

OFFICERS IAS ACADEMY™

OFFICERS' PULSE



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CURRENT AFFAIRS
MONTHLY

The **PULSE** of UPSC at your fingertips.

Foreword

Officers Pulse-In Depth provides detailed analyses of significant articles from a variety of sources including **The Hindu, Indian Express, Business Standard, Down To Earth, Yojana, Kurukshetra, and others. These insights are extremely valuable for UPSC CSE Mains preparation. To ensure comprehensive preparation for both Prelims & Mains, we recommend studying Officers Pulse-In Depth along with Officers Pulse-Digest.**

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1) PRIVATE MEMBER BILLS

(GS-II: Parliament and State Legislatures—Structure, Functioning, Conduct of Business, Powers & Privileges and Issues Arising out of these)

Definition and Background

- Private Member's Bills (PMBs) are a mechanism through which Members of Parliament (MP), who are **not Ministers, can propose their own legislation.**
- In India's parliamentary system, most laws are introduced by the government, drafted by Ministries and tabled by Ministers.
- In contrast, PMBs come from individual MPs, both ruling party or the Opposition.
- In each session, **Fridays are usually reserved for discussion on PMBs.** PMBs are perhaps the last remaining intervention wherein MPs are not strictly guided by party mandate.
- Since Independence, **only 14 PMBs have been passed and received presidential assent and none has cleared both Houses since 1970.**
- In the 17th Lok Sabha (2019-24), 729 PMBs were introduced in the Lok Sabha and 705 in the Rajya Sabha. However, only two in the Lok Sabha and 14 in the Rajya Sabha were ever discussed.

Significance of PMBs

- **Platform for Independent Legislative Initiative:** PMBs provide MPs, especially those not who are not a part of the Council of Ministers, a rare opportunity to propose legislation independently of the government's agenda.
 - This enables MPs to reflect their **personal convictions, respond to constituency needs, and address emerging social issues.**
- **Catalyst for Social and Policy Debates:** Even if not passed, PMBs often initiate important national conversations.
 - For instance, MP Supriya Sule's **Right to Disconnect Bill** initiated dialogue around mental health, work-life balance, and digital-age labour rights.
- **Instrument for Policy Innovation:** PMBs serve as testing grounds for **novel or unconventional policy ideas.** These proposals, though unofficial, can influence or shape future government legislation.
 - This was seen with the **Rights of Transgender Persons Bill**, moved by MP Tiruchi Siva, which laid the groundwork for the 2019 government Act.
- **Democratic Deepening and Accountability:** By enabling MPs to address concerns of the constituency directly, PMBs enhance the democratic function of Parliament as a forum for public representation.
 - They uphold the principle that MPs are **not merely party representatives** but also accountable to the people who elected them.

Reasons for low PMB passage in recent decades

- **Prioritization of Government Business:** Government-sponsored Bills take more time and weightage in Parliament's day to day functioning.
 - Increasing time is allocated to Government legislation, often at the cost of the limited time reserved for PMBs, usually on Fridays.
- **Frequent Disruptions and Adjournments:** Sessions are often disrupted due to political conflicts, protests, or walkouts.
 - These disruptions affect functioning on Fridays, the designated day for PMBs, leading to cancellations or adjournments before any discussion can take place.
- **Limited Political Will and Institutional Support:** PMBs are rarely taken seriously by the government or party leaderships.

- There is minimal institutional encouragement or follow-through, and even high-quality Bills often fail to gain the attention required for passage or meaningful debate.
- **Anti-Defection Law and Party Control:** The **Tenth Schedule (Anti-Defection Law)** limits MPs' freedom to act independently of their parties.
 - As a result, ruling party MPs hesitate to introduce or push PMBs that may appear to conflict with the government's position.
 - *A legislator is deemed to have defected if he either voluntarily gives up the membership of his party or disobeys the directives of the party leadership on a vote.*
 - *This implies that a legislator defying (abstaining or voting against) the party whip on any issue can lose his membership of the House.*
- **Procedural and Structural Limitations:** The rules for introducing and debating PMBs are complex and outdated.
 - There is no fast-track system, no guaranteed discussion time, and no prioritization based on public interest. Unlike government Bills, PMBs lack procedural momentum and support mechanisms.

Way Forward

- **Fixed and Dedicated Time:** There is a need to treat the time earmarked for PMBs as sacrosanct. Amendments to the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business should explicitly protect this time from being overridden, except in cases of a national emergency.
- **Specific Review Mechanism:** Parliament could consider instituting a review committee specifically for PMBs, responsible for screening Bills for quality, relevance, and constitutionality.
 - A fast-track mechanism may also be introduced for high-impact or broadly supported Bills to reach the floor in a time-bound manner.
- **Extension of Parliamentary Working hours:** In instances where the government feels constrained by time to transact its own legislative business, it should consider extending the overall working hours of Parliament, rather than encroaching upon the Fridays reserved for PMBs.
 - An extension, even by an hour or two, can significantly improve the productivity of Zero Hour and Question Hour, while ensuring that PMBs remain undisturbed.
- **International Best Practices:** Ten-Minute Rule of the U.K. Parliament where any MP can make a short speech of up to 10 minutes in support of a PMB along with its introduction after which another MP may oppose it for an equal length of time.
 - This allows Bills to be introduced, heard, and recorded without long time slots.
- The Vice President of India and Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, Jagdeep Dhankhar, has laid emphasis on the role of private member's business in deepening democracy.
 - He described PMBs as "far-sighted, forward-looking, and a gold mine" for India's legislative landscape.

2) PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT IN INDIA

(GS-II: Parliament and State Legislatures—Structure, Functioning, Conduct of Business, Powers & Privileges and Issues Arising out of these)

Definition

- The Parliamentary Oversight is a means for **holding the executive accountable for its actions** and for ensuring that it implements policies in **accordance with the laws and budget** passed by the parliament.
- The robust monitoring of the executive by the parliament is an **indicator of good governance**.

- **Question Hour, Zero Hour, Parliamentary Committees and Department Related Standing committees** are instruments of Parliamentary oversight in India.

Issues in Parliamentary Oversight in India

- **Disruption in Question Hour:** Question Hour, a key tool for executive accountability, is frequently disrupted by protests, leading to adjournments.
 - During the 17th Lok Sabha (2019–24), it functioned only 60% of the time in Lok Sabha and 52% in Rajya Sabha, reducing its effectiveness.
- **Parliamentary Committees:** Although committees produce detailed reports, these are often not discussed on the floor of Parliament.
 - Their recommendations have limited influence on legislation or executive action due to a lack of follow-through.
- **Insufficient Stakeholder Engagement and Expertise:** Committee consultations typically involve a narrow set of stakeholders.
 - The temporary nature of committees limits MPs' ability to develop deep expertise and institutional memory.
- **Lack of Post-Legislative Scrutiny:** India lacks a formal system to assess whether laws are effectively implemented or achieving their intended outcomes.
 - This hampers Parliament's ability to ensure accountability after laws are passed.

