PT SPRINT 2023

SOCIAL ISSUES
(March 2022 – March 2023)
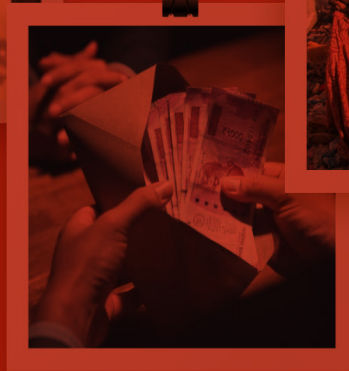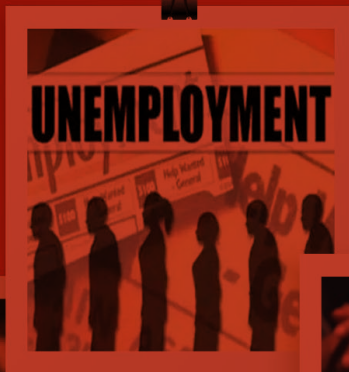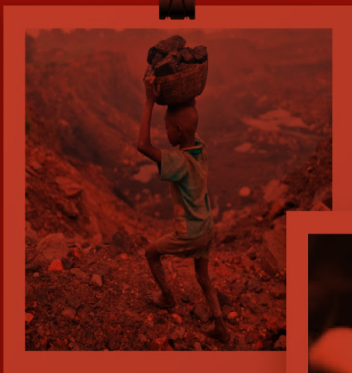
Contents

NAMASTE Scheme

Why in News?

Union Budget 2023-2024 has allocated nearly **Rs 100 crore for the National Action for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE)** and the government is looking to enable **100% mechanical desludging of septic tanks and sewers in all cities and towns.**

➢ The process of extending the Scheme to all the **Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)** of the country has been initiated.

What is the NAMASTE Scheme?

➢ **About:**
  - ○ It was launched in 2022 as a **Central Sector Scheme.**
  - ○ The scheme is being undertaken **jointly by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (MoSJE)** and aims to eradicate unsafe sewer and septic tank cleaning practices.

➢ **Objectives:**
  - ○ Zero fatalities in sanitation work in India.
  - ○ All sanitation work is performed by skilled workers.
  - ○ No sanitation workers come in direct contact with human faecal matter.
  - ○ Sanitation workers are collectivised into **Self Help Groups (SHGs)** and are empowered to run sanitation enterprises.
  - ○ Strengthened supervisory and monitoring systems at National, State and Urban Local Body (ULB) levels to ensure enforcement and monitoring of safe sanitation work.
  - ○ Increased awareness among sanitation services seekers (individuals and institutions) to seek services from registered and skilled sanitation workers.

What are the Key Features of the Scheme to be Implemented in all ULBs?

➢ **Identification**: NAMASTE envisages identifying the Sewer/Septic Tank Workers (SSWs).

➢ **Occupational Training and distribution of PPE Kits to SSWs.**

➢ **Assistance for Safety Devices to Sanitation Response Units (SRUs).**

➢ **Extending Health Insurance Scheme Benefits** to identified SSWs and their families under the Ayushman Bharat- Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY).

➢ **Livelihood Assistance**: The Action Plan will promote mechanization and enterprise development by providing funding support and subsidy (capital +interest) to the sanitation workers, to procure sanitation related equipments.

➢ **IEC (Information Education and Communication) Campaign**: Massive campaigns would be undertaken jointly by the ULBs & NSKFDC (National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development Corporation) to spread awareness about the interventions of NAMASTE.

Increasing Cases of Suicides in Educational Hubs

Why in News?

The **National Crime Records Bureau's (NCRB's) Accidental Deaths and Suicide in India (ADSI) report 2021** shows student **suicides** had gone up drastically during the **Covid-19** pandemic in 2020 and 2021 and have been **steadily rising in the last five years.**

What is the Current Status of Suicides in Students?

TOP FIVE STATES WITH HIGHEST STUDENT SUICIDES IN 2021

Maharashtra 1,834
Madhya Pradesh 1,308
Tamil Nadu 1,246
Karnataka 855
Odisha 834

Source: NCRB data
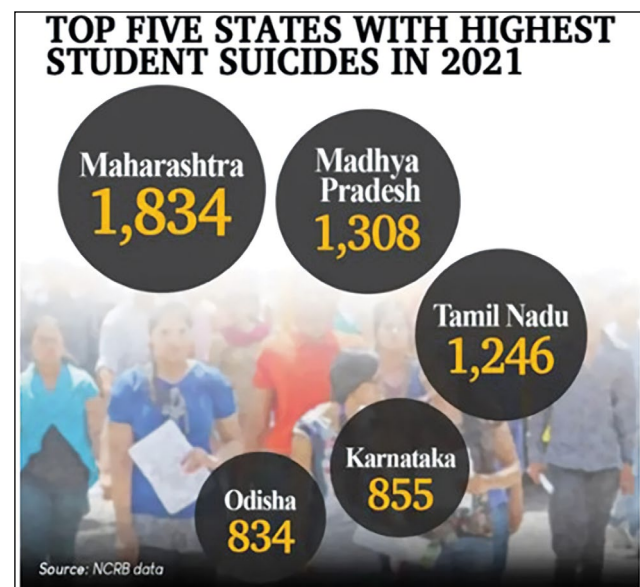
➢ **Over 13,000 students died by in 2021 in India at the rate of more than 35 every day**, a rise of 4.5% from the 12,526 deaths in 2020 with **864 out of 10,732 suicides being due to "failure in examination"** according to the latest data as per NCRB's ADSI report 2021.

Note:

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- Since 1995, the country lost the highest number of students to suicides in 2021, while nearly 2 lakh of them have died by suicide in the past 25 years.
  - The death by suicide of students has **increased by 32.15% since 2017,** when 9,905 students died by suicide.
- Maharashtra had the highest number of student suicides in 2021 with 1,834, followed by Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.
- The report also showed the **percentage of women student suicide was at a five-year low of 43.49%,** while **men student suicides made up 56.51%** of the total student suicides.
  - In 2017, 4,711 women students died by suicide, while **in 2021 such deaths increased to 5,693.**

➢ As per **Ministry of Education, 122 students from IITs, NITs,** central universities and other central institutions **died by suicide over 2014-21.**
  - 68 of 122 belonged to the **scheduled castes (SC), scheduled tribes (ST) or other backward classes (OBC).**

➢ Suicides are a **growing concern in Kota, India, a hub for engineering and medical entrance exams preparation.**
  - As of January 2023, **22 students have died** in Kota **since 2022 and around 121 have died since 2011.**

What are the Factors that Increase Suicide Risk?

➢ **Academic Pressure:**
  - High expectations from parents, teachers and society can lead to excessive stress and pressure to perform well in exams.
  - This pressure to succeed can be overwhelming for some students, leading to feelings of failure and hopelessness.

➢ **Mental Health Issues:**
  - Mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder can contribute to student suicides.
    - These conditions can be exacerbated by stress, loneliness, and lack of support.

➢ **Isolation and Loneliness:**
  - Many students in educational hubs come from far away and live away from their families and friends.
  - This can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness, which can be particularly difficult to deal with in an unfamiliar and competitive environment.

➢ **Financial Concerns:**
  - Financial difficulties, such as not being able to afford tuition fees or living expenses, can create a great deal of stress and worry for students.
  - This can lead to feelings of hopelessness and desperation.

➢ **Cyber Bullying:**
  - Cyber bullying and online harassment are becoming increasingly common and can contribute to student suicides.
    - Cyber bullying can take many forms, such as harassment, cyberstalking, or bullying through social media.

➢ **Substance Abuse:**
  - Substance abuse and alcohol abuse can contribute to student suicides. Substance abuse can lead to mental health problems, financial difficulties, and legal issues, all of which can be overwhelming for students.

➢ **Relationship Problems:**
  - Relationship problems, such as break-ups, family conflicts, and friendship issues can also contribute to student suicides.
  - These problems can be particularly difficult to deal with for students who are far from home and have limited support.

➢ **Lack of Support:**
  - Many students in educational hubs are reluctant to reach out for help when they are struggling.
    - This can be due to stigma surrounding mental health problems or a fear of being judged.
  - This lack of support can lead to feelings of hopelessness and desperation.

What can be Done to Prevent Suicides?

➢ **Improved Mental Health Services:**
  - Providing students with access to mental health services and resources such as counseling services, support groups, and psychiatric services can help prevent suicides.
    - Also, schools and universities **must train teachers, staff, and students in mental health first aid .**

➢ **Embracing Positive Attitude towards Mental Health:**
  - Positive attitudes towards mental health and help-seeking must also be promoted through **open discussions about mental health and suicide.**

Note:

➢ **Focus on Overall Personality Development:**
- By taking a holistic approach to personality development, educational institutions can create a **supportive and inclusive environment that helps students thrive both academically and emotionally,** and can play a critical role in preventing suicides.

➢ **Encouraging Participation in Sports:**
- Sports can play a role in preventing suicides in educational hubs by **providing a positive outlet for stress and emotions,** as well as increase self-esteem and confidence**.**

➢ **Addressing the Socio-economic Issues:**
- Socio-economic factors such as **poverty, homelessness, and unemployment should be addressed** to improve students' overall well-being and reduce stress, anxiety, and depression.

➢ **Stricter Cyber Bullying Policies:**
- Implementing stricter cyber bullying policies and cracking down on online harassment can help reduce the risk of student suicides.
  - This may include **monitoring social media sites, providing education about cyber bullying, and taking legal action** against cyber bullies.

➢ **Substance Abuse Prevention Programs:**
- Implementing substance abuse prevention programs can help reduce the risk of student suicides.
  - This may include **educating students about the dangers of substance abuse, providing support for those struggling with addiction**, and taking steps to reduce access to drugs and alcohol.

➢ **Building Positive Relationships:**
- Encouraging students to **build positive relationships and connections, offering relationship counseling services,** and encouraging students to reach out for help can help reduce the risk of suicide.

➢ **Family Support:**
- **Providing students with support from their families** can help reduce the risk of suicide.
  - This may include **offering support and resources for families, and encouraging students to maintain contact** with their families.

What are Related Initiatives to Reduce Suicides?

➢ **Indian Initiatives:**
- **Mental Healthcare Act (MHA), 2017:**
  - **MHA 2017** aims to **provide mental healthcare services** for persons with mental illness.

- **KIRAN:**
  - The **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has launched a 24/7 toll-free helpline "KIRAN"** to provide support to people facing anxiety, stress, depression, suicidal thoughts and other mental health concerns.

- **Manodarpan Initiative:**
  - **Manodarpan** is an i**nitiative of the Ministry of Education under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.**

➢ It is aimed to **provide psychosocial support to students, family members and teachers** for their mental health and well-being during the times of Covid-19.

- **National Suicide Prevention Strategy:**
  - Announced in 2023, **National Suicide Prevention Strategy** is the f**irst of its kind in the country,** with time-bound action plans and multi-sectoral collaborations to **achieve reduction in suicide mortality by 10% by 2030.**

➢ The strategy is **in line with the World Health Organisation's South East-Asia Region Strategy for suicide prevention.**

- **Its objectives are:**
  - The strategy broadly seeks to **establish effective surveillance mechanisms for suicide within the next three years.**
  - It seeks to **establish psychiatric outpatient departments** that will **provide suicide prevention services** through the District Mental Health Programme in all districts **within the next five years.**
  - It also aims to **integrate a mental well-being curriculum in all educational institutions** within the next eight years.
  - It envisages **developing guidelines for responsible media reporting of suicides,** and **restricting access to means of suicide.**

Global Report on Neglected Tropical Diseases

Why in News?

Recently, the **World Health Organization's (WHO)** has released a **Global report on Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD) 2023**, which states that NTD continues to disproportionately impact the **most impoverished members of the international community.**

➤ World NTD day is observed every year on 30th January. It was declared in the **74th World Health Assembly (2021).**

What are Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs)?

➤ **About:**
- ❍ NTDs are a group of infections that are most common **among marginalized communities** in the **developing regions of Africa, Asia and the Americas.**
- ❍ They are caused by a **variety of pathogens** such as viruses, bacteria, protozoa and parasitic worms.
- ❍ NTDs are especially common in tropical areas where people **do not have access to clean water or safe ways** to dispose of human waste.
- ❍ These diseases generally receive less funding for research and treatment than **malaises like tuberculosis, HIV-AIDS and malaria.**

➤ **Examples of NTDs are: snakebite envenomation,** scabies, yaws, trachoma, **Leishmaniasis** and Chagas disease etc.

What are the Global Initiatives?

WHO's New Roadmap for 2021–2030:

➤ The NTD road map 2021–2030 is WHO's **blueprint to drive global efforts in the fight against NTDs** in the context of the United Nations **Sustainable Development Goals.**

➤ The Blueprint recommends following measures,
- ❍ From measuring **process to measuring impact.**
- ❍ From disease-specific planning and programming to **collaborative work across sectors.**
- ❍ From **externally driven agendas reliant to programmes that are country-owned** and country-financed.

➤ **London Declaration on NTDs:** It was adopted on 30th January, 2012 to recognise the global burden of NTDs.

What are the Indian Initiatives to Eliminate NTDs?

➤ The **Accelerated Plan for Elimination of Lymphatic Filariasis (APELF)** was launched in 2018, as part of intensifying efforts towards the elimination of NTDs.

➤ A WHO-supported regional alliance established by the governments of India, Bangladesh, and Nepal in 2005 to expedite early diagnosis and treatment of the most vulnerable populations and improve disease surveillance and control of sandfly populations **(Kala-azar).**

➤ India has already eliminated several other NTDs, including guinea worm, trachoma, and yaws.

➤ Preventive methods like **Mass Drug Administration (MDA)** rounds are periodically deployed in endemic areas during which anti-filarial medicines are provided free-of-cost to at-risk communities.

➤ **Vector-control measures** like Indoor Residual Spraying rounds are undertaken in endemic areas to prevent sandfly breeding.

➤ The government also supports **morbidity management and disability prevention** for those affected by lymphoedema and hydrocele.

➤ State and central governments have also introduced wage compensation schemes for those suffering from Kala-Azar and its sequela (a condition which is the consequence of a previous disease or injury) known as **Post-Kala Azar Dermal Leishmaniasis.**

Odisha's Initiative to Curb Child Marriage

Why in News?

Odisha has been taking a long-term approach to bring about **social and behavioral change regarding child marriage** over the past **4-5 years.**

➤ Odisha recorded an overall decline in the prevalence of child marriage: from 21.3% in National Family Health Survey-4 to 20.5% in **NFHS-5.**

How Odisha is Tackling the Problem of Child Marriage?

➤ The state has implemented a **multi-pronged approach to tackle child marriage**, including tracking the absence of girls in schools and villages, **counseling,** and using a platform called "**Advika**" to **link all schemes targeting girls aged 10 to 19 years.**

➤ It has issued guidelines to **declare villages child-marriage-free** and there are also **monetary incentives for particularly vulnerable tribal groups.**
- ❍ The approaches to prevent child marriages differ from district to district, with some **maintaining a database of adolescent girls** and others making the **production of Aadhaar number** mandatory **in all marriages.**

Note:

○ Various districts have come up with their own ways of tackling the problem, such as weaving a **Kathak performance into a local celebration to raise awareness about child marriage.**

➢ The emphasis is on **engaging with the community, especially girls in the age group of 15 to 18 who are dropouts**, and retaining them in educational institutions.

➢ The Odisha police have also been involved in the effort, conducting **monthly meetings in the community to discuss dropping out from school** and child marriages with representatives of the panchayat, parents, and children.

○ Police stations have been **made child-friendly** so that girls would feel empowered to approach the police.

➢ Various community leaders of different caste, **tribe, and religious groups have been roped in to build awareness about child marriages.**

What are the Major Developments in Minimum Marriageable Age in India?

➢ At the time of India's independence, the **minimum marriageable age stood at 15 years for females** and **18 years for men.**

➢ In **1978**, the government increased it to **18 for girls and 21 for men**.

➢ The **Law Commission Report of 2008**, on reforming family law, recommended a **uniform age of marriage for boys and girls at 18 years** and not 21.

➢ In **2021,** the Central government sought to introduce th**e Prevention of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill 2021,** to raise the **manageable age for women across all religions, from 18 to 21 years.**

○ The proposed law will apply to all communities in the country and, once enacted, will supersede existing marriage and personal laws.

Mission Shakti

Why in News?

The **Supreme Court** has sought more information from the government about **Mission Shakti,** an umbrella scheme for the **safety, security, and empowerment of women.**

➢ This comes after concerns were raised about a **possible shortage of protection officers** to handle domestic violence cases.

What are the Raised Concerns Regarding Domestic Violence?

➢ According to a government document presented in court, **4.4 lakh cases of domestic assault are pending across 801 districts**.

➢ While most of these districts have **one-stop centres to assist victims under Mission Shakti,** it remains unclear **how many of them actually have protection officers** to effectively support survivors.

○ Under **Section 8** of the **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005,** the appointment of protection officers is **mandatory.**

○ Protection officers, who should **ideally be women**, have a pivotal role under the law. They **help victims file complaints, give Information to the police, provide immediate protection and support,** inform victims about their legal rights and support them through court proceedings.

What is Mission Shakti?

➢ **About: Mission Shakti**' is a scheme of Ministry of Women and Child Development **aimed at strengthening interventions for women safety,** security and empowerment.

○ It seeks to realise the Government's commitment for **"women-led development"** by addressing issues affecting women on a life-cycle continuum basis and by making them **equal partners in nation-building through convergence and citizen-ownership.**

➢ **Sub-Schemes**: It has two sub-schemes - **'Sambal' and 'Samarthya'**. While the **"Sambal" sub-scheme is for safety and security of women**, the **"Samarthya" sub-scheme is for empowerment of women**.

➢ **Sambhal:**

○ The components of 'Sambal' sub-scheme consist of erstwhile schemes of **One Stop Centre (OSC), Women Helpline (WHL), Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP)** with a new component of **Nari Adalats** - women's collectives to promote and facilitate alternative dispute resolution and gender justice in society and within families.

➢ **Samarthya:**

○ The components of 'Samarthya' sub-scheme consist of erstwhile schemes of **Ujjwala**, **Swadhar Greh and Working Women Hostel** have been included with modifications.

○ In addition, the existing schemes of **National Creche Scheme for children of working mothers and Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana under umbrella ICDS** have now been included in Samarthya.

   ● A new component of **Gap Funding for Economic Empowerment** has also been added in the Samarthya Scheme.

Trends in Maternal Mortality: UN

Why in News?

According to the **United Nations' (UN)** new report **"Trends in Maternal Mortality"**, of the estimated 287,000 maternal deaths recorded in 2020, 70 % took place in sub-Saharan Africa.

➢ The **Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)** — deaths per lakh live births — in the region was at a dangerous high of 545, many times greater than the world average of 223.

What are the Key Findings of the Report?

➢ **Statistics:**

○ Every two minutes, a woman dies during pregnancy or childbirth, revealing **alarming setbacks for women's health over recent years**, as maternal deaths either increased or stagnated in nearly all regions of the world.

○ There were an estimated 287,000 maternal deaths worldwide in 2020, which is a **slight decrease from 309,000 in 2016** when the **UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** came into effect.

○ Although there has been significant progress in **reducing maternal deaths between 2000 and 2015**, gains largely stalled, or in some cases even reversed, after this point.

➢ **MMR:**

○ In 2020, about 70% of all maternal deaths were in sub-Saharan Africa.

○ The **top three sub-regions in the world with a high or very high MMR** were found in **sub-Saharan Africa,**

   ● Western Africa at 754, middle Africa at 539 and eastern Africa at 351.

   ● On the country level, a similar trend was seen with South Sudan (1,223), Chad (1,063) and Nigeria (1,047) recording an extremely high — greater than 1,000 — MMR.

○ With approximately 82,000 maternal deaths in 2020, **Nigeria accounted for over a quarter (28.5%) of all estimated global maternal deaths** in the pandemic year.

○ From 2000 to 2020, declines in the MMR stagnated in sub-Saharan Africa, northern Africa, Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) and western Asia, and eastern and south-eastern Asia.

➢ **Causes of Maternal Deaths:**

○ Severe bleeding, **high blood pressure, pregnancy-related infections,** complications from unsafe abortion, and underlying conditions that can be aggravated by pregnancy (such as **HIV/AIDS** and malaria) are the leading causes of maternal deaths.

   ● Globally, 1,878 HIV-related indirect maternal deaths were recorded, of which 1,738 (around 92.5%) were in sub-Saharan Africa.

➢ **Healthcare Gaps:**

○ Roughly a third of women do not have even **four of a recommended eight antenatal checks** or receive essential postnatal care, while some 270 million women lack access to modern family planning methods.

➢ **Risks:**

○ Inequities related to income, education, race or ethnicity further increase **risks for marginalized pregnant women**, who have the least access to essential maternity care but are most likely to experience underlying health problems in pregnancy.

Genetic Information and Privacy

Why in News?

Recently, the **Supreme Court** has ruled that children have the right to protect their genetic information from being revealed in **Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA)Tests** without their consent.

➤ The judgment came in a petition filed by a man who questioned his second child's paternity while accusing his wife of an adulterous relationship.

➤ The apex court concluded on the facts of the case that no adverse inference could be drawn on the ground that the **mother declined to subject the child to a paternity test.**

What is the Judgement?

➤ Genetic information is personal and intimate. It sheds light on a person's very essence.

➤ It allows individuals to **make informed decisions about their health, privacy, and identity.**

➤ Children have the **right to protect their genetic information from DNA testing** in divorce proceedings, as it is part of their fundamental right to privacy.
  ○ This is guaranteed under **Article 21 of Indian Constitution.**

➤ It is imperative that children do not become the focal point of the battle between spouses.

➤ Rights of privacy, autonomy and identity are recognised under the **United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child.**
  ○ The Convention **acknowledges the control** that individuals, including children, have **over their own personal boundaries** and the means by which they define who they are in relation to other people.
  ○ Children are not to be deprived of this entitlement to influence and understand their sense of self simply by virtue of being children.

What is the Status of Genetic Information in India?

➤ **Genetic Data and Privacy:**
  ○ Genetic data privacy is a term that seeks to prevent a third party or anyone else from using a person's genetic data without his permission.
  ○ Technological advances have **made it easy to extract personal information from DNA samples, violating privacy rights.**
  ○ While genetic research holds promise for the future, misapplication can have negative consequences. Due to the significance of genetic data as the blueprint for a person's physical being, privacy protection is crucial.

➤ **Advantages of Genetic Information:**

  ○ Genetic information can reveal details **about disease, health, and ancestry.**
  ○ This knowledge can increase a **person's awareness of their own health,** be used in medical research, and enable early intervention for disease prevention.

➤ **Disadvantages of Genetic Information:**
  ○ Genetic data consists of a person's DNA and chromosomes and can reveal personal information about health and ancestry. Direct-to-consumer genetic tests are not always reliable **and can result in unintended exposure of private information.** Unauthorized access to genetic data can result in negative impacts, such as unwelcome responses from employers, insurance providers, and the government, affecting a person's privacy and life.

➤ **Status of Genetic Privacy:**
  ○ In 2018, The Delhi High Court ruled against United India Insurance Company's discrimination in health insurance against a person with a heart disease that was thought to be a genetic disorder.
  ○ Genetic discrimination is a **breach of Article 14**, which guarantees that everyone is treated fairly under the law.
  ○ The Supreme Court of India unanimously stated that the **Right to Privacy is a Fundamental Right under Article 21** in *Justice KS Puttaswamy (Retd.) & Anr. v. Union of India.*
  ○ Genetic discrimination **is illegal in almost all countries**. In 2008, **the United States passed the Genetic Information Non-discrimination Act (GINA),** a federal law that protects people from genetic discrimination in health care and jobs.

Special Marriage Act, 1954

Why in News?

In India, the secular personal law - **Special Marriage Act (SMA) 1954**, provides an alternate route to religious laws for **marriage to interfaith couples.**

What is the Special Marriage Act 1954?

➤ **About:**
  ○ The **Special Marriage Act (SMA), 1954** is an Indian law that provides a **legal framework for the marriage of people belonging to different religions** or castes.

- It governs a **civil marriage where the state sanctions the marriage rather than the religion.**
  ○ The Indian system, where both civil and religious marriages are recognised, is similar to the laws in the **UK's Marriage Act of 1949.**
- **Basic Provisions:**
  ○ **Applicability:**
    - The applicability of the Act extends to the people of all faiths, including **Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists,** across India.
  ○ **Recognition of Marriage:**
    - The Act provides for the **registration of marriages, which gives legal recognition to the marriage** and provides a number of legal benefits and **protections to the couple, such as inheritance rights, succession rights,** and social security benefits.
    - It **forbids polygamy and declares a marriage null and void** if either party had a spouse living at the time of the marriage or if **either of them is incapable of giving a valid consent to the marriage** due to unsoundness of mind.
  ○ **Written Notice:**
    - **Section 5 of the Act** specifies that the **parties must give written notice to the Marriage Officer of the District** and that at least one of the parties must have lived in the district for at least 30 days immediately before the date of such notification.
    - **Section 7** of the Act allows any person to object to the marriage before the expiration of **30 days from the date of the notice's publication**.
  ○ **Age Limit:**
    - The minimum age to get married under the SMA is **21 years for males and 18 years for females.**
- **Differentiation from Personal Laws:**
  ○ Personal laws, such as the **Muslim Marriage Act, 1954, and the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955,** require **either spouse to convert to the religion of the other before marriage.**
    - However, the **SMA enables marriage between inter-faith or inter-caste couples without them giving up their religious identity** or resorting to conversion.

- But, once married as per the **SMA,** an individual is deemed **severed from the family** in terms of rights like the **right to inheritance.**
- **Issues Related to SMA:**
  ○ **Objections to Marriage:** One of the main issues with the Special Marriage Act is the provision for **objections to be raised against marriage.**
    - This **can often be used to harass consenting couples** and delay or prevent their marriage from taking place.
    - In January 2021, the Allahabad HC ruled that couples who wish to solemnise their marriage under the Special Marriage Act can choose **not to publish the mandatory 30-day notice of their intention to marry.**
  ○ **Privacy Concerns:** The requirement for notices to be published can also be seen as **a violation of privacy,** as it can disclose the personal information of the couple and their plans to get married.
  ○ **Social Stigma**: Inter-caste or inter-religious marriages are still not widely accepted in many parts of India, and **couples who choose to get married under the SMA may face social stigma and discrimination** from their families and communities.

Impact of Covid-19 on Human Capital

Why in News?

Recently, the **World Bank** released a report titled- **"Collapse and Recovery: How COVID-19 Eroded Human Capital and What to Do"**, stating that the **Covid-19** caused **a massive collapse in human capital**, primarily affecting children and young people.

- It **analyzed global data on the pandemic's impacts on young people** at key developmental stages: early childhood (0-5 years), school age (6-14 years) and youth (15-24 years).

Note:
- **Human capital** consists of the **knowledge, skills, and health t**hat people invest in and accumulate throughout their lives, enabling them **to realize their potential as productive members of society.**

Note:

What are the Findings of the Report?

➢ **Impact of Pandemic:**
  ○ The Covid-19 caused massive damage to human capital **at critical moments in the life cycle**, primarily affecting children and young people in **underdeveloped and developing countries**.
  ○ The development of millions in **low- and middle-income countries has been derailed**.

➢ **Impact on School Children:**
  ○ Preschool-age children in multiple countries have **lost more than 34% of learning in early language** and literacy and more than 29% of learning in mathematics compared to pre-pandemic cohorts.
  ○ In many countries, even after schools had reopened, **preschool enrollment had not recovered by the end of 2021**; it was down by more than 10% in multiple countries.
  ○ Children also faced greater **food insecurity** during the pandemic.

➢ **Reductions in Healthcare:**
  ○ Millions of children faced reductions in health care—including missed critical vaccines.
  ○ They also faced m**ore stress in their care environments**—orphanhood, domestic violence, suboptimal nutrition—which led to declines in school readiness and declines in social and emotional development.

➢ **Youth Employment:**
  ○ Forty million people who would have had a job in the absence of the pandemic **did not have one at the end of 2021**, worsening youth unemployment trends. Youth earnings contracted by 15% in 2020 and 12% in 2021.
  ○ New entrants with lower education will have 13% fewer earnings during their first decade in the labour market.
    ● In Brazil, Ethiopia, Mexico, Pakistan, South Africa, and Vietnam **25% of all young people were neither in education,** employment, nor training in 2021.

➢ **Challenges in Future:**
  ○ The cognitive deficit in today's toddlers **could translate into a 25% decline in earnings** at their prime working age.

  ○ Today's students in low- and middle-income countries could lose up to 10% of their future average annual earnings due to the COVID-related education shocks. Globally, this generation of students risks **losing USD 21 trillion in potential lifetime earnings.**
  ○ Losses of lifetime earnings at this scale **can mean lower productivity, greater inequality, and possibly greater social unrest** for decades to come.

Prioritizing Mental Well-being

Why in News?

According to **World Health Organisation,** India's suicide rate in 2019, at **12.9/1,00,000**, was higher than the regional average of **10.2** and the global average of 9.0.

➢ Suicide has become the leading cause of **death among those aged 15–29 in India. While every precious life lost through suicide is one too many, it represents only the tip of the mental health** iceberg in the country, particularly among young adults. Women tend to suffer more.

What is the Status of Mental Healthcare in India?

➢ **About:**
  ○ Mental health encompasses **emotional, psychological, and social well-being.**
    ● It influence**s cognition, perception, and behaviour.** It also determines how an individual handles stress, interpersonal relationships, and decision-making.
  ○ In India, according to **National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences data**, more than **80% of people** do not have access to mental healthcare services for a multitude of reasons.
    ● **Initiatives by Government of India Related to Mental Health:**
  ○ **National Mental Health Program (NMHP):** The **NMHP** was adopted by the government in 1982 in response to a **large number of mental disorders** and shortage of mental health professionals.
  ○ **Mental Health Act:** As part of the **Mental Health Care Act 2017,** every affected person has access to **mental healthcare** and treatment from government institutions**.**

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○ **Kiran Helpline:** In 2020, the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** launched a 24/7 toll-free helpline **'Kiran'** to provide mental health support.

○ **MANAS Mobile App:** To promote mental wellbeing across age groups, the Government of India launched **MANAS (Mental Health and Normalcy Augmentation System) in 2021.**

● **Issues Associated with Mental Health:**

○ **Social Media:** Increased use of certain kinds of social media is exacerbating stress and mental ill health for young people.

● Social media detracts from **face-to-face relationships,** which are healthier, and reduces investment in meaningful activities.

● More importantly, it erodes **self-esteem through unfavourable social comparison.**

○ **Covid-19 Pandemic**: The **Covid-19 pandemic** has further exacerbated the problem. Globally, it might have increased the prevalence of **depression by 28% and anxiety by 26%** in just one year between 2020 and 2021, according to a study published in **Lancet.**

● Again, the large increases have been noted among younger age groups, **stemming from uncertainty, financial and job losses, grief, increased childcare burdens**, in addition to school closures and social isolation.

○ **Poverty**: Mental health is closely linked to **poverty** in a vicious cycle of disadvantage. People living in poverty are at greater risk of experiencing mental health conditions.

● On the other hand, **people experiencing severe mental health conditions are more likely to fall into poverty** through loss of employment and increased health expenditure.

○ **Lack of Mental Health Infrastructure**: Currently, only **20-30% of people with mental illnesses receive adequate treatment.**

● One major reason for such a wide treatment gap is the problem of inadequate resources. Less than 2% of the government health budget is devoted to mental health issues.

● Also, the **list of essential medicines** includes only a limited number of **WHO-prescribed mental health medications.**

Prison Reforms

Why in News?

Recently, the Prime Minister suggested prison reforms to improve jail management and recommended repealing obsolete criminal laws, at the 57th All-India Conference of Director Generals/ Inspector Generals of Police, organised by the Intelligence Bureau (IB).

What are the Key Highlights of the Prime Minister's Address?

➢ He emphasised on the importance of **National Data Governance Framework** for the **smoothing of data exchange, across agencies.**

○ Also, making the police forces more sensitive and training them in emerging technologies.

➢ He talked about leveraging technological solutions like **biometrics** etc., and the need to further strengthen traditional policing mechanisms like foot patrols.

➢ He also emphasised on enhanced cooperation between the **State Police and Central Agencies** to leverage capabilities and share best practices replicating the model of the DGsP/IGsP Conference at the State/district levels, for discussing emerging challenges and evolving best practices among their teams.

What is the Status of Prison Administration in India?

➢ **About:**

○ **Prison administration is an important component of the criminal justice system.** There is a paradigm shift in social viewpoint towards prisoners in the last century.

