



Yojna IAS

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FEBRUARY 2024

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

YOJNA IAS WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS
12/02/2024 TO 18/02/2024

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CURRENT AFFAIRS

FEBRUARY 2024

PM MATSYA KISAN SAMRIDHI SAH-YOJANA

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "PM MATSYA KISAN SAMRIDHI SAH-YOJANA". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "INDIAN ECONOMY & AGRICULTURE" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Cabinet approves the "Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY)," a Central Sector Sub-scheme under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada for micro and small fishing firms. It reports to the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairy.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF PM-MKSSY:

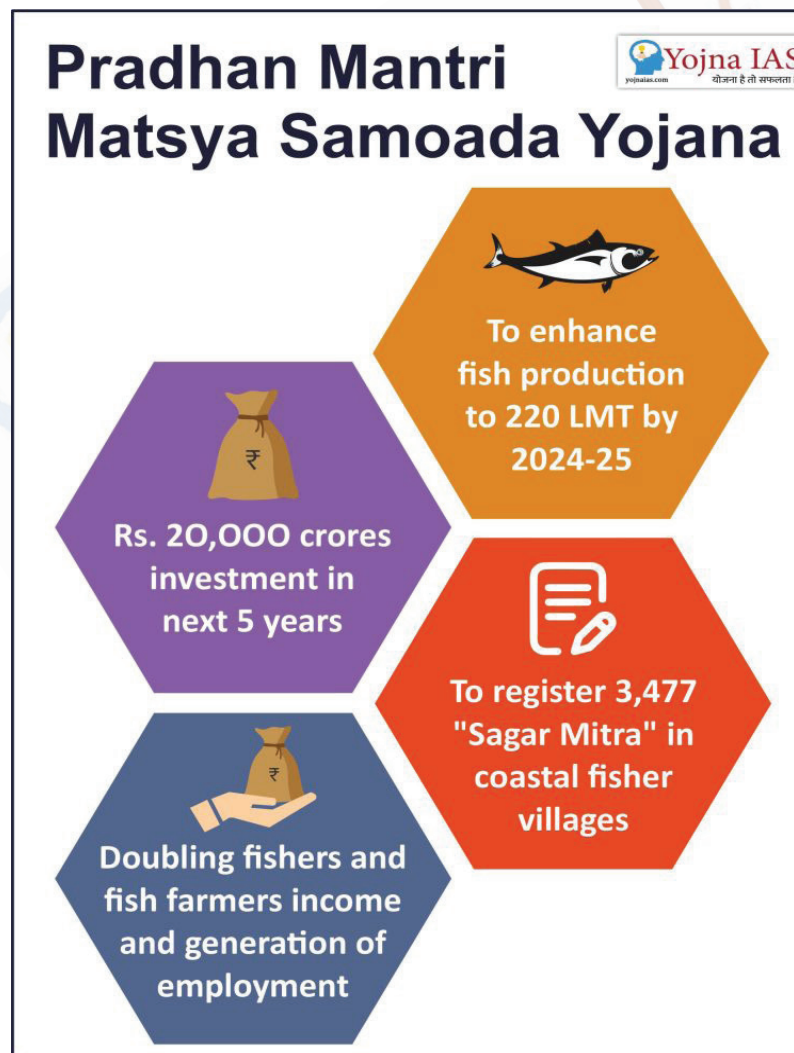
- **Formalisation:** Gradual formalisation of the unorganised fisheries industry by self-registration of fishers, fish farmers, and support workers on a National Fisheries industry Digital Platform, which includes the development of work-based digital IDs for fish workers to improve service delivery.
- **Ensuring Safety and Quality Assurance:** Performance grants are used to incentivize micro and small businesses to adopt and expand fish and fishery product safety and quality assurance systems, as well as to create and maintain jobs.
- **Aquaculture Insurance:** Offering a one-time reward to recipients who purchase aquaculture insurance.
- **Incentivizing Value-Chain Efficiencies:** Providing performance grants to fisheries and aquaculture microenterprises to improve value-chain efficiencies, including employment creation and maintenance.
- **Access to Institutional funding:** Improving access to institutional funding for fisheries sector micro and small businesses.

EXPENDITURE

The Sub-scheme will be implemented as a **Central Sector Sub-scheme under the Central Sector Component** of the PMMSY with an estimated outlay of **Rs.6,000 crore**, comprising 50% public finance, i.e. Rs.3,000 crore, including external financing from the **World Bank and the AFD**, and the remaining 50%, i.e. Rs.3,000 crore, being anticipated investment from beneficiaries/private sector leverage. It will be implemented for four years, from fiscal year 2023-24 to fiscal year 2026-27, throughout all states and UTs.

FISHERIES SECTOR IN INDIA

- **Fisheries and aquaculture** are significant sources of food, nutrition, employment, and money in India. At the primary level, the sector employs about 25 million fishers and fish growers, with twice as many employed further up the value chain.
- India is the world's **third largest fish producer**, accounting for **8% of worldwide production**, and ranks second in aquaculture production.
- **In 2021-22**, fish production is expected to be 16.24 million tonnes (MTs), with 4.12 MTs coming from marine sources and 12.12 MTs coming from aquaculture.



CHALLENGES FACED BY THE FISHERIES SECTOR

OVERFISHING:

Overfishing happens when fish are harvested at a rate that surpasses their natural reproduction, resulting in the depletion of fish populations. This could lead to the collapse of fisheries and have a severe influence on the ecology.

ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED, AND UNREGULATED (IUU) FISHING:

Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing hampers fisheries management efforts since it operates outside the legislation. It can lead to overfishing, endanger marine ecosystems, and create unfair competition for legal fishermen.

POLLUTION:

Agricultural runoff, industrial discharges, and plastic trash can contaminate water bodies, compromising the health of fish and other aquatic creatures. Pollutants can also build in fish tissues, providing health concerns to humans who consume polluted seafood.

INVASIVE SPECIES:

The introduction of non-native species into new environments can disrupt local ecosystems and harm native fish populations. Invasive species may outcompete native species for resources or spread illness.

HABITAT DEGRADATION:

Human activities such as coastal expansion, pollution, and destructive fishing techniques have the potential to destroy vital fish habitats such as coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass beds. Loss of habitat lowers fish breeding and feeding grounds.

CLIMATE CHANGE:

Climate change influences fish populations by changing ocean temperatures, currents, and prey distribution. It can also cause ocean acidification, which has an impact on the health of marine creatures and fisheries productivity in general.

LIMITED ACCESS TO MARKETS AND RESOURCES:

Market and resource access is typically a difficulty for small-scale fishers. A lack of infrastructure, technology, and financial assistance can limit their capacity to compete in the global market.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PMMSY

- **Job Creation:** It is expected to produce 1.7 lakh new jobs, with a focus on hiring 75,000 women, as well as 5.4 lakh additional employment opportunities in the micro and small firm value chain.
- **Performance-Based Incentives:** The gradual transition from traditional subsidies to performance-based incentives in fisheries
- **Addressing Aquaculture Crop Losses:** To enhance production and productivity, address aqua-

culture crop losses caused by disease through aquaculture insurance coverage. Improve export competitiveness with value addition, value realisation, and value creation.

- **Value Chain Efficiencies:** Increased income due to improved profit margins related to value chain efficiencies
- **National Fisheries Digital Platform:** To establish a National Fisheries Digital Platform to equip 40 lakh small and micro-enterprises with work-based IDs.
- **Job Creation:** It is expected to produce 1.7 lakh new jobs, with a focus on hiring 75,000 women, as well as 5.4 lakh additional employment opportunities in the micro and small firm value chain.

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q1) Consider the following statements:

- 1) 'Vanami Shakti' initiative is associated with the empowerment of Women in fisheries sector
- 2) The 'Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF)' is administered by NABARD
- 3) Odisha has implemented the 'Sagar Tatva' initiative for sustainable fisheries management
- 4) The primary objective of the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) is to Promote recreational fishing

How many of the above statements are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) Only three
- d) All four

ANSWER: C

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Q1) Discuss the importance of sustainable fisheries management in India and the potential consequences of inadequate measures on both the environment and the economy.**
- Q2) How can the integration of modern technology, such as satellite imagery and data analytics, contribute to the enhancement of fisheries management and productivity in India?**

DEMAND FOR STATEHOOD BY LADAKH

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "DEMAND FOR STATEHOOD BY LADAKH". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "POLITY & GOVERNANCE" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Union Territory of Ladakh recently shut down due to demands for statehood and constitutional protection under the 6th Schedule.

WHAT ARE THEIR DEMANDS?

- **Safeguards through the 6th Schedule:** Advocating for constitutional safeguards to protect indigenous peoples' cultural, linguistic, and territorial rights.
- **Campaigning for Ladakh's Statehood:** The goal is to elevate Ladakh from its current Union Territory status to that of a full-fledged state, giving it greater political autonomy and decision-making power.
- **Job Reservations:** Calling for restricted employment opportunities for Ladakh's young to enable equal access to economic resources and opportunity.
- **Separate Parliamentary seats:** We propose creating separate Parliamentary seats for Leh and Kargil, taking into account each region's distinctive demographic and geographical characteristics.

BACKGROUND

- Ladakh, which was previously part of the state of Jammu & Kashmir, became a Union Territory in August 2019 after Article 370 was repealed and the state was divided into two independent Union Territories.
- Since then, the region has wrestled with its new administrative position, seeking for greater autonomy and the preservation of its cultural and demographic identity.