Way Forward

- **Introduce Post-Legislative Scrutiny:** Establish formal mechanisms (e.g., subcommittees or dedicated bodies) to review the implementation and impact of laws after their passage.
 - Models like the one used in the United Kingdom, where government departments submit impact reviews of major laws within 3–5 years.
- **Institutionalise Committee Work:** Provide committees with dedicated research and technical support to enhance their effectiveness.
 - Encourage wider stakeholder consultation and improve continuity to build institutional expertise.
- **Technology and Data Analytics:** Using Artificial Intelligence and data tools will help MPs analyze complex documents, detect irregularities, and ask sharper, evidence-based questions.
 - MPs can be provided with professional research staff to better scrutinize government policies and spending.

UPSC PYQs:

Do Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committees keep the administration on its toes and inspire reverence for parliamentary control? Evaluate the working of such committees with suitable examples. (2021)

3) INDIA AND THE ARCTIC

(GS-II: Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests, Indian Diaspora)

Background:

- **Himadri, India's research station in the International Arctic Research Base is at Svalbard** in Norway.
- India has a historical involvement in the Arctic, dating back to the signing of the **Svalbard Treaty in 1920**.

- Its scientific research initiatives in the region, focusing on areas such as microbiology, atmospheric sciences, and geology, contribute to global understanding of climate change and its impacts.
- In 2008, India became the only developing country, aside from China, to establish an Arctic research base.
- **India was granted 'observer' status by the Arctic Council in 2013.** India commissioned a **multi-sensor moored observatory** in Svalbard in 2014 and an **atmospheric laboratory** in 2016.
- The work at these stations focuses on examining Arctic ice systems and glaciers and the consequences of Arctic melt on the Himalayas and the **Indian monsoon**.
- Long seen as an area of scientific cooperation and environmental protection, the polar north is becoming a theatre of military and geopolitical competition.
- With Russia more assertive, China expanding its Arctic ambitions, and USA renewing interest in Greenland, the region appears set for a renewed phase of strategic contest.

Significance of Arctic for India

- **Strategic and Geopolitical Relevance:** As the Arctic becomes a zone of military and geopolitical competition, India cannot afford to stay disengaged.
 - The growing Russia-China coordination in the region directly affects India's broader strategic interests, especially in the Indo-Pacific.
- **Impact on Trade and Maritime Connectivity:** The **Northern Sea Route (NSR)**, now more navigable due to climate change, could divert global shipping traffic away from traditional Indian Ocean routes.
 - This threatens India's ambitions to be a regional connectivity hub and weakens initiatives like SAGAR.
- **Environmental and Climate Linkages:** Changes in the Arctic, particularly glacial melt and atmospheric shifts, have direct consequences for South Asia's water security and monsoon systems.
- **Global Governance:** As new governance structures around Arctic infrastructure, shipping, and the blue economy emerge, India must ensure it has a seat at the table to influence rules and standards that align with its interests and values.

Conclusion

- India's current Arctic posture needs an update that can manage the growing geopolitical fault lines in the region.

4) CIVIL SERVICES IN INDIA

(GS-II: Role of Civil Services in a Democracy)

Background

- The term '**Civil Service**' refers to the **administrative machinery** of the Central and State governments (including local bodies), which is responsible for **implementing policies** made by the political executive, which constitutes the elected representatives in our democracy.
- The civil servants are also known as **Permanent Executive**.
- **Lord Cornwallis, as Governor-General of Bengal in the 1790s**, is credited with laying the groundwork for a structured civil service by implementing reforms aimed at improving governance and reducing corruption.

Role of Civil Services

- Our Constitution vests the **executive power** of the Union and the State in **the President and the Governor** respectively and states that this executive power shall be **exercised by**

them directly or through officers subordinate to them in accordance with the Constitution.

- These officers belong to our permanent civil service. In effect, it is the Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister or the Chief Minister at their head, who exercise the executive power of the State through officers of the Civil Service
- **Implementation of all laws and policies of Government is the foremost function of Civil Services.**
- **Formulation of policies** at Central and State levels is done **by civil servants on behalf of political executives.**
- A permanent Civil Service is a must for any parliamentary democracy. **In the midst of change of governments due to periodic elections, the Civil Service provides an element of stability and continuity** without which an orderly government would be impossible.
- Civil servants act as **agents of change** in the society by bringing and implementing reforms in all possible sectors.
- **Ensures welfare and development** of people of the country in accordance with the Constitutional Values.
- **Limited adjudication role** in bodies like tribunals.

Issues in functioning of Civil Services

- **Degradation in quality** of civil servants with
 - increasing **corrupt practices,**
 - decreasing **value systems,**
 - increasing **groupism,**
 - decreasing **neutrality and anonymity.**
- **Unholy nexus** with political executives for better postings and illegal remuneration.
 - A different aspect of this problem is **political interference into the functioning of civil servants.**
 - This may push an **upright civil servant to follow an illegal instruction given.**
- **Stagnating skillsets of civil servants** once they enter into the service leading to outdated administrative setup.
- **Rigid laws and rules** which hinder outcome based functioning of the civil servants.
 - Failure to follow rigid due process may bring the civil servant under the watch of Vigilance agencies.
 - This **rigidity obstructs innovation** in solving public issues.
- **Lack of effective enforcement mechanisms** to implement the good governance principles of transparency and accountability.
- **Lack of tenure protection and frequent transfers for civil servants hinders** them to be **effective** instruments of public policy.

