



Yojna IAS

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JAN-FEB 2024

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

YOJNA IAS WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS
29/01/2024 TO 4/02/2024

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WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS CONTENTS

S.No.	Topics	Pg No.
1.	AISHE REPORT	1 - 3
2.	END - TO - END ENCRYPTION AND RIGHT TO PRIVACY	3 - 10
3.	UGC RULES, 2024	10 - 12
4.	ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) CHIPS	12 - 15
5.	THE BLURRY PICTURE OF INTERNAL FEMALE MIGRATION AND THE PROBLEMS OF MIGRANT WOMEN WORKERS	16 - 23
6.	SUB-CATEGORISATION OF SC COMMUNITIES	24 - 27
7.	INDIA - FRANCE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP	28 - 37
8.	PAYTM PAYMENTS BANK LTD FORBIDDEN FROM RECEIVING NEW DEPOSITS	37 - 40
9.	EMPLOYER RATING SURVEY	41 - 45
10.	POPULATION PRIORITIES: INTERIM BUDGET 2024 AND CENSUS	45 - 53



CURRENT AFFAIRS

JAN-FEB 2024

AISHE REPORT

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "ALL INDIA SURVEY ON HIGHER EDUCATION (AISHE) REPORT". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "GOVERNANCE" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

More women than males have enrolled in higher education over the previous eight years, according to the newly released 2021-22 All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE).

ABOUT ALL INDIA SURVEY ON HIGHER EDUCATION (AISHE) REPORT:

- The **All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) Report** is a thorough and systematic project launched by the Ministry of Education, Government of India, to collect and analyse data on the country's higher education system. The **major goal of AISHE** is to give reliable and up-to-date information regarding many sectors of higher education, including enrollment trends, infrastructure, faculty, and other pertinent factors.
- The AISHE Report, which is published annually, **plays an important role in developing policies and strategies for the growth of higher education in India**. It examines both traditional and unconventional institutions, providing insights on the variegated landscape of educational institutions across the country.
- The report normally **includes information about student enrollment, faculty composition, infrastructure facilities, gender distribution, and exam outcomes**. It enables policymakers, researchers, and educational institutions to discover trends, evaluate policy impacts, and make educated decisions to improve the quality and accessibility of higher education.
- One prominent component of the AISHE Report is its **emphasis on inclusivity**, which includes data on student enrollment from many social groups and backgrounds. This helps to assess the success of affirmative action measures and ensures equal access to education.
- The AISHE Report is an important resource for a variety of stakeholders, including government authorities, academic institutions, and researchers, since it promotes evidence-based decision-

making and the continuing improvement of India's higher education system. As an updated document, the AISHE Report reflects the dynamic character of higher education, providing a comprehensive overview of the sector's progress and difficulties.

THE MAJOR FINDINGS OF AISHE REPORT 2021-22 ARE:

- The AISHE report 2021-22 was done over the academic session 2021-22. AISHE 2021-22 registered 1,168 universities/university level institutions, 45,473 colleges, and 12,002 stand-alone institutions.
- The poll included responses from 1,162 universities, 42,825 colleges, and 10,576 stand-alone institutions.

NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS AS PER AISHE REPORT:

- **Since 2014-15, 341 universities or university-level institutes have been formed.** Out of 1168 registered universities, 685 are government-managed (240 by the central government and 445 by the state government), 10 are private deemed (aided), and 473 are private (unaided).
- There are **17 universities** specifically for women. It was 11 in 2014-15. In 2021-22, there were **18 Open Universities** (1 Central University, 16 State Universities, and 1 State Private University).
- **Enrollment in higher education:** Higher education enrollment is projected to reach over 4.33 crore in 2021-22, up from 3.42 crore in 2014-15.
- **Female enrollment** in higher education has risen to 2.07 crore (32% increase since 2014-15). The total number of pass-outs has climbed to 1.07 crore in 2021-22 from 95.4 lakh in 2020-21.

CASTE-BASED ENROLLMENT:

- **Caste breakdown of all enrolled students in 2021-22:** The student body is made up of 15.3% Scheduled Caste, 6.3% Scheduled Tribe, 37.8% Other Backward Class, and 40.6% from other categories.
- **Scheduled Caste student** enrollment has risen to 66.23 lakh in 2021-22, up from 58.95 lakh the previous year. The enrollment of **Scheduled Tribe** students has increased to 27.1 lakh in 2021-22 from 24.12 lakh in 2020-21.
- The number of **Scheduled Tribe Female** students enrolled grew to 13.46 lakh in 2021-22 from 12.21 lakh in 2020-21. While **Minority enrollment** has risen to 30.1 lakh in 2021-22 from 21.8 lakh in 2014-15.