● Earlier system of prison with a **punitive attitude** where inmates were forcibly confined and deprived a variety of freedom as a form of punishment has changed with a change in social perception towards **prison and prisoners.**

○ It is now treated as a **correction or improvement facility** which itself indicates that there is more emphasis on reformation of prisoners than to punish them.

➢ **Structure of the Criminal Justice System in India:**

○ The **Indian Criminal Justice System** is composed of government agencies that enforce the law, adjudicate crimes, and correct criminal behaviour.

Note:

○ It has four subsystems:

- **Legislature (Parliament)**
- **Enforcement (Police)**
- **Adjudication (Courts)**
- **Corrections (Prisons, Community Facilities)**

➢ **Issues Related to Prison in India:**

○ **Pendency of Cases:** As per the records of 2022, over **4.7 crore cases are pending in Indian courts across different levels of the judiciary.**

- Also, according to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)-Prison Statistics India, 67.2% of total prison population in India comprises trial prisoners.

○ **Colonial Nature and Obsolete Laws**: Both substantive and procedural aspects of the Indian criminal justice system were designed with the **purpose of ruling the nation in British colonial times.**

- In light of this, the relevance of these **19th century laws is debatable in the 21st century.**

○ **Inhumane Behaviour Behind Bars:** Over the years, critics have repeatedly complained about the **indifferent and even inhuman behaviour** of prison staff.

- Also, there have been many **instances of custodial rapes and deaths** resulting in violation of prisoners' human rights.

○ **Overcrowding:** Many prisons in India are overcrowded, with facilities designed to hold a certain number of **inmates being filled well beyond capacity.**

- For example, in **2020 it was reported that the Tihar Jail in Delhi**, which has a capacity of around 7,000 inmates, held more than 15,000 prisoners.

○ **Inadequate Staff:** Many prisons in India are **understaffed,** which can lead to poor conditions and a **lack of security.**

- For example, in 2020 it was reported that the **Puzhal Central Prison in Chennai, Tamil Nadu** had only one guard for every 100 prisoners.

- Also, as per the Prison Act, 1894 and **Prisoner Act, 1900,** there should be a welfare officer and a law officer in each jail but **recruitment of these officers remains pending.**

Issues Faced by Females in Sports

Why in News?

Recently, some sportspersons made allegations of sexual harassment against **WFI (Wrestling Federation of India)** president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh.

➢ Sports Ministry demands **explanation from WFI within 72 hours,** if WFI fails to furnish the reply, the Ministry will proceed to initiate action against the Federation in terms of the provisions of the **National Sports Development Code, 2011.**

What is the Scenario of Such Allegations?

➢ According to RTI (Right to Information) Data, between 2010 to 2020, there were **45 complaints of sexual harassment to the SAI (Sports Authority of India),** of which 29 were against coaches.

➢ In several of these reported cases, the accused were let off leniently, with punishments that consisted of transfers to a meager cut in pay or pension.

➢ Some of the cases have not seen the end of the tunnel with many dragging on for years, with no resolutions in sight.

○ Abuse in sports **was a poll issue in Germany in 2021**. The Federal Parliament's Sports Committee hosted a public hearing on emotional, physical and sexualised violence in sports in May 2021.

○ It **is about time India discussed the issue** and not wait for athletes to stage protests at Jantar Mantar to be heard.

○ Living in the 21st century, where we have devised the technology to monitor robots to do our bidding, there's still one aspect where **we fall grossly short when it comes to progress — gender equality.**

World Leprosy Day 2023

Why in News?

Every year **last Sunday in January** is observed as Leprosy Day. This year, it falls on 29th January. Leprosy is also known as **Hansen's disease.**

➢ The day is observed to provide an opportunity to lift up the voices of people affected by leprosy across the world.

Note:

What are the Key Points of the Day?

- ➢ **Theme 2023:** Act Now, End Leprosy.
- ➢ **History:** World Leprosy Day was established in 1954 by **French philanthropist Raoul Follereau.**
- ➢ **Objective:** The main objective was to raise awareness about **leprosy disease and to teach people about this ancient disease** that is now easily curable.
  - ○ Various people across the world are not aware of the disease, lack of access to basic medical care, and continued stigma surrounding the illness.

What is Leprosy?

- ➢ **About:**
  - ○ Leprosy is a chronic infectious disease **which is caused by a type of bacteria called** *Mycobacterium leprae.*
    - ■ Leprosy is a **Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD)** which still occurs in more than 120 countries, with more than 200000 new cases reported every year.

LEPROSY

LEPROSY, Also Known as Hansen's Disease (HD), is a Long-Term Infection by the Bacteria Mycobacterium Leprae or Mycobacterium Lepromatosis

Mycobacterium Leprae   **Mycobacterium Lepromatosis**

It Usually Takes About 3 TO 5 YEARS for Symptoms to Appear

Some People do not develop Symptoms UNTIL 20 YEARS LATER

FORMS OF LEPROSY

MORE SEVERE

Tuberculoid   Lepromatous Borderline

Disfiguring Skin Sores

Loss of Feeling

Lump and Bumps

Muscle Weakness

Leprosy Primarily Affects the SKIN and the PERIPHERAL NERVES

- ➢ **Symptoms:**
  - ○ The disease mainly **affects the skin,** the peripheral nerves, mucosa of the upper respiratory tract and eyes.
- ➢ **Transmission:**
  - ○ Leprosy is transmitted via droplets, from the nose and mouth, during close and frequent contact with untreated cases.
- ➢ **Treatment:**
  - ○ Leprosy is curable **with MDT (multi drug therapy)**

and treatment in the early stages can prevent disability. The disease is not hereditary, leprosy does not transmit from parents to children.

- ➢ **Scenario:**
  - ○ In 2021, as many as **1,40,000 new leprosy cases were reported,** with 95% of new cases coming from the 23 global priority countries. Of these, 6% were diagnosed with visible deformities or grade-2 disabilities (G2D).
  - ○ Although leprosy affects both sexes, in most parts of the world **males are affected more frequently**

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- **than females**, often in the ratio of 2:1, according to WHO's Global Leprosy Report.
- Over 6% of the new cases **were children under the age of 15.**
- Despite a 10% increase in new cases from 2020 to 2021, the **reported cases were 30% lower in 2021 than in 2019**.
  - This is not **due to a decrease in transmission,** but because the leprosy cases remained undetected due to Covid-19-related disruptions.

Measles and Rubella

Why in News?

India had set a target to eliminate **Measles and Rubella (MR) by 2023**, having missed the earlier deadline of 2020, due to a variety of reasons, exacerbated by disruptions due to the pandemic.

- In 2019, India adopted the **goal of measles and rubella elimination by 2023**, anticipating that the 2020 goal could not be reached.

What are Measles and Rubella?

- **Measles:**
  - It is a **highly contagious viral disease** and is a cause of death among young children globally.
  - It is caused by a **single-stranded, enveloped RNA virus with 1 serotype.** It is classified as a member of the **genus Morbillivirus in the Paramyxoviridae family.**
  - It is particularly **dangerous for children from the economically weaker background**, as it attacks malnourished children and those with reduced immunity.
  - It can cause serious complications, including **blindness, encephalitis, severe diarrhoea, ear infection and pneumonia.**
- **Rubella:**
  - It is also called **German Measles.**
  - Rubella is **a contagious, generally mild viral infection that occurs most often in children** and young adults.
  - It is caused by the **rubella virus which is an enveloped single-stranded RNA virus.**

- Rubella infection in pregnant women may cause death or congenital defects known as **Congenital Rubella Syndrome (CRS)** which causes irreversible birth defects.
  - **Rubella isn't the same as measles,** but the two illnesses share some signs and symptoms, such as the red rash.
  - Rubella is caused by **a different virus than measles, and rubella isn't as infectious or as severe as measles.**

What is the Global and Indian Scenario of Measles and Rubella?

- The measles virus is one of the **world's most contagious human viruses** that kills more than 1,00,000 children every year globally, and **rubella is a leading vaccine-preventable cause of birth defects**, according to the **World Health Organization (WHO).**
- Over the past two decades, the **measles vaccine is estimated to have averted more than 30 million deaths globally**, as per the WHO's statistics.
- During 2010–2013, India conducted a phased measles catch-up immunisation for children aged 9 months–10 years in 14 States, **vaccinating approximately 119 million children.**
- **Mission Indradhanush** was **launched in 2014 to ramp up vaccinating** the unvaccinated population.
- During 2017–2021, India adopted a national strategic plan for measles and rubella elimination.
  - During the same period, the Government introduced rubella-containing vaccine (RCV) into the routine immunisation programme.
- As of December 2021, **five countries have been verified and have sustained measles elimination** - Bhutan, DPR Korea, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste. In addition, Maldives and Sri Lanka have sustained their rubella elimination status in 2021.

Global Report on Health Equity for Disables

Why in News?

Ahead of the **International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3rd December),** the **World Health Organization (WHO)** has released a report titled- **Global report on health equity for persons with disabilities.**

Note:

What are the Findings of the Report?

➢ **Statistics related to Disabilities:**

○ Currently, **some 1.3 billion people, or one in six, worldwide suffer from major disabilities.**

○ Because of the **systemic and persistent health inequities**, many persons with disabilities face the risk of dying much earlier—**even up to 20 years earlier—than persons without disabilities.**

○ An estimated 80 % of people with disabilities reside in **low- and middle-income countries** with limited resources, making it difficult to address these inequities.

➢ **Risk of Disabilities:**

○ They are at a **two-fold risk of contracting chronic illnesses** like asthma, depression, diabetes, obesity, dental disorders and stroke.

○ Many of the discrepancies in health outcomes cannot be attributed to underlying health conditions but rather to preventable, unfair and unjust circumstances.

➢ **Some Factors for Inequity in Healthcare:**

○ Hostile attitudes of healthcare providers

○ Non-comprehensible health information formats

○ Physical barriers, lack of transportation, or financial constraints that prevent access to a health center.

What are the Recommendations?

➢ It is crucial to ensure that **people with disabilities participate fully and effectively in all facets of society** and to instil inclusion, accessibility and non-discrimination in the medical field.

➢ Health systems should be alleviating the challenges that people with disabilities face, not adding to them.

➢ Ensuring health equity for persons with disabilities will also have wider benefits and can advance global health priorities in 3 ways:

○ **Health equity for all is critical** towards achieving universal health coverage;

○ Inclusive public health interventions that are administered equitably across different sectors can contribute to healthier populations; and

○ Advancing health equity for persons with disabilities is a central component in all efforts to protect everyone in health emergencies.

➢ Governments, health partners and civil society should ensure a**ll health sector actions are inclusive of persons with disabilities** so that they can enjoy their right to the highest standard of health.

Raising Minimum Marriageable Age for Muslim Women

Why in News?

Recently, the Supreme Court asked the government to respond to a plea filed by the National Commission for Women (NCW) to raise the minimum age of marriage for Muslim women to be on par with persons belonging to other faiths.

What is the Legal Framework of Minimum Age for Marriage?

➢ **Background:**

○ In India, the **minimum age of marriage was prescribed for the first time by the law known as the Sarda Act, 1929.** It was later renamed as the **Child Marriage Restraint Act (CMRA), 1929.**

○ In 1978, the CMRA was amended to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 years for girls and 21 years for boys.

○ This position remains the same even in the new law called the **Prohibition of Child Marriages Act (PCMA), 2006, which replaced the CMRA ,1929.**

➢ **Current:**

○ For Hindus, **the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 sets 18 years as the minimum age** for the bride and 21 years as the minimum age for the groom.

○ In Islam, the marriage of a minor who has attained puberty is considered valid.

○ The **Special Marriage Act, 1954 and the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006** also prescribe 18 and 21 years as the minimum age of consent for marriage for women and men, respectively.

○ For the new age of marriage to be implemented, these laws are expected to be amended.

● In 2021, the Union Cabinet proposed to raise the legal age of marriage for women from 18 to 21 years.

Note:

What are the Issues with Underage Marriages of Women?

➢ **Human Rights Violation:** Child marriage **violates girls' human rights** and makes them almost invisible to policy.
  ○ Some of the basic rights that they get devoid of, include the **Right to Education**, Right to Rest and Leisure, Right to Protection from Mental or Physical Abuse including Rape and Sexual Exploitation.

➢ **Disempowerment of Women:** Since child brides are not able to complete their education, they **remain dependent and underpowered** which acts as a big hurdle towards achieving gender equality.

➢ **Associated Health Issues:** The costs of child marriage include **teenage pregnancy and child stunting**, population growth, poor learning outcomes for children and the loss of **women's participation in the workforce.**
  ○ The low domestic status of teenage wives typically condemns them to long hours of domestic labour, poor nutrition and **anaemia**, social isolation, **domestic violence** and lesser decision-making powers within the home.
  ○ Poor education, **malnutrition**, and early pregnancy also lead to low birth weight of babies, perpetuating the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition.

Women in Judiciary

Why in News?

Recently, the **Supreme Court** has recently appointed a female all-woman bench for the third time in its history.

➢ The first time the Supreme Court had an all-woman bench was in 2013, and the second occasion came in 2018.

What is the State of Women in Judiciary?

➢ During the last 70 years, **no significant attempt has been made to provide adequate representation for women** in the High Courts or Supreme Court.

➢ There have been only **11 women judges on the Supreme Court** since its inception, and no women **Chief Justices.**

➢ Just 83 of the 680 judges in the high courts are women.

➢ Only 30% of subordinate judges are female.

Why is High Women's Representation Important?

➢ The presence of women as judges and lawyers, **will substantially improve the justice delivery system.**

➢ Women **bring to the law a different perspective**, one that is built upon their experience.

➢ They also have a **more nuanced understanding of the differing impacts** that certain laws may have on men and women.

➢ Women judges enhance the legitimacy of courts, sending a powerful signal that they are open and accessible to those who seek recourse to justice.

➢ The judiciary must be better represented by women in order to take a balanced and empathic approach to cases surrounding sexual violence.

Manual Scavenging

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJ&E) told **Lok Sabha** that no person had died from Manual Scavenging in the last three years (2019 to 2022).

➢ A total of 233 people had died **"due to accidents while undertaking hazardous cleaning of sewer and septic tanks'** in this time period.

What is Manual Scavenging?

➢ Manual scavenging is defined as **"the removal of human excrement from public streets and dry latrines, cleaning septic tanks**, gutters and sewers"**.

➢ India banned the practice under the **Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (PEMSR).**
  ○ The Act bans the use of any individual manually cleaning, carrying, disposing of or otherwise handling in any manner human excreta till its disposal.
  ○ The Act recognizes **manual scavenging as a "dehumanizing practice".**

What are the Reasons for the Prevalence of Manual Scavenging?

➢ **Indifferent Attitude:**
  ○ A number of **independent surveys have talked about the continued reluctance on the part of**

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state governments to admit that the practice prevails under their watch.

➢ **Issues due to Outsourcing:**

○ Many times, local bodies **outsource sewer cleaning tasks to private contractors.** However, many of them fly-by-night operators, do not maintain proper rolls of sanitation workers.

○ In case after case of workers being asphyxiated to death, these contractors have denied any association with the deceased.

➢ **Social Issue:**

○ The practice is **driven by caste, class and income divides.**

○ It is linked to India's caste system where so-called lower castes are expected to perform this job.

○ In 1993, **India banned the employment of people as manual scavengers** (The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993), however, the stigma and discrimination associated with it still linger on.

● This makes it difficult for liberated manual scavengers to secure alternative livelihoods.

World Malaria Report 2022

Why in News?

Recently, the **World Malaria Report 2022** was released by the **World Health Organization (WHO).**

What are the Highlights of the Report?

➢ **Deaths due to Malaria:**

○ **High-burden malaria countries maintained a strong front** against the disease in 2021 despite the Covid-19 pandemic, with cases and deaths stabilising.

● While deaths came down to 619,000 in 2021 from 625,000 in the first year of the pandemic, it remained higher than the pre-pandemic level of 568,000 deaths in 2019.

➢ **Trend of Malaria Cases:**

○ As for Malaria cases, the **upward trend continued but at a slower rate** — 247 million cases in 2021, compared to 245 million cases in 2020 and 232 million in 2019.

➢ **Scenario of High Burden Countries:**

○ Among the 11 high-burden countries, five — the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, **India**, Niger and the United Republic of Tanzania — **recorded a decline in deaths.**

○ But these **countries continued to contribute heavily** to the **global disease burden.**

➢ **Control Tools used by Countries:**

○ **Insecticide-treated bednets (ITNs)** are the **key vector control tool** used by endemic countries.

○ Prevalence of **Intermittent Preventive Treatment in Pregnancy (IPTP)** has remained consistent in 2021 as compared to 2020.

➢ **Hurdles in Ending Malaria:**

○ Hurdles impeding the process of ending Malaria include - **mutating parasites** which can evade rapid diagnostic tests, **increasing drug resistance** and the **invasion of an urban-adapted mosquitoes**, especially in Africa.

● New tools and fundings to deploy them are urgently needed to help defeat malaria.

India's Progress in Tackling IMR, MMR and Malnutrition

Why in News?

The data presented by the **Registrar General of India (RGI)** presents a gain in momentum of the pace of decline in India's **maternal and infant mortality rates (MMR and IMR)** post-2005.

➢ Unfortunately, nutrition is one key area that has **remained oblivious to any major progress.**

What is the Registrar General of India?

➢ Founded in 1961 under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**, the RGI **arranges, conducts and analyses the results of the demographic surveys of India** (**Census of India** and **Linguistic Survey of India**).

➢ The **position of Registrar is usually held by a civil servant** holding the rank of Joint Secretary.

➢ The Office of RGI is primarily responsible for conducting:

○ Housing & Population Census

○ **Civil Registration System (CRS)**

○ Sample Registration System (SRS)

○ **National Population Register (NPR)**

○ Mother Tongue Survey

Note:

What Progress has been Made in Reducing MMRs and IMRs?

➢ **Declining Trends:**
  ○ According to a special bulletin released by the office of the RGI, **India's MMR was 97 during 2018-2020** compared to **301 during 2001-03.**
  ○ The **IMR has also been reduced to 27 (as of 2021)** compared to **58 in 2005.**

➢ The Rural-Urban difference in this context has also been narrowed.

➢ **Role of NHM and NRHM:** As observed, for the last few years the **National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)** and the **National Health Mission (NHM)** has been a game changer for the country in terms of mortality reductions for infants and mothers.
  ○ The NRHM was launched in 2005 to provide accessible and affordable healthcare through a public system of primary health care.
  ○ NHM was launched by the government of India in 2013 subsuming the National Rural Health Mission (Launched in 2005) and the National Urban Health Mission (Launched in 2013).

GOALS of
National Health Mission

➢ Reduce MMR to 1/1000 live births

➢ Reduce IMR to 25/1000 live births

➢ Reduce TFR to 2.1

➢ Prevention and reduction of anemia in women aged 15-49 years

➢ Prevent and reduce mortality and morbidity from communicable, non-communicable, injuries and emergency diseases

➢ Reduce household out —of-pocket expenditure on total health care expenditure

➢ Reduce annual incidence and mortality from Tuberculosis by half

➢ Reduce prevalence of Leprosy to <I/IOOOO population and incidence to zero in all districts

➢ Annual Malaria incidence to be <I/IOOO

➢ Less than Ipercent microfilaria prevalence in all districts

➢ Kala-Azar Elimination by 2015, <Icase per 10000 population in all blocks

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What is the Scenario of Tackling Malnutrition?

➢ **About:**
  ○ **Malnutrition** is the condition that develops when the body is deprived of vitamins, minerals and other nutrients it needs to maintain healthy tissues and organ function.
  ○ Malnutrition occurs in people who are either **undernourished or over nourished.**

➢ **Findings of NFHS 5:**
  ○ The **5th National Family Health Survey 2019-21** reports **35.5% of children under 5 are stunted**, **19.3% are wasted**, and **32.1% are underweight.**
    • **Meghalaya** has the **highest number of stunted children** (46.5%), followed by Bihar (42.9%).

➢ **Maharashtra** (25.6%) has the **highest percentage of wasted children** followed by Gujarat (25.1%).
  ○ Compared with NFHS-4, the **prevalence of overweight or obesity has increased** in most States/UTs in NFHS-5.

➢ At the national level, it increased from 21% to 24% among women and 19% to 23% among men.
  ○ The **incidence of anaemia** in under-5 children (from 58.6 to 67%), women (53.1 to 57%) and men (22.7 to 25%) has **worsened in all States of India.**

➢ **Inefficiency of Govt. Initiatives:**
  ○ The **POSHAN Abhiyaan**, though innovative, is still not addressing the institutional **decentralised public action challenge** yet.
  ○ The initiatives for nutrition have remained **compartmentalised and fragmented;** the institutional role of local panchayats and communities with **untied financial resources is still lagging.**

➢ **Other Issues:**
  ○ The **vicious cycle of poverty, undernutrition**, diminished work capacity, low earnings and poverty.
  ○ **Infections like malaria and measles** precipitate acute malnutrition and **aggravate the existing nutritional deficit.**
  ○ Arbitrariness and inter-state-variation in determining a household's BPL status results in **arbitrary identification of hunger.**
  ○ **Negligence towards micro-nutrient deficiency** (hidden hunger) and **inadequate knowledge among mothers** regarding nutrition and breast-feeding.

Note:

What Initiatives have been launched to Tackle Malnutrition?

➢ **POSHAN Abhiyaan:** The government of India has launched the National Nutrition Mission (NNM) or POSHAN Abhiyaan to ensure a **"Malnutrition Free India" by 2022.**

➢ **Anemia Mukt Bharat Abhiyan:** Launched in 2018, the mission aims at **accelerating the annual rate of decline of anaemia** from one to three percentage points.

➢ **The National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013:** It aims to ensure **food and nutrition security for the most vulnerables** through its associated schemes and programmes, making access to food a legal right.

➢ **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY):** Rs.6,000 is transferred directly to the bank accounts of pregnant women for availing better facilities for their delivery.

➢ **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme:** It was launched in 1975 and the scheme aims at **providing food, preschool education, primary healthcare, immunisation, health check-up and referral services** to children under 6 years of age and their mothers.

➢ **Eat Right India** and **Fit India Movement** are some other initiatives to **promote healthy eating and healthy lifestyle.**

State of Food Insecurity in 2022

Why in News?

Hunger has remained grisly in several parts of the world including India in 2022, so much so that the **United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) called 2022 'The year of Unprecedented Hunger'.**

➢ According to the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**, about 307 crore people worldwide could not afford a healthy diet in 2020. India is home to almost a third of this global population.

What are the Highlights from Various Reports?

➢ **World Food Programme**:
  ❍ The number of people facing acute food insecurity has **almost tripled since 2019 and as many as 828 million people go to bed hungry every night**, according to **WFP (World Food Programme).**

❍ Food security shot past pre-pandemic levels, especially in war-torn places and those wrecked by climate disasters.

➢ **The Future of Food and Agriculture by FAO:**
  ❍ According to FAO's report **Future of Food and Agriculture — Drivers and triggers for transformation**, the world will witness persistent **food insecurity** if agrifood systems remain the same.
  ❍ The world will witness persistent food insecurity, degrading resources and unsustainable economic growth in the future if agrifood systems remain the same.
  ❍ The world was **"tremendously off track" to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**, including agrifood targets.
  ❍ By 2050, there will be 10 billion people in the world to feed and this will be an unprecedented challenge if significant attempts are not made to reverse current trends.

➢ **Global Hunger Index (GHI):**
  ❍ India ranked an abysmal 107 out of 121 countries on the **Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2022**.
  ❍ Among the South Asian countries, India (107) is ranked below Sri Lanka (64), Nepal (81), Bangladesh (84), and Pakistan (99).
  ❍ **Globally, the progress against hunger has largely stagnated** in recent years, with a global score of 18.2 in 2022 as compared to 19.1 in 2014, there is only a slight improvement. However, the **2022 GHI score is still considered "moderate".**

➢ **State Food Security Index (SFSI) by FSSAI:**
  ❍ **Tamil Nadu scored the highest among major states** on all indicators, followed by **Gujarat and Maharashtra.**
    ● **Tamil Nadu scored a total of 82.5 points** on a scale of 100 where the indicators included human resource and institutional data, compliance, food testing infrastructure and surveillance, training and capacity building and lastly, consumer empowerment.
  ❍ **Among Union Territories (UT), Jammu and Kashmir topped** the list, performing better than the national capital with a score of 68.5, followed by National Capital Territory of Delhi (66) and Chandigarh (58).

➢ **Promises and Reality Report:**

Note:

- More than 90 million eligible people have been **excluded from legal entitlements under the Targeted** Public Distribution System (TDPS), India's tool to combat food insecurity.
- The Census of India 2011 remains the source of data for arriving at the number of people to be covered by the scheme. As a consequence, **subsequent years have seen the exclusion of a large chunk of the population.**
- This in-built fallacy in the legal framework led to exclusion of at least 12% of the population from the legal entitlements in the most legitimized way.

What are India's Initiatives to Eradicate Hunger/Malnutrition?

- ➢ **Eat Right India Movement**
- ➢ **POSHAN Abhiyan**
- ➢ **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana**
- ➢ **Food Fortification**
- ➢ **National Food Security Act, 2013**
- ➢ **Mission Indradhanush**
- ➢ **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme**
- ➢ **Amendments in the Essential Commodities Act, 1955**
- ➢ **Make India Trans Fat free.**
- ➢ **International Year of Millets.**
- ➢ **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY).**

India to Become Largest Populated Country

Why in News?

It is estimated that around April 2023, India's 1.43 billion people will exceed **China's population.**

- ➢ In 2022, China will for the first **time register an absolute decline in its population.**

What are the Drivers of these Shifts?

- ➢ **Mortality and Fertility:**
- **Crude Death Rate (CDR):** The CDR — the number of persons dying per year per 1,000 population — was 23.2 for China and 22.2 for India in 1950.
  - It fell to single digits for China first in 1974 (to 9.5) and for India in 1994 (9.8), and further to 7.3-7.4 for both in 2020.

- **Life Expectancy at Birth:** Another mortality indicator is **life expectancy at birth.** Between 1950 and 2020, it went up from 43.7 to 78.1 years for China and from 41.7 to 70.1 years for India.
- **Total Fertility Rate:** The total fertility rate (TFR) — the number of babies an average woman bears over her lifetime — was as high as 5.8 for China and 5.7 for India in 1950.
  - India's TFR fell to 2 in 2019-2021, from 3.4 in 1992-93.

- ➢ **Sustained Lows in TFR:**
- Populations can keep growing even with TFRs falling. De-growth **requires TFRs to remain below replacement levels** for extended periods.
- The effects of that — fewer children today becoming parents tomorrow and procreating just as much or less — may reflect only after a couple of generations.
- China's **TFR dipped below replacement first in 1991,** which was almost 30 years before India's.

What are the Challenges and Opportunities?

- ➢ **Challenges:**
- Having the most people on the planet could prove to be a **big negative for India unless it can provide food**, education, housing, health services and jobs to its people.
- The scale of this challenge is gigantic.
- Across India, water scarcity is a chronic issue. All these **needs are crucial but by far the single most important thing for India to do is to generate jobs.** The scale of this particular challenge is truly daunting.
  - In 2020, India has 900 million people (67% of the total population) in the working age group of 15-64.
  - This is expected to expand by another 100 million by 2030.

- ➢ **Opportunity:**
- **Claim for permanent member at UNSC:** If India becomes the largest country, it will give Indians a claim to be the permanent member of the Security Council.
  - New population will push its existing demand for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.
  - The geopolitical reality has changed and new powers have emerged which deserve a place

Note:

alongside the old – **Russia, the UK, China, France and the United States.**

○ **Increase in Fiscal Space:** Fiscal resources can be diverted **from spending on children to investing in modern physical and human infrastructure** that will increase economic sustainability of India.

○ **Rise in Workforce:** With more than **65% of the working age population,** India can rise as an economic superpower, supplying more than half of Asia's potential workforce over the coming decades.

● **Increase in the Labour Force** that enhances the productivity of the economy.

● **Rise in Women's Workforce** that naturally accompanies a **decline in fertility,** and which can be a new source of growth.

What should be the Strategy of India?

➤ **Mass Prosperity Strategy:**

○ India's large remittances from a small population overseas reinforce that our **mass prosperity strategy should be human capital and formal jobs.**

○ 0.8 % of software employment workers generate 8 % of GDP.

○ This case is **reinforced by remittances from the overseas population of less than 2 % of our resident population crossing** USD 100 billion last year.

➤ **Qualitative Shift in Employement:**

○ The qualitative shift during the previous five years from low-skilled, informal employment in Gulf countries to high-skilled formal jobs in high-income countries is significant.

● In 2021, the US replaced the UAE as the single biggest source country with 23 % of remittances. Our rich forex remittance harvest — roughly 25 % higher than FDI and 25 % less than software exports — **is fruit from the tree of human capital and formal jobs.**

➤ **Additional Jobs:**

○ To absorb the influx of young people into the workplace, **India would need to create close to 12 million additional, non-farm jobs every year**, starting in 2023.

○ This was triple the four million non-farm jobs created annually **between 2012 and 2018.**

○ India would need a growth rate of 10% per annum to be able to invest in industry so that this army of young people can be absorbed.

➤ **Investments in Education:**

○ While India is expected to have a **demographic dividend** from this large workforce, reaping its potential benefits requires significant investments in education.

Denotified, Nomadic, Semi-Nomadic Tribes

Why in News?

The Parliamentary panel on Social Justice and Empowerment has asked the government to expedite categorisation of **Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes** under either the **SC/ST/OBC** lists. Delay would increase their suffering and deprive them of welfare schemes.

Who are Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes?

➤ These are communities that are the **most vulnerable and deprived.**

➤ DNTs (Denotified) are communities that were **'notified' as being 'born criminals'** during the British regime under a series of laws starting with the **Criminal Tribes Act of 1871.**

○ These Acts were repealed by the **Independent Indian Government in l952,** and these communities were **"De-Notified".**

➤ A few of these communities which were listed **as de-notified were also nomadic.**

○ Nomadic and semi-nomadic communities are **defined as those who move from one place to another rather than living in one place all the time**.

➤ Historically, Nomadic Tribes and De-notified Tribes never had access to private land or home ownership.

➤ While most DNTs are spread across the **Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC)** categories, some DNTs are not covered in any of the SC, ST or OBC categories.

➤ Many commissions and committees constituted since Independence have referred to the problems of these communities.

○ These include the **Criminal Tribes Inquiry Committee, 1947** constituted in the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh),

Note:

○ **Ananthasayanam Ayyangar Committee in 1949** (it was based on the report of this committee the Criminal Tribes Act was repealed),

○ **Kaka Kalelkar Commission** (also called first OBC Commission) constituted in 1953.

○ The **B P Mandal Commission constituted in 1980** also made some recommendations on the issue.

○ The **National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC), 2002** held that DNTs have been wrongly stigmatised as crime prone and subjected to high handed treatment as well as exploitation by the representatives of law and order and general society.

     ● The NCRWC was established under the chairmanship of Justice M N Venkatachaliah.

➤ It has been estimated that South Asia has the **world's largest nomadic population.**

○ In India, roughly 10% of the population is Denotified and Nomadic.

○ While the number of Denotified Tribes is about 150, the population of Nomadic Tribes consists of about 500 different communities.

Vokkaligas, Lingayats share in Reservation

Why in News?

Recently, Karnataka has categorized the two dominant communities, **Vokkaligas and Lingayats, as "moderately backward" from the "backward" category** in a move that could increase their share in reservation for **Other Backward Classes (OBC).**

What are the Key Points of the Move?

➤ Karnataka currently has **32% quota for OBC, and 17% and 7% quota for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes**, respectively, taking the **total to 56%.**

➤ The **Panchamasali sub-sect of Veerashaiva Lingayats** has demanded inclusion in the 2A category which has 15% quota from their current 3B category which has 5% quota.

➤ The Cabinet's decision is based on the **recommendations of the Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes.**

➤ The Vokkaliga community, which is currently in the 3A category, will be moved to a **newly-created 2C**

category with 4% reservation. And the Lingayat community, which is in the 3B category, will now be in **a new 2D category with 5% reservation.**

➤ The Cabinet decision ensures that there is no sub-categorisation of the Lingayat community.

➤ The Lingayats are a **dominant community who make up nearly 17% of Karnataka's six crore population-** followed by Vokkaligas. The new categories will not affect the existing reservation provided to other communities.

➤ The reservation will be applicable only in education and jobs, and "not political reservation.

Who are Lingayats?

➤ **About:**

○ The term **Lingayat denotes a person who wears a personal linga, an iconic form of god Shiva**, on the body which is **received during the initiation ceremony.**

○ Lingayats are the followers of the **12th-century social reformer-philosopher poet, Basaveshwara.**

○ Basaveshwara was **against the caste system and Vedic rituals.**

○ The Lingayats are **strict monotheists**. They enjoin the worship of only one God, **namely, Linga (Shiva).**

○ Lingayats had been classified as a **Hindu subcaste called "Veerashaiva Lingayats"** and they are considered to be Shaivites.

