

**1. In the age of widespread fake news and misinformation, it has become imperative to regulate the media. Do you agree? Is it possible to make the media organisations behave responsibly without stifling the right to freedom of expression? Share your views.**

**Approach** - In the introduction mention what do you mean by fake news and misinformation or give recent example of fake news. Then in the main part of answer mention about causes of spread of fake news, need of regulation of media (try to mention examples), give some measures or innovative solutions to regulate media.

### **Introduction**

Fake news refers to deliberate creation of misinformation or hoaxes spread via traditional print and broadcast news media or online social media shaping belief of people around the nation and world. Fake news, defined by the New York Times as “a made-up story with an intention to deceive”.

### **Body**

Causes of spread of fake news:

- Lack of verification/authenticity: Everyone is busy in sharing/forwarding news items without verifying news. People don't care about finding truth behind a news item and instead look for evidence to support their preferred narrative.
- Social media: It decentralised creation & propagation of fake news. The vastness of social media users and internet makes tracing the origin of fake news almost impossible
- Lack of legislation: There is no specific law or codes of practices to deal with fake news in India. Traditional news sources, journalist follow strict code of practices. However, internet enabled a whole new way to publish, share and consume information with very little or no regulation.
- Organised fake news: Misinformation is no longer considered rare & isolated phenomenon, but appears to be organised and disseminated to target certain section of society.

There is need to regulate media due to following threats posed by fake news:

- Fake news and misinformation can disturb fraternity & brotherhood in society, which then lead to creating enmity & hatred among two or more communities. It can flare up communal violence, hurt sentiments of people. Example: Child kidnapping rumours leads to lynching by mob in Jharkhand.
- As communal tendencies emerged in politics due to spread of fake news economic development taken back seat. Social conditions in country impacts the investor's sentiments.
- Political parties and political leaders try to polarize voter's mind which then further leads to growing tension between different sections of

society. Political campaigning during elections has progressed from mere mass appeal in name of identity to something akin to psychological warfare. By following measures fake news and misinformation can be managed without stifling the right to freedom of expression:

- Internal regulations: Regulating social media to put proper checks through rigorous internal editorial standards and imposing fines upon its inability to stop proliferating fake news.
- Accountability of Social Media: Social media websites should be made accountable of such activities so that it becomes their responsibility to have better control over the spread of fake news.
- Strict regulations: Government should establish new independent agency to verify data circulated in social & other media platforms. The agency should have tasked with presenting real facts and figures.
- Legislation: Properly define broad forms of fake news to avoid unnecessary litigation and putting in place strong monitoring mechanism for proper implementation. Government should have mechanism for immediately issuing of notice against websites/agencies/peoples involved in fake news.
- Spreading awareness: About legal and social consequences of fake news. Government must take initiative to make all sections of population aware of realities of fake news. Italy, for example, added 'recognising fake news' in school syllabus.

### Conclusion

In today's technologically advanced and connected world, fake news poses a grave threat to democratic setup. Correct steps need to be taken to ensure distinction between news, opinion and rumour.

## 2. Is it ethical for the judges to become legislators after retirement? Critically examine.

**Approach** - It expects to ascertain as to what extent the appointment for the Judges to take up positions in the government post-retirement justified. While introducing the question candidate can start with the respective independence and autonomy of judiciary. Whereas in the main body part it is necessary for a candidate to throw light on the negatives and positives of judges becoming legislators after retirement. Then one can conclude with the respective opinions of whether it is ethical or not for judges to become legislators.

### Introduction

The judiciary has been assigned a very significant role in the Indian democratic political system. Therefore, its independence becomes very essential for the effective discharge of the duties assigned to it. To maintain its impartiality and integrity Article 124(7) of the Indian Constitution provides that a retired Supreme Court judge cannot "plead or act in any court or before any authority within the territory of India".

### Body

Former Chief Justice of India's (CJI) nomination to the Rajya Sabha, just four months after his retirement, raises the question on integrity and impartiality of judges. Hence, it becomes imperative to check the positive as well as negative arguments in this regard.

Arguments against judges becoming legislature after retirement:

- The very fact that a judge accepts such an appointment could cast doubt on his judgements. For instance, former CJI had presided over politically sensitive cases (Assam NRC, Sabarimala, Ayodhya, Rafale, and CBI) where all the decisions went in favour of the government.
- This gave rise to the impression that his nomination was a reward for these 'favours'. Hence, it also raises a question on the integrity of the such judge who became legislator.
- The desire of a post-retirement job can influence pre-retirement judgments. Hence, a situation of 'conflict of interest' can occur or 'favouritism' could take place.
- It might also signal that the judiciary is not independent, but is vulnerable to dictates of the executive. Hence, it might hamper the foundational principle of 'Separation of Powers'.
- It will undermine the very constitutional values of impartiality in the dispensation of justice.
- Deteriorates the Public Perception about the integrity of the Judiciary and thus the functioning of our Democracy.

Arguments in favour of judges becoming legislature after retirement:

- Article 124(7) of the Indian Constitution restricts post-retirement appointments in Judiciary itself, but not in posts of president, governor, Member of Parliament, etc.
- In this context, Former Chief Justice of India viewed that membership of the Rajya Sabha was not a job but a service and hence there accepting RS nomination is not ethically conflicting.
- With regard to judgements, former CJI has said that he did not deliver the judgements alone and that there were other judges also. Hence, there cannot be quid-pro-quo arrangements.

In its 14th report in 1958, the Law Commission noted that retired Supreme Court judges used to engage in two kinds of work after retirement:

- Firstly, "chamber practice" (a term which would, today, mean giving opinions to clients and serving as arbitrators in private disputes) and secondly, "employment in important positions under the government". The Law Commission frowned upon chamber practice, but did not recommend its abolition.
- However, it strongly recommended banning post-retirement government employment for Supreme Court judges because the government was a large litigant in the courts. The Commission's recommendations were never implemented.

In constitutional democracy, it is time to have a law in place either by way of a constitutional amendment or a parliamentary enactment barring/regulating post-retirement appointments of Judges.

### **Conclusion**

Several appointments to administrative bodies require a cooling-off period for individuals so as to eliminate the possibility or suspicion of a conflict of interest or quid pro quo. This cooling-off period must be extended to Indian Judiciary. So that people's trust in the judiciary is maintained and its impartiality will not be questioned citing attack on principle of separation of power.

**3. The Chinese adventurism in the Ladakh region is a manifestation of Chinese expansionism and its aggressive posturing as an imminent global superpower. Comment.**

**Approach** - A candidate is expected to put forth their opinion based on these kind of issues. However, it is necessary to adopt a neutral approach while answering this question. For introduction, a candidate can start with briefing of the issue. Whereas, in the main body part it is expected to write how China's policy of expansion and their aggressive posturing as an imminent global superpower has manifested as Chinese adventurism in the Ladakh region. To sound neutral, it is necessary to write down what counter and suomotu measures India has taken to contain Chinese aggression in Ladakh. While concluding one can end up by showing what extra steps India should take to counter Chinese expansionism and aggression.

**Introduction**

Tensions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) pose the biggest national security challenge to New Delhi in at least 20 years. The clashes in Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh have claimed 20 Indian lives, the first incident of fatalities on the India-China border in 45 years. China has revived its claim on the entire Galwan Valley and has asked India to pull back from the areas.

**Body**

In 2017, India and China agreed to amicably resolve the Doklam standoff that lasted for more than two months. No blood was spilt then, and no shots fired. However, the situation this time is different due to following reasons behind China's aggression:

- Salami slice strategy: There is a clear shift in Chinese foreign policy post the COVID-19 outbreak. This is seen in China's rising tensions with the U.S., its threats against Taiwan, repeated naval incidents in the South China Sea, and a new security law for Hong Kong.
- The tensions along the LAC are part of this shift. To understand this shift, one has to get a sense of the sources of China's conduct.
- Today's China is an ambitious rising power which wants to reorient the global order. When it was rising, China had adopted different tactical positions — "hide your capacity and bide your time", "peaceful rise" or "peaceful development".
- Under President Xi Jinping, the Chinese think they have arrived. With the global economy in the doldrums, globalisation in an irrecoverable crisis accentuated by the COVID-19 outbreak, and the U.S. under an isolationist President taking the most aggressive position towards China since Richard Nixon, Beijing believes the global order is at a breaking point.
- It is fighting back through what game theorists call "salami tactics" — where a dominant power attempts to establish its hegemony piece by piece. India is one slice in this salami slice strategy.

- Changed perception about International table: China doesn't see India as a 'swing state' any more. It sees India as an ally-in-progress of the U.S. If India is what many in the West call the "counterweight" to China's rise, Beijing's definite message is that it is not deterred by the counterweight. This is a message not just to India, but to a host of China's rivals that are teaming up and eager to recruit India to the club.
- Within this broader framework there could be a host of factors — local, regional and global — that influenced China's moves. When most of the world's big powers are grappling with the pandemic, revisionist powers such as China have more room for geopolitical manoeuvring.
- Europe has been devastated by the virus. The U.S. is battling in an election year the COVID-19 outbreak as well as the deepest economic meltdown since the Great Depression.
- A confluence of all these factors, which point to a decline in the country's smart power, allowed China to make aggressive moves on the LAC.

Hence, it is clear that Chinese adventurism in the Ladakh region is a manifestation of Chinese expansionism and its aggressive posturing as an imminent global superpower. However, India is not a silent observer when China moves with aggression. Its following counter and suomotu measures have proved to be an 'eyeball to eyeball' answer.

- Military: India has moved in additional divisions, tanks and artillery across the LAC to match Chinese deployments. Further, India has approved the purchase of 33 Russian fighter jets and upgrades to 59 war planes at a cost of Rs. 18,148 crore.
- Economic: Citing the "emergent nature of threats" from mobile applications, including popular ones of Chinese origin such as TikTok, ShareIt, UC Browser, and Weibo, the government has banned 224 Chinese apps. Further, India's trade deficit with China fell to \$48.66 billion in 2019-20 on account of the decline in imports. The trade deficit stood at \$53.56 billion in 2018-19 and \$63 billion in 2017-18.

On 1st April, 2020, India and China completed their 70 years of diplomatic relations. Both sides should acknowledge that the situation is precarious, and that the recent days in particular have undone decades of painstakingly negotiated confidence-building mechanisms.

### **Conclusion**

Good neighbourhood relations are crucial for national stability and well-being. If India is to disengage from economic involvement with China and build the capacities and capabilities it needs in manufacturing, and in supply chain networks closer home, it cannot be a prisoner of the short term. However, through Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, India can try to replace Chinese products with domestic products in the sectors where it is possible. Further, it needs to boost up its economic relations with other countries so that there exists the real mettle to stand one on one in terms with China.

**4. What are your views on the recently enacted farm laws? In your opinion, what are the most important provisions therein? Substantiate your views.**

**Approach** - As the question is directed towards recently enacted farm laws, it becomes necessary for candidate to put forth their own views on the recently enacted farm laws. It also asks to enlist the most important provisions therein with relative examples. Here, a candidate can start with introducing which new farm laws are enacted by the government. In the main body part candidate can put forth their views on recently enacted farm laws with respect to backend and frontend operations. It is also necessary to enlist the most important provisions with relative substantiation. However, in the conclusion one can explain how it is going to be beneficial for the farmer and what are the necessary steps needed to be taken to ensure better implementation of provisions.

**Introduction**

In order to revive the Indian economy, the Central government has announced the AtmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyan. Agricultural reforms are part of the third tranche of the economic package announced under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan to counter Covid-19 pandemic which may yield better income for farmer in coming days. In this direction, the newly introduced ordinances have been enacted by the government recently.

**Body**

The central government introduced major agricultural market reforms through three reform laws as The Essential Commodities Amendment Bill 2020 (ECA), The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020 and The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020. These bills are aimed at transformation of agriculture in the country and raising farmers' income.

- The amendment to ECA would deregulate the commodities such as cereals, edible oils, oilseeds, pulses, onions and potatoes.
- Any limits under ECA over these commodities will be imposed only in exceptional circumstances such as war, famine, extraordinary price rise and natural calamity.
- The freedom to produce, hold, move, distribute and supply will lead to harnessing economies of scale and attract private sector/foreign direct investment into the agriculture sector.
- It will help drive up investment in cold storages and modernization of the food supply chain.
- An amendment to FPTC will create an ecosystem where the farmers and traders would enjoy freedom of choice of sale and purchase of agri-produce.
- It will also promote barrier-free inter-state and intra-state trade and commerce outside the physical premises of markets notified under State agricultural produce marketing legislations.

- It empowers farmers for engaging with processors, wholesalers, aggregators, large retailers, exporters etc. and thus eliminating intermediaries resulting in full realization of price.
- Farmers have been provided adequate protection. Sale, lease or mortgage of farmers' land is totally prohibited and farmers' land is also protected against any recovery.
- It also provides an effective dispute resolution mechanism with clear timelines for redress.
- These reforms are expected to build necessary agrarian infrastructure in the country which will lead to build "One India, One Agriculture Market".

With respect to the above mentioned views following are the most important provisions of the laws which are beneficial to the farm sector.

- The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020 will create an ecosystem where the farmers and traders will enjoy freedom of choice of sale and purchase of agri-produce.
- It will also promote barrier-free inter-state and intra-state trade and commerce outside the physical premises of markets notified under State Agricultural Produce Marketing legislations.
- The farmers will not be charged any cess or levy for sale of their produce and will not have to bear transport costs. The Bill also proposes an electronic trading in transaction platform for ensuring a seamless trade electronically.
- The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020 will empower farmers for engaging with processors, wholesalers, aggregators, wholesalers, large retailers, exporters etc., on a level playing field. It will transfer the risk of market unpredictability from the farmer to the sponsor. Due to prior price determination, farmers will be shielded from the rise and fall of market prices.
- It will also enable the farmer to access modern technology, better seed and other inputs. It will reduce cost of marketing and improve income of farmers.
- The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020 will remove commodities like cereals, pulses, oilseeds, edible oils, onion and potatoes from the list of essential commodities.
- This will remove fears of private investors of excessive regulatory interference in their business operations. The freedom to produce, hold, move, distribute and supply will lead to harnessing of economies of scale and attract private sector/foreign direct investment into agriculture sector.

### Conclusion

These newly introduced reforms are the most awaited reforms since the Independence of India in 1947. It has opened up a new window to improve the farmer's income by better price realisation. In the long run it will help India to achieve its target to double farmer's income by 2022.



**5. What is the National Population Register (NPR)? What is the need of having the NPR? How is it different from census? Examine.**

**Approach** - It expects students to write about NPR and the Need to have it as well as highlight upon how it's difference from census.

**Introduction**

The first phase of the Census and the exercise to update the National Population Register (NPR), scheduled for this year but deferred due to the coronavirus outbreak, may be delayed by a year as there is no sign of slowdown of the pandemic.

**Body**

The National Population Register (NPR) can be understood from the following points:

- It is a Register of usual residents of the country. It is being prepared at the local (Village/sub-Town), sub-District, District, State and National level under provisions of the Citizenship Act 1955 and the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003.
- It is mandatory for every usual resident of India to register in the NPR.
- A usual resident for the purposes of NPR is a person who has resided in a place for six months or more, and intends to reside there for another six months or more
- It is generated through house-to-house enumeration during the "house-listing" phase of the census, which is held once in 10 years.
- Once the basic details of the head of the family are taken by the enumerator, an acknowledgement slip will be issued. This slip may be required for enrolment in NPR, whenever that process begins.
- And, once the details are recorded in every local (village or ward), sub-district (tehsil or taluk), district and State level, there will be a population register at each of these levels. Together, they constitute the National Population Register.

Need of the NPR:

- Need of the NPR is to have a sound population data base, within the framework of the Indian Constitution, which can be used for various purposes including national security, identity, welfare schemes and in the interest of saving national resources.
- There was a need to update the NPR to "incorporate the changes due to birth, death and migration".
- Aadhaar is individual data, whereas NPR contains family-wise data. Various welfare schemes of the State and Central governments are generally family-based, for which NPR data may be used.

Difference between NPR and the Census:

- The NPR and the Census are carried out under the aegis of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India.
- The Census is carried out under the Census Act of 1948 and is based on the self-declaration by the individual. There is no verification involved.
- NPR, however, is carried out under the Citizenship Rules, 2003. These rules make it compulsory for the person to share the demographic data for making the NPR.
- There are bodies at the state, district, and taluka levels mandated under the rules which will be entrusted with the duty to populate such a register.

### Way Forward

- Expedition and Deputation of illegal migrants: The Government could consider utilizing the recommendations of the 175th Law Commission Reports which suggest creating a separate force for detection of illegal migrants, and establishing more tribunals.
- Changing the Quasi-Judicial nature of the Foreigners Tribunal established under the Foreigners Tribunal Order of 1964.
- Public Awareness: The public should be made aware of the notifications made by the government through mediums such as PIB-FAQs.
- For example, no notification has been issued by the government yet, under Rule 4 of the Citizenship Rules, 2003 for the documents required for NRC India.
- The government should ensure that public outreach is also focussed upon along with the implementation of NPR so that the citizens could question the elected representatives at the State Level in case the issue is politicized.
- The government needs to build trust with the public.

### Conclusion

The objective of the NPR is to create a comprehensive identity database of every “usual resident” in the country. While there are concerns about privacy, the government position is based on two grounds. One is that every country must have a comprehensive identity database of its residents with demographic details. In its statement issued after Cabinet approval to NPR, the Home Ministry said the objective of conducting NPR is to “prepare a credible register of every family and individual” living in the country apart from “strengthening security” and “improvement in targeting of beneficiaries under various Central government schemes”.

**6. Why does India fare poorly on the Global Hunger Index despite having surplus food? Analyse. What measures would you suggest to address this paradox? Discuss.**

**Approach** - It expects students to write about Global Hunger Index and despite having surplus why India face hunger problems. Also, to suggest various suggestion and way forward to address the paradox of high surplus food grains and hunger.

### **Introduction**

Global Hunger Index is an annual peer-reviewed publication by Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe. It tracks hunger at global, regional and national levels. It uses four parameters to calculate its scores like Undernourishment, Child wasting, Child stunting, and Child mortality. The GHI 2020 report has placed India 94th position among 107 countries, much behind Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal. The situation is grim and the country is battling widespread hunger.

### **Body**

India fare poorly on the Global Hunger Index despite having surplus food because:

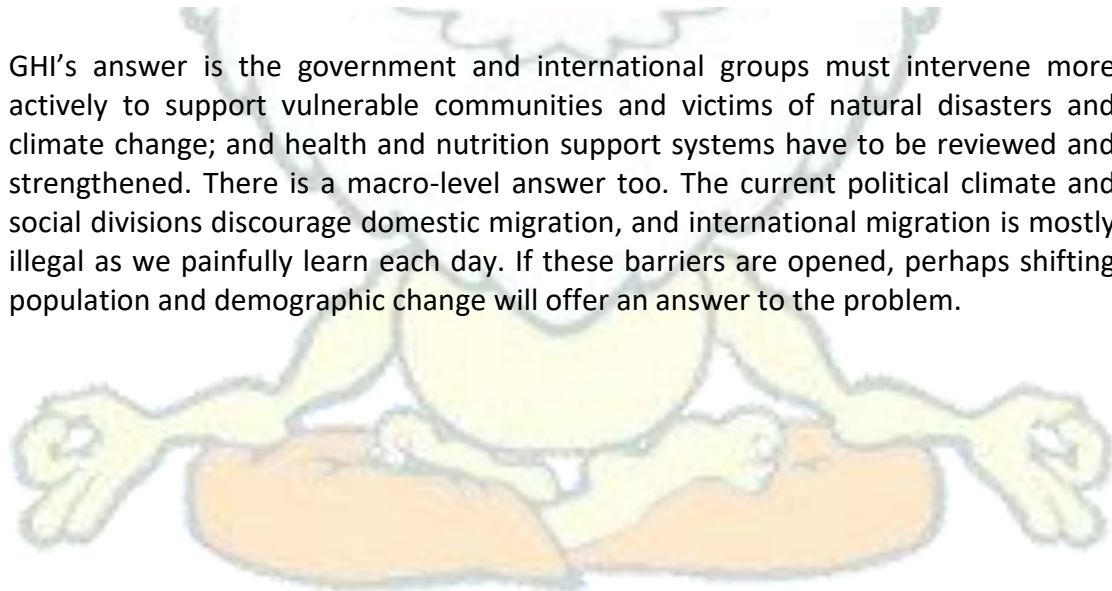
- The agriculture output from small and marginal holdings are either stagnant or declining due to reasons such as reduced soil fertility, fragmented lands or fluctuating market price of farm produce. Almost 50 million households in India are dependent on these small and marginal holdings.
- Though we have surplus food, most small and marginal farming households do not produce enough food grains for their year-round consumption.
- Relative income of one section of people has been on the decline. This has adverse effects on their capacity to buy adequate food, especially when food prices have been on the rise.
- The kind of work a section of people have been doing are less remunerative or there is less opportunity to get remunerative works. Fourth, the public distribution system (PDS) of the state is not functioning well or is not accessible to everyone.
- The emaciated rural livelihoods sector and lack of income opportunities other than farm sector has contributed heavily to the growing joblessness in rural areas. The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2017-18 revealed that rural unemployment stood at a concerning 6.1 per cent, which was the highest since 1972-73.
- The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (MGNREGA) continue to be the lone rural job programme that, too, had been weakened over the years through great delays in payments and non-payments, ridiculously low wages and a reduced scope of employment due to high bureaucratic control.

A multi-pronged approach is needed to deal with the crisis.

- First, more crops have to be grown, especially by small and marginal farmers with support from the Union government. A renewed focus on small and marginal holdings is imperative.
- Second, the government may create provisions to supply cooked nutritious food to the vulnerable section of the society. A model of cheap canteen, which provides cooked food to vulnerable sections of the society for just Rs 15-20, is being successfully run by Left parties during the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in many parts of West Bengal.
- JadavpurJyotideviShramajeevi Canteen, for example, has been running for more than 200 days. This model can be replicated by governments or other agencies. This has to be done in addition to the existing provisions of healthy diets from Anganwadi and schools through mid-day meals for children, mothers and students.
- Third, rural employment schemes such as MGNREGA should be given a boost to increase employment and wages. Several organisations and individuals working under the scheme have suggested that the guaranteed work-days be increased to 200 and that commensurate wages be given in accordance with the minimum agricultural wages of the states.
- Fourth, access to food grains under the PDS needs to be streamlined by simplifying technical processes and reducing Adhaar-related glitches. This is the right time to universalise PDS: COVID-19 has exposed the weaknesses of the targeted nature of the scheme.

### Conclusion

GHI's answer is the government and international groups must intervene more actively to support vulnerable communities and victims of natural disasters and climate change; and health and nutrition support systems have to be reviewed and strengthened. There is a macro-level answer too. The current political climate and social divisions discourage domestic migration, and international migration is mostly illegal as we painfully learn each day. If these barriers are opened, perhaps shifting population and demographic change will offer an answer to the problem.



**7. Examine the factors that make Indian farmers vulnerable. Discuss the measures taken in recent years to address those.**

**Approach** - It expects students to write - in first part write about factors which making Indian farmers vulnerable - in second part write various measures taken by government - in end write about what further steps government should take to reduce vulnerabilities of farmers.

**Introduction**

Indian agricultural sector employs more than 50% of India's population and contributes to only 14% of the GDP. This indicates the drastic inequality in terms of earning when compared to urban population who are mostly employed in either manufacturing or service sectors.

**Body**

Following factors make Indian farmers vulnerable:

- Poor policy and Planning: In the past, Government strategy primarily focused on raising agricultural output and improving food security rather than recognising the need to raise farmer's income,
- Absence of direct measure to promote farmer's welfare.
- Declining average size of farm holdings: Increasing demographic pressure, disguised employment in agriculture and conversion of agricultural land for alternative uses, have drastically reduced the average land holding.
- Dependence on rainfall and climate: Indian agriculture is heavily dependent on monsoon and ever-increasing global temperature has made agriculture more prone to extreme weather events.
- Collapsing farm prices: Low global prices have affected exports and the cheaper imports have hurt domestic prices in the country.
- Lack of easy credit to agriculture and dependence on money lenders.
- Fragmented supply chains:
  - Large gaps in storage, Cold chains
  - Limited connectivity
  - Absence of marketing infrastructure
- Lack of Mechanisation: Introduction of latest technology has been limited due to various reasons like accessibility for credit and low awareness.
- Crop production is always at risk because of pests and diseases.
- Shortage of inputs like seeds and irrigation facilities.
- Deficiencies in Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMC) Act.
- Profiteering by middlemen.

It has following impact on Indian farmers:

- The above factors have resulted in low income for farmers which is evident from the incidence of poverty among farm households.
- The low and highly fluctuating farm income is causing a detrimental effect on the interest in farming and farm investments and is also forcing more and more cultivators, particularly younger age group, to leave farming.

- The country also witnessed a sharp increase in the number of farmer's suicides in the last decades.
- This can cause an adverse effect on the future of food security and the state of agriculture in the country.

Governments measures to reduce farmer's vulnerabilities:

- The goal set to double farmers' income by 2022-23 is central to promote farmer's welfare, reduce agrarian distress and bring parity between the income of farmers and those working in non-agricultural professions.
- In recent years, the Central government has taken various measures like the PM FasalBimaYojana (PMFBY), PM KrishiSinchaiYojana (PMKSY), electronic National Agricultural market (e-NAM), Soil health card, Neem-coated urea etc.
- Agriculture is a major component of Priority Sector Lending (PSL), and the target for bank lending to agriculture has been revised upwards every year.
- In addition to food subsidy under PDS, the government also provides fertilizer subsidy year after year.
- In the budget of 2018 for farmers, the Union budget has announced MSPs at 50% above the production cost.
- It also proposed to launch "Operation Greens" in the agriculture sector on the same lines of the milk sector's "Operation Flood".
- The 2019 budget announced a farm support scheme (PM-KISAN) for farmers owning up to 2 hectares of lands.
- Some States have introduced farm support schemes, examples being the RythuBandhu Scheme (Telangana) and the Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme (Odisha)

However, government needs to take further steps like:

- Improvements in allied sectors: Allied sectors like horticulture, food processing, poultry etc. needs to be pushed. For instance, government initiative like Project CHAMAN, AGRI-UDAAN programme, Scheme for Agro-Marine Processing and Development of Agro-Processing Clusters (SAMPADA) etc. are notable.
- Cooperative Farming: In this context, consolidation of land holdings also becomes important to raise farmer incomes. Farmers can voluntarily come together and pool land to gain the benefits of size. Through consolidation, farmers can reap the economies of scale both in input procurement and output marketing.
- There is a need to make a shift from rice and wheat-centric policies to millet, pulses, fruits, vegetables, livestock and fish.
- The creation of a competitive, stable and unified national market is needed for farmers to get better prices.

