

OFFICERS IAS ACADEMY™

OFFICERS' PULSE



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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) EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN INDIA-AFRICA RELATIONS

(GS-II: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests)

Background:

- India and Africa have a time-honoured partnership based on shared values and the country enjoys considerable goodwill within Africa.
- India's trade with Africa has grown from US\$ 68.5 billion in 2011-12 to US\$ 90.5 billion in 2022-23.
- India is now **one of the top five investors in Africa** with cumulative investments worth US\$ 73.9 billion between 1996 to 2022.

Efforts for building Cooperation:

- **Education Sector:** India has trained nearly 40,000 Africans under the **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC)** program in the past decade.
 - The **tele-education and tele-medicine project**, which has entered its second phase, has provided scholarships to over 15,000 African youths from 22 countries since 2019. Additionally, more than 23,000 African students are currently studying in India.
 - Institutions such as the **Indian Institute of Technology in Zanzibar** and the **National Forensic Science University in Uganda**, highlight India's commitment to advancing education in Africa.
- **Infrastructure Development:** The Indian government has completed **206 projects** in **43 African countries** and is currently implementing 65 projects worth over **US\$ 12.37 billion**.
 - These projects span various sectors which not only strengthen the African infrastructure but also help in the local employment generation.
- **Defence and Security Cooperation:** Multiple meetings of African Defense Ministers have been held in India, and several African military officers receive training in Indian institutions.
 - India has also helped establish Defense Academies and Colleges in countries like Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Tanzania.
 - India's participation as an Observer in the **Djibouti Code of Conduct and the Jeddah Amendment** further strengthens its role in ensuring maritime security in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden.
 - *The Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC) is a soft law approach that aims to improve maritime security in the Gulf of Aden and the western Indian Ocean.*
- **Multilateral Engagement and Global Cooperation:** The inclusion of the African Union as a permanent member of the G20 in 2023 was a significant achievement and India's Presidency played a major role.
 - India's commitment to the '**Ezulwini Consensus**' and the '**Sirte Declaration**' underscores its support for Africa's representation in global governance structures.
 - *The Ezulwini Consensus is a position on reforming the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) that was adopted by the African Union (AU) in 2005. The consensus is based on the idea that African countries need permanent representation in the UNSC to address continental peace and security issues.*
 - *The Sirte Declaration led to the formation of the African Union(AU).*
- **Technological Collaboration:** The '**India Stack**' model, which includes **UPI and Aadhar systems**, has already started yielding positive results in Africa.

- **Space technology** solutions for weather forecasting, early warning systems, resource management, and precision agriculture can significantly contribute to Africa's development and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Opportunities in India- Africa Relations:

- **Africa's Rich Mineral Reserves:** Africa holds 30% of the world's critical mineral reserves, essential for India's growing demand in sectors like electric vehicles, electronics, and renewable energy.
- **Expanding Bilateral Trade:** With **\$98 billion in bilateral trade in 2022-23**, India can further enhance trade in energy and critical minerals.
- **Supporting African Mineral Industrialization:** India could assist African countries' move away from a "pit-to-port" model (just exporting raw materials) by helping develop local value-added processing industries.
 - This aligns with Africa's policies that focus on beneficiation (processing of raw minerals locally), like Zimbabwe's and Namibia's bans on raw mineral exports.
- **Capacity Building and Workforce Development:** Through existing programs like the **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC)**, which has trained 40,000 Africans in 10 years, India can contribute to building Africa's skilled workforce in critical mineral exploration, processing, and manufacturing, essential for mineral-based industrialization.

Measures India can take:

- **Continued Engagement:** India should take steps to hold the **India-Africa Forum Summit IV (IAFS-IV)** as soon as possible, following the momentum of the African Union's inclusion in the G-20.
 - Establish an **India-African Union Track 1.5 Dialogue** to discuss issues of mutual interest after consulting Africa's eight regional economic communities (RECs).
- **Economic Integration and Industrialisation:** India can support Africa's industrialisation by encouraging Indian companies to invest in higher value-added sectors like agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and manufacturing.
 - It can also establish manufacturing bases in African countries to create local employment and serve African markets.
 - Indian companies can be encouraged to invest in farm mechanisation, food processing, irrigation, cold storage infrastructure, and promote affordable and adaptable technologies for Africa.
- **Encourage Private Sector Participation and Innovative Financing:** Foster public-private partnerships (PPP) and blended finance models to provide alternative financing options for projects in Africa.
 - India can expand banking relationships with Africa through initiatives like the EXIM Bank's Trade Assistance Programme.

Conclusion:

- African countries are increasingly taking greater ownership of their strategic thinking.
- Their citizens are demanding accountability from their governments to ensure that their economies move up the value chains.
- They are trying to change the narrative surrounding Africa by repositioning the continent as an investment destination. Indian initiatives should take this aspect into consideration.

UPSC PYQs:

“If the last few decades were of Asia’s growth story, the next few are expected to be of Africa’s.”
In the light of this statement, examine India’s influence in Africa in recent years. (2021)

2) INCOME INEQUALITY

(GS-III: Inclusive Growth and issues arising from it)

Definition:

- The OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) defines income inequality as the extent to which income is distributed unevenly among a population. It refers to disparities in the income levels across individuals or households in a country.
- Report by OXFAM has found out that 5 percent of Indians own more than 60 per cent of the country’s wealth, while the bottom 50 percent of the population possess only 3 percent of the wealth.

Measures for addressing income inequality:

- **Progressive Taxation:** Progressive tax policies ensure that the affluent contribute more to societal development. Tax revenues should be allocated towards public goods such as healthcare, education, skill development, and environmental protection.
- **Education and Skill Development:** Universal access to quality education and skill development can help in improving employability and boosting the earning potential of marginalised and low-income individuals.
- **Fair Labour Laws:** Ensuring labour rights, fair wages and safe working conditions can protect workers from exploitation and promote collective bargaining to ensure fair compensation for all workers.
- **Investment in Infrastructure:** Regional disparities can be addressed through investments in infrastructure projects that create opportunities for underdeveloped regions.
 - Areas like water, sanitation, energy, transportation, housing, and projects addressing climate change and the environment can be focussed as a priority.
- **Super Rich Contributions:** Encourage the super-rich to make substantial contributions through philanthropy (e.g., Giving Pledge by Bill Gates and Warren Buffett) and implement **inheritance taxes** on large asset transfers.
 - These funds can be used to support public welfare initiatives that uplift the economically disadvantaged.
- **Decentralised Development:** Promote a Gandhian model of development focusing on local needs, local talent, local resources, and local production.
- **Support for SMEs:** Banks should be promoted to support SMEs by facilitating access to small loans and digital financial services.
 - Build digital platforms across India's 800 districts to boost local industries and enhance their capacity to compete in global markets.
- **Sustainable and Ethical Consumption:** Promote a lifestyle shift from conspicuous consumption to one that values happiness through sharing and caring.
 - Encourage sustainable consumption patterns that prioritise non-violence and conservation of resources.
- **Globalisation with Vigilance:** Adopt globalisation and market liberalisation as strategies that require vigilance and mid-course corrections.

- Use global experiences and adapt policies to the local Indian context to ensure that growth is sustainable and inclusive.

Conclusion:

- Inequality in the long term can create problems to the social and economic stability of the nation. Concerted efforts by the Government are required to reduce the ill effects of income inequality.