ENROLLMENT IN STATES:

- The **top six states** in terms of student enrollment are Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, and Rajasthan. They account for **53.3%** of the overall student enrollment.
- In 2021-22, there were approximately 15.98 lakh faculty/teachers in higher education, with 56.6% being male and 43.4% female.
- The number of educators in 2021-22 has increased by 46,618 from 2020-21.

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q1) Consider the following statements:

- 1) University Grants Commission (UGC) is the primary regulatory body overseeing higher education in India
- 2) National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) in India primarily focuses on Vocational education and skill development
- 3) University Grants Commission (UGC) is responsible for conducting the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) in India

How many of the above statements are correct? · ·

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

ANSWER: B

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q1) In your opinion, how has the implementation of the Right to Education Act impacted the quality of primary education in the country?

END – TO – END ENCRYPTION AND RIGHT TO PRIVACY

SOURCE – THE HINDU AND PIB.

GENERAL STUDIES – PAPER 3 – PROTECTION OF PRIVACY, FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND COMPUTERS, DATA SECURITY, DATA PROTECTION LAWS, ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF END-TO-END ENCRYPTION.

WHY IN THE NEWS ?

- On the one hand, in the context of compliance with India's proposed Online Security Bill (OSB) for the entire country, the head of WhatsApp has said that – **“WhatsApp will not comply with India's Online Security Bill (OSB), which effectively Prohibits “end-to-end (E2E) encryption.”** Apple has announced that – **“It will further increase the data points protected by end-to-end**

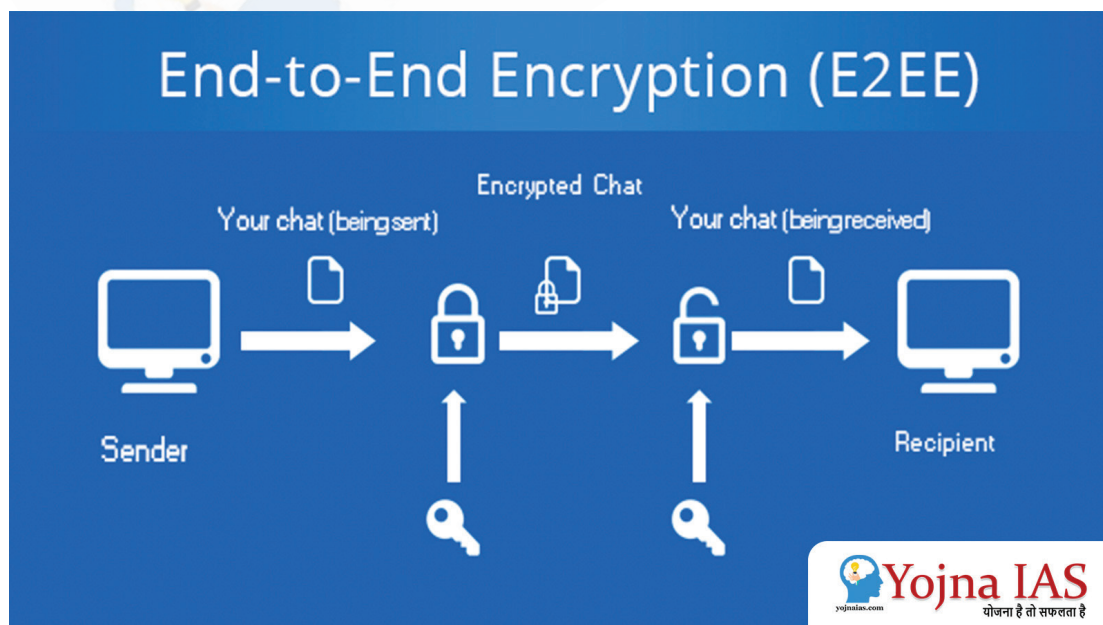
encryption (E2EE) on iCloud from 14 to 23 categories, as a result of which the protection of consumers' privacy can be ensured. “



MAIN OBJECTIVES OF SHARING DATA – BREACH – RESEARCH :

- According to a recent survey-research conducted by Apple, which is also called data-breach-research, the total number of data breaches in India from the year 2013 to the year 2021 is three. Has increased more than times. Only in the year 2021 . In this year alone, data of 1.1 billion personal records has been revealed.
- With this end-to-end encryption, even if someone's personal data is breached in the cloud, the user's data will remain completely safe. This additional layer/level of encryption will somehow prove to be extremely valuable from the right to privacy and security of personal data point of view to deal with the hacking attacks launched by some funded groups and also from data theft and other security point of view.