### Conclusion

The need is to educate the farmer regarding the use of proper quantity of manure, fertilizer and good quality seeds to get desired output of the produce. Optimal utilization of water along with above mentioned elements is essential. Government initiatives with the help of agriculture colleges and universities in association with gram panchayats are crucial for the implementation of the policies.

**8. What are the current issues related to GM crops in India? What are your views on adoption of GM technologies? Substantiate.**

**Approach** - Students are expected to write about the current issues of GM crops in India in first part, substantiate the views on adoption of GM technologies in second part.

**Introduction**

GM crops are those crops whose DNA has been modified by introducing alien genes in the seeds to get desired effects such as resistance to pest attacks. Genes from any living organism, be it plants, or animals, is used to arrive at the desired traits. GM technology is often called “modern biotechnology” or “genetic engineering”. It allows selected individual genes to be transferred from one organism into another, also between nonrelated species.

**Body**

Recently farmers in Maharashtra were protesting the central government’s move which bans the cultivation of GM crops and they would undertake mass sowing of GM seeds for maize, soyabean, mustard, brinjal and herbicide tolerant (Ht) cotton, although these are not approved.

Issues related to GM crops:

- Cost effective variety of Cotton: Bt cot is the only GM crop that is allowed in India. Currently farmers cite the high cost of weeding of it, which goes down considerably if they grow HtBt cotton and use glyphosate against weeds.
- New variety of Brinjal: Brinjal growers in Haryana have rooted for Btbrinjal as it reduces the cost of production by cutting down on the use of pesticides.
- To challenge Government for change its regulations: This action of defying government regulations by growing unapproved Bt varieties will draw attention of authorities to the need for introduction of the latest technology in the fields as the approval process of GM seeds is lengthy, opaque and often excludes farmers. This is opposed by farmers who want access to better technology.
- Huge benefits of GM crops: Because of the modification in genes, GM crops has huge benefits like Increased crop yields, Reduced costs for food or drug production, Reduced need for pesticides, Enhanced nutrient composition, Resistance to pests and disease, Increased shelf life etc. hence its attracts farmers to enhance their revenue.

In 2002 Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) allowed Bt cotton, since then 95 per cent of the country’s cotton area has under Bt cotton. Concerns over the use of genetically modified (GM) technology:

- Ecological Balance: The capability of the GMO to escape and potentially introduce the engineered genes into wild populations thus disturbing the fragile ecological balance.
- Danger of Permanence: The persistence of the gene after the GMO has been harvested. The susceptibility of non-target organisms (e.g. insects which are not pests) to the gene product will be in danger. Also, the stability of the gene is another cause of worry which will increase use of chemicals in agriculture.
- Health: Genetic modification brings about changes that can be harmful to humans in the long run.
- Awareness and Labelling issues: Manufacturers do not mention on the label that foods are developed by genetic manipulation considering it may affect their business. However, this is harmful practice.
- Religious issues: Many religious and cultural communities are against such foods because they see it as an unnatural way of producing foods.

#### Views on adoption of GM technologies:

- Medicinal Benefits of GM technologies: GM technologies have emerged as one of the mainstays of biomedical research since the 1980. Pharmaceutical products such as hepatitis B vaccine, injectable insulin produced through GM technology.
- Genetic modification of insects: GM mosquitoes have been developed that express a small protein called SM1, which blocks entry of the malaria parasite, Plasmodium, into the mosquito's gut. Introduction of these GM mosquitoes into the wild could help reduce transmission of the malaria parasite. Also, male Aedes aegypti mosquitoes engineered so it transmits a gene to their offspring that causes the offspring to die before becoming sexually mature.
- Genetic modification of humans is becoming a treatment option: Genetic modification via gene therapy is becoming a treatment option for diseases ranging from rare metabolic disorders to cancer. Coupling stem cell technology with recombinant DNA methods allows stem cells derived from a patient to be modified in the laboratory to introduce a desired gene. Introduction of these GM cells into the patient could cure the disease without the need for a matched donor.
- No Harm from GM Food recorded: There is a scientific consensus that currently available food derived from GM crops poses no greater risk to human health than conventional food, but that each GM food needs to be tested on a case-by-case basis before introduction.
- Considering all modern medicinal benefits of GM technology, introduction and responsible use of it is necessary for mankind.

#### Conclusion:

Though there is a ban on other GM crops, cases of cultivation of GM Crops not approved by the government indicate that there may be an illegal supply of GM



seeds in the country. With growing agrarian distress there is a need for innovation in agriculture that balances interests of humans and that of environment. Given the increased growth of global population and increased urbanisation, GM crops offer one of the promising solutions to meet the world's food security needs which ultimately meet the SDG zero hunger target by 2030. Hence the government must take steps carefully keeping in the mind of interests of farmers, national biosafety and biosecurity.



**9. What do you understand by intelligent transportation system? What role can they play at a time of rising population and congestion? Illustrate.**

**Approach** - It expects students to write about intelligent transport system. And highlight on role of intelligent transportation system in the time of rising population and congestion with various examples and analysis.

**Introduction**

With the conception of smart city transmuting cities into digital societies, making the life of its citizens easy in every facet, Intelligent Transport System becomes the indispensable component among all. In any city mobility is a key concern be it going to school, college and office or for any other purpose citizens use transport system to travel within the city in the time of rising population and congestion.

**Body**

**Intelligent transportation system** - An intelligent transportation system is an advanced application which aims to provide innovative services relating to different modes of transport and traffic management and enable users to be better informed and make safer, more coordinated, and 'smarter' use of transport networks.

How Intelligent Transport System works?

Traffic Management Centre (TMC) is the vital unit of ITS. It is mainly a technical system administered by the transportation authority. Here all data is collected and analysed for further operations and control management of the traffic in real time or information about local transportation vehicle. Well-organised and proficient operations of Traffic Management Centre depends on automatised data collection with precise location information than analysis of that data to generate accurate information and then transmitting it back to travellers.

Role of the intelligent transportation system at a time of rising population and congestion in transport -

- **Data collection:** Strategic planning needs precise, extensive and prompt data collection with real-time observation. So the data here is collected via varied hardware devices that lay the base of further ITS functions. These devices are Automatic Vehicle Identifiers, GPS based automatic vehicle locators, sensors, camera etc. The hardware mainly records the data like traffic count, surveillance, travel speed and travel time, location, vehicle weight, delays etc.
- **Data Transmission:** Rapid and real-time information communication is the Key to proficiency in ITS implementation so this aspect of ITS consists of the transmission of collected data from the field to TMC and then sending back that analysed information from TMC to travellers. Traffic-related announcements congestion, accidents and any work of construction are communicated to the traveler through internet, SMS or onboard units of Vehicle and infra-red links.

- **Data Analysis:** The data that has been collected and received at TMC is processed further in various steps. These steps are error rectification, data cleaning, data synthesis, and adaptive logical analysis. Inconsistencies in data are identified with specialised software and rectified. After that data is further altered and pooled for analysis. This mended collective data is analysed further to predict traffic scenario which is available to deliver appropriate information to users.
- **Traveler Information:** Travel Advisory Systems (TAS) is used to inform transportation updates to the traveling user. The system delivers real-time information like travel time, travel speed, delay, accidents on roads, change in route, diversions, work zone conditions etc. This information is delivered by a wide range of electronic devices like variable message signs, highway advisory radio, internet, SMS, automated cell.

Why intelligent transport system is need in congestion areas and high populations areas:

- Improve attractiveness of public transport system.
- Tackling rising congestion which increases industry cost, travel time and life style problems.
- Low speed and increased accident can be tackled.
- Reduce environment impact of transport.
- For Capacity and security management.
- Incident management.

Advantage of the intelligent transport system:

- Make transportation more efficient, secure, safe, and affordable and reduce traffic related stress in life.
- Travel time improvement
- Speed control and improvement.
- Reduction in stops and delays at intersections.

### Conclusion

With urbanisation expanding with speedy stride, number of vehicles on road is also increasing. Combination of both in return puts enormous pressure on cities to maintain a better traffic system so that the city keeps on moving without any hassle. For the purpose application of Intelligent Transport System is the only solution. ITS a win-win situation for both citizens and city administrators where it provides safety and comfort to citizens and easy maintenance and surveillance to city administrators.

**10. What are the various stages of vaccine development? Illustrate. How is efficacy of a vaccine calculated? Explain.**

**Approach** - In the introduction you can start with explanation of what is vaccine and how it works. It expects candidates to describe about various stages of vaccine development in the first half. In the next half it is expected to mention the method to calculate efficacy. To fetch more marks giving a current relevance is necessary.

**Introduction**

Vaccine is a mild form of a disease that is put (injected) into a person or an animal's blood using a needle (an injection) in order to protect the body against that disease. The outbreak of the novel coronavirus has triggered an international effort to develop a safe and effective vaccine against COVID-19, perhaps at breakneck speed.

**Body**

Stages in the development of a vaccine: According to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are six stages of vaccine development: exploratory, pre-clinical, clinical development, regulatory review and approval, manufacturing and quality control.

- Exploratory: This is research-intensive phase of the vaccine development process which is designed to identify "natural or synthetic antigens that might help prevent or treat a disease".
- Pre-clinical: During this phase, researchers use tissue-culture or cell-culture systems and animal testing to determine whether the candidate vaccine will produce immunity or not.
- Clinical development: It is a three-phase process. During Phase I, small groups of people receive the trial vaccine. In Phase II, the clinical study is expanded and vaccine is given to people who have characteristics similar to those for whom the new vaccine is intended. In Phase III, the vaccine is given to thousands of people and tested for efficacy and safety.
- For instance, Oxford vaccine shows 90% efficacy in Phase-3 trial. Moderna has completed enrolment of its late-stage phase 3 COVID-19 vaccine study, with 30,000 participants now enrolled in the study in October 2020.
- Regulatory review and approval: If a vaccine passes through all three phases of clinical development, the vaccine developer submits a Biologics License Application (BLA) to the licensing authority.
- Manufacturing: Major drug manufacturers provide the infrastructure, personnel and equipment necessary to create mass quantities of vaccines.
- Quality control: Stakeholders must adhere to procedures that allow them to track whether a vaccine is performing as anticipated. Recently, Russia became the first country to officially register a Covid-19 vaccine and declare it ready for use.

Vaccine Efficacy calculation method:

- Vaccine efficacy is the percentage reduction of disease in a vaccinated group of people compared to an unvaccinated group, using the most favourable conditions.
- It is best measured using double-blind, randomized, clinical controlled trials, such that it is studied under 'best case scenario'.
- Vaccine efficacy studies are used to measure several possible outcomes such as disease attack rates, hospitalizations, medical visits, and costs.
- The outcome data (vaccine efficacy) generally are expressed as a proportionate reduction in disease attack rate (AR) between the unvaccinated (ARU) and vaccinated (ARV), or can be calculated from the relative risk (RR) of disease among the vaccinated group. Following is the formula through which Vaccine efficacy is calculated.

$$VE = \frac{ARU - ARV}{ARU} \times 100\%$$

- Here, VE = Vaccine efficacy, ARU = Attack rate of unvaccinated people, ARV = Attack rate of vaccinated people.
- The advantages of a vaccine efficacy have control for all biases that would be found with randomization, as well as prospective, active monitoring for disease attack rates, and careful tracking of vaccination status for a study population there is normally a subset as well, laboratory confirmation of the infectious outcome of interest and a sampling of vaccine immunogenicity.
- The major disadvantages of vaccine efficacy trials are the complexity and expense of performing them, especially for relatively uncommon infectious outcomes of diseases for which the sample size required is driven up to achieve clinically useful statistical power.

### Conclusion

Coronavirus pandemic has impacted almost every sector and left a disastrous impact on the affected sector or groups. Due to this sheer scale of impact it becomes imperative to expedite the vaccine development to unprecedented level so that its impact will be minimised and a pre-covid-19 normalcy can be brought in to lives of people.

**11. What do you understand by the 'dark web'? Why is it a serious threat? Explain.**

**Approach** - It expects students to write about – what do you know about Dark Web – in second part write about threats possess by Dark Web – in end write few advantages of it.

**Introduction**

The dark web is the World Wide Web content that exists on darknets: overlay networks that use the Internet but require specific software, configurations, or authorization to access.

**Body**

Dark Web:

- The dark web refers to encrypted online content that is not indexed by conventional search engines. Sometimes, the dark web is also called the dark net.
- The dark web is a part of the deep web, which just refers to websites that do not appear on search engines.
- Most deep web content consists of private files hosted on Dropbox and its competitors or subscriber-only databases rather than anything illegal.
- Specific browsers, such as Tor Browser, are required to reach the dark web. Using the dark web often provides considerably more privacy than just using Tor to access the web.
- Many dark web sites simply provide standard web services with more secrecy, which benefits political dissidents and people trying to keep medical conditions private.
- Unfortunately, online marketplaces for drugs, exchanges for stolen data, and other illegal activities get most of the attention.

Dark Web possess serious threats because:

- The dark web empowers ordinary people, but some people will inevitably abuse that power. The dark web can make it easier to commit some of the worst crimes.
- For example, the combination of the dark web and cryptocurrencies theoretically makes it much easier to hire someone to commit a murder.
- While the dark web promises privacy to its users, it can also be used to violate the privacy of others. Private photos, medical records, and financial information have all been stolen and shared on the dark web.
- Since there's more content to analyze, Deep Web search engines tend to be slower than standard search engines. Searching the Deep Web also requires a more precise search string.
- Deep Web searches should be reserved for serious, painstaking research, not for simple questions and basic Web surfing.
- Deep Web searches may also return sensitive personal information from normally restricted databases, creating ethical dilemmas and leaving individuals susceptible to fraud and identity theft.

- Everything on the deep web is completely untraceable and it's only a matter of time before criminals take advantage of it. To put it simply, the deep web has become a corrupted hub of criminal activity.
- The transfer of drugs, illegal weapons and the hiring of contract killers is an almost daily occurrence on this medium. Illegal bidding market places similar to E-bay have been set up on the deep web to sell these illegal goods and, no matter how hard they try; there is nothing the law can do to stop it.
- These illegal market places are extremely efficient and even boast a user-friendly interface and search bar to help criminals save time in locating their illegal goods.
- The currency used in these marketplaces is the cyber currency Bitcoin, which only adds to the impossibility of the transfers and guilty parties being traced.

However, Dark web had some advantages like:

- The dark web helps people to maintain privacy and freely express their views. Privacy is essential for many innocent people terrorized by stalkers and other criminals.
- The increasing tendency of potential employers to track posts on social media can also make it difficult to engage in honest discussions publicly.
- Finally, the popularity of the dark web with criminals makes it a perfect way for undercover police officers to communicate.
- One of the biggest advantages of the dark web is the difficulty of blocking it. Common forms of censorship, which block traffic to websites at specific choke points along the Internet hierarchy, do not work with encrypted overlay networks. For similar reasons, the dark web is more resistant to surveillance by governments and corporations.
- Whistle blowers, journalists, and other professionals at risk of targeted surveillance use the dark web to communicate sensitive information. And organizations including Human Rights Watch and the Electronic Frontier Foundation support the use of and access to the dark web.

### Conclusion

The internet, like most things in life, is both a boon and a curse. In the right hands and with the right guidance, it can be a pathway to unparalleled opportunities for learning and growth. Without proper regulation, however, it can be extremely destructive and may negatively impact someone's future.

## 12. Examine the current and potential applications of wearable devices.

**Approach** - It is straightforward question where, it expects students to write about – in first part current applications of wearable devices – while in second part you need to write about potential applications of wearable devices.

### Introduction

Wearable technologies are smart electronic devices (electronic device with micro-controllers) that are worn close to and/or on the surface of the skin, where they detect, analyse, and transmit information concerning e.g. body signals such as vital signs, and/or ambient data and which allow in some cases immediate biofeedback to the wearer

### Body

Current applications:

- For Kids and Families: Wearable devices provide parental assistance. Whether kids are going to a school event or a friend's house, they will be accessible thanks to wearable tech all the time. You can get your kid a GPS tracker, a screen less smartphone or some other device among many more options.
- Health and Wellness: If you feel overstressed at work, then it's time to give yourself a break. Find the mind-body balance and meditate yourself after a long workday. Sometimes your mind can be tired along with your body, so it shouldn't be all about body health, but also mental health. From sleep tracking to heart rate monitoring, you can ask help from a smart assistant to check on what's going on in your body.
- Music: They offer the ability to take your podcasts and music to hangouts. Without the need of headphones, you and your friends can listen to music at the same time. Also, you can use these wearable speakers underwater, so the music will be with you even in the pool.
- Adventure: Dealing with bigger cameras is a difficult task when you're trying to record your adventures. It causes many accidents, especially for those who like outdoor and underwater sports like hiking, skiing, or diving. Thanks to these lightweight wearable cameras, no need to carry additional gears in your backpack.

Potential applications:

- The Public and Personal Safety: In contrast with the position that wearable technology will give harm to security, the wearable devices will provide the safety of the society. For example, in the near future Bio-sensors will be integrated into the wearable devices, and these sensors will monitor the brain activities.
- Business: The wearable technologies are expected to innovate the companies' strategies and the way of doing business. In the near future, there will be no need to go to meetings physically. Instead of W/C meetings, the managers



may meet in a virtual meeting room formed by augmented reality and all the decisions will be recorded.

- **Research:** Wearable technologies provides several opportunities for companies in the context of market research. Researchers use some eye-tracking techniques in the laboratory experiments. In the future, they can gather real-life data via eye-tracking software built in a smart glasses.
- **Production:** In production and in the logistics workers should work very efficiently and find and bring the necessary parts. However, sometimes they can be confused about the location of the necessary parts or products. With Smart glasses, when the factory needs some parts, the list may be automatically uploaded to the glasses. It can put them in the order and may navigate the optimum route for the workers, and this lead to time and cost efficiency.
- **Sales:** Retailers can use a system that customers upload shopping list to the Smart Glasses, and the glasses will make the customers finish their shopping as fast as possible via indoor navigation. In addition, there may be no need to try on clothes in the near future. When we choose a dress the smart glasses may show the dress on the wearer virtually and it will be like looking at a mirror.
- **Tourism:** Augmented reality integrated wearable technologies enable people to visit cities, tourist attractions virtually without going there. They also use virtual city sightseeing tours. New virtual tourism companies may emerge in the near future.
- **Entertainment:** With the emergence of wearable technologies, there will also be a paradigm shift in the gaming industry. Oculus Rift, which is a virtual reality head-mounted display, can be considered as the preliminary version of this shift. When a user wears this head-mounted display he/she can view the virtual environment almost as real.

### Conclusion

Today, the diffusion of the wearable technologies is just at the early adopter stage both for the society and companies. In the near future the evolution of wearable technologies, especially smart glasses and smart watches, will almost be completed their evolutions and these technological devices will be adopted by the societies and companies. Wearable technologies will be a milestone both for daily life of people and the way of doing businesses of the companies in the future.

### 13. What is the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP)? What are its intended benefits? Examine.

**Approach** - It expects student to write about – in first part write about what is National Infrastructure Pipeline – in second part write different intended benefits of National Infrastructure Pipeline – in the end write few challenges before it.

#### Introduction

Recently, the Government has released a report of the task force on National Infrastructure Pipeline for 2019-2025. To augment infrastructure and create jobs in the country, the government task force on National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP), which in its report projected total investment of Rs 111 lakh crore in infra projects over five years. It said that 18 per cent of the targeted investment is expected to be made in the road sector.

#### Body

National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP):

- NIP is a first-of-its-kind initiative to provide world-class infrastructure across the country and improve the quality of life for all citizens.
- It will improve project preparation, attract investments (both domestic & foreign) into infrastructure, and will be crucial for attaining the target of becoming a \$5 trillion economy by FY 2024.
- Covers both economic and social infrastructure projects.
- During the fiscals 2020 to 2025, sectors such as Energy (24%), Roads (19%), Urban (16%), and Railways (13%) amount to around 70% of the projected capital expenditure in infrastructure in India.
- It has outlined plans to invest more than ₹102 lakh crore on infrastructure projects by 2024-25, with the Centre, States and the private sector to share the capital expenditure in a 39:39:22 formulas.

There are following intended benefits of NIP:

- It is estimated that India would need to spend \$4.5 trillion on infrastructure by 2030 to sustain its growth rate. The endeavour of the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP), is to make this happen in an efficient manner.
- Well-planned NIP will enable more infrastructure projects, grow businesses, create jobs, improve ease of living, and provide equitable access to infrastructure for all, making growth more inclusive.
- Well-developed infrastructure enhances level of economic activity, creates additional fiscal space by improving revenue base of the government, and ensures quality of expenditure focused on productive areas.
- National Infrastructure Pipeline will ensure that infrastructure projects are adequately prepared and launched. It will provide better view of project supply, provides time to be better prepared for project bidding, reduces aggressive bids/ failure in project delivery, and ensures enhanced access to sources of finance as a result of increased investor confidence.

- It will strengthen agricultural and rural infrastructure. Irrigation and rural infrastructure projects would account for 7.7 lakh crore each.
- It will further increase the connectivity in India, especially in rural areas. Road projects will account for Rs. 19.63 lakh crore while another Rs. 13.68 lakh crore would be for railway projects.
- There is a lack of private investment due to ongoing NPA crisis and lack of credit creation in the economy. So the government needs to invest from its own resources to give a push to the economy

However, following challenges needs to address:

- Credit availability is the biggest challenge in the backdrop of the NPA crisis. Envisaged Private sector participation in capital expenditure (22%) may largely suffer due to this.
- State governments' financial commitment may not be realised because of fiscal concerns. Presently, more than 20 states already have a debt-GSDP ratio of above 25 per cent.
- Land acquisition is a big challenge for the completion of infrastructure projects.

### Conclusion

Availability of quality infrastructure is a prerequisite to achieve broad-based and inclusive growth on a sustainable basis. If the concerns regarding fiscal availability are addressed properly, National Infrastructure Pipeline would be a massive exercise to realise the vision of becoming a 5 trillion \$ economy by 2024.

**14. Examine the significance of rural infrastructure schemes for the economy.**

**Approach** - It expects student to write about – in first part write about significance of rural infrastructure schemes for the economy – in second part write about different rural infrastructure schemes (you can also write first and second part as one) – in third part write challenges before it – in end write few way forwards.

**Introduction**

Infrastructure plays a critical role in the economic development of any country. Presently 65% of India's population resides in its rural areas. If we talk about rural infrastructure in the country, then it is crucial for agriculture, agro-industries and poverty alleviation in the rural areas.

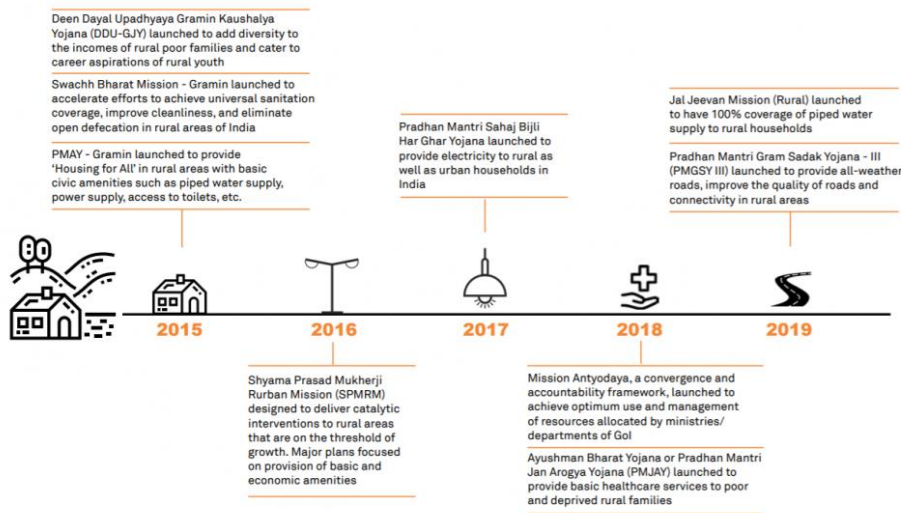
**Body**

Significance of rural infrastructure schemes for the economy:

- Basically, rural infrastructure has the potential to provide basic amenities to people that can improve their quality of life. To give an example, development of rural infrastructure can lead to improved access to market centres for the rural producers, better availability of inputs and raw materials at reduced prices and improved mobility.
- Rural road infrastructure scheme: It provides mobility and connectivity to people living in rural areas. It also provides the much needed boost to agricultural activities by making available water, seeds and other raw materials to the farmers. By improving connectivity, rural roads also enhance employment opportunities for the rural people in non-agriculture sector, thereby, increasing livelihood opportunities. Rural roads also ensure that the rural areas are served with better public services and all the benefits offered by the state reach the far-flung areas easily. They can even provide access to education and health services.
- Rural electrification infrastructure scheme: It basically caters well to the requirements of agriculture and other activities including irrigation pumpsets, small and medium industries, khadi and village industries, cold storage chains, healthcare and education
- Rural water supply scheme: It can lead to sustainability of systems and sources and tackle the problem of water quality, thereby, increasing good health of people.
- Rural housing infrastructure scheme: It has the potential to improve living standard of the people.
- Overall and as per various studies, development of rural power, irrigation, water, sanitation and road infrastructure can increase productivity, savings, income and tourism and result in better jobs and health of rural people.

Keeping all the above factors in mind, the government of India (GoI) has initiated critical schemes for the upliftment of rural infrastructure. Such as:

- Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY - Gramin): Providing Housing for All by 2022. PMAY-G aims to provide pucca (permanent) houses and other basic civic amenities such as piped drinking water, power supply and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) connection in convergence.
- Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY): Improving rural connectivity, by providing all-weather roads to connect eligible habitations in rural areas. As on December 31, 2019, road length worth Rs. 2.9 lakh crore had been sanctioned and expenditure of Rs. 2.17 lakh crore incurred.
- Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM): Providing Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC) to every rural household i.e., Har Ghar Nal Se Jal by 2024.



There have been several factors that have posed a challenge to development:

- Land availability: There is a continuous tussle for land for agriculture, agro-based industries, and housing in the rural areas, which is a severe constraint to meet the housing demands of the rural population. This implies that the vision of 'Housing for All' will require acquisition/ supply of large land parcels on a regular basis.
- Inadequate financing: Inadequate access to formal sources of finance for the rural population has been an issue in the rural housing sector. Lack of proper documentation/ steady source of income for rural population has been a hindrance in securing formal finance.
- Legal constraints: There is a barrier for major players in real estate in tapping the vast land potential in rural areas reinforced by poor enforcement of laws against encroachment of public lands. There is an absence of clear titles to private lands causing an artificial scarcity of land in rural areas. Another major issue is the absence of large-scale digitisation of land records and easy access to such records for checking land-holding titles.
- Poor condition of rural road network: India has one of the largest and densest rural road networks around the world. However, 2.7 million kilometres of rural road network is in poor condition. At present, most of the rural roads are not all-weather roads and lack connectivity to remote areas.