REASONS FOR LADAKH'S INTEREST IN SIXTH SCHEDULE INCLUSION:

Sense of Neglect: The predominantly Buddhist Leh district has long sought Union Territory status, feeling neglected by the previous Jammu and Kashmir state government, which was dominated by politicians from Kashmir and Jammu.

Limited Powers of Councils: The existing councils in Ladakh lack inclusion in the sixth schedule and have limited authority, primarily involving the collection of local taxes such as parking fees and land allotment vested by the central government.

UT Status without Legislature: Unlike the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh lacks a legislature. Despite having four MLAs in the former J&K assembly, the current administration is solely in the hands of bureaucrats, making the government seem more distant than Srinagar.

Concerns over Domicile Policy: Changes in the domicile policy in Jammu and Kashmir have sparked fears about Ladakh's land, demography, and cultural identity. The removal of Article 35A, which protected the rights of permanent residents, has led to apprehensions about land transfer to non-tribals.

Impact of Article 370: Under Kashmir's governance, Ladakh experienced a loss of development, political aspirations, identity, and language due to Article 370. The fear is that external forces may induce demographic changes and job losses for locals.

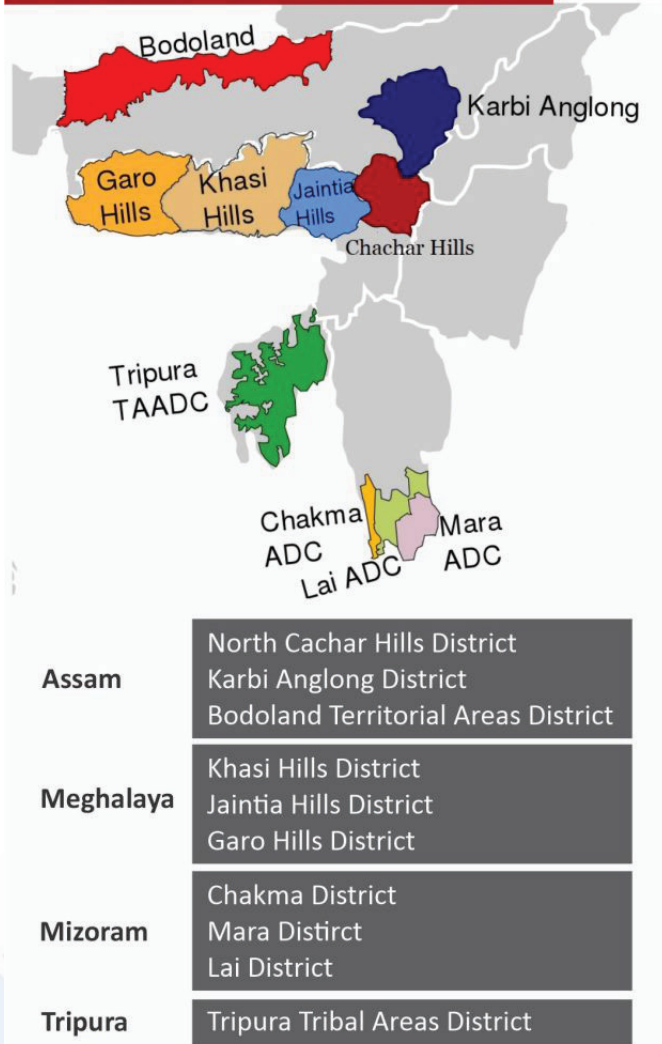
Administrative Challenges: The accountability of Ladakh's Council officers to the central government hampers decision execution. Granting autonomy to the Council under the sixth schedule could resolve this issue.

Statehood Demand: A coalition of religious, social, and political representatives from Leh and Kargil is advocating for full statehood, surpassing the sixth schedule. They also seek protection for local land and job opportunities.

ABOUT 6TH SCHEDULE OF THE CONSTITUTION

- The Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution outlines the administrative structure for specific regions in **Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram**, designating them as Autonomous Districts and Regions. This framework aims to **protect the cultural, linguistic, and land rights of the indigenous populations in these areas**. The Governor, under this schedule, has the authority to establish administrative centers and modify territorial boundaries within these autonomous regions.
- Initially comprising two parts, the Sixth Schedule now encompasses ten regions spread across the four states. Each region has distinct legislative, executive, judicial, and financial powers. The key features of the Sixth Schedule include:
 1. **Executive Functions:** District and Regional Councils are responsible for overseeing the development and management of public amenities like schools, dispensaries, highways, and waterways. They also play a role in determining educational policies for primary schools.
 2. **Legislative Functions:** District Councils in autonomous regions have the authority to enact laws concerning land, forests, village administration, marriage, social norms, and more, subject to approval from the state governor.
 3. **Judicial Functions:** Council Courts handle disputes involving Scheduled Tribes within the district, with jurisdictional limitations on crimes punishable by death or a minimum five-year sentence.

AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCILS



4. **Financial Functions:** District and Regional Councils are involved in formulating budgets, imposing taxes on businesses, trades, and goods, and granting permits for mineral mining within their jurisdiction.
- The **significance of the Sixth Schedule** lies in providing a framework for the autonomous governance of tribal areas. It **ensures the preservation of indigenous rights and cultures while facilitating local development and administration**. Through its provisions, the Sixth Schedule aims to empower tribal communities by granting them legislative, executive, judicial, and financial autonomy within specified regions.

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q1) Consider the following statements:

- The primary objective of the Sixth Schedule is to protect the minority languages
- Governor of the state appoints the tribal advisory councils in the Sixth Schedule areas

3. Article 244 of the Constitution empowers the President to declare an area as a Scheduled Area

How many of the above statements are correct?

1. Only one
2. Only two
3. All three
4. None

ANSWER: B

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Q1) Explain the historical background and significance of the Sixth Schedule. How did it address the unique administrative needs of tribal areas in India?
- Q2) Compare and contrast the provisions of the Sixth Schedule with those of the Fifth Schedule. Highlight the distinctive features that differentiate the administration of scheduled areas in these two schedules.

GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND EQUITY

SOURCE - THE HINDU AND PIB.

GENERAL STUDIES - INDIAN POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL JUSTICE, UN WOMEN, WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM REPORT 2023, GLOBAL GENDER GAP INDEX, GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

- 'Alliance for Global Good - Gender Equity and Equality' program launched by India at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting held in Davos, Switzerland from January 15-19, 2024.
- The World Economic Forum (WEF) has lauded India's inclusive and remarkable growth story under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for its agenda of **"Women-led growth"** and its philosophy of **"Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas"**. The government has been praised.



GLOBAL GOOD-GENDER EQUITY AND EQUALITY COALITION :

- The initiative **“Women-led Development”** agenda launched by the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi has been globally supported at the World Economic Forum (WEF) 2024, with the committed support of more than 10,000 businesses from across the WEF world.
- At the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF), India participated in the spirit of **“Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam”**, aligning with the WEF’s overarching theme “Rebuilding Trust” for a shared future marked by global cooperation. Ready to shape.
- At WEF 2024, the Indian official delegation is led by **Union Minister of Women and Child Development Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani, Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Housing and Urban Affairs Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Union Minister of Railways, Communications, Electronics and IT Shri Ashwini Vaishnav, Shri RK Singh, Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry** and other senior officials of the Government of India participated.
- The Forum meeting announced the launch of the **“Global Good-Gender Equity and Equality”** with the support and collaboration of WEF and the Government of India.
- Announcing the launch of this alliance, Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani said – **“In a place where only politics is involved with the flow of money, we are here to join hands with industry, enterprise and humanity in this grand alliance. Being able to bring together the best.”**
- The collaboration has received support from industry leaders including Mastercard, Uber, Tata, TVS, Bayer, Godrej, Serum Institute of India, IMD Lausanne and over 10,000 industry partners.
- The alliance was organized and led by the CII Center for Women’s Leadership and supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
- The World Economic Forum has joined the alliance as a ‘Network Partner’ and Invest India as an ‘Institutional Partner’.
- In view of India’s enduring commitment to **‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’** and its continuous efforts towards **“Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and Sabka Prayas”** for **‘One Earth, One Family, One Fu-**

ture', the **Global Alliance for Gender Equality ('Alliance for Global Good – Gender Equity and Equality')** will definitely advance all gender related issues strongly.

- This year's unique initiative at WEF was the first-ever Women's Leadership Lounge (We Lead Lounge) by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), led by the Union Minister of Women and Child Development.
- The lounge hosted various panel discussions and meetings on the topics of "women-led development" and increasing women's participation in the economy, bridging the digital gender gap, promoting women's health, etc.
- The **"We Lead"** lounge also showcased handicrafts made by women entrepreneurs and products made by the Tea and Coffee Board of India for women-driven global prosperity.
- Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani participated in eight sessions of this annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF). These include **'Restoring Confidence in Global Systems', 'BRICS in Expansion', 'Can India Seize Its Moment' and 'Country Strategy Dialogue on India'**. Her meaningful interventions in these sessions focused the attention of all the countries attending the meeting on the policies and initiatives of the Government of India with special emphasis on gender equality and women-led development.
- Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani, Additional Union Minister of WEF, held bilateral meetings with leaders from across the world. She met Her Excellency Noor Ali Alkhulaif, Minister of Sustainable Development of Bahrain, Her Excellency Mrs. Karien van Gennep, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Social Affairs and Employment of the Netherlands and Her Excellency Ms. Caroline Edstadler, also discussed issues of mutual interest and potential cooperation with Her Excellency Ms. Caroline Edstadler, Federal Minister for the European Union and the Constitution, Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria.



WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM :

- The World Economic Forum was founded in 1971 as a non-profit organization and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

- The World Economic Forum engages society's foremost political, cultural, business and other leaders to shape the regional and industry agenda at the global level.

SOME MAJOR REPORTS ISSUED OR PUBLISHED BY THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM :

1. Global Energy Transition Index
2. Global Competitiveness Report
3. Global IT Report (joint report with INSEAD and Cornell University)
4. global gender gap index report
5. Global Travel and Tourism Report

UN WOMEN :

- UN Women was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2010 to accelerate progress in meeting the needs and rights of women and girls around the world.
- UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards to achieve gender equality and engages governments and citizens to design and implement laws, policies, programs and services that benefit women and girls. Work together with society.
- UN Women's four key strategies focus on strategic priorities such as women's leadership and political participation, women's economic empowerment, ending violence against women, and peace, security and humanitarian action.

INITIATIVES STARTED BY INDIA TO REDUCE GENDER GAP :

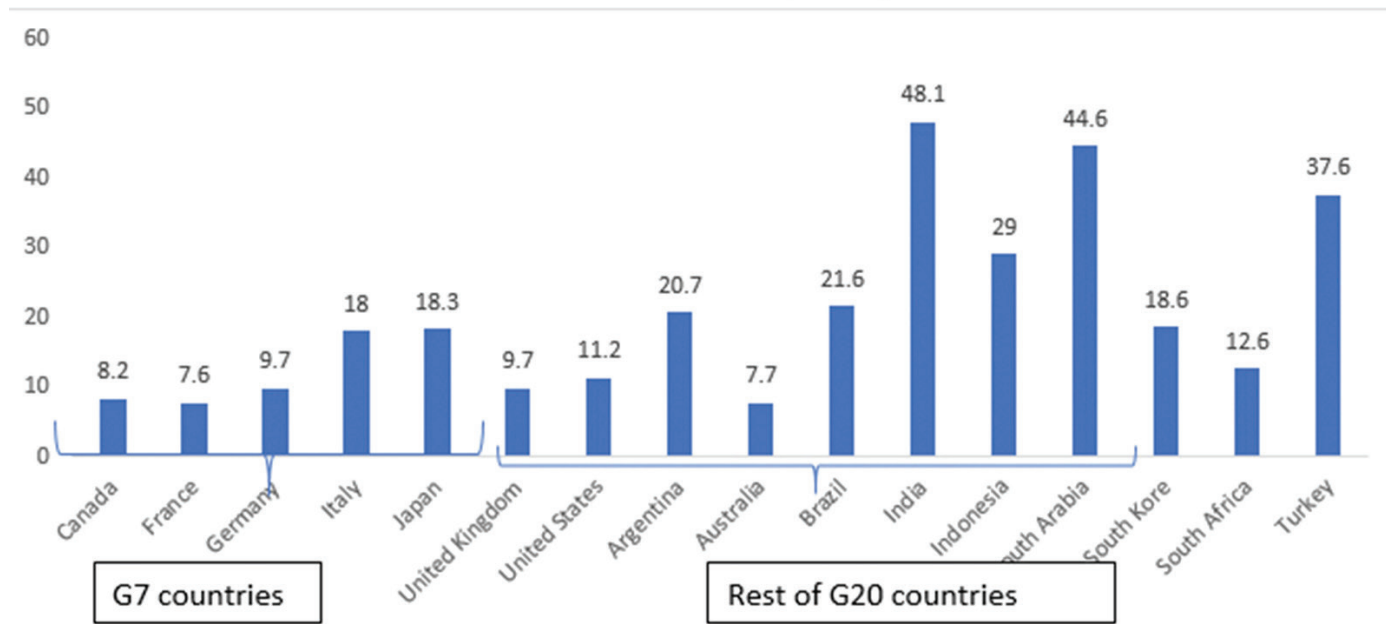


Following are some of the major initiatives launched by India to reduce the gender gap in social, economic and political life –

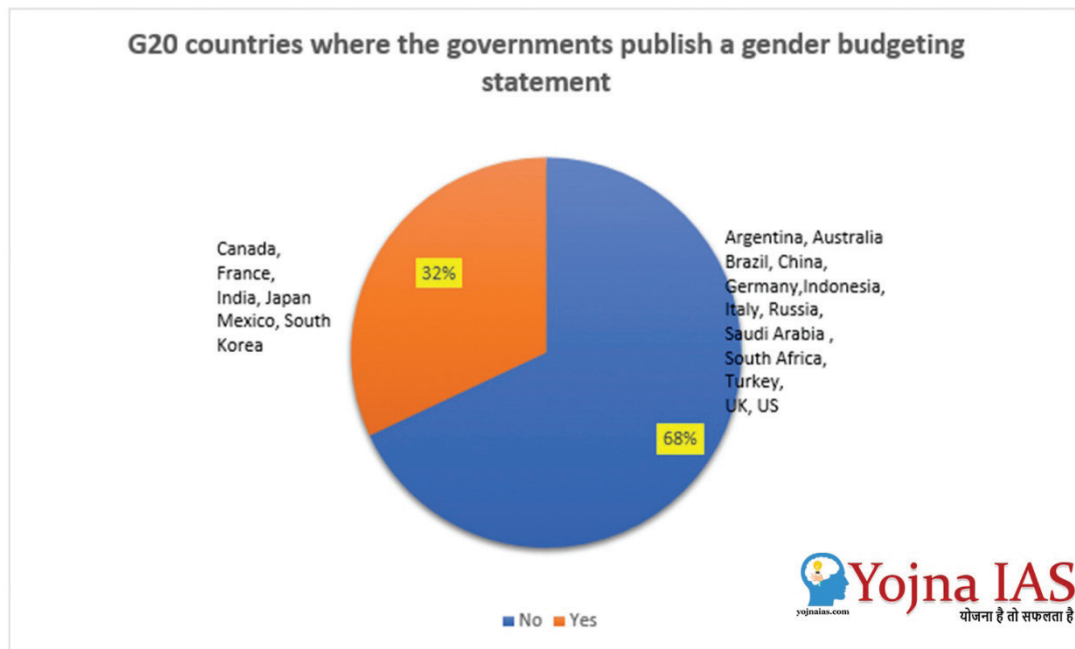
- **Mahila Shakti Kendras :** Mahila Shakti Kendras have been established by the Government of India with the aim of empowering rural women by enhancing their skill development and

connecting them with employment opportunities.

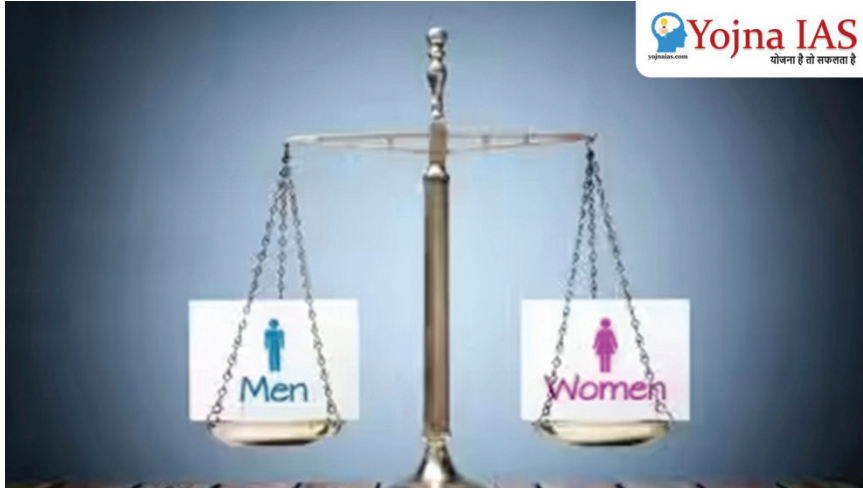
- **Kasturba Gandhi Girls Schools :** In India, Kasturba Gandhi Girls Schools have been started by establishing them in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs).
- **Sukanya Samridhi Yojana :** Sukanya Samridhi Yojana has been started by the Government of India. Through this scheme, girls have been empowered financially by opening bank accounts.
- **Women Entrepreneurship :** To promote women entrepreneurship, the government has launched programs like Stand-up India and Mahila e-Haat (online marketing platform to support women entrepreneurs/SHGs/NGOs), Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Program (ESSDP). Have done.
- **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao:** The main objective of launching the 'Beti Bachao - Beti Padhao' program by the Government of India is to increase the number of girl children in the country and to ensure the guarantee of safety, survival and education of the girl child.
- **Rashtriya Mahila Kosh:** The main objective of Rashtriya Mahila Kosh launched by the Government of India is to provide various livelihood opportunities to poor women and loans at concessional rates and terms for income generating activities through an apex microfinance organization. Have to provide.
- **Political Reservation:** The government has reserved 33% seats in Panchayati Raj institutions for women.
- **Capacity building aimed at empowering elected women representatives:** The main objective of this program is to empower women to participate effectively in governance processes and make them self-reliant.