WHAT IS ENCRYPTION ?



- One way to protect data from unauthorized access or tampering is called encryption. This process involves converting data into a secret code that only the intended recipient can understand. It

is useful for various cases. Such as securing mutual online communications, storing sensitive information among themselves and verifying their digital identities, etc.

There are mainly two types of encryption-

1. SYMMETRICAL AND

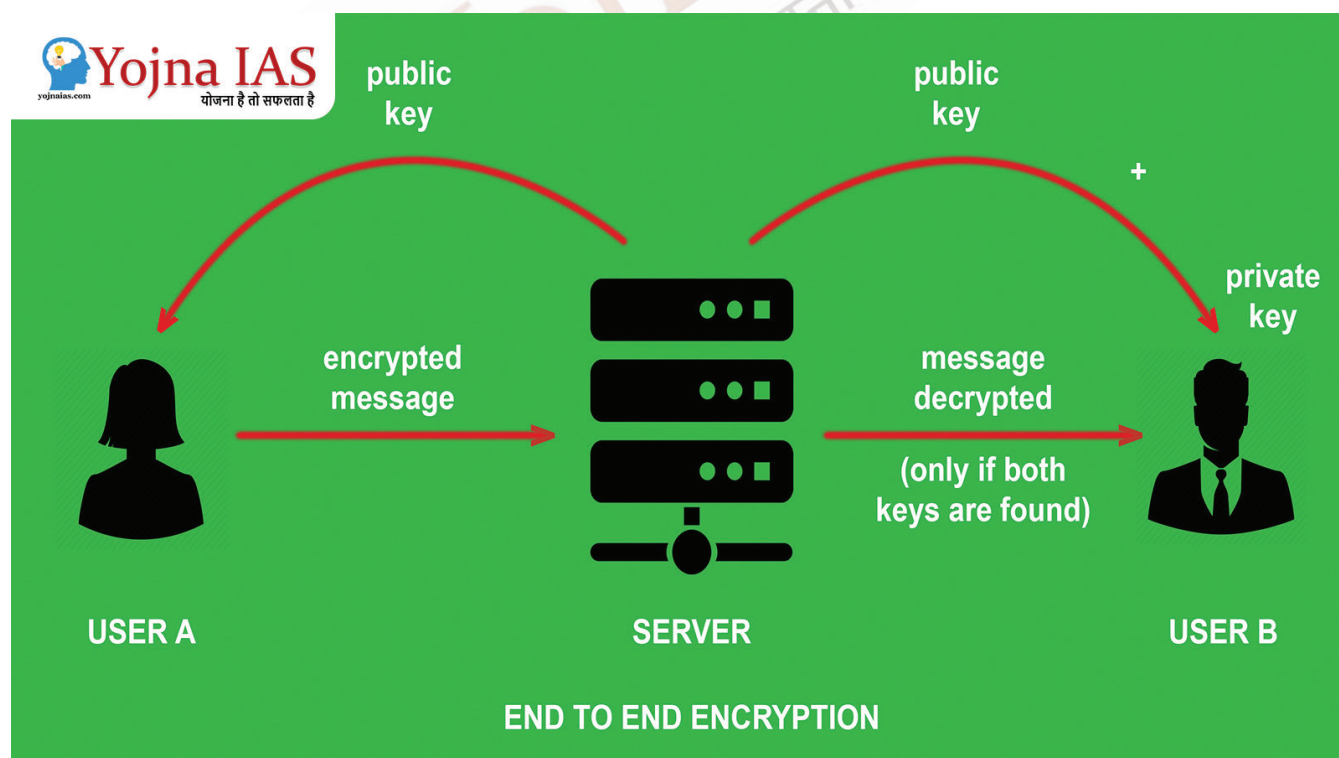
2. ASYMMETRIC.

- Symmetric encryption uses a single key to encrypt and decrypt data, while asymmetric encryption uses a pair of keys – one public and one private. One thing to note is that any public key can be shared with anyone, but in asymmetric encryption the private key is always kept secret.

WORKING MECHANISM OF END-TO-END ENCRYPTION :

- Any end-to-end encryption relies on an elegant but complex cryptographic system to protect the data in transit or shared between two devices. The key element is asymmetric cryptography, which uses pairs of keys – public and private – to secure communications. The public key encrypts the data, while the private key decrypts it.
- It is a communication process that encrypts the data being shared between two devices.
- This prevents third parties such as Internet Service Providers (ISPs), cloud service providers and cyber criminals from accessing the data, especially when one's personal data is being transferred.