Way Forward

- **Hota committee** gave broad recommendations for Civil service reforms
 - **Periodic review** of Officers through **Annual performance plans, 5 yearly performance reviews and 15 yearly reviews.**
 - **Article 311 of the Constitution to be amended** to enable the **President or the Governor to dismiss or remove public servants** in case of **corrupt practice** or having **assets disproportionate** to known source of income.
 - There should be a **cooling off period of at least two years after resignation or retirement** before a civil servant can join a **political party** and contest elections to **any political office.**

- Take measures like **performance awards to promote greater performance** of civil servants.
- To provide a clean, honest and transparent government, **outdated rules and procedures in Government must be discarded and new simplified rules be put in place**. Such an exercise is absolutely **essential for the introduction of e-governance**. **Making Officers e-governance friendly** is one the main recommendations of this committee.
- **Second Administrative Reforms Committee** also has given measures
 - Ensuring **multidimensional accountability from the civil servants**.
 - **Performance Management System(PMS)** to ensure competitive performance from the civil servants.
 - **Periodic review** should be brought in and **appraisal mechanisms should be made more transparent**.
 - Creating options for **Lateral Entry** to attract best talents **from the private sector**.
 - **Disciplinary proceedings** against Civil servants should be **mandatorily consulted with UPSC only in the case of dismissal or removal of the particular civil servant**.
- In a democracy, a neutral bureaucracy needs to be **insulated from undue political interference** to uphold the rule of law and constitutional values.
- To maintain a smooth balance between the political and permanent executive, the autonomy of career bureaucrats is essential.
- **A shift from 'procedure' to 'outcomes'**: Monitoring at present in the government is primarily through the measurement of outlays and at best through outputs.
- There is a need to move towards measurement of 'outcomes.' This reform can be hastened by **hiring domain experts as lateral entrants**, especially at senior levels. These reforms would uphold the essential traits of an effective civil service.

UPSC PYQs:

Initially Civil Services in India were designed to achieve the goals of neutrality and effectiveness, which seems to be lacking in the present context. Do you agree with the view that drastic reforms are required in Civil Services. Comment. (2017)

5) CASTE CENSUS IN INDIA

(GS-II: Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors and Issues arising out of their Design and Implementation)

Background

- The Indian Census is the largest single source of various statistical information on various characteristics of the people of India.
- As per **Article 246 of the Constitution of India**, **Census is a union subject** listed at 69 in the Union List in the Seventh Schedule.
- It started in the **year 1872** when the **first census** was conducted non-synchronously in different parts of India.
- The **Census of 1881** was the first Census exercise conducted in the entire Indian subcontinent in a synchronous manner.
- Since then, Censuses have been undertaken uninterruptedly once in every ten years until 2011.

- In the **censuses after 1951, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe data was collected** but full **Caste data was not collected after 1931**.
- All our understanding of caste arithmetic (names and headcounts of different castes in the Other Backward Class(OBC) category, General category, etc) is based on this exercise conducted some 90 years ago.
- In the 2011 Census, the Parliament resolved to count caste numbers but the experiment failed due to reasons like lack of legal backing, open ended questions and undertrained enumerators (persons collecting census data).
- Opposition parties say this is not acceptable, especially when caste is a crucial base for the formulation of multiple welfare schemes, amid fears that large sections of beneficiaries were being left out of government schemes.
- The Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs has decided to conduct caste enumeration in the upcoming Census.

Need for a Caste Census

- **Evidence-Based Policymaking:** A caste census provides detailed data necessary for framing inclusive and effective public policies. Without this data, social justice measures (like reservations) are based on outdated estimates and are prone to inefficiency and inequity.
- **Fair Distribution of Benefits:** Reliable caste data can expose how a small group within the OBCs or upper castes dominates access to state benefits.
 - A caste census allows identification of underrepresented and overrepresented castes, enabling **rational sub-categorisation** and better targeting.
- **Legal and Constitutional Mandate:** The Constitution mandates affirmative action based on social and educational backwardness. The Supreme Court has also supported that caste is a valid proxy for backwardness.
- **Administrative Necessity:** For implementing policies like OBC reservations in panchayats (under the 73rd and 74th Amendments) and Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) reservations, caste data across all regions is critical. This ensures policy planning at local levels is responsive to demographic realities.
- **Correct Historical Oversight:** While SCs and STs have been regularly enumerated since 1951, OBCs and upper castes have been excluded. This has made many marginalized groups statistically invisible, limiting their representation and inclusion in governance and planning.

Measures to conduct a Proper Census

- **Legal Backing:** Census Act, 1948 should be amended to explicitly mandate caste enumeration and insulate the process from shifting political situation of the country.
- **Right Institution:** The responsibility of the exercise should be with the body, Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, who have proper domain expertise.
- **Standardised Questionnaire:** Use closed-option questions with dropdown menus covering sub-caste, caste (including aliases), broader caste group, and caste-linked surname (optional). Assign unique digital codes to avoid duplication and semantic confusion.
- **State-Specific Caste Lists:** Develop draft lists in consultation with State governments, sociologists, and community leaders. Publish them online and invite public feedback before finalisation using a participatory approach.
- **Enumerator Training:** Conduct region-specific training sessions with mock examples, clear dos and don'ts, and guidance on local caste nuances to minimise confusion and errors.
- **Digital Tools:** Equip enumerators with handheld devices preloaded with validated caste lists. Restrict data entry to predefined options to ensure accuracy and consistency.

- **Diverse Staff Pool:** To ensure data integrity, deploy enumerators should be selected from diverse communities and areas with no conflict of interest.
- **Independent Oversight:** District-level committees should be established to audit samples and monitor data integrity throughout the enumeration process.
- **Pilot Testing:** Trial runs should be conducted in diverse States such as Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Assam to refine the methodology before nationwide rollout.

Conclusion

- Ultimately, the caste census is not about counting caste. It is about recognising injustice and correcting it.
- A caste census done right could thus offer India a data-driven democratic transformation.

6) E-WASTE MANAGEMENT IN INDIA

(GS-III: Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment)

Background

- India confronts a formidable challenge of managing e-waste. India's e-waste volumes soared by 151.03% in six years, from 7,08,445 metric tonnes in 2017-18 to 17,78,400 metric tonnes in 2023-24, with an annual increase of 1,69,283 metric tonnes.
- Only 10% of e-waste reaches formal recycling systems in India.
- In this situation, India's system for management of E-waste has many inadequacies.

Impacts of improper E-waste disposal

- **Environmental degradation:** Improper e-waste disposal releases toxic substances like lead, mercury, cyanide, and sulphuric acid into air, water, and soil, which harms the ecosystems.
- **Health hazards:** Informal recyclers suffer due to long exposure to toxins which causes serious health issues and lifespan loss.
- **Economic loss:** India loses over \$10 billion annually due to environmental damage and over ₹80,000 crore in unrecovered critical metal value due to crude recycling methods.
- **Loss of tax revenue:** Informal recycling is largely unaccounted for, causing an estimated \$20 billion loss in annual tax revenue.
- **Impact on the formal recycling sector:** The informal sector's cost advantage discourages investment in safe, formal recycling infrastructure.
- **Obstacle to circular economy:** Inefficient recycling wastes valuable resources and prevents India from transforming e-waste into economic opportunity through sustainable recovery and reuse.