Several reforms that are identified as imperative in the development of Rural infrastructure are as follows:

- Boosting rural affordable housing to ensure 'Housing for All by 2022': However, for the affordable housing initiative to succeed there needs to be efficient land usage and easy access to finance and innovative financing mechanism. For that the government is setting up an affordable housing fund in the National Housing Bank (NHB) that can be funded from the priority sector lending shortfall.
- Improving condition of roads under PMGSY: All roads to be covered by five-year maintenance contracts, to be entered into along with the construction contract with the same contractor in accordance with standard bidding document (SBD). Policy Framework for road maintenance by National Rural Infrastructure Development Agency in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO) to be implemented on a state level. Ensuring greater fund availability, acknowledging feedback from the Meri Sadak App and improving last-mile connectivity in rural areas.
- Improving coverage of basic civic amenities: By increasing accountability of GPs by decentralising service delivery model, improving the capacity of local government to undertake and implement quality infrastructure projects in the rural areas. And creating awareness among the rural population regarding user charges/ fees for quality services/ amenities.
- Improving supply of drinking water: By bringing structural changes in the regulatory environment, a shift is needed in the institutional framework of the Central Water Commission (CWC) and the Central Groundwater Board (CGWB) to make water management more holistic and multidisciplinary. Restructuring and unifying the CWC and CGWB to form a new National Water Commission (NWC). A model law on water resource regulatory mechanisms can also be drafted and implemented on state level.

### Conclusion

Rural infrastructure can give impetus to overall growth and special need of Atmanirbhar Bharat can be fulfilled by bringing 69% of Indian population together with good infrastructure connectivity of all sorts.

**15. What is the 'Blue Flag' certification of beaches? Explain. Why was it in news recently? Discuss.**

**Approach** - Students are expected to write about the 'blue flag' certification in first part and discuss its recent significance in Indian context.

**Introduction**

Blue Flag is awarded by the Denmark-based non-profit Foundation, Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE). The award is given to the safest, cleanest, and environment-friendly beaches of the world. Recently India became the first country in the world to receive the Blue Flag Certification for 8 beaches in a single attempt. This is a global recognition of India's conservation and sustainable development efforts

**Body**

Blue Flag Certification:

- The 'Blue Flag' is a certification that can be obtained by a beach, marina, or sustainable boating tourism operator, and serves as an eco-label.
- It is awarded annually to beaches and marinas in FEE member countries. Blue Flag beaches are considered the cleanest beaches of the world.
- The Blue Flag programme was started in France in 1985. It promotes sustainable development in freshwater and marine areas through four main criteria those are Water quality, Environmental management, Environmental education, Safety.
- Forty-seven countries currently participate in the program, and more than 4000 beaches, marinas, and boats have this certification worldwide.

Recently, India is the first country in "Asia-Pacific" region which has achieved this feat in just about 2 years' time whereas Japan, South Korea and UAE are the only other Asian nations who have been conferred with a couple of Blue Flag beaches, however, in a time frame of about 5 to 6 years.

However according to the new notification, few activities and facilities would be permitted in the CRZ in order to meet the requirements of Blue Flag certification.

- Minimum distance: 50 meters from the High Tide Line (HTL) area was under imposition for development on the beach as per the earlier CRZ guidelines which is now changed to 10 meters from the High Tide Line.
- Infrastructure development permitted on Beaches: India has permitted certain types of development on beaches focusing on the criteria of blue flag certification such as Portable toilet blocks, change rooms and shower panels, Solid waste management plant, Solar power plant, Purified drinking water facility, Beach access pathways, Outdoor play / fitness equipment, CCTV surveillance and control room, First aid station, environment information

boards and other signages, Other associated facilities or infrastructure, as per requirements of Blue Flag Certification.

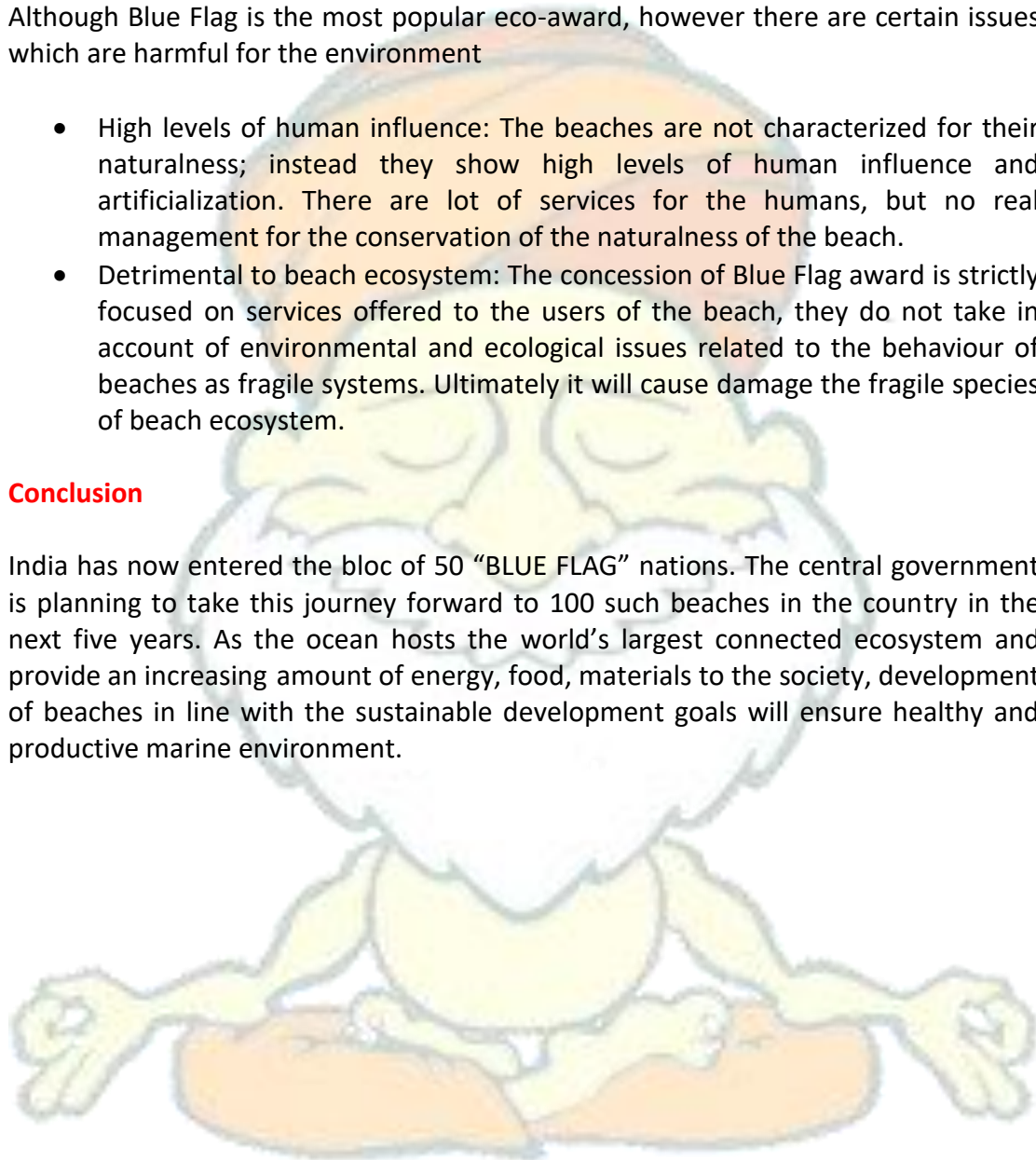
- New initiatives by Government: To take this project forward India has launched its own eco-label BEAMS (Beach Environment & Aesthetics Management Services) under ICZM (Integrated Coastal Zone Management) project which is an attempt to achieve sustainability.

Although Blue Flag is the most popular eco-award, however there are certain issues which are harmful for the environment

- High levels of human influence: The beaches are not characterized for their naturalness; instead they show high levels of human influence and artificialization. There are lot of services for the humans, but no real management for the conservation of the naturalness of the beach.
- Detrimental to beach ecosystem: The concession of Blue Flag award is strictly focused on services offered to the users of the beach, they do not take in account of environmental and ecological issues related to the behaviour of beaches as fragile systems. Ultimately it will cause damage the fragile species of beach ecosystem.

### Conclusion

India has now entered the bloc of 50 “BLUE FLAG” nations. The central government is planning to take this journey forward to 100 such beaches in the country in the next five years. As the ocean hosts the world’s largest connected ecosystem and provide an increasing amount of energy, food, materials to the society, development of beaches in line with the sustainable development goals will ensure healthy and productive marine environment.





**16. Comment on India's recent achievements on the front of border infrastructure expansion. What benefits would accrue with such expansion? Examine.**

**Approach** - It expects students to write about recent border infrastructure expansion and how it will be beneficial in border security management in coming days.

**Introduction**

India shares its border with seven different countries. Most of these borders are man-made and do not follow any natural barrier. India's vast coastline and island territories also make it open to attacks and infiltration. In addition, political instability, cultural radicalism and patronage of mafia and terrorism in the few neighbouring countries make border management an important aspect to guard India's sovereignty.

**Body**

India's recent achievements on the front of border infrastructure:

- **Bridge construction:** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated 44 major bridges at strategic locations along the western, northern and north-eastern borders. This included eight major bridges in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh each, along with 28 other bridges located across different border sectors.
- **Tunnel construction:** Atal Tunnel in Rohtang, which is the highest altitude tunnel in the world and has strategic significance. The tunnel was constructed using drill and blast NATM (New Austria Tunnelling Method) techniques. 10 new such tunnel construction has been planned.
- **Infrastructure Development along the LAC:** India is close to completing a major upgrade of border roads, including a strategic military-use road that connects an airfield at Daulat Beg Oldie in the northern tip of the western sector with the villages of Shyok and Darbuk toward the south.
- **Frontier highways:** Roads spread across Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim — BRO has reportedly completed 40 roads and 12 more roads will be completed by March 2021. For example Chardham project.
- **Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System:** The CIBMS is a robust and integrated system that is capable of addressing the gaps in the present system of border security by seamlessly integrating human resources, weapons, and high-tech surveillance equipment.
- **The Border Area Development Programme (BADP):** Under BADP, for projects in areas of States/UTs inhabited along the Indo-China border i.e. Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh, Sikkim and Uttarakhand. The fund is distributed to the Border States and Union Territories (UTs) depending on various criteria such as the length of the international border and population.

Benefits of border infrastructure projects:

- Bridges will facilitate faster movement of heavy civil and military traffic in the border areas, provide connectivity to the border population and aid in the faster deployment of troops when needed in sectors of strategic importance. For example project Sampark of BRO.
- DS-DBO road greatly facilitates the lateral movement of Indian forces along the western sector, reducing travel time by 40%.
- The tunnels are being built in areas where road traffic is disrupted every year for up to six months due to heavy snowfall during the winter months. The opening of the tunnels will enable the rapid movement of troops throughout the year, even in winter months.
- CIBMS has three components which are using a number of different devices for surveillance, efficient and dedicated communication network and data storage for a composite picture. Sensors like Thermal Imager, Unattended Ground Sensor (UGS), Fibre Optical Sensors, Radar, Sonar, satellite imagery are used in CIBMS.
- Under BADP the projects for developing strategically important villages and towns in border areas will be given priority. Construction of roads, bridges, primary schools, health infrastructure, playfields, irrigation works, etc. will be undertaken within 10 km of the border.

#### Way forward:

- Improving the functionality and efficiency of BRO: with Manageable Workload, Greater Financial Autonomy, Delinking Pay and Allowances, Higher Incentives and changes in the organisation structure in order to meet the deadlines.
- Leveraging technology: Integrated command and communication centres, scaling up of CIBMS, use of AI and moving a step closer to smart border management as recommended by Madhukar Gupta committee.
- Cross-border cooperation (CBC): The core principle of cross-border cooperation (CBC) is the information sharing and collaborative approach between neighbouring countries for border security threats like human trafficking arms smuggling, terrorist threats, etc.

#### Conclusion

Work on critical border infrastructure such as roads and bridges has gone up by nearly 75 per cent across seven states and union territories sharing borders with China and Pakistan in the last two years, defence ministry data has showed. The creation of infrastructure would help integrate these areas with the hinterland, create a positive perception of care by the country and encourage people to stay on in the border areas leading to safe and secure borders.

**17. Critically evaluate the impact of liberalisation in addressing the twin problem of poverty and unemployment in India.**

**Approach** - As the directive here is critically evaluate, it is necessary to arrive on the overall analysis of the pros and cons backed by evidence. In the first part of answer it is expected to show what were expected outcomes of liberalisation in addressing the twin problem of poverty and unemployment in India. In the next part you can show what positive impacts are and what the negative ones are. A constructive way forward will fetch you more marks.

**Introduction**

In the economic history of India major economic reforms occurred in 1991 when a new economic policy was announced. This policy focussed on three aspects i.e. liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation. Though the macro objective of these reforms was to dismantle the excessive regulatory framework, micro objectives were focussed at increasing growth rate of per capita income and achieving full employment there by reducing income inequality, reducing number of people living below poverty line.

**Body**

Liberalization refers to the process of making policies less constraining of economic activity and also reduction of tariff or removal of non-tariff barriers. Poverty and unemployment are inseparable twins as unemployment leads to lack of a regular income, which in turn leads to the inability of a person to be able to maintain the basic needs, such as having sufficient healthy foods, availing health care and having adequate shelter and lack of education. However, even it is possible to live in poverty even while employed. For instance, A low paid worker may suffer much the same hardships.

Positive impacts of liberalisation on Poverty and Unemployment:

- There are two conclusions on trends in poverty. The first one, shown in a World Bank study by Gaurav Datt and others, is that poverty declined by 1.36 percentage points per annum after 1991, compared to that of 0.44 percentage points per annum prior to 1991.
- The second conclusion is that in the post-reform period, poverty declined faster in the 2000s than in the 1990s. Around 138 million people were lifted above the poverty line during this period.
- The poverty of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes also declined faster in the 2000s. The Rangarajan committee report also showed faster reduction in poverty during 2009-10 to 2011-12.
- Higher economic growth, agriculture growth, rural non-farm employment, increase in real wages for rural labourers, employment in construction and programmes like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment

Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) contributed to higher poverty reduction in the 2000s compared to the 1990s.

- Unemployment rate is reduced: In 1991 unemployment rate was 4.3% but after adoption of new LPG policy more employment is generated because of globalization many new foreign companies came in India and due to liberalization many new entrepreneurs have started new companies because of an abolition of Industrial licensing / Permit Raj so, employment is generated, and due to which India's unemployment rate is reduced from 4.3% in 1991 to 3.6% in 2014.
- Strongest revolution of new century has been one of Information Technology, which started in last years of past century. This revolution was different because it made globalization even more obvious and stark. It made possible transfer of real time human labour across nations, without transfer humans themselves. There by it increased the employment rate in India.

Negative impacts of liberalisation on Poverty and Unemployment:

- Liberalisation benefits to those who have the skills and technology in the country. The higher growth rate achieved by an economy can be at the expense of declining incomes of people who may be rendered redundant. Hence, liberalisation has widened the gap between the rich and poor, rises inequalities and thereby increasing the number of poor in the country.
- In 1991, agriculture provided employment to 72 percent of the population and contributed 29.02 per cent of the gross domestic product. However, in 2018 the share of agriculture in the GDP went down drastically to 15% and employment to nearly 50%
- This has resulted in a lowering the per capita income of the farmers and increasing the rural indebtedness which in turn grappled more and more farmers in to poverty. Rising suicides of farmers in Maharashtra is one such example.
- As per the methodology of the Suresh Tendulkar Committee report, the population below the poverty line in India was 354 million (29.6% of the population) in 2009-2010 and was 269 million (21.9% of the population) in 2011–2012. Till 2014 unemployment rate came down to 3.6%. However, after 2014 due to jobless growth unemployment rate has increased to 6.1% in 2018.
- Former vice chairperson of NITI aayog, Arvind Panegariya also pointed out that Underemployment, and not unemployment is the key challenge facing India. He also argued that, it is not possible to grow at 7% and have no jobs growth. Most people are employed but earn low wages, especially in agriculture output per worker is one-fifth of that in industry.

Way forward to overcome the twin problem of poverty and unemployment:

- India needs to continue to follow the two-fold strategy of achieving high economic growth and direct measures through social protection programmes.

- The focus should also be on increase in urban growth and income as the share of urban poverty will rise with urbanization.
- It is necessary to focus here on the two important measures: creating productive employment and providing quality education for reduction in poverty and inequality.
- Employment focus is the major part of equity approach. Studies have shown that agricultural growth leads to reduction in poverty twice as that of non-agriculture. We need more diversified agriculture for raising the income of farmers.
- However, future employment has to be created in manufacturing and service. In this context, the Make in India initiative, focus on start-ups, Mudra, financial inclusion, etc., are steps in the right direction. Equally, service sector employment has to be promoted.
- Over time, the share of the organized sector has to be raised while simultaneously improving productivity in the unorganized sector.
- Efficient delivery systems of public services. Many reckon that poor governance is the biggest constraint in achieving the aspirations of a new generation and reduction in poverty, inequality and unemployment.

### Conclusion

Sustainable Development Goal 1, one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals established by the United Nations in 2015, calls for "no poverty". Though Liberalisation focused on creating employment and thereby reducing poverty, some of the issues still remain a challenge for the policymakers. There is a need of an effective anti-poverty programme at solving the unemployment problem through structural, institutional and technological reforms in the economic sectors for speeding up the pace of economic growth, and reduction in poverty. If the expected reforms are implemented in their letter and spirit we can realise true meaning of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikaas'.

**18. Discuss the recent measures taken to upgrade the storage and transportation infrastructure for agricultural produce. Also, comment on its backward and forward linkage potential.**

**Approach** - It expects students to write about the storage and transportation infrastructure development measures taken by government recently in first part, and comment about its forward and backward linkage potential in second part.

### **Introduction**

Agriculture is the primary source of livelihood for about 58% of India's population. India is a surplus producer in several agri commodities. However, the country's farmers do not get remunerative prices because of a lack of investment storage and transportation infrastructure. For a country where a large part of the population is dependent on agriculture for livelihood, it is essential to invest heavily in storage and warehouse facilities.

### **Body**

Recently through various schemes and stimulus fund government have focused on agri infrastructure development.

Recent measures taken to upgrade the storage and transportation infrastructure:

- **Transport and Marketing Assistance (TMA):** The Government of India came out with Transport and Marketing Assistance (TMA) scheme to provide financial assistance for transport and marketing of agriculture products in order to boost agriculture exports.
- **More warehouses will be developed:** Under Union Budget 2020-21, the Ministry of Finance announced that more warehouses that comply with the requirements of the Warehousing Development and Regulation Authority (WDRA) will be developed on a public-private partnership (PPP) basis at the block/ taluka level.
- **Mapping of Cold storage facility:** National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) will be undertaking the exercise of geotagging all cold storage facilities, which will help NABARD direct resources so as to expand capacities where there is a need.
- **Direct Procurement from Farmer:** As part of stimulus package, the government has announced a Rs 1 trillion fund for entrepreneurs to set up facilities to procure, store and market agricultural produce. Aggregators, cooperative societies and farm entrepreneurs for strengthening farm gate infrastructure and establishing post-harvest management infrastructure will use this proposed fund.
- **Operation Greens:** The government has announced that Operation Greens, a price fixation scheme that aims to ensure that farmers are given the right price for their produce, will be extended from tomatoes, onions and potatoes(TOP) to all fruits and vegetables. The scheme will include a 50 per cent subsidy on transportation from surplus to deficit markets. It will also

include a 50 per cent subsidy on storage, including cold storage. The project will be implemented on a pilot basis for six months and will later be extended further.

- **SAMPADA Scheme:** Government plans to triple the capacity of food processing sector in India from the current 10% of agriculture produce and has also committed Rs 6,000 crore (US\$ 936.38 billion) as investments for mega food parks in the country, as a part of the Scheme for Agro-Marine Processing and Development of Agro-Processing Clusters (SAMPADA).
- **Dairy Processing & Infrastructure Development Fund:** The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved a “Dairy Processing & Infrastructure Development Fund” (DIDF) with an outlay of Rs 11,184 crore during the period from 2018-19 to 2030-31 through which 95 Lakh milk producers will be benefited by covering 50,000 villages.
- **Animal husbandry infrastructure development:** Government announced the launch of animal husbandry infrastructure development fund of Rs 15,000 crore with an interest subsidy scheme to promote investment by private players and MSMEs in dairy, meat processing and animal feed plants.
- **Venture Capital fund By NABARD:** In May 2019, NABARD announced an investment of Rs 700 crore venture capital fund for equity investment in agriculture and rural-focused start-ups.
- **Digitalisation in Agriculture:** The Government of India is going to provide Rs 2,000 crore for computerization of Primary Agricultural Credit Society (PACS) to ensure cooperatives are benefitted through digital technology.
- **Pradhan MantriKrishiSinchaiYojana (PMKSY):** The Government of India launched the Pradhan MantriKrishiSinchaiYojana (PMKSY) with an investment of Rs 50,000 crore aimed at development of irrigation sources for providing a permanent solution from drought.
- **RashtriyaKrishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY):** In 2019–20, Rs 202.5 crore was allocated to the Rainfed Area Development, a sub-scheme under RashtriyaKrishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY).

Backward and forward production linkages always requires modern agriculture production and distribution system. Forward linkage potential:

- **Supermarkets can replace intermediaries:** Provision of quality chilling infrastructure can attract the supermarkets to procure from farmers directly, which will result in Reduction of intermediaries.
- **Adequate knowledge of Market through Digitalisation:** Lack of adequate operational knowledge of smartphones resulted in loss for regular updates on fair prices of crops (MSP), future crops and weather updates etc. Digitalisation in this sector bridging this gap.
- **Vital Role of Cold storage facility:** The demand for frozen goods is increasing by the day, leading to an expansion of the cold storage market. The cold storage sector in agriculture is opening various business opportunities. Fully integrated cold chain will include, both forward and backward linkage such as Pre-cooling, packaging, small cold storage facilities and in forward linkage,

Reefer vehicles, large cold-storage facilities, ripening chambers, waxing, and packaging from cold storage to consumer.

Backward linkage potential:

- Scientific approach farm processes: It has been reported that postharvest losses can be substantial, resulting in annual economic losses of at least Rs 1,00,000 crore. Investments in research labs for scientific gradation and quality assessment. Training centres for farmers to provide knowledge transfer on quality management, seed selection, crop forecasting etc. will avoid this loss.
- Development of infrastructure like road and transport: Good quality roads for farm produce to processing centres reduces time as well as preserve the quality of the product.
- Credit facility necessary for expansion: Easily available credit facility increases expansion ability of the farmers. Credit facilities also develop the farmers to enter into the farm allied businesses.

Going forward, the adoption of food safety and quality assurance mechanisms such as Total Quality Management (TQM), Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Good Hygienic Practices (GHP) by the food processing industry will offer several benefits.

### **Conclusion**

India is expected to achieve the ambitious goal of doubling farm income by 2022. The agriculture sector in India is expected to generate better momentum in the next few years due to increased investment in agricultural infrastructure. Furthermore, the growing use of genetically modified crops will likely improve the yield for Indian farmers.



**19. Why is regional imbalance a grave threat in the Indian context? Examine. Can the creation of infrastructure alone ensure inclusive growth and reduce the feeling of alienation? Critically comment.**

**Approach** – You need to examine the issue of regional imbalance in context of India and the threats arising out of it. Further in the 2<sup>nd</sup> part, you need to focus on critically commenting on creation of infrastructure as sole tool towards ensuring inclusive growth and reducing the feeling of alienation in people.

### Introduction

Regional disparities are an alarming issue in India, and it has been widening in spite of various policy initiatives by the government to develop backward areas. The fruit of high growth have not been distributed fairly across India's different regions and have given rise to the threat of regional inequality.

### Body

- Regional imbalance is the disparity in the economic and social development of two regions. Regional imbalances mean wide differences in per capita income, literacy rates, health and education services, levels of industrialization between different regions.
- Disparities in social and economic development, employment, and infrastructure amenities across the regions and within regions have been a major challenge to policy makers and economists. Consequently, regional imbalance is considered a grave threat in Indian context due to the following factors:
  1. **Inter - States and Intra State Agitations** - Uneven regional development or regional imbalances lead to several agitations with in a State or between the States. The erstwhile combined State of Andhra Pradesh can be sited as the best example of the consequences of intra - state regional imbalance in terms of development.
  2. **Migration** - Migration takes from backward areas to the developed areas in search livelihood. For example, migration from rural to urban. Because, urban areas will provide better quality of life and more job opportunities when compared to rural. This leads to tremendous pressure on urban areas in terms of planning and resources.
  3. **Social Unrest** - Differences in prosperity and development leads to friction between different sections of the society causing social unrest. For example Naxalism. Naxalites in India function in areas which have been neglected for long time for want of development and economic prosperity.
  4. **Housing, Water Problem** - Establishment of several industries at one place leads to shortage of houses as a result rental charges will increase abnormally. For example, Mumbai, New Delhi, Chennai and Hyderabad and over population leads to water crisis.

5. **Aggregation of the imbalance** - Once an area is prosperous, more investments pour-in neglecting the less developed regions. For examples, the rate of growth of the metropolitan cities like Mumbai, Delhi, etc. is higher compared to other metro cities of India.
6. **Under – Developed Infrastructure** - Rural and backward areas do not have 24 hours power, proper houses, safe drinking water, sanitation, hospitals, doctors, telephone and internet facilities

Here, the creation of infrastructure alone can ensure inclusive growth and reduce the feeling of alienation due to the following factors:

- Availability of adequate infrastructure especially the physical infrastructure facilities is the pre-condition for sustainable economic and social development. Non-availability or inadequate availability of infrastructure poses a serious threat to growth.
- The social infrastructure broadly includes health, education and sanitation. It is well recognised that the literacy of any region or area has a positive relation to the overall development. Regional disparity can also be observed from the gap in literacy level in different states in India.
- The physical infrastructure includes transport, communication, electricity etc. India suffers from inadequate availability of physical infrastructure, as measured by any accepted indicator. Not only is infrastructure inadequate and weak, it varies from interstate to intra state.

At the same time, for overcoming any problem, a balanced approach is necessary where tackling regional imbalance would require a host of other measures along with infrastructure development like:

- The most important factors driving growth come from the health, education, transport, agriculture, and energy sectors, which are used to construct composite infrastructure index.
- Efficient investment in all these sectors would provide the much-needed boost required for economic and human development, which would ultimately result in sustainable and satisfactory economic growth which is broad based.
- Investment in agriculture needs to be stepped up especially in the lagging regions. Since agricultural growth is found to be different in different regions, steps to equalise it will certainly reduce the regional imbalances.

