



Date – 6 July 2022

Digital India Week 2022



- Recently, the Prime Minister inaugurated Digital India Week 2022 under the Digital India programme, which aims to promote ease of doing business and make life easier.
- **Theme:** 'New India Technology Inspiration'.
- To transform the country into a digitally empowered society and knowledge based economy.
- During the event, the Prime Minister launched several digital initiatives aimed at increasing access to technology, streamlining service delivery to make life easier and promoting startups.

Initiatives:

Digital India Bhashini:

- Digital India Bhashini is India's Artificial Intelligence (AI) led language translation platform.

- Bhashini platform will make Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Natural Language Processing (NLP) resources available in public domain to MSMEs (Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises), Startups and individual innovators.

Digital India Genesis (GENESIS):

- 'Digital India Genesis' (Gen-Next Support for Innovative Startups) is a national deep-tech startup platform to discover, support, develop and succeed successful startups in Tier-II and Tier-III cities of India.

My Scheme:

- It is a search and discovery platform facilitating access to government schemes.
- It aims to introduce a one-stop search and discovery portal, where users can search the schemes for which they are eligible.

My identity:

- It is a National Single Sign on (NSSO) for a citizen login.
- It is a user authentication service in which a single set of credentials provides access to multiple online applications or services.

Chips Startup (C2S) Program:

- The objective of the C2S program is to train specialized manpower in the area of semiconductor chips design at Bachelor's, Master's and Research levels and act as a catalyst for the growth of startups involved in semiconductor design in the country.
- It offers mentoring at the organizational level and provides state-of-the-art facilities for design to institutions.

India Stack Global:

- It is a global repository of key projects implemented under India Stack like Aadhaar, UPI (Unified Payment Interface), DigiLocker, Coin Vaccination Platform, Government e-Marketplace, Diksha Platform and Ayushman Bharat Digital Health Mission.
- It will help establish India as a leader in building digital transformation projects at the population level.

Digital India Program:

- It was launched in the year 2015.
- This program has been enabled for many important government schemes like BharatNet, Make in India, Startup India and Standup India, Industrial Corridors etc.

Field of vision:

- Digital infrastructure as useful to every citizen.
- Governance and services on demand.
- Digital empowerment of citizens.

Purpose:

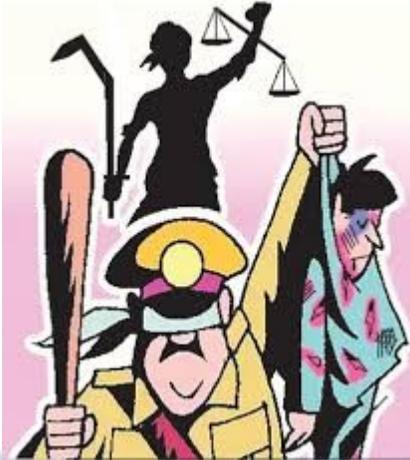
- To prepare India's knowledge for the future.
- To be transformative, IT (Indian Talent) + IT (Information Technology) = IT (India Tomorrow) have to be realized.
- Centralizing technology to enable change.
- An umbrella program covering multiple departments.

Achievements of Digital India Program:

- Since 2014, more than Rs 23 lakh crore has been transferred to the beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer or DBT.
- Digital platform services like Aadhaar, UPI, Covin and Digilocker have contributed to the "ease of living" as it allows citizens to get online services without having to go to government offices or middlemen.
- Digital India has brought the government to the doorsteps and phones of the citizens. More than 1.25 lakh Common Service Centers (CSCs) and Grameen Stores are now taking e-commerce to rural India.
- Similarly property documents for rural properties are being made available using technology.
- With the help of One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC), free ration was ensured for more than 80 crore countrymen.
- India has undertaken the world's largest and most efficient COVID vaccination and COVID relief program through the Co-Win platform.

Swadeep Kumar

Custodial death



- India has a poor record in terms of police brutality and custodial violence. Between 2001 and 2018, 1,727 people died in police custody, but only 26 policemen were convicted in these cases.
- Custodial deaths are common despite huge expenditure of time and money on training police personnel to adopt scientific methods to investigate crimes. This is because policemen are human from different backgrounds and different perspectives.
- In this context, it would be relevant to consider the questions relating to custodial deaths.

Custodial deaths mean:

- Custodial Deaths or 'Custodial Deaths' means the death of persons in police custody or while serving a sentence in judicial custody or imprisonment during trial.
- It is not a secret that when the police are not satisfied with the findings obtained during their interrogation, they sometimes resort to torture and violence, which can lead to the death of the suspect.
- It includes torture, death and other excesses in police custody or imprisonment.

Scenario of Custodial Deaths in India

- According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, there have been 1,888 custodial deaths, 893 cases filed against policemen and charge sheets filed against 358 policemen across the country in the last 20 years. But according to official records, only 26 policemen were convicted in the same period.

- Except in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Odisha, no policeman was held responsible for such deaths anywhere else in the country.
- In addition to custodial deaths, more than 2,000 human rights violations were also registered against the police between 2000 and 2018, and only 344 policemen were convicted in those cases.

What are the possible causes of custodial deaths?

Lack of strong law:

- Anti-torture Legislation does not exist in India, nor has Custodial Violence been declared a crime, while the status of action against the guilty policemen/officers is also unsatisfactory.

Institutional Challenges:

- The entire prison system is inherently vague and gives little opportunity for transparency.
- India has also failed to bring much-needed prison reforms and prisons continue to suffer from poor conditions, overcrowding, and acute shortage of personnel and lack of minimum safeguards against violence/trauma in prisons.