Measures to address the issues in E-waste disposal

- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR):** EPR should be enforced strictly with regulations that are environment friendly and easy to follow. This can hold producers accountable for safe end-of-life product disposal.
 - *Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a policy approach that makes producers responsible for the end-of-life management of their products and packaging.*
 - *It shifts the burden of waste management from municipalities and taxpayers to the producers who place those products on the market.*
- **Formalise the recycling sector:** Integration of informal recyclers into the formal system through training, certification, and incentives to promote safe and efficient recycling practices can make the sector more sustainable.
- **Recycling infrastructure:** Advanced and decentralised recycling facilities equipped with modern technology can handle growing e-waste volumes safely and efficiently.

- **Promote sustainable product design** Encourage manufacturers to adopt eco-friendly, durable, and recyclable product designs to reduce future e-waste generation.
- **Raise public awareness and participation** Launch nationwide campaigns to educate citizens on safe e-waste disposal and set up accessible collection points to increase responsible consumer behaviour.

E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022

- **E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022** is in force from 1st April, 2023. The objective of the said rules is to take all steps required to ensure that e-waste is managed in a manner which shall protect health and environment against any adverse effects, which may result from such e-waste.
- These rules put in place an **improved Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** regime for e-waste recycling in which all the manufacturer, producer, refurbisher and recycler are required to register on a portal developed by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).
- This would **facilitate and channelize the informal sector** to the formal sector for doing business and ensure recycling of e-waste in an environmentally sound manner.
- Provisions for **environmental compensation and verification** & audit have also been introduced.
- These rules also **promote Circular Economy** through EPR regime and scientific recycling/disposal of the e-waste.

Conclusion

- E-Waste management requires credible and urgent attention from the Government and all stakeholders.
- With rising population and growing E-waste accumulation, managing it effectively can provide a great service to the environment.

7) IRRIGATION IN INDIA

(GS-III: Major Crops - Cropping Patterns in various parts of the country, - Different Types of Irrigation and Irrigation Systems; Storage, Transport and Marketing of Agricultural Produce and Issues and Related Constraints; E-technology in the aid of farmers)

Background

- Irrigation is the artificial application of water on land to assist the growth of crops or other plants.
- This is usually done in areas where natural rainfall is insufficient or unreliable. It is a guarantee for usual crop production even during failure of seasonal rainfall.
- In India, around **55% of the gross cropped area(GCA)** is under irrigation (2021-22).
 - *Gross cropped area (GCA) represents the total area sown once and/or more than once in a particular year, i.e. the area is counted as many times as there are sowings in a year. It includes the net sown area (area sown with crops only once) plus the area sown more than once in the same year.*
- Various **sources of irrigation** in India are **canals, tanks, tube wells and other wells** with tube wells accounting for about 40 % of total irrigation.

Issues in Irrigation Sector in India

- **Inequitable Access to Irrigation Water:** Water distribution is heavily influenced by social inequalities, governance mechanisms, and policies.
 - Marginalized groups, like Scheduled castes and women farmers, face greater deprivation.
 - Tube well irrigation systems can be installed by rich farmers but not by marginal farmers thus increasing inequity in access.

- **Over-Exploitation of Groundwater:** Groundwater is the dominant source for irrigation. In the country, around 17% of groundwater units are over-exploited and 3.9% are in a critical state.
 - Over-extraction has led to declining water tables and serious sustainability concerns.
- **Unsustainable Cropping Patterns:** Water-intensive crops like rice, wheat, and sugarcane are cultivated in water-scarce regions like Punjab and north-west India. This misalignment increases water stress and leads to poor irrigation water productivity (IWP).
 - *Irrigation water productivity (IWP) is a measure of how efficiently irrigation water is used to produce agricultural yield.*
- **Low Irrigation Efficiency and High Water Wastage:** India's irrigation systems operate at around 38% efficiency, compared to 55% in developed countries.
 - Inefficient practices like flood irrigation (especially in rice) cause environmental damage, including high GreenHouse Gas emissions.
- **Environmental and Energy-Related Impacts:** Intensive **groundwater pumping contributes 8–11% of India's total carbon emissions.**
 - Heavy dependence on diesel and electric pumps further increases the carbon footprint.
 - Poor water management adds to ecological degradation and climate vulnerability.

Measures by the Government

- **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)** was launched during the year 2015-16, with an aim to
 - enhance physical access of water on farms,
 - expand cultivable area under assured irrigation,
 - improve on-farm water use efficiency,
 - introduce sustainable water conservation practices, etc.
- It is an umbrella scheme, consolidating various schemes and components namely, **Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP)**, and **Har Khet Ko Pani (HKKP)**, **Per Drop More Crop (PDMC)**, **Watershed Development component (WDC)**.

Measures Required to address Issues

- **Efficient Irrigation Technologies:** Adoption of micro-irrigation systems like drip and sprinkler irrigation can minimize water loss and improve irrigation efficiency, especially in water-intensive crops like sugarcane.
 - This should be supported through easy finance support and easy availability of technology.
- **Water Management Practices:** Techniques such as alternate wetting and drying in paddy cultivation can significantly reduce water use and greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Groundwater Extraction:** Introduction of groundwater usage policies and restrictions to prevent over-extraction and promote efficient water use.
- **Supplementary Irrigation Sources:** Construction of rainwater harvesting structures and tail water storage pits can enhance water availability.
- **Participatory Water Governance:** Shifting from **supply-driven to demand-driven irrigation** systems through **participatory irrigation management (PIM)** structures to ensure equitable and efficient distribution of water.

Conclusion

- While India reports the highest water usage in agriculture globally, access to water for irrigation remains a contentious issue.
- The problem of water scarcity in India is multifaceted, indicating the co-existence of actual physical shortage with economic scarcity due to inequitable access and management.

- This complex issue can be managed and solved through a broad approach which involves multiple departments, states using region specific solutions.

UPSC PYQs:

What are the major challenges faced by Indian irrigation system in recent times? State the measures taken by the government for efficient irrigation management. (2024)

8) GENDER BASED NUTRITIONAL INEQUALITY

(GS-III: Role of Women and Women's Organization, Population and Associated Issues, Poverty and Developmental issues, Urbanization, their problems and their remedies)

Definition and background

- **Nutritional inequality** refers to the **uneven distribution of access to and consumption of nutritious food**, leading to disparities in health outcomes across different population groups.
- It may occur between different genders, caste groups, economic groups, regions and countries.
- In the Indian context, nutritional inequality based on gender is a major concern.
- The **National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-5** reveals that **57% of women in the age group 15 to 49 years are anaemic**, in comparison to 26% of men; nearly one in five women are underweight. Women are far more likely to be malnourished than men in India.