3) GLOBAL SOUTH AND INDIA

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

Background:

- The **Global South** is a term used to describe a group of countries that are often referred to as **developing, less developed, or underdeveloped**.
- The term is used generally to describe countries in **Africa, Asia, and Latin America**, but it is not a geographical term, and many countries in the Global South are in the northern hemisphere.
- The **Voice of Global South Summit** is **India's endeavour** to provide a common platform to deliberate on the concerns, interests and priorities of developing countries, exchange ideas and solutions, and unite in voice and purpose in forging development solutions.
- It calls for a more inclusive and equitable dialogue and acts as a catalyst for collaboration, offering fresh insights and driving collective action towards a more balanced and interconnected world.

Learnings for Global South from India:

- **Sustainability and Renewable Energy Initiatives:** India promotes the concept of **Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE)** and re-energizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
 - India's emphasis on **renewable energy** through the development of **rooftop solar panels** and **solar farms** can help Global South countries adopt cleaner energy solutions.
- **Health Security and "One World One Health":** India's health security efforts, like the **Arogya Maitri initiative**, highlight India's assistance in building hospitals and **Jan Aushadhi Kendras** in African and Pacific Island countries.
 - This enhances healthcare infrastructure and **affordable medicine access** in developing nations.
- **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Resilience:** India's role as a **first responder** in humanitarian crises in countries like Papua New Guinea, Kenya, Gaza, and Ukraine.
 - Support in building **disaster resilience** and establishing **institutional mechanisms** for efficient disaster response can assist other countries in crisis management.
- **Promoting Financial Inclusion via Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI):** India's initiatives in **financial inclusion** and **last-mile connectivity**, particularly through **UPI** and **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)**, are transformational.
 - Agreements with 12 countries to promote DPI show the potential for technology-driven economic inclusion in the Global South.
- **Education, Skills, and Capacity Building:** India can strengthen **interlinkages in education** and promote **skills and capacity building** initiatives.

Way Forward:

- For sharing India's development experience, institutional frameworks like the **Global South Centre of Excellence (DAKSHIN)** for knowledge promotion, experience sharing and evolving programmes for skills and capacity building are important.
- In the third Voice of Global South Summit, India has proposed a **"Development Compact"**.
 - **Under this, India will engage with the Global South in five areas capacity building, technology sharing, trade for development, grants and concessional finance.**
- It is extremely important for the Global South to go back to basics and revisit the idea of development which disappeared from the global policy landscape. India can help these countries in this process.

4) INDIA-ASEAN RELATIONS

(GS-II: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests)

Background:

- **ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)** is a regional organisation comprising ten Southeast Asian countries, aimed at promoting political, economic, and security cooperation among its member states.
- The members of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) are:
 - Brunei Darussalam
 - Cambodia
 - Indonesia
 - Laos (Lao People's Democratic Republic)
 - Malaysia
 - Myanmar
 - Philippines
 - Singapore
 - Thailand
 - Vietnam
- India began formal engagement with **ASEAN** in 1992 as a "Sectoral Dialogue Partner" (Secretary level interaction) and subsequently as a "Dialogue Partner" in 1995.
- In 2002, it was upgraded to Summit level interaction and in 2012, it was upgraded to a strategic partnership.
- India's engagement with the ASEAN has been driven by **three goals**:
 - (i) **enhancing connectivity** between India and ASEAN in the broadest sense of the term (ie, physical, digital, people-to-people, business etc.);
 - (ii) **strengthening the ASEAN** organisation;
 - (iii) expanding **practical cooperation** in the **maritime** domain.
- ASEAN and India share both land and maritime borders. They are civilizational partners.
- ASEAN and India together **share 7 per cent of the world GDP and 26 per cent of the world population.**
- ASEAN is currently **India's 4th largest trading partner**, and **India is ASEAN's 7th largest trade partner.**

Opportunities in India- ASEAN Relations:

- **Educational and Media Exchanges:** Opportunities for students, teachers, and media professionals from ASEAN countries to engage in Indian institutions, through scholarships (e.g., Nalanda University), research partnerships, and media exchange programs.

- **Cultural and Civilisational Links:** Projects like the ASEAN-India Cultural and Civilisational Links Conference and the proposed ASEAN Cultural Heritage List offer opportunities for preserving and sharing cultural heritage.
- **Artistic and Cultural Events:** Platforms such as the ASEAN-India Music Festival and Artists' Camp foster creative collaboration and cultural exchange.
- **Trade and Investment Facilitation:** The review and simplification of the **ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement** offer enhanced trade opportunities and reduced barriers, benefiting businesses in both regions.
- **Digital cooperation** in ASEAN-India economic engagements will continue to add further momentum to the relations.
 - **Cross-border e-commerce and Fintech innovations** are key sectors where MSMEs are expected to thrive.
- **Science and Technology Collaboration:** R&D in science and technology, supported by the **ASEAN-India Science and Technology Development Fund**, promotes joint projects, innovation, and capacity building.
- **Grassroots Innovation:** The ASEAN-India Grassroots Innovation Forum provides opportunities for local innovators to share their products, experiences, and knowledge on grassroots-level innovations.
- **Maritime Cooperation:** Collaborating on maritime security and safety provides strategic opportunities to address common concerns in the **Indo-Pacific region**.
- **Combating Transnational Crime and Terrorism:** Enhanced collaboration in law enforcement and security, particularly through dialogue platforms such as the **Delhi Dialogue and ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly**, allows both sides to jointly tackle issues like terrorism and transnational crime.

Challenges In the relationship:

- First, unlike the EU, ASEAN is not a single market. India faces **10 different economies** in market access.
- Second, **trade barriers** are very high at borders and Non Tariff Measures (NTMs) have been complicated and rising. An increase in NTMs could raise trade costs, inhibiting trade expansion and GVCs.
- There are **restrictions on the movement of professionals**, capital, and goods. Well, some of them are not India-specific, but some discriminate against India over ASEAN's other trade partners.
- India's exit from **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)** which brings together ASEAN and its top trading partners.

Way Forward:

- ASEAN and India should continue their commitment to respecting freedom of navigation and overflight, and unimpeded lawful commerce, based on the principles of international law, as reflected notably in the UNCLOS 1982.
- Global uncertainties are looming large where geopolitical rifts continue to aggravate the uncertainties further.
- The growing differences between countries over trade and investment are undermining growth and trust.
- In such an unfolding situation, ASEAN and India may further intensify their cooperation to stabilise the global order.
- The 21st ASEAN-India summit is expected to bring significant decisions adding further momentum to ASEAN-India relations and Indo-Pacific.

5) ISSUES IN INDIAN PUBLIC HEALTH SECTOR

(GS-II: Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources)

Background:

- Public health policies are those **decisions made by the government** based on the resources available **to address people's health needs**.
- Public health needs include those felt by people (felt needs) based on their lived experiences and those projected upon (projected needs) by medical experts.
- The share of Government Health Expenditure (GHE) in the overall GDP of the country remains at 1.9% in 2023-24.
- This share is less when compared to Western countries and also China.

Issues in India's Public Health Sector:

- **Inadequate Preventive Care:** Diseases like tuberculosis, malaria, undernutrition, and food- and water-borne infections disproportionately affect the poor and vulnerable.
 - Health systems often fail to integrate livelihood concerns and rights-based approaches into health interventions for these groups, complicating efforts to prevent such diseases.
- **Focus on Curative Care Over Preventive Care:** The public health system overly prioritises curative care (especially tertiary care) at the expense of preventive and primary healthcare services.
 - There is inadequate secondary-level healthcare infrastructure, which exacerbates healthcare gaps, especially for the poor who rely on government-run primary care centres.
- **Privatisation of Healthcare:** The shift towards publicly funded health insurance schemes, such as the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY), has led to outsourcing of secondary and tertiary care to the private sector.
 - This shift weakens public sector healthcare, leaving a large portion of the population (those not covered by insurance) to rely on expensive, commercialized private healthcare.
- **Issues in Publicly Funded Health Insurance Schemes (PFHI):** Only hospitalisation is covered under PMJAY, neglecting outpatient and other critical healthcare needs. This benefits the private healthcare sector at the cost of patients..
- **Stagnation of Public Sector Healthcare Institutions:** The transformation expected through the conversion of sub-centers, Primary Health Centers (PHCs), and Community Health Centers (CHCs) into Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) has not given adequate results.
- **Inadequate Investment in Secondary and Tertiary Care:** The inability to strengthen secondary and tertiary-level care in the public sector has led to overcrowding in public healthcare institutions.
- **Shortages of health professionals** is also a major issue, further eroding public trust in the healthcare system.