➤ **Separate Religion for Lingayats:**

○ Lingayats had distanced themselves **from Hindu Veerashaivas because the latter followed the Vedas** and supported the caste system, to which Basaveshwara was against.

○ Veerashaivas are the **followers of the five peethas (religious centers)**, called Pancha Peethas. These peethas are set up on similar lines to the four peethas set up by Adi Shankara.

Who are Vokkaligas?

➤ It is even believed that the **Rashtrakutas and Western Gangas were of Vokkaliga origin.**

➤ Vokkaliga is a category defined in **terms of occupation, and to that extent could be an ethnic category; these are largely farmers by origin.**

➤ The Vokkaliga caste **originates in the Indian state of Karnataka.** In the former princely state of Mysore, the Vokkaligas were the largest community.

➢ As a community of warriors and cultivators, they have historically wielded **tremendous demographic, political, and economic dominance in Old Mysore.**

How has the Status of OBC Reservation Emerged Over Time?

➢ The **Kalelkar Commission, set up in 1953**, was the **first to identify backward classes other than** the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) at the national level.

➢ The **Mandal Commission Report, 1980** estimated the **OBC population at 52% and classified 1,257 communities** as backward.
  ○ It recommended increasing the existing quotas, which were only for SC/ST, from 22.5% to 49.5% to include the OBCs.

➢ **The central government reserved 27%** of seats in union civil posts and services for OBCs [Article 16(4)]. The quotas were subsequently enforced in central government educational institutions [Article 15 (4)].
  ○ In 2008, the **Supreme Court** directed the central government to **exclude the creamy layer (advanced sections) among the OBCs.**

➢ The **102nd Constitution Amendment Act, 2018** provided constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC), which was previously a statutory body under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

Democratic Vision of Ambedkar

Why in News?

Several studies have examined Dr B.R. Ambedkar's concept of democracy, primarily through the lens of social, political, and economic philosophy.

What Constitutes Democracy in Ambedkar's Opinion?

➢ **Morality:**
  ○ A look at the **Buddha** and his Dhamma sheds light on how **Ambedkar** viewed **democracy** as an approach **that affected every aspect of human existence.**
    ● Buddha, **Kabir** and **Mahatma Phule**'s philosophies played an important role in Ambedkar's own engagement with democracy.

  ○ According to him, **democracy must also be viewed morally** despite its pillars of equality, liberty, and fraternity.
  ○ **Use of Morality in Caste System:**
    ● **Ambedkar used the lens of morality in investigating the caste system**, the Hindu social system, the nature of religion and Indian history.
    ● Since Ambedkar brought the most marginalized communities into democracy, it was difficult to place his framework of democracy within these rigid religious structures and socio-political systems.
    ● Thus, Ambedkar attempts to construct a new structure based on the principles of Buddhism.

➢ **Balancing Individualism and Fraternity:**
  ○ He was **critical of extreme individualism that was a possible outcome of Buddhism,** as such characteristics failed to engage in activism that challenged social order.
    ● Thus, he believed that **there needed to be a balance between individualism and fraternity for a harmonious society.**

➢ **Importance to Practicality:**
  ○ Ambedkar gave **utmost importance to practicality.**
  ○ For him, **concepts and theories needed to be tested** as they were supposed to be practised in society.
  ○ He used **rationality and critical reasoning to analyse any subject matter**, because he believed that a subject must first pass the test of rationality, failing which, it must be rejected, altered or modified.

What are the Types of Morality?

➢ **Social Morality:**
  ○ According to Ambedkar, **social morality was built through interaction and such interaction was based on the mutual recognition of human beings.**
  ○ Yet, under the rigid systems of caste and religion, such interaction was not possible as one did not accept another person as a respectable human being due to their religion or caste background.
  ○ Social morality was **based on equality among human beings and a recognition of respect.**

➢ **Constitutional Morality:**
  ○ Constitutional morality for Ambedkar was a **prerequisite to maintaining a system of democracy in a country.**

Note:

- Constitutional morality means adherence to the core principles of constitutional democracy.
  - ❍ He believed that only through a negation of hereditary rule, laws that represented all people, with people's representatives and a State which has the confidence of the people, can democracy be maintained.
  - ❍ One single person or political party could not represent the needs or will of all the people.
  - ❍ Ambedkar realised that the **caste system did not go hand in hand with such an understanding of moral democracy.**
    - This was because the **traditional caste structure was of a hierarchical rule,** with no mutual respect among individuals, and complete subjugation of one group by another.

Rise in Organ Donation

Why in News?

After a fall during the first year of the **Covid-19 pandemic**, organ donation numbers increased back in 2021.

➢ In India, **Transplantation of Human Organs Act, 1994** provides various regulations for the removal of human organs and its storage. It also regulates the transplantation of human organs for therapeutic **purposes and for the prevention of commercial dealings in human organs.**

What is the Status of Organ Donation in India?

➢ India has an **organ donation rate of about 0.52 per million population.** In comparison, the organ donation rate in Spain, t**he highest in the world, is 49.6 per million population**.
  - ❍ Unlike India where a person has to register to be an organ donor — and the family has to consent to it after death — **Spain has an opt-out system where a person is presumed to be a donor unless otherwise specified.**
➢ Although organ donation has increased, however, **the number of deceased donations has remained lower** than the number of donations from living persons.
  - ❍ Deceased Donation is the **organs donated by the kin of those who suffered brain death or cardiac death.**

➢ Only 14.07% of the total organs harvested in 2021 were from deceased donors, much less than the 16.77% of 2019.
➢ Of the 12,387 organs **harvested in 2021**, only 1,743 — a little more than 14% — were from deceased donors. The numbers harvested in 2021 were close to the highest in the last five years (12,746, in 2019).
➢ There is also a **geographical skew in deceased donations**. All but two deceased organ donations in 2021 were in 15 states, with **the top five — Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Karnataka — accounting for more than 85% of the total.** Two organs were harvested from a deceased donor in Goa.
  - ❍ One reason for the geographical skew could be that most organ transplant and harvesting centres are concentrated in these geographies.

What is the Need for Increasing Deceased Donations?

➢ **Gap in the Number of Organs Needed:**
  - ❍ The first reason is the gap in the number of organs **needed and the number of transplants that happen in the country.**
  - ❍ In absolute numbers, India conducts the third highest number of transplants in the world.
  - ❍ Yet, of the estimated 1.5-2 lakh persons who need a kidney transplant every year, only **around 8,000 get one.**
  - ❍ Of the 80,000 persons who require a liver transplant**, only 1,800 get one.** And of the 10,000 who need a heart transplant, only 200 get it.
➢ **Prevalence of Lifestyle Diseases:**
  - ❍ Demand is on the rise **because of the increasing prevalence of lifestyle diseases.**
  - ❍ Besides, organs like heart and lungs can be retrieved only from deceased donors.
➢ **Only Harvested from Brain Dead Persons:**
  - ❍ The second reason is that without deceased donations, **a precious resource is wasted.**
  - ❍ Nearly 1.5 lakh persons die in road traffic accidents every year in India, many of whom **can ideally donate organs.**
  - ❍ Although donations are possible after the heart stops working, **almost all organs are currently harvested from brain dead persons.**

Note:

Prohibition on the Sale of Single Cigarettes

Why in News?

Recently, the **Parliamentary Standing Committee** on Health and Family Welfare has recommended a ban on the sale of single sticks of cigarettes, in its report about **Cancer Management, Prevention and Diagnosis**.

What is the Need for Imposing a Ban?

- **Cancerous:**
  - Oral **cancer accounts for the highest proportion of cancer cases** in the country.
  - Tobacco consumption accounts for **nearly 50% of all cancers**, **collectively referred to as tobacco-related cancers.**
- **Singles Stick are more Alluring:**
  - Single sticks are more economical to **acquire than a full pack of cigarettes.**
  - A ban on single-stick sales will compel **a potential consumer to buy the entire pack which may not be particularly economical, thus curbing potential experimentation** and the scope for regular intake.
  - Moreover, a potential ban will also mean that the **consumer would have to carry around the packet.**
- **Some Reports concern over Usage:**
  - The **World Health Organisation (WHO)** has observed that all forms of tobacco are harmful, and there is no safe level of exposure to tobacco.
    - It also states that **smoking cigarettes is the most common way of tobacco** use worldwide.
  - The medical journal, **Lancet** noted in June 2020, that by 2030, 7 million of annual deaths from smoking are expected to **be from low and middle-income countries.**
- **Highly Addictive:**
  - Nicotine in tobacco products is highly addictive, and without cessation support only 4% of users who attempt to quit tobacco consumption will succeed, according to the WHO.

What are the Tobacco Control Measures in India?

- **International Convention:**
  - Governments adopt and implement the tobacco control provisions of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC).
  - It is the first international treaty negotiated under the auspices of the WHO.
  - It was adopted by the World Health Assembly on 21 May 2003 and entered into force on 27 February 2005.
- **Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003:**
  - Replaced the Cigarettes Act of 1975 (largely limited to statutory warnings- 'Cigarette Smoking is Injurious to Health' to be displayed on cigarette packs and advertisements. It did not include non-cigarettes).
  - The 2003 Act also included cigars, bidis, cheroots, pipe tobacco, hookah, chewing tobacco, pan masala, and gutka.
- **National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP), 2008:**
  - Objective: To control tobacco consumption and minimize tobacco consumption related deaths
  - Activities: Training and capacity building; information, education, and communication (IEC) activities; tobacco control laws; reporting survey and surveillance and tobacco cessation
- **Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Packaging and Labelling) Amendment Rules, 2020:**
  - It was mandated that the specified health warning shall cover at least 85% of the principal display area of the package.
  - Of this, 60% shall cover pictorial health warning and 25% shall cover textual health warning.
- **mCessation Programme:**
  - It is an initiative using mobile technology for tobacco cessation.
  - India launched mCessation using text messages in 2016 as part of the government's **Digital India initiative.**
    - It uses two-way messaging between the individual seeking to quit tobacco use and programme specialists providing them dynamic support.
- **Prevention and Control of Pollution Act of 1981-** Recognized smoking as an air pollutant.
- **Cable Television Networks Amendment Act of 2000-** Prohibited the transmission of advertisements on tobacco and liquor in India.

Note:

drishti

➤ **The Government of India has issued regulations under the** Food Safety and Standards Act 2006 **which lay down that tobacco or nicotine cannot be used as ingredients in food products.**

➤ 31ˢᵗ May is observed as **'World No Tobacco Day'** every year to spread awareness about the deadly effects of tobacco consumption.

Social Progress Index 2022

Why in News?

Recently, the Social Progress Index (SPI) for States and Districts of India was released by the **Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM).**

A LONG WAY TO GO

➤ SPI assessed states and districts based on **12** components

➤ These components are spread across three critical dimensions of social progress - basic human needs, foundations of wellbeing, and opportunity

➤ The index used a framework comprising **89** indicators at the state level and **49** at the district level

➤ Based on the SPI scores, states and districts have been ranked under six tiers of social progress

➤ As per the Index, AP has not completed even **30 per cent** of sanctioned households under the PMAY scheme

➤ Puducherry has the highest SPI score of **65.99** in the country

➤ Lakshadweep and Goa closely followed it with scores of **65.89** and **65.53**, respectively

➤ Jharkhand and Bihar scored the lowest, **43.95** and **44.47**, respectively

➤ In the 'basic human needs' component, Goa, Puducherry, Lakshadweep, and Chandigarh are the top four states

➤ Mizoram, Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh, and Goa emerged as the best-performing states for the 'foundations of wellbeing'

➤ Tamil Nadu scored the highest in the 'opportunity' dimension

➤ Three aspirational districts of Andhra Pradesh – Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Kadapa – beat the national averages in terms of 'human needs and opportunity'

➤ The SPI was compiled by the Institute for Competitiveness and Social Progress Imperative.

➤ The report also dwells on **India's performance (ranked 110 out of 169 nations) based on the global SPI 2022** that is brought out by Social Progress Imperative since 2013.

What is EAC-PM?

➤ It is an **independent body constituted to give advice on economic and related issues to the Prime Minister.**

➤ EAC-PM is **responsible for analysing and advising the Prime Minister** on any issue of macroeconomic importance that the Prime Minister refers to.

➤ These could be either suo-motu or on reference from the Prime Minister or anyone else.

➤ They also include attending to any other task as may be desired by the Prime Minister from time to time.

What is SPI all about?

➤ **About:**
  ○ SPI is a **comprehensive tool that can serve as a holistic measure** of a country's social progress at the national and sub-national levels.
  ○ The report aims to **provide a systematic account of the social progress made at all levels in the country.**
  ○ The **index uses an extensive framework comprising 89 indicators** at the state level and 49 at the district level.

➤ **Assessment Components:**
  ○ The index **assesses states and districts based on 12 components** across three critical dimensions of social progress:
    ● **Basic Human Needs:** It **assesses the performance of states and districts in terms of Nutrition and Basic Medical Care**, Water and Sanitation, Personal Safety and Shelter.
    ● **Foundations of Wellbeing:** It **evaluates the progress made by the country across the components of Access to Basic Knowledge**, Access to Information and Communication, Health and Wellness, and Environmental Quality
    ● **Opportunity:** It **focuses on Personal Rights, Personal Freedom and Choice**, Inclusiveness, and Access to Advanced Education.

Note:

What are the Findings of the Index?

➢ **Highest SPI Score:** Puducherry

➢ **Lowest SPI Score:** Jharkhand and Bihar

➢ **Basic Human Needs:** Goa, Puducherry, Lakshadweep, and Chandigarh are the top four states with the best performance in water, sanitation and shelter.

➢ **Foundations of Wellbeing:** Mizoram, Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh, and Goa have emerged as the best-performing states for the Foundations of Wellbeing.

   ○ For **Environmental Quality**, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Meghalaya are the top three states.

➢ **Opportunity:** Tamil Nadu has achieved the highest component score for Opportunity dimension.

➢ **Top Best Performing Districts:** Aizawl (Mizoram), Solan (Himachal Pradesh) and Shimla (Himachal Pradesh) have emerged as the top three best-performing districts.

State of Food Insecurity in 2022

Why in News?

 Hunger has remained grisly in several parts of the world including India in 2022, so much so that the **United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) called 2022 'The year of Unprecedented Hunger'.**

➢ According to the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**, about 307 crore people worldwide could not afford a healthy diet in 2020. India is home to almost a third of this global population.

What are the Highlights from Various Reports?

➢ **World Food Programme**:

   ○ The number of people facing acute food insecurity has **almost tripled since 2019 and as many as 828 million people go to bed hungry every night**, according to **WFP (World Food Programme).**

   ○ Food security shot past pre-pandemic levels, especially in war-torn places and those wrecked by climate disasters.

➢ **The Future of Food and Agriculture by FAO:**

   ○ According to FAO's report **Future of Food and Agriculture — Drivers and triggers for transformation**, the world will witness persistent **food insecurity** if agrifood systems remain the same.

   ○ The world will witness persistent food insecurity, degrading resources and unsustainable economic growth in the future if agrifood systems remain the same.

   ○ The world was **"tremendously off track" to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**, including agrifood targets.

   ○ By 2050, there will be 10 billion people in the world to feed and this will be an unprecedented challenge if significant attempts are not made to reverse current trends.

➢ **Global Hunger Index (GHI):**

   ○ India ranked an abysmal 107 out of 121 countries on the **Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2022**.

   ○ Among the South Asian countries, India (107) is ranked below Sri Lanka (64), Nepal (81), Bangladesh (84), and Pakistan (99).

   ○ **Globally, the progress against hunger has largely stagnated** in recent years, with a global score of 18.2 in 2022 as compared to 19.1 in 2014, there is only a slight improvement. However, the **2022 GHI score is still considered "moderate".**

➢ **State Food Security Index (SFSI) by FSSAI:**

   ○ **Tamil Nadu scored the highest among major states** on all indicators, followed by **Gujarat and Maharashtra.**

      • **Tamil Nadu scored a total of 82.5 points** on a scale of 100 where the indicators included human resource and institutional data, compliance, food testing infrastructure and surveillance, training and capacity building and lastly, consumer empowerment.

   ○ **Among Union Territories (UT), Jammu and Kashmir topped** the list, performing better than the national capital with a score of 68.5, followed by National Capital Territory of Delhi (66) and Chandigarh (58).

➢ **Promises and Reality Report:**

   ○ More than 90 million eligible people have been **excluded from legal entitlements under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TDPS)**, India's tool to combat food insecurity.

   ○ The Census of India 2011 remains the source of data for arriving at the number of people to be covered by the scheme. As a consequence, **subsequent years have seen the exclusion of a large chunk of the population.**

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○ This in-built fallacy in the legal framework led to exclusion of at least 12% of the population from the legal entitlements in the most legitimized way.

What are India's Initiatives to Eradicate Hunger/Malnutrition?

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➢ **International Year of Millets.**
➢ **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY).**

Age of Consent for Adolescents

Why in News?

Recently, Karnataka High Court, while dismissing a case filed under the **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO Act)**, saying the Law Commission of India will have to rethink the age of consent for Adolescents.

➢ The court said, the aspect of consent by a girl of 16 years, but who is below 18 years, would have to be considered, if it is indeed an offense under the **Indian Penal Code and/or the POCSO Act.**

What is the POCSO Act, 2012?

➢ It defines a child as any person **below eighteen years of age and regards the best interests** and welfare of the child as a matter of paramount importance at every stage, to ensure the **healthy physical, emotional, intellectual and social development** of the child.
➢ It defines different forms of sexual abuse, **including penetrative and non-penetrative assault**, as well as sexual harassment and pornography.
➢ It deems a sexual assault to be "aggravated" under certain circumstances, such as when the abused child is mentally ill or when the abuse is committed by a person in a position of trust or authority like a family member, police officer, teacher, or doctor.

➢ It also casts the police in the role of child protectors during the investigative process.
➢ The Act stipulates that a case of child sexual abuse **must be disposed of within one year** from the date the offence is reported.
➢ It was **amended in August 2019** to provide more stringent punishment, including the death penalty, for sexual crimes against children.

UDISE Plus Report

Why in News?

Recently, the Union Education Minister released the **Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) Plus 2021-22 report on school education.**

➢ The Ministry of Education also **released the Performance Grading Index (PGI) for 2020-21**.

What is the UDISE Plus Report?

➢ It is a comprehensive study that **provides information on enrollment and dropout rates of school students**, number of teachers in schools, and information on other infrastructural facilities like toilets, buildings and electricity.
➢ It was **launched in 2018-2019 to speed up data entry, reduce errors**, improve data quality and ease its verification.
➢ It is an **application to collect the school details** about factors related to a school and its resources.
➢ It is an **updated and improved version of UDISE**, which was initiated in 2012-13 by the Ministry of Education.

What are the Findings of the UDISE Plus 2021-22 Report?

➢ **Decline in Enrolments:**
○ **Pre-Primary Level:**
● A **total of 94.95 lakh students entered pre-primary classes in 2021-2022**, registering a drop of 10% as compared to the previous year when 1.06 crore children enrolled in these classes.
● However, in 2020-2021, there was **already a decline of 21% enrolment in pre-primary classes as compared to 1.35 crore the year** before as the pandemic and lockdown measures resulted in school closures and classrooms moving online

Note:

- ○ **Primary and Higher Secondary Level:**
  - Enrolment in primary classes (classes 1 to 5) also **saw a drop for the first time**—falling from 12.20 lakh in 2020-2021 to 12.18 lakh in 2021-2022.
  - However, the total number of students from **primary to higher secondary increased by 19 lakhs to 25.57 crores.**
- ➢ **Decline in Number of Schools:**
  - ○ **Total number of schools in 2021-22 stood at 14.89 lakhs** compared to 15.09 lakhs in 2020-21.
    - The decline was **mainly due to closure of private and other management schools** and grouping/clustering of schools by various states.
  - ○ There were also **1.89 lakh fewer teachers** as their number reduced from 96.96 lakh in 2020-2021 to 95.07 lakh in 2021-2022.
- ➢ **Computer Facilities and Internet Access:**
  - ○ **Computer facilities were available in 44.75% of schools**, while Internet access was available only in 33.9% of schools.
  - ○ However, **their availability has improved as compared to pre-covid** when only 38.5% of schools had computers and 22.3% had Internet facilities.
- ➢ **Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER):**
  - ○ **It compares the enrolment in a specific level of education** to the population of the corresponding age group.
    - **Overall Improvement:**
- ➢ The GER for the primary section has **improved from 101.3% in 2018-2019 to 104.8% in 2021-2022.**
- ➢ For secondary classes, it has **risen to 79.6% in 2021-22**, from 76.9% in 2018-19 and for higher secondary level, it has **increased from 50.14% to 57.6%.**
    - **Category-wise Improvement:**
- ➢ Total number of **Scheduled Caste** enrolment increased **to 4.82 Crore** in 2021-22 as compared to 4.78 Crore in 2020-21.
- ➢ Total **Scheduled Tribe enrolment increased to 2.51 crore** in 2021-22 from 2.49 crore in 2020-21.
- ➢ Total **other backward students** also increased to 11.48 crore in 2021-22 from 11.35 crore in 2020-21.
- ➢ **Total enrollment of Children with Special Needs (CWSN)** in 2021-22 stands at 22.67 lakh as compared to 21.91 lakh in 2020-21.
- ➢ **Gender Parity Index (GPI):**

- ○ In 2021-22 over **12.29 crore girls are enrolled in primary to higher secondary** showing **an increase** of 8.19 lakh compared to the enrolment of girls in 2020-21.
  - The Gender Parity Index (GPI) of GER indicates **the representation of girls in school with respect to their population in the corresponding age group.**

What is the State of Education System in India?

- ➢ **About:**
  - ○ **According to PGI, the Indian Education System is one of the largest in the world** with about 14.9 lakh schools, 95 lakh teachers, and nearly 26.5 crore students.
  - ○ The current state of Education **faces major challenges like lack of adequate infrastructure, low government expenditure on education** (less than 3.5% of the GDP).
- ➢ **Related Initiatives:**
  - ○ **National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning.**
  - ○ **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan**
  - ○ **PRAGYATA**
  - ○ **Mid Day Meal Scheme**
  - ○ **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao**
  - ○ **PM SHRI Schools**

UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review

Why in News?

Recently, the **Human Rights Council (HRC) Universal Periodic Review (UPR)** session was held in Geneva, where India's human rights record was examined by the **Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group.**

What is UPR?

- ➢ **About:**
  - ○ The UPR is a unique process which **involves a periodic review of the human rights records of all 193 UN Member States**.
  - ○ Since its first meeting was held in April 2008, all 193 UN member States have been reviewed **thrice within the first, second and third UPR cycles.**

Note:

- The ultimate aim of this mechanism is t**o improve the human rights situation in all countries and address human rights violation**s wherever they occur. Currently, no other universal mechanism of this kind exists.
- During the review process, **States outline specific steps they have taken to implement recommendations** posed during their previous reviews and highlight their recent human rights developments.

- **UPR for India:**
  - The three country representatives serving as rapporteurs ("troika") for the review of India are: **Sudan, Nepal and the Netherlands.**
  - This review marks the beginning of the **UPR fourth cycle**. India's first, second and third UPR reviews took place in April 2008, May 2012 and May 2017, respectively.

- **Reviews are Based on:**
  - National report - information provided by the State under review
  - Information contained in the reports of independent human rights experts and groups, known as the Special Procedures, human rights treaty bodies, and other UN entities
  - Information provided by other stakeholders including national human rights institutions, regional organizations and civil society groups.

What are the Highlights of the Review?

- Greece, the Netherlands and Vatican City called upon the Government of India to ensure **freedom of religion and end discrimination against human rights defenders** and religious minorities.
  - India appreciates the role of human rights defenders, journalists and activists in the democratic system but the activities of these groups and individuals should be in conformity with the law of the land.
- **Germany** expressed concern about the **rights situation in India** especially religious minorities as well as women and girls.
- Germany also said that the **Foreign Contribution Regulation Act** should not "unduly restrict" the "freedom of association" in India.
  - The **German representative called upon India to strengthen the National Human Rights Commission** and said the discrimination against Dalits should end.

- Nepal called for India to **strengthen measures to end violence against women** and end child marriage.
- Russia asked India to continue to **take policies that will eradicate poverty** and called for "responsible corporate behaviour".
- India said that actions were taken against some organizations due to their illegal practices including malafide re-routing of money and wilful and continuing violations of extant legal provisions, foreign exchange management rules and tax law of India.

What is UNHRC?

- **About:**
  - The Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of **human rights** around the world.

- **Formation:**
  - The Council was created by the United Nations General Assembly in 2006. It replaced the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights.
  - The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) serves as the Secretariat of the Human Rights Council.
  - OHCHR is headquartered in **Geneva, Switzerland.**

- **Members:**
  - It is made up of 47 United Nations Member States which are elected by the UN General Assembly (UNGA).
  - The Council's Membership is based on equitable geographical distribution. Seats are distributed as follows:
    - African States: 13 seats
    - Asia-Pacific States: 13 seats
    - Latin American and Caribbean States: 8 seats
    - Western European and other States: 7 seats
    - Eastern European States: 6 seats
  - Members of the Council serve for a period of **three years** and are not eligible for immediate re-election after serving two consecutive terms.

- **Procedures and Mechanisms:**
  - **Advisory Committee:** It serves as the Council's "think tank" providing it with expertise and advice on thematic human rights issues.

Note:

○ **Complaint Procedure:** It allows individuals and organizations to bring human rights violations to the attention of the Council.

○ **UN Special Procedures:** These are made up of **special rapporteurs,** special representatives, independent experts and working groups that monitor, examine, advise and publicly report on thematic issues or human rights situations in specific countries.

State of Food and Agriculture Report, 2022

Why in News?

Recently, the 2022 edition of the State of Food and Agriculture report by the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** was released.

➢ The **flagship report is produced each year.**

➢ The report looked at how automation in our agrifood systems can contribute to achieving **Sustainable Development Goals** and offers recommendations to policy makers on how to maximize the benefits and minimize the risks.

What is Agriculture Automation?

➢ Agricultural automation, which includes **anything from tractors to artificial intelligence,** plays an important role in making food production more efficient and environmentally friendly.

➢ But it can also **deepen inequalities if it remains inaccessible** to small-scale producers and other marginalised groups.

What are the Highlights of the Report?

➢ The report looked at 27 case studies from all over the world, representing different technologies.

○ Only 10 of the 27 service providers are profitable and financially sustainable.

➢ There is an **unequal progress toward mechanization among regions**, according to available statistics on the number of tractors per 1,000 hectares of arable land.

➢ High-income countries in North America, Europe and Oceania were highly mechanised by the 1960s. But regions dominated by **low-and middle-income countries were less mechanised**.

➢ Crucially, **there are wide disparities in the spread of automation** between and within countries, with adoption being particularly limited in sub-Saharan Africa.

○ For instance, **Japan had more than 400 tractors per 1,000 hectares of arable land,** compared with just 0.4 in Ghana in 2005.

○ Agriculture reliant on human and animal power continues to dominate in sub-Saharan Africa, limiting productivity.

What are the Recommendations?

➢ An agricultural automation policy should ensure that **agrifood systems are sustainable and resilient.**

➢ **Policymakers should avoid subsidising automation** in such labour-abundant contexts.

○ Agricultural automation can lead to unemployment in places where rural labour is abundant and wages are low.

➢ Policymakers **should focus on creating an enabling environment for adopting automation**.

➢ **Social protection should be provided to the least skilled workers**, who are more likely to lose their jobs during the transition.

What is the Food and Agriculture Organization?

➢ **About:**

○ FAO is a specialised agency of the **United Nations** that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.

○ **World Food Day** is celebrated every year around the world on 16th October. The day is celebrated to mark the anniversary of the founding of the FAO in 1945.

○ It is one of the UN food aid organisations based in Rome (Italy). Its sister bodies are the **World Food Programme** and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

➢ **Initiatives Taken:**

○ **Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS).**

○ Monitors the **Desert Locust** situation throughout the world.

○ The **Codex Alimentarius Commission or CAC** is the body responsible for all matters regarding the implementation of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme.

Note:

- The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture was adopted by the Thirty-First Session of the Conference of the FAO in 2001.
- ➤ **Flagship Publications:**
  - The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA).
  - The State of the World's Forests (SOFO).
  - The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI).
  - The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets (SOCO).

Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA)

Why in News?

Recently, Elaben Bhatt, renowned founder of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), passed away.

Who was Elaben Bhatt?

- ➤ She was a noted **Gandhian, leading women's empowerment activist**.
- ➤ For her work, **Elaben received numerous accolades** and was conferred several national and international awards including Padma Bhushan, Magsaysay Award and the **Indira Gandhi Sadbhavna Award**.
- ➤ She was a Member of Parliament and of the Planning Commission of the Government of India.
- ➤ She **used all these opportunities to bring about a structural improvement** in the condition of Indian women.
- ➤ She joined the **Textile Labour Association in 1955**, a union that emerged after a textile strike led by Mahatma Gandhi **in 1918.**
- ➤ **Ela Bhatt's work at the women's wing of the union** and continuous interaction with women migrants in the **textile sector led her to conceptualize the self-help group.**

What is the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA)?

- ➤ **SEWA** was born out of the **Textile Labour Association (TLA)** founded by Anasuya Sarabhai and Mahatma Gandhi in 1920 but it could not register as a trade union until 1972 because its members did not have an "employer" and were thus not seen as workers.
  - In 1981, after the anti-reservation riots in which the Bhatts were targeted for supporting quotas for Dalits in medical education, the **TLA broke up with SEWA**.
- ➤ As early as in 1974, SEWA Bank was established to provide small loans to poor women.
- ➤ It is an initiative that was recognised by the International Labour Organisation as a microfinance movement.
- ➤ With an **annual membership fee of just Rs 10**, SEWA allows anyone who is self-employed to become a member.
- ➤ Its network is spread across 18 Indian states, in other countries of South Asia, in South Africa, and Latin America.
- ➤ It has **helped rehabilitate women in personal**, and even political or social crises, by empowering them through skilling and training.
- ➤ It **simultaneously provided employment to women and promoted cooperative production**, consumption and marketing of textiles which constituted the core of India's industrialisation.
- ➤ It also **decisively influenced the course of trade unionism** and labor movement in India.

What are the Achievements of SEWA?

- ➤ The **Unorganised Workers Social Security Act** (2008), the **National Rural Livelihoods Mission** (2011), and the **Street Vendors Act** (2014), are seen as successes of SEWA's struggle.
- ➤ The PM Street Vendors Atmanirbhar Nidhi (PM-SVANidhi) scheme is seen as being inspired by SEWA's microfinance model.
- ➤ During the pandemic, SEWA launched **Anubandh, an e-commerce platform** to connect sellers with buyers, to keep kitchen fires burning through the lockdowns.
- ➤ The efforts of SEWA to c**hange the lives of over 2.1 million members** and many more around the world have long been recognised as a model for the world.

Note:

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Nai Chetna-Pahal Badlav Ki

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Urban Development launches the "**Nai Chetna-Pahal Badlav Ki**"- A Community-led **National Campaign Against Gender-Based Discrimination.**

➢ Kerala also launched the campaign under the umbrella of the Kudumbashree Mission.

What is the Nai Chetna-Pahal Badlav Ki Campaign?

➢ **About:**
   ○ It is a **four-week campaign**, aiming at equipping **women to recognise and prevent violence** and making them **aware of their rights**.
   ○ Activities will be centred on the theme of '**Gender equality** and **gender-based violence**.'

➢ **Aim:**
   ○ This will be an **annual campaign** focussing on **specific gender issues each year**. The focus area of the campaign this year is **gender-based violence**.

➢ **Implementing Agency:**
   ○ This campaign will be implemented by all states in collaboration with **Civil Society Organisations (CSO)** partners, and actively executed by all levels including the **states, districts and blocks,** engaging the community institutions along with the extended community.

➢ **Significance:**
   ○ **The campaign will bring together all line departments and stakeholders to create a concerted effort in acknowledging, identifying and addressing the issues of violence.**

What is the Kudumbashree Mission?

➢ It is the **poverty eradication** and women empowerment programme implemented by the State Poverty Eradication Mission (SPEM) of the Government of Kerala.