Causes for this inequality

- **Cultural norms:** In many households, women and girls eat last and least, making them more prone to malnutrition despite food availability.
- **Decision-making power:** About 49% of women have no control over how their earnings are spent, which limits their ability to prioritize their own nutrition and health needs.
- **Economic vulnerability:** Most of the working women are engaged in informal, low-paying jobs or unpaid labor, which restricts their financial capacity to consume nutritious food.
 - According to the **Periodic Labour Force Surveys**, as of 2021-22 only 5% of working women held a regular salaried job, while nearly 20% were self-employed (mostly in small-scale or informal activities).
 - Moreover, self-employed women earned on average 53% less than men in similar work.
- **Inadequacies in welfare schemes:** Large allocations of funds under programmes like POSHAN 2.0, remain underutilized and thus fail to address the root causes of nutritional inequality.
 - In 2022-23, the Ministry of Women and Child Development was allocated nearly ₹24,000 crore for Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0, but by December 2022, only 69% of those funds had been utilised.
 - Despite such spending, the prevalence of anaemia among women actually rose from 53% to 57% between the last two NFHS rounds, and about 18.7% of women remain underweight.

Specific Measures to address the situation

- **Women's economic empowerment:** Provision of support for women's skill training, access to credit, and formal employment to increase their independent income and decision-making power will empower them to make their own nutritional decisions.
- **Challenge harmful social norms:** Launching specific awareness campaigns that promote gender equality in food distribution and encourage households to promote women's nutrition can help in improving the situation.

- **Anganwadi centres:** Transformation of these centres into multifunctional hubs offering not just meals and supplements, but also antenatal care (care during pregnancy), financial literacy, and links to job opportunities will help in addressing the situation.
- **Measurable empowerment goals:** Inclusion of indicators such as the percentage of women with financial control and employment as official targets within nutrition schemes like POSHAN 2.0 will help in overall improvement of women.

Conclusion

- Studies have shown that empowering women financially is one of the most effective ways to improve nutrition. Nobel laureate Esther Duflo says from a study that when women control extra income, they are more likely to spend it on nutrition and children's well-being.
- A malnutrition-free India will be possible only when women are not seen as passive beneficiaries of nutrition schemes but as active agents driving the health and the prosperity of their families.

9) MARINE FISHERIES IN INDIAN SHORES

(GS-III: Issues related to Direct and Indirect Farm Subsidies and Minimum Support Prices; Public Distribution System - Objectives, Functioning, Limitations, Revamping; Issues of Buffer Stocks and Food Security; Technology Missions; Economics of Animal-Rearing)

Background

- India has 2.02 million square kilometres of EEZ and a coastline of 8118 kilometres that has an estimated annual potential of 5.31 million metric tons for capture fisheries.
- The marine fisheries sector has grown from 5.34 lakh tonnes in 1950-51 to an impressive 44.95 lakh tonnes in 2023-24.

Issues in Marine Fisheries

- **Inequitable catch distribution:** Small-scale fishers make up 90% of the fishing population but catch only about 10% of the total fish. Most of the catch is taken by the mechanised fleets.
- **Poverty among fisher families:** Around three-quarters of India's marine fisher families live below the poverty line despite high overall fish production.
- **Overfishing:** The sector has reached its maximum potential yield in the areas currently being used. Further efforts to increase catch lead to higher costs without significant gain, contributing to resource exhaustion.
 - *Overfishing is the act of catching fish at a rate faster than their populations can replenish, leading to a decline in fish stocks and potential ecosystem damage.*
- **High bycatch:** Indiscriminate trawling results in massive bycatch and harvest of under-grown fishes, damaging marine biodiversity and reducing future fish stocks.
 - *Bycatch is the incidental capture of non-target species such as dolphins, marine turtles and seabirds.*
- **Fragmented and inconsistent regulations:** Each coastal State/UT has its own **Marine Fisheries Regulation Act (MFRA)**, leading to regulatory loopholes that are exploited by fishers to bypass conservation rules.
- The **fish-meal and fish-oil industry (FMFO)** promotes the use of juvenile bycatch for feed, which reduces food availability for local communities and long term growth of fish stocks in a region.
- **Weak enforcement mechanisms:** Limited patrol capacity and lack of real-time monitoring hinder effective enforcement of fishing laws and sustainability measures.

Government Measures for Fishery Sector

- **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)** is the flagship scheme of Government of India to **bring about the Blue Revolution** through sustainable and responsible development of the fisheries sector in India.

- It is designed to **address critical gaps in the fisheries value chain** from fish production, productivity and quality to technology, post-harvest infrastructure and marketing.
- It aims to **modernize and strengthen the value chain**, enhance traceability and establish a robust fisheries management framework while simultaneously ensuring the **socio-economic welfare of fishers and fish farmers**.
- Provision of **financial assistance** for **deep sea fishing vessels** and upgradation of fishing vessels is also given through this scheme.
- **'ReALCRaft' portal for uniform registration** and licensing of fishing vessels is implemented, wherein registration of fishing vessels is granted under Merchant Shipping Act 1958 and licence is granted under Marine Fishing Regulation Act (MFRAs) by the concerned coastal States/Union Territories.
- **Social Safety Net** is being ensured by providing annual Livelihood and Nutritional Support during fishing ban/lean period.
 - In addition, **insurance coverage** has been increased for fishermen through the Group Accident Insurance Scheme for Fishers (GAIS).
- Development of **insulated/refrigerated vehicles**, fish markets and kiosks to minimize post-harvest losses for strengthening value chain and providing market linkages.

Way Forward

- **New Zealand's fish quota management system (QMS)** has shown excellent results by aligning science and policy. Adapting the QMS for India's large mechanised trawl fleet, at least on a pilot basis, could curb the depletion of marine biodiversity by tying fishing allowances to actual stock health, rather than vessel size or fuel use.
- **Targeted size limits and minimum legal-size regulations** can also help.
 - After Kerala enforced a minimum legal size for certain fish species, catches rose by 41% within a single season thus producing greater yields over time and better income for the fishers.
- Reining in the **fish-meal and fish-oil (FMFO) industry** is another urgent priority.
 - Most of the products from FMFO are exported, while Indian fish consumers and the Indian aquaculture industry lose out on critical nutrition sources.
- **Effective Regulation:** At the national level, the central government needs to optimize vessel licences, infrastructure grants and fisheries subsidies, towards an ecosystem-based regulatory approach.
- **Community Involvement:** Fisher cooperatives and village councils should be empowered as co-managers of local marine protected areas and breeding sanctuaries.
- Climate-driven storms, coastal erosion, and market volatility already threaten India's nearly 11,098 km coastline and its 3,000 plus fishing villages. Solutions should thus focus on long-term sustainability and fisher welfare.