CONCLUSION / SOLUTION :



- According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2023, there has been a slight improvement in India's ranking in terms of gender equality. However, despite this, India is still far behind the countries around the world. Despite an improvement of eight points in India's ranking this time compared to last year, India's ranking is at 127th among 146 countries across the world. In the World Economic Forum's 2022 report, India's ranking was 135 among 146 countries.
- In terms of gender equality, the ranking of India's neighboring countries Nepal, Bhutan, China, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh is much better than India. In which Bangladesh has got 59th rank, China has got 107th rank, Nepal has got 116th rank, Bhutan has got 103rd rank and Sri Lanka has got 115th rank. Whereas Pakistan has been placed at 142nd rank.
- The World Economic Forum report states that Iceland has had the best performance among countries around the world, which has reduced the gender gap by more than 90 percent for the 14th consecutive year.
- This report states that while equality in pay and income has increased in India, the share of women in senior positions and technical roles has decreased compared to last year. Whereas in terms of political empowerment, India has recorded equality of 25.3 percent, which is the highest since the report came in 2006.
- The share of women in ministerial positions is very low in countries around the world. 75 countries of the world have about 20 percent or less women ministers. Countries like India, Turkey and China have less than seven percent women ministers, while countries like Azerbaijan, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon have almost zero women ministers.



- The report states that gender equality has reached pre-Covid levels, but its pace has become quite stagnant and slow. Till now no country in the world has achieved complete gender equality.
- According to this report, the top-9 countries included in the ranking have closed 80 percent of the gap in gender inequality. Along with this, the report also states that it may take about 131 years to bridge the gender gap in the world, while it may take 169 years for economic equality on the basis of gender and 162 years for political equality.
- The idea of a global alliance for gender equality and equity emerged from the G-20 Leaders' Declaration and India's enduring commitment to women-led development as enunciated by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.
- The primary and stated objective of this new alliance is to bring together global best practices, knowledge sharing and investment in the identified areas of women's health, education and entrepreneurship.
- The Alliance will build on the commitments of G20 Leaders for the benefit of the larger global community, as a follow-up to the activities of the Engagement Group and the Business G20 Women and G20 Empowerment (G20 Empowerment – EMPOWER) initiative under the G20 framework.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM :

Q.1. Consider the following statements regarding the Global Alliance for Gender Equality and Equity.

1. The Global Coalition for Gender Equality and Equity is organized by the World Economic Forum.
2. In the year 2024, the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum was held in Davos, Switzerland.
3. The theme of the World Economic Forum in the year 2024 was 'Rebuilding Trust'.
4. The alliance was organized and coordinated by the CII Center for Women's Leadership and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Which of the above statement / statements is/ are correct?

- (A) Only 1, 2 and 3
- (B) Only 2, 3 and 4
- (C) None of these.
- (D) All of these.

Answer – (D)

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM :

Q.1. Explaining the various dimensions of the Global Alliance for Gender Equality and Equality, discuss what are the obstacles in the way of gender equality and equality for men and women in India? Present a rational opinion.

WATER (PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF POLLUTION) AMENDMENT BILL, 2024

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "WATER (PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF POLLUTION) AMENDMENT BILL, 2024". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Bill, 2024 has recently been passed by the Parliament.

KEY PROVISIONS MENTIONED IN THE WATER (PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF POLLUTION) AMENDMENT BILL, 2024

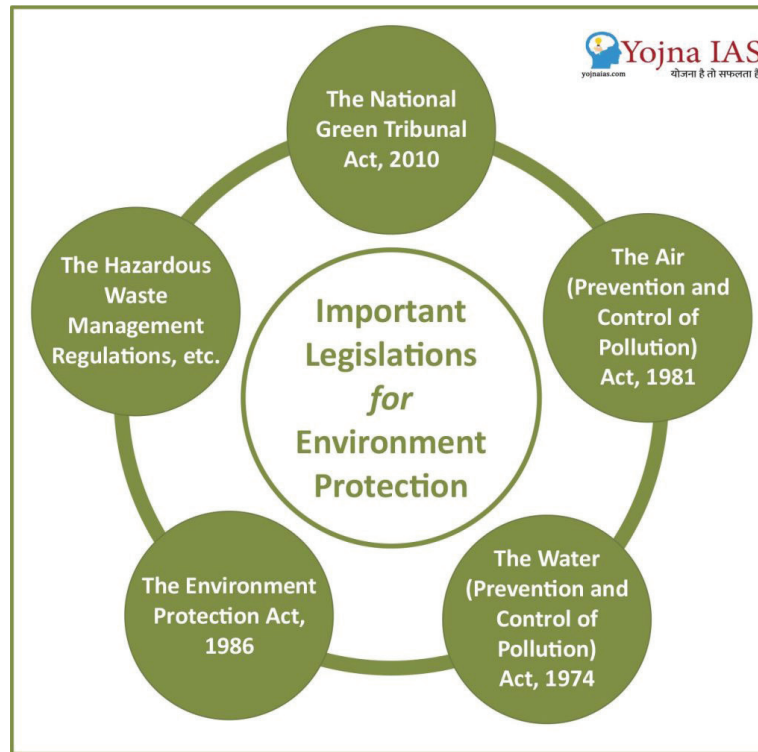
- The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act of 1974 has long been a cornerstone of India's environmental legislation, ensuring the sustainable management of water resources.
- The recent modification aims to resolve several deficiencies and adapt regulatory structures to current demands.
- Amendments to the Water Act are also necessary to bring it in line with the Air Act, as both laws contain comparable provisions.

IMPORTANT AMENDED PROVISIONS:

1. The **decriminalization of minor offenses** in the context of water pollution is a key focus, aiming to **eliminate concerns about imprisonment for technical or procedural lapses**. The underlying rationale is to establish penalties that match the seriousness of offenses, fostering compliance without excessively burdening those involved.
2. **Specific types of industrial plants can be exempted from certain legal restrictions**, as per the revised bill, granting the central government the authority to make such exceptions. This includes provisions related to the establishment of new outlets and discharges outlined in **Section 25**. The goal is to **simplify regulatory processes, minimize redundancy in surveillance efforts, and reduce unnecessary challenges for regulatory agencies, ultimately enhancing efficiency**.
3. To **improve regulatory oversight and standardization across states**, the bill introduces measures that **empower the central government**. This includes the ability to set guidelines for appointing chairpersons of State Pollution Control Boards and issuing directives on the approval, rejection, or revocation of industry-related consents. The legislation also **outlines specific mandatory qualifications, experience requirements, and procedures to ensure the fair appointment of chairpersons**.
4. The current modifications apply to Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Union territories (although the **original Act applies to 25 states only**). They substitute imprisonment for “minor” offences with **fin**es ranging from **₹10,000 to ₹15 lakh**.
5. However, operating or constructing an industrial unit without SPCB permission is still a serious offence punishable by up to six years in prison and a fine.

CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH THE BILL

- **Lack of Supervision:** The provision granting exemptions for specific industrial categories from obtaining consent may pose a risk of heightened pollution levels if not effectively regulated.
- **Questionable Adjudication Process:** Allowing the central government to designate adjudication officers could raise concerns regarding the fairness and independence of the adjudication process.
- **Centralized Nomination Process Concerns:** The centrally prescribed nomination procedures by the central government for appointing chairpersons of State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) may compromise the autonomy of state governments.
- **Diminished Deterrence:** The replacement of imprisonment provisions with penalties for violations against pollution standards might lessen the deterrent impact.
- **Unchecked Discharge Hazards:** Insufficient oversight may lead to uncontrolled discharge of pollutants into water bodies, jeopardizing water quality and public health.
- **Potential Administrative Inefficiencies:** Expanding the entities authorized to file complaints may result in overlapping jurisdictions and administrative inefficiencies, potentially causing delays and bureaucratic obstacles.



ABOUT WATER (PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF POLLUTION) ACT, 1974

The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, enacted in 1974, stands as a pivotal legislative framework in India designed to address and manage water pollution. This comprehensive legislation aims to prevent and control water pollution, emphasising the restoration and maintenance of water wholesomeness.

Constitution of Control Boards

Under this Act, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and State Pollution Control Boards (SP-CBs) were established, playing crucial roles in the enforcement and implementation of pollution control measures. The CPCB, formed in September 1974, operates as a statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

Dual Responsibility under the Air Act, 1981

An important extension occurred in 1981 when the CPCB was entrusted with responsibilities under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act. This dual role underscores its significance in addressing both air and water pollution issues.

Amendments in past

The Act underwent amendments in 1978 and 1988, focusing on clarifying ambiguities and empowering the Pollution Control Boards. These amendments strengthened the regulatory framework and expanded the powers of the Boards to effectively address emerging challenges.

Key Provisions and Industry Compliance

The Act mandates industries and local bodies to obtain prior consent from State Pollution Control

Boards before initiating operations that involve the discharge of domestic sewage or trade effluent into water bodies. The Boards may grant consent with specified conditions or refuse, accompanied by written reasons.

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q1. Consider the following statements

1. Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) operates under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
2. Under the Water Act, 1974, State Pollution Control Boards can grant or refuse consent with written reasons
3. Amendments in 1978 and 1988 to the Water Act primarily aimed at weakening the regulatory framework

How many of the above statements are correct?

1. Only one
2. Only two
3. All three
4. None

ANSWER: B

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Q1) Analyze the role of environmental impact assessments (EIAs) in the pollution regulatory framework of India. How do EIAs contribute to sustainable development and environmental protection?
- Q2) Evaluate the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as it relates to industries' responsibility in pollution control. How can CSR initiatives contribute to a sustainable and eco-friendly industrial landscape?

INDIA – UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE) RELATIONS

SOURCE – THE HINDU AND PIB.

GENERAL STUDIES – POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE OF INDIA, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, INDIA'S NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (CEPA),

WHY IN THE NEWS ?



