

**1. How is the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic impacting India's diaspora? What measures have been taken by the Government to help the distressed diaspora? Examine.**

**Demand of the question:**

It expects candidates to write about how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted Indian diasporas worldwide. It also expects to write about the steps taken by the Indian government to help the distressed diasporas.

**Introduction:**

For a nation, which prides itself on having a diaspora empire on which the sun never sets, the present global pandemic is a reminder of the trials and tribulations of past empires, which crumbled under the weight of their own wealth, glory and responsibilities.

**Body:**

The Indian diaspora has been a source of remittances, technology and intellectual power. Ever since the Indian economy was liberalised and began to grow at a rapid pace, the prosperous diaspora in the developed countries and the massive number of migrant workers in the Gulf became the back bone of the Indian economy.

- Covid-19 has put to the test the seriousness of the pledge of assistance and protection made by the government to every Indian abroad.
- The government shut down Indian skies to all inbound traffic on March 22, which left a large number of Indians stranded in various countries. The stranded Indians included employees working in MNC's, students went to study in abroad, migrant workers in the regions of gulf, and tourists including medical tourists and occasional visitors.
- Indians stranded abroad stared at the bleak possibility of not returning home.
- They faced evictions from hostels and hotels in certain cases due to safety measures as well as financial constraints.
- The events that followed gave the impression that the administration has a discriminatory approach towards its citizens in need overseas.
- Air India signed a contract with the four countries - Germany, Canada, France and Ireland. The contract said that Air India would return safely the citizens of four countries. But it opted to fly back empty instead of ferrying back Indians, which left everyone with a sense of betrayal.
- Added to this is the real danger of loss of lives among the diaspora, resulting in cases of deprivation and misery. Unless the spread of Coronavirus is halted and the world economy recovers, India will have a gigantic burden on its hands.
- With the growth of nationalism in different parts of the world and diminishing international cooperation, India cannot count much on external help. The United Nations itself remains paralysed on account of the arrogant approach of China. Kerala will be particularly affected as many of the people who are likely to be affected will be from the state.

- As nearly 17.5 million people of Indians live abroad, the job loss led to weakening of their financial books, in turn unfolding survival problems in front of them.
- Hunger fight: As many of the people have lost jobs due to COVID-19 induced lockdown, it led to weak financial conditions of people. Which led to be dependent on the relatives or at help of the NGO's and Civil Society organisations.
- Large amount of remittance flow stopped due to job loss.
- Many of the stranded Indian failed to get quick medical attention in the countries where they are stuck. Leading to risk of loss of lives.
- Students faced evacuation from the Universities under the reasons of noncompliance of Online education in their education curriculum. For instance, USA initiated such process.
- In the case of stranded Indians, even the Supreme Court of India said, "stay where you're" in an observation while dealing with the plea seeking directions to the government to initiate evacuation missions.

However, In 2017, then External Affairs Minister of India said, "Even if you are stuck on Mars, the Indian Embassy will be there to help you". It was based on the glorious track record of 30-plus successful overseas evacuations by the government since Independence. Following such events 'Samudra setu' and 'Vande Bharat' mission has been launched to bring back stranded Indians:

- Vande Bharat Mission is the biggest evacuation exercise to bring back Indian citizens stranded abroad amidst the coronavirus-induced travel restrictions.
- It is also considered as the largest exercise to bring back Indian citizens since the evacuation of 177,000 from the Gulf region in the early 1990s at the start of hostilities between Iraq and Kuwait during the first Gulf War.
- The mission has given priority to Indian citizens with "compelling reasons to return" – like those whose employment have been terminated, those whose visas have expired and not expected to be renewed under the present circumstances and those who have lost family members in recent times.
- The program named Samudra Setu by Indian navy entails to bring back around two thousand Indians in two ships during the first phase of evacuation.
- INS Jalashwa and INS Magar are being operated as part of efforts to repatriate Indian nationals from foreign shores.