10) ISSUE OF OVERNUTRITION IN INDIA

(GS-I: Role of Women and Women's Organization, Population and Associated Issues, Poverty and Developmental issues, Urbanization, their problems and their remedies)

Background

- **Overnutrition is a form of malnutrition** (imbalanced nutrition) arising from **excessive intake of nutrients**, leading to accumulation of body fat that impairs health i.e., overweight/obesity.
- India is grappling with a paradoxical nutritional situation. While undernutrition remains a concern in many regions, overnutrition is now rapidly escalating in urban centres.
- In 2021, **India** ranked **second** globally in **overweight and obesity prevalence**.

- The trend is particularly evident in metropolitan IT corridors, where professionals are unwittingly becoming the face of a silent metabolic crisis.
- India's double burden of malnutrition — rampant undernutrition coexisting with overnutrition — is reflected in its low ranking on the Global Hunger Index.

Health Hazards due to Overnutrition

- **Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Fatty Liver Disease (MAFLD):** A significant number of urban IT professionals, especially in cities like Hyderabad, are affected due to sedentary work culture, poor diet, and chronic stress.
- **Obesity and Overweight:** Rising sharply across all income groups and ages, obesity is now prevalent among 31.6% of adults and is projected to affect 450 million Indians by 2050. (LANCET article, 2025)
 - Childhood obesity in India has surged by 244% over the past three decades and is expected to rise another 121%, posing long-term risks for early-onset chronic diseases.
- **Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs):** Overnutrition contributes to diseases like diabetes, hypertension, and heart conditions, which account for over 65% of deaths in cities like Chennai (2023-24 STEPS Survey).
 - *Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), also known as chronic diseases, tend to be of long duration and are the result of a combination of genetic, physiological, environmental and behavioural factors.*
 - *The main types of NCDs are cardiovascular diseases (such as heart attacks and stroke), cancers, chronic respiratory diseases (such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and asthma) and diabetes.*
- **Poor Glycaemic and Blood Pressure Control:** Even among those receiving treatment, only a small percentage manage proper control of blood sugar and blood pressure. Just 9.8% of diabetics and 9.3% of young hypertensives maintain recommended levels.

Steps Required to reduce Overnutrition

- **Nutritional Regulations:** Over and beyond awareness campaigns, manufacture, marketing, and availability of ultra-processed, **high-fat, sugar, and salt (HFSS) foods** should be controlled and regulated.
 - Introduction of front-of-pack labelling norms, such as clear **Health Star Ratings** or warning labels will help in this direction.
- **Workplace-Based Health Interventions** programmes like **Tamil Nadu's Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam (MTM)**, which screen working populations and promote lifestyle changes through initiatives like health walks and nutrition challenges can be adopted to be followed by other states of the country.
- **Fiscal Policies:** Imposing taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages, salty snacks, and energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods, similar to **Saudi Arabia's excise tax model** will help discourage the consumption of these foods.
 - On the other hand, healthier food alternatives can be subsidised to shift consumer behavior.
- **Urban Lifestyle Reforms** should be promoted to change the sedentary behavior in IT and other corporate sectors by incentivizing physical activity, regulating work hours, and promoting active commuting and fitness infrastructure in urban design.
- **Coordination and Enforcement** between health, education, urban development, and food industry policies should be developed to get a favourable outcome in this.
 - Existing programmes like **Eat Right India** can be supported with legal enforcement to ensure industry accountability.

Conclusion

- Overnutrition in India is rapidly emerging as a major public health crisis, especially in urban and economically productive populations.
- Urgent, multisectoral interventions are needed to curb its impact and prevent a surge in noncommunicable diseases.

11) INDIA- PAKISTAN CONFLICT- AN OVERVIEW

(GS-II: India and its Neighborhood- Relations)

Background

- In 1947, British India was partitioned into India and Pakistan. The basis of the partition was the demand of the Muslim League to create a separate country for Muslims.
- **First War (1947):** The first armed conflict between the two countries was immediately after Independence and Partition in October 1947.
 - The fear of Kashmir acceding to India was what had triggered the struggle. The Pakistani Army infiltrated Kashmir through tribal forces in an attempt to occupy Kashmir.
 - This was followed by the **Maharaja of Kashmir, Hari Singh** signing the **agreement of accession to the dominion of India** resulting in a full fledged war between India and Pakistan and the solidification of the Line of Control.
 - Even though the war did not have a conclusive victor, **India managed to claim two-thirds of Kashmir**, while Pakistan got about a third of the territory.
- **Second War (1965):** The war of 1965 was a result of **Operation Gibraltar** carried out by **Pakistani armed forces to occupy Kashmir**.
 - India responded with a full scale armed struggle that continued for the next 17 days.
 - The war ended only after the **diplomatic intervention of the Soviet Union and the United States**.
- **Third War (1971):** The war of 1971 was unique in the sense that this time Kashmir was not the bone of contention. It occurred as a result of the ongoing civil war between **East Pakistan (Bengali dominated) and West Pakistan (Urdu language and Punjabi people dominant)**.
 - India gave full support to East Pakistan's cause in the wake of a large number of refugees entering into India.
 - The war ended with a **decisive Indian victory** and resulted in the independence of East Pakistan thus **creating the People's Republic of Bangladesh**.
- **Kargil Conflict (1999):** The Kargil war of 1999 took place immediately following the Pakistani army's infiltration into the Kargil district in Kashmir.
 - The Indian army retaliated in an effort to drive out the Pakistani infiltrators. Within two months India had been able to regain most of its territory.
 - The struggle ended as a result of international pressure on Pakistan to withdraw its troops.
- From the early **1990s**, Pakistan has started **developing terror organisations and networks** to conduct terror attacks in India. This came after the realisation that Pakistan can't defeat India in a conventional conflict.
 - A key outfit is the **Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)**, Pakistan's premier proxy organisation against India.
 - It operates under Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, a designated terrorist operating in Pakistan despite international sanctions. **Mumbai attacks in 2008** were carried out by this group.