Measure to improve Public Health:

- **Strengthen Primary and Secondary Healthcare Infrastructure:** The government should prioritise upgrading existing PHCs and CHCs, especially in rural areas, with adequate infrastructure, medical equipment, and healthcare professionals.
- **Enhance Workforce Training and Recruitment:** Central and State governments can increase the recruitment of doctors, nurses, and paramedical staff, ensuring proper training, particularly at secondary care levels, to address healthcare demands effectively.

- **Reinforce Public Sector Hospitals:** Investment in the expansion and modernization of secondary- and tertiary-level public hospitals, reducing reliance on the private sector for critical care and reversing the trend of outsourcing services to private providers.
- **Regulate Private Healthcare:** Establish stronger regulations for private hospitals, ensuring affordability, transparency, and accountability, while discouraging monopolistic practices in the healthcare market.
- **Integrate Preventive and Curative Care at Health and Wellness Centers:** The original role of sub-centers and PHCs in providing preventive, promotive, and outreach healthcare services, alongside minimal curative care can be strengthened.
 - Ensure community health officers and workers are better trained and empowered to handle both preventive and curative care comprehensively, without relying on "minimal" care practices that undermine trust.
- **Broaden Health Insurance:** Publicly funded health insurance schemes like PMJAY should cover not just hospitalisation but also outpatient care, diagnostics, medicines, and preventive services to address the broader health needs of the population.
- **Increase Coverage for Uninsured Populations:** Provision of affordable and accessible healthcare for the 100 crore people not covered under existing schemes, either through public provisioning or inclusive insurance schemes should be made.
- **Address Social Determinants of Health and Environmental Issues:** Health policies that integrate livelihood support directly addressing the diseases of poverty such as tuberculosis, malaria, and undernutrition should be developed.
- **Improve Urban Health Infrastructure:** Strengthen urban health programs to address pollution, waste management, road safety, and lifestyle diseases through better infrastructure development and strict market regulations.

Conclusion:

- The public health needs of a population are diverse and perception and prioritisation vary across the social strata.
- Governments at the Union and State level should try to create a health ecosystem which serves the needs of all the sections of the people.

UPSC PYQ:

1. Appropriate local community level healthcare intervention is a prerequisite to achieve 'Health for All' in India. Explain. (2018)
2. Public health system has limitations in providing universal health coverage. Do you think that the private sector could help in bridging the gap? What other viable alternatives do you suggest? (2015)

6) CENSUS- DIFFERENT APPROACHES

(GS-II: Functions and Responsibilities of the Union and the States, Issues and Challenges Pertaining to the Federal Structure, Devolution of Powers and Finances up to Local Levels and Challenges Therein)

Background:

- The Indian Census is the **largest single source of various statistical information** on various characteristics of the people of India.

- This reliable, time-tested exercise is bringing in a **real insight into the data every 10 years**, beginning in the **year 1872** when the first census was conducted non-synchronously in different parts of India.
- The responsibility of conducting the decadal census rests with the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India under the **Union Ministry of Home Affairs**.
- The **Census Act** was enacted in 1948 to provide a plan for conducting population census along with the duties and responsibilities of census officers.
- The last census was conducted in 2011. The next census was to be conducted in 2021 but the COVID-19 pandemic caused a delay in the census. As of September 1, 2024, it is yet to be conducted.
- In this context, knowing about the census operations in different parts of the World to make it better becomes important.

Global Practices in Census Process:

- **Register-Based Censuses:**
 - **Countries:** Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, Singapore, and Bahrain.
 - **Process:** These countries rely on **administrative registers** (population, tax, employment, school, health, and municipal records) rather than conducting a full traditional census. This model integrates existing data from various government databases.
 - **Example:** Austria reduced its census costs from €72 million (2001) to €10 million (2011) by switching to a register-based model.
- **Dynamic or Real-Time Censuses:**
 - **Countries:** United Kingdom, some European nations.
 - **Process:** Data from **everyday activities** are continuously added to the census database in real time. This could include data from private companies, administrative registers, and other public sources.
 - **Examples:** The U.K. gathers data from supermarket scanners, transportation data from Auto Trader, and Rail Delivery Groups.
 - The U.K. Office for National Statistics uses private-sector data alongside government sources.
- **Small-Scale Sample Surveys:**
 - **Countries:** Switzerland, United States, others in Europe.
 - **Process:** Small-scale sample surveys are conducted on a regular basis to complement administrative data. This approach ensures that the census captures more detailed and nuanced demographic information not available in registers.
 - **Example:** Switzerland conducts surveys on 5%-10% of the population to gather additional information beyond the scope of register data.
- **Data Integration:**
 - **Countries:** United Kingdom, some Scandinavian countries.
 - **Process:** Multiple government and **private databases** are integrated to form a comprehensive census register, covering births, deaths, tax data, health records, and more.
 - This method helps update key census data continuously, providing a near real-time demographic picture.
 - **Examples:** The U.K. plans to replace its decennial census with data derived from administrative sources after 2021.
- **Mixed-Method Approach:**
 - **Countries:** United States, United Kingdom (in transition).

- **Process:** These countries are transitioning from traditional censuses to a model that combines administrative records with surveys and big data (e.g., from supermarkets, transportation systems). The idea is to capture ongoing changes in the population dynamically.
- **Examples:** The U.S. combines survey data from the American Community Survey (ACS) with government administrative data to provide more frequent updates between censuses.

Way Forward:

- A census serves as a valuable repository of data pertaining to various economic endeavours, educational attainment and literacy rates, housing and domestic facilities, urbanisation, migration, mortality, fertility, religion, language, and additional socio-economic, cultural, and demographic information.
- The Census process has to be updated on a regular basis to ensure that credible and up to date data is available for policy making anytime.

7) TRANS PEOPLE IN INDIA

(GS-II: Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections of the population by the Centre and States and the Performance of these Schemes; Mechanisms, Laws, Institutions and Bodies constituted for the Protection and Betterment of these Vulnerable Sections)

Background:

- Trans people, or transgender people, are individuals whose **gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.**
- This means that their personal understanding and experience of their gender is not aligned with the biological or anatomical sex assigned to them (male or female) when they were born.
- Trans people may identify as:
 - Transgender women (assigned male at birth, but identifying and living as women)
 - Transgender men (assigned female at birth, but identifying and living as men)
 - Non-binary or genderqueer individuals (who do not exclusively identify as either male or female)
- The Supreme Court, in April 2014, legally recognized transgenders or eunuchs as **'the third gender,'** in the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) judgement.
- The Court directed the Centre as well as the states to **treat them as socially and educationally backward classes** and extend **reservations** in admission in educational institutions and for public appointments.
- Within the judgement, the apex court directed governments to take steps to remove problems faced by them such as fear, shame, social pressure, depression, and social stigma.
- The court affirmed the constitutional **rights of transgender persons under Articles 14, 15, 19 and 21 of the Constitution.**
- In 2018, the Supreme Court widened the ambit of individual autonomy and decisional privacy by **decriminalising homosexuality.**
- The provisions of **Section 377** of the Indian Penal Code that criminalised same-sex relationships was **scrapped** as it violated the fundamental rights of citizens.
- The court noted that the above Section was used as a weapon to harass the members of the LGBTQ community, resulting in discrimination.
- The **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019** provides for protection of rights and welfare of transgender persons.