- The visit of the Indian Prime Minister to the UAE in February 2024 is significant from the point of view that he has gone there to inaugurate a temple built by Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan, a resident of Bochasan in Abu Dhabi. This is the seventh visit of the Indian Prime Minister since 2015, reflecting the growing importance of bilateral relations.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Indian community at the **'Ahlan Modi'** event in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, on 13 February 2024. During this, he interacted directly with about 65 thousand people of the Indian community living in the UAE. India's PM Modi said- **"Across the ocean, I have brought to you the fragrance of the soil in which you were born. I have come with a message, another message for your 140 crore Indian brothers and sisters that India is proud of you."**
- The program organized in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, started with the national anthems of both the countries. As Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi entered the open-air stadium, members of the Indian diaspora chanted **'Har Har Modi, Ghar - Ghar Modi', 'We Love Modi', 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai', and 'Jai Shri Ram'**. He was welcomed with the proclamation of.
- The Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, has visited the UAE for the third time in the last eight months. He paid a bilateral visit in July 2023 and then traveled to COP28 in November, where he was given the rare honor of being the only guest to address the formal opening session.
- Sheikh Mohammed also visited Delhi in September 2023 for the G-20 summit as one of India's special invitees.
- Sheikh Mohammed visited India to participate in the **Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit in January 2024** as the chief guest.
- At a time when diplomatic relations in global politics are widely considered important for mutual trade, the deep personal relationship between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan is a testament to India and the United Arab Emirates. The long standing bilateral relations between the Emirates are being viewed globally as a new relationship in the making.
- This is a relationship between India and the UAE where trust and credibility are more important than diplomatic reciprocity and protocol, where convergence of strategic interests is driven by

regular interactions to lay the foundation of one of India's most dynamic and consequential bilateral relations. Get a boost.

- The Prime Minister greeted the people of Indian origin who participated in the 'Ahlan Modi' program by saying 'Namaskar' amid slogans of 'Modi Modi' at the Zayed Sports Stadium in Abu Dhabi. He said he was overwhelmed by the affection from the Indian community at the event.
- In the context of current global political and diplomatic relations, India and the UAE are partners in progress and the relationship between India and the UAE is one of talent, innovation and culture.
- Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been awarded the '**Order of Zayed**', the highest civilian honor of the United Arab Emirates.
- Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has gone on a two-day visit to the United Arab Emirates. He inaugurated the largest Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi, the capital of UAE on 14 February 2024.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CURRENT VISIT OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA TO THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES :

- This current visit of the Prime Minister of India is also important because it is scheduled by the religious calendar for the '**inauguration of the grand Hindu temple**' in Abu Dhabi, UAE.
- The presence of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was also seen as a reminder that during his first visit in August 2015, he had requested the UAE leadership to provide land for a Hindu temple in the UAE. Will cater to the religious and spiritual needs of the emirate's large Hindu community.
- The inauguration of the Hindu Temple by the Prime Minister of India in Abu Dhabi, UAE on 14 February 2024 has no doubt created excitement among the 3.5 million Indian people/Indian citizens in the UAE. A mega event named Ahlan (Welcome Modi) was also organized at the Zayed Sports City Stadium in Abu Dhabi.
- Also includes the Prime Minister of India's address as the guest of honor at the 11th World Government Summit in Dubai.
- Often referred to as Dubai's version of Davos, it is a major annual conference that attracts government leaders, heads of international organizations, leading industrialists and thinkers from around the world.
- The main theme of this year's summit is '**Shaping the Governments of the Future**' and provides an important platform for India to present its views to an influential global audience.

BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND UNITED ARAB EMIRATES :



- In 1972, bilateral diplomatic relations were established between India and the United Arab Emirates.
- The visit of the Prime Minister of India to the UAE in August 2015 marked the beginning of bilateral relations and a new strategic partnership between the two countries.
- Following the visit of the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi to India as the Chief Guest at the Republic Day celebrations of India in 2017, India and the UAE took forward bilateral relations and worked towards building a comprehensive strategic partnership. Started.
- Under this, the bilateral relations between India and the United Arab Emirates were given impetus to start negotiations for the **India-UAE comprehensive economic partnership agreement**.

BILATERAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND UNITED ARAB EMIRATES :



- Under the mutual bilateral relations between India and UAE, mutual economic partnership between India and UAE has increased. As a result, in the year 2022-23, bilateral trade between India and UAE will reach US \$ 85 billion. UAE is India's third largest trading partner and second largest exporter.

- Under the mutual bilateral relations between India and UAE, a target has been set to increase bilateral goods trade to more than US\$ 100 billion and services trade to US\$ 15 billion in the coming five years.
- The UAE's investments in India are estimated to be around US\$11.67 billion, making it the ninth largest investor in India, as a trade agreement also enables two-way investment flows.
- Many Indian companies have set up their manufacturing units in the UAE as joint ventures or in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) for cement, building materials, textiles, engineering products, consumer electronics, etc.
- Many Indian companies have also invested in tourism, hospitality, catering, healthcare, retail and education sectors in the UAE.
- Under India's revised strategy of Free Trade Agreements (FTA), the Government of India has provided priority to at least six countries/territories, with UAE topping the list for Early Harvest Deals (or Interim Trade Agreements) . The UK, European Union, Australia, Canada, Israel and a group of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries are some of the other such countries/regions.
- The UAE had also earlier announced plans to pursue bilateral economic agreements with India and seven other countries (UK, Turkey, South Korea, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Israel and Kenya).

TO REVIVE AND STRENGTHEN BILATERAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND UAE :



- Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is also expected to launch the much-awaited Bharat Mart in Dubai, which is also a major initiative of Dubai-based DP World and India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Which will promote the exports of Indian micro, small and medium enterprises by providing them retail, warehousing and facilities.
- Logistics facilities in the Jebel Ali Free Zone area of Dubai, DP World to allow Indian manufacturers of machinery, electrical and electronics products, auto components, medical devices, furniture, apparel, processed foods, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and handicrafts to ship their products. will build approximately 800 showrooms and 18 warehouses over the next 24 months on a 1.3 million square feet plot to showcase and reach buyers and markets in Iran, Central Asia, Africa and the Middle East. ,

- The Bharat Mart project comes on the heels of the ambitious India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which completed its first year in 2023 and has already seen India's trade with the UAE grow by 16% to \$85 billion. This has strengthened the UAE's position as India's third largest trading partner and second largest export destination.

REGIONAL ISSUES :

- The talks between Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi and Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed also reviewed the ongoing war in Gaza, Houthi attacks on shipping in the Red Sea and the deteriorating situation in the region in the context of the clear and present danger.
- Longer shipping times, higher freight costs and a potential rise in oil prices could pose significant risks to India's economic growth in trade relations between India and the UAE.
- It is important for the Indian government to coordinate closely with key regional partners such as the UAE as well as countries such as Saudi Arabia. At the same time, Egypt will also have to ensure that India's interests are protected.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has described India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as 'partners in progress'. PM Modi, while greeting the people of Indian origin in an event organized in Abu Dhabi on 13 February 2024, described the relationship between the two countries as an ideal for other countries of the world. He said that both the countries are creating new history in the third decade of the 21st century. India wishes that our partnership continues to grow stronger every day.



CONCLUSION / SOLUTION:

- In the current global politics, the unique combination of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between India and the UAE and Bharat Mart has the potential to provide a strong boost to India's manufactured goods exports. Even though early steps to start trading in national currencies promise to reduce transaction costs. The MoU signed at the bilateral talks will further strengthen economic relations between India and the UAE.
- There are many other major achievements that both India and the UAE can legitimately take credit for.

- Indian Institute of Technology Delhi has launched its Master's Program in Energy Transition and Sustainability at its interim campus in Abu Dhabi.
- Growing investment from the UAE has made it the fourth largest source of foreign direct investment in India in 2022-23. Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) will soon open an office in GIFT City, Gujarat. A 14-year agreement has been signed by Indian Oil Corporation Limited to purchase 1.2 million metric tonnes of liquefied natural gas per year from Abu Dhabi National Oil Company during 2026-39 to boost India's energy security.
- Discussions on several sensitive areas of defense cooperation between India and UAE and joint military exercises between the two countries are progressing well.
- The UAE is now India's third largest trading partner and seventh largest investor.
- Today India is leading the global discussion on many fronts. Both India and UAE are partnering on ease of living and ease of doing business. Today the aim of every Indian is to make India a developed nation by 2047. In such a situation, the mutual relationship between India and the United Arab Emirates will prove to be a **'milestone'** in India's economic development.
- The mutual achievements of India and the UAE in terms of community and culture are serving as an exemplary model for other countries of the world.
- India and the United Arab Emirates have shared community and cultural ties between the two countries since ancient times.
- Both India and UAE are writing the script of a better future in the **'book of the world' with the 'pen of time'**.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM :

Q.1. Consider the following statements in the context of mutual relations between India and the United Arab Emirates.

1. The Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, has visited the UAE four times in the last eight months.
2. Sheikh Mohammed visited India to participate in the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit in January 2024 as the chief guest.
3. The Indian community was addressed by India's Defense Minister Rajnath Singh at the 'Ahlan Modi' event in Abu Dhabi.
4. India's Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar has been awarded the 'Order of Zayed', the highest civilian honor of the United Arab Emirates.

Which of the above statement / statements is/ are correct?

- (A) Only 1 and 3
 (B) Only 2 and 4

(C) Only 3

(D) Only 2

Answer – (D)

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM :

Q.1. Highlight the key provisions of the India-United Arab Emirates Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement and discuss how the economic, strategic and strategic relationship between India and the United Arab Emirates is playing a supporting role in making India a developed nation?

