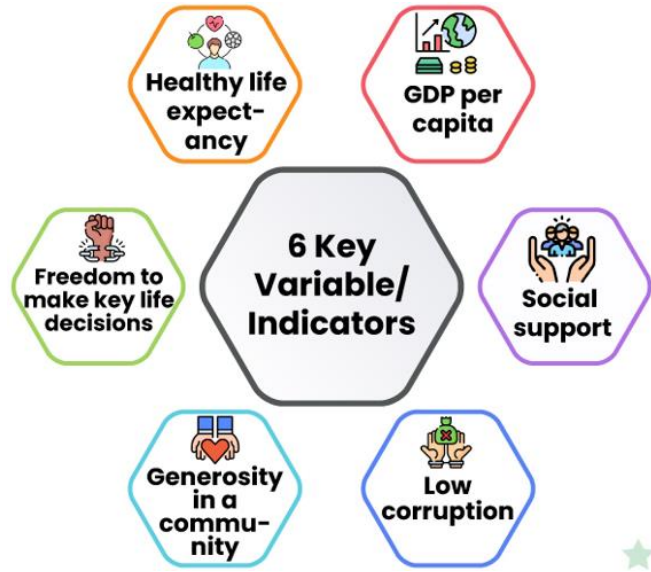
8.1. WORLD HAPPINESS REPORT

Why in news?

India has been ranked at the 126th place among 137 countries in the World Happiness Report (WHR) 2023

About the report

- WHR is released by the **UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network**.
- Report evaluates **levels of happiness** by taking into account **6 key variables** based on **people's own assessment of their happiness**.
- The goal of the report is to **identify key determinants of well-being**.
- **Key ranking**
 - Top three countries are **Finland, Denmark and Iceland** respectively
 - **Afghanistan, Lebanon, Sierra Leone** were in the bottom of the chart.
 - India ranked **below Ukraine, Russia and its neighbours** China, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.
 - India also recorded the **lowest use of social media platforms (31%) among emerging economies**, indicated a lower interaction among the residents, consequentially **dipping in the happiness quotient**.
 - **Bhutan is not listed** in the WHR 2023.



What is happiness and what constitutes happiness?

- Happiness can be defined as an enduring state of mind consisting not only of feelings of joy, contentment, and other positive emotions, but also of a **sense that one's life is meaningful and valued**.
 - Aristotle described it as a **good or flourishing life**; Indian philosophy has argued that to be **happy is to be content**.
 - Mahatma Gandhi said, "Happiness is when **what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony**."
- Happiness can be achieved by **Income, Status, Health, Family, Social relationships, and positive emotions etc.**

Why happiness matters?

Happiness is the thing we want most for the people we love the most. That's why it matters so much. Research shows happiness doesn't just feel good, it has various other positive outcomes including:

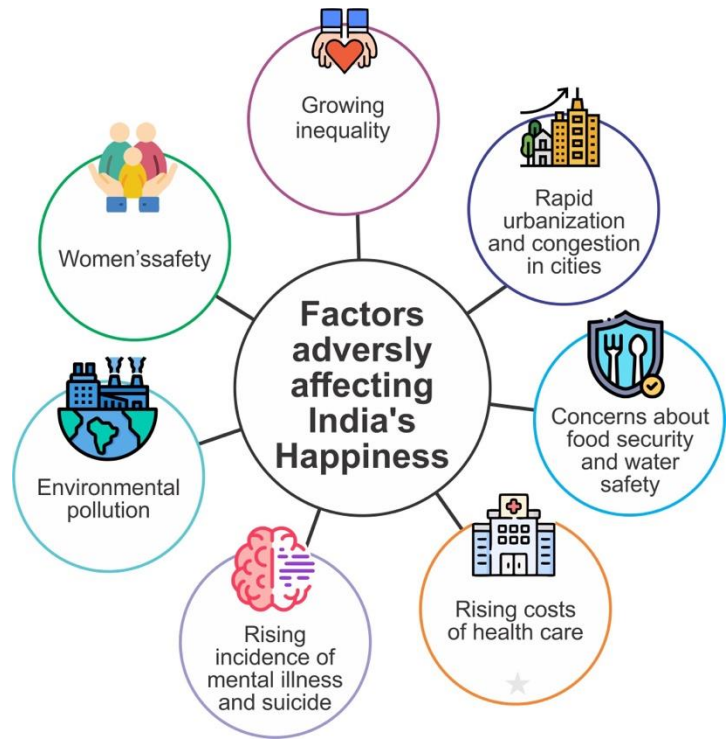
- **Better decision-making:** Happier people tend to take **less time in making decisions** and that happiness **does not impact risk-taking behavior**.
- **A key to success:** Schools that focus on **children's emotional wellbeing** experience **significant gains in academic attainment** and improvements in **pupil behaviour**.
- **Benefits for society:** happier people have **better overall health and live longer**, do voluntary work and participate in public activities, less likely to engage in risky behaviour like substance use.
 - **Happiness is contagious**, so that happier people help others around them to become happier too.
- **Benefits to economy:** Happier people are even more financially responsible, tending to save more and have more control over their expenditures
- **Strengthening democratic institutions:** Happier people are more likely to vote, and have a greater respect for law and order and offer more help to others.

Why India ranks low in the WHI and what is India's stand on it?

India's External Affairs Minister has dismissed the finding of the report with respect to India. Some of the key issues in the report highlighted by the State Bank of India (SBI) in a recent report are as follows:

- **Overlooking persistent issues** prevailing in many better rank countries like gun-related violence unfolding from schools to streets; civil unrest on pension and jobs fronts, etc.

- 'Happiness is subjective' and citizens in different countries may not feel happy the same way and in same proportion.
 - There are always **country-specific parameters** in each domain of **social science and development** and happiness measurement cannot be an exception to that.
- **Social relationships** is most closely related to higher level of happiness and in India it is much broadened and altruistic than any other country in the world".



Conclusion

Generations of people from all over the world have been coming to India to find true happiness. Spirituality, as practised in this country, is nothing but the science that postulates the wisdom, techniques and processes of fostering happiness. What is needed is an effective mechanism that could deliver the skill of happiness to its masses.

Mains 365 - Social Issues

“ The Secret To Getting Ahead Is Getting Started ”



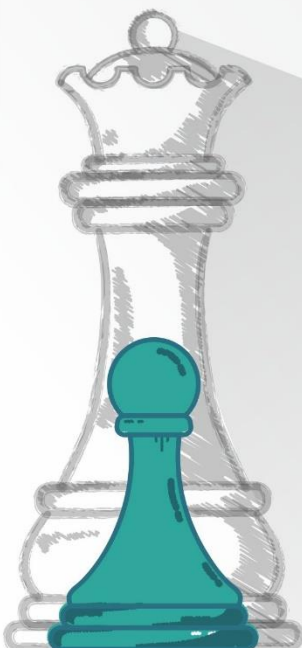
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8.2. SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIETY

SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIETY AT A GLANCE

Social Media is a grouping of interactive **Web 2.0 Internet-based applications** that facilitates the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and information through the **building of virtual networks and communities**. Examples include **Joint projects** like Wikipedia, **Blogs** like Twitter, **Content Communities** like YouTube, **Social Networking Sites** like Facebook etc.



Benefits of Social Media for Society

- ⊕ Facilitated **political and economic empowerment of Youth**.
- ⊕ Acted as a **transformational tool for education**.
- ⊕ Provides a **platform for marginalised communities to fight for their rights**.
- ⊕ Helps in **women empowerment** and bridging gender divide.
- ⊕ Provided a **social support system for elderly population**.
- ⊕ Provides a platform for **collective social action and facilitates cultural integration**.
- ⊕ Facilitates **better governance and health care management**.