Extreme coercion:

- The state tends to use extreme coercion including torture, the victims of which are marginalized communities. The state also resorts to the use of coercion to control those participating in movements or propagating ideologies that the state considers against itself or sees as a threat.

Long Judicial Processes:

- The lengthy, costly formal procedures followed by the courts discourage the poor and vulnerable.

Not Compliance with International Standard:

- Although India had signed the United Nations Convention against Torture in the year 1997, it has not ratified it yet.
- While this signature only indicates the country's intention to fulfill the obligations stipulated in the treaty, its ratification or ratification will pave the way for the creation of laws and mechanisms to fulfill the commitments.

What Provisions Are Available With respect to Custody?

Constitutional Provisions:

Article 21:

- Article 21 states that “No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.”
- Protection from torture is a fundamental right under Article 21 (Protection of life and personal liberty) of the Indian Constitution.

Article 22:

- Article 22 provides for “protection from arrest and detention in certain cases”.
- Under Article 22(1) of the Constitution of India, a person has a fundamental right to seek advice and to be defended by a legal practitioner of his interest.

Legal Provisions:

Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC):

- Section 41 of the CrPC was amended in the year 2009 and safeguards were added to ensure that proper grounds and documentary procedures are followed for arrest and detention for interrogation, making arrest transparent to family, friends and general public and be protected through legal representation.

Mathura Case of 1972:

- The Mathura rape case was a serious case of custodial rape that took place on March 26, 1972. A tribal girl named Mathura was allegedly raped by two policemen in the premises of Desaijanj police station in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra.
- This case prompted the Indian government to amend rape laws in the country and in 1983 a new category was added to the criminal laws dealing with rape.
- Provision has been made in the law that if a woman says that she did not consent to sex, then the court will hear that she is telling the truth.
- The Mathura case also paved the way for in-camera trial as a closed proceeding and subsequent ban on marking rape victims by their real names.
- Besides defining custodial rape, the amendment shifted the burden of proof from the accuser to the accused.

- Provision was also made that women could not be called to the police station before sunrise and after sunset.

Role of technology in relation to custodial interrogation

Brain Fingerprint System (BFS):

- BFS is a type of lie-detection technique through which a person's brain waves are measured to find out whether a person is telling the truth while answering the questions asked.
- This technology helps the investigating agencies to find clues in complex cases.

Robot:

- Robots are increasingly being used by the police department for surveillance and for bomb detection.
- Many experts believe that robots can perform the same role as or better than a human interrogator in interrogation.
- Suspects may be more receptive to automated conversational robots than to police to uncover the truth.
- Robots equipped with AI and sensor technology can form a seamless connection with suspects, use persuasive techniques such as flattery, shaming and pressure, and strategically use body language.
- The University of Arizona has developed an automated interrogation technology called 'Automated Virtual Agent for Truth Assessments in RealTime (AVATAR)'.
- It uses visual, auditory, near-infrared and other sensors to test the suspect's eye movements, voice and other things during interrogation.

AI:

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) are emerging as tools of inquiry. AI can detect human emotions and predict behaviour.
- The ML can immediately alert the superiors when the police are treating the suspects in an inhumane manner.

Related concerns:

- With the use of technology comes the risk of bias, skepticism associated with automated interrogation tactics, the risk of machine learning algorithms targeting individuals and communities, and its misuse for surveillance.

- While the technologies available to police and law enforcement agencies are constantly improving, it is only a limited means that cannot completely eliminate custodial deaths.

Swadeep Kumar

Infrastructure regarding Food Safety in States

The FSSAI has released the Fourth State Food Safety Index recently.

What is the State Food Safety Index?

- FSSAI has developed the State Food Safety Index to measure the performance of states on various parameters of Food Safety.
- It was first started in 2018-19 with the aim of creating a competitive and positive change in India's food safety ecosystem.
- This index is based on performance of State/ UT on five significant parameters
 - Human Resources and Institutional Data
 - Compliance
 - Food Testing – Infrastructure and Surveillance
 - Training & Capacity Building
 - Consumer Empowerment

What about the recent index?

- In the 4th index, Tamil Nadu topped the list among larger states, followed by Gujarat and Maharashtra.
- Among smaller states, Goa was the winner, followed by Manipur and Sikkim.
- Jammu and Kashmir emerged top among Union Territories, followed by Delhi and Chandigarh.

How can the States' index be improved?

- **Support of the Centre**– States need the support of the Central government in developing food laboratory infrastructure and enhancing manpower.

- **Assistance**– Liberal assistance should be provided to the States and Union Territories as far as laboratory infrastructure and improvement of manpower are concerned.
- **Role of private sector**– The private sector should come forward in a big way to have staff trained at their cost to improve productivity.
- **Use of ICT**– The participation of information technology majors with the help of non-governmental organisations can be utilised in getting surplus food distributed to the needy.

What are some of the important initiatives for food safety in India?

- **Eat Right India Movement**– to transform the country's food system in order to ensure safe, healthy and sustainable food for all Indians.
- **Eat Right Station Certification**– awarded by FSSAI to railway stations that set benchmarks (as per the FSS Act, 2006) in providing safe and wholesome food to passengers.
- **The Eat Right Research Awards and Grants**– for high quality research in the area of food safety and nutrition in India.
- **PAN-India survey**– for identifying the presence of industrially produced trans fatty acid content in the selected foods has been released.

Anshum

YOJNA IAS