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CURRENT AFFAIRS

Date: 5 September 2023

IPBES INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES ASSESSMENT

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "IPBES Invasive Alien Species Assessment". The topic "IPBES Invasive Alien Species Assessment" has relevance in the "Ecology and Environment" section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

What are Invasive Alien Species?

What is IPBES?

For Mains:

GS3: Ecology and Environment

Why in the news?

The Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) recently released a report on Invasive Alien Species.

Invasive Alien Species

- An invasive species is one that is **not indigenous to a specific area and has a negative impact on the environment, economy, or human health**. Invasive species can be intentionally or unintentionally introduced into a new area.
- Invasive species establish themselves in an environment by outcompeting native wildlife, causing infrastructure damage, and endangering human health and livelihoods.

Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

- IPBES, also known as the "IPCC for biodiversity," is an independent intergovernmental body with over 140 member governments.
- It was established by governments in 2012 to provide policymakers with objective scientific assessments of the state of knowledge regarding the planet's biodiversity, ecosystems, and the contributions they make to people, as well as the tools and methods for protecting and using these vital natural assets in a sustainable manner.
- It is not a United Nations organisation. However, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) provides secretariat services to IPBES at the request of the IPBES Plenary and with the authorization of the UNEP Governing Council in 2013.

Assessment Report on Invasive Alien Species and their Control

- According to the report, **human activities have introduced approximately 37,000 alien species**, encompassing both plants and animals, to various regions and biomes worldwide.

- Among these, there are over **3,500 invasive alien species**, which have played a significant role in **causing 60% of documented global extinctions** in both plant and animal species.
- The report also highlights that **invasive alien species rank among the top five primary drivers of biodiversity loss** on a global scale.
- The report underscores that the proliferation of alien species has been an ongoing trend for centuries across all regions. However, it is now accelerating at an unprecedented pace, primarily due to increased human mobility, trade, and the expansion of the global economy.
- Notably, roughly **6% of introduced plant species, 22% of introduced invertebrates, 14% of introduced vertebrates, and 11% of introduced microbes** are recognized as **invasive**, posing substantial threats to both natural ecosystems and human well-being.
- This comprehensive study, conducted over a four-year period, involved the collaboration of 86 leading experts hailing from 49 countries. Their research drew upon a vast body of knowledge, encompassing more than 13,000 references.

Major Invasive Species

- The **water hyacinth** is the most common invasive alien species on land in the world.
- **Lantana**, a flowering shrub, and the **black rat** are the second and third most common species on the planet.



- The **brown rat and house mouse** are two other common invasive alien species.
- The **Caribbean false mussel** devastates Kerala's important fishery resources by eradicating native clams and oysters.
- Malaria, Zika, and West Nile Fever are spread by invasive species such as **Aedes albopictus** and **Aedes aegyptii**.



Methods to control invasive species

- **Physical removal:** This involves physically removing the invasive species from the environment. This can be done by hand, using tools such as traps or nets, or by using herbicides or pesticides.
- **Biological control:** This includes using natural predators or parasites to control the invasive species. This can be a more sustainable approach than physical removal, but it can also be more difficult to implement.
- **Genetic control:** It involves introducing genes into the invasive species that will make them sterile or less competitive. This is a new and experimental approach, but it has the potential to be very effective.
- **Cultural control:** It includes changing the way that people interact with the environment to make it less hospitable to invasive species. This can include things like changing farming practices, cleaning up waste, and controlling the spread of invasive species through trade.

Way Forward

- Minimising the risks and costs associated with their negative impacts while capturing the social and economic benefits possible through responsible management.
- Regulating the trade and movement of invasive alien species is the most effective way to prevent their introduction and spread.
- Once an invasive species arrives in a new area, it is possible to limit their negative impacts through early detection, monitoring, and rapid eradication

Sources:

Biodiversity loss: 37,000 'alien species' introduced by human activities, says report | India News – The Indian Express

Q1. With reference to Invasive species, consider the following statements:

1. Invasive species are only those who are unintentionally introduced into a new area.
2. Invasive species lead to infrastructure damage as well as endangering human health and livelihoods.
3. The invasive alien species are one of the primary drivers of biodiversity loss.

Which of the statements given above is/are NOT correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) None

Answer: (a)

Q2. Consider the following :

1. Black Rat
2. Kondana Rat
3. Caribbean false mussel
4. Komodo dragon

How many of the abovementioned species are invasive species?

- (a) Only one

- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All Four

Answer: (b)

Q3. Discuss the significance of regulating the trade and movement of invasive alien species as a strategy for biodiversity conservation and ecosystem protection. Elaborate on the challenges associated in this regard.

Gaurav Nikumbh

ANTI-POLYGAMY LAW

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Anti-Polygamy Law". The topic "Anti-Polygamy Law" has relevance in the Governance section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

About Polygamy?

For Mains:

GS 2: Governance

Is Polygamy Criminalized in India?

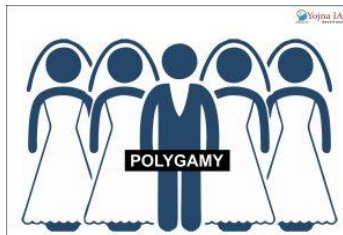
Problems associated with Polygamy?

Why in the news:

The government of Assam has formed a three-member committee tasked with drafting a law to abolish polygamy.