Problems Faced by Trans People in India:

- **Family Rejection and Eviction:** Many trans individuals, especially teenagers, face harsh behaviour and expulsion from their families. This leaves them homeless and vulnerable at a very young age and they may be misguided by wrong persons.
- **Violence and Persecution:** Trans people, particularly from rural and working-class backgrounds, are subjected to violence and persecution in public spaces. They face physical and emotional harm from both society and the authorities.
- **Suicide and Mental Health Struggles:** The trauma of being rejected by their families, coupled with social rejection and violence, pushes trans individuals to attempt suicide.
- **Social Stigma and Discrimination:** Society frequently treats trans identities as illegitimate or unnatural due to the harmful cultural and political narratives that dismiss their existence.
- **Limited Legal Recognition:** Although there have been some progressive legal judgments in India, trans persons still face significant barriers to having their gender identities legally recognized. This impedes access to education, employment, and healthcare.
- **Institutional Exclusion:** Trans persons are often barred from full participation in societal institutions like schools, workplaces, sports, and healthcare facilities.
 - For example, **gendered spaces like bathrooms** are sites of exclusion and fear for many trans individuals.
- **Medical Discrimination and Intrusion:** Trans persons face scrutiny over their bodies. Medical procedures and examinations often treat their gender identity with suspicion or outright disbelief, **violating their bodily autonomy and dignity.**
- **Economic Marginalization:** Trans people are often **denied employment opportunities** due to widespread discrimination, forcing many into precarious forms of livelihood such as begging or sex work.
- **Public Spaces and Safety Concerns:** Trans persons face harassment and violence in public spaces like streets, bathrooms, and transport. They are often portrayed as a danger to others, particularly women and children, perpetuating harmful myths and stereotypes.
- **Limited Representation and Voice:** Trans people rarely get platforms to voice their concerns. Their experiences are often overshadowed by debates led by people who do not experience their reality, further pushing them away from social and political discourse.

Measures to improve the lives of Trans People:

- **Full Legal Recognition of Gender Identity:** Ensure that transgender individuals have the legal right to self-identify their gender without invasive medical or bureaucratic requirements. Updating identification documents like Aadhaar cards, passports, and voter IDs to reflect their affirmed gender should be made easy.
- **Enforce Anti-Discrimination Laws:** Strengthen and enforce anti-discrimination laws to protect trans persons from discrimination in employment, education, healthcare, and public services. Ensure penalties for violations and create mechanisms for redress.
- **Gender-Affirming Healthcare Services:** Provide access to affordable and non-judgmental healthcare, including hormone therapy, gender-affirming surgeries, and mental health services. Ensure healthcare professionals are trained to understand and respect trans-specific health needs.
- **Mental Health Support:** Increase access to counselling and mental health services specifically tailored to address the trauma, mental health struggles, and societal pressures faced by transgender people, especially in the wake of family rejection and violence.
- **Inclusive Education Policies:** Introduce policies to ensure that schools and universities are inclusive of transgender students, including safe, non-discriminatory environments.

Implement anti-bullying programs and provide gender-neutral bathrooms and facilities in educational institutions.

- **Employment Opportunities:** Government and private employers should be encouraged to hire transgender individuals, and vocational training programs should be developed to enhance their employability.
- **Combat Social Stigma:** Launching nationwide campaigns to raise awareness about the rights and dignity of trans persons can help. Also, media, schools, and public forums can be used to challenge harmful stereotypes and myths surrounding transgender identities.
- **Shelters and Housing Support:** Create more and more government-funded shelters and housing schemes for trans persons, especially those facing homelessness due to family rejection. These shelters should offer safety, medical care, and legal assistance.

Conclusion:

- Trans peoples should also be treated as an equal human being for the overall welfare of the society.

8) INFLATION TARGETING IN INDIA

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

Background:

- Inflation targeting may be defined as a framework for policy decisions in which the **central bank** makes an explicit **commitment to** conduct policy to **meet** a publicly announced **numerical inflation target** within a particular time frame.
- Some countries have adopted point targets while others are following a more flexible approach of targeting inflation within a band.
- Inflation targets may help provide a clear path for the medium-term inflation outlook, reducing the size of inflationary shocks and their associated costs.
- Since long-term interest rates fluctuate with movements in inflation expectations, targeting a low rate of inflation would lead to more stable and lower long-term rates of interest.
- The **Government of India and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) signed an inflation-targeting agreement** in February 2015 and **amended the RBI Act** in May 2016.
- The inflation target was set by the government in consultation with the RBI with the possibility of revisiting it after five years.
- Accordingly, the government announced, via the Official Gazette, **4% Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation as the target** from August 5, 2016, with an **upper tolerance limit of 6% and a lower limit of 2%**.

Success of current Inflation Targeting:

- **Price Stability:** Current mechanisms have helped maintain inflation within the target range of 4-6% most of the time, even during economic shocks like food price volatility, oil price changes, and the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - The framework has successfully kept inflation away from double-digit levels experienced in the past.
- **Improved Central Bank Credibility:** By adopting a clear inflation target, the RBI has enhanced its credibility. A credible central bank can manage inflation expectations more effectively.
- **Lower Interest Rates:** With the commitment to a targeted inflation range, there has been less need for the RBI to hike interest rates drastically.
 - This has contributed to a generally lower interest rate environment, encouraging investment and economic growth.

- **Economic Growth Support:** Price stability provided the stable inflation has allowed businesses to plan for the long term without the risk of sudden cost surges.
 - A stable inflation environment is conducive to investment, economic growth, and job creation.
- **Accountability for Monetary Policy:** Inflation Targeting has made the RBI more accountable by setting a clear inflation target. If inflation deviates from the target, the central bank must explain the reasons and propose corrective measures, ensuring transparency in monetary policy.

Some Problems which needs to be addressed:

- **Limited Control Over Food Prices:** The RBI has limited ability to control food prices, which are driven by supply-side factors like monsoon conditions, agricultural productivity, and global commodity prices.
 - As food constitutes a significant portion of the Consumer Price Index (CPI), it can cause headline inflation to breach the target band despite monetary policy actions.
- **Forecasting Challenges:** The RBI's inflation and growth forecasts have deviated from actual outcomes, pointing to limitations in its economic modelling.
 - Errors in forecasts can lead to suboptimal policy decisions that can negatively affect the economy.
 - The CPI basket takes time to reflect the changing consumption patterns in the economy.
- **Potential Rigidity in Monetary Policy:** A strict focus on the inflation target could make monetary policy less flexible in responding to other economic needs, such as supporting growth or addressing financial stability risks.
 - During times of economic downturn, the central bank may be constrained in using monetary policy to boost growth if inflation remains close to the upper target.
- **Shortcomings in Addressing Structural Inflation:** The framework primarily targets cyclical inflation, but structural factors such as supply chain bottlenecks, infrastructure issues, or regulatory policies in agriculture can also drive inflation.

Conclusion:

- Addressing the issues in the inflation targeting framework can help in improving the inflation scenario in the country and ensure a proper developmental process in the country.