### Conclusion

Regional imbalance is a threat to the goal of inclusive growth and reduction of poverty. Ultimately, the key to balanced regional development lies not merely in increasing resource flows to backward regions but in creating an enabling environment to attract more resources, using them properly and assuring a fair deal to investors and also ensuring the ideal path of 'economic growth with integrity'.

**20. Examine the factors that have led to India's lower tax to GDP ratio. What are its implications for the economy? Analyse.**

**Approach** - Students are expected to examine those factors, which led to India's lower tax to GDP ratio in first part, and analyse its implications on economy in second part.

**Introduction**

Tax revenue is income collected by governments through taxation. The tax-to-GDP ratio is used to measure how much a government controls its economic resources. The low ratio represents that the government won't be able to finance its expenditure and hence increases government's dependence on borrowings. Although India has improved its tax-to-GDP ratio in the last six years, it is still far lower than the average OECD ratio, which is 34 per cent.

**Body**

India despite seeing higher growth rates, has struggled to widen the tax base.

Factors that have led to India's lower tax to GDP ratio:

- Low per capita income keeps tax collections low: Low average incomes and a high poverty rate result in a very small portion of the labour force being eligible to pay personal income taxes. As per OECD report, income taxes accounted for a lower proportion around 16% of the general government's revenue.
- A large proportion of economic activity generated by SME: Although SMEs have enjoyed strong profitability growth over the past decade, the government has not captured their earnings in tax revenues due to a variety of exemptions and compliance issues.
- Tax Exemptions to Start-ups: Start-ups with turnover up to Rs. 25 crores are allowed deduction of 100% of its profits for three consecutive assessment years. Indeed, it boost the economic activity and entrepreneurship, a large proportion of income government missed to capture here.
- Tax exemptions on agriculture related activity: The incomes of the small and marginal farmers are far below the minimum threshold limit of personal income taxation. Wealthy farmers are reportedly misusing this benefit to evade taxes. The proportion of agricultural households holding 4-10 hectares of land is just 3.7% and 0.4% over 10 hectares. Just by taxing the incomes of the top 4.1% of agricultural households, at an average of 30%, as much as Rs 25,000 crore could be collected as agricultural tax.
- Low service tax net: Although it has been progressively expanded to include a greater number of services each year, and service tax revenue has grown the fastest of all revenue sources. Yet, service taxes constitute merely 5 per cent

of total general government revenues, although they comprise about 60 per cent of GDP.

- Tax exemptions to SEZ: According to the sunset clause, there is 100 per cent income tax exemption on export income for SEZ units for the first five years, 50 per cent for next five years and 50 per cent of the ploughed back export profit for subsequent five years.
- Drop in corporate tax revenue: Surprise cut in corporate tax rate last year aimed at wooing manufacturers and boosting investment in Asia's third-biggest economy is another key reason behind the sluggish tax collections.

Lower tax-to-GDP ratio constrains the government to spend on infrastructure and puts pressure on the government to meet its fiscal deficit targets. Implications of lower tax to GDP ratio on economy:

- It lowers the GDP: One of the reasons for lower tax to GDP is due to pervasive structure of exemptions, which indirectly affects the GDP growth, as it is a vicious cycle that means low tax produces less revenue resources with the state. It results in less public investment and lower job opportunities, thus lower economic progress.
- Lesser spending on health and education also disturbs Socio-Economical structure: Lower revenue means lesser spending on important social sectors such as Health and Education, which are key sectors for developing country. As it diminishes the welfare measures provided by the state, ultimately it affects the social structure and develop further inequality.
- Affects government policy: It creates political incentives for successive governments to ignore some eligible sections of society for vote-bank politics, rather than building an effective tax system that will spur economic growth.
- High Government Borrowing: It also increases government borrowing. To stimulate the economic activity in the country government is forced to borrow from, within and outside the country and thus it becomes difficult to manage fiscal deficits.
- Low spending on national security: Even though the actual amount of defence expenditure is seen to be increased in each budget, the defence expenditure percentage to GDP is reduced almost every year since last decade.
- Burden on few sectors: Some economists argue that as high productive sectors are taxed it is incentivizing the low productivity sectors not to come into formal tax system.
- Parallel economy: Low taxation means most of the money in economy goes unaccounted and hence will encourage parallel economy.

Although there are numerous implications of Low ratio, India's number does not look that bad given the significant difference in per capita income of the developed country. Therefore, it does have some positive implications. Positive implications of low tax to GDP ratio:

- Tax cuts increases demand: Tax cut also stimulate the economic activity by increasing workers' take-home pay. Tax cuts can also boost business demand by increasing firms' after-tax cash flow, which can be used to pay dividends and expand activity, and by making hiring and investing more attractive.
- Low tax Attracts Investment: The government always hopes that, lower tax rates will attract more investments into the country and help revive the domestic manufacturing sector, which has seen lacklustre growth. So there is constant pressure on governments across the world to offer the lowest tax rates in order to attract investors.
- OECD, group of developed nations: Out of 36 member countries of OECD, most of them from the developed world. Such high average tax-GDP ratio in OECD could be attributed to some of the European countries like France, Denmark etc. hence its generalised numbers are not exactly relevant to Indian economy.

### Conclusion

Continues efforts government putting in the form of various schemes to generate more tax and to increase revenue collection. To avoid tax disputes government announced various schemes like “vivad se vishwas” scheme and “sabakavishwas” scheme. The Central Government also introduced the “Faceless Assessment Scheme” to provide greater transparency, efficiency and accountability in Income Tax assessments. Rationalisation of GST and moving towards a two-rate structure can also help in increasing compliance and putting an end to tax evasion. While measures to improve tax compliance and widen the tax base will yield higher tax revenue, the importance of higher economic growth cannot be ignored.

**21. How sustainable is the vision of export led economic growth in the current changing global order? Critically examine.**

**Approach** - It expects student to write about - in first part write about positive aspects of export led economic growth - in second part mention why it is not sustainable for economy - in third part write way forward/suggestions.

**Introduction**

Export led growth is where a significant part of the expansion of real GDP, jobs and per capita incomes flows from the successful exporting of goods and services from one country to another. As the global supply chains look to diversify their sources, amid Covid-19 pandemic, India hopes to become one of the replacements for China. Moreover, the idea of turning the Indian economy into an export-led economy is not new.

**Body**

Export-led growth sustainable due to:

- Exports of goods and services are an injection into the circular flow of income leading to a rise in aggregate demand and an expansion of output. This helps to raise per capita incomes and reduce extreme poverty especially in developing/emerging economies.
- Growing export sales provide revenues and profits for businesses which can then feed through to an increase in capital investment spending through the accelerator effect. Higher investment increases a country's productive capacity which then increases the potential for exports.
- Many industries help facilitate trade such as trade insurance, logistics and port facilities. Countries with fast-growing export sectors are likely to see increased investment and employment in these related industries. A good example is the importance of trade to countries such as the Netherlands (including the port of Rotterdam), and Singapore and Hong Kong both of which have developed in globally-scaled hubs for trade.
- India's big, unexploited opportunities are in unskilled labour exports. India is vastly under-exporting relative to its labour force. Because China's wages are rising as it has become richer, it has vacated about \$140 billion in exports in unskilled-labour intensive sectors. Post-COVID, the move of investors away from China will probably accelerate to hedge against supply chain disruptions.
- As India contemplates atmanirbharta, two deeper advantages of export orientation are always worth remembering. 1) Foreign demand will always be bigger than domestic demand for any country. 2) If domestic producers are competitive internationally, they will be competitive domestically and domestic consumers and firms will also benefit.

However, there are potential risks and drawbacks from export-led growth:

- Focusing on exporting might lead to over-dependence on the economic cycles of trade partner countries and vulnerability to external economic and political shocks.
- Running persistent trade surpluses might incite a protectionist response from other nations who feel that the benefits of trade have been unequally skewed in favour of exporting countries. Huge trade imbalances remain a big concern in the global economic system.
- Production capacity allocated to supply goods and services for export cannot be put to use meeting domestic needs and wants. There might be a consequent dip in domestic living standards unless the country is also prepared to import goods and services using the revenue generated from exporting.
- Rapid export-led growth might lead to demand pull inflation and higher interest rates. High relative inflation might then have the effect of making export industries less competitive in overseas markets and domestic producers less price competitive against imports.
- Export-led growth might be unsustainable if it contributes extraction of natural resources beyond what is required for long term balanced growth to be maintained. Consider for example the impact of deforestation and over-fishing and degradation of land by industrial-scale farming.

#### Way Forward:

- **Building Domestic Demand:** No matter how bleak the global demand remains in the present times, a robust industrial architecture is crucial for a country to become self-sufficient. Thus, there is a need to build strong domestic demand, to sustain industrial activity in India.
- **Focus on Knowledge Power:** As the population in the majority of the developed world is ageing, India can leverage its demographic dividend and export its human resource to the world. For this, India needs to invest in its education, research & innovation capabilities and turn into a Knowledge superpower.
- **Addressing Structural Issues:** All countries that promoted export-led growth invested heavily in human capital and ensured very good infrastructure with ports, roads, airports and railways. Thus, India needs to: Invest in its labour force and provide them with regular, affordable food supply and housing. Build a well- functioning infrastructure and take various trade facilitation measures like easier customs clearances, less paperwork.
- **Economic Decentralisation:** There is also the need for economic planning to be devolved lower and lower down all levels of government so that people are empowered to take up an economic activity that suits them and develop the resilience needed to respond to new opportunities and threats.
- **Providing Easy Credit:** Providing easy credit remains a critical aspect of mobilising investment. Hence, India also needs cleaning up of the Non-Performing Assets. In this context, the privatisation of banks will be a step in the right direction.

#### Conclusion

The idea of the export-led economy has been very successful for many East-Asian countries (also called East-Asian Miracle). In the 1960s and 70s, these countries transformed their economies rapidly from developing countries to become middle-income countries through high export. However, the viability of a new export-based economy, that India aspires to be, depends on policy restructuring, reaping demographic dividend and leveraging its domestic market.





**22. Why is India grappling with the challenge of unemployment? Discuss. Examine the sectors that have high potential for creating jobs for the youth.**

**Approach** - As the question has two directives it is better to answer straightforwardly. The core of the question lies in unemployment and creating jobs for the youth. Hence, one can start by introducing some facts or stats regarding unemployment besides quoting any report regarding unemployment. In main body part, it is necessary to divide the question in two parts. For the first half of the answer, candidate needs to write the reasons due to which India is grappling with the challenge of unemployment. As a bridging gap between first half and second half, candidate may show which sectors have high potential for creating jobs for youth. In the second half, directive is examine, here a candidate is expected to investigate and establish the key facts and issues related to those specific sectors which have the high potential for creating jobs for the youth in India. For value addition, one can show a graph regarding unemployment, mentioning sector specific unemployment in table format, one can also mention current government schemes/programmes which works with objective of creating employment.

**Introduction**

Unemployment occurs when a person who is actively searching for employment is unable to find work. As per the report of Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMEI), unemployment rate in India fell to 7% in September 2020 from 3.37% of July 2017. As unemployment indicates the health of the economy and has subsequent critical domino effects on economy, it becomes essential to look at the reasons due to which India is grappling with the challenge of unemployment.

**Body**

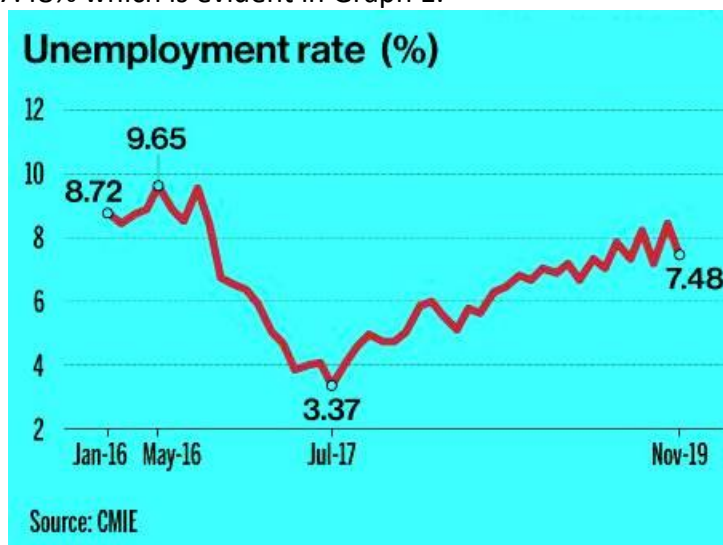
Reasons for grappling challenge of unemployment in India:

- Most of the decline in employment has happened due to the fall in the number of workers in agriculture and a sharp fall in the absolute number of female workers.
- Roughly 37 million workers left agriculture in the last six years. During the same time, 25 million women workers were out of the workforce. However, the low productivity in the agriculture sector plus the lack of alternative opportunities for agricultural workers makes transition among the three sectors difficult.
- Surprising trend is of declining women workers, which has absolutely no parallel in any developing or developed country of similar per capita income. In most East Asian countries, the period of rapid growth was also accompanied by a rising number of women workers.
- Along with the fact that the number of people aged 25-64 years increased by around 47 million during the six-year period, it also means that the economy should have created at least 83 million jobs between 2012 and 2018 to

accommodate those who have entered the labour force and those forced out of agriculture.

- The unemployment in India is not due to single reason, but it is due to multitude of reasons. For instance, disguised unemployment, structural unemployment, seasonal unemployment, vulnerable unemployment, technological unemployment, cyclical unemployment, and cyclical unemployment. Hence, it becomes a multi-fold crisis for India as economy is interdependent.
- Inadequate skills: Lack of vocational skills, skill gap of the working population posed one of the biggest sector specific challenge of unemployment. For instance, According to the Developer Skills report of an online learning platform, there is a strong mismatch between the frameworks/ skills required by the corporate world and the ones being learned by students. Close to 80% of the engineers blamed a lack of focus and hands-on coding experience for this situation.
- In the past few years, India's GDP grew at about 7-8%, but growth does not translated into creating more employment opportunities for the labour force of the country. For instance, the number of salaried jobs contracted by 1.8% in 2019-20. So, even before Covid kicked in, we were struggling to create salaried jobs.
- Legal complexities, inadequate state support, low infrastructural, financial and market linkages to small businesses making such enterprises unviable with cost and compliance overruns. For instance, despite the fact that attempt were made to lure foreign investors to set up their manufacturing plants in India under Make in India initiative. Very less investors are attracted to set up their manufacturing plants in India, just like Apple manufacturing plant set up issue.
- Also figures can be cited that in 2014, the share of manufacturing in India's GDP was 15%, however, in 2019 it contracted by 1% reaching to 14%.
- Inadequate growth of infrastructure and low investments in the manufacturing sector, hence restricting the employment potential of the secondary sector. For instance, despite being an emerging field in the economy, electric vehicles market is failing to create more job opportunities in 2nd and 3rd tier cities.
- The huge workforce of the country is associated with the informal sector because of a lack of required education or skills, and this data is not captured in employment statistics.
- The core cause of structural unemployment lies in the education we provide and how we provide it. For instance, the system of rote learning and targeting marks as an indicator of merit led to loss of true potential of child's intellect, like Indian middle class aspiration of making their son engineer and daughter.
- Gender based selection of jobs is also one of the factors which is affecting the job availability. For instance, a day time job is considered as safe and secure job for woman. Which contradicts job choices for woman.

- As per CMEI report, even before Covid-19, job opportunities were low for Indian youth. For instance, in November 2019, Unemployment rate in India fell to 7.48% which is evident in Graph 1.



Graph 1: Unemployment Rate in India (November 2019)

Unemployment affects the economy of the country as the workforce that could have been gainfully employed to generate resources actually gets dependent on the remaining working population, thus escalating socio-economic costs for the state. For instance, a 1% increase in unemployment reduces the GDP by 2%. Hence, creation of job opportunities becomes of critical importance. Meanwhile, manufacturing sector in the economy holds the key to create more jobs in India due to its forward and backward linkages.

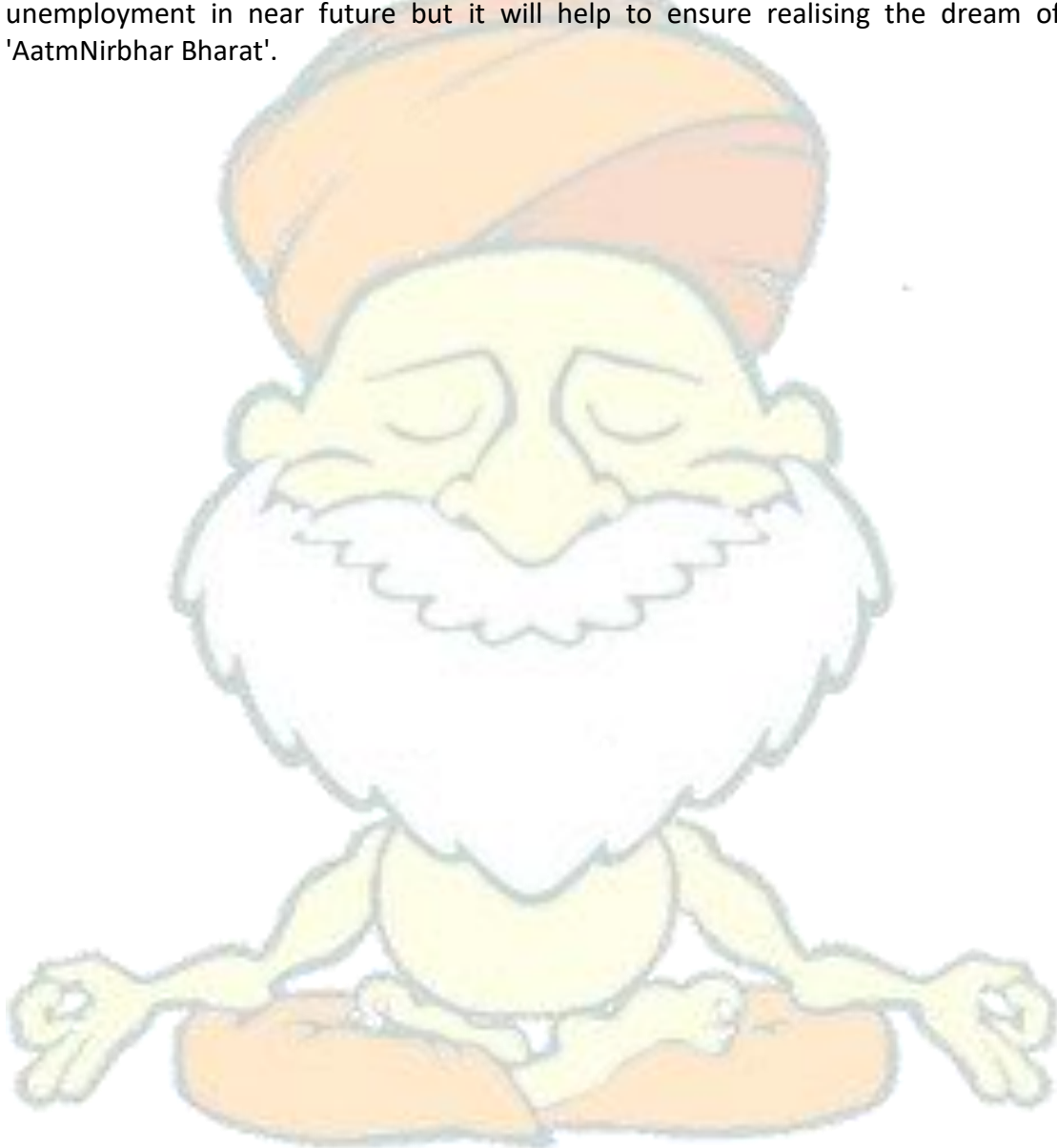
- There are number of labour intensive manufacturing sectors in India such as food processing, leather and footwear, wood manufacturers and furniture, textiles and apparel and garments. Special packages, individually designed for each industry are needed to create jobs.
- The share of manufacturing in the Indian economy has varied between 14.7% of gross domestic product (GDP) and 16.7% of the GDP, between FY05 and FY20.
- Manufacturing activity leads to the creation of large employment in several service sector areas for instance, consider industry of readymade garments where backward linkages will provide job opportunities for youth in the rural areas for raw materials production, transport and for the youth in urban area with subsequent industrial and market development.
- Of course, just manufacturing cannot create enough jobs for the 10-12 million individuals who enter the workforce every year in India. In stark contrast, between 2004-05 and 2019-20, the share of services in the economy has gradually increased from 43.5% of the GDP to 50.4%.
- As per the study conducted by Climate Policy Initiative and Indian School of Business, India's renewable energy sector, including the solar and wind power generation segments, could create new job opportunities between 2 million and 4.5 million over the next 25 years.

- Besides tourism industry has more potential to generate more jobs. For instance, tourism Council calculated that tourism generated 8.31 lakh crore (US\$120 billion) or 6.3% of the nation's GDP in 2015 and supported 37.315 million jobs, 8.7% of its total employment. The sector is predicted to grow at an average annual rate of 7.5%.
- Credit facilities have not been penetrated in to rural areas. The current grants to Microcredit institutes and small scale banks holds the key potential to create more jobs. For instance, network of Garmeen bank in Bangladesh.
- It not only holds the potential to generate jobs in banking sector, but also in other sectors too such as a loan granted to one organisation will create other jobs due to its forward and backward linkages.
- By improving the infrastructure and building post-harvest storage & processing units, and improving transportation facilities to distribute and sell the produce can create a large number of employment opportunities. Raising farmers' income is very important to boost the agricultural sector. For that, Minimum Support Price should be increased. Taking steps to boost Agri exports can also create number of jobs.
- Approximately 51% of MSMEs are in rural India. Strengthening them and providing the necessary tools & technologies to MSMEs can create multiple job opportunities.
- Also new fields like Artificial intelligence and Machine Learning hold the potential to create more jobs. According to accountancy firm PwC, over 7 million jobs will be displaced by AI between 2017 and 2037. However, it will also lead to the generation of 7.2 million jobs, which is a net gain of 200,000 jobs in India.
- For sector specific job creation opportunities, Government of India launched following schemes to ensure creation of job opportunities. For instance, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act launched in 2005 providing the right to work to people. An employment scheme of MGNREGA aimed to provide social security by guaranteeing a minimum of 100 days paid work per year to all the families whose adult members opt for unskilled labour-intensive work. However, recently Azim Premji Foundation suggested increasing MGNREGA workdays from 100 to 200 to compensate for the lack of employment opportunities in rural areas.
- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana was launched in 2015. The objective of PMKVY was to enable the youth of the country to take up industry-relevant skill training in order to acquire a secured better livelihood.
- The government launched the Start-Up India Scheme in 2016. The aim of Startup India programmes was to develop an ecosystem that nurtures and promotes entrepreneurship across the nation. Besides, Stand Up India Scheme also launched in 2016 aimed to facilitate bank loans to women and SC/ST borrowers between Rs 10 lakh and Rs. 1 crore for setting up a greenfield enterprise.
- National Skill Development Mission was set up in November 2014 to drive the 'Skill India' agenda in a 'Mission Mode' in order to converge the existing

skill training initiatives and combine scale and quality of skilling efforts, with speed.

### **Conclusion**

India has the opportunity to build a productive and inclusive workforce in the near future due to its advantage of demographic dividend. However, necessary cautions have to be addressed. It will not only help to create more jobs and reduction of unemployment in near future but it will help to ensure realising the dream of 'AatmNirbhar Bharat'.



**23. The continuance of retrospective amendments to taxation laws hurts investor sentiments and is detrimental to India's economic aspirations. Do you agree? Substantiate your views.**

**Approach** – You need to enumerate various recent retrospective amendments to taxation laws and show its effect on investor sentiments as well as India's economic aspirations in both positive and negative forms while also mentioning the side you agree with. Proper substantiation of points is necessary.

### Introduction

India, one of the fastest growing economies of the world with an exemplary rate of GDP, has tax as the main source of Government revenue, which contributes approximately 18% revenue to the GDP, and has always been a very sensitive issue taking into consideration the economic condition of population at large which have led to issues like retrospective amendments to taxations laws.

### Body

- Retrospective taxation allows a country to pass a rule on taxing certain products, items or services and deals and charge companies from a time behind the date on which the law is passed.

Consequently, the retrospective amendments to taxation laws can be seen to have the following benefits:

1. From the ancient time, retrospective law or ex post facto law has been a part of standard jurisprudence. It is neither an Indian creation, nor it is being used exclusively in India.
2. Some retrospective amendments are always required either to prevent the misuse of law or to harmonize various decisions of honourable courts with the statutes.
3. Further, many experts opine that such amendments are sometimes required to correct the "aberrations" that had come in by decisions of the quasi-judicial bodies, which went against the legislative intent.
4. Many consider this instrument as a platform of a great instrument to finance State welfare and achieve the much desired dream of egalitarianism.
5. Apart from India, many countries including the US, the UK, the Netherlands, Canada, Belgium, Australia and Italy have retrospectively taxed companies, which had taken the benefit of loopholes in the previous law.

At the same time, continuance of retrospective amendments to taxation laws can be seen as hurting investor sentiments and detrimental to India's economic aspirations due to the following points:

1. Introducing a retrospective taxation amendment into a present taxation system is hard on both ends i.e. for the government to implement and for the people to accept. The increased money flow towards the government results

in lack of credit in the hands of the public and they are left helpless with a heavy tax burden on their heads.

2. A company's business decisions are based upon the tax situation that exists today. It is very difficult to organize its activities today based on a future law that will be made applicable from today. An ideal tax system should be predictable certain and stable. Hence retrospective implementation is considered a bad move.
3. Hurts Investor Confidence: The amendments are criticised by investors globally, who said the change in law was "perverse" in nature. This impacts the market sentiment and the flow of foreign funds to India.
4. Hurts Companies: While governments often use a retrospective amendment to taxation laws to "clarify" existing laws, it ends up hurting companies that had knowingly or unknowingly interpreted the tax rules differently.
5. As a retrospective amendment affects ongoing contracts too, it is very difficult for the contracting parties to accommodate a new levy against their private interest agreeable to both ends at once. In addition to domestic issues, international transactions also suffer a heavy blow and will certainly affect the foreign investment and faith, triggering financial crunches.
6. The legislature in recent times has perverted its power to enact retrospective changes in taxing statutes. One major instance would be of the Finance Act, 2009, which exemplifies several retrospective alterations in the Income Tax Act. For example – the Vodafone case.

#### Way Forward -

- Reducing scope of litigation by signing Advance-pricing Agreements (APA's) to avoid Transfer pricing disputes.
- Need to Bring More Clarity on Tax laws: India has already rolled out Anti-tax avoidance regulations i.e. the General Anti-Avoidance Rules (GAAR) from assessment year 2018-19.
- Indian Finance Code for simplification of taxation laws in India. In this context there is a need to implement recommendations of the Financial Sector Legislative Reforms Commission.
- Implementing Shome Committee recommendations: which recommended that any taxation involving indirect transfer of assets located in India should be prospective and not retrospective.