➢ **The name Kudumbashree in Malayalam language means 'Prosperity of the Family'. The name represents 'Kudumbashree Mission' or SPEM as well as the Kudumbashree Community Network.**

What is the National Rural Livelihoods Mission?
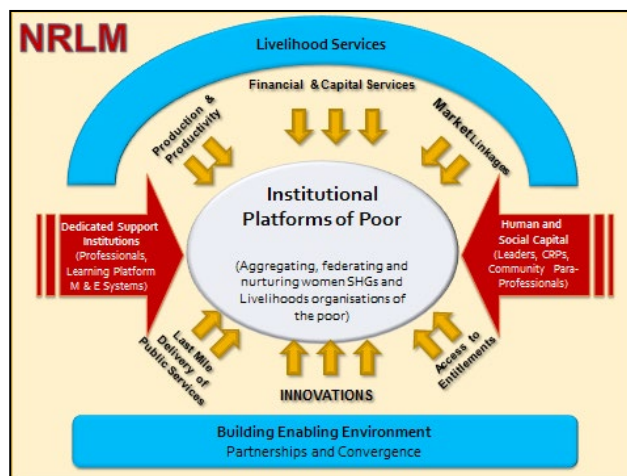
➢ **About:**
   ○ It is known as **"Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM)"**.
   ○ It is a **centrally sponsored programme**, launched by the Ministry of Rural Development in June 2011.
   ○ The government accepted the recommendation of the **Prof. Radhakrishna Committee** and restructured "**The Swarnjayanti Gram SwarozgarYojana (SGSY)**" into "**National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM)**" in FY 2010-11.

➢ **Aim:**
   ○ To **reduce poverty** by enabling the **poor households to access gainful self-employment** and skilled wage employment opportunities, resulting in appreciable improvement in their livelihoods on a sustainable basis, through building strong grassroots institutions for the poor.

➢ **Sub-Schemes:**
   ○ **MKSP:**
      ● In order to promote **agro-ecological practices** that increase women farmers' income and reduce their input costs and risks, the Mission has been implementing the **Mahila Kisan Shashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP)**.
   ○ **SVEP and AGEY:**
      ● As part of its n**on-farm livelihoods strategy**, DAY-NRLM is implementing **Start-Up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP)** and **Aajeevika Grameen Express Yojana (AGEY)**.
         ■ SVEP aims to support entrepreneurs in rural areas to set up local enterprises.

Note:

- AGEY, launched in August 2017, to provide safe, affordable and community monitored rural transport services to connect remote rural villages.
  - ○ **DDUGKY:**
    - **Deendayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDUGKY)** aims at building placement-linked skills of the rural youth and placing them in relatively higher-wage employment sectors of the economy.
  - ○ **RSETIs:**
    - The Mission, in partnership with 31 Banks and State Governments, is supporting **Rural Self Employment Institutes (RSETIs)** for skilling rural youth to take up gainful self-employment.

Same-sex Marriage under the Special Marriage Act, 1954

Why in News?

Recently, the **Supreme Court** has issued notice to the Centre and the **Attorney General for India** on a plea by two gay couples seeking recognition of same-sex marriage under the **Special Marriage Act, 1954.**

➢ As a result of several petitions, a two-judge bench headed by **Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud issued the notice.**

➢ The non-recognition of same-sex marriage amounted to **discrimination that struck at the root of dignity and self-fulfillment of LGBTQ+ couples.**

What are the Arguments of the Petitioners?

➢ The Act is ultra vires the Constitution to the extent it **discriminates between same-sex couples and opposite sex couples**, denying same-sex couples both legal rights as well as the social recognition and status that flows from marriage.
  - ○ The Special Marriage Act of 1954 ought to apply to a marriage between any two persons, regardless of their gender identity and sexual orientation.

➢ If not, the Act, in its present form **should be declared violative of the fundamental rights to a dignified life and equality** as "it does not provide for solemnisation of marriage between same sex couple".

➢ The Act should **grant same sex couple the same protection** it allowed inter-caste and inter-faith couples who want to marry.

➢ There has been **insufficient progress by simply decriminalizing homosexuality; equality must extend to all spheres of life**, including the home, the workplace, and public places, for LGBTQ+ individuals.
  - ○ Current population of LGBTQ+ are 7% to 8% of the population of the country.

What is the Legality of Same-Sex Marriages in India?

➢ The right to marry is **not expressly recognized either as a fundamental or constitutional right under the Indian Constitution.**

➢ Though **marriage is regulated through various statutory enactments**, its recognition as a fundamental right has only developed through judicial decisions of India's Supreme Court. Such declaration of law is binding on all courts throughout India under **Article 141 of the Constitution.**

What are the Views of Supreme Court on Same Sex Marriages?

➢ **Marriage as a Fundamental Right (*Shafin Jahan v. Asokan K.M. and others 2018*):**
  - ○ While referring to **Article 16 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights** and the Puttaswamy case, the SC held that the right to marry a person of one's choice is integral to **Article 21** of the Constitution.
    - **Article 16 (2)** in the Indian constitution provides that there cannot be any discrimination on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them.
  - ○ The **right to marry is intrinsic to the liberty which the Constitution guarantees as a fundamental right**, is the ability of each individual to take decisions on matters central to the pursuit of happiness. Matters of belief and faith, including whether to believe are at the core of constitutional liberty.

➢ **LGBTQ Community Entitled to all Constitutional Rights (*Navjet Singh Johar and others v. Union of India 2018*):**
  - ○ The **SC held that members of the LGBTQ community "are entitled**, as all other citizens, to the full range of constitutional rights including the liberties protected by the Constitution" and are entitled to equal citizenship and "equal protection of law".

Note:

What is the Special Marriage Act (SMA), 1954?

➤ **About:**
  ○ Marriages in India can be **registered under the respective personal laws Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, Muslim Marriage Act, 1954, or under the Special Marriage Act, 1954.**
  ○ It is the **duty of the Judiciary to ensure that the rights of both the husband and wife are protected.**
  ○ The **Special Marriage Act, 1954 is an Act of the Parliament of India** with provision for civil marriage for people of India and all Indian nationals in foreign countries, irrespective of religion or faith followed by either party.
  ○ When a person solemnises marriage under this law, then the marriage is not governed by personal laws but by the Special Marriage Act.

➤ **Features:**
  ○ Allows people from two different religious backgrounds to come together in the bond of marriage.
  ○ Lays down the procedure for both solemnization and registration of marriage, where either of the husband or wife or both are not Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, or Sikhs.
  ○ Being a secular Act, it plays a key role in liberating individuals from traditional requirements of marriage.

Global Hunger Index 2022

Why in News?

Barring the war-torn Afghanistan, India has performed worse than all the countries in the South Asian region in the **Global Hunger Index 2022.** It has ranked **107 out of 121 countries.**

➤ India ranked 101 out of 116 countries in the **Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2021**.

What is the Global Hunger Index?

➤ The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is a tool for comprehensively measuring and tracking hunger at global, regional, and national levels.

➤ GHI scores are based on the values of four component indicators:
  ○ **Undernourishment**
  ○ **Child stunting**
  ○ **Child wasting**
  ○ **Child mortality**

➤ The GHI score is calculated on a 100-point scale reflecting the severity of hunger - zero is the best score (implies no hunger) and 100 is the worst.

➤ The GHI is prepared by European NGOs of **Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe.**

➤ The GHI is an **annual report** and each set of GHI scores **uses data from a 5-year period.** The 2022 GHI scores are calculated using data from 2017 through 2021.

What is the Performance of Countries on GHI 2022?

➤ **Global Progress:** Globally, the progress against hunger has largely stagnated in recent years; with a **global score of 18.2 in 2022** as compared to 19.1 in 2014, there is only a slight improvement. However, the 2022 GHI score is still considered **"moderate".**
  ○ The plausible causes for the stagnation in this progress are overlapping crises such as conflicts among countries, climate change, the economic fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic as well as the Russia-Ukraine war, which has increased global food, fuel, and fertiliser prices and is expected to **"worsen hunger in 2023 and beyond".**
  ○ As per the index, there are 44 countries that currently have "serious" or "alarming" hunger levels and "without a major shift, neither the world as a whole **nor approximately 46 countries are projected to achieve even low hunger as measured by the GHI by 2030.**

➤ **Top and Worst Performers:**
  ○ **Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Chile, China and Croatia** are the top five countries in GHI 2022.
  ○ **Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Central African Republic and Yemen** are the countries ranked at the bottom of the index.

➤ **India and Neighboring Countries:** Among the South Asian countries, **India (107)** is **ranked below Sri Lanka (64), Nepal (81), Bangladesh (84), and Pakistan (99).**
  ○ India has a score of **29.1** which places it under **'serious'** category.
  ○ Afghanistan (109) is the only country in South Asia that performs worse than India on the index.

Note:

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○ **China, with a score of less than 5**, has topped the chart, topped the chart, together with 16 other countries.

➤ **India's Performance in the Four Indicators:**

○ **Child Wasting:** India's **child wasting rate (low weight for height), at 19.3%**, is **worse than the levels recorded in 2014** (15.1%) and even 2000 (17.15%).

● It is the **highest for any country** in the world and drives up the region's average owing to India's large population.

○ **Undernourishment:** Prevalence of undernourishment has also risen in the country from **14.6% in 2018-2020 to 16.3% in 2019-2021.**

● It implies that **224.3 million people in India (out of 828 million globally)** are considered undernourished.

● The indicator measures the proportion of the population facing chronic deficiency of dietary energy intake.

○ **Child Stunting and Mortality:** India has shown improvement in child stunting and child mortality.

● Child stunting (low height for age) has declined from 38.7% to 35.5% between 2014 and 2022.

● Child mortality (mortality rate under the age of five) has dropped from 4.6% to 3.3% in the same comparative period.

Trend for Indicator Values - India

- Proportion of undernourished in the population
- Prevalence of wasting in children under five years
- Prevalence of stunting in children under five years
- Under-five mortality rate
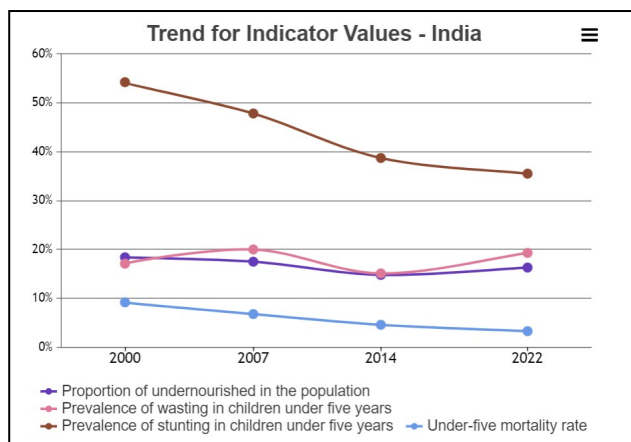
What Other Similar Indices/Reports are There?

➤ **State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World:**

○ Presented by the **Food and Agriculture Organization**, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the **UNICEF**, the **World Food Programme** and the **World Health Organization.**

➤ **Global Nutrition Report, 2021:**

○ It was conceived following the first Nutrition for Growth Initiative Summit (N4G) in 2013.

➤ **National Family Health Survey (NFHS):**

○ It comprises detailed information on key domains of population, health and family welfare - fertility; family planning; **infant and child mortality; maternal and child health; nutrition and anaemia;** morbidity and healthcare; women's empowerment etc.

Revised Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme

Why in News?

The Central Government, expanding the mandate of its flagship scheme - **'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' (BBBP Scheme)** announced the inclusion of skilling of girls in **non-traditional livelihood (NTL)** options.

➤ At the **national conference on skilling in non-traditional livelihoods for girls**, Ministries of Women and Child Development MW&CD emphasises the importance of convergence between various departments for providing quality education to empower girls.

What is BBBP Scheme?

➤ **About:**

○ The Scheme was **launched** by Prime Minister on **January 22, 2015** to **addresses the declining Child Sex Ratio** (CSR) and related issues of women's empowerment over a life-cycle continuum.

○ It is **a Tri-ministerial effort** of the Ministries of Women and Child Development **(MW&CD)**, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare **(MH&FW)**, **and Ministry of Education.**

➤ **Main Objectives:**

○ Prevention of gender-biased sex-selective elimination.

○ Ensuring survival & protection of the girl child.

○ Ensuring education and participation of the girl child.

○ Protecting rights of Girl children.

➤ **Innovative Interventions under BBBP:** Innovations that have created a positive ecosystem/ enabling environment for girls include:

○ **Guddi-Gudda Boards:** (Display of Birth Statistics (number of Girls born vis-à-vis number of Boys)

Note:

in public). Example: Jalgaon district, Maharashtra has installed digital Guddi-Gudda Display Boards.

○ **Breaking Gender Stereotypes & Challenging Son-centric Rituals:** Celebration of birth of the girl child, dedicating special day on value of girl child, **plantation drives** symbolizing nurturing and care for girl child. Example: Cuddalore (Tamil Nadu), Selfie with Daughters (Jind district, Haryana).

What are the New Changes in the BBBP Scheme?

➢ **Some of the new aims in the revised BBBP scheme include:**
   ○ **Ensuring 1% increment in enrolment at the secondary level** particularly in **STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) subjects.**
   ○ Skilling of girls and women every year (mainly in **non-traditional livelihoods**)
   ○ Raising awareness about **safe menstrual hygiene**
   ○ Promulgating **elimination of child marriages**

➢ **Other Changes to the Scheme:**
   ○ The MW&CD also emphasised the convergence between various departments for providing quality education (including vocational) to empower girls.
   ○ A MoU was signed between the MW&CD and Ministries Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, and Minority Affairs to **ensure adolescents complete their education, build skills, and enter the workforce** in a diverse range of professions.
   ○ A national committee headed by the Secretary of MW&CD, formed under the larger **Mission Shakti** will review the implementation of the BBBP scheme with states and UTs.

Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2022: Correcting Course

Why in News?

Recently, the **World Bank** released a report titled **"Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2022: Correcting Course".**

What are the Findings of the Report?

➢ **Global Poverty Reduction:**

○ Global poverty reduction has **been slowing down since 2015** but the **Covid pandemic** and the **war in Ukraine** have completely reversed the outcomes.

○ By 2015, the **global extreme-poverty rate had been cut by more than half**.
   ● Since then, poverty reduction has slowed in tandem with subdued global economic growth.

○ As such, the **global goal of ending extreme poverty by 2030** would not be achieved.

➢ **People living below the Poverty Line:**

○ In 2020 alone, the **number of people living below the extreme poverty line rose by over 70 million**; the largest one-year increase since global poverty monitoring began in 1990.

○ Given current trends, 574 million people—nearly 7% of the world's population—will still be living on less than USD 2.15 a day in 2030, with most in Africa.

➢ **Rise in Inequalities:**

○ The **poorest people bore the steepest costs of the pandemic**: Income losses averaged 4% for the poorest 40%, double the losses of the wealthiest 20% of the income distribution.

○ Global inequality rose, as a result, for the first time in decades.

○ Global median income declined by 4% in 2020—the first decline since measurements of median income began in 1990.

What are the Suggestions?

➢ National policy reforms can help restart progress in reducing poverty.

➢ Stepped-up global cooperation will also be necessary.

➢ In fiscal policy, governments should act promptly on three fronts:
   ○ **Avoid Broad Subsidies, increase targeted cash transfers:**
      ● Half of all spending on energy subsidies in low- and middle- income economies go to the richest 20% of the population who consume more energy.
      ● Cash transfers are a far more effective mechanism for supporting poor and vulnerable groups.
   ○ **Focus on Long-Term Growth:**
      ● High-return investments in education, research and development, and infrastructure projects need to be made today.

- In a time of scarce resources, **more efficient spending and improved preparation for the next crisis will be key.**
  - ○ **Mobilize Domestic Revenues without Hurting the Poor:**
    - **Property taxes and carbon taxes can help raise revenue** without hurting the poorest.
      - So can broadening the base of personal and corporate income taxes.
    - If sales and excise taxes do need to be raised, **governments should minimize economic distortions** and negative distributional impacts by simultaneously using targeted cash transfers to offset their effects on the most vulnerable households.

World Tuberculosis Report 2022: WHO

Why in News?

The **World Health Organisation (WHO)** recently released the **World Tuberculosis Report** 2022 noting the impact of **Covid-19 pandemic** on the diagnosis, treatment and burden of disease for **Tuberculosis (TB)** all over the world.

➢ The 2022 report features data on trends of disease and the response to the epidemic from 215 countries and areas, including **all 194 WHO member states.**

What are the Key Findings of the Report?

➢ **Diagnosis and Mortality Globally:**
  - ○ Around **10.6 million people across the world were diagnosed with TB** in 2021, an **increase of 4.5%** from 2020, while **1.6 million patients died of the disease.**
  - ○ Of the total TB deaths, 187,000 patients were also positive for **HIV (human immunodeficiency virus).**
    - Nearly 82% of global TB deaths among HIV-negative people occurred in the **African and South-East Asia regions.**
  - ○ The reported number of people newly diagnosed with TB fell from 7.1 million in 2019 to 5.8 million in 2020.
    - There was a **partial recovery to 6.4 million in 2021**, but this was still well below pre-pandemic levels.

Percentage of people newly diagnosed with TB who were initially tested with a WHO-recommended rapid test at country level,ᵃ 2021

Percentage (%)
- <25
- 25–49
- 50–75
- 76–90
- >90
- No data
- Not applicable
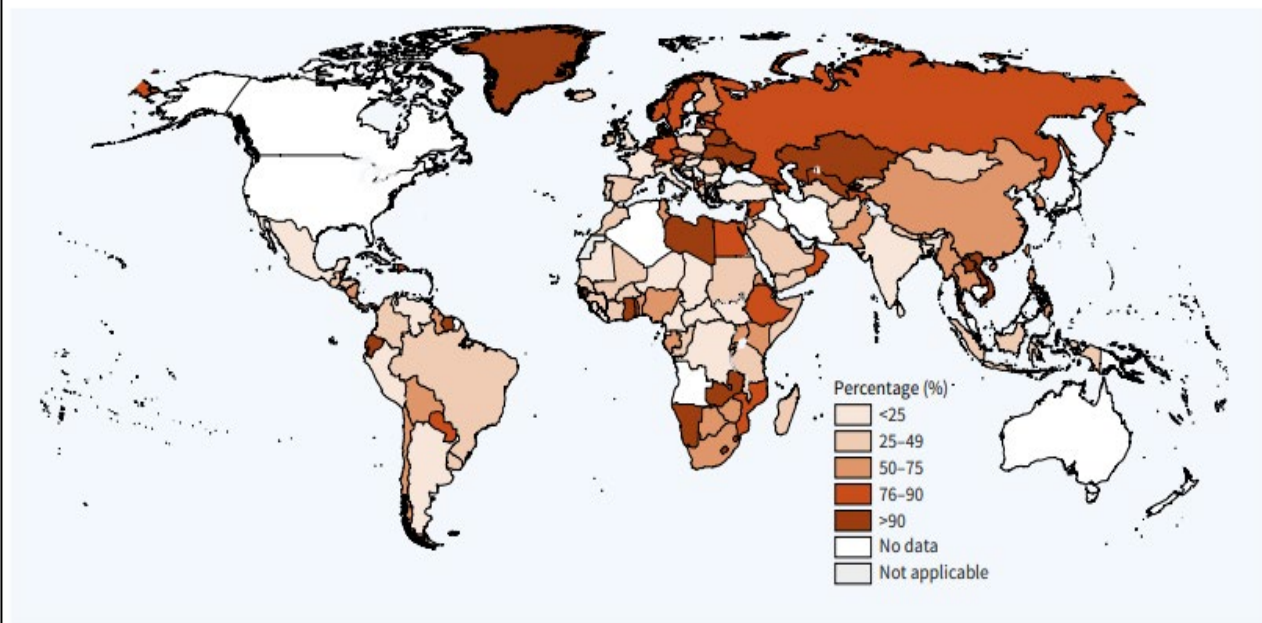
ᵃ Data are for notified cases.

Note:

- ➤ **India and TB:**
  - ○ With 28% cases, India was among the eight countries **accounting for more than two-third (68.3%) of the total TB patients' count.**
    - The other countries were **Indonesia** (9.2% cases), **China** (7.4%), the **Philippines** (7%), **Pakistan** (5.8%), **Nigeria** (4.4%), **Bangladesh** (3.6%) and the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** (2.9%).
  - ○ India **accounted for 36% of the global TB related deaths** among HIV negative people.
  - ○ India was among the three countries (along with Indonesia and the Philippines) that **accounted for most of the reduction in 2020** (67% of the global) and made partial recoveries in 2021.
  - ○ **India's Stand on the Report:** India has **performed far better on major metrics** as compared to other countries over time.
    - **India's TB incidence for the year 2021 is 210 per 100,000 population** – compared to the baseline year of 2015 (which was **256 per 100,000 population**).
    - There has been an **18% decline** (7 percentage points); better than the **global average of 11%** placing India at the 36th position in terms of incidence rates.

What is Tuberculosis?

- ➤ **About:**
  - ○ TB is caused by a bacterium called **Mycobacterium tuberculosis**, belonging to the Mycobacteriaceae family consisting of about 200 members.
  - ○ In humans, TB most **commonly affects the lungs (pulmonary TB)**, but it can also affect other organs (extra-pulmonary TB). It c**an spread from person to person** through the air.
  - ○ Most people who develop the disease are adults — in 2021, **men accounted for 56.5% of the TB burden, adult women - 32.5% and children - 11%.**
  - ○ TB is **preventable and curable** - around 85% of people who develop the disease can be successfully treated with a 4/6-month drug regimen.
- ➤ **India's Initiatives to Eliminate TB:**
  - ○ Under the **Pradhan Mantri TB Mukt Bharat Abhiyan**, India aims to eliminate TB from the country by 2025 (5 years earlier than the global target of 2030).

- **Ni-kshay Mitra** is a component of this initiative that ensures additional diagnostic, nutritional, and vocational support to those on TB treatment.
  - ○ India conducts its own **National TB Prevalence Survey** to assess the true TB burden in the country which is the **world's largest such survey ever conducted.**
    - The Union Ministry for Health and Family Welfare also launched the **'TB Harega Desh Jeetega Campaign'**, along with the Survey.
  - ○ Currently, two vaccines **VPM (Vakzine Projekt Management) 1002** and **MIP (Mycobacterium Indicus Pranii)** have been developed and identified for TB which are under clinical trials.
- ➤ **Note:**
  - ○ The **World Tuberculosis (TB) Day** is observed on **24th March** to **spread awareness** about the disastrous health, social, and economic consequences of TB and to make efforts to end the TB epidemic globally.
  - ○ The **Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine** is presently the **sole vaccine available for the prevention of TB.**

Polio Eradication

Why in News?

Recently, global leaders confirmed USD 2.6 billion in funding toward the **Global Polio Eradication Initiative's (GPEI)** 2022-2026 Strategy to end polio at the **World Health Summit** in Berlin.

What is the World Health Summit?

- ➤ The World Health Summit is an **international health conference.**
- ➤ WHS 2022 **aimed to strengthen exchange, stimulate innovative solutions** to health challenges, position global health as a key political issue and promote a global health conversation in the spirit of the **UN Sustainable Development Goals.**

What is Polio?

- ➤ **About:**
  - ○ Polio is a **crippling and potentially deadly viral infectious disease** that affects the nervous system.
  - ○ There are three individual and immunologically distinct wild poliovirus strains:
    - Wild Poliovirus type 1 (WPV1)

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- Wild Poliovirus type 2 (WPV2)
- Wild Poliovirus type 3 (WPV3)
  - ○ Symptomatically, all three strains are identical, in that they cause irreversible paralysis or even death. However, there are genetic and virological differences, which make these three strains separate viruses which must each be eradicated individually.
- ➢ **Spread:**
  - ○ The virus is **transmitted person-to-person mainly through the faecal-oral route** or, less frequently, by a common vehicle (for example, through contaminated water or food).
  - ○ It **largely affects children under 5 years of age.** The virus multiplies in the intestine, from where it can invade the nervous system and can cause paralysis.
- ➢ **Symptoms:**
  - ○ Most people with polio do not feel sick. Some people have only minor symptoms, such as fever, tiredness, nausea, headache, pain in the arms and legs, etc.
  - ○ In rare cases, polio infection causes permanent loss of muscle function (paralysis).
  - ○ Polio can be fatal if the muscles used for breathing are paralysed or if there is an infection of the brain.
- ➢ **Prevention and Cure:**
  - ○ There is no cure, but it can be prevented through **Immunisation.**
- ➢ **Vaccines:**
  - ○ **Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV):** It is given orally as a birth dose for institutional deliveries, then primary three doses at 6, 10 and 14 weeks and one booster dose at 16-24 months of age.
  - ○ **Injectable Polio Vaccine (IPV):** It is introduced as an additional dose along with the 3rd dose of **DPT (Diphtheria, Pertussis and Tetanus)** under the **Universal Immunisation Programme** (UIP).
- ➢ **India & Polio:**
  - ○ **India received polio-free certification** by the **World Health Organisation (WHO)** in 2014, after three years of zero cases.
    - This achievement has been spurred by the successful **Pulse Polio Campaign** in which all children were administered polio drops.
    - The last case due to **wild poliovirus** in the country was detected on 13th January 2011.

Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2022

Why in News?

Recently, the **Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2022** was released by the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** and the **Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI).**

What are the Key Highlights of the Index?

- ➢ **Global Data:**
  - ○ 1.2 billion people are multidimensionally poor.
    - Nearly half of them live in severe poverty.
    - Half of poor people (593 million) are children under age 18
    - The number of poor people is highest in Sub Saharan Africa (579 million), followed by South Asia (385 million). The two regions together are home to 83% of poor people.
- ➢ **Impact of Pandemic:**
  - ○ The data do not, however, reflect post-pandemic changes.
  - ○ According to the report the **Covid-19 pandemic could set back the progress made in poverty reduction** globally by 3-10 years.
    - The most recent data on food security from the World Food Programme suggest that the number of people living in food crises or worse increased to 193 million in 2021.

What are the Key Findings about India?

- ➢ **Data:**
  - ○ India has by far the **largest number of poor people worldwide at 22.8 crore,** followed by **Nigeria at 9.6 crore.**
  - ○ **Two-thirds of these people live in a household** in which at least one person is deprived of nutrition.
- ➢ **Reduction in Poverty:**
  - ○ The incidence of **poverty fell from 55.1% in 2005/06 to 16.4% in 2019/21** in the country.
    - The **deprivations in all 10 MPI indicators saw significant reductions** as a result of which the MPI value and incidence of poverty more than halved.

Note:

- As many as **41.5 crore people moved out of poverty in India** during the 15-year period between 2005-06 and 2019-21.
  - Improvement in MPI for India has significantly **contributed to the decline in poverty in South Asia.**
  - South Asia now has **not the lowest number of poor people than Sub-Saharan Africa.**
- **Relative Reduction in Poverty:**
  - The relative reduction from **2015/2016 to 2019/21 was faster:** 11.9% a year compared with 8.1% from 2005/2006 to 2015/2016.
- **Performance of States:**
  - Bihar, the poorest state in 2015-16, **saw the fastest reduction in MPI value in absolute terms.**
    - The **percentage of poor in Bihar fell from 77.4 % in 2005-06 to 52.4 % in 2015-16** and further to 34.7 % in 2019-21.
  - However, in relative terms, the **poorest states have not quite caught up**.
    - Of the 10 poorest states in 2015/2016, only one (West Bengal) have emerged out of the list in 2019-21.
    - The rest (Bihar, Jharkhand, Meghalaya, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan) remain among the 10 poorest.
  - Across states and union territories in India, **the fastest reduction in relative terms was in Goa, followed by Jammu and Kashmir,** Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan.

- **Poverty among Children:**
  - Poverty among children **fell faster in absolute terms**, although India still has the highest number of poor children in the world.
  - **More than one in five children in India are poor** compared with around one in seven adults.
- **Reduction of Poverty Region Wise:**
  - The incidence of **poverty fell from 36.6% in 2015-2016 to 21.2% in 2019-2021** in rural areas and **from 9.0% to 5.5% in urban areas.**
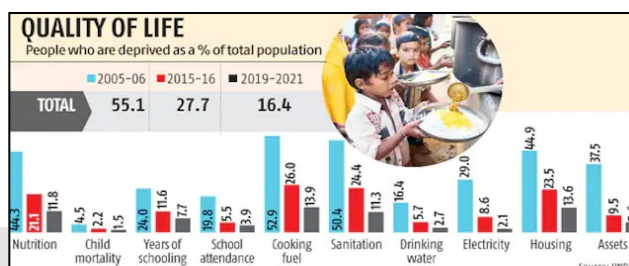
What is the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index?

- **About:**
  - The index is a **key international resource** that measures acute multidimensional poverty across more than 100 developing countries.
  - It was **first launched in 2010 by the OPHI** and the Human Development Report Office of the UNDP.
  - The **MPI monitors deprivations in 10 indicators** spanning health, education and standard of living and includes both incidence as well as intensity of poverty.
- **MPI Indicators and Dimensions:**
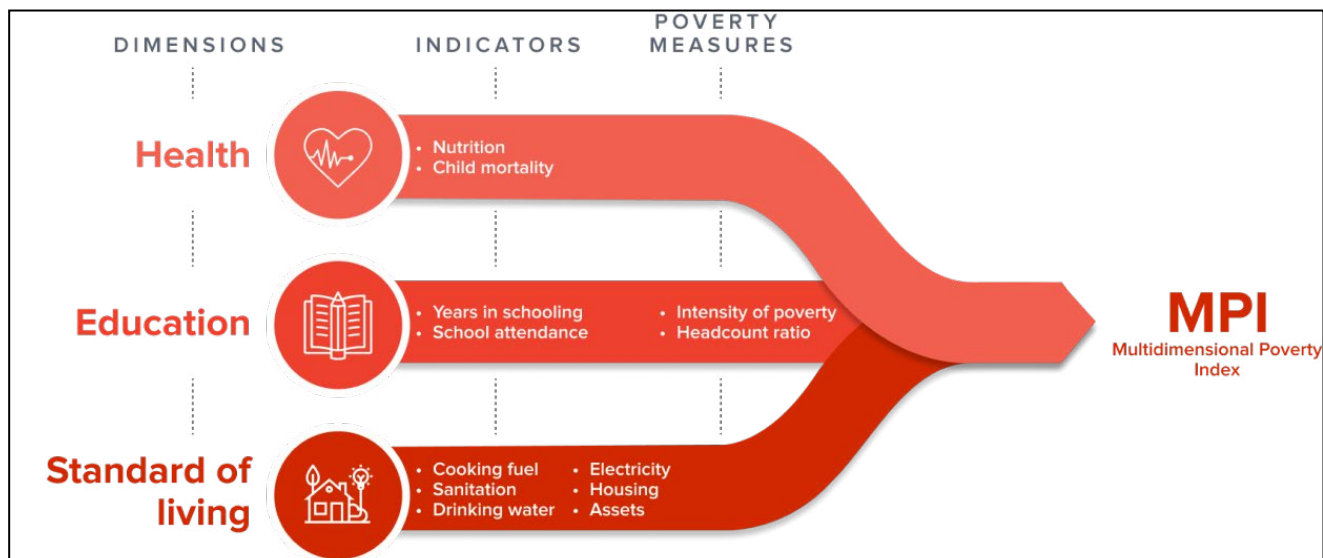
Note:

○ A person is **multidimensionally poor** if she/he is deprived in one third or more (means 33% or more) of the weighted indicators (out of the ten indicators). Those who are deprived in one half or more of the weighted indicators are considered living in **extreme multidimensional poverty.**

Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2022

- First launched **in 2010**
- **Reflects the multiple deprivations** that poor people face in the areas of education, health, and living standards.
- MPI **ranges from 0 to 1,** and higher values imply higher poverty
- **Released by:** United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI)

Dimensions and Indicators

DIMENSIONS	INDICATORS	POVERTY MEASURES
Health	• Nutrition • Child mortality	
Education	• Years in schooling • School attendance	• Intensity of poverty • Headcount ratio
Standard of living	• Cooking fuel • Electricity • Sanitation • Housing • Drinking water • Assets	
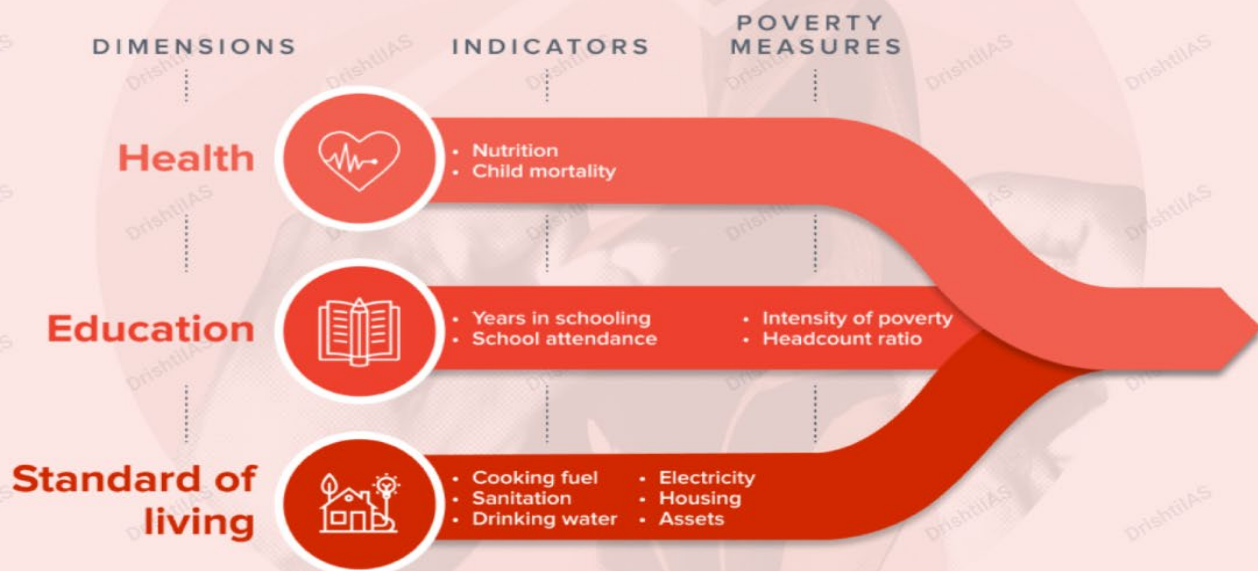
Global Scenario
- 120 crores are multidimensionally poor
  ○ About half of them are children under age 18
  ○ Most of them live in Sub-Saharan Africa (57.9 crore), followed by South Asia (38.5 crore)
- **India has by far the largest number of poor people** worldwide followed by Nigeria

Indian Scenario
- 22.8 crore are multi-dimensionally poor (including 9.7 crore children)
- **Number of poor people fell by about 41.5 crore** between 2005-06 and 2019-21
- **MPI value** fell from 0.283 in 2005-06 to 0.069 in 2019-21, and the incidence of poverty fell from 55.1% to 16.4%
- **Bihar, the poorest state in 2015-16,** saw the fastest reduction in MPI value in absolute terms.
- The **fastest reduction in relative terms was in Goa,** followed by Jammu and Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan.