IEA'S REPORT INDIAN OIL MARKET OUTLOOK TO 2030 REPORT

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "IEA'S REPORT INDIAN OIL MARKET OUTLOOK TO 2030 REPORT". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "INDIAN ECONOMY" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The International Energy Agency (IEA) recently published the Indian Oil Market Outlook to 2030 report, which examines how India's involvement in the global oil market may change between now and 2030. The report examines energy transition patterns that may affect oil demand in various industries, and how these changes may impact the country's energy security.

WHAT DOES THE REPORT SAY?

INDIA'S PREEMINENCE IN OIL DEMAND GROWTH:

Projections indicate that India will emerge as the primary contributor to global oil demand growth until 2030, **surpassing China by 2027**. The anticipated surge in India's oil demand is estimated to reach approximately 1.2 million **barrels per day (bpd)** by 2023, constituting over a third of the projected global demand growth of 3.2 million bpd by 2030. The outlook for India's total oil demand projects an increase from 5.48 million bpd in 2023 to 6.64 million bpd in 2030. This growth is attributed to robust economic expansion, population growth, and demographic factors.

INVESTMENTS IN THE REFINING SECTOR:

Indian oil companies are making substantial investments in the refining sector to meet the escalating domestic oil demand. Over the **next seven years, India is expected to add 1 million bpd of new refinery distillation capacity**, surpassing any other country globally outside of China. Additional significant projects are under consideration, potentially exceeding the anticipated 6.8 million bpd

capacity.

ROLE IN GLOBAL OIL MARKETS:

India is positioned to maintain its role as a crucial exporter of transportation fuels to markets in Asia and the Atlantic Basin. **Since 2022**, India's influence as a global swing supplier has grown, particularly with the redirection of Asian diesel and jet fuel due to the loss of Russian product exports to European markets. **In 2023, India ranked as the fourth-largest exporter** of middle distillates globally and the **sixth-largest exporter of refinery products** at 1.2 million bpd. The forecast indicates that new refining capacity will initially boost global product supplies to 1.4 million bpd through the mid-decade before slightly declining to 1.2 million bpd by 2030 due to the rise in domestic demand.

INCREASED FUEL DEMANDS:

Diesel/gasoil is identified as the predominant driver of oil demand growth in India, contributing nearly half of the nation's increase and over one-sixth of the total global oil demand growth by 2030. Jet-kerosene demand is poised to experience substantial growth at an average rate of 5.9% per year, albeit from a lower baseline compared to other countries. India's average fuel consumption is expected to increase by 0.7%, as the country's growing fleet of electrified vehicles helps to offset a larger increase in demand. The electrification trend is also expected to lead to modest growth in gasoline demand, while increased investments in production facilities are anticipated to drive LPG demand.

CRUDE OIL IMPORTS:

India's crude oil imports are predicted to rise by more than a fourth to 5.8 million barrels per day by 2030, due to sustained demand growth and falling domestic supply. Currently, India relies on imports to fulfill over 85% of its oil requirements, making it the **third-largest global consumer of crude oil after the US and China**. The nation's domestic consumption, as per oil ministry data, stands at around 5 million bpd.

BIOFUELS IN DECARBONIZATION:

Biofuels are expected to play a pivotal role in India's transport sector decarbonization. India currently stands as the **world's third-largest producer and consumer of ethanol**, with domestic production tripling over the last five years. Supported by ample feedstocks, political backing, and effective policy implementation, India's ethanol blending rate of approximately 12% ranks among the world's highest. India has expedited its timeline for doubling nationwide **ethanol blending in gasoline to 20%**, aiming to achieve this

Major Oil Refineries in India



by Q4 2026. However, meeting the 20% ethanol blending target within this accelerated time frame poses several challenges, primarily related to rapidly expanding feedstock supplies.

EFFORTS IN ENERGY TRANSITION:

The increased adoption of **Electric Vehicles (EVs)** is anticipated to play a pivotal role in the transport sector's decarbonization. Projections estimate that the combined impact of new EVs and energy efficiency improvements will prevent an additional **480,000 barrels per day of oil demand in the 2023-2030 period.** Without these gains, India's oil demand would reach a significantly higher 1.68 million bpd by 2030 compared to the current forecast.

CHALLENGES:

Despite making efforts to attract foreign upstream investment, the domestic crude oil production is expected to continue declining over the medium term due to a lack of new discoveries. In 2023, India ranked as the world's second-largest crude oil net importer, **having increased imports by 36%** over the past decade to 4.6 million bpd to meet rising refinery intake. The continued expansion of refining processing is expected to further elevate crude oil imports to **5.8 million bpd by 2030**, posing significant implications for India's security of supply.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

India's current oil stock holding levels equate to 66 days of net-import cover, with **Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) stocks covering seven days.** In comparison, IEA member countries maintain a stockpile equivalent to **90 days of their demand.** While India holds an associate member status and is not a full member of the agency, there is a need to enhance its capacity to respond to potential oil supply disruptions. Strengthening and implementing SPR programs and enhancing oil industry readiness are crucial steps to mitigate the impact of emergencies such as wars on energy supplies.

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q1. Consider the following statements: (UPSC Prelims-2019)

1. The coal sector was nationalised by the Government of India under Indira Gandhi.
2. Now, coal blocks are allocated on a lottery basis,
3. Till recently, India imported coal to meet the shortages of domestic supply, but now India is self-sufficient in coal production.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER: A

Q2. Which of the following is/are the characteristic/characteristics of Indian coal? (UPSC Pre-lims-2013)

1. High ash content
2. Low sulphur content
3. Low ash fusion temperature

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER: A

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Q1. How is India planning to address the security implications of relying on imports for over 85% of its oil requirements, and what measures are in place to diversify and secure its sources of crude oil?**
- Q2. How does India plan to balance its growing oil demand with the need for energy security, considering the projected increase in crude oil imports and declining domestic production?**

INDIAN AGRICULTURE: CURRENT PROBLEMS AND LONG TERM SOLUTIONS

SOURCE - THE HINDU AND PIB.

GENERAL STUDIES - DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN ECONOMY, INDIAN AGRICULTURE, MINIMUM SUPPORT PRICE, NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY, DIRECT INCOME AND INVESTMENT SUPPORT, LOAN WAIVER.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

- In February 2024, thousands of farmers from Punjab gathered at three places on the Haryana border, where they had been stopped from marching to Delhi.

- The major demands of these protesting farmers include legally guaranteed MSP for crops from the central government of India, loan waiver, cancellation of international agreements affecting the agriculture sector and a minimum pension of Rs 5,000 for farmers and agricultural workers. . Some of these demands were raised during their first protest in 2021-22, which was called off after the central government withdrew three contentious laws demanding reforms in the agriculture sector.



- The protest is being led by SKM (Non-Political), a breakaway group from the body that had earlier led the protest. The split marks a rift among interest groups in Haryana, Punjab and western Uttar Pradesh. And Rajasthan. At least three other types of protests are gaining momentum.
- People affected by the Kisan Jewar Airport Project and Yamuna Expressway in Western UP are also facing the government in protests.
- Farmers in Sonipat, Haryana are protesting against land acquisition for electricity cable.
- SKM and several trade unions have called for further industrial strikes at the national level on February 16 with overlapping and additional demands which include repeal of the four labor laws.
- The central government has started talks with the farmers of Punjab, but there seems to be no possibility of legal guarantee of MSP.
- The police in Haryana and Delhi have stopped the farmers more than 200 km away from Delhi as they will not allow the farmers to enter inside the limits of the national capital again in the year 2021-22 due to the farmers' protest in Delhi. An unconstitutional act was committed by anti-social elements at the Red Fort.
- MSP-based procurement by the Food Corporation of India has been the cornerstone of food security. Surplus producers of grains have benefited from the MSP scheme, but the scheme ignores subsistence farmers in poor areas.
- The government's neglect of farmers has also been considered a major reason for the defeat of the ruling BJP in the recent assembly elections held in three states. There were continuous reports that farmers did not get the right price for their produce. Such reports were also discussed that due to not being able to meet the cost of crops like potato and onion, farmers destroyed their crops in the fields themselves. Apart from this, farmers also do not get fair prices for other agricultural produce.
- The biggest reason for the dissatisfaction of farmers across the country is not getting the right price for their produce and this is their biggest problem. The problems of farmers are not new; But honest efforts for their solution were never seen. News of farmers committing suicide have also been in the news for the last several years. The huge rallies taken out by farmers in different parts of the country are enough to express their dissatisfaction.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM OF INDIAN AGRICULTURE :

- Since 1947 till now, every region of the country has made substantial development. Today India's space program is among the most successful space programs in the world. The Indian Army is one of the most powerful armies in the world and India's economy is one of the five strongest economies in the world. India is regularly writing new development stories in other areas as well.
- Despite these achievements, there is one area which is still lagging behind in the race of development. The agriculture sector, which plays an important role in areas like food security and rural employment, has still not reached a situation that can be considered satisfactory. The result of this is that crores of people of the country dependent on agriculture are still forced to live in extreme poverty and many times they are not able to fulfill even their basic needs through agriculture.