Need for Social Media Regulation

- ⊕ **Increasing polarisation of society:** People cultivating rigid opinions of issues and narrower world views.
- ⊕ **Ethical and privacy concerns:** Issues like financial frauds, human rights violation, online abuse etc.
- ⊕ **Social costs:** Adverse impacts on mental health, Altered human behaviour and society's inability to check anti-social behaviours.
- ⊕ **Misinformation and Fake news:** They are fulling rising incidences riots, discrimination, putting life of common people at risk, etc.
- ⊕ **Threats to democratic institutions:** Security landscape is compromised due to the illegal and terrorist activities taking place on social media.



Challenges in Social Media Regulation

- ⊕ **Tackling misinformation:** Difficult to decide which content is fake and which is not.
- ⊕ **Regulating hate speech:** Regulating content **might harm freedom of expression and suppress** dissent that may negatively affect country's democratic framework.
- ⊕ **Lack of resources:** Insufficient resources and know-how to detect and remove objectionable social media content at the requisite scale or speed.
- ⊕ **Issue of accountability:** Since the content is user generated and not created by the social media platforms.
- ⊕ **Potential risk of monopoly:** High cost of complying with government regulations inhibits competition and innovation and may create monopolies.



Ways to strengthen Social Media for the emerging era

- ⊕ Self-Regulation by the platforms to the public to limit spread of misinformation by taking steps such as:
 - Following a set of **Human Rights Principles for Content Moderation**
 - **Expanding the number of moderators and investing to improve quality of content review.**
- ⊕ **Redefining the role of the Government through**
 - **Define and periodically update content standards** and enforcement guidelines.
 - **Supporting positive measures** to address online disinformation
 - **Formulating Transparency requirements** related to all platforms' core functions.
 - **Building Societal capacity** for better usage of social media by.



8.3. SPORTS IN INDIA

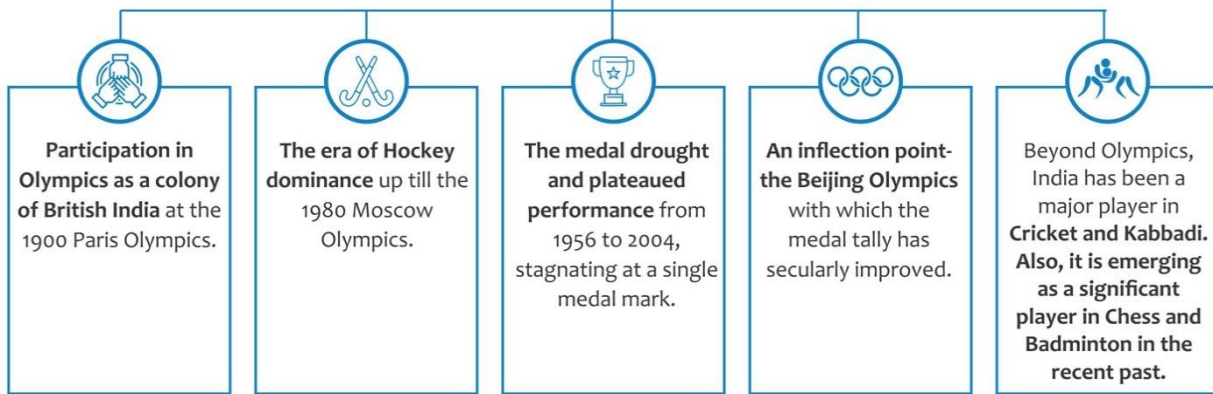
SPORTS IN INDIA AT A GLANCE



Importance of Sports in individual's life and in society



Evolution of India's sporting journey



Reasons for India's sub-optimal performance

- ⊖ **Hurdles to generation of interest in sports:** Outside the ambit of the mainstream education, discrimination, malnutrition, and poverty, etc.
- ⊖ **Hurdles in choosing sports as a profession:** Uncertainty about future prospects with prevalence of 'hero or zero' syndrome, infrastructural gaps, etc.
- ⊖ **Hurdles faced by sportspersons:** Dearth of quality coaching staff, Poor utilization of the sporting infrastructure, etc.
- ⊖ **Other issues: Limited funding,** Politicization of the sporting federations, etc.