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Note:

World Food Day

Why in News?

World **Food Day** is celebrated to commemorate the establishment of the United Nations **Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)** on **16th October 1945.**

➢ **FAO is a specialised agency of the United Nations** that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.

What are the Key Highlights of World Food Day 2022?

➢ **About:**
  ○ It is observed **annually** to address the problem of global hunger.
  ○ It emphasises **Sustainable Development Goal 2** (SDG 2) i.e., **Zero Hunger.**

➢ **Theme:** Leave No One Behind.

➢ **Significance:**
  ○ As a global community, we each have a role to play in bringing forward those left behind by making our agrifood systems more inclusive and sustainable.
  ○ Promote worldwide awareness and action for those who suffer from hunger and for the need to ensure healthy diets for all.
  ○ Many awareness initiatives are also held to educate people about malnutrition and obesity, both of which cause major health consequences.

What is the Status of Global Hunger according to Various Reports?

➢ **The Hunger Hotspots Outlook (2022-23)**, a report by the **FAO** and **World Food Programme (WFP)** — forebodes escalating hunger, as **over 205 million people across 45 countries will need emergency food assistance to survive.**

➢ **The Global Report on Food Crises 2022** released in May by the Global Network against Food Crises underscored that about 180 million people across 40 countries will face inescapable food insecurity.

➢ **Global Hunger Report, 2022:** Globally, the progress against hunger has largely stagnated in recent years, with a **global score of 18.2 in 2022** as compared to 19.1 in 2014, there is only a slight improvement,
  ○ Barring war-torn Afghanistan, India has performed worse than all the countries in the South Asian region in the the **Global Hunger Index 2022.**

● It has ranked **107 out of 121 countries.**

Women Representation in Parliament

Why in News?

Recently, the representation of women in parliament in New Zealand crossed the **50% mark.**

➢ According to the **Inter-Parliamentary Union**, New Zealand is among a half-dozen nations in the world that can claim at least 50% female representation in their parliament by 2022.
  ○ In 1893, New Zealand became the first nation to allow women to vote.

➢ Other nations include **Cuba, Mexico, Nicaragua, Rwanda and the United Arab Emirates.**

➢ Globally, about 26% of lawmakers are women.

What is the Indian Scenario?

➢ As per the data compiled by the IPU, of which India is a member, women **represent 14.44% of the total members of the Lok Sabha.**

➢ As per the latest **Election Commission of India (ECI) data:**
  ○ As of October 2021, Women represent **10.5%** of the total members of the Parliament.
  ○ The scenario for women **Members of Legislative Assemblies (MLAs)** across all state assemblies in India is even worse, with the national average being a pitiable 9%.
  ○ In the last 75 years of independence, **women's representation in Lok Sabha has not even increased by 10%.**

➢ In electoral representation, India has fallen several places in the **Inter-Parliamentary Union's global ranking of women's parliamentary** presence, from 117 after the 2014 election to 143 as of January 2020.
  ○ India is currently behind Pakistan (106), Bangladesh (98) and Nepal (43) and ahead of Sri Lanka (182).

What are the Government Efforts?

➢ **The Women's Reservation Bill 2008:**
  ○ It proposes to amend the Constitution of **India to reserve 1/3rd of all seats** in the Lower house of Parliament of India, the Lok Sabha, and in all state legislative assemblies for women.

Note:

- ➤ **Reservation for Women in Panchayati Raj Institutions:**
  - ○ **Article 243D of the Constitution** ensures participation of women in **Panchayati Raj Institutions** by mandating not less than one-third reservation for women out of total number of seats to be filled by direct election and number of offices of chairpersons of Panchayats.
- ➤ **Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women:**
  - ○ The Committee on Empowerment of Women was constituted for the first time in 1997 during the 11th Lok Sabha of the Parliament for improving the status of women.
  - ○ The Members of the Committee are expected to work together for the empowerment of women cutting across party affiliations.

Human Development Report 2021-22

Why in News?

According to the **Human Development Report** 2021-22, India's rank on the **Human Development Index (HDI)** has slipped from 130 in 2020 to 132 in 2022, in line with a global fall in HDI scores in the wake of the **Covid-19** pandemic.

What is Human Development Report?

- ➤ **About:**
  - ○ Human Development Reports (HDRs) have been released since 1990 and have explored different themes through the human development approach.
  - ○ It's **published by the Human Development Report Office for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).**
- ➤ **Goal:** The goal is to contribute toward the expansion of opportunities, choice and freedom.
- ➤ **Theme:** The theme for Human Development Report 2021-22 is **Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives: Shaping our Future in a World in Transformation.**

What is the Human Development Index?

- ➤ HDI is a **composite index that measures average achievement** in human development taking into account four indicators:

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
TRACKING GLOBAL DECLINE

INDIA'S RANK		HDI VALUE	
132 in 2021	**130** in 2020	**0.633** India	**0.732** World

TOP 5 COUNTRIES
1	Switzerland
2	Norway
3	Iceland
4	Hong Kong
5	Australia

BOTTOM 5
191	South Sudan
190	Chad
189	Niger
188	CAR
187	Burundi

WHERE NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES STAND
73	Sri Lanka
79	China
127	Bhutan
129	Bangladesh
143	Nepal
161	Pakistan

INDIA'S PERFORMANCE ON THE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX SINCE 1990
0.434 — 0.633 (1990 to 2021)

WHAT IS HDI
The HDI is "composite" index that measures average achievement in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, knowledge, decent standard of living

FOUR INDICATORS CONSIDERED
Life expectancy at birth | Expected years of schooling | Mean years of schooling | GNI** per capita

**Gross national income

* HDI value is the geometric mean (equally-weighted) of life expectancy, GNI per capita, and education (arithmetic mean of years of schooling and expected years of schooling)
Source: UNDP report   *Graphic: IE Design*

- ○ Life expectancy at birth (Sustainable Development Goal 3),
- ○ Expected years of schooling (Sustainable Development Goal 4.3),
- ○ Mean years of schooling (Sustainable Development Goal 4.4),
- ○ **Gross national income (GNI)** (Sustainable Development Goal 8.5).

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- ➤ **Global:**
  - ○ Ninety percent of countries have registered a reduction in their **Human Development Index** value in 2020 or 2021, reversing much of the progress toward the **Sustainable Development Goals.**
  - ○ **Drop in Life Expectancy:** A large contributor to the Human Development Index's recent decline is a global drop in life expectancy, down from 72.8 years in 2019 to 71.4 years in 2021.

Note:

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- ➤ **Indian Perspective:**
  - ○ **Human Development Index:** India's HDI value stood at **0.633 in 2021**, which was lower than the world average of 0.732. In 2020, too, India recorded a decline in its HDI value (0.642) in comparison to the pre-Covid level of 2019 (0.645).
  - ○ **Life expectancy**: In 2021, India's **life expectancy at birth was recorded at 67.2 years**.
  - ○ **Schooling:** Expected years of schooling at 11.9 years; mean years of schooling at 6.7 years;
  - ○ **Gross National Income:** The gross national income per capita stood at USD 6,590.
  - ○ **Gender Inequality Index**: India has been ranked 122 on the **Gender Inequality Index**.
- ➤ **Other insights:**
  - ○ **Humans are not prepared for** climate change: It stated that humans were unprepared for a world with climate crises like **fires and storms and other planetary-level changes** brought about due to the Anthropocene in recent years.
  - ○ **Population Decline of Insects:** Without an abundance of insect pollinators, humans face the mind-boggling challenge of **growing food and other agricultural products at scale.**
    - ● As insects are important because of their **diversity, ecological role and influence on** agriculture, human health and natural resources.
    - ● They create the **biological foundation for all terrestrial ecosystem**s, further, they **cycle nutrients, pollinate plants, disperse seeds, maintain soil structure and fertility**, control populations of other organisms and provide a major food source for other taxa.
  - ○ **Microplastic menace:** Plastics are now everywhere, in country-sized garbage patches in the ocean, in protected forests and distant mountaintops and in people's lungs and blood.

Operation 'Gear Box'

Why in News?

Recently, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) launched **operation 'Gear Box'** to stop heroin smuggling, seizes 39.5 kg of contraband from Kolkata port.

- ➤ The heroin was examined and seized under provisions of the **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act.**

What is Operation Gear Box?

- ➤ Operation Gear Box is conducted to **detect the hidden drugs in the gear boxes.**
- ➤ The gears from old and used gearboxes were removed after opening them and plastic packets containing the narcotic substance were placed in the created cavity and the gearboxes were refitted to avoid detection.
  - ○ The drug syndicate has used this unique modus operandi to conceal heroin.
- ➤ These packets were shipped concealing inside this metal scrap with other metal scrap so that it would go unnoticed by the authorities.

What about Drug Addiction in India?

- ➤ The menace of **drug addiction** has spread fast among the youth of India.
  - ○ India is sandwiched between two largest Opium producing regions of the world that is the **Golden triangle on one side and the Golden crescent on other.**
  - ○ The golden triangle area comprises Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam and Laos.
  - ○ The golden crescent area includes Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran.
- ➤ According to the **World Drug Report 2022,** India is one of the world's single largest opiate markets in terms of users and would likely be vulnerable to increased supply.
- ➤ According to the **National Crime Records Bureau's** Crime in India 2020 report, a total of 59,806 cases were lodged under NDPS Act.
- ➤ According to the Social Justice Ministry and **All India Institute of Medical Sciences** (AIIMS) report on magnitude of substance use in 2019, there were:
  - ○ 3.1 crore cannabis users (of which 25 lakhs were dependent users).
  - ○ 2.3 crore opioid users (of which 28 lakhs were dependent users).

What are the Other Related Initiatives?

- ➤ **Seizure Information Management System**
- ➤ **National Drug Abuse Survey**

Note:

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- ➢ **NDPS Act,1985**
- ➢ **Nasha Mukt Bharat**

What are the International Treaties and Conventions to Combat Drug Menace?

- ➢ India is signatory of the following International treaties and conventions to combat the menace of Drug Abuse:
  - ○ **United Nations (UN) Convention on Narcotic Drugs** (1961)
  - ○ UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971)
  - ○ **UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988)**
  - ○ UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) 2000.

Ban on Conversion Therapy for the LGBTQIA+

Why in News?

The **National Medical Commission (NMC),** has written to all State Medical Councils, banning conversion therapy of LGBTQIA+ Community and calling it a **"professional misconduct"**.

- ➢ The NMC by following a Madras High Court directive, said that conversion therapy is wrong, under the **Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquettes and Ethics) Regulations, 2002.**

What is LGBTQIA+?

- ➢ The LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual or of any other orientation) are the people **who don't identify with cisgender (**sex assigned at birth**) heterosexual "ideals".**
  - ○ The 'plus' is used to signify **all of the gender identities** and sexual orientations that **letters and words cannot yet fully describe.**
- ➢ In India, the LGBTQIA+ community also includes a specific social group, a distinct community: the Hijras.
- ➢ They are culturally defined either as **"neither men, nor women", or as men who behave like a woman**.
- ➢ At present they are referred to as the **Third Gender.**
- ➢ Supreme Court, on 6th September 2018, decriminalised section 377[1], which **titled homosexual relations as "unnatural offences".**

What is Conversion Therapy and Associated Risk?

- ➢ Conversion or reparative therapy is an **intervention aimed at changing the sexual orientation** or **gender identity** of an individual with the use of either **psychiatric treatment, drugs, exorcism (Evil Ceremonial Practices) and even violence**, with the aim being to **make the individual heterosexual (Attraction to Oppositre Sex).**
- ➢ It includes **efforts to change the core identity of youth** whose gender identity is incongruent with their sex anatomy.
- ➢ Often, the therapy is offered by quacks with little expertise in dealing with the issue.
- ➢ According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP), the interventions under conversion therapy are **provided under the false premise that homosexuality and diverse gender identities are pathological.**
- ➢ Conversion therapy **poses the risk of causing or exacerbating mental health conditions**, like anxiety, stress and drug use which sometimes even lead to suicide.

What are the Directives of Madras High Court?

- ➢ The Madras High court ruling **prohibited any attempt to medically "cure"** or change the sexual orientation of LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual or of any other orientation) people.
- ➢ It urged the authorities to **take action against professionals involving themselves in any form or method of conversion therapy**.
- ➢ The court gave an order to the National Medical Commission directing it to "issue necessary official notification by enlisting **'Conversion Therapy' as a professional misconduct."**
- ➢ The court said the **community should be provided with legal assistance by the District Legal Services Authority** in coordination with law enforcement agencies.
- ➢ Asking agencies to follow the **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020**, and the **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019**, in letter and spirit, the court said it was imperative to hold sensitization programmes for an all-out effort to understand the community and its needs.

Note:

What are the Rulings for Safeguarding LGBTQIA+?

➢ **Naz Foundation vs. Govt. of NCT of Delhi (2009):**
  ○ Delhi High Court struck off section 377, legalising consensual homosexual activities between adults.

➢ **Suresh Kumar Koushal Case (2013)**:
  ○ SC overturned the previous judgment by Delhi High Court (2009) arguing that "plight of sexual minorities" could not be used as an argument for deciding constitutionality of law.

➢ **Justice K.S. Puttaswamy vs. Union of India (2017):**
  ○ SC ruled that Fundamental Right to Privacy is intrinsic to life and liberty and thus, comes under Article 21 of the Indian constitution. It held that "sexual orientation is an essential attribute of privacy".

➢ **Navtej Singh Johar vs. Union Of India (2018):**
  ○ Dismissed the position taken by SC in Suresh Kumar Koushal case (2013) and decriminalised homosexuality.

➢ **Shafin Jahan v. Asokan K.M. and others (2018)**:
  ○ The Supreme Court observed that choice of a partner is a person's fundamental right, and it can be a same-sex partner.

➢ **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019**:
  ○ An Act to provide for protection of rights of transgender persons and their welfare and for matters connected therewith and incidental thereto.

➢ **Same-sex Marriage:**
  ○ In February, 2021, the Central Government opposed same-sex marriage in Delhi High Court stating that a marriage in India can be recognised only if it is between a "biological man" and a "biological woman" capable of producing children.

Status of Social Protection in India

Why in News?

According to the latest report **(World Social Protection Report 2020-22: Regional companion report for Asia and the Pacific)** on social protection by the **International Labour Organisation (ILO),** only 24.4% of Indians, even fewer than Bangladesh (28.4%), are under any sort of social protection benefit.

What is Social Protection?

Social protection systems help individuals and families, especially the poor and vulnerable, cope with crises and shocks, find jobs, improve productivity, invest in the health and education of their children, and protect the aging population.

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

➢ **About:** The Report is a **companion to the ILO's 'World Social Protection Report 2020-22'**, that gives a regional overview of the social protection in the Asia and Pacific region.

➢ **Global:**
  ○ **Social Protection:** It notes that **Mongolia, New Zealand, Singapore and Australia have 100% social protection net,** while in **Myanmar and Cambodia,** the number stands **below 10%.**
  ○ **Lower Coverage**: As per the report, three **out of four workers in the Asia Pacific region are not protected** in the event of illness or injury sustained at work.
    ● Countries with lower **Gross Domestic Product(GDP)** per capita tend to have low levels of work injury coverage for example, Afghanistan, India, Nepal and Pakistan cover fewer than 5% of their workers.
  ○ **Uneven Coverage:** According to the report, as of 2020, **only 46.9% of the global population was effectively covered by at least one social protection benefit**, while the remaining 53.1% as many as 4.1 billion people were left wholly unprotected.
    ● The report further notes that the large majority of the working-age population in the world 69.4%, or **4 billion people, are only partially protected or not protected at all.**
  ○ **Gender Inequality:** Highlighting the inherent gender inequality in the social protection coverage, the report makes note women's coverage lag behind men's by a substantial 8% points.

➢ **Indian Perspective:**
  ○ **Low Investment in Social Protection**: The report notes that owing to the relatively **low investment in social protection i.e.,** only 24.4% of Indian population**, the amounts transferred under non-contributory benefits are usually too low to** provide adequate protection.

Note:

drishti

- ○ **Disparity in Coverage:** With **contributory schemes typically limited to those working in the formal sector** and non-contributory schemes still mostly targeted on the poorest, India's social security benefits are **lower than the 5% of GDP per capita (USD 2,277).**
- ○ **Recent Initiatives**: It appreciated India's **higher coverage rate achieved through a combination of contributory and non-contributory schemes** through its progressive extension of coverage by combining different tiers of social protection such as the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (MGNREGA)**, which offers a degree of protection for informal sector workers for up to 100 days.

What are the various Indian Government Initiatives Regarding Social Security?

- ➤ **Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan Yojana (PM-SYM).**
- ➤ **National Pension Scheme for Traders and The Self-employed Persons (NPS).**

Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Yojana (PMJJBY).

- ➤ **Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY).**
- ➤ **Atal Pension Yojana.**

National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC).

- ➤ **Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers.**

What is International Labour Organisation (ILO)?

- ➤ It is the only tripartite **United Nation (UN) agency.** It brings together governments, employers and workers of 187 member States (India is a member), to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men.
- ➤ Received the **Nobel Peace Prize in 1969.**
- ➤ **Established in 1919 by the Treaty of Versailles** as an affiliated agency of the **League of Nations.**
- ➤ Became the first affiliated specialized agency of the UN in 1946.

- ➤ **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland.
- ➤ **Other Reports:**
  - ○ Social Dialogue Report.
  - ○ World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends
  - ○ World Employment and Social Outlook
  - ○ World Social Protection Report
  - ○ Global Wage Report

State of the World's Healthcare Facilities

Why in News?

According to the latest **Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) report by World Health Organisation(WHO) and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund(UNICEF),** about half of the world's healthcare facilities lack basic hygiene services, putting 3.85 billion people at an increased risk of infections.

- ➤ The report was released during **World Water Week held in Stockholm, Sweden.**

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- ➤ **Lack of Basic Hygiene:**
  - ○ About **half of the world's healthcare facilities lack basic hygiene services, putting 3.85 billion people at an increased risk of infections.**
    - These facilities **do not provide patients with water, soap, or alcohol-based hand rubs.**
    - **Only 51% of healthcare facilities met the requirements** for basic hygiene services.
    - **Some 68% of them provided facilities for handwashing with water and soap at restrooms** and 65% had such amenities at points of care.
      - Furthermore, **just one in 11 medical facilities worldwide has both.**
- ➤ **Lethal for Vulnerable Population:**
  - ○ Hospitals and clinics without safe water and basic hygiene and sanitation services are a **potential death trap for pregnant mothers, newborns and children.**
- ➤ **Rise of Various Diseases:**
  - ○ Every year, a **whopping 670,000 newborns lose their lives to sepsis.**
    - Sepsis is a potentially **life-threatening condition that occurs when the body's response to an infection damages its own tissues.**

Note:

- **Increased Disease Transmission:**
  - Unhygienic hands and environment significantly **influence disease transmission in healthcare facilities and the emergence of antibiotic resistance.**
  - Only 53% of healthcare institutions in the least developed countries have access to a safe water supply.
    - The proportion for **eastern and south-eastern Asia is 90%, with hospitals performing better than smaller healthcare facilities**.
      - Some 11% of the rural and 3% of urban healthcare institutions lacked access to water.

What is the Importance of Hygiene Facilities?

- Hygiene facilities and practices in health care settings are non-negotiable.
- Their improvement is **essential to pandemic recovery, prevention and preparedness.**
- Promoting access to handwashing with water and soap and cleaning is essential for providing **high-quality health care**, especially for safe deliveries.

How Could the Issue be tackled?

- As the coverage of WASH facilities is still uneven across different regions and income groupings.
  - There is a need for countries to **implement their 2019 World Health Assembly commitment to strengthen water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services in health care facilities.**

What are the Indian Government Initiatives related to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)?

- **Present Status:**
  - **Urban Centers Bear the Brunt:**
    - Nationally, **910 million citizens do not have access to proper sanitation.**
      - Despite urban centers housing the majority of India's population, urban sanitation is underfunded.
- **Initiatives:**
  - **Swachh Bharat's Toilet Access and Job Creation:**
    - It aims to **reduce open defecation in India**. Between 2018 and 2019, 93% of households had access to toilets, a noticeable jump from 77% in the previous year.

- The construction of the sanitation infrastructure is responsible for **employing more than 2 million full-time workers**.
  - **Water in Rural Communities:**
    - Between 2017 and 2018, India's national water mission expanded to become the **National Rural Drinking Water Mission (NRDWM)**.
- While other programs and departments address sanitation in urban centers, NRDWM **cares for the rural regions of India.**
- One **goal is the institution of piped water supplies to rural households.**
  - **iJal Safe Water Stations:**
    - The Safe Water Network, a **nonprofit organization** created by Paul Newman, has reached communities through its iJal water stations.
- The locally owned stations **provide access to clean, quality water in communities where water security is scarce**.
  - **WASH Allies:**
    - USAID and UNICEF work in cooperation with the Government of India.
- As of September 2020, **USAID reported recent achievements,** including greater access to safe drinking water, more household toilets and a decrease in public defecation.

Megh Chakra Operation

Why in News?

The operation code-named "**Megh Chakra**" is being **carried out following the inputs received from Interpol's Singapore special unit based** on the information received from the authorities in New Zealand.

- It is a **pan-India drive against the circulation and sharing of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM)** conducted by the **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).**

What are the Key Highlights of the Megh Chakra Operation?

- Searches at 59 locations across 20 States and one Union Territory were conducted.
- It has been alleged that a **large number of Indian nationals were involved in the online circulation**, downloading and transmission of the CSAM using cloud-based storage.

Note:

➤ The operation is sought to **collate information from various law enforcement agencies in India**, engage with the relevant law enforcement agencies globally and coordinate closely through the Interpol channels on the issue.

➤ The probe had led to the **identification of over 50 groups with more than 5,000 offenders, including the nationals of about 100 countries.**

➤ A similar exercise code named **"Operation Carbon" was conducted by CBI in November 2021.**

What are the Issues Related to Child Sexual Abuse?

➤ **Multi-layered Problem:** Child sexual abuse is a **multi-layered problem which negatively impacts children's physical safety,** mental health, well-being and behavioural aspects.

➤ **Amplification Due to Digital Technologies:** Mobile and digital technologies have further amplified child abuse and exploitation. New forms of child abuse like online bullying, harassment and **Child Pornography** have also emerged.

➤ **Ineffective Legislation:** Although Government of India has enacted the **Protection of Children against Sexual Offences Act 2012 (POCSO Act),** it has **failed to protect children from sexual abuse.** The reasons for this can be the following:

  ○ **Low Conviction Rate:** The rate of conviction under the **POCSO act is only about 32%** if one takes the average of the past 5 years and the percentage of cases pending is 90%.

  ○ **Judicial Delay:** The Kathua Rape case took 16 months for the main accused to be convicted whereas the POCSO Act clearly mentions that the entire trial and conviction process has to be done in one year.

  ○ **Unfriendly to Child:** Challenges related to age-determination of the child. Especially laws that focus on biological age and not mental age.

What are the Related Constitutional Provisions?

➤ The Constitution guarantees to every **child the right to live with dignity (Article 21), the right to personal liberty (Article 21), the right to privacy (Article 21), the right to equality (Article 14)** and/or the **right against discrimination (Article 15),** the r**ight against exploitation (Article 23 & 24).**

  ○ **Right to free and compulsory elementary education** for all children in the 6–14-year age group **(Article 21 A).**

➤ **The Directive Principles of State Policy,** and in particular **Article 39(f)**, cast an **obligation on the State to ensure that children are given opportunities and facilities** to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.

Tribal Forest Rights

Why in News?

Recently, residents of Karipani and Budra villages in Chhattisgarh carried out a **massive afforestation drive over 100 acres,** as it was the last-ditch effort of the villagers to **secure rights over their forest land.**

➤ As many as 10 villages in protected areas of the state received the **Community Forest Resource Rights (CFRR)** titles on **Adivasi Divas observed on August 9, 2022** but Karipani and Budra were not among them.

What are Community Forest Resource Rights?

➤ **The Community Forest Resource rights under Section 3(1)(i)** of the **Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006** (Commonly referred to as the Forest Rights Act) provides for recognition of the right to "protect, regenerate or conserve or manage" the community forest resource.

➤ These rights allow the community to formulate **rules for forest use by itself and others a**nd thereby discharge its responsibilities under Section 5 of the Forest Rights Act.

➤ CFR rights, along with Community Rights **(CRs) under Sections 3(1)(b) and 3(1)(c),** which include nistar rights and rights over non-timber forest products, ensure sustainable livelihoods of the community.

➤ **Once CFRR is recognised by a community, the ownership of the forest passes into the hands of the Gram Sabha instead of the forest department.**

➤ Effectively, the Gram Sabha has become the nodal body for management of the forests.

➤ These rights give authority **to the Gram Sabha adopt local traditional practices of forest conservation and management** within the community forest resource boundary.

Note:

➢ Chhattisgarh is only the second state to have recognised CFR rights inside a national park i.e., **Kanger Ghati National Park.**

➢ In 2016, the Odisha government was the first to recognise Community Forest Resources (CFRs) inside the **Simlipal National Park.**

What is the Forest Rights Act,2006?

➢ The Act recognizes and vests the forest rights and occupation in Forest land in **Forest Dwelling Scheduled Tribes** (FDST) and **Other Traditional Forest Dwellers** (OTFD) who have been residing in such forests for generations.

➢ Forest rights can also be claimed by any member or community who has **for at least three generations (75 years) prior to the 13th day of December, 2005 primarily resided in forest** land for bona fide livelihood needs.

➢ It strengthens the **conservation regime** of the forests while ensuring livelihood and food security of the FDST and OTFD.

➢ The **Gram Sabha** is the authority to initiate the process for determining the nature and extent of **Individual Forest Rights** (IFR) or **Community Forest Rights** (CFR) or both that may be given to FDST and OTFD.

➢ The Act identifies **four types of rights**:

○ **Title rights:** It gives FDST and OTFD the **right to ownership** to land farmed by tribals or forest dwellers subject to a maximum of **4 hectares**. Ownership is only for land that is actually being cultivated by the concerned family and no new lands will be granted.

○ **Use rights:** The rights of the dwellers extend to **extracting Minor Forest Produce, grazing areas** etc.

○ **Relief and development rights:** To **rehabilitate** in case of illegal eviction or forced displacement and to basic amenities, subject to restrictions for forest protection.

○ **Forest management rights:** It includes the right to **protect, regenerate or conserve** or manage any community forest resource which they have been traditionally protecting and conserving for sustainable use.

Poshan Abhiyan

Why in News?

Recently, under various interventions of the Ministry of Women and Child Development jointly (MWCD) with Ministry of Ayush, close to 4.37 lakh Anganwadi Centres have set up **Poshan Vatikas.**

➢ Under ongoing **Poshan Maah 2022**, activities for setting-up Poshan Vatikas with backyard poultry / fishery units is being carried out in a big way across the country.

➢ Additionally, so far, 1.10 lakh medicinal saplings have also been planted across some of the selected districts of 6 States.

What do we Know about Poshan Maah?

➢ The Rashtriya Poshan Maah is being **celebrated during the month of September every year** under **POSHAN Abhiyaan.**

➢ It includes a month-long activity focused on antenatal care, optimal breastfeeding, Anemia, growth monitoring, girls' education, diet, right age of marriage, hygiene and sanitation and eating healthy (Food Fortification).

➢ The activities focus on **Social and Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC) and are based on Jan Andolan Guidelines**.

○ SBCC is the strategic use of communication approaches to promote changes in knowledge, attitudes, norms, beliefs and behaviours.

What do we know about Poshan Vatika?

➢ **About:**

○ Poshan Vatika means that **small piece of land where the people of the house grow vegetables** to make sure that all in the family specially children and women should not become victim of mal-nutrition.

➢ **Objective:**

○ Its main objective is to **ensure supply of nutrition through organically home-grown vegetables and fruits** simultaneously ensuring that the soil must also remain healthy.

➢ **Implementation:**

○ Plantation drives for Poshan Vatikas would be taken up by all the stakeholders in the space available at anganwadis, school premises and gram panchayats.

Note:

What do we Know about Poshan Abhiyan?

➢ **About**
  - ○ **POSHAN Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission)** was launched by the government on March 8, 2018.

➢ **Aim:**
  - ○ The Abhiyaan targets to **reduce stunting, undernutrition, anemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls)** and reduce low birth weight by 2%, 2%, 3% and 2% per annum respectively.
  - ○ The target of the mission is to bring down stunting among children in the age group 0-6 years from 38.4% to 25% by 2022.
  - ○ POSHAN Abhiyaan aims to **ensure service delivery and interventions by use of technology, behavioural change** through convergence and lays-down specific targets to be achieved across different monitoring parameters.
  - ○ Under the Abhiyaan, **Swasth Bharat Preraks will be deployed one in each district for coordinating with district officials** and enabling fast and efficient execution of the Abhiyaan across the country. Swasth Bharat Preraks would function as catalyst for fast tracking the implementation of the Abhiyaan.

➢ **POSHAN 2.0:**
  - ○ **About:**
    - The government has amalgamated various programmes with similar objectives such as **Supplementary Nutrition Programme** and POSHAN Abhiyaan under one umbrella– Mission POSHAN 2.0—for **creating synergies in operations and adopting an integrated approach** in the nutrition services mechanism.
  - ○ **Components:**
    - **Convergence**: The Abhiyaan is to ensure convergence of all nutrition related schemes of MWCD on the target population. The Abhiyaan will ensure convergence of various programmes.
    - **ICDS-CAS: Software based tracking of nutritional status** will be done.
    - **Behavioral change:** The Abhiyaan will be run as a **Jan Andolan where mass involvement of people is desired**. A community-based event will happen once a month to create awareness and address issues.
    - **Incentives:** Front line workers will be given incentives for performance.

- **Training and Capacity Building:** Incremental Learning Approach will be adopted to teach 21 thematic modules. The training will be given by Master Trainers to front line workers.
- **Grievance Redressal:** A call centre will be set up for ease of access to solutions to any issues faced.

Social Audit of Social Sector Schemes

Why in News?

Recently, the Rajasthan government has decided to **set up a specialised social and performance audit authority** to conduct social audit of schemes, a first-of-its-kind in the country.

What is the Significance of this Decision?

➢ **Ensure Public Accountability:**
  - ○ The authority will **ensure public accountability, transparency and citizen participation** in implementation of government schemes, programs and services, and also conduct performance assessment of implementing agencies.

➢ **Assess the Quality Service Delivery:**
  - ○ The authority will also **assess the quality service delivery** by the government schemes and programs.
  - ○ It will also **perform people satisfaction surveys** to ascertain the outcome of various schemes.

➢ **Plan Social Audit and Performance Audit:**
  - ○ The authority will **plan, conduct and finalise the social audit and performance audit of the government departments,** undertakings, schemes (central and state), programs, projects and activities in the state of Rajasthan.
    - It will **ascertain the efficiency and effectiveness of the services delivery** and whether public money has been spent economically.