#### Conclusion

It can thus be concluded that retrospective application of tax law should occur in exceptional or rarest of rare cases, and with particular objectives. Moreover, retrospective application of a tax law should occur only after exhaustive and transparent consultations with stakeholders who would be affected which would be help in improving India's ease of doing business and overall business environment.

**24. Explain the phenomenon of jobless growth in the Indian context. Why does it occur? Is there a way to address it? Discuss.**

**Approach** - It is straightforward question, it expects student to give explanation about jobless growth in India context, reason behind it and in end mention measures to address it.

### **Introduction**

The World Bank, in its publication, "South Asia Economic Focus, Spring: Jobless Growth?", says that over the long-term, India has been creating 7,50,000 new jobs for everyone per cent rise in gross domestic product (GDP), at an average of 7% growth, India should be creating at least 5.25 million jobs, if not more.

### **Body**

Jobless growth in India:

- In a jobless growth economy, unemployment remains stubbornly high even as the economy grows. This tends to happen when a relatively large number of people have lost their jobs, and the ensuing recovery is insufficient to absorb the unemployed, under-employed, and those first entering the workforce.
- During the last decade (2001-11), the growth rate of the labour force (2.23 per cent) was significantly higher than the growth rate of employment (1.4 per cent), which itself was several-fold less than the growth rate of the economy. According to Census 2011, the average growth rate of the economy was 7.7 per cent per annum, when it was only 1.8 per cent for employment.
- 66th round of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) data on employment in 2011 revealed that between 2004-05 and 2009-10, only 1 million jobs were added per year; in a period when the economy averaged a record 8.43% growth annually.
- An Indian Labour Bureau survey of 2015 showed that 2,000 companies in eight sampled industries generated all of one lakh jobs, a fall from the four lakh generated in 2014, even though growth in 2014 was lower than in 2015.
- A HDFC Bank report on India's tapering jobs growth says that "employment elasticity" in the economy is now close to zero – for every one-point rise in GDP, jobs grow only 0.15. Fifteen years ago, it was 0.39

Reasons behind the Jobless growth

- In India, growth is attributed to service sector, whereby both employment and wages have seen a rise. But as figures say, the biggest employing sector in India is the Agriculture sector, employing 45% of the population but contributing 15% to the GDP, whereas Service sector is the biggest contributor to the GDP but employs less than 30%. IT and Financial services are drivers of service sector growth in last 2 decades however both of these sector are not employment intensive. Thus contributing to jobless growth in India.
- Labour –intensive manufacturing sector did not become the engine of growth in India. In fact, it was the knowledge-intensive services sector which along



with some segments of capital intensive manufacturing was the engines of growth in India. But these sectors by their nature were not employment-intensive.

- Stagnation in manufacturing output and employment and contraction of labour-intensive segment of the formal manufacturing sector.
- Therefore, the nature of the trade regime in India is still biased towards capital-intensive manufacturing.
- The nature of Indian manufacturing is not employment-friendly. Most of them are automated and any employment is highly skilled. Thus they have contributed to growth, but not necessarily to employment.
- The labour intensity of MSME is four times higher than that of large firms. - but they are not treated well in India they have poor access to credit and they are plagued by many serious problems which has limited their growth potential.
- Impediments to entrepreneurial growth in small firms (such as high costs of formalisation) along with a long history of small scale reservation policy which has prohibited the entry of large scale units in labour intensive industries.
- The tax incentives, subsidies, depreciation allowance all are solely linked to the amount invested and not to the number of jobs created.
- Sluggish process in education and skill levels of workers.

However, following measures can be taken to address problem of Jobless growth:

- Improving the labour market information system where emerging demand for skills are spotted quickly and the necessary training and certifications for the same are created.
- Quick improvements in public-private partnership in capturing demand for skills and following through with quick investments in skill-building to match demand with supply.
- Jobs and skills planning should be decentralized and it has to be done at state and district levels, where there is granular information on education, skills and job options.
- Implementing a new model of manufacturing which is high-skilled, and where high-end cottage manufacturing can create employment at the small scale level.
- If urbanization is good and well planned, then job growth will be positive. Government should concentrate on the development of towns and narrow areas and service it with good infrastructure to generate employment alongside development.
- If government starts spending on public goods (schools, hospitals, dams, roads etc.) instead of spending on freebies (deep subsidies on food, farm loan waivers etc.) the capacity of government to create employment increases.

### Conclusion

India needs a new strategy to counter the phenomena of jobless growth. This requires manufacturing sector to play a dominant role. "MAKE IN INDIA" initiative a great step forward which will boost the manufacturing. Complementary schemes like Skill India, Start-up India etc. can enhance the skillsets and employment generation.

**25. Do you think the inability of the Indian subcontinent to forge long lasting Economic alliances, unlike its western and eastern counterparts, has hurt it badly? Critically examine.**

**Approach** - It expects student to write about - in first part write about how inability of the Indian subcontinent to forge long lasting economic alliances hurt it badly - while in second part write about how it doesn't hurt - in third part write way forward.

**Introduction**

Despite geographical proximity and the existence of bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements (FTAs), South Asia is one of the least economically integrated regions in the world. Owing to protectionist policies, high logistics cost, lack of political will and a broader trust deficit, intra-regional trade in South Asia remains well below its potential at 5% of the region's global trade.

**Body**

Impact of least economic integration:

- On east side ASEAN and on west Gulf cooperation council and European Union helped member countries to achieve rapid economic growth.
- India achieve high growth rate but external trade potential not harnessed to its capacity majorly due to less economic integration in neighbourhood.
- Countries like Sri-lanka, Maldives, Nepal became too dependent on external debt for their development created debt-crisis and interference from big power like China.
- Failure of SAARC and spoiler role of Pakistan could not generate economic alliance which reduced growth pace in Nepal and Bangladesh.
- Till recently India's north-east remained underdeveloped due to lack of geographic connectivity which was possible through Bangladesh even before. Eg: Chittagong port, Kolkata-Pabna-Agartala train etc.
- India and other South Asian nations, collectively forecast to grow by 7.3% in 2017, can integrate their dynamic economies into the rest of Asia.
- Removing obstacles to trade and investment between South Asia, Southeast Asia and other parts of Asia is the key to erase extreme poverty in the region.
- If South Asia and Southeast Asia each cut non-tariff barriers by 50% and trade costs by 15%, will lead to gains of 8.9% of GDP in South Asia and 6.4% of GDP in Southeast Asia.
- Sub-regions of Asia have their respective weaknesses. So the Asia's growth spurt can be achieved from integrating these regions.

However, despite of lack of economic alliance:

- India and Bangladesh achieved high GDP growth rates.
- India-Srilanka free trade agreement increased trade volume between two countries.
- India-Bhutan share special relationship and with Maldives also.

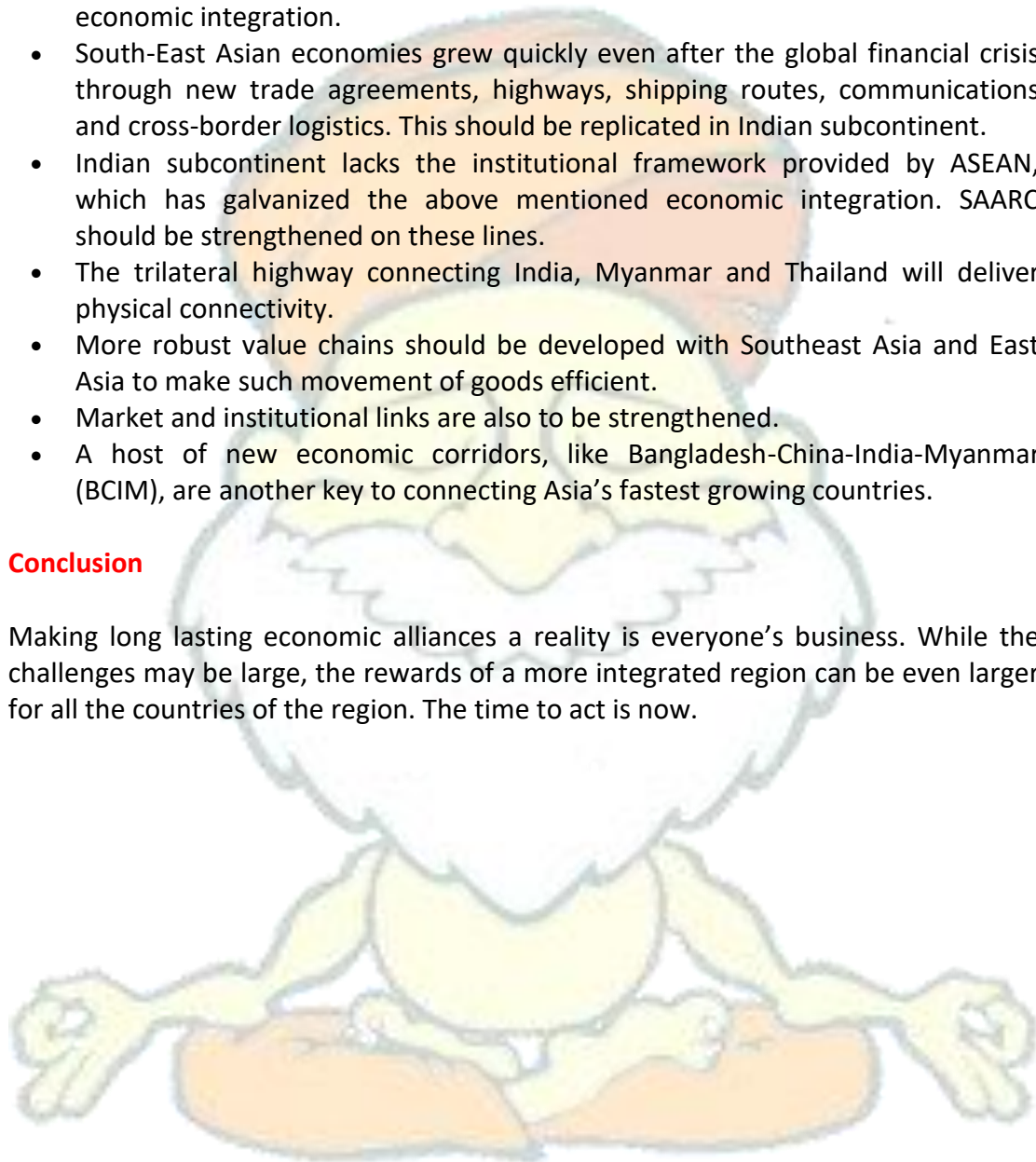
- India's initiatives of 'non-reciprocity' in neighbourhood, 'Neighbourhood first' policy increased economic alliance.

Way forward:

- As always, the problems are not economic but political and geopolitical.
- The drive for regional integration can only come from India.
- Political volatility in the other countries has further dimmed the prospects of economic integration.
- South-East Asian economies grew quickly even after the global financial crisis through new trade agreements, highways, shipping routes, communications and cross-border logistics. This should be replicated in Indian subcontinent.
- Indian subcontinent lacks the institutional framework provided by ASEAN, which has galvanized the above mentioned economic integration. SAARC should be strengthened on these lines.
- The trilateral highway connecting India, Myanmar and Thailand will deliver physical connectivity.
- More robust value chains should be developed with Southeast Asia and East Asia to make such movement of goods efficient.
- Market and institutional links are also to be strengthened.
- A host of new economic corridors, like Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM), are another key to connecting Asia's fastest growing countries.

### Conclusion

Making long lasting economic alliances a reality is everyone's business. While the challenges may be large, the rewards of a more integrated region can be even larger for all the countries of the region. The time to act is now.



**26. Examine the recent improvements introduced to the Integrated Child Development Services and Mid-Day Meal schemes.**

**Approach** - Student are expected to write about the recent improvements introduced to the Integrated Child Development Services and Mid-Day Meal scheme in first part and examine its implications in the second part.

**Introduction**

Paediatric malnutrition has always been a matter of national concern. Under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which India is a party, India has committed to yielding "adequate nutritious food" for children. The formulation of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme is one of the most prestigious and premier national human resource development programs for children under 6 years of age and their mothers. To follow it for further age group GOI introduced Mid-day Meal Scheme (MDM), which supplies free lunch on working days for children in primary and upper primary classes.

**Body**

Recent improvements in Mid-day meal scheme:

- Inclusion of Pre- primary class (Bal Vatika) children under MDM: MDM has been proven to attract children from disadvantaged sections (especially girls, Dalits and Adivasis) to school. The revised National Education policy has proposed that prior to the age of 5 every child will move to a "preparatory class" or "balavatika". The mid-day meal programme shall be extended to the preparatory Classes in primary schools to avoiding classroom hunger and Reducing malnutrition.
- Inclusion of simple and energetic breakfast under MDM: Children are unable to learn optimally when they are undernourished or unwell. Hence, the nutrition and health of children will be addressed, through healthy meals. New National Education Policy (NEP) has noted that morning hours after a nutritious breakfast can be particularly productive for the study of cognitively more demanding subjects and hence recommended expansion of the mid-day meal scheme to include provisions for breakfast in schools. In locations where hot meals are not possible, a simple but nutritious meal-- groundnuts or chana mixed with jaggery and local fruits may be provided.

Recent improvements in Integrated Child Development Services:

- Digitisation of Anganwadi Centres: The Ministry of WCD has conceptualized a digital platform, " Poshan Tracker", which will be an overarching system, providing facilities, services and interlinkages, and thereby also promote real time data with analytics.
- Non-formal Pre-School Education in Anganwadi Centres: Children (3-6 years) are provided non-formal Pre-School Education service in all AWCs. The child beneficiaries under the Anganwadi Services Scheme are also provided

Supplementary Nutrition as per the guidelines of the Scheme. Monthly Village Health and Sanitation Day and Community Based Events are organised to improve status of nutrition of children.

- Poshan Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission): Poshan Abhiyaan targets to reduce the level of stunting, under-nutrition, anemia and low birth weight babies by reducing mal-nutrition/under nutrition, anemia among young children as also, focus on adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers.
- Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana: Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) scheme provides cash incentive amounting to Rs.5,000/- in three instalments directly to the Bank/Post Office Account of Pregnant Women and Lactating Mother in DBT Mode during pregnancy and lactation in response to individual fulfilling specific conditions. The eligible beneficiary also receives the remaining cash incentive as per approved norms towards maternity benefit under Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) so that on an average, a woman gets Rs.6,000/-.
- Out of school Adolescent Girls: Scheme for Adolescent Girls aims at out of school girls in the age group 11-14, to empower and improve their social status through nutrition, life skills and home skills. The scheme has nutritional and non-nutritional components which include nutrition, iron and folic acid supplementation, health check-up and referral services. Mainstreaming out of school girls to join formal schooling bridge course/skill training, life skill education, home management etc.

Constraints in implementation of Integrated Child Development Services and MDM:

- Under performed ICDS: Despite increasing funding over the past three decades, the ICDS fell short of its stated objectives and still faces a number of challenges. Also, though it has widespread coverage, operational gaps mean that service delivery is not consistent in quality and quantity across the country.
- Child hunger in India: Despite the success of the program, child hunger as a problem persists in India, 42.5% of the children under 5 are underweight. Some simple health measures such as using iodised salt and getting vaccinations are uncommon in India. Many children don't get enough to eat, which has far-reaching implications for the performance of the country as a whole.
- Implementation issues: Several media reports have highlighted implementation issues, including irregularity, corruption, hygiene, caste discrimination, etc.
- Poor food quality: Poor food quality is a major concern, affecting the health of children. There are provisions for regular social audit, field visits and inspections but these are seldom carried out.

## Conclusion

The various vertical health programmes initiated by the Government of India (GOI) from time to time did not reach out to the target community adequately, even though ICDS are there. In order to change this and strengthen the Mid-Day Meal Programme to bring uniformity across the nation, monitoring and evaluation need to be improved, and this requires to be a part of the budget allocation. An enhanced budget that supports the MDM Scheme and the various components associated with the holistic development of the school ecosystem will eventually result in making a positive impact on education.



**27. What are the key components of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for electronics manufacturers? Discuss. What sort of economic potential does this scheme hold?**

**Approach** - It expects students to write – in first part write about key components of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme – in second part write about what economic potential holds by PLI scheme – in end write challenges which needs to be addressed.

**Introduction**

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) notified PLI scheme on April 2020. Global electronics companies like Samsung, Pegatron, Flex, and Foxconn are in final stages of negotiations to benefit from the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for making mobile phones and certain other specified electronic components in India.

**Body**

Key components of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme:

- It offers a production linked incentive to boost domestic manufacturing and attract large investments in mobile phone manufacturing and specified electronic components, including Assembly, Testing, Marking and Packaging (ATMP) units.
- It will extend an incentive of 4% to 6% on incremental sales (over a base year) of goods manufactured in India and covered under target segments.
- It will be active for five years with the financial year (FY) 2019-20 considered as the base year for calculation of incentives.
- It will be implemented through a Nodal Agency which shall act as a Project Management Agency (PMA) and be responsible for providing secretarial, managerial and implementation support and carrying out other responsibilities as assigned by MeitY from time to time.
- Eligibility for the scheme- All electronic manufacturing companies which are either Indian or have a registered unit in India will be eligible to apply for the scheme. These companies can either create a new unit or seek incentives for their existing units from one or more locations in India.
  - Any additional expenditure incurred by companies on the plant, machinery, equipment, research and development and transfer of technology for the manufacture of mobile phones and related electronic items will be eligible for the incentive scheme.
  - The investments done by companies on land and buildings for the project will not be considered for any incentives.

Following economic potential holds by PLI scheme for electronics manufacturers:

- The government estimates that with the PLI scheme, domestic value addition for mobile phones is expected to rise to 35-40% by 2025 from the current level of 20-25% and generate additional 8 lakh jobs, both direct and indirect.

- The scheme will generate approximately 3 lakh direct employment opportunities in next 5 years.
- Additional indirect employment will be nearly 3 times the direct employment.
- PLI scheme and other initiatives to promote electronics manufacturing will help in making India a competitive destination for electronics manufacturing and give boost to AtmaNirbhar Bharat.
- Creation of domestic champion companies in electronics manufacturing under the Scheme will give fillip to vocal for local while aiming for global scale.
- The scheme is expected to promote exports significantly.
- Out of the total production of INR 11,50,000 crore in the next 5 years, more than 60% will be contributed by exports of the order of INR 7,00,000 crore.
- The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme is designed to incentivise incremental production for a limited number of eligible anchor entities in each of the selected sectors.
- These selected entities will invest in technology, plant & machinery, as well as in R&D.
- The scheme will also have beneficial spill over effects by the creation of a widespread supplier base for the anchor units established under the scheme.
- Along with the anchor unit, these supplier units will also help to generate massive primary and secondary employment opportunities.
- The sectors for PLI have been shortlisted on the basis of their potential for economic growth, extent of benefit to the rural economy, revenue and employment generation.
- A key benefit of the PLI Scheme is that it can be implemented in a very targeted manner to attract investments in areas of strength and to strategically enter certain segments of global value chains (GVCs).

However, there are few challenges which needs to address:

- It's difficult to build a manufacturing nucleus around R&D of semiconductors and compete with MNCs overnight, including high-value components like displays, camera modules and memory chips to be part of India's manufacturing nucleus; as opposed to assembly and packaging, which is quite doable.
- Many more companies would like to move their supply chains to India, at least partially if not fully. But, higher employment and economic activity will happen if we start moving the component manufacturing across the value chain, like plastic moulding, metal products etc.
- Companies may face issues like congested ports, slow turnaround times.
- India doesn't have international transshipment points, it's one of the reasons why exporting from India can be expensive.

## Conclusion

Given the scale of incentives, the electronics manufacturing sector of the country is set to transform in the next few years. Its contribution to the GDP will significantly improve, leading to unprecedented investment and job creation.



**28. Mission Karmayogi is a crucial step towards the modernisation of civil services in India. Comment.**

**Approach** - It expects students to write about – in first part write about need of the mission – in second part write about why it is crucial step towards the modernisation of civil services – in end write challenges before it.

**Introduction**

The Union Cabinet has approved 'Mission Karmayogi' - the National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB). It is meant to be a comprehensive post-recruitment reform of the Centre's human resource development. Similar to pre-recruitment changes in the form of the National Recruitment Agency.

**Body****Need of the Mission**

- There is a need to develop domain knowledge besides administrative capacity in the bureaucracy.
- There is a need to formalize the recruitment process and match the public service to a bureaucrat's competence, so as to find the right person for the right job.
- The plan is to begin right at the recruitment level and then invest in building more capacity through the rest of their career.
- As the Indian economy grows, it will get more complex to govern; the governance capacities will have to be enhanced proportionately which this reform undertakes.
- The reforms in the Indian bureaucracy is the need of the hour and It is a major reform undertaken in recent years to transform it.

It is crucial step towards the modernisation of civil services because:

- Tech-Aided: The capacity building will be delivered through iGOTKarmayogi digital platform, with content drawn from global best practices.
  - The platform will act as a Launchpad for the National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB).
- Shift from Rules to Roles: The programme will support a transition from "rules-based to roles-based" Human Resource Management (HRM) so that work allocations can be done by matching an official's competencies to the requirements of the post.
  - Apart from domain knowledge training, the scheme will focus on "functional and behavioural competencies" as well, and also includes a monitoring framework for performance evaluations.
- Rule Based to Role Based: The programme will support a transition from rules-based to roles-based HR management, so that work allocations can be done by matching an official's competencies to the requirements of the post.
- Domain Training: Apart from domain knowledge training, the scheme will focus on functional and behavioural competencies also.

- It will provide an opportunity for civil servants to continuously build and strengthen their Behavioural, Functional and Domain Competencies in their self-driven and mandated learning paths.
- Uniform Training Standard: It will harmonise training standards across the country, so that there is a common understanding of India's aspirations and development goals.
- Vision for New India: Mission Karmayogi is aimed at building a future-ready civil service with the right attitude, skills and knowledge, aligned to the vision of New India.
- On Site Learning: It will emphasize on 'on-site learning' to complement the 'off-site' learning.
- Adoption of Best Practices: It will encourage and partner with the best-in-class learning content creators including public training institutions, universities, start-tips and individual experts.

However, there are few challenges before it:

- John Maynard Keynes, the economist, once said that "The difficulty lies, not in the new ideas, but in escaping from the old ones."
- There is a tendency in the Bureaucracy to resist the change which challenges their status quo.
- The bureaucracy too must understand the need of domain knowledge and the importance of moving away from generalist to specialist approach.
- In today's world the governance is getting technical with each passing day and hence it's important that the person in authority too should have the requisite skill and experience in that particular area.
- Thus, there should be a behavioural change in the bureaucracy too and they must embrace the change as a need of the hour and not an attack on their status quo.
- Moreover, these online courses must not become another opportunity for the officers to go for the sabbatical leaves.
- It must be ensured that they are actually attending the courses and participating in it so that the purpose doesn't get defeated.

### Conclusion

To conclude, the ultimate aim of Mission Karmayogi is to ensure "Ease of Living" for the common man, "Ease of Doing Business" and Citizen-Centricity that is reducing the gap between the government and the citizens. This can only be achieved by regular and constructive involvement by the government and civil servants.

**29. What is the Ayushman Sahakar Scheme? Can it transform the status of healthcare in the rural areas? Examine.**

**Approach** - As the directive here is examine, it is necessary to find out cause-effect relationship between two things. In the introduction you need to mention in brief about Ayushman Sahakar Scheme, you can state who launched the scheme or who is implementing the scheme or who targeted beneficiaries are. In the main body part, you need to explain about the features of scheme in first half, whereas in the second half you need cover various angles related to the question that whether it can transfer the status of healthcare in rural areas or not. Here you can cite cause effect relationship by stating how and why rural healthcare in the rural areas is lacking and how it will get benefited by the Ayushman Sahakar scheme. In the conclusion, you can show in brief how it will transform healthcare in rural areas in particular and at pan India level in general.

**Introduction**

Ayushman Sahkar, a unique scheme to assist cooperatives to play an important role in creation of healthcare infrastructure in the country formulated by the apex autonomous development finance institution under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC). The scheme is expected to revolutionize the way healthcare delivery takes place in rural areas.

**Body**

As per NCDC, there are about 52 hospitals across the country run by cooperatives. They have cumulative bed strength of more than 5,000. Hence, utilisation of this kind of large health care facility seems a right move. Following are the features of the scheme:

- NCDC would extend term loans to prospective cooperatives to the tune of Rs.10,000 crore in the coming years. The NCDC fund would give a boost to provision of healthcare services by cooperatives.
- The scheme also provides working capital and margin money to meet operational requirements.
- Any Cooperative Society with suitable provision in its byelaws to undertake healthcare related activities would be able to access the NCDC fund.
- The scheme covers establishment, modernization, expansion, repairs, renovation of hospital and healthcare and education infrastructure.
- NCDC assistance will flow either through the State Governments/ UT Administrations or directly to the eligible cooperatives.

Status of healthcare in rural areas:

- Healthcare is the right of every individual but lack of quality infrastructure, dearth of qualified medical functionaries, and non- access to basic medicines and medical facilities thwarts its reach to 60% of population in India.

- Sixty per cent of primary health centres (PHCs) in India have only one doctor while about five per cent have none, according to the Economic Survey 2018-19.
- A majority of 700 million people live in rural areas where the condition of medical facilities is deplorable.
- In rural India, where the number of Primary health care centers (PHCs) is limited, 8% of the centers do not have doctors or medical staff, 39% do not have lab technicians and 18% PHCs do not even have a pharmacist.
- India also accounts for the largest number of maternity deaths. A majority of these are in rural areas where maternal health care is poor.
- If we look at the health landscape of India, 92 percent of health care visits are to private providers of which 70 percent is urban population. However, private health care is expensive, often unregulated and variable in quality. Besides being unreliable for the illiterate, it is also unaffordable by low income rural population.
- CAG's report on reproductive and child health highlights the dysfunctional aspects of the medical system in rural areas.