Steps taken by India

- ⊖ **Hurdles to generation of interest in sports:** Outside the ambit of the mainstream education, discrimination, malnutrition, and poverty, etc.
- ⊖ **Hurdles in choosing sports as a profession:** Uncertainty about future prospects with prevalence of 'hero or zero' syndrome, infrastructural gaps, etc.
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- ⊖ **Other issues: Limited funding,** Politicization of the sporting federations, etc.



Path to embed sports in the fabric of Indian Culture

- ⊖ **Encourage to Play:** Sports as an integral part of the schooling; Strengthening food and nutritional security, awareness about sports as a career, support to traditional sports.
- ⊖ **Participate to enjoy:** Organization of **Systematic competitions and leagues for all major sports at all levels;** encouraging **sporting activities in community interactions;** **Using Media to galvanize the popularity of sports, etc.**
- ⊖ **Support to win:** Catch them young, catch them right; Providing support during testing times; Overcoming the infrastructural gaps; Strengthening sports federations; Creating a culture of private sponsorships.



APPENDIX

APPENDIX: KEY DATA AND FACTS



- ▶ **1% of India's GDP is spent** on the care economy and **3.1% of India's GDP is the value of women's unpaid work**. Also, women bear a disproportionate burden of **emotional labour**.
- ▶ **Impact on women:** Time poverty, opportunity cost, Discrimination at workplace, Reinforces gender-based discrimination, increased vulnerability to climate-related shocks
- ▶ **Way forward:** Measuring unpaid work and its valuation, Universal access to care policies, gender-neutral and publicly funded leave policies.



- ▶ The POSH Act, 2013 is based on **Vishaka & Ors vs State of Rajasthan (1997)**, and aims for preventing, prohibiting, and redressing acts of sexual harassment against women at workplace.
- ▶ **Provides for Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)** at each office or branch with 10 or more employees.
- ▶ **Challenges:** Dismissive attitude of organisations, Reporting barrier, Act is gender specific and protects only women.
- ▶ **Way forward:** Zero tolerance policy, establish ICC in all the organizations, gender-neutral law.



- ▶ Established in 2012, it is a dedicated **non-lapsable fund** for initiatives aimed at **enhancing the safety and security of women in the country**
- ▶ Key initiatives include establishing **one stop centres, making safety devices, setting up fast-track courts, etc.**
- ▶ **Challenges:** Inadequate fund, Absence of **proposal on women's safety, Reduced allocation** (allocation for Mission Shakti is 10% lesser than its components previous year), construction of **routine infrastructure**, and **lack of transparency**.
- ▶ **Way ahead:** **Enhance Centre's share in fund, feedback** from local communities, police, NCRB, psychologist, etc. interventions in areas, such as **education, health, sanitation, etc.**



- ▶ **Prohibition of Child Marriage or PCMA (Amendment) Bill, 2021** proposes to raise the **legal age of marriage for women** from 18 to **21 years**.
- ▶ **Benefits:** Ensure gender neutrality in age of marriage, reduce child marriages, facilitate more education and economic participation to women, improved health.
- ▶ **Way forward:** Comprehensive public awareness campaign, targeted approach for reducing Child marriage, empowerment of women through access to schools and universities.



- ▶ Surrogacy is regulated under the **Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021**.
- ▶ **Issues with the Act: Exclusionary** (Only legally married couples are allowed to choose for surrogacy), Infertility is **restricted to failure to conceive**, banning commercial surrogacy denies a legitimate source of income of the surrogate.
- ▶ **Way ahead:** Extend **maternal benefits** to both mothers, **rescinding the time-stipulated for IVF treatment** before allowing people to resort to surrogacy, overtime **allow commercial surrogacy** with proper safeguards.