THE BASIC PROBLEM OF INADEQUATE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN AGRICULTURE :



There are some problems at the root of inadequate development of Indian agriculture, without removing which development of the agriculture sector in India is not possible. These problems are as follows -

- There is still a lack of irrigation facilities in most parts of India. Only those farmers who have sufficient capital are able to manage irrigation facilities privately because the cost of installing irrigation equipment like tube wells is so much that it is not possible for poor farmers to afford it. In this way, most of the farmers become dependent on monsoon and if there is no timely rain, their crops get spoiled and sometimes they are not able to produce enough for subsistence. Similarly, due to excessive rainfall or various natural disasters, crops get spoiled and the farmer gets trapped in the quagmire of poverty.
- A large population of Indian farmers have only a small amount of cultivable land available. A major reason for this is the increasing population. As a result, agriculture has become a means of subsistence rather than a means of earning profit for the farmers, in which they are somehow able to support themselves and their families. The Indian agriculture sector is also facing the problem of

hidden unemployment.

- Farmers often do not get adequate prices for their produce, a major reason for this is that they sell their crops at prices below the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for various reasons such as to repay loans. Due to which they have to face a lot of loss.
- Problems like inability to use modern equipment and techniques in India's agricultural sector, lack of transportation facilities, lack of storage facilities, lack of transportation facilities, lack of other basic facilities and reduction in yield due to poor quality of soil etc. Are included.
- Most of the farmers in India lack/lack the capital to invest in agriculture. Even today, most of the farmers of the country are not able to avail the benefit of institutional credit facilities in practical terms. Many times farmers do not even have enough capital to arrange for basic things like seeds, fertilizers and irrigation. The result is that farmers are not able to produce crops on time or due to insufficient nutrients the crops are not of adequate quality. Besides this, due to lack of capital, the farmer has to take loans from private individuals at high interest rates, which increases his problems instead of reducing them. In this regard, the Kisan Samman Nidhi Scheme launched by the Government of India is proving to be very helpful for the farmers. This helps to a great extent in meeting the basic agricultural needs of the farmers.

IMPORTANT INITIATIVES LAUNCHED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA FOR REFORMS IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR :



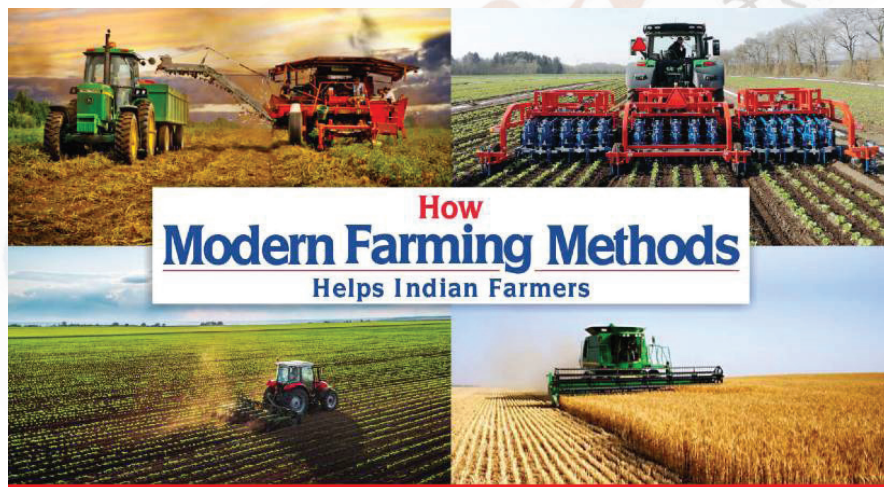
A 7- Point strategic initiative has been launched by the Government of India for infrastructural reforms in the agriculture sector and doubling the income of farmers. Which are as follows –

- The Government of India is increasing investment on warehouses and cold storage to prevent agricultural produce from getting destroyed. This will prevent wastage of produce, strengthen the food security situation and the remaining produce can also be exported to international markets.
- Emphasis has been laid by the Central Government on the creation of a National Agricultural Market to provide the farmers the right price for their agricultural produce. This will bring uniformity in the prices of agricultural produce across the country and farmers of all the states of India will be able to get adequate benefits.
- At present in India, emphasis is being laid on using high quality seeds in the agricultural sector and also awareness is being spread to use the same amount of fertilizers in the fields as prescribed by

the Soil Health Card and the soil. It is appropriate to use it according to fertility. This will not only improve the quality of the soil but will also effectively reduce the expenditure on fertilizers. This will also reduce soil and water pollution.

- Per Drop More Crop Strategy – Under this strategy, emphasis is being laid on micro irrigation. This will reduce the amount of water used in agriculture. This will not only conserve water but also reduce the cost of irrigation. This strategy is particularly beneficial in water-scarce areas.
- Emphasis is being laid on using high quality seeds in the agriculture sector. Along with this, awareness is being spread to use the same amount of fertilizers in the fields as is appropriate according to the soil health card. This will improve the quality of the soil and will also effectively reduce the expenditure on fertilizers. This will also reduce soil and water pollution.
- Value addition in the agricultural sector is being promoted through food processing. There is immense potential in the food processing sector in India.
- Every year in India, crops are adversely affected due to natural disasters like drought, fire, cyclone, heavy rain, hailstorm etc. in different areas. To mitigate these risks, crop insurance has been made available at affordable prices. However, its actual benefits have not yet reached enough farmers. The Government of India should take measures at the central level to ensure that its benefits reach most of the people/farmers.

LONG TERM SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF INDIAN AGRICULTURE :



For a long-term solution to the problems of Indian agriculture and Indian farmers, some such reforms are necessary which both the state governments and the central government need to implement honestly and without delay. Those improvements are as follows –

- 1. The need for direct income and investment support by governments.**
- 2. Support of minimum support price of crops.**
- 3. Loan waiver of farmers.**

DIRECT INCOME AND INVESTMENT SUPPORT BY GOVERNMENTS :

- Keeping in mind the interests of farmers, the Telangana State Government started this option. Which has been named '**Rythu Bandhu**'. **Rythu Bandhu means - 'Friend of farmers'**. It is a farmer investment assistance scheme, under which the Government of Telangana provides financial assistance to farmers for Rabi and Kharif crops. Under this scheme, Telangana State Government is providing financial assistance of Rs 4000 per acre to the farmers per crop season/season to support agricultural investment. This financial assistance is provided twice annually for Rabi and Kharif seasons i.e. financial assistance of Rs 4000 per acre annually. Under this scheme, the assistance amount is paid to the farmers in the form of a check from the office of the Mandal (Sub-District) Agriculture Officer. This is a top priority scheme of the Telangana Government and is carefully monitored. Apart from this scheme, insurance cover of Rs 5 lakh is also being given to farmers in Telangana.

STEPS TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT FOR REFORMS IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR IN INDIA :

To bring about reforms in the agricultural sector in India and to solve the problems of Indian farmers, there is a need to bring about radical changes in the agricultural markets. Along with this, new direction can be provided to Indian agriculture and the condition of Indian farmers through the following initiatives by the governments –

1. Expanding the scope of the Minimum Price Support (MSP) system by strengthening it.
2. To break the web of Agricultural Produce Marketing Committees (APMCs) and eliminate brokers and middlemen.
3. To develop supply chains to take the agricultural products of farmers to the markets.
4. To develop better linkages between consumers, farmers and markets.
5. To improve the negotiable warehouse receipt system.
6. To amend the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 in India.
7. Simplifying laws related to land and consolidation etc.
8. Promote contract farming
9. To create a simple and favorable environment for increasing agricultural exports of Indian farmers.
10. To develop food processing facilities.

ISSUE OF LOAN WAIVER OF FARMERS :

- The loan waiver scheme of farmers in India has not proved to be a permanent solution to the problems of farmers, because only 20 to 30 percent of the farmers in India get its benefit. Due to this limited reach of the government, the widespread grievances and problems of Indian farmers cannot be resolved. Because in reality, interim measures like loan waiver do not solve the real problem of continuously decreasing income from agriculture.

NEED FOR STRUCTURAL REFORMS IN INDIAN AGRICULTURAL SECTOR :



- In the present situation of Indian farmers, it has been seen that with the passage of time, instead of improving, the condition of Indian farmers has become worse. The measures taken from time to time by the country's policy makers at the government level to satisfy the farmers provide immediate relief. Under these measures, steps are taken to woo the farmers, whereas what is needed is such structural measures which are long term and can solve the problems of the farmers permanently. Like running a scheme like Universal Basic Income. This will ensure a fixed income every month and farmers will not be forced to sell their produce at throwaway prices. But the reality is that we are not succeeding in solving the common problems of the farmers like electricity, water, fertilizers, agricultural infrastructure, marketing and ability to face risks etc.

INDIAN AGRICULTURE IS DEPRIVED OF MODERN AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY AND AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT :

- Today, when technology is being used in every field of human activities all over the world, most of the Indian agriculture is still dependent on age-old patterns and traditional methods. Till date no special technology is being used in Indian agriculture. BT cotton started being used 15 years ago, but after that no such experiment has been done in the agriculture sector. Today humans have various types of technologies available, such as biotechnology, information and communication technology, satellite technology, nuclear agriculture technology and nanotechnology for food processing. All these cannot be used in the Indian agricultural sector.

FEATURES OF AGRICULTURAL SECTOR IN INDIA AND MEASURES TO IMPROVE IT:

A radical change can be brought about in the Indian agricultural sector by adopting the following 6-point plan to improve the agricultural sector in India. Which can have a positive impact in the interest of Indian farmers –

1. Strengthening the input delivery system.
2. Rapid expansion of irrigation facilities.
3. Using diverse technologies in the Indian agriculture sector.
4. Investing in the rural infrastructure sector.