To control the spread of diseases and reduce the growing rates of mortality due to lack of adequate health facilities, special attention needs to be given to the health care in rural areas. The need to improve health care sector in Rural areas becomes more critical in the light of Covid-19 like pandemic. However, the Ayushman Sahkar scheme addresses some of these challenges in following ways:

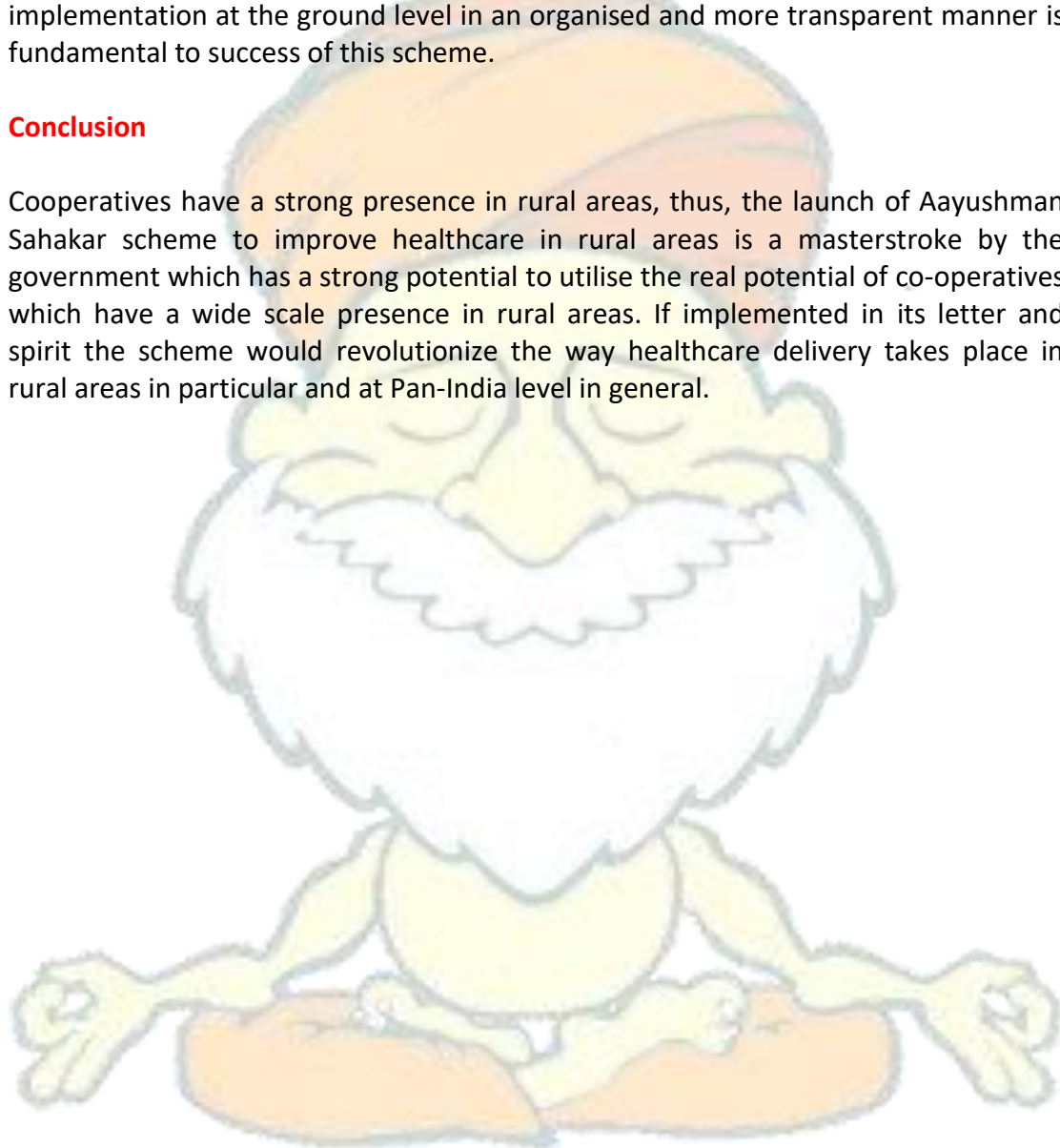
- The scheme aligns itself with the focus of the National Health Policy, 2017, covering the health systems in all their dimensions- investments in health, organization of healthcare services, access to technologies, development of human resources, encouragement of medical pluralism, affordable health care to farmers etc.
- It has a comprehensive approach in which hospitals, healthcare, medical education, nursing education, paramedical education, health insurance and holistic health systems such as AYUSH will get covered
- . Ayushman Sahakar scheme fund would also assist cooperative hospitals take up medical / Ayush education there by it will address the issue of low doctor to patient ratio in rural areas.
- It is line with National Digital Health Mission. NCDC's Ayushman Sahakar would bring transformation in rural areas. By virtue of their strong presence in rural areas, cooperatives utilizing the scheme would bring revolution in comprehensive health care services.
- Any Cooperative Society with suitable provision in its byelaws to undertake healthcare related activities would be able to access the NCDC fund. NCDC assistance will flow either through the State Governments/ UT Administrations or directly to the eligible cooperatives. Subsidy/ grant from other sources can be dovetailed.
- Ayushman Sahakar specifically covers establishment, modernization, expansion, repairs, renovation of hospital and healthcare and education infrastructure encompassing various fields of health sector in rural areas.

- The scheme also provides working capital and margin money to meet operational requirements. The scheme provides interest subvention of one percent to women majority cooperatives.

Thereby it is clear that the scheme encompasses an all comprehensive approach to address the issues with respect to health care in rural areas. However, Issues with respect to corrupt practises, diversion of funds i.e. cut practices, awareness generation require a focused attention for the success of this scheme. Hence, its implementation at the ground level in an organised and more transparent manner is fundamental to success of this scheme.

### **Conclusion**

Cooperatives have a strong presence in rural areas, thus, the launch of Aayushman Sahakar scheme to improve healthcare in rural areas is a masterstroke by the government which has a strong potential to utilise the real potential of co-operatives which have a wide scale presence in rural areas. If implemented in its letter and spirit the scheme would revolutionize the way healthcare delivery takes place in rural areas in particular and at Pan-India level in general.



**30. What is the Viability Gap Funding (VGF) Scheme? Discuss. Why is it important?**

**Approach** - A direct question divided into two parts where the first part requires discussion on what is Viability Gap Funding (VGF) scheme and in the second part, you need to elaborate upon why it is important.

**Introduction**

The main constraint in India's infrastructure sector is the lack of source for finance. Some projects may not be financially viable though they are economically justified and necessary. This is the nature of several infrastructural projects which are long term and development oriented. For the successful completion of such projects, the government has designed Viability Gap Funding (VGF).

**Body**

- Viability Gap Finance means a grant to support projects that are economically justified but not financially viable. The scheme is designed as a Plan Scheme to be administered by the Ministry of Finance and amount in the budget are made on a year-to-year basis.
- Such a grant under VGF is provided as a capital subsidy to attract the private sector players to participate in PPP projects that are otherwise financially unviable. Projects may not be commercially viable because of long gestation period and small revenue flows in future.
- The VGF scheme was launched in 2004 to support projects that comes under Public Private Partnerships. VGF grants will be available only for infrastructure projects where private sector sponsors are selected through a process of competitive bidding. The VGF grant will be disbursed at the construction stage itself but only after the private sector developer makes the equity contribution required for the project.
- The usual grant amount is up to 20% of the total capital cost of the project. Funds for VGF will be provided from the government's budgetary allocation. If the sponsoring Ministry/State Government/ statutory entity aims to provide assistance over and above the stipulated amount under VGF, it will be restricted to a further 20% of the total project cost.
- The lead financial institution for the project is responsible for regular monitoring and periodic evaluation of project compliance with agreed milestones and performance levels, particularly for the purpose of grant disbursement.

Recently, the government has expanded the provision of financial support by means of viability gap funding for public-private partnerships (PPPs) in infrastructure projects to include critical social sector investments in sectors such as health, education, water and waste treatment. Also, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved continuation and revamping of the Scheme for Financial

Support to Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in Infrastructure Viability Gap Funding (VGF) Scheme Till 2024-25.

The importance of VGF scheme can be understood from the following points:

1. To promote PPPs in social and Economic Infrastructure leading to efficient creation of assets and ensuring their proper Operation and Maintenance and make the economically/socially essential projects commercially viable.
2. The scheme would be beneficial to public at large as it would help in creation of the Infrastructure for the country.
3. The new Scheme will come into force within one month of the approval of Cabinet. Proposed amendments under the revamped VGF scheme would be suitably incorporated in the Guidelines for the Scheme.
4. Revamping of the proposed VGF Scheme will attract more PPP projects and facilitate the private investment in the social sectors (Health, Education, Waste Water, Solid Waste Management, Water Supply etc.).
5. Creation of new hospitals, schools will create many opportunities to boost employment generation.
6. PPP projects - It will attract more PPP projects and facilitate private investment in the social sectors.
7. Employment and infrastructure - Creation of new hospitals, schools will create many opportunities to boost employment generation.

### Conclusion

The Indian Economy is currently going through a challenging phase as GDP growth has not grown to match India's potential. Infrastructure spend in India is likely to have a positive spiral and multiplier effect to our GDP growth and is likely to be one of the main devices to unleash India's economic growth potential where VGF will be an important component to ensure proper infrastructure funding.

**31. Discuss the mandate of the National Green Tribunal (NGT). What has been the impact of NGT in recent years? Examine.**

**Approach** - A straightforward question divided into two parts where in the first part, you need to discuss the mandate of National Green Tribunal (NGT) and in the second part, you need to examine the impact of NGT in recent years.

**Introduction**

The National Green Tribunal has been established in 2010 under the National Green Tribunal Act 2010 for effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources including enforcement of any legal right relating to environment and giving relief and compensation for damages to persons and property and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

**Body**

- The National Green Tribunal, as per the National Green Tribunal Act is a specialised judicial body equipped with expertise solely for the purpose of adjudicating environmental cases in the country.
- Recognising that most environment cases involve multi-disciplinary issues which are better addressed in a specialised forum, the Tribunal was setup as per recommendations of the SC, LC, etc.
- The Tribunal is tasked with providing effective and expeditious remedy in cases relating to environmental protection, conservation of forests and other natural resources and enforcement of any legal right relating to environment. The Tribunal's orders are binding and it has power to grant relief in the form of compensation and damages to affected persons.
- The Tribunal shall not be bound by the procedure laid down under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, but shall be guided by principles of natural justice.
- The Tribunal's dedicated jurisdiction in environmental matters shall provide speedy environmental justice and help reduce the burden of litigation in the higher courts. The Tribunal is mandated to make and endeavour for disposal of applications or appeals finally within 6 months of filing of the same.
- Initially, the NGT is proposed to be set up at five places of sittings and will follow circuit procedure for making itself more accessible. New Delhi is the Principal Place of Sitting of the Tribunal and Bhopal, Pune, Kolkata and Chennai shall be the other four place of sitting of the Tribunal.
- It provides relief and compensation for environmental damage involving subjects in the legislations mentioned in Schedule I of the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010 may approach the Tribunal. Some of the statutes in Schedule I include The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess Act, 1977, The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, etc.



- The Chairperson of the NGT is a retired Judge of the Supreme Court, Head Quartered in Delhi. Other Judicial members are retired Judges of High Courts. Each bench of the NGT will comprise of at least one Judicial Member and one Expert Member. Expert members should have a professional qualification and a minimum of 15 years' experience in the field of environment/forest conservation and related subjects

The National Green Tribunal has in the short term since its establishment strongly influenced environmental litigation in India. In this regard, the impact of NGT in recent years can be examined from the following points:

1. Since its inception, NGT has emerged as dedicated court for environmental issues where specialisation has allowed quick redressal of matters and also reduced burden on HC's and SC.
2. It's judgements have had far reaching consequences and have helped saved fragile environments like in the case of Save Mon Federation Vs Union of India case where the NGT suspended a ₹6,400-crore hydro project to save the habitat of a bird.
3. The Principal Bench of the NGT at New Delhi has given some powerful judgments in the recent years which have strengthened the process of obtaining environmental clearances. For instance, the case of M.P. Patil v. Union of India.
4. The quality of time spent on environmental issues has also be increased as, unlike the Supreme Court, the tribunal has benches in various States, thereby increasing access to all citizens. Also, time bound disposal of cases has helped in improved efficiency to a great extent.
5. But NGT has also been criticised for exceeding its jurisdiction where NGT has been accused of overstepping its jurisdiction and taking actions for which it has not been empowered under the NGT Act.
6. For example, Ban on sand mining activity in Goa by NGT has been termed as judicial overreach. It would impact the construction industry thereby hampering the developmental activity of the state.
7. Further, there is a limit to its Jurisdiction where two important acts – Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 have been kept out of NGT's jurisdiction.
8. NGT hasn't had full strength. The lack of human and financial resources has led to high pendency of cases - which undermines NGT's very objective of disposal of appeals within 6 months.

### Conclusion

The NGT has been the most consistent and progressive environmental authority in India. Unlike the Supreme Court, it has lesser delays in resolving the cases before it. It had redefined the role of environmental experts and the criteria to select such experts. Thus, it can be said to have largely successful in implementing its orders and has had tremendous impact in India.

**32. The office of Governor has ceased to be apolitical in recent years. Do you agree? Substantiate your response.**

**Approach** - It expects students to write about office of Governor and how it ceased to become a political in recent years with suitable examples.

**Introduction**

Article 154 of the Constitution envisages Governor as the executive chief of the state. B R Ambedkar called the office of the Governor as the “office of dignity”. His office is the linchpin of Indian Cooperative Federalism. From a long time, the office of the Governor has been at the centre of controversies for several reasons, the most important one being the range of discretionary powers that the holder of the office enjoys.

**Body**

Office of Governor in recent years ceased to be apolitical:

- **Intervention by governors:** Most notably, the governors of West Bengal, Puducherry and Maharashtra are in news for the wrong reasons. For example, Maharashtra governor issue over the opening of temple after lockdown in state and controversy over secularism.
- **Non-neutrality of the office of the Governor:** The governors are the agents of the Central Government and since most of them are retired politicians belonging to a particular political party, they remain loyal to the people, who appoint them. As a result of it, they try to topple the State Government if it happens to be a Government by the opposition party.
- **Appointment and dismissal of the Chief Minister:** Governor appoints Chief Minister, other ministers, Advocate General, Chairmen and members of the State Public Service Commission in the state. After elections in the state, there is a convention to invite the largest party to form government in the state. This convention has been flouted many times at the whim of the governor. Eg: The recent episode Maharashtra where Governor inducted a new government at 5:00 am without ascertaining the requisite numbers for the government.
- **Gubernatorial powers:** The task of inviting the largest party/alliance post-election is a discretion of the Governor which is wrought in controversy. Eg: Karnataka, in 2018 election presented a hung assembly. Ultimately the issue had to be resolved in Supreme Court leading to fall of the government that couldn't prove its majority.
- **Removal of the Governor:** Article 156 says that the governor will hold office during the pleasure of the President for five years. President works on aid and advice of the Council of Ministers under Article 74. In effect it is the central government that appoints and removes the Governors. The governor has no security of tenure and no fixed term of office. E.g: The mass changing

of the governors of state whenever a new government comes to power at Centre.

- Advising the President for proclamation of Emergency: The Assemblies of Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh had been placed under suspended animation on the recommendation of the Governor due to alleged failure of Constitutional Machinery (Article 356). However, the State Governments were reinstated by reversal of President's rule by Supreme Court due to lack of sufficient evidence.
- Reservation of Bills for Consideration of President: On his/ her discretion, the Governor can reserve a bill passed by the state legislature for president's assent. However, situations are mentioned in Article 200, when he will reserve the bill, yet he can use, discretion regarding this matter. Governor has discretion to refuse to sign to an ordinary bill passed by the state legislature.
- Seeking information from the chief minister: With regard to the administrative and legislative matters of the state Many governors have been criticised for expanding their discretionary powers suo motu. Tamil Nadu (TN) governor Banwarilal Purohit has been criticised for running a parallel administration of universities within TN and appointing vice-chancellors without consulting the state government. He was already under fire for conducting "review meetings" of government schemes.

Recommendations of SC Judgements and Committees:

- SR Bommai vs. Union of India, 1994: The case was about the limits to the Governor's powers in dismissing a state government under Article 356 of the Constitution. The floor of the Assembly is the only forum that should test the majority of the government of the day, and not the subjective opinion of the Governor.
- Rameshwar Prasad Case, 2006: Supreme Court was called upon to pronounce its verdict on the validity of the proclamation of President's Rule and the dissolution of the Assembly in Bihar in 2005. The SC held that the Governor could not decide based on his subjective assessments.
- Sarkaria Commission Report (1988):
  1. Governor should be an eminent person and not belong to the state where he is to be posted.
  2. State chief minister should have a say in the appointment of governor
  3. Governor should be a detached figure without intense political links or should not have taken part in politics in recent past.
  4. Governor should not be a member of the ruling party.
- Punchhi Commission (2010): The phrase "during the pleasure of the President" should be deleted from the Constitution. Governor should be removed only by a resolution of the state legislature.

## Conclusion

The role of governor is indispensable for the successful working of the constitutional democracy. He must refrain from aligning himself to any political ideology. For the smooth functioning of a democratic government, it is equally important to have 'Code of Conduct', 'norms and principles' the governor must act judiciously, impartially and efficiently while exercising his discretion and personal judgment.



**33. In parliamentary proceedings, examine the significance of the 'question hour'. What was the recent controversy related to it? Discuss.**

**Approach** - It is straightforward question it expects student to write about - in first part write significance of question hour - in second part discuss recent controversy related to it.

**Introduction**

Question Hour is the first hour of a sitting session devoted to questions that Members of Parliament raise about any aspect of administrative activity. The concerned Minister is obliged to answer to the Parliament, either orally or in writing, depending on the type of question raised.

**Body**

Importance of Question Hour:

- The Government is put on its trial during the Question Hour and every Minister whose turn it is to answer questions has to stand up and answer for his or his administration's acts of omission and commission.
- Through the Question Hour the Government is able to quickly feel the pulse of the nation and adapt its policies and actions accordingly.
- It is through questions in the Parliament that the Government remains in touch with the people in as much as members are enabled thereby to ventilate the grievances of the public in matters concerning the administration.
- Questions enable Ministries to gauge the popular reaction to their policy and administration.
- Questions bring to the notice of the Ministers many loopholes which otherwise would have gone unnoticed.
- Sometimes questions may lead to the appointment of a Commission, a Court of Inquiry or even Legislation when matters raised by Members are grave enough to agitate the public mind and are of wide public importance.

Recent controversy regarding question hour:

- The monsoon session of the Parliament has begun from 14th of September. For this Parliamentary session a decision was taken to go without Question Hour. This decision has raised some serious concerns regarding the democratic functioning of the institution. Question hour is an opportunity for the members to raise questions.
- The decision to skip Question Hour during the Monsoon session of Parliament has earned criticism.
- With the ongoing issues in our country like the unprecedented decline in GDP and its impact on the economy, the New Education Policy, tensions at the border, rising unemployment, the miseries of migrant labour.
- Questions regarding all these issues were supposed to be asked in the question hour session with the government.

- Question hour is a parliamentary device primarily meant for exercising legislative control over executive actions.
- Over the decades, MP's have utilised this question hour to throw light on the government functioning. Suspension of the question hour is a straight indication that the opposition will lose the right to question the government. Plus, the Ministers are not liable to reply to the issues raised during the Zero Hour.
- This would mean that the MPs would not be able to hold the government accountable for its action. This will lead against the spirit of parliamentary democracy.

### **Conclusion**

The government is accountable to the parliament. The parliamentary proceedings are meant to hold the government accountable and it should not be suspended or curtailed as it will go against the essence of the Constitution.



**34. What is the MPLAD scheme? Critically evaluate its performance in recent years. Do you support the recent decision of the government to suspend MPLADS for two years? Substantiate your views.**

**Approach** - As the question has two specific directives it will be better to answer the question in a straightforward way. In the introduction part one can explain what is MPLAD scheme and how it is implemented. Main body part will have two parts, in the first part one needs to arrive at a fair judgment based on overall performance of MPLAD scheme substantiated with examples and facts. In the second part of the answer it is necessary to put your opinion on the suspension of MPLAD scheme for two years. The opinion should be backed by supporting arguments with examples and facts. In the conclusion one can conclude by explaining the impact of such scheme in brief and stating further course of action for continuation or discontinuation of scheme. The scheme is implemented by Ministry of Statistics and Programme implementation.

### **Introduction**

The Local Area Development Scheme known as MPLADS is a government scheme launched in 1993. This central sector scheme was developed as an initiative to enable the parliament members to recommend developmental work in their constituencies based on locally felt needs. The scheme emphasises on durable assets of national priorities and community needs viz. drinking water, primary education, public health, sanitation and roads, etc.

### **Body**

Features of MPLAD scheme:

- The MPLADS is a Plan Scheme fully funded by Government of India. The annual MPLADS fund entitlement per MP constituency is Rs. 5 crore.
- MPs are to recommend every year, works costing at least 15 per cent of the MPLADS entitlement for the year for areas inhabited by Scheduled Caste population and 7.5 per cent for areas inhabited by S.T. population.
- In order to encourage trusts and societies for the betterment of tribal people, a ceiling of Rs. 75 lakh is stipulated for building assets by trusts and societies subject to conditions prescribed in the scheme guidelines.
- Lok Sabha Members can recommend works within their Constituencies and Elected Members of Rajya Sabha can recommend works within the State of Election (with select exceptions). Nominated Members of both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha can recommend works anywhere in the country.
- All works to meet locally felt infrastructure and development needs, with an emphasis on creation of durable assets in the constituency are permissible under MPLADS as prescribed in the scheme guidelines. Expenditure on specified items of non durable nature are also permitted as listed in the guidelines.

However, the scheme received a fair criticism from various sections of society and demand for discontinuation due to its gaps in its performance since its inception which is as mentioned below:

- The scheme violates one of the cardinal principles, which though not specifically written down in the Constitution, actually permeates the entire Constitution: separation of powers.
- Simply put, this scheme, in effect, gives an executive function to legislators (read legislature). The argument that MPs only recommend projects, but the final choice and implementation rests with the district authorities is strange; there are hardly any authorities in the district who have the courage or the gumption to defy the wishes of an MP.
- The details below, which are some of the observations made by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India, in a report made it clear that there are gaps in its implementation.
- Utilisation of funds between 49 to 90% of the booked amount; Though the scheme envisages that works under the scheme should be limited to asset creation, 549 of the 707 works test-checked (78%) of the works recommended were for improvement of existing assets.
- Delays in issuing work orders ranging from 5 to 387 days in 57% of the works against the requirement of issuing the work order within 45 days of the receipt of recommendation by the MP.
- There are wide variations in the utilisation of the MPLAD amount in various constituencies. A report published in IndiaSpend has some very interesting insights based on data made available to it by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. Some of these are: "A year after they took office, 298 of 542 members of the 16th Lok Sabha — India's lower house of parliament — have not spent a rupee from the ₹5 crore that is set aside annually for them to develop their constituencies." Also, 508 MPs (93.55%) did not, or could not, utilise the entire MPLADS amount from May 4, 2014 till December 10, 2018, in 4 years and 7 months.
- Since the MPLADS began in 1993, ₹5,000 crore was lying unspent with various district authorities by May 15, 2015.
- Added to the data above is fairly widespread talk of money under MPLADS being used to appease or oblige two sets of people: opinion-makers or opinion-influencers, and favourite contractors. Sometimes these two categories overlap. An often-heard tale is that of the contractor being a relative, close friend, or a confidant of the MP, and the contractor and the MP being financially linked with each other.
- Reports of underutilisation and misutilisation of MPLADS funds continue to surface at regular intervals but there seems to have been no serious attempt to do anything about it till now. There are innumerable instances of misuse of these funds; one prominent example is the construction of a fountain in the open space of an unauthorised settlement, or a jhuggijhopdi colony, which did not have provision of drinking water. The general belief in the settlement was that the contractor who bagged the contract to build the fountain was related to the local Member of Parliament.



- Also, The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (2000) and the Second Administrative Reforms Commission, headed by Veerappa Moily (2007), recommended discontinuation of the scheme.

Meanwhile the scheme has some of the positive impacts too, they are as mentioned below:

- Similar to MPLADS, several states have enacted schemes called Member of Legislative Assembly Local Area Development Scheme (MLALADS) where funds are given to MLAs.
- According to the 'Guidelines on Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS)' published by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation in June 2016, the MPLAD funds can also be used for implementation of the schemes such as Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan), conservation of water through rain water harvesting and SansadAadarsh Gram Yojana, etc. So, other schemes can be supported by funding through MPLADS.
- Based on Constitutionality of the Scheme, the MPLADS was challenged in the Supreme Court (SC) in 2010. A five-judge bench of the SC held that: Indian Constitution does not recognise strict separation of powers. Even though MPs have been given a seemingly executive function, their role is limited to 'recommending' works and actual implementation is done by the local authorities. Therefore, the scheme does not violate separation of powers.
- India has a quasi-federal nature of the Constitution. Article 282 held that both the Union and the State have the power to make grants for a purpose irrespective of whether the subject matter of the purpose falls in the Seventh Schedule provided that the purpose is "public purpose" within the meaning of the Constitution.
- Also, the Scheme falls within the meaning of "public purpose" aiming for the fulfillment of the development and welfare of the State as reflected in the Directive Principles of State Policy.
- Also there are robust accountability mechanisms for the scheme as it comes under the RTI Act.
- In 2018, when continuation of the scheme was approved, the government noted that "the entire population across the country stands to benefit through the creation of durable assets of locally felt needs, namely drinking water, education, public health, sanitation and roads etc, under MPLAD Scheme."
- Until 2017, nearly 19 lakh projects worth Rs 45,000 crore had been sanctioned under the MPLAD Scheme. Third-party evaluators appointed by the government reported that the creation of good quality assets had a "positive impact on the local economy, social fabric and feasible environment." Further, 82% of the projects have been in rural areas and the remaining in urban/semi-urban areas.
- There are numerous examples of good implementation of scheme. For instance, Cricket icon and Rajya Sabha member Sachin Tendulkar has sanctioned Rs 2 crore from his Members of Parliament Local Area

Development Scheme (MPLADS) fund for revamp of rail foot overbridges in Mumbai here in the backdrop of the Elphinstone Road station stampede.

Government's recent move to discontinue MPLADS for 2 years:

- The central scheme has continued uninterrupted for 27 years. It is budgeted through the government's finances and continues as long as the government is agreeable. In 2018, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved the scheme until the term of the 14th Finance Commission, that is March 31, 2020.
- However, the Government of India in the event of struggle against Covid-19 has suspended Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme or MPLADS funds for two years (2020 and 2021) and directed these funds to be transferred to the Consolidated Fund of India.
- The Government is seeking to garner around Rs 7,900 crores by suspending the MPLADS for two years. For comparison, this is only 4.5% of the Rs 1.70 lakh crore relief package for the poor announced under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana.
- The government is of view that the transfer of these sums to the Consolidated Fund of India would help judicious deployment of fund, but political opposition has criticized this move, as in their opinion the decision may undermine the decentralized manner of funding local area development.