- ▶ **Medical Termination of Pregnancy (amendment) Act 2021** allows termination of pregnancy beyond 24 weeks of gestation period to all women (expanded by the Supreme Court).
- ▶ **Challenges in implementing the MTP Act:** Shortage of qualified doctors and Health Infrastructure, religious opposition, social stigma, lack of awareness about law.
- ▶ **Way forward:** Education and financial independence to women, eliminating social stigma, Increasing financial allocation for the health sector, engaging religious leaders.



WASH and Gender Inequality

- ▶ WASH is a collective term for **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene**.
- ▶ It relates to **SDG 3** (good health and well-being) and **SDG 6** (clean water sanitation for all).
- ▶ **50 minutes per day** is spent by Indian women in 25% rural household for collecting water
- ▶ **Reasons for gender inequality in WASH:** Knowledge gap, Accessibility gap, Affordability gap, Discriminatory laws, low budgetary financing.
- ▶ **Way Forward:** Safe and hygienic menstruation materials, **Accessibility for all, Gender sensitive building code and legal guarantee for WASH**, Build local governments' capacities.



Urbanisation and women

- ▶ **Challenges in urban space for women:** Gender biased urban planning, Urban spaces do not reflect and celebrate women in statues, road names, Higher rates of poverty, unemployment, **unpaid care duties, Sexual violence, disproportionate burden of Climate change**.
- ▶ **Way ahead:** Participatory urban designing and governance at all levels, **Design spaces through a safety lens**, improve lighting design in streets, quality water and sanitation facilities, women leadership in climate action.



Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012

- ▶ POCSO Act is a **comprehensive law** to protect **children** (any person below age of 18 years) from **offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography**.
- ▶ In 2019, it was amended to **impose stringent punishment for sexual crimes against children**.
- ▶ It provides for **establishment of Special Courts for trials** for early disposal of cases.
- ▶ **One in every four cases** under POCSO Act constituted romantic cases and **93.8% cases** ended with acquittals.



Child Adoption in India

- ▶ There are **29.6 million stranded, orphaned and abandoned children** but just 3000-4,000 get adopted annually.
- ▶ Adoption is governed by **JJ Act and adoption rules 2017**.
- ▶ **Challenges in adoption:** Children are not placed under institutionalised care, Centralized CARINGS system, high instances of disruption, availability of legal alternatives.
- ▶ **Way forward:** Counselling and choices to prospective parents, Mandatory registration of Child Care Centres (CCCs), transparent process.



Transgenders

- ▶ **Constitutional rights** under Article 14, 15, 16, 19 and 21.
- ▶ In **NALSA vs Union of India (UoI), 2014** the Supreme Court recognised the rights of Transgender.
- ▶ **Navtej Singh Johar vs UoI, 2018** decriminalises same sex marriage.
- ▶ **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019** defines transgender and enlists their rights.
- ▶ **Challenges faced by transgender:** Marginalization and Social Exclusion, Low education and accessibility to healthcare, transphobia
- ▶ **Way Forward:** **Changes in policy making, Address the basic needs**, scholarship, Gender neutral Sexual harassment mechanism



Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)

- ▶ PVTGs are **tribal communities** who have a **declining or stagnant population, low level of literacy, pre-agricultural level of technology and are economically backward**. 75 PVTGs have been recognised.
- ▶ **Challenges:** Low literacy (ranging from 10% to 44%), displacements, **Declining population, Threats to livelihood like degradation of forest, erosion of cultural identity.**
- ▶ **Way ahead:** Gather **accurate demographic** data for informed policy making, **Updation of PVTG List, recognition of rights** pertaining to their land and customary rituals, **mainstreaming and building trust with government.**



Foundational Literacy And Numeracy (FLN)