### **Conclusion:**

According to Global Migration Report 2020, India continues to be the largest country of origin of international migrants with a 17.5 million-strong diaspora across the world, and it received the highest remittance of \$78.6 billion (this amounts to a whopping 3.4% of India's GDP) from Indians living abroad. Hence, it becomes important protect and take care of the interest of the Indian diaspora living abroad.

## 2. What is the structure and the mandate of the International Labour Organisation (ILO)? Discuss.

### Demand of the question:

It's a straightforward question as it expects from candidate to write in detail about the structure and mandate of International Labour Organisation.

### Introduction:

The International Labour Organization (ILO) celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2019. It is the only tripartite U.N. agency as it brings together governments, employers and workers of 187 member States, to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men.

### Body:

The unique tripartite structure of the ILO gives an equal voice to workers, employers and governments to ensure that the views of the social partners are closely reflected in labour standards and in shaping policies and programmes.

- The ILO is established in 1919 by the Treaty of Versailles as an affiliated agency of the League of Nations. It became the first affiliated specialized agency of the United Nations in 1946. It has its headquarter in Geneva, Switzerland.

Structure of ILO: The ILO accomplishes its work through three main bodies which comprise governments', employers' and workers' representatives:

- International Labour Conference: It sets the International labour standards and the broad policies of the ILO. It meets annually in Geneva. It is often referred to as an International Parliament of Labour. It is also a forum for discussion of key social and labour questions.
- Governing Body: It is the executive council of the ILO. It meets three times a year in Geneva. It takes policy decisions of ILO and establishes the programme and the budget, which it then submits to the Conference for adoption. The work of the Governing Body and the Office is aided by tripartite committees covering major industries.
- It is also supported by committees of experts on such matters as vocational training, management development, occupational safety and health, industrial relations, workers' education, and special problems of women and young workers.
- International Labour Office: It is the permanent secretariat of the International Labour Organization. It is the focal point for ILO's overall activities, which it prepares under the scrutiny of the Governing Body and under the leadership of the Director-General.
- Regional meetings of the ILO member States are held periodically to examine matters of special interest to the regions concerned.

Mandate of ILO:

- ILO has mandate for creation of coordinated policies and programs, directed at solving social and labour issues.
- It also has mandate for adoption of international labour standards in the form of conventions and recommendations and control over their implementation.
- It provides Assistance to member-states in solving social and labour problems.
- It also works in Human rights protection field (the right to work, freedom of association, collective negotiations, protection against forced labour, protection against discrimination, etc.).
- It also facilitates Research and publication of works on social and labour issues.
- As part of its mission, the ILO aims to achieve decent work for all by promoting social dialogue, social protection and employment creation, as well as respect for international labour standards.

So far ILO has worked as per its mandate and strived to achieve following glorious achievements:

- ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work: It was adopted in 1998, the Declaration commits member states to respect and promote eight fundamental principles and rights in four categories, whether or not they have ratified the relevant conventions.
- Core Conventions of the ILO: The eight fundamental conventions form an integral part of the United Nations Human Rights Framework, and their ratification is an important sign of member States' commitment to human rights.

However ILO faced criticism on certain issues as it lacked to address them, they are as follows:

- A universal labour guarantee that protects the fundamental rights of workers', an adequate living wage, limits on hours of work and safe and healthy workplaces.
- Guaranteed social protection from birth to old age that supports people's needs over the life cycle.
- Managing technological change to boost decent work, including an international governance system for digital labour platforms.

**Conclusion:**

The eight-core conventions of the ILO provide relevance and bring justice to the workers all around the world. The conventions are formulated keeping in mind the economic challenges faced by the workers of all classes. They help the workers get fair pay for their work and get the opportunity to be treated equally. It also regulates the employment of children for minimum wages. However, ILO needs to formulate policies to address the emerging challenges due to global integration so that interest of every worker is addressed.

**3. There are many international organisations and programmes that work for the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. Can you discuss at least three of them? Also, discuss their mandate and objectives.**

**Demand of the question:**

It expects candidates to write about at least 3 International organisations and programmes which work to eliminate extreme poverty and hunger. It also expects to discuss about their mandates and objectives.