9) ONE NATION, ONE ELECTION

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

Background:

- India initially held simultaneous elections for Lok Sabha and State Assemblies from 1952-1967.
- Premature dissolutions of both Lok Sabha and state assemblies led to staggered elections, with only occasional overlaps like the 2019 polls involving four states.
- The Election Commission and Law Commission have repeatedly advocated for simultaneous elections to streamline the process and ensure better governance.
- A **High -Level Committee (HLC) headed by Ramnath Kovind**, former President of India constituted in September 2023 to examine the issue of holding simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies and local bodies of all States gave its report and it was accepted by the Union Cabinet.

The Case for Consolidation:

- **Saving of Public money:** Simultaneous elections promise significant financial savings for both the government and political parties.
- **Governance Focus:** By reducing election cycles, governments can dedicate more time and resources to policymaking and implementation. The Model Code of Conduct that is enforced during the election process ranges usually from 45--60 days where no new schemes or projects can be announced by the Centre and concerned State governments
- **Administrative Efficiency:** Holding all elections at once streamlines resource allocation and deployment for the election machinery. Also, Paramilitary forces are withdrawn from the locations in which they are posted and deployed to the concerned State for the smooth conduct of elections.
- **Social Cohesion:** Frequent high-stakes elections can exacerbate social divisions. Proponents believe simultaneous polls would mitigate this by focusing on national issues rather than regional or religious differences.

The Counter arguments:

- **Regional Concerns Drowned Out:** Various States have their own unique set of issues that are significantly different from one another.
 - The Union and State governments have their respective powers and responsibilities towards the electorate as per the division of powers under the Constitution.
 - Simultaneous elections could lead to national issues overshadowing regional and state-specific concerns, potentially weakening federalism.
- **National Parties' Gain, Regional Parties Lose:** National parties with broader reach and resources might benefit disproportionately, disadvantaging regional parties with strong local support.
- **Accountability Concerns:** Elections also serve as an effective feedback mechanism for governments in power. Longer intervals between elections could reduce voter accountability and responsiveness of elected officials.
- **Constitutional Hurdles:** Implementing simultaneous elections requires amendments to the Constitution to address fixed terms and premature dissolutions.

Solutions:

The reports of the Law Commission (1999), and the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice (2015), have dealt with the issue of simultaneous elections. The Law Commission had also submitted a draft report in 2018.

- **A Phased Approach:** One proposed solution is to hold Lok Sabha elections in one cycle and state assembly elections in another, spaced 2.5 years apart. This necessitates amending the Constitution and the Representation of the People Act.
- **Stability Measures:** Any 'no confidence motion' in the Lok Sabha or Legislative Assembly should be mandatorily accompanied by a 'confidence motion' for the formation of an alternate government.
 - If for any unavoidable reason, the Lok Sabha or State Assembly is to be dissolved prematurely, the duration of the newly constituted House should be only for the remainder period of the original House.
- **Limited Extensions:** Curtailing or extending existing assembly terms to align with the new schedule might be necessary, requiring further amendments.
- **Consolidated By-Elections:** Clubbing by-elections together annually could further streamline the electoral process.

Conclusion:

- Achieving the benefits of simultaneous elections without compromising democratic and federal principles hinges on political consensus and a willingness to make necessary constitutional amendments.
- Finding a middle ground, such as the proposed phased approach with additional measures for stability and efficiency, could offer a viable solution.

UPSC PYQ:

'Simultaneous election to the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies will limit the amount of time and money spent in electioneering but it will reduce the government's accountability to the people' Discuss. (2017)

10) ECONOMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN INDIA-RUSSIA

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

Background:

- In 2024, Russia is India's fourth largest trading partner.
- In June 2022, the level of bilateral trade surpassed \$3.5 billion. Two years later, in May 2024, the figure rose to \$7.5 billion.
- The meeting between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin in July this year resulted in the announcement of setting up a bilateral trade target of \$100 billion by 2030.
- Achieving this target requires efforts to address the problems which exist in different trade and economic aspects.

Issues in the relations:

- **Limited Economic Complementarity:** The list of products produced by both the countries are somewhat similar, which reduces the possibility of extending the trade far beyond energy. Both Russia and India are also **promoting self-reliance in industrial production**, with Russia focusing on technological nationalism and India pursuing its "Make in India" agenda.
- **Sanctions Regime:** International sanctions on Russia limit trade opportunities, especially in sectors that require stable financial transactions.
 - Payment systems and logistics are not well-integrated between the two countries without the involvement of other countries.
- **Limited Technology and Investment Cooperation:** Apart from nuclear and military collaboration, there is a significant gap in large-scale investment projects, especially in the secondary sector. Bilateral technology cooperation lacks business orientation and research collaboration is minimal.
- **Insufficient Scientific and Educational Collaboration:** There is slow progress in academic, scientific, and STEM-based collaboration. A lack of joint research and educational initiatives creates an "information vacuum" and limits mutual understanding.
- **Low Quality of Trade:** India's exports to Russia are often limited to low-value items like smartphones assembled by foreign companies, while higher-value engineering and technology exports are minimal.
- **Logistics and Trade Infrastructure:** Inadequate logistics routes and no single logistics operator for transport corridors, and a lack of investment protection agreements reduce efficient trade between the two nations.

Solutions to Strengthen India-Russia Relations:

- **Financial Integration and Payment Mechanisms:** Both the countries should establish financial frameworks like integrating national payment systems (such as India's UPI and Russia's MIR) and creating dedicated payment gateways to bypass sanctions.
 - This will help facilitate smooth transactions and boost small and medium enterprises' involvement in trade.
- **Joint Technology and Industrial Projects:** Large-scale cooperation in technology sectors beyond defence, focusing on industrial modernisation can be developed.
- **Educational and Scientific Partnerships:** Cooperation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) through joint academic programs, student exchange initiatives, and research projects can help to bridge the information gap and foster mutual understanding.
- **Diversification of Trade and Investment:** Indian companies can invest in Russian sectors with potential for growth (agriculture, medical equipment, and machinery), while facilitating Russian investments in Indian infrastructure and energy projects.

Conclusion:

- In order to have a more stable footing, India and Russia should look at how to increase integration in bilateral production chains and negotiate issues of localisation.

11) VERTICAL FISCAL IMBALANCE IN INDIA

(GS-II: Functions and Responsibilities of the Union and the States, Issues and Challenges Pertaining to the Federal Structure, Devolution of Powers and Finances up to Local Levels and Challenges Therein)

Definition:

- Vertical Fiscal Imbalance in India refers to the **mismatch between the revenue-raising capacity of the States and their expenditure responsibilities**.
- The 15th Finance Commission has pointed out that the **states incur 61% of the revenue expenditure** but collect **only 38% of the revenue receipts**.
- The ability of the States to incur expenditures is dependent on transfers from the Union government.

Need for reducing VFI:

- **Resource Allocation Efficiency:** Reducing VFI would allow States to have **more untied resources**, enabling them to allocate funds based on **local needs and priorities**.
 - This can improve the efficiency of public spending and ensure that resources are used where they are most needed.
- **Fiscal Autonomy of States:** Lowering VFI would grant States greater fiscal independence, reducing their reliance on the Union government for funds.
- **Better Public Service Delivery:** As States are primarily responsible for providing public goods and services, reducing VFI can lead to better quality and more accessible services, such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure development.
- **Increasing Crisis Management Capacity:** With a lower VFI, States would have greater financial flexibility to address economic crises or unexpected expenditure demands, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Ensuring Fairer Distribution of National Resources:** Addressing VFI would help in achieving a more balanced distribution of national revenue between the Union and the States, aligning expenditure responsibilities with revenue-raising capabilities and promoting equitable development across regions.

Way Forward:

- Many States have raised the demand that the share of tax devolution from the net proceeds must be fixed at 50% by the 16th Finance Commission.
- This measure coupled with other measures like cap on cess and increase in untied funds for states can help to reduce the VFI in India and ensure that states have fiscal autonomy.