- ▶ FLN is the ability to **read and understand a basic text and perform simple mathematical calculations by the end of grade 3.**
- ▶ **Challenges in achieving FLN:** Priority to **English language, 19% of the teaching positions lie vacant, malnutrition, poor infrastructure** like drinking water, toilets, etc.
- ▶ **Way ahead:** **Familiar language** as medium of instruction, **interpersonal interactions between the teacher and the child, recruiting teachers from diverse communities, home learning.**



National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for Foundational Stage

- ▶ For **children between ages 3-8 in India.**
- ▶ **Key features:** Teaching exclusively in **mother tongue** until the **age of 8, No prescribed textbooks** for the children aged **three to six, introduction of an ethics component** to build character, **Panchakosha** system for education.
- ▶ **Significance:** **Critical age for learning, foundation for lifelong learning,** improving pedagogy, **better human resource** for the nation



National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE)

- ▶ Proposed for the **age group 3 to 18 years.**
- ▶ **Key features:** **No hard separation** among arts, humanities, and sciences, class wise pedagogical approach, Proposes **the integration of ancient Indian knowledge systems.**
- ▶ **Significance:** Provides Opportunity to pursue a variety of subjects, help students **imbibe their cultural connect, Imparts Equality, Improved learning levels**



Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions

- ▶ **Multiple agencies** have been mandated for **periodic approvals, assessment, accreditation and ranking** of HEIs.
- ▶ **Challenges:** Duplication and overlapping, Centralised system, low participation (only 418 universities out of 1113 are accredited by NAAC), corruption.
- ▶ **Way ahead:** **Composite Assessment System** for all HEIs and every programme, **Technology-driven systems, categorise the HEIs based on their orientation/vision and heritage/legacy.**



National Digital University (NDU)

- ▶ NDU is a university designed to **bring together various higher educational institutions (HEIs)** for providing **online higher educational courses**.
- ▶ **Concerns:** Ambiguity on **industry recognition**, difficulties in **standardised evaluation**, potential of compromise in **quality of education**, **lack of skills and digital divide**.
- ▶ **Way ahead:** Strengthening **Industry-academia linkages**, **peer learning communities**, incorporating **emerging technologies**, **engagement** between students, counsellors/faculties/ professionals.



Foreign Higher Educational Institutions (FHEIs) in India

- ▶ **Concerns from FHEIs:** **Commodification** of higher education, **exclusion** of vulnerable sections, **pushback for language-inclusive** higher education, **Repatriation of profits**, **Western influences**.
- ▶ **Way Ahead:** **Collaboration** among Indian Universities and between Indian Universities and FHEIs, **International accreditation** for Indian HEIs, **Scholarships** to students from marginalized sections



Artificial Intelligence in Education (AIED)

- ▶ AI in Education systems have **contributed** ed to reach **US\$7.8 billion by 2025 at a rate of 20.2% CAGR**.
- ▶ **Challenges:** Lack of comprehensive policy, Inadequate States capacity, Low expenditure on Education (less than 3.5%), Digital divide.
- ▶ **Way ahead:** A comprehensive **State policy**, **Intelligent tutoring systems**, **Data anonymity** and promoting algorithmic **fairness**, **applied research** to promote women in AIED.



Universal Immunisation

- ▶ Immunisation is the process whereby a **person is made immune or resistant to an infectious disease**, typically by the administration of a vaccine.
- ▶ **Challenges:** Affordability, availability of vaccines for disease like Ebola and malaria, Vaccine hesitancy, disruption of supply chain of vaccine due to pandemic, war, or disasters.
- ▶ **Way ahead:** **Assured financial resources through effective partnership** between Government, private sector and international organisations, **awareness programmes** to dispel vaccine hesitancy, **focus on vulnerable sections like migrant workers**.