When we see at the implementation gap as highlighted by the CAG report and current grim situation induced by pandemic, the move seems to be a right move in the right direction due to following reasons:

- In this pandemic like situation it is better to have more funds in hand for the building infrastructure and facilitating services in the Health sector. For instance, Resident doctors of Hindu Rao Hospital supported by AIIMS staff staged a protest alleging non-payment of salaries.
- According to the World Bank database, India was the 13th lowest (among 206 for which data was available) in terms of the percentage of total government expenditure that went to health in 2017. At present, Government spending on the healthcare industry stands at 1.15% of the Gross Domestic. Considering the balloon of pandemic this much expenditure on health care sector is meagre amount of money relatively to other sectors.
- Hence, it becomes evident that the current move by the government to suspend the scheme for two years is a well thought move.

However, we cannot neglect the objective of MPLADS. It aimed to create durable assets of national priorities and community needs, which also should not stop citing the basic needs of the citizens. Unless problems such as poor utilisation of funds, irregular sanction of works, delay in completion of works are tackled in an efficient manner, the efficacy of the scheme will remain in doubt.

### Conclusion

While resuming the operation of scheme after two years, corruption related factors needs to addressed so that MPLADS full potential can be utilised. Meanwhile, to compensate the loss incurred by suspension of scheme for two years, government needs to put on some constructive work in the durable assets creation by giving impetus to its other schemes such as, Accessible India campaign, Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan, conservation of water through rain water harvesting and SansadAadarsh Gram Yojana etc.



**35. India's geopolitical interests are in close alignment with a stable and moderate Arab centre. Do you agree? Substantiate your views.**

**Approach** - It expects students to write about - in first part write about why stable Arab centre important for India geopolitically - in second part mention challenges in west Asia -in third part write about what should be India's future policy towards West Asia.

**Introduction**

India's relations with the West Asian countries are historical since the independence. India has interests in economic, political, security and strategic fields with the West Asian nations. India has huge stakes involved in the region such as energy, trade and safety of Indian community in the region.

**Body**

Geopolitical interest of India in west Asia:

- Geopolitically West Asia occupies an important position in international relations due to its geographical location and proximity to continents and countries South Asia, China, Central Asia, Europe, and Africa.
- The region is strategically significant due to its enormous energy resources, trade route links to different parts of the world.
- It is the world's largest oil-producing region accounting for 34% of world production, 45% of crude oil exports and 48% of oil proven reserves.
- Gate way to central Asia: West Asia is gate way to land locked and energy rich central Asia.
- Geostrategic importance: To reduce the influence of china in west Asia and in Arabian Sea. China is continuously making in road to west Asia through OBOR initiative.

**Challenges in west Asia:**

- The security situation in West Asia has been continuously deteriorating ever since the onset of the Arab Spring in December 2010.
- The internal security situation in Syria, Iraq and Yemen has gone from bad to worse. The regional powers continue to fight proxy wars on sectarian lines, pumping huge amount of money and weapons to bolster their favoured groups.
- The involvement of extra-regional players such as the USA and Russia in the internal conflicts in West Asia has further aggravated the situation.
- The GCC-Iran rivalry, Shia-Sunni conflict, external intervention in the region, the fear of rise of religious radicalism etc. have further contributed to instability in West Asia.
- Terrorism: Terrorism has emerged as the biggest security threat to the region. The rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is the most disturbing trend.
- Saudi-Iran rivalry: destabilizing West Asia and influencing West Asian geopolitics.

- Pakistan factor: Pakistan is very close ally of many west Asian countries especially with GCC.
- India's close relation with Iran may antagonize Saudi Arabia. India has to balance its ties with all three regional power in west Asia-Iran, Israel and Saudi Arabia.

India's geopolitical interests are in close alignment with stability in West Asia. Therefore, standing up for the region and opposing the forces of regional destabilisation should be at the very heart of India's foreign policy in the region. In this context, India's West Asia policy should adhere to following four principles:

- Acting as a Peace Negotiator: India should act as a mediator to normalize the relationship between West Asian countries, especially between Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey and Iran.
- Opposing Foreign Interventions in the Region: In the past, those came from the West and Israel. Today, most Arabs see the greatest threat to their security from Turkish and Iranian interventions.
- Aiding Arab Economic Integration: India should extend support to Arab economic integration, intra-Arab political reconciliation and the strengthening of regional institutions.
- Strengthening Ties with All Major Players in the Region: India's geopolitical interests are in close alignment with those in the Arab Centre including Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Oman. Thus, India needs to make strong ties with the region.

### Conclusion

The geopolitical realignment in the Middle East, marked by agreement on the normalisation of relations between the United Arab Emirates and Israel, intersects with the equally significant reorientation of the Subcontinent's relationship with the region. As Pakistan rediscovers its tradition of aligning with non-Arab powers, India must renew its defence of Arab sovereignty.

**36. Collaboration between India and Australia can limit the dangers of the growing Geopolitical imbalance in the Indo-Pacific. Comment.**

**Approach** - It expects students to write - in first part write how India and Australia can limit the dangers of the growing geopolitical imbalance in the Indo-Pacific - In second part write about challenges before it - in third part write way forward

**Introduction**

India and Australia has shared a cordial relation with each other since a very long time and has witnessed an increased commitment in recent past. Multiple engagement in fields such as bilateral trade, strategic relations, student exchange programs, similar commitments towards sustainable development has made this relationship all the more dynamic. As the global momentum is markedly shifting towards the Indo-Pacific region it becomes imperative for both the nations to stand in unison and provide the stability the region desires owing to the over-indulging nature of China.

**Body**

Geopolitical imbalance in the Indo-Pacific:

- China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) raises concerns among other nations like China Pakistan Economic Corridor Passing through Pakistan Occupied Kashmir. China's alleged 'String of Pearls Policy' aimed at encircling India using infrastructural projects in countries like Sri Lanka and Pakistan.
- China is also building artificial islands in SCS and establishing naval ports of Hambantota and Gwadar in Indian periphery. Japan is also wary of China's capability to influence the energy supply chains on which East Asia depends.
- It is estimated that IPR will witness more than 50% of world's submarines and advanced combat aircraft movement in next two decades. Debt Book Diplomacy followed by China of leading to China acquiring Hambantota Port of Sri Lanka for a lease period of 99 years.
- China's has declared its ambition to make its military world class', one that is capable of 'winning wars' is not the right signal for regional peace and prosperity. The recently released Doklam report by Indian Parliamentary Panel even also suggested not to take China's strategic intentions casually.
- In 2016, International Court's (ICJ) held that China's claim over whole of SCS is baseless compromising the sovereignty of many other nations. China's out rightly refused to accept this verdict on South China Sea.
- Lack of holistic Legal mechanism for multilateral cooperation on maritime security in the IPR makes resolution of issues difficult. For example, the recently concluded Caspian Sea deal is a legal mechanism evolved to recognize the sovereign rights of all the littoral nations.
- Presence of Organized Crime and Piracy in the IPR the Golden Crescent and Golden Triangle region. Also, there is still presence of Pirate groups in the Somalia and adjoining regions. Presence of major nuclear weapons states like

India, China, USA and rogue nuclear states like Pakistan and North Korea, in this region.

India and Australia can limit the dangers of the growing geopolitical imbalance in the Indo-Pacific as follows:

- The two countries must order their security establishments to develop strategic coordination in the various sub-regions of the Indo-Pacific littoral.
- The eastern Indian Ocean that lies between the shores of peninsular India and the west coast of Australia ought to be the top priority.
- Eastern Indian Ocean, connecting the two oceans, is at the heart of the Indo-Pacific. This is where Delhi and Canberra can initiate a full range of joint activities, including on maritime domain awareness, development of strategically located islands and marine scientific research.
- The sea lines of communication between the Indian and Pacific oceans run through the Indonesian archipelago. Given the shared political commitment to the Indo-Pacific idea between Delhi, Jakarta and Canberra and the growing pressures on them to secure their shared waters, India and Australia must seek trilateral maritime and naval cooperation with Indonesia.
- The current trilateral dialogue between Japan, Australia and India (JAI) can be expanded from the diplomatic level to practical maritime cooperation on the ground.
- Paris and Canberra are eager to develop a trilateral arrangement with Delhi that will supplement the bilateral cooperation among the three nations. Delhi must endorse the initiative.
- India and Australia must explore the possibilities for engagement between India and the Five Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA). FPDA was set up back in 1971, after Britain pulled back most of its forces from the East of Suez. The FPDA brings together the armed forces of the UK, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand.

Challenges:

- There are also a growing number of non-traditional and trans-boundary security challenges, including terrorism, natural disasters and pandemics.
- Also, India faces unfavourable trade with Australia and despite opening talks for a comprehensive economic cooperation agreement in 2011, the agreement which would have significantly lowered the trade balance in favour of India, has remained elusive.
- The region faces a range of traditional security challenges that relate to issues of trust in the form of China which has emerged as a regional power and has little faith in rule based order.

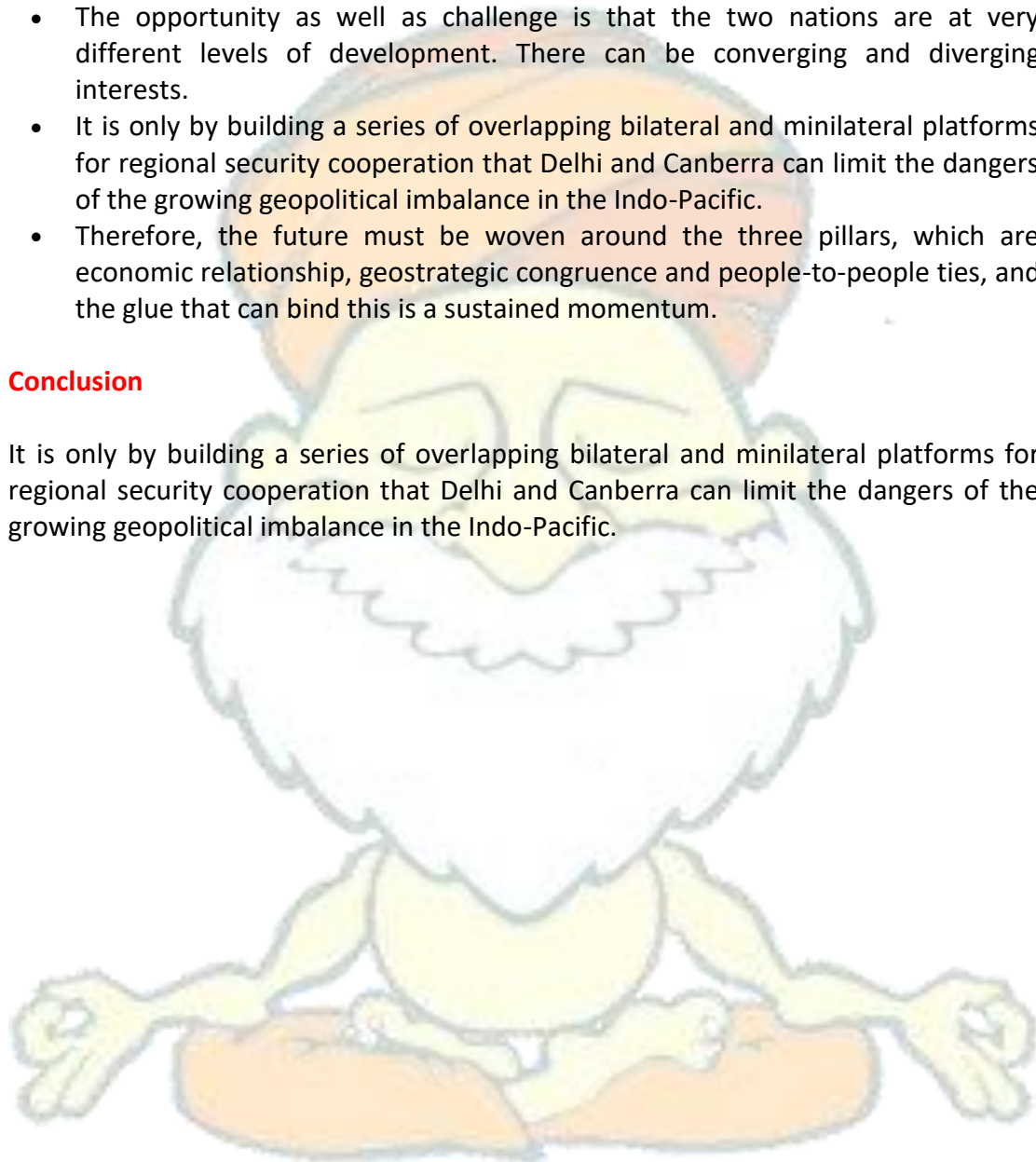
Way Forward:

- Shared values, shared interests, shared geography and shared objectives are the bedrock of deepening India-Australia ties and the cooperation and coordination between the two countries have picked up momentum in recent years.

- India no longer sees Australia at the periphery of India's vision but at the centre of its thoughts.
- Both India and Australia share a vision of a free, open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific region and cooperative use of the seas by adherence to international law including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and peaceful resolution of disputes rather than through unilateral or coercive actions.
- The opportunity as well as challenge is that the two nations are at very different levels of development. There can be converging and diverging interests.
- It is only by building a series of overlapping bilateral and minilateral platforms for regional security cooperation that Delhi and Canberra can limit the dangers of the growing geopolitical imbalance in the Indo-Pacific.
- Therefore, the future must be woven around the three pillars, which are economic relationship, geostrategic congruence and people-to-people ties, and the glue that can bind this is a sustained momentum.

### **Conclusion**

It is only by building a series of overlapping bilateral and minilateral platforms for regional security cooperation that Delhi and Canberra can limit the dangers of the growing geopolitical imbalance in the Indo-Pacific.





**37. The coronavirus pandemic has exposed the plight of working people in the informal sector in urban areas. What measures would you suggest to address it? Discuss.**

**Approach** - It expects students to write about - in first part write about importance of informal sector in urban development - in second part mention issues faced by worker of informal sector in urban areas - in last part suggest some measures to address this problem.

### Introduction

The unorganised sector refers to those enterprises whose activities or collection of data is not regulated under any legal provision or do not maintain any regular accounts. Informal/unorganized sector has a predominant place in the Indian economy in terms of its contribution to the GDP and employment. Out of the total workers, nearly 72 per cent in the urban areas are engaged in the informal sector.

### Body

Importance of informal sector in urban development:

- To put things in perspective, as per the Economic Survey of India, about 90% of India's total workforce of about 500 million workers is engaged in the informal sector.
- The migrant labourer is the builder of not just modern India, but modern Singapore, modern Dubai and every modern country that prides itself on the glamour list of modernity.
- A key feature of the urban economy in India, consistent with most developing economies, is the role played by informal workers and the unorganized sector.
- In many ways this is back-end India that offers the much-needed daily support to front-end India to keep the wheels of the modern economy moving.
- Factories, industrial units, hotels, restaurants and many other establishments, irrespective of their scale of operations, depend on such workers.
- They come in many avatars. There is a hierarchy even. There is the Uber and Ola driver who has migrated from Patna to Mumbai. There is the mason, the carpenter, the food delivery boy, the painter, the plumber and many, many others.
- Labour migration within India is crucial for economic growth and contributes to improving the socio-economic condition of people.
- Migration can help, for example, to improve income, skill development, and provide greater access to services like healthcare and education.

Issues faced by worker of informal sector in urban areas:

- Huge Gap in Data About informal sector worker: Though the Unorganised Workers Social Security Act 2008 has specified the role of urban local bodies in registering numbers of informal sector worker and disseminating information regarding welfare schemes to them, these provisions are not obligatory.

- Due to this, there is lack of any credible data on how many informal sector workers enter and leave our states and cities.
- Challenge of informalisation: According to the Economic Survey of India 2019, about 90% of India's total workforce of about 500 million workers is engaged in the informal sector. This made them more vulnerable to the economic crisis induced by Covid-19.
- Some of the major challenges due to the informalisation of the workforce include lack of job security, limited or no access to banking and insurance channels, a generally under-developed public health system.
- Lack of Basic Amenities: According to the recent "Drinking Water, Sanitation, Hygiene and Housing Condition" survey by the government, there continue to be glaring gaps in water access in urban and rural India.
- Also, informal sector workers are likely to have relied more on public amenities such as hand pumps and public taps or standpipes which are connected to a municipal connection.
- These sources are generally unreliable — hand pumps and municipal pipes, for example, do not always supply water of potable quality.
- Given the importance of washing hands in combating the infection, the lack of WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) makes migrant labourers subject to work in an unsafe work environment

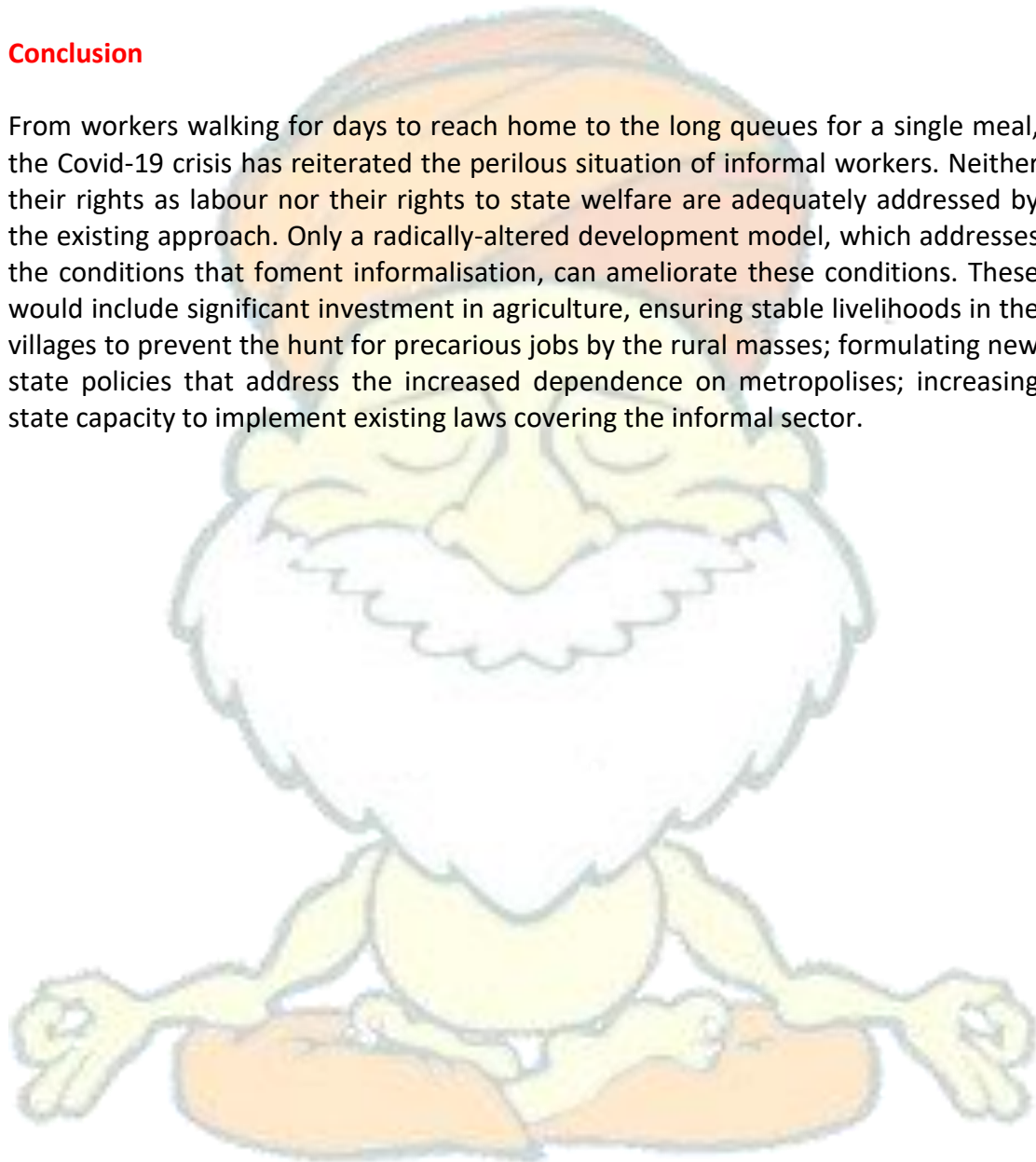
Measures to make Urban spaces more inclusive for the informal sector worker:

- Formalisation of Economy: The central and state governments need to continue their efforts to address the informality of the Indian economy, the rural-urban divide, the uneven growth within states and between regions in the country, and the social and economic inequalities associated with the poorest and vulnerable. The informal sector worker need to be supported with relevant information and counselling for job search and employment opportunities based on their skills and previous experience through their local governance and panchayat structures. Recently proposed Unorganised Worker Index Number Card by the Labour Ministry would also help in formalisation of the workforce.
- Focusing on Public Health Infrastructure: Smart cities project does well by focusing on creation of hard infrastructure for urban renewal. There is a need to strengthen the public health emergency infrastructure also. This social and financial inclusion would make the Smart Cities Mission truly holistic.
- Supporting Financially: There is a need to expedite the proposed Social Security Fund under the Code on Social Security, 2019. This could go a long way to provide a sense of financial security and act as a tool to monitor this segment of the population better.
- Creation of a Database of Migrant Workers: Recognition and identification of migrants is the first step towards a more enhanced framework to provide basic amenities. To begin with, an effort to create a database of migrant workers is most necessary. Creating a digital Pan-India database to ensure coordination with their home districts and respective states. Eventually, convergence around this could create a framework of health, banking, microfinance and insurance networks centred around workers and migrants in urban areas.

- Labour Migration Governance System: A fair and effective labour migration governance system for workers within the country is an urgent need of the hour. This is necessary for the realisation of decent work opportunities for all migrant workers while respecting fundamental human rights. Also, there is a need to ensure the protection of the labour rights of workers while taking into account the views of the employers to foster innovation in business and enterprises.

### Conclusion

From workers walking for days to reach home to the long queues for a single meal, the Covid-19 crisis has reiterated the perilous situation of informal workers. Neither their rights as labour nor their rights to state welfare are adequately addressed by the existing approach. Only a radically-altered development model, which addresses the conditions that foment informalisation, can ameliorate these conditions. These would include significant investment in agriculture, ensuring stable livelihoods in the villages to prevent the hunt for precarious jobs by the rural masses; formulating new state policies that address the increased dependence on metropolises; increasing state capacity to implement existing laws covering the informal sector.



**38. While self-reliance is important, India does not have the luxury of abandoning export orientation. Elucidate.**

**Approach** - It expects students to write answer in two parts - In first part write your argument as why India focusing on self-reliance; while in second part write about why India does not have the luxury of abandoning export orientation.

**Introduction**

Only a self-reliant nation can serve the diverse needs of its population and provide them with choices. A content nation can also contribute to the welfare of other counties with a sense of self-pride. The COVID-related pressures and the unfortunate border tensions with its largest import partner, China, present a rare opportunity for India to reinvent itself, economically.

**Body**

India now focussing on Self-Reliance due to following reasons:

- COVID-19 took very little time to spread across the world economy. International trade has been constricted and global supply chains have, by and large, been disrupted.
- Each nation has been left to fend for itself. India's dependence on other countries has been exposed in several areas. The country should now refocus on manufacturing, and be self-reliant.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave a call to fellow Indians to be "Vocal for Local" in May. This essentially means, as PM Modi explained, not only to buy and use local products, but to also take pride in promoting them.
- The Centre announced a well-considered programme, the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan (ANBA), as part of the post-pandemic economic revival package. Rs. 20 lakh crore (10% of India's GDP) was earmarked for the purpose.
- Nevertheless, experts and industrialists do assert that the ANBA is an excellent initiative and gives India the opportunity to embark on the self-reliance drive.

However, while focusing of self-reliance, India does not have the luxury of abandoning export orientation because:

- India has focused on domestic-demand led growth not just as a short-run response to Covid – 19, but as a medium-term growth strategy. All the evidence across the world and in India has shown that rapid and sustained economic growth requires export dynamism.
- Only growth can rehabilitate balance sheets; stressing balance sheets further cannot realistically revive growth. Consumption growth will be limited by the fact that household debt has grown rapidly in the last few years.
- Consumption now can grow only if incomes grow. Government spending could be a short run option, but COVID has limited that possibility. Post-COVID, India's debt is expected to rise from about 70 per cent of GDP to about 85-90 per cent and deficits are likely to be in the double-digit range. The fiscal space for spending will be severely limited both because of high levels of deficits and

indebtedness and because debt dynamics will be adverse unless growth picks up substantially.

- India may well have scope for expansionary fiscal policy in the short run but not as a medium run growth strategy. India's financial system was badly impaired even heading into the COVID crisis and will come out more seriously damaged. Given the limited progress in fixing the financial system, prospects for investment remain weak. In short, in India's current circumstances, India does not have the luxury of abandoning export orientation because the alternatives are so limited.
- We estimate that India is producing and exporting about \$60-\$140 billion (2-5 per cent of GDP) less of low-skilled activity annually than it should be. There are, of course, two ways to look at this finding. On the one hand, it is an indictment of past performance. On the other, it is also an indicator of potential future opportunity if the underlying problems are addressed.
- In recent years, because China's wages are rising as it has become richer, it has vacated about \$140 billion in exports in unskilled-labour intensive sectors, including apparel, clothing, leather and footwear. Post-COVID, the move of investors away from China will probably accelerate as they seek to hedge against supply chain disruptions because of trade actions against China.
- India did not take advantage of the first China opportunity. Now, a second opportunity stemming from geo-politics has been created and that is India's big prize waiting to be seized. Importantly, exploiting this opportunity in unskilled exports requires more not less openness.

Export success will also require genuine easing of costs of trading and doing business in India. As India contemplates atmanirbharta, two deeper advantages of export orientation are always worth remembering. First, foreign demand will always be bigger than domestic demand for any country. Second, there is also a fundamental asymmetry: If domestic producers are competitive internationally, they will be competitive domestically and domestic consumers and firms will also benefit. The reverse is not true: Being competitive only domestically is no guarantee of efficiency and low cost. In sum, resisting the misleading allure of the domestic market, India should zealously boost export performance and deploy all means to achieve that.

### **Conclusion**

Pursuing rapid export growth in manufacturing and services should be an obsession with self-evident justification. Abandoning export orientation will amount to killing the goose that lays the golden eggs and indeed killing the only goose laying the eggs.

**39. As global supply chains have disrupted during pandemic, India has a tremendous opportunity to reindustrialise. Comment.**

**Approach** - It expects students to write - in first part, write about how pandemic disrupt global supply chain - in second part write about why India has a tremendous opportunity to reindustrialise - in third part in short you can mention few constraints for reindustrialisation - while in fourth part write about How India can seize the global supply chain opportunity in the post COVID-19 era

**Introduction**

COVID-19 took very little time to spread across the world economy. International trade has been constricted and global supply chains have, by and large, been disrupted. With pandemic crisis, both regional and global supply chains stand fractured. There is a pressing need to re-evaluate the global supply chains wherein fundamental assumptions may need to be re-examined, manufacturing bases may need to be diversified, trade channels may need to be re-engineered, and investment destinations may see a shift.