12) PRESIDENT'S RULE AND ITS IMPACTS ON CENTRE-STATE RELATIONS

(GS-II: Functions and Responsibilities of the Union and the States, Issues and Challenges Pertaining to the Federal Structure, Devolution of Powers and Finances up to Local Levels and Challenges Therein)

Background:

- India is a federation with governments at the Centre and the States. The Seventh Schedule to the Indian Constitution distributes the power between the Union and States.
- The emergency provisions are provided in Part XVIII of the Constitution. Articles 355 and 356 deal primarily with the **affairs of government in a State** under this part.
- **Article 355** imposes a duty on the Centre to protect every State from external aggression and internal disturbance.
 - It also specifies that the Centre should ensure that every State government operates according to the Constitution.
- **Article 356** allows for the imposition of the President's rule if a State's government cannot function in accordance with constitutional provisions.
- **Article 365** of the Indian Constitution states that if a state government does not follow the directions given by the Central Government, it can be considered that the state government is not functioning according to the provisions of the Constitution.
 - In such a situation, the President of India can impose President's Rule in that state.
- While in the U.S. and Australia, federal government functions also involve protecting States, their constitutions do not contain provisions for removing State governments.

Impacts on Centre-State Relations:

- **Centralization of Power:** When President's Rule is imposed, the state government is dismissed, and the central government directly controls the state's administration through the Governor. This centralization reduces the autonomy of the state, as all major decisions are taken by the central government.
- **Weakening of Federalism:** The federal structure is weakened by disrupting the balance of power between the centre and the states. It can be seen as a move away from cooperative federalism, especially if used for political reasons.
- **Governor's Role Becomes Prominent:** The Governor, who acts as the representative of the central government, takes administration in the state during President's Rule. This strengthens the centre's control over the state, as the Governor acts on behalf of the central government rather than being a neutral figure.
- **Political Tensions:** Imposing President's Rule, especially in states ruled by opposition parties, can lead to accusations of misuse for political gains.
 - This can create friction and mistrust between the central and state governments, leading to political instability and governance issues in the long term..
- **Impact on State Legislature:** During President's Rule, the state legislature is either suspended or dissolved. The state's legislative functions are taken over by the Parliament, which can make laws for the state.
 - This diminishes the role of the state's elected representatives and curtails the state's legislative independence.

Way Forward:

- The Supreme Court's judgement in the **S R Bommai case (1994)** restricted the misuse of the President's rule for political reasons.
- The court held that **Article 356 should be imposed only in the event of a breakdown of constitutional machinery**, as distinguished from an ordinary breakdown of law and order.
- It also held that the imposition of the President's rule is **subject to judicial review** and should not be misused for political reasons.
- The **Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State Relations (1987)**, the **National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (2002)**, and the **Punchhi Commission on Centre-State Relations (2010)** have all opined that Article 355 not only imposes a duty on the Union but also grants it the power to take necessary actions for the effective performance of that duty.
- Imposition of the President's rule under Article 356 must be used as a last resort in situations of utmost gravity and urgency.

13) FOOD WASTAGE IN INDIA

(GS-III: Food Processing and Related Industries in India- Scope' and Significance, Location, Upstream and Downstream Requirements, Supply Chain Management)

Background:

- The **United Nations has designated September 29 as the International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste (FLW)**.
- Events to mark the day are jointly convened by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) because the issue has important implications for food security and saving our environment.
- An FAO, 2023 report estimates that food lost between harvest and retail amounts to 13.2 percent of the global food production. Interestingly, UNEP estimates that 17 percent of food is wasted between retail and feeding people.
- The **all-India post-harvest loss survey** by NABARD Consultancy Services(NABCONS), 2022, shows that the country suffers from **food losses worth Rs 1.53 trillion (\$18.5 billion)** with a loss of
 - **12.5 million metric tons (MMT) of cereals,**
 - **2.11 MMT of oilseeds and**
 - **1.37 MMT of pulses.**

Causes of High Food Wastage in India:

- **Inefficient Harvesting Techniques:** Low levels of mechanisation, especially among small and marginal farmers, result in substantial post-harvest losses.
 - Traditional manual harvesting methods are less efficient compared to mechanised methods like combine harvesting.
 - The study by Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) reveals that **overall loss in paddy drops to just 2.84 percent if mechanisation in harvesting and drying** is adopted at the farm.
- **Inadequate Drying and Storage Facilities:** Traditional drying methods, such as sun drying, are less effective and expose crops to contaminants, moisture, and pests, which can lead to quality degradation and spoilage.
- **Poor Cold Chain Infrastructure:** Inadequate facilities for storage and transportation of perishable goods lead to high losses, especially in horticultural crops like fruits and vegetables.

- Issues in transportation networks contribute to delays and losses in moving food products from farms to markets.
- **Lack of Access to Technology:** Small and marginal farmers (over 86% of agricultural households) often cannot afford advanced agricultural machinery.
- **Jute Packaging Material Act (JPMA, 1987)** talks of using jute bags for packaging rice, and wheat grains.
 - Even though jute is biodegradable, its use leads to frequent rodent attacks and pilferage in India's climate and lead to higher losses during storage and transit.
- **Market Access Issues:** Small farmers may face difficulties accessing markets, leading to unsold produce and subsequent waste.
- **Limited Awareness and Training:** Small farmers may lack knowledge about modern agricultural practices, post-harvest handling, and technologies that could minimise losses.
- **Consumer Behaviour:** Significant food waste occurs at the consumer level due to factors such as over-purchasing, lack of planning, and cultural practices surrounding food consumption, including lavish weddings and feasts.

Government Efforts to address Food wastage:

- **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana** is a comprehensive package which will result in creation of modern infrastructure with efficient supply chain management from farm gate to retail outlet.
 - Pre-existing schemes like the **Mega Food Parks scheme** were included into this scheme.
- **Kisan Rails:** The objective of this service is to move perishables including fruits, vegetables, meat, poultry, fishery and dairy products from the areas of production or surplus regions to consumption or deficient regions, and speedy movement of these perishables to ensure minimum damage during transit.

Measures Required to address Food wastage:

- **Improving Cold Chain Infrastructure:** Enhance cold storage and refrigerated transportation facilities to reduce spoilage of perishable goods like fruits and vegetables.
- **Promoting Mechanization in Agriculture:** Increase the use of farm machinery like combine harvesters, threshers, and power tillers, particularly among small and marginal farmers.
 - Encourage group leasing arrangements and easy hiring of farm machinery through **Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs)**.
- **Drying and Storage Facilities:** Introduce modern drying methods like **solar dryers and dehydrators**, which are more efficient in reducing contamination risks, and are cost-effective for small-scale farmers.
 - Expand grain storage capacity through government initiatives to modernise agricultural storage infrastructure.
- **Efficient Transportation Systems:** Improve the logistics and transportation networks to reduce delays and minimise losses during the transport of food products from farms to markets.
- **Access to Technology for Small Farmers:** Provide small and marginal farmers with better access to affordable technology and machinery through subsidies, cooperative models, or group leasing arrangements to improve efficiency and reduce losses.
- **Awareness:** Educate farmers about modern post-harvest handling, better storage practices, and the use of technology to reduce both quantity and quality losses.

Conclusion:

- Food loss and waste (FLW) amounts to about 30 percent of the global food production.

- Even if half of this food is saved and used, it could easily feed all the hungry people in the world.
- Such savings could also help reduce at least 8 to 10 percent of the world's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and 38 per cent of total energy usage, making our planet breathe better.
- Therefore, it is important to be aware of these potential benefits and commit ourselves to reducing FLW by at least 50 per cent, thus contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations.