Ayushman Bharat scheme

- ▶ It was **launched in 2018** as recommended by the **National Health Policy (NHP) 2017**, to achieve the vision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC).
- ▶ **2 Components:** Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) and Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)
- ▶ **Issues with PM-JAY:** **Corruption at private hospitals**, **suboptimal spending** of allocated budget, only upto **15 days of medications post discharge**, **biased against poor states**.
- ▶ **Way ahead:** **Exclude private hospitals**, **Penalising unethical practice**, **Continuous Quality Improvement** in PM-JAY network hospitals, availability of **real time data** for researchers.



Student suicides

- ▶ There has been **18.5% increase in deaths by suicide by children below 18 years of age** from 2019 to 2020 (NCRB).
- ▶ **Challenges in prevention: Under reporting**, suppression of facts, **adolescent phase**, adjustment to **new way of life** in the education institutions, **One-size-fits-all approach** for cure.
- ▶ **Way ahead:** Reduce **expectation mismatch** and improve communication between parent and child, **early detection and alert generation by peers**, **remedial teaching and graceful exit** for slow learners, **promotion of wellness and life skills**.



Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA)

- ▶ ASHA workers are **female community health workers** instituted as community-based health functionaries **under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)** launched in 2005.
- ▶ **Difficulties faced by ASHAs:** Inadequate Compensation, Patriarchal hurdles, Poor infrastructure, High Workload.
- ▶ **Way ahead:** Higher and timely incentives, Universalization of ASHAs, leveraging technology to ease job of ASHA, Community sensitization



Global hunger Index

- ▶ India has **slipped to 107th position in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2022 of 121 countries**, from its 101st position in 2021.
- ▶ **Challenges: Multidimensional nature of hunger**, excessive focus on rice and wheat, **declining Purchasing Power** (unemployment, inflation), food wastage.
- ▶ **Way ahead: Diversify** food basket, **climate-smart and nutrition-sensitive** production, **supply chain management** reforms, **awareness** for nutritional security and issue of food wastage.



Poshan (prime Minister's Overarching Scheme For Holistic Nourishment) Abhiyaan

- ▶ Launched in 2017 with the aim to ensure **holistic development and adequate nutrition** for pregnant women, mothers and children.
- ▶ **Challenges in the implementation: Inadequate infrastructure** at Anganwadi centres, **Underutilization of funds**, **lack of real-time data** on nutrition.
- ▶ **Way ahead: A Poshan-Plus strategy** to focus on social determinants like sanitation, education, etc., strengthen ICDS and health platforms, **eat Right and Fit India** movements.



Manual scavenging

- ▶ Manual scavenging is the dehumanising practice of **manually cleaning and handling of human excreta with basic tools like brooms**.
- ▶ It is a **primarily caste-based-forced occupation** in India.
- ▶ **Challenges in eradication: Informal economy**, loophole in the **Scavenging Act, 2013** and ineffective implementation, **Water scarcity**, complex procedure for **restoration and rehabilitation**.
- ▶ **Way ahead: Scientific waste disposal**, **technology-driven solutions** (as used by Kerala), **awareness campaign** against manual scavenging, mobilised manual scavengers into **trade unions** and make them **stakeholders in policy making**.



Internal Displacement

- ▶ **Internal displacement** refers to the **forced movement** of people **within the country** they live in. **59 million** people were **Internally Displaced** in 2021.
- ▶ **Challenges:** **Inadequate data**, displaced migrants do **low wages and high risk jobs**, lack of **Social Security, poor health and education** facilities, low political participation.
- ▶ **Way ahead:** Fill the **research gap**, **targeted policy** framework, **National Minimum Social Security Scheme** for Informal Workers, compliance with **PESA, 1996 and FRA, 2006**, **sensitise** policymakers, employers and financial institutions

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4.	Universal Immunisation Towards A Healthier And A Safer World		12.	Protection of Child Rights: An unfinished agenda?	
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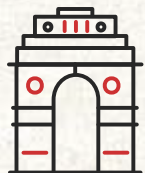
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