➢ **Identify and Build Capacity of Civil Services Organisation:**
  - ○ It will provide technical assistance towards effective implementation of various schemes and programmes; provide technical assistance to finance and planning department towards strengthening of annual plans and outcome budgeting; and

Note:

assess the **quality standards of development and infrastructure works** in rural and as well as urban areas.

What is Social Audit?

➢ **About:**
- ○ Social Audit is the **audit of a scheme jointly by the Government and the people**, especially by those who are affected by the scheme or its beneficiaries.
- ○ Social audit is different from financial audits **which involve inspecting and assessing documents** related to financial transactions in an organization to provide a true picture of its profits, losses and financial stability.

➢ **Social Audit and MGNREGA:**
- ○ Under Section 17 of the MGNREGA, **all works executed under the program must undergo a social audit.**
  - ● Every Social Audit Unit is entitled **to funds equivalent to 0.5% of the MNREGA expenditure** incurred by the State in the previous year.
- ○ The audit **involves quality checks of infrastructure** created under the MNREGA, financial misappropriation in wages, and checking for any procedural deviations.
- ○ The report titled **'Social audit calendar vs audits completed' was released recently** by the Union Rural Development Ministry (MoRD) highlights that **only 14.29% of the planned audits have been completed in 2021-2022.**
- ○ The Ministry also held that failure to carry out a social audit of the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)** by states will invite action, including withholding of funds.
- ○ However, it is the **Centre that bears the administrative cost of these Social Audit Units**, and the inordinate delay in the release of funds has left many of these cash-strapped units nearly paralysed.

➢ **Challenges:**
- ○ **Lack of Administrative Will:**
  - ● The **lack of adequate administrative and political will** in institutionalising social audits to deter corruption has meant that social audits in many parts of the country are not independent of the influence of implementing agencies.

- ● The Social Audit Units of some states such as Kerala, Telangana, Himachal Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh, had not received the administrative funds that the Centre owes them. Therefore, **auditors' wages have been delayed** by three months to one year.
- ○ **Resistance and Intimidation:**
  - ● Social audit units, including village social audit facilitators find it difficult to even access primary records for verification.
- ○ **Lack of People's Participation:**
  - ● People's participation has been minuscule due to the lack of education, awareness and capacity building among the common masses.
- ○ **Absence of Independent Agency:**
  - ● There is an **absence of an independent agency** to investigate and act on social audit findings.

Economically Weaker Section (EWS) Quota

Why in News?

Recently, the **Attorney-General of India** articulated that the **10% quota for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS)** of society does not erode the rights of the **Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes or the Other Backward Classes**.

What are the Government's Views?

➢ **Doesn't Harm Quota of Other Classes:** The **EWS quota** was given independently of the already **existing 50% reservation granted for the backward classes**, that is, the scheduled communities and the OBCs.
- ○ The **Attorney general** rejected arguments by petitioners that the exclusion of backward classes from the EWS quota amounted to discrimination, as they have been **loaded with benefits by way of affirmative actions.**
  - ● For example, the members of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities have been given several benefits under the Constitution, including **Article 16(4)(a)** (special provision for promotion), **Article 243D** (reservation in panchayat and municipality seats), **Article 330** (reservation in the Lok Sabha) and **Article 332** (reservation in state legislative assemblies).

Note:

> ➤ **Necessary to Uplift the Weaker Section:** The reservation for the backward classes, and now the EWS quota, should be considered by the court as "one single approach of the state intended for the upliftment of the weaker sections of the society".
>   ○ Altogether **18.2% of the total population in the general category belonged to EWS** and referred to the **Multi-dimensional Poverty Index** used by the **Niti Ayog**, which would be about 350 million (3.5 crores) of the population.
> ➤ **Confer the Constitution:** The **reservation** for OBCs, SCs and STs fall under different silos other than the EWS quota and it does not violate the basic structure of the Constitution.
> ➤ **Examples:** As per the written submissions submitted by government referred to how the top court had stood by the validity of the **Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009**.
>   ○ The court had held that the 2009 Act **seeks to remove all barriers, including financial and psychological barriers** which a child belonging to the weaker section and disadvantaged group has to face while seeking admission and therefore upheld it under **Article 21** of the Constitution.

What are the Opponent's views?

> ➤ The amendments **run contrary to the constitutional scheme,** where no segment of available seats/posts can be reserved, only on the basis of economic criteria.
> ➤ The amendments also run contrary to the judgment pronounced in the **Indra Sawhney V. Union of India 1992 case**, that **a backward class cannot be determined only and exclusively with reference to economic criteria.**
> ➤ The amendments **alter the 50% quota limit** set up in **Indra Sawhney V. Union of India** 1992 case, which according to the petitioner is a part **Basic Structure of the Constitution.**

What is Economically Weaker Section (EWS) Quota?

> ➤ **About:**
>   ○ The **10% EWS quota** was introduced under the **103rd Constitution (Amendment) Act, 2019** by amending **Articles 15 and 16.**
>   ● It inserted **Article 15 (6) and Article 16 (6).**

> ○ It is for **economic reservation** in jobs and admissions in educational institutes for **Economically Weaker Sections (EWS).**
> ○ It was enacted to promote the welfare of the poor not covered by the 50% reservation policy for **Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs)** and **Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC).**
> ○ It enables both the **Centre and the States** to provide reservations to the **EWS of society.**
> ➤ **Significance:**
>   ○ **Addresses Inequality:**
>   ● The **10% quota is progressive** and could **address the issues of educational and income inequality in India** since the **economically weaker sections of citizens** have **remained excluded** from attending higher educational institutions and public employment due to their financial incapacity.
>   ○ **Recognition of the Economic Backwards:**
>   ● There are many people or classes other than backward classes who are **living under hunger and poverty-stricken conditions**.
>   ● The proposed reservation through a constitutional amendment would **give constitutional recognition to the poor from the upper castes.**
>   ○ **Reduction of Caste-Based Discrimination:**
>   ● Moreover, it will **gradually remove the stigma associated with reservation because reservation has historically been related to caste** and most often the upper caste looks down upon those who come through the reservation.
> ➤ **Concerns:**
>   ○ **Unavailability of Data:**
>   ● The Union or state governments have **no such data to prove that 'upper' caste individuals**, who have less than Rs 8 lakh annual income, **are not adequately represented in government jobs** and higher educational institutions. There is a strong possibility that they are actually over-represented in these places.
>   ○ **Arbitrary Criteria:**
>   ● The criteria used by the government to decide the eligibility for this reservation is vague and is not based on any data or study.

Note:

- Even the SC questioned the government whether they have checked the **GDP per capita for every State** while deciding the monetary limit for giving the EWS reservation.

➢ Statistics show that the **per capita income in states differs widely** - Goa is the state having the highest per capita income of almost Rs. 4 lakhs whereas Bihar is at the bottom with Rs.40,000.

Aliva: A Data-Driven Approach to Eradicate Child Marriage

Why in News?

Recently, **Nayagarh, a district in Odisha,** has adopted a **unique initiative- Aliva to eradicate child marriage.**

➢ As per Odisha's child marriage prevention strategy, the State aims to **eradicate child marriage by 2030.**

What are the Key Highlights of the Initiative?

➢ **About:**
  ○ The programme was **launched in January, 2022.**
  ○ **Anganwadi workers** had been asked to **identify every adolescent girl in their jurisdiction** and keep tabs on them.
  ○ **Details about adolescent girls-** birth registration date, Aadhaar, family details, skill training, etc., are **recorded in registers named – Aliva** available in the Aanganwadi centres of the district.
  ○ The age of the girl is approved by the local school head master, father, supervisor and Child Marriage Prohibition Officer (CMPO).
  ○ As of now, the district has **registered information of 48,642 adolescent girls in the Aliva registers.**
  ○ When tipped off about child marriages, **district administration and the police refer to registers for ascertaining proof of girls' age.**
  ○ The district has **decided to maintain the record for a period of 10 years**-2020 to 2030.
➢ **Significance:**
  ○ The **Aliva registers are by far the most comprehensive ones** that keep tabs on girls' lives for 10 years.

- The register has been **useful for law enforcement agencies, as parents attempt to lie about the age of their girls** to escape punishment.
○ Though the register was conceptualised to prevent child marriages, it has been very **useful for tracking the health of girls especially if they are anaemic.**

What is the Current Status of Child Marriages in India?

➢ United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates suggest that **each year, at least 1.5 million girls under 18 get married in India,** which makes it home to the largest number of child brides in the world - accounting for a third of the global total.
  ○ According to **NFHS-5, 23.3% women surveyed got married before attaining the legal age of 18 years,** down from 26.8% reported in NFHS-4. The figure for **underage marriage among men is 17.7% (NFHS-5) and 20.3% (NFHS-4).**
    - **West Bengal and Bihar,** with around 41% such women each, had the **highest prevalence of girl child marriage.**
  ○ Underage marriages are **lowest in J&K, Lakshadweep, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Goa, Nagaland, Kerala, Puducherry** and **Tamil Nadu,** according to NHFS-5.
    - The share of **women aged 20-24 who married before turning 18 has declined from 27% to 23%** in the last five years.
    - **The maximum reduction** in the proportion of underage marriages was observed in **Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Haryana.**

What are the Government Laws and Initiatives to Prevent Child Marriage?

➢ **Minimum Age for Marriage:**
  ○ For Hindus, **The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955**, sets **18 years as the minimum age of marriage for the bride** and **21 years as the minimum age for the groom.**
    - **In Islam,** the marriage of a minor **who has attained puberty is considered valid.**
    - The **Special Marriage Act, 1954** also prescribes **18 and 21 years as the minimum age of consent** for marriage for **women and men respectively.**
  ○ **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006** replaced the **Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929** which was enacted during the British era.

Note:

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- It defines a **child to mean a male below 21 years** and **female below 18 years.**
  - **"Minor"** is defined as a person w**ho has not attained the age of majority as per the Majority Act.**
- The **legal status of Child Marriage is voidable if so desired** by one of the parties.
  - However, **if the consent is obtained by fraud,** deceit or if the child is enticed away from his/her lawful guardians, and if the sole purpose is to use the child for trafficking or other immoral purposes, **marriage would be void.**
- There is also a **provision for maintenance of girl child. Husband is liable to pay** maintenance if **he is a major.**
  - In case, the **husband is also a minor, his parents would be liable to pay maintenance.**
- It envisages preventing child marriage with punishments of **rigorous imprisonment for two years and/ or fine of Rs. 1 lakh.**
- The Act also provides for the **appointment of CPMO whose duties are to prevent child marriages and spread awareness** regarding the same.
- **India's Efforts for Reducing Gender Gap:**
  - India had ratified the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1993.**
    - **Article 16** of this Convention strictly **forbids child marriage** and asks governments to identify and enforce the minimum marriage age for women.
    - Since 1998, India has had **national legislation exclusively on human rights protections** drafted in consonance with international instruments such as the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.**

India Discrimination Report

Why in News?

The **India Discrimination Report** which is released by **Oxfam India** highlighted that women and marginalized communities suffered discrimination in the job market.

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

➢ The dataset was taken from the 61st round of the **National Sample Survey on employment unemployment** (2004-05), the **Periodic Labour Force Survey(PLFS)** in 2018-19 and 2019-20, and the **All-India Debt and Investment Survey** by the Centre.

➢ **Schedule caste/Schedule tribe:** There has been a **decline in discrimination in urban areas** due to education and supportive government policies.
  - **Difference in Earning:** The average earning of self-employed workers in 2019-20 was Rs 15,878 for people from non-SCs/ST categories, while it is Rs 10,533 for those from SC or ST backgrounds.
    - Self-employed **non-SC/ST workers earn a third more than** their counterparts from **SC or ST backgrounds**.
  - **Rise in discrimination in Rural areas:** The SC and ST communities in rural India are facing an increase in discrimination in casual employment.

➢ **Women:** Discrimination against women is so high that there is **hardly any difference** across **religion or caste-based sub-groups,** or the rural-urban divide.
  - The discrimination increased for women in this period — **from 67.2% in 2004-05 to 75.7% in 2019-20**.

➢ **Earning Gap between Males & Females:** The earning gaps are large, both in rural and urban areas for casual workers ranging between 50% and 70%. The range is low for regular workers, **with earnings of men exceeding those of women by 20 and 60%.**
  - In the case of the self-employed, the disparity is much higher, with men earning 4 to 5 times that of women.
  - Gender discrimination in India is structural which results in great disparities between earnings of men and women under 'normal circumstances.

What are the Constitutional Provisions against Discrimination?

➢ **Right to Equality (Article 14, 15, 16):**
  - **Equality Before Law: Article 14** says that no person shall be denied treatment of equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.
    - The right is extended to all persons whether citizens or foreigners, statutory corporations, companies, registered societies or any other type of legal person.

- ❍ **Prohibition of Discrimination: Article 15** provides that **no citizen shall be discriminated on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.**
- ❍ **Equality of Opportunity in Public Employment: Article 16** of the Indian constitution provides for equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters of employment or appointment to any public office.

What are the Government Initiatives Related to Women Empowerment?

- ➢ **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme**
- ➢ **Ujjawala Yojna**
- ➢ **Swadhar Greh**
- ➢ **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana**
- ➢ **Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra Scheme**
- ➢ **One Stop Centre**

World Tribal Day

Why in News?

The **International Day of the World's Indigenous People** is observed on **9 August each year** to raise awareness and protect the rights of the **world's indigenous population.**

- ➢ On 9th August 2018, the first **National Report on the State of India's Tribal People's Health** was submitted to the Government of India by the Expert Committee on **Tribal Health.**

What is World Tribal Day?

- ➢ **About:**
  - ❍ The day recognizes the f**irst meeting of the United Nations Working Group** on **Indigenous Populations in Geneva in 1982.**
    - It has been celebrated every year since 1994, in accordance with the declaration by the **United Nations**.
  - ❍ To date, numerous indigenous peoples experience extreme **poverty, marginalization, and other human rights violations**.
- ➢ **Theme:**
  - ❍ The theme for 2022 is **"The Role of Indigenous Women in the Preservation and Transmission of Traditional Knowledge".**

What do we need to know about the Report?

- ➢ **About:**
  - ❍ The **13-member committee** was jointly appointed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
  - ❍ It took **five years of research** for the committee to bring out the evidence and provide a **true picture of the state of tribal people of the country.**
- ➢ **Findings:**
  - ❍ **Geographical Location:**
  - ❍ Tribal people are concentrated in **809 blocks in India**.
    - Such areas are designated as the **Scheduled Areas**.
  - ❍ Unexpected finding was that **50% of India's tribal population (**around 5.5 crore) live **outside the Scheduled Areas**, as a scattered and marginalised minority.
  - ❍ **Health:**
    - The health status of tribal people has certainly improved during the last 25 years.
    - **Mortality Rate:**
- ➢ **Under-five child mortality rate** has declined from **135 (Deaths per 1000) in 1988 (National Family Health Survey NFHS-1)** to **57(Deaths per 1000) in 2014 (NFHS-4).**
  - ❍ The % of **excess of uner-five mortality** among **STs compared to others has widened.**
    - **Malnutrition:**
- ➢ **Child malnutrition** is 50% higher in tribal children (42% compared to 28% in others).
    - **Malaria and Tuberculosis:**
- ➢ **Malaria** and **tuberculosis** are **three to eleven times** more common among the tribal people.
  - ❍ Though the tribal people constitute **only 8.6% of the national population**, 50% malaria deaths in India occur among them.
    - **Public Health Care:**
- ➢ Tribal people heavily depend on government-run public health care institutions, such as primary health centres and hospitals.
  - ❍ There is a 27% to 40% deficit in the number of such facilities, and 33% to 84% deficit in medical doctors in tribal areas.
  - ❍ Government health care for the tribal people is starved of funds as well as of human resources.
    - **Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) Audit**:

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➢ It is an official policy of allocating and spending an additional financial outlay equal to the percentage of the ST population in the State.

➢ As estimated for 2015-16, annually Rs 15,000 crore should be additionally spent on tribal health.

   ○ However, it has been completely flouted by all States.

   ○ No accounts or accountability exist on policy.

   ○ No one knows how much was spent or not spent.

What were the Major Recommendations of the Committee?

➢ **Firstly**, the committee suggested launching a **National Tribal Health Action Plan** with a goal to bring the **status of health and healthcare** at par with the respective State averages in the next 10 years.

➢ **Second**, the committee suggested **nearly 80 measures to address the 10 priority health problems**, the **health care gap**, the **human resource gap** and the **governance problems.**

➢ **Third**, the committee suggested **allocation of additional money** so that the per capita **government health expenditure** on tribal people becomes **equal to the** **stated goal of the National Health Policy (2017)**, i.e., **2.5% of the per capita GDP**.

What Steps has the Government of India taken for Tribal Welfare?

➢ **Anamaya**
➢ **1000 Springs Initiative**
➢ **Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojna (PMAAGY)**
➢ **TRIFED**
➢ **Digital Transformation of Tribal Schools**
➢ **Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups**
➢ **Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana**
➢ **Eklavya Model Residential Schools**

Digital Gap in Education

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Education informed Lok Sabha that less **than 10% of schools are equipped** with **Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools or Digital Tools**, in at least 10 states of India.

BELOW 10%

State	Value
Uttar Pradesh	3.08
Gujarat	8.30
Madhya Pradesh	1.37
Maharashtra	7.77
Bihar	2.60
Arunachal Pradesh	9.79
Nagaland	7.30
Meghalaya	5.31
Jharkhand	8.24
Andhra Pradesh	4.33

Legend:
- 10-20%
- 21-30%
- 31-40%
- 41-50%
- 51-60%
- 71-80%
- 81-90%
- 91-100%
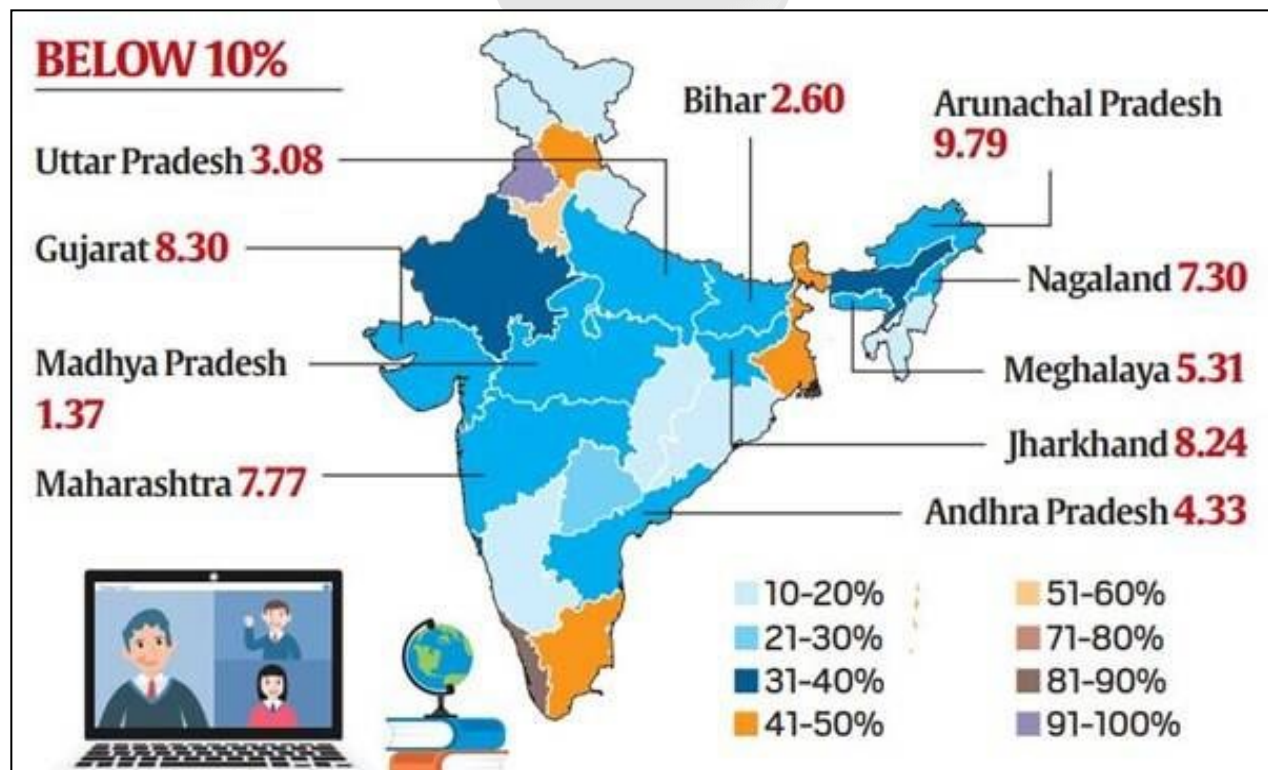
Note:

What are the ICT Tools?

➢ ICT tools for teaching and learning cover **everything from digital infrastructures such as printers, computers, laptops, tablets, etc., to software tools** such as Google Meet, Google Spreadsheets, etc.

➢ It refers to all communication technologies that are the tools to access, retrieve, store, transmit and modify information digitally.

➢ ICTs are also **used to refer to the convergence of media technology** such as audio-visual and telephone networks with computer networks, by means of a unified system of cabling (including signal distribution and management) or link system.

➢ However, there is no universally accepted definition of ICTs considering that the concepts, methods, and tools involved in ICTs are steadily evolving on an almost daily basis.

What is a Digital Gap?

➢ **About:**
   ○ It is a **gap between demographics and regions** having access to modern information and communications technology (ICT) and **those not having access.**
   ○ It exists between **developed and developing countries, urban and rural populations, young and educated versus older and less-educated** individuals, and men and women.
   ○ In India the **urban-rural divide is the single biggest factor** in the Digital Gap.

➢ **Status:**
   ○ A study in 2021 by the Azim Premji Foundation showed that almost **60 % of school children in India cannot access online learning opportunities.**
   ○ A study by Oxfam India found that even among students of urban private schools, **half of the parents reported issues with Internet signal and speed.** A third struggled with the cost of mobile data.

➢ **Impact:**
   ○ **Causes Dropouts and Child Labour:**
      ● Children belonging to the Disadvantaged Groups may suffer the **consequence of not having to fully pursue their education** or worse still drop out because of the **lack of access to ICT.**

      ● They even run the danger of being drawn into **child labour or worse**, child trafficking.
   ○ **Deprivation of Quality Education:**
      ● It will deprive **people of higher/quality education and skill training that could help them contribute** to the economy and become leaders on a global level.
   ○ **Unfair Competitive Edge:**
      ● The poor **will remain void of crucial information** presented online concerning academia, and thus they will always lag, and this may be summed up by poor performance.
      ● Hence superior students who can access the internet have **an unfair competitive edge** over their less privileged counterparts.
   ○ **Learning Disparity:**
      ● The people in lower socio-economic classes are disadvantaged and have **to undergo long hours of cumbersome studies** in meeting the objectives of the course.
      ● While the **rich can easily access schooling materials online** and work on their programs in a flash.

What are the Constitutional Provisions for Right to Education?

➢ Originally Part IV of Indian Constitution, Article 45 and Article 39 (f) of **DPSP (Directive Principles of State Policy),** had a provision for state funded as well as equitable and accessible education.

➢ The 86th Constitutional Amendment in 2002, provided Right to Education as a fundamental right in Part-III of the Constitution.
   ○ It inserted **Article 21A** which made Right to Education a fundamental right for children between 6-14 years.
   ○ It provided for a follow-up legislation **Right to Education Act 2009.**

What are the Related Initiatives?

➢ **National Education Policy, 2020.**

➢ **Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA).**

➢ **PM eVidya.**

➢ **Swayam Prabha TV Channel**

➢ **SWAYAM portal**

Note:

Food Security and Gender Equality: CARE

Why in News?

Recently, a report was released named **"Food Security and Gender Equality: A synergistic understudied symphony",** which highlighted **a global link between Gender Inequality and Food Insecurity.**

➢ The Report was released by CARE, which is an international humanitarian organisation fighting global poverty and world hunger by working alongside women and girls.

What are the Findings of the Report?

➢ **Growing Gender Gap in Food Security:**
  ○ The gap between men and women's food security is growing worldwide.
    ● As many as 828 million people were affected by hunger in 2021. Among them, 150 million more women were food insecure than men.
  ○ Across 109 countries, as gender inequality goes up, food security goes down.
    ● Between 2018 and 2021, the number of hungry women versus hungry men grew 8.4 times, with a staggering 150 million more women than men hungry in 2021.
➢ **Gender Inequality and Malnourishment:**
  ○ Gender equality is highly connected to food and nutrition security at a local, national, and global level.
  ○ The more gender inequality in a country, the hungrier and more malnourished people are.
  ○ Nations with high gender inequality, such as Yemen, Sierra Leone and Chad, experienced the lowest food security and nutrition.
➢ **Women Bear Bigger Burdens:**
  ○ Even when both men and women are technically food insecure, women often bear bigger burdens, in this situation men are found eating smaller meals and women are found skipping meals.
    ● In Lebanon, at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, 85% of people reduced the number of meals they ate. At the time, 85% of women

were eating smaller portions, compared to only 57 % of men.
➢ **Women Employed Experienced less Food Insecurity:**
  ○ When women are employed and earning money or when they are directly involved in farming, they are less likely to experience food insecurity.
➢ **Women more Likely to Live in Poverty:**
  ○ Women are more likely than men to live in extreme poverty, because their work is underpaid or not paid at all.
  ○ Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, women took on three times as much unpaid work as men.

What are the Recommendations?

➢ As women keep feeding the world, they must be given the right space in the data collection methods and analysis to make the gaps they encounter visible and work with women themselves to find solutions to those gaps.
➢ It is time to update global understanding of food security and gender inequality, and local actors, including women's organisations in crisis-affected communities, need to get the flexible funding and support desperately needed to protect women and girls from hunger-associated gender-based-violence and protection risks.
➢ All the SDGs depend on the achievement of Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Gender equality by 2030 requires urgent action to eliminate the many root causes of discrimination that still curtail women's rights in private and public spheres.

Period Poverty

Why in News?

Scotland has become the first nation in the world to legally protect the right to access free period products and have made period products free for all by passing the Period Products Act.

➢ Period poverty is when those on low incomes can't afford, or access, suitable period products (tampons, sanitary pads, etc.).

What do we know about the Development in Scotland?

➢ **About:**

❍ Under the Period Products Act, schools, colleges and universities as well as local government bodies must make a range of period products available for free in their bathrooms.

❍ Every council in Scotland is required with local communities to determine the best access point for menstrual products.

➢ **Accessibility:**

❍ A mobile phone app (PickUpMyPeriod) also helps people find the nearest place — such as the local library or community center — where they can pick up period products.

❍ The period products would be available at libraries, swimming pools, public gyms, community buildings, town halls, pharmacies & doctor's offices.

Note:

What has been the state of Menstrual Hygiene in India?

➢ According to a United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) study conducted in 2011:
  ○ Only 13% of girls in India are aware of menstruation before menarche.
  ○ 60% of girls missed school on account of menstruation.
  ○ 79% faced low confidence due to menstruation and 44% were embarrassed and humiliated over restrictions.
  ○ Thereby, Menstruation adversely impacts women's education, equality, maternal and child health.
➢ National Family Health Survey 5:
  ○ Women aged 15-24 years using period products:
    ● Seventeen states and Union Territories (UTs) had 90% or more of their women using period products.
➢ In Puducherry and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the fraction was 99%.
    ● Tripura, Chhattisgarh, Assam, Gujarat, Meghalaya, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar – had 70% or fewer of their women using period products.
    ● Bihar was the only state to report a figure lower than 60%.
  ○ Top three states that reported an increase in the percentage of women using period products from NFHS-4 to NFHS-5:
    ● Bihar: 90%
    ● Odisha: 72%
    ● Madhya Pradesh: 61%

What Initiatives has the Indian Government taken for Menstrual Hygiene?

➢ **Shuchi Scheme:**
  ○ Shuchi Scheme aims aimed at instilling awareness about menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls.
  ○ It was started in 2013-14 initially as a Centrally-sponsored one.
    ● However, the Centre asked States to take over the scheme from 2015-16.
➢ **Menstrual Hygiene Scheme:**
  ○ Menstrual Hygiene Scheme focuses on promotion of menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls (10-19 years) in rural areas of selected districts in 2011.

➢ **SABLA programme:**
  ○ It was implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
  ○ It focuses on nutrition, health, hygiene and reproductive and sexual health (linked to rural mother and childcare centres).
➢ **National Rural Livelihood Mission:**
  ○ It supports self-help groups and small manufacturers to produce sanitary pads.
➢ **Swachh Bharat Mission and Swachh Bharat: Swachh Vidyalaya (SB:SV):**
  ○ Menstrual hygiene management is also an integral part of the Swachh Bharat Mission.
➢ **Guidelines for Gender Issues in Sanitation (2017):**
  ○ These have been evolved by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation to ensure gender equality and empowerment of women and girls with respect to sanitation.
  ○ Safe and effective menstrual hygiene management is a trigger for better and stronger development for adolescent girls and women.
➢ **The National Guidelines on Menstrual Hygiene Management:**
  ○ It was released by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation in 2015.
  ○ It seeks to address every component of menstrual hygiene ranging from, raising awareness, addressing behaviour change, creating a demand for better hygiene products, capacity building etc

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Why in News?

A petition has been filed in the Delhi High Court to stop a person, who has been suffering from Chronic Fatigue Syndrome since 2014, from travelling to Europe to undergo a physician-assisted euthanasia.

What is Chronic Fatigue Syndrome?

➢ **About:**
  ○ It is a serious and debilitating disease that affects the nervous system, the immune system and the body's production of energy.
  ○ It is also known as "Myalgic Encephalomyelitis".
  ○ Its potential results are viral or bacterial infection, hormonal imbalances and genetic predispositions.

Note:

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○ It can affect anyone, from children to adults of all ages.

➢ **Symptoms:**
  ○ Significantly lowered ability to do activities that were performed before the illness.
  ○ At least 6 months (or longer) of debilitating fatigue that is more severe than everyday feelings of tiredness.
  ○ Most recognizable symptom is Post-Exertional Malaise (PEM).
    ● A "crash" in physical/mental energy following even minor activities like grocery shopping or brushing teeth.
  ○ **Other Symptoms:**
    ● Trouble sleeping, difficulty in thinking, memory retention and concentration, dizziness/light-headedness, headaches, muscle pain, joint ache, flu-like symptoms, tender lymph nodes and digestive issues.

➢ **Treatment:**
  ○ There is no specific test for the disease, and doctors have to rely on medical examinations, blood and urine tests.
  ○ Doctors have recommended ways to deal with the symptoms of the disease like "Pacing" in which patients learn to balance rest and activity to prevent crashes caused by exertion.

What is Euthanasia?

➢ **About:**
  ○ Euthanasia is the practice of ending the life of a patient to limit the patient's suffering. The patient in question would typically be terminally ill or experiencing great pain and suffering.

➢ **Types:**
  ○ **Active euthanasia:**
    ● Killing a patient by active means, for example, injecting a patient with a lethal dose of a drug. Sometimes called "aggressive" euthanasia.
  ○ **Passive euthanasia:**
    ● Intentionally letting a patient die by withholding artificial life support.
  ○ **Voluntary euthanasia:**
    ● With the consent of the patient.
  ○ **Involuntary euthanasia:**

● Without the consent of the patient, for example, if the patient is unconscious and his or her wishes are unknown.

➢ **Legal Provisions in India:**
  ○ In 1994, the Supreme Court of India in Gian Kaur vs State of Punjab had held that both assisted suicide and euthanasia were unlawful.
    ● The bench stated that the right to life did not include the right to die, hence overruling the two-judge bench decision in P. Rathinam vs Union of India which struck down section 309 of Indian Penal Code (attempt to suicide) as unconstitutional.
  ○ In 2011, the Supreme Court in Aruna Ramchandra Shanbaug vs Union of India held that passive euthanasia could be given a nod in case of exceptional circumstances and under strict monitoring of the apex court.
  ○ In 2018, the Supreme Court declared the right to die with dignity as a fundamental right, allowing passive euthanasia in the country.

Manual Scavengers Enumeration Exercise

Why in News?

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJ&E) is preparing to undertake a nationwide survey to enumerate all Sanitation workers engaged in cleaning of sewers and septic tanks.

What are the Key Points?

➢ The enumeration exercise is part of the National Action Plan for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) Scheme and will be conducted across 500 AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) cities.

➢ It will merge with and replace the Self-Employment Scheme for the Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS), which was started in 2007.

➢ Programme Monitoring Units (PMUs) for the 500 AMRUT cities will be set up to carry out the exercise.

➢ Once this exercise is completed across the 500 cities, it will be expanded nationwide, making it easier to bring government benefits like upskilling and loan and capital subsidies to them.