14) RURAL DEVELOPMENT

(GS-III: Inclusive Growth and issues arising from it)

Background

- According to the Economic Survey 2022-23, **65 percent of India's population lives in rural areas** and agriculture is the main source of livelihood for 47 percent of the population.
- The 2024-25 budget allocation for agriculture & allied activities registered a significant increase over the actual expenditure registered in 2023-24.

Issues faced by Rural India

- **Dependent on Agriculture:** The rural population is dependent on agriculture for their livelihood and their income is low due to less profit in agriculture.
 - In India, farming is still **dependent on the monsoon**. Equal irrigation facilities are not available across the country.
 - At the same time, the crops of farmers are sometimes ruined by floods and sometimes by drought.
 - In the financial year 2011-12, the agricultural sector contributed about **18.10 percent to the gross domestic product (GDP)**, which decreased to about 15 percent in the financial year 2022-23.
- **Agriculture and Farmers Welfare:** Issues that may **affect agriculture performance** and enhance stress levels of the country's monsoon dependent agro-economy are:
 - Low productivity levels
 - the impact of climate change,
 - fragmented land holdings and
 - inadequate marketing infrastructure
- **Low work participation rates:** It is due to the non-availability of adequate employment opportunities and the necessary investment needed for creation of job avenues in rural sectors.
- **Pseudo employment:** It is a situation where the work which can be done by one person is done by many people together.
- **Other issues: Illiteracy, caste issue, gender discrimination, limited access of farmers to the market, shortage of grain storage, dominance of middlemen, lack of financial awareness, etc. are persisting, and non-availability of health infrastructure, drinking water, communication system, electricity, etc. are making this situation worse.**

Schemes/Initiatives by the Government

- **For farmers**
 - **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana:** It is a food security scheme launched by the Government of India in March 2020 as part of the economic stimulus package to combat the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - The scheme provides **free food grains** to a significant portion of the population, including beneficiaries of the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and other eligible categories.

- **Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana:** This scheme was initiated in 2007 as an umbrella scheme for ensuring holistic development of agriculture and allied sectors.
- **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY):** It aims to transform the fisheries sector into a major contributor to the Indian economy and improve the livelihoods of millions of fishers and associated communities.
- **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY):** It was launched during 2015-16 to ensure **assured and quality irrigation**.
 - **Components:** Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme, Command Area Development and Water Management, Har Khet Ko Pani, Per Drop More Crop.
- **Kisan Credit Card:** Kisan Credit Card (KCC) was introduced in 1998 to provide credit to farmers based on their land holdings, so that farmers can easily buy seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, etc.
- **Healthcare**
 - **Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY):**
 - This scheme is dedicated to improving the health of the deprived or weaker sections of the society.
 - It focuses on financial protection to the citizens and has become the world's largest health insurance/ assurance Scheme completely financed by the Government.
 - **National Health Mission:** It was launched in 2005 and aims to ensure the availability of quality health facilities for children, women and underprivileged sections living in rural areas.
 - **Saksham Anganwadi and Nutrition 2.0:** It is an integrated nutrition support programme aimed at protecting children, adolescents, pregnant women and lactating mothers from malnutrition and other serious diseases through strategic changes in nutrition content and distribution.
 - **Swachh Bharat Mission:** It was launched on 2nd October 2014. This campaign motivates people to donate 100 hours of labour every year, so that every city and every village can be kept clean.
- **Employment Generation:**
 - **The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA):**
 - It is to create diverse green job opportunities at the grass-root level and to remove demand side rigidities from the rural scenario.
 - **National Rural Livelihood Mission:** It has two important self-employment schematic interventions namely, **Deendayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushal Yojana** and **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM)**.
 - DAY-NRLM seeks to **reach out to all rural poor women**.
 - The core financial support under the programme is the **Revolving Fund (RF)** and **Community Investment Fund (CIF)** provided to Self Help Group (SHGs) and their Federations to facilitate their livelihood activities.
 - The **village entrepreneurship development approach** of DAY-NRLM is aimed at creating a catalytic **local entrepreneurial ecosystem** and encouraging the rural unemployed youth to take up local enterprises on their own.
 - **The Pradhan Mantri Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP):** It is a **loan linked subsidy scheme**, with the objective of creating new employment

opportunities in rural areas by promoting new self-employment related ventures to stop the migration of rural youth by making people economically self-reliant.

- **Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Yojana:** Banks are financing the craftsmen and artisans of the unorganised sector to make them economically self-reliant, so that they can be brought into the mainstream.
- **Infrastructure Development**
 - **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)- Rural:** With this initiative, the poor and lower middle class will be able to get their own house at an affordable rate.
 - **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana** under which the unpaved roads of villages were connected to the paved roads of cities.
 - **Jal-Jeevan Mission:** This scheme was started in 2019 with the aim of providing drinking water to every household, so that pure drinking water can be provided to all people.

Conclusion

- The continued emphasis on rural infrastructure and social sectors indicates the country's resolve towards ensuring inclusive and equitable growth in rural areas. This direction can be taken forward by strengthening women's participation in the workforce, ease of doing business, rural and urban development, rural infrastructure, etc.

15) INCLUSIVE HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

(GS-II: Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections of the population by the Centre and States and the Performance of these Schemes; Mechanisms, Laws, Institutions and Bodies constituted for the Protection and Betterment of these Vulnerable Sections)

Background

- Social justice in India faces several issues that need to be addressed to ensure the well-being of people and development of the country.
 - These issues include poverty, lack of access to healthcare and education, gender inequality, and discrimination against marginalised communities.
- The process of **increasing the knowledge, skills, and capacities of all people** in the society can be termed as Human Resource Development.
- The concept of Human Resource Development is more about expansion of freedom, enhancement of capabilities, providing equal opportunities to all and ensuring a long, healthy and prosperous life.

Concept of Inclusive Human Resource Development

- Inclusive Human Resource Development is an encompassing concept which aims to **remove the barriers and include all citizens of the country to enhance their capacity and capabilities.**
- Inclusive Human Resource Development may be considered a logical extension and ultimate end to the right to equality (**Article 14-18**) in order to unify the potential and productivity of all the people in the country.
- Inclusive and faster Human Resource Development has been emphasised upon in the **11th five-year plan.**

Relationship of Human Resource Development with Social Justice

- **Social justice and Human Resource Development** are the two facets of the ultimate goal of progress.
- Social justice is fundamental to Indian Democracy and can be traced in the **preamble of the Indian constitution.**

- Human Resource Development is important to **increase and enhance the economic growth** of any country, as human resources yield an array of economic benefits over their working life.

Important issues that hinder inclusive Human Resource Development:

- **Poverty:** Poverty limits access to education, healthcare, and other essential resources, hindering human development.
- **Unemployment:** Unemployment leads to economic hardship. Creating job opportunities is essential for providing people with the means to support themselves and their families.
- **Rural Infrastructure:** Investing in rural infrastructure is essential for bridging the gap between rural and urban areas and ensuring equitable development.
- **Financial Inclusion:** Promoting financial inclusion is crucial for empowering individuals and businesses, especially in rural areas.
- **Balanced regional development:** Ensuring balanced regional development is essential for promoting social cohesion and reducing regional tensions.
- **Gender equality:** Promoting gender equality is essential for ensuring that women have the same opportunities as men and can contribute fully to economic and social development.
- **Lack of basic amenities** like sanitation, drinking water, housing etc.