**Introduction:**

Poverty and hunger are closely linked, those who live in poverty are likely to suffer from hunger or malnutrition. Poverty and hunger are often caused by lack of education, employment and healthcare.

**Body:**

As poverty and hunger are closely linked, many of the organisations are working in the direction to achieve the target of eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. The organisations and programmes include, Oxfam International, The Organization for Poverty Alleviation and Development, Food and Agricultural organisation, United Nations World Food Programme etc. Their detailed work and along with mandate and objectives are mentioned below:

**Oxfam International:**

- Oxfam International is a global development organization mobilizing the power of people against poverty.
- It serves as an international confederation consisted of 19 organizations that work together with local communities in around 90 countries.
- When crisis occurs, Oxfam International helps rebuild livelihoods and works to find innovative and practical solutions for people to end their poverty.
- Oxfam International fights for a world in which an opportunity is not a privilege, but a right for everyone and in which human rights can be claimed.
- At the core of the organization's work is working with partner organizations, as well as with vulnerable women and men to end the injustices that cause poverty.
- It also conducts campaigns to raise the voices of poor on local and global agendas to influence decisions that affect them.
- During the last two years, Oxfam International worked directly with 22.3 million people across the world and provided immediate relief in times of crisis.

**The Organization for Poverty Alleviation and Development:**

- The Organization for Poverty Alleviation and Development (OPAD) is an international NGO that actively works on poverty alleviation by promoting human rights, sustainable development and climate change.
- The vision of the organization is to "improve the standard of living of all people by recognizing them as resources and not as victims.

- OPAD acts internationally by offering a variety of services directed towards eradicating poverty.
- The organization implements many projects of poverty eradication in developing countries by using tools such as education, economic development, health promotion and income redistribution.
- It also advocates for equal rights to economic resources amongst men and women and works with small-scale food producers, such as women, indigenous groups, family farmers and pastoralists, to improve their income and sources of livelihood.
- It supports local initiatives by promoting self-reliance amongst women, men and youth in poor countries.

#### Food and Agricultural Organisation:

- The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.
- Established in 1945, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has its headquarters in Rome, Italy.
- It was founded with a goal to provide food security for everyone and assure that people will have access to high-quality food in sufficient quantities to achieve a healthy lifestyle.
- Every year, the FAO publishes a number of major 'State of the World' reports related to food, agriculture, forestry, fisheries and natural resources.
- Helping Governments and Development Agencies coordinate their activities which are targeted to develop and improve agriculture, fisheries, forestry and other water and land resources.
- Conducting research and providing technical assistance to various projects related to improving agricultural output and development.
- The FAO also brings out a number of publications/reports, some of which are, the State of the World, the Global Report on Food Crises, the State of Food and Agriculture, the State of the World's Forests, etc.

#### United Nations World Food Programme:

- Assisting almost 100 million people in around 83 countries each year, the World Food Programme (WFP) is the leading humanitarian organization saving lives and changing lives, delivering food assistance in emergencies and working with communities to improve nutrition and build resilience.
- As the international community has committed to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition by 2030, one in nine people worldwide still do not have enough to eat. Food and food-related assistance lie at the heart of the struggle to break the cycle of hunger and poverty.
- WFP's efforts focus on emergency assistance, relief and rehabilitation, development aid and special operations. Two-thirds of our work is in conflict-affected countries where people are three times more likely to be undernourished than those living in countries without conflict.

One of the cause of hunger is poverty. It is a global social issue. As per the Asian Development Bank's figures In India, 21.9% of the population lives below the

national poverty line in 2011. The SDGs aim to end all forms of hunger and malnutrition by 2030, making sure all people—especially children—have sufficient and nutritious food all year.

**Conclusion:**

According to the most recent estimates, in 2015, 10 percent of the world's population or 734 million people live in poverty. The reasons for poverty are manifold. However, a harmonious collaboration of government initiatives and the organisations and programmes which work for eradication of extreme poverty and hunger will yield better results in future if both strive in one direction to achieve the targets of SDG 1 and 2.