- **Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM)** was established in 2000 by Masood Azhar. The JeM represents Pakistan's suicide terrorism capability.
- JeM's operational history includes the **2001 Indian Parliament attack**, and the **2019 Pulwama suicide bombing** where 40 security personnel were killed.
- The constant support to terrorism provided by Pakistan has reflected in its regular appearance on the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) "grey list" (2008-2010, 2012-2015, 2018-2022).
 - *The **FATF grey list**, officially known as **Jurisdictions Under Increased Monitoring**, includes countries with deficiencies in their anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing (AML/CTF) regimes.*
 - *Countries on the grey list are subject to increased monitoring and must work with FATF to improve their regimes.*
- In this scenario, Pakistan supported terrorists conducted a **terror attack at Pahalgam**, Jammu and Kashmir (April, 2025), leading to the death of 26 Indian citizens.
- India responded with "**Operation Sindoor**", targeting many terror installations in Pakistan's territory.

Changes in India's Response to Pakistan Sponsored terrorism

- **Shift from Restraint to Retaliation:** India has moved away from its earlier policy of restraint to adopting **kinetic responses**, as seen in surgical strikes (2016), the Balakot airstrike (2019), and Operation Sindoor (2025). These actions signal India's **willingness to cross borders** to target terrorist infrastructure.
- **Technological Warfare:** India is **investing in rapid-response, tech-driven capabilities**, including drones, satellite surveillance, and advanced missile systems, to ensure dominance and deter future attacks. This reflects a transition to **pre-emptive, tech-integrated deterrence**.

Measures for India to manage the Pakistan menace

- **Lawfare at International Forums:** India should systematically document and present evidence of Pakistan's involvement in cross-border terrorism through international legal channels (e.g., ICJ, UN Security Council and FATF), and isolate Pakistan diplomatically.
 - Key international treaties like the **International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (ICSFT)** and the **International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings (Terrorist Bombing Convention)** can be used by India.
 - India should also work to create global support for the **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT)**, which gives a universal definition for terrorism and terrorists.
- **Technological Warfare Capabilities:** India must continue developing cutting-edge military technologies like drones, electronic warfare systems, air defense (like S-400), and satellite-based surveillance.
- **Counter Pakistan's Global Narrative:** India must deploy **strategic public diplomacy** through international delegations, media outreach, and engagement with think tanks to expose Pakistan's military dictatorship and its support for extremism, while contrasting it with India's democratic values and developmental progress.
 - India should take steps to **influence** organisations like **the World Bank and International Monetary Fund**, which have provided financial support to Pakistan even after knowing that the funds are being used to support terrorism.
- **Space-Based Defense Capabilities:** Given modern warfare's reliance on space, India must invest heavily in military-grade satellites, early warning systems, and cyber defense infrastructure.

- Bridging this gap is vital to monitor Pakistani (and Chinese) movements and ensure real-time response in future conflicts.

Conclusion

- India should use a multi-pronged strategy to counter the terrorism coming out of Pakistan.
- First, India should **develop its capabilities** to manage and effectively retaliate cross border military and terror attacks by Pakistan.
- Second, India should push for a **universal definition for terrorism** through an United Nations Convention and make a wide range of countries to join this convention.
- Finally, India should take steps in the International organisations to **build economic pressure** on Pakistan and on other countries which use terrorism as a political tool against other countries.

UPSC PYQs:

“Increasing cross-border terrorist attacks in India and growing interference in the internal affairs of several member-states by Pakistan are not conducive for the future of SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation).” Explain with suitable examples. (2016)

12) INDIA'S AVGC SECTOR

(GS-III: Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment)

What is AVGC?

- The **AVGC sector** encompasses **Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, and Comics**— industries that sit at the crossroads of **creativity, storytelling, and cutting-edge technology**.
- This dynamic sector contributes not only to **entertainment** but also to domains like **education, defence, healthcare, and tourism** through immersive digital experiences.
- As **global demand for digital content** surges, AVGC has emerged as a critical enabler of India's soft power, digital economy, and employment generation.

Growing Relevance of the AVGC Sector in India

- The Indian AVGC industry is growing at a **compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 16–18%**, outpacing many traditional media sectors.
- It is poised to become a **\$100 billion industry by 2030** (InvestIndia).
- The **internet advertising market** alone is projected to grow from **USD 4 billion in 2022 to USD 8 billion by 2027**.
- India is the **second-largest anime-consuming country** and is expected to contribute to **60% of global growth in anime content**.
- India has the **second-largest gamer base** in the world (~450 million users) and a fast-growing animation and VFX service sector.
- AVGC has the potential to **generate 20 lakh jobs** in the next decade, making it key to India's employment and export potential.

From Global Consumers to Global Creators

- India is transitioning from being a **global consumer** of digital content to becoming a **global creator and exporter** of culturally rich, technologically sophisticated narratives.
- Success stories like **RRR, Baahubali, and Avatar's VFX outsourcing to Indian studios** demonstrate India's rise in global creative influence.
- Indian firms are increasingly providing AVGC services to international giants like **Disney, Warner Bros, and Netflix**.

Immersive Technologies Driving Innovation

- The integration of **Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), Mixed Reality (MR), and 3D animation** is revolutionising digital storytelling and simulation.
- These immersive tools are transforming:
 - **Education:** through interactive e-learning platforms.
 - **Healthcare:** with mental health gamification and surgical simulations.
 - **Defence:** via combat simulation and strategic training modules.
 - **Tourism:** by offering virtual walk-throughs of historical sites.

Economic Potential and Employment Generation

- The AVGC sector is projected to generate **over 5 lakh (500,000) direct and indirect employment opportunities** in the coming years.
- India is becoming a **preferred outsourcing destination** for AVGC services due to its cost competitiveness and large talent pool.
- Demand is increasing for professionals such as **game developers, 3D animators, VFX artists, XR specialists, and comic illustrators.**

Enhancing India's Soft Power through Digital Storytelling

- The sector offers a unique medium to **globalise Indian mythology, history, and folklore** in contemporary formats. **Eg- Animated Ramayana, Mahabharata**
- AVGC-based content is contributing to **India's cultural diplomacy and global image.**
- It plays a strategic role in **building India's narrative globally**, similar to the soft power tools used by countries like **South Korea (K-Wave) and Japan (Anime).**

Policy Reforms and Institutional Support

- **AVGC Promotion Task Force (2022):** Recommended curriculum development, R&D parks, and market access.
- **National Centre of Excellence (NCoE) in Mumbai:** A central body to provide industry-relevant training and international linkages.
- **Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT):** To be set up with ₹1391 crore as India's IIT-IIM for creative industries.
- **Creation of a ₹1,000 crore AVGC Fund:** To finance creators, startups, and studios working in AVGC and related sectors.