Note:

What is the NAMASTE Scheme?

➢ **About:**
  ○ It was launched in July 2022.
  ○ The NAMASTE scheme is being undertaken jointly by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and the MoSJ&E and aims to eradicate unsafe sewer and septic tank cleaning practices.

➢ **Objectives:**
  ○ Zero fatalities in sanitation work in India.
  ○ All sanitation work is performed by skilled workers.
  ○ No sanitation workers come in direct contact with human faecal matter.
  ○ Sanitation workers are collectivised into Self Help Groups (SHGs) and are empowered to run sanitation enterprises.
  ○ Strengthened supervisory and monitoring systems at National, State and Urban Local Body (ULB) levels to ensure enforcement and monitoring of safe sanitation work.
  ○ Increased awareness among sanitation services seekers (individuals and institutions) to seek services from registered and skilled sanitation workers.

What is the Need for Enumeration Exercise?

➢ Manual Scavenging has led to at least 351 deaths since 2017.

➢ It is aimed at streamlining the process of rehabilitating sanitation workers.

➢ It will make it easier to bring government benefits like upskilling and loan and capital subsidies to them.

➢ To link listed sanitation workers to the Swaachha Udyami Yojana, through which the workers will be able to own sanitation machines themselves and the government will ensure that at the municipality level, the work keeps coming in.
  ○ Swaachha Udyami Yojana has twin objectives of cleanliness and providing livelihood to Safai Karamcharis and liberated Manual Scavengers to achieve the overall goal of "Swachh Bharat Abhiyan".

What is Manual Scavenging?

➢ Manual scavenging is defined as "the removal of human excrement from public streets and dry latrines, cleaning septic tanks, gutters and sewers".

➢ India banned the practice under the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (PEMSR).

○ The Act bans the use of any individual manually cleaning, carrying, disposing of or otherwise handling in any manner human excreta till its disposal.

○ The Act recognizes manual scavenging as a "dehumanizing practice."

Why is Manual Scavenging Still Prevalent?

➢ Indifferent Attitude:
  ○ A number of independent surveys have talked about the continued reluctance on the part of state governments to admit that the practice prevails under their watch.

➢ Issues due to Outsourcing:
  ○ Many times, local bodies outsource sewer cleaning tasks to private contractors. However, many of them fly-by-night operators, do not maintain proper roles of sanitation workers.
  ○ In case after case of workers being asphyxiated to death, these contractors have denied any association with the deceased.

➢ Social Issue:
  ○ The practice is driven by caste, class and income divides.
  ○ It is linked to India's caste system where so-called lower castes are expected to perform this job.
  ○ In 1993, India banned the employment of people as manual scavengers (The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993), however, the stigma and discrimination associated with it still linger on.
    ● This makes it difficult for liberated manual scavengers to secure alternative livelihoods.

➢ Lack of Enforcement and Unskilled Labourers:
  ○ The lack of enforcement of the Act and exploitation of unskilled labourers are the reasons why the practice is still prevalent in India.

Nikshay Poshan Yojna

Why in News?

Only two-thirds of people living with tuberculosis benefitted from the Union government's Nikshay Poshan Yojana (NPY), sole nutrition support scheme, in 2021, which raises major public health concern.

Note:

What is Nikshay Poshan Yojna?

➢ **About**

  ❍ The NPY was launched in 2018 by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

  ❍ It aims to support every Tuberculosis (TB) Patient by providing a Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) of Rs 500 per month for nutritional needs.

    ● Since its inception around Rs 1,488 crore has been paid to 5.73 million notified beneficiaries.

➢ **Performance:**

  ❍ As per India TB Report 2022, only 62.1 % of 2.1 million notified cases across the country received at least one payment in 2021.

  ❍ In Delhi, which has the highest burden of all forms of TB at 747 cases per 100,000 people, only 30.2 % of patients have got at least one DBT.

    ● Other poor performers are Punjab, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Bihar, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. In the North East, Manipur and Meghalaya fared the worst.

➢ **Challenges:**

  ❍ Several hurdles were found in the DBT for both health providers and patients such as non-availability of bank accounts and unlinked bank accounts.

  ❍ Lack of communication, stigma, illiteracy and the multi-step approval process as key hurdles.

  ❍ States have their own nutritional support schemes, but caveats remain here too; for instance, some schemes are only for patients showing resistance to TB drugs.

What is the Status of TB in India?

➢ As per India TB Report 2022, during 2021, the total number of TB patients was more than 19 lakhs. In 2020 it was around 16 lakhs, increasing 19 %.

➢ In India, the mortality rate due to all kinds of tuberculosis increased by 11% between 2019 and 2020.

➢ The total number of estimated TB-related deaths for the year 2020 was 4.93 lakh, which is 13 % higher than the estimates of 2019.

➢ Malnutrition, HIV, diabetes, alcohol, and tobacco smoking are the comorbidities that impact a person suffering from TB.

What are the Initiatives to Combat TB?

➢ **Global Efforts:**

  ❍ The WHO has launched a joint initiative "Find. Treat. All. #EndTB" with the Global Fund and Stop TB Partnership.

  ❍ WHO also releases the Global Tuberculosis Report.

➢ **India's Efforts:**

  ❍ National Strategic Plan (NSP) for Tuberculosis Elimination (2017-2025), The Nikshay Ecosystem (National TB information system), Nikshay Poshan Yojana (NPY- financial support), TB Harega Desh Jeetega Campaign.

  ❍ Currently, two vaccines VPM (Vaccine Projekt Management) 1002 and MIP (Mycobacterium Indicus Pranii) have been developed and identified for TB, and are under Phase-3 clinical trial.

  ❍ **The Saksham Project:** It is a project of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) that has been providing psycho-social counselling to DR-TB patients.

Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNTs

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has said that only 402 online applications are received to avail benefits under SEED (Scheme for Economic Empowerment of Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes).

➢ More than 10 crore Indians from 1,400 communities belong to these groups, as per the latest estimates available with the government.

What is SEED?

➢ **About:**

  ❍ The Scheme for Economic Empowerment of Denotified/Nomadic/SemiNomadic (SEED) communities was launched in February 2022 by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.

  ❍ It aims to provide free competitive exam coaching to these students, to provide health insurance to families, to uplift clusters of these communities through livelihood initiatives, and to provide financial assistance for housing.

➢ **Components:**

  ❍ Free coaching to students from these communities for Civil Services, entry to professional courses like medicine, engineering, MBA, etc.

Note:

○ Health Insurance through PMJAY of National Health Authority.

○ Livelihoods to support income generation

○ Housing (through PMAY/IAY).

➢ **Features:**

○ It ensures expenditure of Rs.200 crore to be spent over five years beginning 2021-22.

○ The DWBDNCs (Development and Welfare Board for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities) has been tasked with the implementation of this scheme.

○ An online portal has been developed by the department which will ensure seamless registration and will also act as a repository of the data on these communities.

Who are De-Notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes?

➢ These are communities that are the most vulnerable and deprived.

➢ DNTs are communities that were 'notified' as being 'born criminals' during the British regime under a series of laws starting with the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871.

○ These Acts were repealed by the Independent Indian Government in l952, and these communities were "De-Notified".

➢ A few of these communities which were listed as de-notified were also nomadic.

○ Nomadic and semi-nomadic communities are defined as those who move from one place to another rather than living in one place all the time.

➢ Historically, Nomadic Tribes and De-notified Tribes never had access to private land or home ownership.

➢ While most DNTs are spread across the Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC) categories, some DNTs are not covered in any of the SC, ST or OBC categories.

➢ Many commissions and committees constituted since Independence have referred to the problems of these communities.

○ These include the Criminal Tribes Inquiry Committee, 1947 constituted in the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh),

○ Ananthasayanam Ayyangar Committee in 1949 (it was based on the report of this committee the Criminal Tribes Act was repealed),

○ Kaka Kalelkar Commission (also called first OBC Commission) constituted in 1953.

○ The B P Mandal Commission constituted in 1980 also made some recommendations on the issue.

○ The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC), 2002 held that DNTs have been wrongly stigmatised as crime prone and subjected to high handed treatment as well as exploitation by the representatives of law and order and general society.

● The NCRWC was established under the chairmanship of Justice M N Venkatachaliah.

➢ It has been estimated that South Asia has the world's largest nomadic population.

○ In India, roughly 10% of the population is Denotified and Nomadic.

○ While the number of Denotified Tribes is about 150, the population of Nomadic Tribes consists of about 500 different communities.

Pasmanda Community

Why in News?

Recently, Pasmanda Community has gained attention of many political parties for inclusive growth and eradication of intra caste discrimination.

Who are Pasmanda Muslims?

➢ 'Pasmanda', a Persian term meaning "those who have fallen behind" refers to Muslims belonging to the shudra (backward) and ati-shudra (Dalit) castes.

➢ It was adopted as an oppositional identity to that of the dominant ashraf Muslims (forward castes) in 1998 by the Pasmanda Muslim Mahaz, a group which mainly worked in Bihar.

➢ Pasmandas encompass those who are socially, educationally and economically backward and make up the majority of the Muslim community in the country.

➢ The term "Pasmanda" is majorly used by Muslim associations in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and other parts of India to define themselves as Muslim communities historically and socially oppressed by caste.

➢ Backward, Dalit and tribal Muslim communities are now organising under the identity of Pasmanda. These communities includes:

Note:

○ Kunjre (Raeen), Julahe (Ansari), Dhunia (Mansuri), Kasai (Qureishi), Fakir (Alvi), Hajjam (Salmani), Mehtar (Halalkhor), Gwala (Ghosi), Dhobi (Hawari), Lohar-Badhai (Saifi), Manihar (Siddiqui), Darzi (Idrisi), Vangujjar, etc.

What are the Provisions Available for Minorities?

➢ **Constitutional:**
  ○ **Article 29:**
    ● It provides that any section of the citizens residing in any part of India having a distinct language, script or culture of its own, shall have the right to conserve the same.
    ● It grants protection to both religious minorities as well as linguistic minorities.
    ● However, the SC held that the scope of this article is not necessarily restricted to minorities only, as use of the word 'section of citizens' in the Article includes minorities as well as the majority.
  ○ **Article 30:**
    ● All minorities shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.
    ● The protection under Article 30 is confined only to minorities (religious or linguistic) and does not extend to any section of citizens (as under Article 29).
  ○ **Article 350-B:**
    ● The 7th Constitutional (Amendment) Act 1956 inserted this article which provides for a Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities appointed by the President of India.
    ● It would be the duty of the Special Officer to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for linguistic minorities under the Constitution.
  ○ **Legal:**
    ● National Commission for Minority Education Institution (NCMEI) Act, 2004:
    ● It gives minority status to the educational institutions on the basis of six religious communities notified by the government under the NCMEI Act, 2004-- Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Zoroastrians (Parsis) and Jains.

Who are the minorities notified by the Government of India?

➢ Currently, only those communities notified under section 2(c) of the NCM Act, 1992, by the central government are regarded as minority.

➢ In 1992, with the enactment of the NCM Act, 1992, the MC became a statutory body and was renamed as the NCM.

➢ In 1993, the first Statutory National Commission was set up and five religious communities viz. The Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (Parsis) were notified as minority communities.

➢ In 2014, Jains were also notified as a minority community.

NFSA Ranking 2022

Why in News?

Recently, the first edition of the State Ranking Index for National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013 was released.

What is the Index all About?

➢ **About:**
  ○ The index seeks to document the status and progress of the implementation of NFSA across the country and various reform initiatives after consultation with the states.
  ○ It highlights the reforms undertaken by the States and Union Territories and creates a cross-learning environment and scale-up reform measures by all the States and Union Territories.
  ○ The current index is largely focused on NFSA distribution and will include future buyouts, PMKGAY (Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana) distributions.
➢ **Basis of the Assessment:**
  ○ The index for ranking of States and UTs is built on three key pillars, which cover end-to-end implementation of NFSA through Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). These pillars are-
  ○ NFSA- coverage, targeting and provisions of the Act
  ○ Delivery platforms and
  ○ Nutrition initiatives

Note:

In what ways did the states Perform?

- **General Category States:**
  - Odisha is ranked first followed by Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh in second and third position.
- **Special Category States:**
  - Tripura ranks top among the special category states (the North-eastern States, Himalayan States, and Island States).
  - Himachal Pradesh and Sikkim are in second and third place, respectively.
- **Worst Performers:**
  - Punjab, Haryana and Delhi are among the states at the bottom five.

What is the significance of the Index?

- The findings from the exercise revealed that most states and union territories have fared well in digitization, Aadhaar seeding, and ePoS installation, which reiterates the strength and scale of the reforms.
- However, states and union territories can improve their performance in a few areas. Exercises, such as conducting and documenting social audits thoroughly and operationalizing functions of state food commissions across states and union territories, will further bolster the true spirit of the Act.
- It will lead to healthy competition among States to further their enhance performance.

Reforms in Education Sector

Why in News?

The Parliamentary Standing Committee carried out a review of education standards, accreditation process, research, examination reforms and academic environment in India's higher education institutes.

What are the Findings of the Report?

- The higher education department of the Union ministry of Education informed the committee that only 30% of the universities and 20% of the colleges are in the accreditation system.
- Less than 9,000 colleges out of a total of 50,000 colleges are accredited.
- Many deemed universities, in order to make quick money, have started Open Distance Learning courses undermining qualitative research work.

- Several state universities regularly fail to carry out assessments smoothly, often reporting instances like question paper leaks and rampant cases of copying.

What Do We Know About the Accreditation System?

- **About:**
  - Accreditation is a procedure wherein standardisation happens as to what minimum benchmarks are to be created.
  - It is a formal, independent verification that a program or institution meets established quality standards in terms of testing, inspection, or certification.
- **Significance:**
  - It is an important tool to improve the quality of product and services in the field of health, education, food as well as other areas.
  - It also promotes the adoption of quality standards relating to Quality Management Systems, Food Safety Management Systems and Product Certification.
  - It helps in realizing the objective of improving quality competitiveness of Indian products and services.

Self Help Groups

- Why in News?

  Government is aiming at raising the annual income of each woman in Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to Rs 1 lakh by 2024.
- **What are SHGs?**
- **About:**
  - Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are informal associations of people who choose to come together to find ways to improve their living conditions.
  - It can be defined as self-governed, peer-controlled information group of people with similar socio-economic background and having a desire to collectively perform common purpose.
  - SHG rely on the notion of "Self Help" to encourage self-employment and poverty alleviation.
- **Objectives:**
  - To build the functional capacity of the poor and the marginalized in the field of employment and income generating activities.

Note:

○ To resolve conflicts through collective leadership and mutual discussion.

○ To provide collateral free loan with terms decided by the group at the market driven rates.

○ To work as a collective guarantee system for members who propose to borrow from organised sources.

○ The poor collect their savings and save it in banks. In return they receive easy access to loans with a small rate of interest to start their micro unit enterprise.

➢ **What is the Significance of SHGs?**

○ **Social integrity:**

● SHGs encourages collective efforts for combating practices like dowry, alcoholism etc.

○ **Gender Equity:**

● SHGs empowers women and inculcates leadership skill among them. Empowered women participate more actively in gram sabha and elections.

● There is evidence in this country as well as elsewhere that formation of Self-Help Groups has a multiplier effect in improving women's status in society as well as in the family leading to improvement in their socio-economic condition and also enhances their self-esteem.

○ **Voice to Marginalized Section:**

● Most of the beneficiaries of government schemes have been from weaker and marginalized communities and hence their participation through SHGs ensures social justice.

○ **Financial Inclusion:**

● Priority Sector Lending norms and assurance of returns incentivize banks to lend to SHGs. The SHG-Bank linkage programme pioneered by NABARD has made access to credit easier and reduced the dependence on traditional money lenders and other non-institutional sources.

○ **Alternate source of Employment:**

● It eases dependency on agriculture by providing support in setting up micro-enterprises e.g., personalised business ventures like tailoring, grocery, and tool repair shops.

➢ **What is the Role of SHGs in Women Empowerment?**

○ Self-help group (SHG) movement is one of the most powerful incubators of female resilience and entrepreneurship in rural areas. It is a powerful channel for altering the social construct of gender in villages.

○ Women in rural areas are now able to create independent sources of income. While there were many young semi-literate women who have home-grown skills, the absence of capital and regressive social norms prevents them from taking a full plunge in any decision-making role and setting up their own independent business.

○ Women are working in multiple sectors as Business Correspondents (BC), Bank Sakhis, Kisan Sakhis and Pashu Sakhis.

Mission Shakti

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Women and Child Development has issued detailed guidelines for the 'Mission Shakti' scheme.

➢ The norms of 'Mission Shakti' will be applicable with effect from 1st April 2022.

➢ What do we need to know about Mission Shakti?

➢ **About:**

○ 'Mission Shakti' was launched during the 15th Finance Commission period 2021-22 to 2025-26.

○ Mission Shakti is an integrated women empowerment programme is launched as an umbrella scheme for the safety, security and empowerment of women for implementation.

➢ **Components:**

○ **Sambal:**

● It is for Safety and Security of Women.

● It consists of schemes of One Stop Centre (OSC), Women Helpline (WHL), Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP), with a new component of Nari Adalats - women's collectives to promote and facilitate alternative dispute resolution and gender justice in society and within families.

Note:

○ **Samarthya:**

- It is for Empowerment of Women.

- It consists of erstwhile schemes of Ujjwala, Swadhar Greh and Working Women Hostel have been included with modifications.

- In addition, the existing schemes of National Creche Scheme for children of working mothers and Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) under umbrella Integrated Child Development Services ICDS have now been included in Samarthya.

- A new component of Gap Funding for Economic Empowerment has also been added in the Samarthya Scheme.

➢ **What are the Services & Activities Involved?**

- Emergency/ Immediate services & short-term care:

- National toll-free number and integrated services such as temporary shelter, legal aid, psycho-social counselling, medical assistance, police facilitation and link them with existing services etc. through One Stop Centres.

○ **Institutional Care for long term support:**

- Taking care of the needs of women right from the conception stage till the time they need such care and support.

- SakhiNiwas or Working Women Hostel will provide a safe and secure place for the working women.

- Behaviour Change Communication for dignity and prevention of crime and violence against women:

- This would include large scale awareness programs and community engagement for gender sensitisation.

- In addition, engaging with men and boys would be done to partner for countering violence against women and Gender stereotypes.

➢ **What are the Objectives of Mission Shakti?**

○ Provide immediate and comprehensive continuum of care, support and assistance to women affected by violence and for those in distress.

○ To put in place quality mechanisms for rescue, protection and rehabilitation of women in need

of assistance and victims of crime and violence.

○ To improve accessibility to various government services available for women at various levels.

○ Making people aware about Government schemes and programmes as well as legal provisions to fight social evils like dowry, domestic violence, Sexual Harassment at Workplace and to promote gender equality etc.

○ Collaboration with partner Ministries/ Departments/ States/ UTs for convergence of policies, programmes/ schemes and to create an enabling environment for public private partnership for safety and empowerment of women across sectors.

○ To prevent gender-biased sex selective elimination; to ensure survival, protection, education and development of the girl child.

○ It also seeks to reduce the care burden on women and increase female labour force participation by promoting skill development, capacity building, financial literacy, access to microcredit etc.

Jagriti Mascot

Why in News?

Recently, a mascot named Jagriti has been launched by the Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA) to empower consumers and further generating awareness of their rights.

How will Jagriti work?

It would be projected as an empowered consumer who is spreading awareness about consumer rights & addressing solutions to the problems faced by the consumers.

It would help to generate consumer awareness about the various government initiatives like:

Provisions of Consumer Protection Act 2019 Hallmarking

➢ National Consumer Helpline toll free number 1915

➢ Provisions of weights & measures Act

➢ Decisions of the Central Consumer Protection Authority

➢ Testimonials by consumers on grievance redressal

उपभोक्ता मामले विभाग
भारत सरकार

जागृति

है मेरा नाम ...

उपभोक्ता सशक्तिकरण मेरा काम ....

जागो ग्राहक जागो

उपभोक्ता शिकायतों के लिए राष्ट्रीय उपभोक्ता
हेल्पलाइन नंबर 1915 पर कॉल करें।
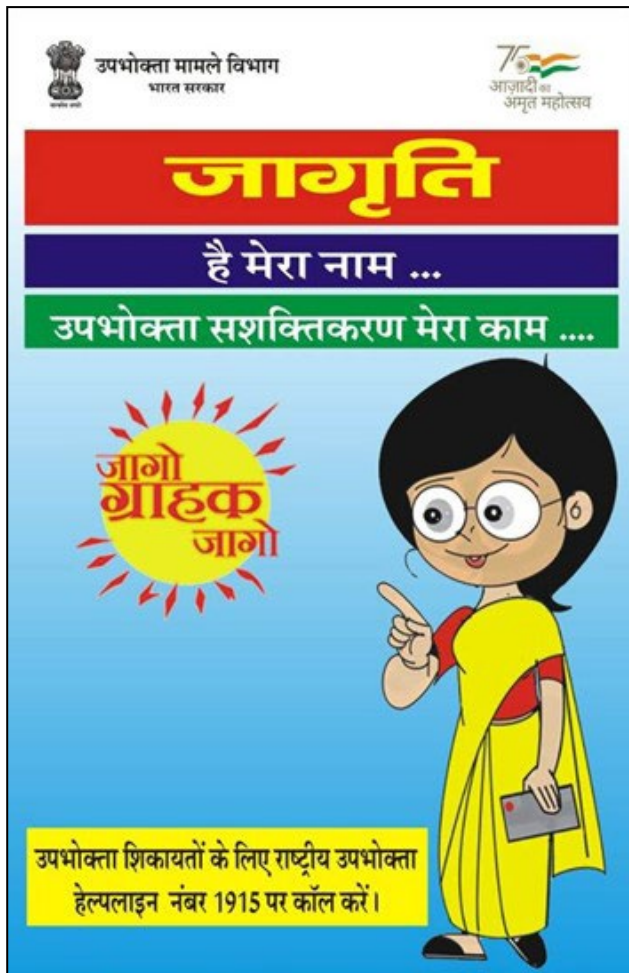
What is the Significance of Jagriti Mascot?

In addition to increasing the campaign's presence in digital and multimedia channels, it would heighten consumer rights awareness.

It would be shown with the tagline "Jago Grahak Jago" in various media campaign.

Replacement Level Fertility

Why in News?

Recently, the Government of India reported that India has achieved replacement level fertility, with as many as 31 States/Union Territories reaching a Total Fertility Rate of 2.1 or less.

Between 2012 and 2020, India added more than 1.5 crore additional users for modern contraceptives thereby increasing their use substantially.

Government also unveiled the India Family Planning 2030 vision document.

What do we know about Replacement Level Fertility?

➢ Total Fertility Rate of about 2.1 children per woman is called Replacement-level fertility.

○ TFR lower than 2.1 children per woman — indicates that a generation is not producing enough children to replace itself, eventually leading to an outright reduction in population.

○ Total fertility rate (TFR) in simple terms refers to the total number of children born or likely to be born to a woman in her lifetime if she were subject to the prevailing rate of age-specific fertility in the population.

○ India's total fertility rate (TFR) has declined from 2.2 in 2015-16 to 2.0 in 2019-21, indicating the significant progress of population control measures, revealed the report of the fifth round of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5).

What is India Family Planning 2030 Vision?

➢ **Focus Areas:**

Strategies to overcome teenage childbearing, lack of male participation in awareness programmes, migration and lack of access to contraceptives have been identified as priorities.

➢ **Contraceptives:**

○ Modern contraceptive prevalence Rate:

● Women with Migrant Husband:

○ 35% in Bihar and 24% in UP

● It is mostly driven by lack of contraceptive preparedness before husband's arrival, inability to procure contraceptives due to inaccessibility to health facilities and stigma around procuring contraceptives when the husband was away.

➢ **Women with Resident Husband:**

○ 47% in Bihar and 36% in UP

○ Although modern contraceptive use among married adolescents and young women have increased, it remains low.

○ Married adolescent girls and young women reported high unmet need for contraception.

○ In several districts, more than 20% of women marry before they become adults.

Note:

➤ The districts are located in Bihar (17), West Bengal (8), Jharkhand (7), Assam (4) and two each in UP, Rajasthan and Maharashtra.

➤ The same districts have seen low use of modern contraceptives.

➤ The vision also included a plan to use the private sector for providing modern contraceptives.

➤ Private sector contributes 45% share of pills and 40% share of condoms. For other reversible contraceptives like injectables, the share is 30% and 24% for Intrauterine contraceptive device (IUCD).

How did India achieve the Replacement Level Fertility?

➤ **Women Empowerment:**

➤ The latest data also show significant progress on several indicators related to fertility, family planning, age at marriage and women's empowerment — all of which have contributed to the decrease in TFR.

➤ **Contraceptives:**

○ Between 2012 and 2020, India added more than 1.5 crore additional users for modern contraceptives thereby increasing their use substantially.

➤ **Reversible Spacing:**

○ Introduction of new reversible spacing (gaps between children) methods, wage compensation systems to undergo sterilisation, and the promotion of small family norms also worked well over the years.

➤ **Government's Initiatives:**

➤ **Mission Parivar Vikas:**

○ The Government has launched Mission Parivar Vikas in 2017 for substantially increasing access to contraceptives and family planning services in146 high fertility districts with TFR of 3 and above in seven high focus states.

➤ **National Family Planning Indemnity Scheme (NFPIS):**

○ This scheme was launched in the year 2005, under this scheme clients are insured in the eventualities of death, complication and failure following sterilization.

➤ **Compensation scheme for Sterilization Acceptors:**

○ Under the scheme, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare provides compensation for loss of wages to the beneficiary and also to the service provider (& team) for conducting sterilizations from the year 2014.

What is the National Family Health Survey?

➤ **About:**

The National Family Health Survey is a large-scale, multi-round survey conducted in a representative sample of households throughout India.

➤ **Conducted by:**

○ The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) has designated the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) Mumbai, as the nodal agency for providing coordination and technical guidance for the survey.

○ IIPS collaborates with a number of Field Organizations (FO) for survey implementation.

➤ **Objectives:**

○ Each successive round of the NFHS has had two specific goals:

○ To provide essential data on health and family welfare needed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and other agencies for policy and programme purposes.

○ To provide information on important emerging health and family welfare issues.

➤ **The survey provides state and national information for India on:**

○ Fertility

○ Infant and child mortality

○ The practice of family planning

○ Maternal and child health

○ Reproductive health

○ Nutrition

○ Anaemia

○ Utilization and quality of health and family planning services.

➤ **NFHS - 5 Report:**

○ The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has further declined from 2.2 to 2.0 at the national level between NFHS 4 (2015-16) and NFHS 5 (2019-20).

○ There are only five states in India which are above replacement level of fertility of 2.1. These states are Bihar, Meghalaya, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Manipur.

Note:

World Hepatitis Day

Why in News?

World Hepatitis Day is observed each year on 28th July to enhance awareness of viral hepatitis.

➤ The theme for the year 2022 is "Bringing hepatitis care closer to you".

➤ It aims to highlight the need to bring hepatitis care closer to primary health care facilities, and so communities, to ensure better access to treatment and care.

What do we need to know about Hepatitis?

➤ **Hepatitis:**
  ○ The word hepatitis refers to any inflammation of the liver — the irritation or swelling of the liver cells from any cause.
  ○ It can be acute (inflammation of the liver that presents with sickness — jaundice, fever, vomiting) or chronic (inflammation of the liver that lasts more than six months, but essentially showing no symptoms).

➤ **Causes:**
  ○ Usually caused by a group of viruses known as the "hepatotropic" (liver directed) viruses, including A, B, C, D and E.
  ○ Other viruses may also cause it, such as the varicella virus that causes chicken pox.
  ○ SARS-CoV-2, the virus causing Covid-19 may injure the liver too.
  ○ Other causes include drugs and alcohol abuse, fat buildup in the liver (fatty liver hepatitis) or an autoimmune process in which a person's body makes antibodies that attack the liver (autoimmune hepatitis).
  ○ Hepatitis is the only communicable disease where mortality is showing an increasing trend.

➤ **Treatment:**
  ○ Hepatitis A and E are self-limiting diseases (i.e. go away on their own) and require no specific antiviral medications.
  ○ For Hepatitis B and C, effective medications are available.

➤ **Global Scenario:**
  ○ Approximately 354 million people are suffering from hepatitis B and C.

  ○ Southeast Asia has 20% of the global morbidity burden of hepatitis.
  ○ About 95% of all hepatitis-related deaths are due to cirrhosis and liver cancers caused by the hepatitis B and C virus.

➤ **Indian Scenario:**
  ○ Viral hepatitis, caused by hepatitis viruses A through E, still remains a major public health problem in India
  ○ India has "intermediate to high endemicity" for Hepatitis B surface antigen and an estimated 40 million chronic HBV infected people, constituting approximately 11% of the estimated global burden.
  ○ Population prevalence of chronic HBV infection in India is around 3-4 %.

➤ **Challenges:**
  ○ Access to healthcare services is often out of reach for communities as they are usually available at centralised/specialised hospitals at a cost which cannot be afforded by all.
  ○ People continue to die because of late diagnosis or lack of appropriate treatment. Early diagnosis is the gateway for both prevention and successful treatment.
  ○ In the Southeast Asia region, only about 10% of people with hepatitis know their status; and of them, only 5% are on treatment.
  ○ Of the estimated 10.5 million people with hepatitis C, just 7% know their status, of which around one in five are on treatment.

➤ **Note:**
  ○ Hepatitis B is included under India's Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) which provides free of cost vaccination against eleven (excluding Hepatitis B) vaccine-preventable diseases i.e. Tuberculosis, Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Polio, Pneumonia and Meningitis due to Haemophilus Influenzae type b (Hib), Measles, Rubella, Japanese Encephalitis (JE) and Rotavirus diarrhoea.
  ○ Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Thailand became the first four countries in the World Health Organization's Southeast Asia region to have successfully controlled Hepatitis B.
  ○ Recently, an automated coronavirus testing device named 'COBAS 6800' was launched which can also detect viral Hepatitis B & C, among others.

Note:

○ It can be noted that only for four diseases viz. HIV-AIDS (1st December), TB (24th March), Malaria (25th April), and Hepatitis, the World Health Organization (WHO) officially endorses disease-specific global awareness days.

Solid Waste Management

Why in News?

With burgeoning population and even faster urbanisation, there has been an explosion in the generation of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) in Indian cities.

➢ It is important to note that the engagement of formal waste management system remains low in the cities, primarily due to insufficient funds, low sectoral development and lack of know-how about sustainable waste management businesses.

➢ Hence, in many developing countries, including India, waste collection and material recycling activities are majorly performed by the informal waste sector.

What is the Role of the Informal Sector in Solid Waste Management?

➢ **About:**
  ○ Informal waste collectors include individuals, associations or waste-traders who are involved in sorting, sale and purchase of recyclable materials.
  ○ Waste picker is a person informally engaged in the collection and recovery of reusable and recyclable solid waste from the source of waste generation to sale of waste to recyclers directly or through intermediaries.
  ○ It is estimated that the informal waste economy employs about 0.5% - 2% of the urban population worldwide.

➢ **Challenges:**
  ○ **Least Rewarding Job:**
    ● The informal sector is often not officially approved, recognised and acknowledged, besides the fact that they potentially contribute to waste recycling practices of cities by collecting, sorting, processing, storing and trading waste materials in the recycling value chain.
  ○ **Health Issue:**
    ● The informal sector lives in close proximity to dumpsites and works under unhygienic and unhealthy conditions.

● The workers have no access to drinking water or public toilets.

● They do not have appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, gumboots and aprons.

● Due to the poor living and working conditions, malnutrition, anaemia and tuberculosis are common among them.

○ **Social Treatment:**
  ● They are treated as dirty and unwanted elements of society, and they have to deal with exploitative social behaviour.
  ● Wages and living conditions of different strata of informal waste-workers differ greatly.

○ **Others:**
  ● Child labour is quite prevalent and life expectancy being low.
  ● Waste-pickers are not covered under any labour legislation.
  ● As a result, they do not benefit from social security and medical insurance schemes.

Tackling Global Water Scarcity

Why in News?

According to a newly published book, **unconventional water sources** can help beat **global water scarcity.**

➢ The book was compiled by experts at the United Nations University's Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH), UNU Institute for Integrated Management of Material Fluxes and of Resources and the UN **Food and Agriculture Organisation.**

➢ **Conventional water sources which rely on snowfall, rainfall and rivers** – are not enough to meet growing freshwater demand in water-scarce areas.

What are Unconventional water sources?

➢ **Enhancing Rain via Cloud-Seeding:**
  ○ Global research on cloud-seeding technology indicates that **precipitation can be increased up to 15% of the annual norm**, depending on the available cloud resources and technical systems used.