**Body**

Pandemic disrupt global supply chain as follows:

- Economic activities stagnated
- Transportation halted
- Labour movement restricted
- Some MSME's shutdown
- Unemployment
- Fall in demand
- Import substitution

India has a tremendous opportunity to reindustrialise because:

- India has strongest demography: According to National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship - 54% are below 25yrs and 62% are aged between 15-59yrs.
- India's continuous efforts to improve infrastructure by various projects like Bharatmala, Sagarmala, National Infrastructure Pipeline etc.
- Recently amended labour laws can attract foreign investment which can be utilised for industrialisation.
- With the disruptions in supply chains, every company that relied on inputs from abroad has been severely impacted. It is becoming evident that the supply chain strategies that were most celebrated in pre-COVID-19 world can no longer be relied upon.
- For instance, the lean or the 'just-in-time' inventory strategies that entail manufacturers to maintain minimum raw material, may need to be revaluated. There is thus a pressing need to re-engineer the global supply chains wherein the fundamental assumptions may need to be re-examined, manufacturing

bases may need to be diversified, trade channels may need to be altered, and investment destinations may see a shift.

- In line with the urge to create a resilient supply chain system, the consumption-driven developed economies such as the EU, Americas and Asia are not only rethinking their business strategies, but also are beginning to look at other nations to mitigate their supply chain risks.

However, following are some challenges for reindustrialisation:

- **Regulatory uncertainty:** Regulatory risks and policy uncertainty in the past have dented investor confidence.
- **Investment:** There has been a cyclical slowdown in fresh investment since 2011-12.
- **Technology adoption:** The adoption of new technologies like artificial intelligence, data analytics, machine-to-machine communications, robotics and related technologies, collectively called “Industry 4.0”, are a bigger challenge for SMEs than for organized large-scale manufacturing. Data security, reliability of data and stability in communication/transmission also pose challenges to technology adoption.
- **Exports and insufficient domestic demand:** There has been no export driven industrial growth. Domestic demand alone may not be adequate for sustained, high value manufacturing.
- **Challenges to doing business:** Despite recent improvements in our global EODB rank, it continues to be a drag on the system. This is also true of investment conditions in the states. Getting construction permits, enforcing contracts, paying taxes, starting a business and trading across borders continue to constrain doing business.

India can seize the global supply chain opportunity in the post COVID-19 era by following interventions:



Under the above-mentioned groupings, some of the immediate measures the governments may undertake include:

- Immediate release of incentives under the industrial and sectoral policies.
- Enact ease of not just doing business but resuming, diversifying and expanding too.
- Allow extended operating hours.
- Provide plug-n-play infrastructure and common facility centers (CFCs) in each district, with focus on technological support and export promotion.
- Establish helpdesks and digital platform to bridge information gap between suppliers, buyers and logistics service providers.

- Revisit, renegotiate and enforce FTAs, especially with respect to value addition clauses and change in import-export basket of India.

### Conclusion

With the newly defined objectives of global companies and countries to reduce their supply chain risks in the long term and fix the broken value chains in the short term, India has an exclusive opportunity to emerge as the preferred destination during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.





**40. With its focus on equity and critical learning, NEP addresses present, future challenges. Elucidate.**

**Approach** - It expects students to write - in first part about present challenges faced by Indian education system - in second part write how different provisions of NEP addressed present and future challenges while focusing equity and critical learning. In end write 1-2 points about few lacunas.

**Introduction**

The Union Cabinet approved the National Education Policy (NEP) in July 2020. This policy will usher in sweeping changes to the education policy of the country, including a renaming of the Ministry of Human Resource Development as the Education Ministry. The NEP 2020 aims at making “India a global knowledge superpower”.

**Body**

Currently Indian Education system faces following challenges:

School Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate public funding in the sector.</li> <li>• Disproportionate focus on school infrastructure as opposed to learning outcomes.</li> <li>• Challenges in governance and monitoring mechanisms for learning outcomes.</li> <li>• Accountability systems in government schools.</li> <li>• Inadequate teacher training, large number of teaching vacancies and rampant absenteeism.</li> <li>• Limited options for vocational education in the school system.</li> <li>• Inadequate support and counselling given to children in schools.</li> </ul>
Higher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdated and multiple regulatory mechanisms limit innovation and progressive change.</li> <li>• Outdated curriculum results in a mismatch between education and job market requirements, dampens students’ creativity and hampers the development of their analytical abilities.</li> <li>• Quality assurance or accreditation mechanisms are inadequate.</li> <li>• There is no policy framework for participation of foreign universities in higher education.</li> <li>• There is no overarching funding body to promote and encourage research and innovation.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public funding in the sector remains inadequate.</li> <li>• There are a large number of faculty posts lying vacant, for example in central universities, nearly 33 per cent of teacher posts were vacant in March 2018; faculty training is inadequate.</li> </ul>
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NEP 2020 addressed present and future challenges by focusing on equity and critical learning as follows:

- NEP is important for several quantitative, and more importantly, qualitative changes. These range from pre-school to higher education with thrust on practicality and skill development; breaking the stereotypical divide of arts, commerce and science streams in high school; reorganising schooling years; making the education system more inclusive; permission to foreign universities to establish branches in India; and thrust on Indian and ancient languages.
- Other transformative changes relate to education in the local language or mother tongue at least up to the fifth grade and if possible, eighth and beyond; universal access and early childhood education; curriculum change leading to learning outcomes (LOs) and competencies; stress on equity, gender, special needs and promotion of multilingualism.
- It focuses on early child development, the endeavour to reduce the dropout rate, putting in place different forms of assessment, the emphasis on essential learning and critical thinking and the centrality of the teacher and teacher education.
- The NEP will bring two crore out-of-school children back into the mainstream. The policy aims at a 100 per cent Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in school education by 2030 and 50 GER in higher education by 2025 – it's currently about 25 per cent.
- Some elements of the overarching Universal Access to Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) framework relate to the NCERT's National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Education (NCPFCE). It also involves aligning NCPFCE with the latest research on ECCE and national and international best practices. The integration of vocational education with basic education in all institutions by identifying focus areas based on skills gap analysis and mapping of local opportunities will develop entrepreneurial competencies.
- Innovations in the higher education ecosystem include high-quality universities and colleges, multidisciplinary education, learning optimisation, extension of the graduate course from three to four years, multiple entry and exit points, college teachers' education, replacement of the UGC, AICTE and NAAC, dispensing with the MPhil programme and the proposed National Research Foundation. The key principles of the NEP relate to accessibility, equality, accountability, affordability, and quality of education.

- The “fragmented” ecosystem of higher education will be integrated once NEP’s vision of combining different institutions into multidisciplinary universities and “higher education institution clusters” or “knowledge hubs” is realised. By upgrading the digital infrastructure, emphasising on learning at your own pace and underlining the importance of online courses, the NEP attempts to bridge the digital divide.
- The policy talks of solving mathematics problems through a variety of innovative methods, including the regular use of puzzles and games. There is a provision to teach coding at the middle-school level.
- The philosophy of access, equity, infrastructure, governance and learning has ultimately to be grounded in action to drive India’s growth, modernisation and structural transformation. The policy justifiably aims to increase the spending on education from the current 3.2 per cent of GDP to 6 per cent of the GDP.

However, mobilising funds could be difficult because of the resource crunch, low tax-to-GDP ratio, kick-starting the economy, strife with neighbours and competing development requirements. The policy’s success will also hinge on its integration with the government’s other policies — the New Industrial Policy, Digital India, Skill India, Atmanirbhar Bharat and the “vocal for local” programme.

### Conclusion

NEP 2020 present wide-ranging reforms in the policy are aimed at making the Indian education system more contemporary and skill-oriented. Proper implementation of the reforms and ideas envisioned in the NEP 2020 will fundamentally transform India.

With the emphasis on knowledge-economy driven growth in the 21st century, this is precisely what India needs to dominate in the future decades of growth and drive the education requirements of our young population.

**41. The Quad offers a great opportunity for reforming China-centred economic globalisation. Comment.**

**Approach** - As the directive is comment, it is important to pick out the main points and give one's opinion based on the information or the arguments originated from the reading. One should take a neutral ground and write facts and viewpoints. Introduction for this question may start with explanation of what is quad, what are subsequent developments and what is the main focus of this group.

**Introduction**

The Quad, or the quadrilateral security dialogue between India, US, Japan and Australia, is now emblematic of the geopolitical churn in the eastern hemisphere. Less noted but equally significant is its geo-economic agenda that has drawn South Korea, Vietnam and New Zealand into the post-pandemic consultations in the so-called "Quad Plus" format. In both the domains, China is the natural focus.

**Body**

The policy discourse is about blunting Beijing's ambition to exercise regional hegemony and preventing it from bending the global economic order in China's favour.

- Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) is the informal strategic dialogue between India, USA, Japan and Australia with a shared objective to ensure and support a "free, open and prosperous" Indo-Pacific region.
- The idea of Quad was first mooted by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007. However, the idea couldn't move ahead with Australia pulling out of it, apparently due to Chinese pressure.
- In December 2012, Shinzo Abe again floated the concept of Asia's "Democratic Security Diamond" involving Australia, India, Japan and the US to safeguard the maritime commons from the Indian Ocean to the western Pacific.
- In November 2017, India, the US, Australia and Japan gave shape to the long-pending "Quad" Coalition to develop a new strategy to keep the critical sea routes in the Indo-Pacific free of any influence (especially China).

China has been the chief beneficiary of the globalisation of the world economy which began accelerating since the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s.

- This phase of relatively free movement of capital and technology and goods and services enabled China to transform itself into a low-cost manufacturing hub for the world.
- It became an export powerhouse leveraging its access to the large consuming markets of the US, Europe and Japan.
- Thanks to its brand of state capitalism and managed markets, China emerged relatively unscathed from the global financial and economic crisis (GFEC) of

2007-8 while the advanced capitalist economies of the West faced prolonged disruption and stagnation.

- The Western consensus behind globalisation has been eroded as competition from China has sharpened. As China, accelerated its ambition of becoming a world super power through its Belt and Road Initiative, Cheque book diplomacy etc. and by becoming a hub of global manufacturing industry.
- Due to this there is a rise in protectionist sentiments in the West, a greater scrutiny of inward investment particularly for acquisitions in the high-tech sector, and growing sensitivity over loss of intellectual property to Chinese firms.
- Also, Chinese aggression with its neighbours regarding Land boundary and maritime boundary issues forced the global leaders to think about opening a wide front against China on diplomatic table.

QUAD a great opportunity for reforming China-centred economic globalisation:

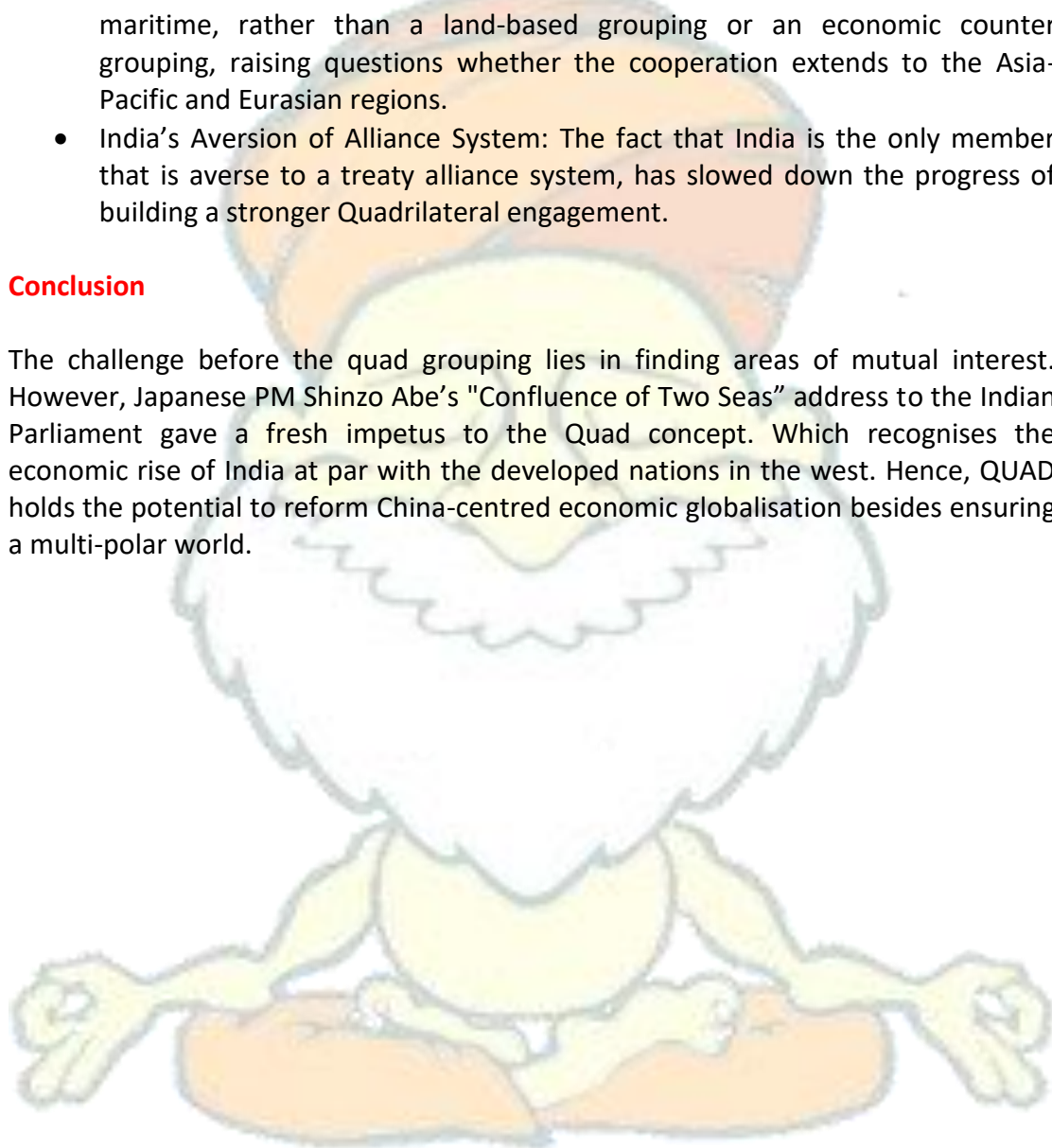
- As of now, it is an ad hoc grouping that has the potential to develop itself into a full-fledged economic and security-based international organisation.
- It is clear by now that India's foreign and domestic policies have started countering China's rise with the banning of several Chinese Apps and upholding the 'self-reliance' model of economic growth.
- The US has described China, along with Russia, as a strategic rival in its National Security Strategy, National Defence Strategy and the Pentagon's report on Indo-Pacific Strategy.
- Quad is an opportunity for like-minded countries to share notes and collaborate on projects of mutual interest.
- Members share a vision of an open and free Indo-Pacific. Each is involved in development and economic projects as well as in promoting maritime domain awareness and maritime security.
- It is one of the many avenues for interaction among India, Australia, Japan and the US and should not be seen in an exclusive context.
- Confronting an expansive Chinese aggression on its frontiers and Beijing's growing strategic influence in the subcontinent and the Indian Ocean, Its and opportunity for Delhi to explore security coalition-building with its Quad partners.
- India has also been a pioneer in economic decoupling from China. For instance, its withdrawal from the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership in 2019 and its opposition to China's Belt and Road Initiative first articulated in 2017.
- USA has laid out a comprehensive framework for addressing the ideological, political, economic, and technological and security challenges posed by China. But disentangling the web of economic interdependence woven over the last four decades is not easy.
- Free, open, prosperous and inclusive Indo-Pacific region serves the long-term interests of all countries in the region and of the world at large.

Hence, Quad shows a great potential to check China's ambitions be it in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond. However, global community is of the opinion that China's rise cannot be halted but can only be countered with an equally strong economic and security-oriented organisation and the Quad fits the setting. However, some of the following challenges persists in-front of QUAD grouping.

- **Undefined Vision:** Despite the potential for cooperation, the Quad remains a mechanism without a defined strategic mission.
- **Maritime Dominated:** The entire focus on the Indo-Pacific makes the Quad a maritime, rather than a land-based grouping or an economic counter grouping, raising questions whether the cooperation extends to the Asia-Pacific and Eurasian regions.
- **India's Aversion of Alliance System:** The fact that India is the only member that is averse to a treaty alliance system, has slowed down the progress of building a stronger Quadrilateral engagement.

### Conclusion

The challenge before the quad grouping lies in finding areas of mutual interest. However, Japanese PM Shinzo Abe's "Confluence of Two Seas" address to the Indian Parliament gave a fresh impetus to the Quad concept. Which recognises the economic rise of India at par with the developed nations in the west. Hence, QUAD holds the potential to reform China-centred economic globalisation besides ensuring a multi-polar world.



**42. How ethical do you find the behaviour of journalists nowadays? Hasn't journalism lost its high moral ground? Comment in the context of corporate control of media houses and the trend of intrusive media trials.**

**Approach** - It expects student to write about - In first part write few points about importance of media ethics - In second part write about how ethical journalism lost its ground nowadays due to corporate control and media trial - while in third part mention few points about how there are some journalist still work with high ethical standards.

### **Introduction**

The Journalism which provide accurate information from the source to the audience without any influence of political party, organisation is known as ethical Journalism. Ethical journalists must seek out and report on the truth, no matter how difficult or unpleasant it might be. They must ensure the information they provide is accurate, whether that means cross-checking eyewitness accounts, doing independent research, or verifying a source's credibility. At the same time, they must balance the objective reporting they strive for with the impact that reporting might have on the story's subjects or elsewhere.

### **Body**

Journalism in developing countries like India has immense importance as:

- It acts as a watchdog of public interest in a democracy. It plays an important role in a democracy and serves as an agency of the people to inform them of the events of national and international significance. It is the means by which people receive a free flow of information and ideas, which is essential to intelligent self-governance, that is, democracy.
- Freedom of the media is part of the freedom of speech guaranteed by the Constitution under Article 19 (1) (a).
- One of the basic tasks of the media is to provide truthful and objective information to the people for their social, political and international awareness to reach an informed opinion. This makes media an important stakeholder in a democracy to shoulder the responsibility of presenting unbiased honest news without any vested interest.
- Media is considered as "Fourth Pillar" in democratic countries along with Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary. Its importance in influencing readers can be gauged by the role it played during the freedom struggle, politically educating millions of Indians who joined the leaders in their fight against the British imperialism. The role of media in Indian democracy has undergone massive changes, from the days of press censorship during Emergency in 1975 to being influential in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections.

Due to corporate control of media and profit making attitude now days it observed that media acts less ethically & immorally on many instances:

- The issues of paid news, media trial, non-issues being presented as real news while the real issues are side lined, the news is being doctored and fact distortion for profits and political favour, fake news, yellow journalism are important concerns which are influencing public and impacting national security. For instance, fear mongering through media has led to mob lynchings, attacks on the migrant population.
- The absence of objective journalism leads to the false presentation of truth in a society which affects the perception and opinions of people. As observed in the case of Cambridge analytica case, the biased news coverage on social media platform affected the Presidential elections in the U.S.
- The chase for sensationalism and higher TRP rates as observed in the coverage of 26/11 terrorist attacks in India risked the internal security of the nation. The sensationalism-driven reporting compromised the identities of rape victims and survivors despite SC guidelines.
- Trial by media does not follow the due process of law and can reduce the public trust in institutions of governance like the judiciary.
- Paid news and fake news can manipulate public perception and can instigate hatred, violence, and disharmony among the various community within society.
- With the advent of social media, technological changes, the reach of media has grown profoundly. Its reach and role in impacting public opinion have made it even more important to ensure its objectivity, non-partisanship calls for the enforcement of journalistic ethics.

However, earlier major chunk of journalist works from urban area but with rise of social media and increased penetration of internet there are many independent journalists who are working from rural and semi-urban area. These journalist work without any corporate support and on non-profit basis independently, while sticking to ethical principles of journalism.

### **Conclusion**

In developing countries like India, the journalist has a great responsibility to fight backward ideas such as casteism and communalism and help the people in their struggle against poverty and other social evils. Hence, having journalistic ethics in place becomes very important. It is important that the media stick to the core principles like truth and accuracy, transparency, independence, fairness and impartiality, responsibility and fair play.



**43. In the age of social media influencers, ethics and morality have taken a backseat. Do you agree? Critically examine.**

**Approach** - As the directive here is critically examine, it is necessary to look deep at both aspects of the issue then arrive at fair judgment. In the intro part one can explain who social media influencers are and how they influence society, people etc. It is necessary to connect social media influencers with our syllabus point of social influence and persuasion. In the main body part both aspects of the issue needs to be deeply checked and before conclusion a fair judgment with examples has to be given. One can conclude by showing how social media influencers can play a prominent role in maintaining ethics and morality in the world.

### **Introduction**

Social media Influencers are people who have built a reputation for their knowledge and expertise on a specific topic. They make regular posts about that topic on their preferred social media channels and generate large followings of enthusiastic, engaged people who pay close attention to their views. For instance, Footballer Chritiano Ronaldo keeps his fans committed to his content with regular updates on his life and football practise sessions.

### **Body**

Social influence is the change in behaviour that one person causes in another, intentionally or unintentionally. Social influence and persuasion are the most efficient tools to bring about change in the participation levels of people in policy implementation. However in the age of social media we are witnessing a wide scale impact of social media influencers.

- A Social media influencer has the tools and authenticity to attract many viewers consistently and can motivate others to expand their social reach. An influencer may be anyone from a blogger to a celebrity to an online entrepreneur.
- Their audience isn't limited to their actual followers; they can connect with the followers of their followers who share their content. As a result, they engage in many sponsored posts, allowing them to be paid for what they share on social media.
- Also, Social media influencers can have a significant impact on brand outreach considering influencers garner more social engagement than the advertising brand's account.

Ethics and Morality at the backseat in the age of Social media influencers:

- **Spread of Hate:** In this super competitive age of 21st century, survival of human beings is threatened by many factors. Hate speech and spreading fake news through social media handles became one of them. For instance, Social media influencer Jessy Taylor had to face wrath of people over her racist comments.

- Growth of insensitivity: Human is a social animal and lives in a society which is interdependent. However, due to social media influencers sensitivity of human beings is getting hampered. For instance, many of the time a buzz on twitter is seen when attack on minority community takes place. Many of the social media influencers on twitter insensitively took the sides of convicts or criminals who did some of the horrible crimes against minorities.
- Social media influencers even attain lowest level of not following ethics and morality in the social media sphere. For instance, a beauty YouTuber went to the worst rated salon in her area and claimed to get a skin infection, but was accused of lying by the owners.
- One such insane act is a famous YouTuber family sold replicas of their actual baby online, and people were weirded out. The Ingham Family, who have 1.2 million subscribers on YouTube, made a life-like replica doll of their four-month-old baby Jace in collaboration with dollmaker Mary Shortle. Some fans love the idea of getting their own Jace clone, complete with birth certificate and nappies. Others were horrified, calling it "unbelievably weird," "creepy," and "irresponsible."
- Throughout our life we heard this saying that 'lying is crime', however, in the age of social media influencers, 'lying is a trend'. For instance, Carissa Pinkston, a 20-year-old model for Rihanna's Savage X Fenty brand, made transphobic comments on Facebook, saying trans women aren't real women. She then backtracked and claimed to be transgender herself.
- People are getting mesmerised by the kind of glamour they can achieve through Social media influencing. For instance, An Instagram influencer who documented her motorcycle crash was accused of sponsoring the posts and glamorizing the accident.
- In this age it is also becoming difficult to understand who lies and who is telling the truth. For instance, in a recent controversy where the Baba ka dhaba owner got recognition due to a Youtuber was applauded by the public at large. However, the same owner later on accused the Youtuber for cheating and stealing his money.
- Role of society on shaping children personality is of utmost importance. However, recent instances of exposing nudity and behaving in an unethical way through tik tok like social media platforms left a bad impact on children's mind. It seems like social media influencers have left the ethics and morality.
- Many of the social media influencers claim that they are more animal friendly or humane in nature but in reality they act in double standard way. However, a youtuber through her vlog demonstrated how to eat a live octopus. It's an inhumane act where people are getting less sensitive towards the animals.
- The basis of ethics and morality lies in respecting the individual. However, the incidence of a youtuber vs tik toker where they abused each other shows that both have left this basic principle and forgot to show respect to each other.

- The rise of influencer marketing even led this issue to the next level. For instance, people are just running behind money. To get money they can do whatever they want. Marketing through social media platforms is such a move. For instance, the term 'influencer marketing's increased by 325% in Google search in 2017.

Social influence is one of the biggest tools to change the whole picture of society. It works in three types, i.e. Compliance, Identification and Internationalisation. We can relate the Identification, and internationalisation types with respect to social media influencers. For instance, people worship celebrities and follow them, the kind of social media influence celebrities have is identified by the public and they follow them. Though we have seen many incidences where social media influencers left a negative impression wrt ethics and morality. There are many incidences where they uphold the ethics and morality.

Ethics and Morality upheld in the age of Social media influencers:

- Social influence in swachh bharat: Many of the social media influencers understood their responsibility towards the society and took part in promoting Swachh bharat abhiyan.
- It shows they adhered moral responsibility. In some of the tragic incidences social media used their spread and reach to aware people about the gravity of the tragic incidences and what we should do when these kind of situations occur. For instance, Hathras tragedy.
- Social media influencers even many of the times used their social media handles to spread the message against evils in society and spread awareness. For instance, campaign of selfie with daughter is one such example where people campaigned against female infanticide and promoted the campaign of 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao'.
- It highlights that they adhered to their moral responsibility. Our prime minister also uses his influencing reach on social media to promote government campaigns and spread awareness. For instance, wide scale use of social media influence by PMO to spread awareness regarding COVID-19 pandemic.
- Following this move, social media influencers in India and across the globe too spread awareness regarding norms to follow during COVID-19. For instance, bollywood celebrities through their collective effort created a short film cum message to spread awareness regarding covid-19 pandemic. From the above mentioned arguments and examples it is evident that in the age of social media influencers ethics and morality have not taken a back seat, instead they promoted ethics and morality.

### Conclusion

'Technology is a two edged sword', hence it depends on the user who uses it and in which way the user use it. Though, ethics and morality have taken the back seat in the age of social media due to some irresponsible social media influencers, it is even

upheld by some other social media influencers in the society. It's not a problem of the age of social media influencers but it's the problem of the way in which social media influencer uses their social influencing potential. Hence, it is of no doubt that the righteous and judicious use of social media influencing will bring sweet fruits of peace and harmony in the society there by ensuring ethics and morality take their front seat.