About Polygamy:

Polygamy is a marital practice characterized by the act or custom of maintaining multiple spouses simultaneously. It is observed in various regions and communities worldwide, with varying prevalence rates.



Polygamy in India:

- **National Trends:** Government data reveals that polygamy cases in India decreased from 1.9 percent in 2005-06 to 1.4 percent in 2019-20, indicating a declining trend over the years.
- **Regional Disparities:** Polygamy rates vary across different states and regions within India.
- **North Eastern States:** The northeastern states of Meghalaya exhibit a higher prevalence, with a rate of 6.1 percent, while Tripura follows closely with a rate of 2 percent.

- **Other States:** Polygamy continues to be practiced in states like Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Odisha, predominantly among specific caste groups.
- **Religious Dimensions:** In Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh, polygamy is more commonly observed among the Muslim community than among Hindus.
- **Assam's Scenario:** Polygamy is prevalent in specific regions of Assam, primarily in the Barak Valley and areas like Hojai and Jamunamukh. Notably, its prevalence is relatively low among educated classes and is not as widespread among the local Muslim population in these areas.

Is Polygamy Criminalized in India:

- **IPC Provisions:** The Indian Penal Code (IPC) criminalizes polygamy, specifically under Sections 494 and 495. These sections make it illegal to marry someone while already being married to another person.

Polygamy under Hindu Law

- **Hindu Marriage Act:** The Hindu Marriage Act, enacted on May 18, 1955, explicitly abolished and criminalized polygamy among Hindus. It mandated monogamy as the only option for Hindus, declaring polygamous marriages as void. A Hindu spouse cannot remarry until the first marriage is terminated, either through divorce or the death of one spouse. This provision also extends to Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs, who are considered Hindus under this law.

Polygamy under Other Religious Laws in India

- **Christian and Parsi Communities:** Polygamy was abolished among Christians through the Christian Marriage Act of 1872 and among Parsis through the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act of 1936.

Polygamy under Muslim Personal Law

- **Muslim Personal Law:** Unlike Hindu personal law, Muslim personal law does not outlaw polygamy. Under the 'Muslim Personal Law Application Act (Shariat) of 1937, as interpreted by the All India Muslim Personal Law Board, Muslim men can marry and maintain up to four wives concurrently. Such relationships are legally recognized under Muslim personal law. However, this allowance does not extend to Muslim women, who are not permitted to marry more than one individual.

Global Perspectives on Polygamy

- **Global Practice:** Polygamy is illegal and criminalized in many countries worldwide, including Europe and the US, as well as China, Australia, and others. However, it remains permissible and legal exclusively for Muslims in nations such as India, Singapore, and Malaysia. Additionally, polygamy continues to be recognized and practiced in countries like Algeria, Egypt, and Cameroon.

Problems associated with Polygamy:

Forced Marriages

- **Lack of Choice:** In regions where polygamy is prevalent, women may be coerced or forced into marriages they do not desire. This lack of agency in choosing a spouse can have severe consequences for their well-being and autonomy.

- **Gender Bias in Laws:** Legal frameworks that permit polygamy often favor men, as seen in some parts of West Africa where Sharia Law allows men to have multiple wives while restricting women from having multiple husbands.

Not a Religious Duty

- **Misconception:** Contrary to some beliefs, polygamy is not universally considered a religious duty or religious conduct. Courts and religious authorities have frequently clarified that it is not inherently required by any faith.

Power Imbalance & Mental Health

- **Psychological Effects:** Research in psychology has shown that polygamous relationships, particularly polygynous setups where one man has multiple wives, can lead to power imbalances and detrimental effects on women.
- **Mental Health Impact:** Women in polygynous relationships are more likely to suffer from mental health issues, including higher levels of anxiety, depression, and reduced life and marital satisfaction.

Physical, Emotional, and Sexual Abuse

- **Abuse Link:** Studies indicate a connection between polygamy and various forms of abuse, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. This can lead to negative emotional experiences for mothers in polygamous families, such as loneliness, despair, anger, powerlessness, and sadness.

Effects on Children

- **Adverse Impact on Children:** The stressful nature of polygamous marriages, along with potential conflicts among family members, can create an environment that is less conducive to the well-being and healthy development of children.

Way Forward

- The United Nations Human Rights Committee suggests that regions where polygamy persists should take steps to eliminate it. This is because polygamy is seen as a violation of women's dignity and a constraint on their freedom of choice.
- It is essential to address and reconsider the legal status of practices like polygamy, triple talaq, and nikah halala, as they are not only outdated but also detrimental to the well-being of Muslim women. These laws need to be questioned and eventually discarded.

SOURCE:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/assam-government-forms-three-member-panel-to-draft-anti-polygamy-law/article67266965.ece>

Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding polygamy in India:

1. The Hindu Marriage Act of 2005 prohibits Hindus to have multiple spouses.
2. Muslim personal law in India permits both men and women to have multiple spouses.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only

- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: D

Q.2 Consider the following statements regarding polygamy in India:

1. There is a blanket ban on polygamy in India for all religions
2. There is no separate law for Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs for prohibition of Polygamy.
3. The Indian Penal Code (IPC) criminalizes polygamy.

How many of the above statement/s is/are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

ANSWER: B

Q.3 Discuss the social, legal, and psychological implications of polygamy in contemporary society. Provide your insights on the need for reform and potential measures to address the associated issues.

Rishabh