- However, it was **acknowledged that greater research was needed** on the variability of the technology in different areas.
- **Fog Harvesting and Micro-Catchment Rainwater Harvesting:**
  - **Efficient fog harvesting systems** wherein **moisture in fog is collected through rocks, flora or mesh nets** can yield within 20 litres per square metre per day, for a decade. Only 70 sites have shown to be viable for fog harvesting.
  - Micro-catchments have also **shown potential for households** or farmlands in dry environments with low rainfall.
- **Role of Icebergs:**
  - **Icebergs**, the world's largest source for freshwater, have also been gaining attention in recent years.
  - **Climate change** is causing polar ice caps to melt and break, and scientists, scholars, and leaders have discussed "towing" polar ice caps to countries with water shortages.
  - In 2017, faced with massive water shortages, the **United Arab Emirates proposed a plan to tow an iceberg into the country**, but no action was taken on this front.
- **Ballast Water:**
  - Ballast water is **another transportable resource** - freshwater or saltwater held in the ballast tanks and cargo holds of ships to provide stability and maneuverability during a journey.
  - Around 10 billion tonnes of ballast water is discharged globally every year in accordance with **international norms**, this water needs to be desalinated.
  - When **desalination is used to treat ballast water,** the end product (desalinated water) is free of invasive aquatic organisms and unhealthy chemical compounds, making it usable for public water supply and irrigation as well.
- **Municipal Wastewater:**
  - Proper treatment of municipal wastewater — already underway in several countries is a major resource of water for agriculture.
  - Several countries have **launched successful initiatives to treat wastewater to meet demand.**
- **Drainage Water:**
  - Drainage water used in irrigation agriculture also has potential for reuse, but is hindered due to its high salinity.

- Careful management and promotion of salt-resistant crops can be the solutions for this.
- **Brackish Water:**
  - Research has shown that **continental shelves have around 5 million cubic km brackish water** and 300,000-500,000 cubic km freshwater within their sedimentary deposits.
  - Development of brackish water resources is already underway in countries in West Asia, Africa, Europe and the US and India.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

Why in News?

- On the eve of **World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD – 15th June)**, the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry has released a report on the state of Elderly People in India.
- The report was **based on a survey conducted by a Non-Governmental Organisation** across 22 cities.

What is Elder Abuse?

- Elder abuse can be **defined as "a single, or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action,** occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person".
- It is a **global social issue which affects the Health and Human Rights of millions of older persons** around the world, and an issue which deserves the attention of the international community.
- **Elder abuse is a problem that exists in both developing and developed countries** yet is typically underreported globally.
  - Prevalence rates or estimates exist **only in selected developed countries** — ranging from 1% to 10%.
  - As such, it demands a global multifaceted response, one which focuses on protecting the rights of older persons.

What are the Key Highlights about the WEAAD?

- **About:**
  - WEAAD occurs every year on **15th June.**

Note:

○ It was officially recognized by the **United Nations General Assembly** in its **resolution 66/127** in 2011.

➤ **Theme for 2022:**

○ Digital Equity for All Ages.

➤ **Aim:**

○ **To raise awareness about the plight of elderly people** who are abused and harmed.

● The **primary goal is to develop a better understanding of elder abuse** and neglect by raising awareness about the cultural, social, economic, and demographic factors that influence such abuse and neglect.

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

➤ **Economic Conditions:**

○ India has shown that **47% of elderly people are economically dependent** on their families for income and 34% relied on pensions and cash transfers, while 40% of the surveyed people have expressed a desire to work "as long as possible".

➤ **Citizens willing to Work:**

○ **71% of senior citizens were not working,** while 36% were willing to work and 40% wanted to work "as long as possible".

● As much as **30% of the elders were willing to volunteer their time** for various social causes.

○ **Healthcare Facilities:**

● **87% elders reported there is availability of healthcare facilities** nearby, however 78% elders mentioned unavailability of app-based online healthcare facilities and a significant 67% elderly reported they do not have any health insurance at this critical stage in their lives and only 13% are covered under government insurance schemes.

○ **Elder Abuse:**

● **59% of elders felt that elder abuse was "prevalent" in society**, but 10% reported being victims themselves.

Issue with the Juvenile Justice Amendment Act, 2021

Why in News?

The Juvenile Justice Act Amendment is making it harder to report abuse at child care institutions by making abuse and cruelty by staffers or persons in-charge at Child Care Institutions (CCI) non-cognisable.

➤ The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Act, 2021 was passed to amend various provisions of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015.

What are the Provisions of Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Amendment Act 2021 ?

➤ **Non-Cognisable Offence:**

○ Crimes against children which are mentioned in the chapter "Other Offences Against Children" of the JJ Act, 2015 that allow an imprisonment between three and seven years will be deemed "non-cognisable".

➤ **Adoption:**

○ The amendment provides strength to the provision of protection and adoption of children. There are many adoption cases pending before the court and to make proceedings of the court faster now the power is transferred to the district magistrate.

○ Amendment provides that the district magistrate has the authority to issue such adoption orders.

What are the Highlights about of Juvenile Justice Act, 2015?

➤ Parliament introduced and passed the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act in 2015 to replace the Juvenile Delinquency Law and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children Act) 2000.

➤ The Act offered provisions to allow trials of juveniles in the age group of 16-18 years as an adult who were found to be in conflict with the law, especially heinous crimes.

➤ The Act also offered provisions regarding adoption. The Act replaced the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act (1956) and Guardians of the ward Act (1890) with more universally accessible adoption law.

➤ The Act enabled smooth functioning of adoption procedures for orphans, surrendered, and abandoned children while making the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) the statutory body for adoption-related matters.

➤ **Child Care Institutions (CCI):**

○ All Child Care Institutions, whether run by the State Government or by voluntary or non-governmental organisations are to be mandatorily registered under the Act within 6 months from the date of commencement of the Act.

What is a Cognizable and Non-Cognizable offence in India?

➢ The Criminal Procedure Code lays the rules for the conduct of proceedings against any person who has committed an offence under any Criminal law.

➢ **Cognizable Offences:**
  ○ A cognizable offence is an offence in which the police officer as per the first schedule or under any other law for the time being in force, can arrest the convict without a warrant and can start an investigation without the permission of the court.
  ○ Cognizable offences are generally heinous or serious in nature such as murder, rape, kidnapping, theft, dowry death etc.
  ○ The first information report (FIR) is registered only in cognizable crimes.

➢ **Non-Cognizable Offences:**
  ○ A non-cognizable offence is the offence listed under the first schedule of the Indian Penal Code and is bailable in nature.
  ○ In case of a non-cognizable offence, the police cannot arrest the accused without a warrant as well as cannot start an investigation.
  ○ A criminal complaint is lodged with the magistrate who is supposed to order the concerned police station to initiate an investigation.
  ○ The crimes of forgery, cheating, defamation, public nuisance, etc., fall in the category of non-cognizable crimes.

➢ **Cases consisting of both Cognizable and Non-Cognizable Offences:**
  ○ According to Section 155(4) of the Criminal Procedure Code, when two or more offences are there in a case, of which at least one is of cognizable nature, and other of non-cognizable nature.
  ○ Then the entire case has to be dealt as a cognizable case, and the investigating officer will have all the powers and authority as he has in investigating a cognizable case.

One Nation One Ration Card

Why in News?

Assam has become the 36th State/UT to implement One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC).

➢ With this, the ONORC programme has been successfully implemented in all states and Union Territories, making food security portable throughout the country.

➢ The government has also rolled out the 'MERA RATION' mobile application to take maximum advantage of the ONORC plan. The mobile app is providing a host of useful real-time information to the beneficiaries and is available in 13 languages.

➢ During the last two years of Covid-19 pandemic, ONORC plan has significantly contributed in ensuring subsidized foodgrains to National Food Security Act (NFSA) beneficiaries, especially migrant beneficiaries.

What is ONORC?

➢ **About:**
  ○ The ONORC scheme is being implemented under National Food Security Act (NFSA).
  ○ This system allows all NFSA beneficiaries, particularly migrant beneficiaries, to claim either full or part foodgrains from any Fair Price Shop (FPS) in the country through existing ration card with biometric/Aadhaar authentication in a seamless manner.
  ○ The system also allows their family members back home, if any, to claim the balance foodgrains on same the ration card.
  ○ The implementation of ONORC was initiated in August 2019.

Objectives:

➢ To empower all NFSA beneficiaries to become AtmaNirbhar for their food security anywhere in the country, through portability of their existing ration cards enabling them.

➢ To seamlessly lift their entitled subsidized foodgrains (in part or full) from any Fair Price Shop of their choice.

➢ To enable family members to lift balance/required amount of foodgrains on the same ration card at their native/ any place from the FPS of their choice.

What is the Significance of ONORC:

➢ Enabling Right to Food: Previously, ration cardholders can avail their entitlement of subsidised food grains under the National Food Security Act, only from the designated Fair price shop (FPS) within the concerned state.
  ○ However, if a beneficiary were to shift to another state, he/she would need to apply for a new ration card in the second state.

○ Thus, ONORC envisages removing the geographical hindrance to social justice and enabling the right to food.

➢ Supporting One-Third of Population: Nearly, 37% of the population is that of migrant labourers. The scheme is therefore important for anyone who is going to move from one place to the other.

➢ Reducing Leakages: The ONORC can reduce leakages, because the fundamental prerequisite of this scheme is deduplication.

   ○ This will ensure that the same person does not figure as a beneficiary in two different locations of the country.

   ○ Further, the scheme is linked with Aadhaar and biometrics, this removes most possibilities of corruption.

➢ Reducing Social Discrimination: ONORC will be particularly beneficial for women and other disadvantaged groups, given how social identity (caste, class and gender) and other contextual factors (including power relations) provide a strong backdrop in accessing PDS (Public Distribution System).

What has been the Performance of Scheme So Far?

➢ This is one-of-its-kind Citizen Centric initiative in the country, which is swiftly implemented in a short-span of time covering about 80 Crore beneficiaries, after being initiated in August 2019.

➢ Since 2019, about 71 crore portable transactions have taken place delivering foodgrains equivalent to about Rs 40,000 crore in food subsidy through portability.

➢ At present, a monthly average of about 3 crore portable transactions are being recorded, delivering the subsidised NFSA and free PMGKAY (Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana) foodgrains with anywhere flexibility to the beneficiaries.

Drug Resistant Typhoid

Why in News?

Bacteria that cause typhoid fever are becoming more and more resistant to some of the most widely used antibiotics, according to the study published in The Lancet Microbe journal.

➢ Typhoid fever causes 11 million infections and more than 1,00,000 deaths per year. South Asia accounts for 70% of the global disease burden.

What is Typhoid?

➢ **About:**

   ○ Typhoid fever is a life-threatening systemic infection caused by the bacterium Salmonella enterica serovar Typhi (commonly known as Salmonella Typhi) carried only by humans – no other animal carrier has been found.

➢ **Transmission:**

   ○ Typhoid fever is transmitted by the faecal-oral route, through ingestion of contaminated food or water.

   ○ Without treatment, about one person in 20 who recovers from typhoid becomes a 'carrier'. Despite having no symptoms of illness, they have bacteria in their faeces and urine, and can infect others for a period of about three months (sometimes up to one year).

   ○ Travellers are at high risk of developing typhoid fever in many typhoid endemic countries. This includes parts of Asia (especially India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh), Africa, the Caribbean, Central and South America, and the Middle East.

➢ **Symptoms:**

   ○ Symptoms and signs of typhoid range from mild to severe, can last for about one month without treatment, and may include: fever, fatigue or tiredness, malaise (general feeling of unwellness), sore throat, persistent cough, headache.

➢ **Prevention:**

   ○ **Vaccine:**

     • The typhoid vaccine is available as an oral medication or a one-off injection:

       ■ Capsule: For adults and children over the age of 6 years, this is a live, attenuated vaccine.

       ■ Shot: For adults and children over the age of 2 years, this is an inactivated vaccine a person needs to get 2 weeks before travel.

       ■ The typhoid vaccine is only 50–80% effective.

➢ **Treatment:**

   ○ Typhoid fever requires prompt treatment with antibiotics.

➢ **Drug Resistance:**

○ The effectiveness of antibiotics for typhoid fever is threatened by the emergence of drug resistant strains.

○ The existence of resistant strains of bacteria means antibiotics or drugs designed to kill them no longer work, allowing them to spread rapidly, posing a risk to public health.

➢ Since 2000, multi-drug-resistant (MDR) typhoid has declined steadily in Bangladesh and India, remained low in Nepal, and increased slightly in Pakistan.

○ However, these are being replaced by strains resistant to other antibiotics, according to the study conducted by researchers from Stanford University, Christian Medical College Vellore and other institutions.

○ Multi-drug resistance (MDR) is defined as lack of susceptibility to at least one agent in three or more chemical classes of antibiotic.

○ Strains were classified as MDR if they had genes giving resistance to antibiotics ampicillin, chloramphenicol, and trimethoprim/ sulfamethoxazole.

➢ A new type of drug resistance is observed in strains termed XDR typhoid. Strains resistant to the antibiotic (azithromycin) have been seen in India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan.

○ Extensive Drug Resistance (XDR) typhoid is caused by a strain that is resistant to at least five antibiotic classes recommended for treating typhoid fever.

India State Support Programme for Road Safety

Why in News?

The World Bank has approved a USD 250 million loan for India State Support Program for Road Safety for seven States under which a single accident reporting number will be set up to better manage post-crash events.

What is World Bank?

➢ **About:**

○ It was created in 1944, as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) along with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The IBRD later became the World Bank.

○ The World Bank Group is a unique global partnership of five institutions working for sustainable solutions that reduce poverty and build shared prosperity in developing countries.

➢ **Members:**

○ It has 189 member countries.

○ India is also a member country.

○ Major Reports:

○ Human Capital Index.

○ World Development Report.

➢ **Its Five Development Institutions:**

○ International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)

○ International Development Association (IDA)

○ International Finance Corporation (IFC).

○ Multilateral Guarantee Agency (MIGA)

○ International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)

○ India is not a member of this.

What are the Key Highlights of the Program?

➢ **About:**

○ The project will establish a national harmonised crash database system in order to analyse accidents and use that to construct better and safer roads.

○ The USD 250 million variable spread loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) has a maturity of 18 years including a grace period of 5.5 years.

○ It will be implemented in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

➢ **Aim:**

○ It aims to fund network expansion of basic and advanced life support ambulances and training of first responder caregivers to road crash victims on the spot.

○ The project will also provide incentives to the States to leverage private funding through Public Private Partnership (PPP) concessions and pilot initiatives.

○ Women face the indirect brunt of road accidents. Recognising this challenge, the project has a special focus on gender and will promote women's representation in management roles in the road safety sector.

Note:

❍ The project will also provide employment opportunities for women especially, in post-crash care command and control centers.

What is the Scenario of Road Accidents in India?

➢ Road crashes are estimated to cost the Indian economy between 5% to 7% of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) a year.

➢ Official government data show that each year road accidents in India kill about 1,50,000 people and injure another 4,50,000.

➢ More than half of the victims are pedestrians, cyclists, or motorcyclists and almost 84% of all fatalities are among road users between the working ages of 18-60 years.

➢ Poor households that account for over 70% of crash victims bear a higher proportion of the socio-economic burden of road crashes due to loss of income, high medical expenses and limited access to social safety nets.

What are the Initiatives for Road Safety?

➢ **Third High Level Global Conference on Road Safety for Achieving Global Goals 2030':**

  ❍ MoRTH (Ministry of Road Transport and Highways) participated in a conference in Sweden in 2020 — the Third High Level Global Conference on Road Safety for Achieving Global Goals 2030' — where it was conceptualised to have zero road fatalities in India by 2030.

➢ **Brasilia declaration:**

  ❍ India signed the Brasilia declaration and committed to reduction in fatalities.

  ❍ The declaration was signed at the Second Global High-Level conference on Road Safety held in Brazil.

➢ **Motor Vehicles (MV) (Amendment) Act, 2019:**

  ❍ It hiked the penalties for traffic violations, defective vehicles, juvenile driving, etc.

  ❍ It provides for a Motor Vehicle Accident Fund, which would provide compulsory insurance cover to all road users in India for certain types of accidents.

NFHS-5 National Report

Why in News?

Recently, the National Report of the 2nd phase of fifth round of **National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5)** was released.

➢ The **National Family Health Survey (NFHS)** is a large-scale, multi-round survey conducted in a representative sample of households throughout India.

What is the NFHS-5 Report?

● **About:**

  ❍ It comprises **detailed information on key domains of population, health and family welfare and associated domains** like characteristics of the population; fertility; family planning; infant and child mortality; maternal and child health; nutrition and **anaemia;** morbidity and healthcare; women's empowerment etc.

  ❍ The **scope of NFHS-5 is expanded in respect of the earlier round of the survey (NFHS-4)** by adding new dimensions such as:

  ❍ Death registration, pre-school education, expanded domains of child immunization, components of micro-nutrients to children, menstrual hygiene, frequency of alcohol and tobacco use, additional components of **Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs),** expanded age range for measuring hypertension and diabetes among all aged 15 years and above.

  ❍ Thus, **NFHS-5 provides information on important indicators** which are helpful in tracking the progress of **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** in the country.

  ❍ The national report also **provides data by socio-economic and other background characteristics;** useful for policy formulation and effective programme implementation.

  ❍ The NFHS-5 National Report **lists progress from NFHS-4 (2015-16) to NFHS-5 (2019-21).**

● **Objective:**

  ❍ The main objective of successive rounds of the NFHS has been **to provide reliable and comparable data relating to health and family welfare** and other emerging areas in India.

Note:

drishti

What are the Key
Highlights of the NFHS-5 National Report?

➢ **Total Fertility Rate (TFR):**
  ○ **Overall:**
    ● The Total Fertility Rate (TFR), has further **declined from 2.2 to 2.0** at the national level between NNFHS 4 and 5.
    ● There are **only five States in India** which are **above replacement level of fertility of 2.1.** These states are **Bihar, Meghalaya, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Manipur.**
    ● Replacement level fertility is the **total fertility rate**—the average number of children born per woman—at which a **population exactly replaces itself from one generation to the next, without migration.**
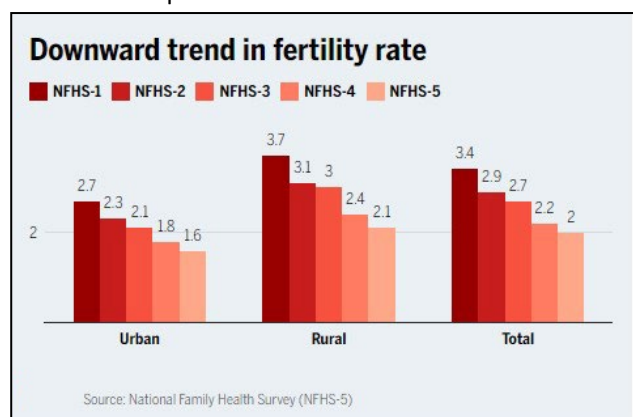 ○ **Highest and Lowest Fertility Rate:**
    ● Bihar and Meghalaya have the highest fertility rates in the country, while Sikkim and Andaman and Nicobar Islands have the lowest.
  ○ **Area wise:**
    ● In **rural areas, TFR has declined** from 3.7 children per woman in 1992-93 to 2.1 children in 2019-21.
    ● The **corresponding decline among women in urban areas** was from 2.7 children in 1992-93 to 1.6 children in 2019-21.
  ○ **Community Wise:**
    ● **Muslims' fertility rate has seen the sharpest decline** among all religious communities over the past two decades.

Downward trend in fertility rate

NFHS-1 NFHS-2 NFHS-3 NFHS-4 NFHS-5

Urban	Rural	Total
2.7, 2.3, 2.1, 1.8, 1.6	3.7, 3.1, 3, 2.4, 2.1	3.4, 2.9, 2.7, 2.2, 2

Source: National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5)

➢ **Underage Marriages:**
  ○ **Overall:**
    ● National average of underage marriages has **come down.**

● According to NFHS-5, **23.3% women surveyed got married** before attaining the legal age of 18 years, down from 26.8% reported in NFHS-4.
● The figure for underage marriage among men is 17.7% (NFHS-5) and 20.3% (NFHS-4).
  ○ **Highest Surge:**
    ● **The rate has increased in** Punjab, West Bengal, Manipur, Tripura and Assam.
    ● **Tripura** has seen the **largest jump in marriages** for women from 33.1% (NHFS-4) to 40.1%, and from 16.2% to 20.4% among men.
  ○ **Highest Rate of Underage Marriages:**
    ● West Bengal, along with Bihar, remains one of the states with highest rate of underage marriages.
  ○ **Lowest Rate of Underage Marriages:**
    ● J&K, Lakshadweep, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Goa, Nagaland, Kerala, Puducherry and Tamil Nadu.
  ○ **Teenage Pregnancies:**
    ● Teenage pregnancies are **down from 7.9% to 6.8%.**
  ○ **Use of Contraceptive Method:**
    ● **Employment Factor: 66.3% women who are employed** use a modern contraceptive method, compared with 53.4% women who are not employed.
    ● Contraceptive use increases in communities and regions that have seen more socioeconomic progress.
    ● **Income Factor:** The **"unmet need for family planning methods"** is highest among the lowest wealth quintile (11.4%) and lowest among the highest wealth quintile (8.6%).
    ● Use of **modern contraceptives also increases with income** from 50.7% women in the lowest wealth quintile to 58.7% women in the highest quintile.
  ○ **Domestic Violence Against Women:**
    ● **Overall:** Domestic violence has **come down marginally from 31.2% in 2015-16 to 29.3% in 2019-21.**
  ○ **Highest and Lowest (States):**
    ● Domestic violence against women is **highest in Karnataka at 48%,** followed by Bihar, Telangana, Manipur and Tamil Nadu.

Note:

- **Lakshadweep has the least** domestic violence at 2.1%.
  - Institutional Births:
    - **Overall:** It increased from **79% to 89% in India.**
    - **Area Wise:** In **rural areas** around **87%** births being delivered in institutions and the same is **94% in urban areas**.
  - Immunisation Level:
    - **More than three-fourths (77%) children age 12-23 months** were fully immunised, compared with 62% in NFHS-4.
  - Stunting:
    - The level of stunting among children under five years has **marginally declined from 38% to 36% in the country** since the last four years.
    - Stunting is higher among **children in rural areas (37%)** than urban areas (30%) in 2019-21.
  - Obesity:
    - Compared with NFHS-4, the **prevalence of overweight or obesity has increased in most States/UTs in NFHS-5.**
    - At the national level, it **increased from 21% to 24% among women** and 19% to 23% among men.
  - SDG Goal:
    - **NFHS-5 shows an overall improvement in Sustainable Development Goals** indicators in all States/Union Territories (UTs).
    - The **extent to which married women usually participate in three household decisions** indicates that their participation in decision-making is high.
    - **Household decisions include** health care for herself, making major household purchases, visiting her family or relatives.
    - Participation in decision making rises **ranging from 80% in Ladakh to 99% in Nagaland and Mizoram.**
    - Rural (77%) and urban (81%) differences are found to be marginal.
    - The **prevalence of women having a bank or savings account** that they use has increased from 53% to 79% in the last four years.

Indira Gandhi Shahri Rozgar Guarantee Yojana

Why in News?

The Rajasthan government has come up with the job description under its much-touted **Indira Gandhi Shahri Rozgar Guarantee Yojana.**

➢ Announcing the employment scheme for urban areas on the lines of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA for rural areas in his budget speech

➢ While MGNREGA assists people in rural areas, there is no such scheme for street vendors, as well as those working at dhabas and restaurants in urban areas.

What is the Scheme?

➢ **About:**
  ○ Under the scheme, **100 days of employment per year will be provided to families residing in urban areas.**
  ○ The ratio of cost of material to payment for labour work of "general nature" will be in the ratio of 25:75, while for special works, it will be 75:25.
  ○ The **focus is on providing as many jobs as possible.**
  ○ On the other hand, **creation of assets** will require a higher material component, hence **under 'special works' the ratio is 75:25**.

➢ **Eligibility:**
  ○ All those aged between **18 and 60 years and residing within urban body limits are eligible for the scheme**, and in special circumstances such as a pandemic or a calamity, migrant labourers may be included.

➢ **Components:**
  ○ **Environmental Conservation:**
    - The tree plantation in public places, maintenance of parks, watering plants on footpaths and dividers, preparing nurseries under departments of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), forest, horticulture and agriculture.
  ○ **Water conservation:**
    - One may undertake works for improvement of cleanliness and improvement of ponds, lakes, step-wells, etc.; construction, repair and cleaning of rainwater harvesting structures; and restoration of water sources.

Note:

○ **Cleanliness and Sanitation-Related Works**:

- This includes works related to solid waste management, labour work, including door to door garbage collection and segregation, separation of waste at the dumping sites, cleanliness and upkeep of public/community toilets, cleaning of nullah/drain as well as removing waste created due to construction and demolition works.

○ **Works Related to Defacement of Property:**

- This includes labour work to remove encroachments, as well as illegal boards/hoardings/banners, etc. and painting of dividers, railings, walls and other publically visible spaces.

○ **Convergence:**

- People under this scheme can be employed in other centre or state level schemes, already having a material component, and which require labour work.

○ **Service:**

- It includes labour work at gaushalas and 'multitask services' at offices of civic bodies, record keeping, etc. Also, work related to heritage conservation.

- Miscellaneous works, such as those related to security/fencing/boundary wall/guarding of urban civic bodies and public lands; development and management of parking spots within urban civic body limits; catching and management of stray animals, etc.

Why is Social Security needed for Urban Areas?

➢ **Major Contributor to Economy:** Urban areas is an integral part of the development process of the country. As in most countries, India's urban areas make a major contribution to the country's economy.

○ Indian cities contribute to about **two-third of the economic output,** host a growing share of the population and are the main recipients of **FDI** and the originators of innovation and technology.

○ **Magnet For Businesses:** The cities are a collective magnet for a great diversity of economic activities.

- The cities attract business and people, as a result of scale and agglomeration advantages (supply of educational facilities, presence of suppliers, etc).

○ **Hotbed of Social Capital:**

- The cities are a hotbed of social capital or as a 'melting pot' of culturally or socially diversified groups.

○ **Cities are Power Centres:**

- The city is an ever-expanding power-block, which reinforces its position to the detriment of towns and villages in its hinterland.

What is the Significance of Urban Employment Schemes?

➢ Ensures **social inclusion by strengthening the livelihood base** of rural poor.

➢ It gives **urban residents a statutory right to work and thereby ensures the right to life (Art 21) guaranteed under the Constitution.**

○ E.g. in Madhya Pradesh, the new State government has launched the "Yuva Swabhiman Yojana"

○ It provides **employment for skilled and unskilled workers** among urban youth and addresses the concerns of underemployment and unemployment.

○ S**uch programmes can bring in much-needed public investment in towns, which, in turn, could** boost local demand, improve the quality of urban infrastructure and services, restore urban commons, skill urban youth, increase the capacity of ULBs.

What are the other Initiatives by Government?

➢ **Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise (SMILE)**

➢ **PM-DAKSH (Pradhan Mantri Dakshta Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi)**

➢ **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)**

➢ **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)**

➢ **Start Up India Scheme**

○ **Jharkhand:**

- Birsa Harit Gram Yojana (BHGY), Neelambar Pitambar JAL Sammridhi Yojana (NPJSY) and Veer Sahid Poto Ho Khel Vikas Scheme (VSPHKVS)

Fortification of Rice

Why in News?

According to the recent findings, the Union government's plan to **distribute subsidised iron-fortified rice may do more harm than good to Adivasis, or**

indigenous populations, who suffer from **sickle-cell anaemia** and **thalassemia** and are genetically prone to these ailments.

What is Food Fortification?

➢ **Fortification:**
  ○ Fortification is the **addition of key vitamins and minerals** such as iron, iodine, zinc, Vitamin A & D to staple foods such as rice, milk and salt to improve their nutritional content.
  ○ These nutrients may or may not have been originally present in the food before processing.

➢ **Fortification of Rice:**
  ○ According to the Food Ministry, **fortification of rice is a cost-effective and complementary strategy** to increase vitamin and mineral content in diets.
    ● **According to FSSAI norms**, 1 kg fortified rice will contain iron (28 mg-42.5 mg), folic acid (75-125 microgram) and Vitamin B-12 (0.75-1.25 microgram).
    ● In addition, **rice may also be fortified with micronutrients**, singly or in combination, with zinc, Vitamin A, Vitamin B1, Vitamin B2, Vitamin B3 and Vitamin B6.

What is the Need of Food Fortification?

➢ **India has very high levels of malnutrition** among women and children. According to the Food Ministry, every second woman in the country is anemic and every third child is stunted.

➢ India has slipped to **101ˢᵗ position in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2021** of 116 countries, from its 2020 position of 94ᵗʰ.

➢ The deficiency of micronutrients or micronutrient malnutrition, also known as "hidden hunger", is a serious health risk.

➢ **Rice is one of India's staple foods**, consumed by about two-thirds of the population. Per capita rice consumption in India is 6.8 kg per month. Therefore, fortifying rice with micronutrients is an option to supplement the diet of the poor.

What are the Issues with the Fortification of Rice?

➢ **Inconclusive Evidence:**
  ○ Evidence supporting fortification is **inconclusive and certainly not adequate** before major national policies are rolled out.
  ○ Many of the studies which FSSAI relies on to promote fortification are **sponsored by food companies** who would benefit from it, leading to conflicts of interest.

➢ **Hypervitaminosis:**
  ○ According to some studies published in the medical journal Lancet and in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition which show that both anaemia and Vitamin A deficiencies are overdiagnosed, meaning that mandatory fortification could lead to hypervitaminosis.
  ○ Hypervitaminosis is a condition of abnormally high storage levels of vitamins, which can lead to various symptoms such as over excitement, irritability, or even toxicity.

➢ **Toxicity:**
  ○ One major problem with chemical fortification of foods is that **nutrients don't work in isolation but need each other for optimal absorption**.
  ○ Undernourishment in India is caused by monotonous cereal-based diets with low consumption of vegetables and animal protein.
  ○ **Adding one or two synthetic chemical vitamins and minerals will not solve the larger problem,** and in undernourished populations can lead to toxicity.
  ○ A **2010 study that showed iron fortification causing gut inflammation** and pathogenic gut microbiota profile in undernourished children.

➢ **Cartelisation:**
  ○ Mandatory fortification **would harm the vast informal economy of Indian farmers and food processors** including local oil and rice mills, and instead benefit a small group of multinational corporations who will have sway over a Rs.3,000 crore market.

➢ **Decrease Value of Natural Food:**
  ○ Dietary diversity was a **healthier and more cost-effective way to fight malnutrition.**
  ○ **Once iron-fortified rice is sold as the remedy to anaemia**, the value and the choice of naturally iron-rich foods like millets, varieties of green leafy vegetables, flesh foods, liver, to name a few, will have been suppressed by a policy of silence.

Note:

Global Report on Assistive Technology

Why in News?

Recently, the **World Health Organisation (WHO)** and **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** jointly launched the **first Global Report on Assistive Technology (GReAT).**

What is the purpose of the Global Report on Assistive Technology (GReAT)?

➢ This report is the **culmination of the 71st World Health Assembly resolution in 2018** to prepare a global report on effective access to assistive technology.

➢ The report assumes significance as **90% of those who need assistive technology do not have access to it globally**, and including assistive technology into health systems is critical for progress towards the targets in the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)** relating to **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)**.

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

➢ **People Need Assistive Products:**
  ○ More than **2.5 billion people need one or more assistive products**, such as wheelchairs, hearing aids, or apps that support communication and cognition.

➢ **People Denied Assistive Products:**
  ○ A **billion of them are denied access**, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, where access can be **as low as 3% of the need** for these life-changing products.

➢ **Number of People in Need of Assistive Products in Future:**
  ○ The number of people in **need of one or more assistive products is likely to rise to 3.5 billion by 2050,** due to populations aging and the prevalence of non-communicable diseases rising across the world.
  ○ Also, **affordability is a major barrier** to access.

➢ **Large Gaps in Service Provision and Trained Workforce:**
  ○ A survey of **70 countries featured in the report found large gaps in service provision and trained workforce** for assistive technology, especially in the domains of cognition, communication and self-care.

What is Assistive Technology (AT)?

AT is any **item, piece of equipment, software program or product system** that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities.

➢ **Examples:**
  ○ **Technologies and devices** such as prosthetics, braces, walkers, special switches, special-purpose computers, screen readers and specialised curricular software.
  ○ **Universal assistive technology coverage implies** that everyone, everywhere receives the AT that they need without financial or other hardships.
  ○ **Priority Assistive Products List** launched by WHO in 2018 include hearing aids, wheelchairs, communication aids, spectacles, artificial limbs, pill organisers, memory aids and other essential items for the elderly and person with disabilities.

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Key Points

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