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Globalisation & Covid-19

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Why in News

Global leaders have reached this consensus that the **pandemic Covid-19** and the crisis it has generated is a turning point in modern history.

> The crisis offers the world an opportunity to **forge a new human-centric concept of globalisation.**

Key Points

- The rapid worldwide spread of **Covid-19** has a lot to do with the **fallout of globalisation,** including the **travel** industry, **tourism** and the neoliberal attack on **universal health care** which can be understood by the **examples of South Korea, Iran and Sri Lanka.**
- **South Korea:**
  > The transmission of the Covid-19 in South Korea is related to the Shincheonji Church of Jesus. This **cult facilitated the transmission** of the disease from Wuhan to South Korea because of **frequent travel among its followers.**
- **Iran:**
  - The coronavirus was introduced in Iran through **globalisation-triggered international alignment and incubated through political and religious processes.**
  - **The economic sanctions imposed by the U.S. dominated western countries** compelled Iran to develop ties with China. Which in turn, made the **traders act as the carriers** of the viruses.
  - The **initial hub of disease transmission** in Iran was Qom, a **popular pilgrimage centre for Shiite Muslims** from where it reached the **Iranian Parliament,** having strong ties with Qom.

- **Sri Lanka & India:**
  - Here the onset of the Covid-19 has a lot to do with **tourism and labour migration,** processes intimately connected with globalisation.
  - Both in **Sri Lanka and India,** the **first cases were reported among foreign tourists** from China and Italy respectively.
  - The **tour guides** became the **first set of local people exposed** to the disease triggering local transmissions.
  - Both Sri Lanka and Kerala in India have **large portions of their labour force employed overseas.**
  - **Returnees** from these overseas destinations have contributed to the upsurge in the Covid-19 epidemic in South Asian countries.

Challenges

- The quarantine and social distancing processes may not be **totally effective** in so far as the migrant workers and their families are often in between two states, experiencing difficulties at both ends.
- Both migrant workers and tourist guides already experience discrimination of various kinds because of their occupations and the risks involved and the quarantine has added to their misery.

Way Forward

- The world needs to think **beyond social distancing and quarantining** the affected people and places.
- Broader and deeper issues like **fallout from globalisation need to be analysed** and questioned.
- In the recent **G20 video conference**, Indian Prime Minister stressed the world leaders to look at **humanitarian aspects to global challenges like pandemics, climate change and terrorism, not just economic ones.**
- The world needs to redefine the definition of globalisation and make it more **human-centric instead of market and profit-oriented.**
- There is a need to **devote special attention to the needs of less developed countries** as they might not contribute to the causes but face the severity of the situation far worse.

Globalisation

- It refers to the **economic, social and political integration of nations.** It entails the spread of products, technology, information and jobs across national borders and cultures.

- In **economic terms,** it describes an **interdependence of nations** around the globe, fostered through free trade.
- Globalisation can be further divided into subcategories based on its time frame and focus areas:
  - **Globalization 1.0**
    - It was **pre-World War I** globalization, which was launched by a historic drop in trade costs.
    - This globalization came with almost no government support and was without global governance.
  - **Globalization 2.0**
    - It is the **post-World War II** phase where trade in goods was combined with complimentary domestic policies.
    - The market was in charge of efficiency while the government was in charge of justice.
    - It saw the establishment of institute-based, rule-based international governance, specifically the **United Nations** (UN), **International Monetary Fund** (IMF), **World Bank**, **World Trade Organisation** (WTO, earlier GATT), **International Labor Organization** (ILO) etc.
  - **Globalization 3.0**
    - It created a new world of manufacturing in which high-tech was combined with low wages.
    - This was achieved through establishment of global supply chains as factories crossed international borders.
    - It was variously called **New globalization, Hyper globalization, Global value chain evolution.**
  - **Globalization 4.0**
    - It is the latest stage of globalization which involves cutting-edge new technologies like **artificial intelligence** (AI) that powers forward with the explosion of information technology.
    - These technologies shrink distances, open up borders and minds and bring people all across the globe closer together.

Source: TH