Measures taken by Government to ensure Human Resource Development in Budget 2024-25

- **Education:**
 - **Education Loans:** For helping our youth who have not been eligible for any benefit under Government.
 - **Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan:** It was revamped to create a new education structure, pedagogy, assessment pattern, regulation and governance that is aligned with the aspirational goals of 21st century education.
 - **PM SHRI Scheme:** The scheme emphasises on the emergence of exemplary schools that will provide high-quality **education in an equitable, inclusive and joyful environment** that takes care of the diverse background, multilingual needs and different academic abilities of children and makes them active participants in their own learning process.
 - **Pradhan Mantri Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM- USHA):** This scheme provides funds to States/UTs institutions, with the vision to attain higher levels of access, equity, and excellence in the State higher education system for developing Quality Teaching & Learning processes with greater efficiency, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness.
- **Skill Development:** Skill development is one of the key components of Human Resource Development to realise the goal of Viksit Bharat.
 - **Centrally sponsored Skilling programme:** Twenty lakh youth are planned to be skilled over a period of 5-years and one thousand Industrial Training Institutes are to be upgraded with outcome based orientation.
 - **Skilling Loans- Model Skill Loan Scheme:** This is a measure which is expected to help 25,000 students every year.
 - Some flagship schemes include PM Kaushal Vikas Yojna 4.0, Jan Shikshan Sansthan, Craftsmen Training Scheme, Aspirational Skilling Abhiyan etc.
- **Employment Generation:** Employment generation is crucial so that the skilled workforce can convert resources towards economic growth. The Union Budget (2024-25) has envisaged implementing three schemes for 'Employment Linked Incentive', as part of the Prime Minister's package.
 - **Scheme A-First Timers:** This scheme aims to provide one-month wage to all the persons who are newly entering into the workforce under all formal sectors.

- **Scheme B- Job Creation in manufacturing:** This scheme aims to incentivize additional employment in the manufacturing sector, linked to the employment of first-time employees.
- **Scheme C-Support to employers:** This employer-focussed scheme will cover additional employment in all sectors. All additional employment within a salary of Rs. one lakh per month is to be counted.
- **Innovation & Research**
 - **Anusandhan National Research Fund:** This shall be established in order to support basic research and prototype development, by allocating Rs. 1 lakh crore to spur private sector-driven research and innovation at a commercial scale and also to expand the Space economy fivefold in the next 10 years by establishing a venture capital fund of Rs. 1,000 crore.
- **Women-led development:** Dedicated financial support for women entrepreneurs and skill programmes shall significantly bear an impact on women's economic participation & development.
 - Encouraging participation of women in the workforce through setting up of working women's hostels in collaboration with industry, and establishing crèches.
 - Organise women-specific skilling programmes, and promotion of market access for women Self Help Group (SHG) enterprises.
 - **Vatsalya pension scheme:** It shall be a contributory pension scheme with contributions from parents & guardians.

Schemes to ensure Social Justice

- **Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan:**
 - It aims to improve the socio-economic condition of tribal communities by adopting saturation coverage for tribal families in tribal-majority villages and aspirational districts.
- **Purvodaya Schemes:**
 - It focuses on the all- round development of the eastern region of the country covering Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.
 - This aims to cover Human Resource Development, infrastructure, and generation of economic opportunities to make the region an engine to attain Viksit Bharat.

Conclusion

- Inclusive Human Resource Development and Social Justice are an integral part of growth in all sectors of economy.
- All stakeholders' i.e. government and civil society organisations need to coordinate together and implement effective policies and programs that focus on reducing poverty, improving access to healthcare and education, promoting gender equality, and protecting the rights of marginalised communities.

16) STEPS TOWARDS VIKSIT BHARAT

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

Background

- The Economic Survey mentions that the Indian economy grew at 9.7 percent and 7.0 percent in 2021-22 and 2022-23, respectively, and is estimated to grow at 8.2 percent in real terms in 2023-24.
- The Government of India now aims at 'next generation reforms' in various sectors to attain the status of Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Next Generation Reforms

- The elements of 'next generation reforms' span various **factors of production** such as land, labour, capital and entrepreneurship to spur economic growth aimed at achieving the status of Viksit Bharat by 2047.
- These reforms will be undertaken in close collaboration with states through cooperative federalism.

Land Reforms

- Assigning **Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) or Bhu-Aadhaar** for all lands, digitization of cadastral maps, survey of map subdivisions as per current ownership, establishment of land registry, and linking to the farmers registry. These measures will also facilitate credit flow and other agricultural services.
- **Digital registry:** It is part of the Government's **Digital Agriculture Mission**, which would enable farmers to access benefits from a host of schemes. The **unique IDs** would contain the details of the farmers' land holding, crops grown in the field and other details, so that it would be easier for the Government to provide direct cash benefits, sanction credits, crop insurance and projecting crop yield in advance.

Labour Reforms

- A **comprehensive integration of the e-shram portal with other portals** will facilitate a one-stop solution.
- **Open architecture databases** for the rapidly changing labour market, skill requirements and available job roles, and a **mechanism to connect job-aspirants with potential employers and skill providers** will be covered.
- The **Shram Suvidha and Samadhan portals** will be revamped to enhance ease of compliance for the industry and trade.

Reforms in Financial Sector and Investment Promotion

- **Financial sector vision and strategy document:** This will set the agenda for the next five years and guide the work of the Government, regulators, financial institutions and market participants.
- In addition, the Government will develop a **taxonomy for climate finance** for enhancing the availability of capital for climate adaptation and mitigation.
- Under the next generation reform, the Government will seek the required legislative approval for providing an efficient and flexible mode for financing, leasing of aircrafts and ships, and pooled funds of private equity through a '**variable company structure**'.
- The **rules and regulations for Foreign Direct Investment and Overseas Investments** will be **simplified** to facilitate Foreign Direct Investments, nudge prioritization, and promote opportunities for using Indian Rupee as a currency for overseas investments.

Ease of Doing Business

- **Jan Vishwas Bill 2.0.:** It is for enhancing Ease of Doing Business. The legislation aims to contribute to rationalising criminal provisions and ensuring that citizens, businesses and the Government departments operate without fear of imprisonment for minor, technical or procedural defaults.

MODEL QUESTIONS

- 1) Elaborate on the recent efforts taken by India to strengthen its relationship with African Continent.
- 2) Rising income inequality in India is a major concern which needs to be controlled. Explain.
- 3) How can India help the Global South to develop in a sustainable way?
- 4) India-ASEAN relations hold potential for varied opportunities. Examine.
- 5) Issues in India's public health sector need immediate reform. Discuss.
- 6) Propose few innovative and practical methods to improve the efficiency and accuracy of the Census process.
- 7) Trans peoples' lives in India are made tough by many problems which need immediate focus. Discuss.
- 8) Discuss in detail the nuances of inflation targeting in India.
- 9) Critically analyse the proposal for 'One Nation, One Election'.
- 10) Economic partnership with Russia is gaining momentum after the Russia-Ukraine War. In this context, explain the issues in making this relationship a sustainable one.
- 11) What do you understand about the term 'Vertical Fiscal Imbalance'? Explain in detail.
- 12) How does the President's rule impact the Centre-State relations in India? Discuss.
- 13) The all-India post-harvest loss survey by NABARD Consultancy Services (NABCONS), 2022, shows that the country suffers from food losses worth Rs 1.53 trillion. In this context, examine the reasons for food wastage in India. Also, discuss the government efforts in this direction.
- 14) Despite significant government efforts, rural India continues to grapple with various challenges. Analyse the key issues hindering rural development in India and evaluate the effectiveness of government schemes and initiatives in addressing these challenges.
- 15) Analyse the interrelationship between inclusive human resource development and social justice in India. Critically evaluate the government's initiatives and policies aimed at achieving these goals.
- 16) Discuss the need for reforms across various sectors to achieve the goal of a Viksit Bharat by 2047.