Institutional Support: Role of the Centre of Excellence (CoE)

- The **National Centre of Excellence (NCoE)** for AVGC-XR is being set up in **Mumbai**, the hub of India's entertainment sector.
- It will:
 - Offer **industry-aligned curriculum and hands-on training.**
 - Support **startups, IP creation, and R&D** in AVGC and XR technologies.
 - Foster **public-private partnerships** with bodies like **FICCI** and **CII.**
- Modelled on the lines of IITs/IIMs, the CoE is designed to become the **nucleus of immersive content creation** in India.

Strengthening Public-Private Innovation Ecosystems

- AVGC development is supported by an ecosystem of:
 - **Academic institutions** integrating AVGC modules.
 - **Startups and incubators** focused on digital creativity.
 - **Industry-government partnerships** for innovation and market access.
- These synergies are expected to **drive R&D, capacity building, and global competitiveness.**

Conclusion

- The AVGC sector stands at the heart of India's creative, technological, and economic transformation. With its ability to merge culture and code, art and algorithms, the sector has opened new frontiers in **employment, exports, and storytelling.** India's rise as a

global digital content hub is no longer aspirational but increasingly inevitable—driven by immersive technology, indigenous IP creation, and institutional support like the National CoE.

- As the world moves towards immersive experiences, India must harness the full potential of AVGC not only to **lead the global narrative** but also to **empower its youth, economy, and identity** in the digital age.

13) WOMEN'S ROLE IN INDIA'S GROWTH STORY

(GS-I: Role of Women and Women's Organization, Population and Associated Issues, Poverty and Developmental issues, Urbanization, their problems and their remedies)

Introduction

- Women have transitioned from being passive participants in the economy to active architects of India's growth story. Their increasing involvement in credit systems, entrepreneurship, and policy influence reflects a structural shift towards inclusive and sustainable development. This transformation is not merely about empowerment but about redefining India's economic resilience.

Rise in Financial Literacy and Credit Awareness

- **Early adoption of financial discipline:** A growing number of women, particularly from Gen Z and Millennials, are self-monitoring their credit health.
- **Credit-conscious behaviour:** Regular monitoring and disciplined repayment practices have led to healthier credit profiles among women borrowers.
- **Regional dynamics:** Southern states dominate in terms of financially aware women; meanwhile, Hindi heartland states show the highest growth rates.

Emergence of Women Entrepreneurs

- **Women-led MSMEs:** Increasing presence of women in micro, small, and medium enterprises has helped diversify supply chains and boost exports.
- **Policy support:** Schemes like MUDRA, Stand-Up India, and PMEGP have enabled access to credit and scaling of women-owned enterprises.
- **Sectoral spread:** Women entrepreneurs are no longer limited to traditional crafts; they are active in IT, logistics, manufacturing, and fintech sectors.

Socio-Economic Multiplier Effects

- **Family welfare improvement:** Women's income enhances household well-being, education levels, and healthcare access.
- **Intergenerational mobility:** Financially empowered women invest more in the future of their children, especially daughters.
- **Inclusive development:** Empowerment of women at the grassroots helps reduce regional, caste-based, and gender inequalities.

Enhancing Economic Resilience

- **Diversified participation:** Broader inclusion of women makes the economic base more balanced and robust.
- **Shock absorption:** Women's involvement across sectors helps the economy withstand downturns (e.g., pandemic recovery driven by female SHGs and frontline workers).
- **Strengthened rural economies:** Women in agriculture, crafts, and local industries anchor village economies.

Shaping Policy and Governance

- **Women as influencers:** Successful female entrepreneurs and credit-users inspire inclusive policy formulation.
- **Institutional responses:** Bodies like **WEP (Women Entrepreneurship Platform)** and regulatory frameworks under **NITI Aayog** promote gendered economic reforms.

- **Digital inclusion:** Initiatives like **Mahila Samman Savings Certificates, Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile (JAM) trinity**, and **Mahila E-Haat** enhance women's economic agency.

India's Global Competitiveness

- **Demographic dividend:** Harnessing women's potential boosts India's productivity and competitiveness.
- **Soft power projection:** A progressive image of empowered Indian women enhances global perceptions and partnerships.
- **Investment magnet:** Economies with higher gender parity attract more foreign investment due to better social indicators and skilled labour supply.

Conclusion

- The 21st century marks a paradigm shift from women empowerment to women-led development. Backed by policy, technology, and grassroots mobilisation, Indian women are not just participating in the economy—they are shaping it. As India marches towards the goal of becoming a developed nation by 2047, the contribution of women will be pivotal in making this vision a reality.

MODEL QUESTIONS

1. Private Member Bills (PMBs) can play a far sighted and forward looking role in deepening democracy in India. Analyse.
2. What do you understand by the term Parliamentary oversight? Discuss its functioning in India.
3. India's current Arctic posture is not without merit, but it is no longer adequate. It rests on the hope that scientific cooperation and climate diplomacy can smooth over growing geopolitical fault lines. That hope is fast fading. The Arctic is now shaped less by principle than by power. Analyse.
4. Analyse the need of reforms in Civil services in India.
5. The Government of India has announced that it will conduct a Caste census. Was it the first time such a census has been conducted in India? Assess the need for such a census at present.
6. E-waste management in India is in need of an overhaul. Critically Analyse.
7. The agricultural sector accounts for almost 80% of the water withdrawal in India. Is this due to the absolute need of water for agriculture which cannot be reduced in any way? Analyse.
8. Is gender based nutritional inequality prevalent in India? Assess the situation in detail.
9. Analyze the current state of India's fisheries sector, identifying the challenges it faces and various government policies in promoting sustainable and inclusive growth.
10. India is grappling with a paradoxical nutritional landscape. While undernutrition remains a concern in many regions, overnutrition is now rapidly escalating in urban centres. In this context, assess the health hazards due to overnutrition. Suggest practical solutions to cope with this situation.
11. India has in recent times altered its response to terror attacks by Pakistan. Analyse this change and suggest measures for India to counter Pakistan's menace.
12. "India's AVGC (Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming & Comics) sector holds the potential to be a global leader in the creative economy." Discuss the role of policy reforms, talent development, and global collaboration in realising this potential.
13. "The transformation of women from credit-users to credit-conscious participants marks a new phase in India's economic development." Critically examine the role of financial awareness and entrepreneurship among Indian women in shaping the nation's growth trajectory.