5. To make maximum use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the Indian agriculture sector.

6. To develop capacity building of Indian farmers.

CONCLUSION / SOLUTION :

- Agriculture in India is a state subject and every state decides its agricultural policies according to its convenience and circumstances. There is a need for the Center and the states to work together when it comes to the agriculture sector in India. But the bitter and real truth of the present times is that Indian farmers deserve much more than the income they are getting from farming. But it is not possible to increase the income of Indian farmers through short-term measures taken by the Central and State Governments. This will require long-term commitment and systematic solutions, only then can there be any improvement in the economic condition of Indian farmers.
- The uneven geographical spread of procurement by the Food Corporation of India has also led to unsustainable farming practices in some areas, while farmers in other areas of the country remain perpetually on the brink of poverty.
- Seeks to improve public support for farming in the Indian agricultural sector, which is necessary for reasons including national food security. This can be better achieved through broader political consultation and by encouraging beneficiaries of the existing system to diversify production and increase productivity. The mutual interests of political parties at the root of farmers' protests before the Lok Sabha elections cannot be ignored. The agricultural sector needs a new model of public support. It cannot be left at the mercy of the market. The government should lead efforts to build national consensus on this question.
- Most of the country's population is dependent on agriculture. Therefore, poverty eradication, increase in employment, eradication of hunger etc. in the country is possible only when the condition of agriculture and farmers is improved. If the above measures are implemented effectively then the condition of agriculture can definitely improve. This will reduce the despair prevalent in this sector, farmer suicides will stop, and people who have given up farming will start taking interest in this sector again.
- The Government of India is laying emphasis on the development of agricultural supporting sectors like dairy, animal husbandry, beekeeping, poultry, fisheries etc. through various schemes at the central level. Since most of the farmers of the country are already connected with these things. Hence, they can get direct benefit from it. Now there is a need to create awareness among the farmers in India, so that factors like breed improvement of animals can be worked on effectively.
- The Central Government should resolve the grievances of the farmers through talks with the farmers sitting on strike on the border of the country's capital.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM :

Q.1. Agriculture in India is related to which of the following?

(A) It comes under the subjects of the Union List.

(B) It comes under the subjects of concurrent list.

(C) It deals with the Directive Principles, Preamble and Fundamental Rights of the State.

(D) It comes under the subjects of the state list.

Answer – (D)

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM :

Q.1. What do you understand about the Minimum support price? Underline the basic problems of the agricultural sector in India and discuss in detail the measures for its long-term solution.

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "SOCIAL ISSUES" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

According to recent reports from UN agencies, around 4.4 million girls worldwide could become victims of female genital mutilation by the year 2024.

ABOUT FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

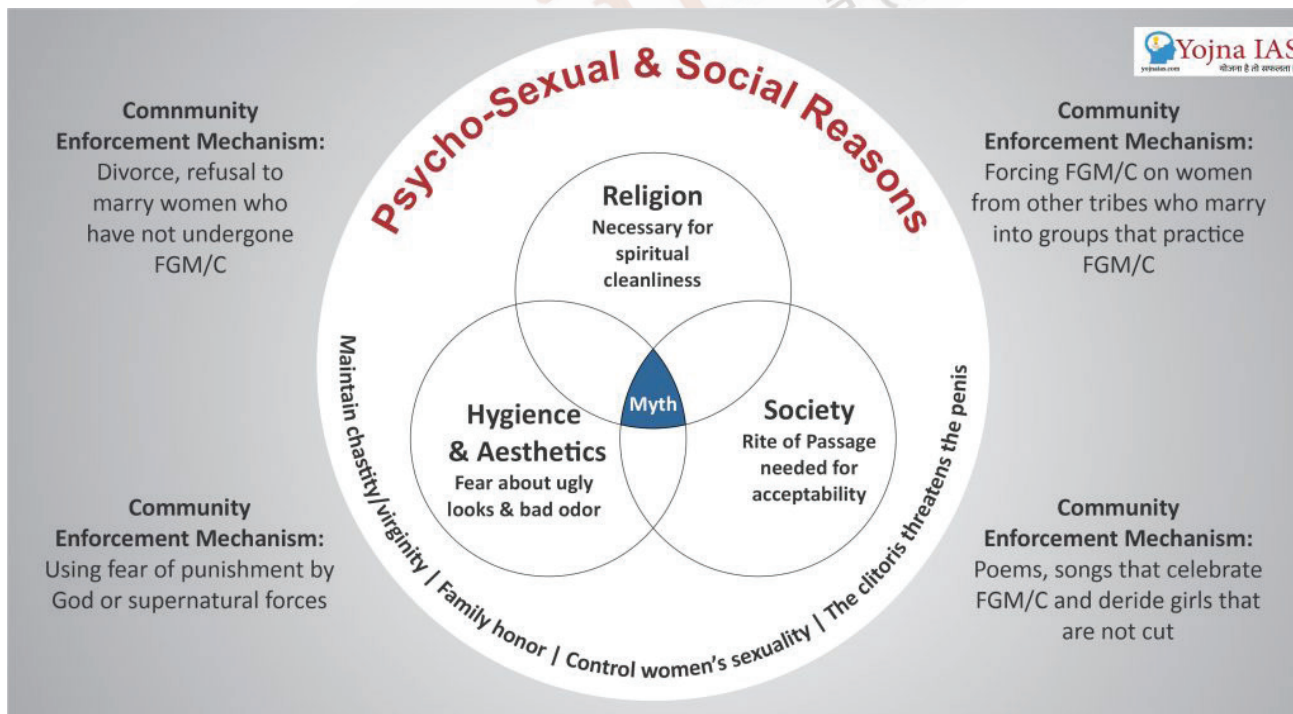
- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** refers to procedures involving the modification or harm to female genitalia for non-medical or cultural motivations. Internationally, it is acknowledged as a violation of human rights, impacting the well-being and dignity of girls and women.
- While the **majority of those subjected to FGM reside in sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States**, this practice is also observed in certain countries in Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America.
- The **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** notes that despite uncertain origins, FGM appears to have predated both Christianity and Islam, with historical evidence such as Egyptian mummies displaying characteristics of the practice.
- Additionally, the ancient Greek historian **Herodotus** asserted that in the fifth century BC, circumcision was practiced by the Phoenicians, Hittites, and Ethiopians.

MOTIVES BEHIND FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

In various regions, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is carried out for diverse reasons, classified by the UNFPA into five categories:

1. **Psycho-Sexual Reasons:** FGM is employed as a means to control women's sexuality, with the removal of genitalia, especially the clitoris, believed to curb perceived insatiable desires.
2. **Sociological or Cultural Reasons:** Viewed as part of a girl's initiation into womanhood and an integral aspect of a community's cultural heritage.
3. **Hygiene and Aesthetic Reasons:** Some communities consider external female genitalia as unattractive and unclean, prompting FGM for hygiene and aesthetic purposes.
4. **Religious Reasons:** While not endorsed by Christianity or Islam, FGM may be justified using "supposed" religious doctrines, according to the UNFPA.
5. **Socio-Economic Factors:** In certain communities, FGM is a prerequisite for marriage, particularly where women are economically dependent on men.

Moreover, the World Health Organization (WHO) highlights additional motives, including "the attempt to ensure premarital virginity and the belief that FGM reduces libido, aiding in resisting extramarital sexual acts". FGM may also be linked to cultural ideals of femininity and modesty.



CHALLENGES IN COMBATING FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM):

- **Cultural and Social Norms:** FGM often finds its roots in cultural and social norms, functioning as a tradition passed down through generations within communities. The task of altering these deeply ingrained beliefs and practices proves to be a formidable challenge.

- **Lack of Awareness and Education:** Within communities where FGM is prevalent, there is a significant lack of understanding regarding the detrimental consequences associated with the practice. The absence of awareness and education about the physical and psychological health risks linked to FGM contributes to its perpetuation.
- **Lack of Adequate Data Collection and Reporting:** Efforts to address FGM are impeded by limited data collection and reporting on its prevalence. The absence of comprehensive information hinders a clear understanding of the issue's scope and undermines the effective targeting of interventions.

STATUS OF FGM IN INDIA

- As of right now, the nation does not have legislation outlawing the practice of FGM. The Ministry of Women and Child Development stated in 2017 that “currently there is no public information or study which proves the practice of FGM in India” in answer to a petition filed in the Supreme Court.
- However, according to some other unofficial reports, procedures of FGM are **prevalent amongst the Bohra community**, primarily in the states of Maharashtra, Kerala, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh.

GLOBAL EFFORTS TOWARDS ELIMINATION:

- Since 2008, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have jointly spearheaded the most extensive global initiative dedicated to eradicating female genital mutilation (FGM).
- In 2012, the UN General Assembly officially designated February 6th as the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, with the overarching goal of intensifying and directing efforts toward eliminating this practice. The **Theme for 2024 was “Her Voice. Her Future.”**

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q1. Which scheme focuses on promoting the well-being of pregnant women and lactating mothers by providing them with cash incentives for better nutrition and healthcare?

- Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA)
- Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY)
- Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana (SSY)
- Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP)

ANSWER: B

Q2. The Swadhar Greh scheme provides shelter and support to

- Widowed women

- B. Pregnant women
- C. Women in distress without family support
- D. Women entrepreneurs

ANSWER: C

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Q1. Explore the role of cultural diversity and migration patterns in either perpetuating or challenging the practice of Female Genital Mutilation globally.**
- Q2. Evaluate the impact of educational initiatives and awareness programs in mitigating the prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation.**