MECHANISMS USED IN END- TO- END ENCRYPTION :



- Cryptographic keys used to encrypt and decrypt messages are stored on endpoints.
- The process of end-to-end encryption uses an algorithm that converts standard text into an unreadable format.

- This format can only be opened or read by people with decryption keys, which are stored only on the endpoints and are not shared with any third parties, including service providing companies.

USEFULNESS OF END-TO-END ENCRYPTION IN MUTUAL COMMUNICATION :

- End-to-end encryption has long been commonly used in India when transferring business documents, financial statements, legal proceedings and personal conversations.
- It can also be used to control the authorization of users when accessing any stored data.
- End-to-end encryption is used to secure user-to-user communications.
- It is commonly used to secure any passwords, ensure the security of stored data, and also for provisional protection of data security on cloud storage.

BRITISH ONLINE SECURITY BILL :

- The Online Safety Bill (OSB) is a British proposed legislation to impose '**duty of care**' obligations on online platforms to improve online safety. Whose work is motivated by forcing Internet service providers to work to improve online security.
- Section 110 of the Terrorism and Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (CSEA) Content Identification and Online Safety Bill (OSB) empowers the regulator to issue notices to most internet service providers, including private messaging apps, to prevent terrorism and Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (CSEA) can be investigated and immediately removed from internet platforms.
- The Online Security Bill (OSB) does not mandate the removal of end-to-end encryption but would require any messaging app to scan all messages to flag such content, which would actually mean removing security mechanisms such as encryption. To break.
- The Online Security Bill (OSB) is seen as contradictory to the fundamental rights of an individual such as privacy and freedom of expression which allow states or governments to restrict and monitor the individual's fundamental rights such as privacy and freedom of expression.

ONLINE SECURITY BILL (OSB) IN INDIA :

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ACT 2000 :

- This Act brought by the Government of India regulates and guides the electronic and wireless modes of communication in the country. It exempts us from making any concrete provision related to encryption or making any strict policy at the concrete level, which makes this Act a matter of concern from the point of view of the question of privacy of consumers and it is a major step forward in the field of information and technology in India. Also demands making a concrete guideline.

DIGITAL MEDIA CODE OF CONDUCT – RULES 2021 :

- Through what is commonly called traceability, the Government of India has made it mandatory for messaging platforms with more than five million users in India to 'enable the identification of the first originator' of the message. The Government of India has mandated this through the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.
- This information about the person who first sent the message, the number of times he has sent a message and the number of times he has forwarded it is also contained in this Code of Conduct

rule.

- WhatsApp's penetration rate in India is over 97%, while in the United Kingdom it is around 75%. Because there are 487.5 million WhatsApp users in India where the messaging platform accounts for 22% i.e. 2.24 billion monthly active users.

BENEFITS OF END-TO-END ENCRYPTION (E2EE) :

END-TO-END ENCRYPTION HELPS IN PROVIDING SECURITY IN MUTUAL COMMUNICATION :

- End-to-end encryption helps provide security in communications because end-to-end encryption uses public key cryptography, which stores the private key on endpoint devices. Messages can only be decrypted using these keys, so only people with access to the endpoint device are able to read the message.

HELPFUL IN KEEPING SAFE FROM THIRD PARTIES :

- End-to-end encryption (E2EE) also serves to ensure that consumers or users are protected from malicious parties, including Internet data service providers, cloud storage providers, and companies that handle encrypted data.

IT IS FREE FROM ANY KIND OF INTERFERENCE :

- The decryption key does not need to be provided with E2EE as it is already available to the recipient.
- If a message encrypted with the public key is tampered with during transmission, the recipient will not be able to decrypt it and will not be able to access the tampered content.

UNREADABLE AND FORCED TO COMPLY WITH GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS :

- Many industries are bound by regulatory laws/requirements or compliance laws that require encryption-level data protection as a primary requirement. So end-to-end encryption (E2EE) can help organizations keep data secure by making it unreadable.

DISADVANTAGES OF END- TO- END ENCRYPTION (E2EE) :

IT IS EXTREMELY COMPLEX TO DEFINE ENDPOINTS :

- Some end-to-end encryption (E2EE) implementations in India allow encrypted data to be encrypted and re-encrypted at certain points during transmission.
- In this it clearly defines and differentiates the endpoints of the communication circuit. If the endpoints are compromised in any way, the encrypted data may be exposed. Therefore, it is extremely complex to define the endpoints of a communication circuit.

EXCESSIVE PROVISION OF CONFIDENTIALITY :

- Governments and government law enforcement agencies have always expressed concern that end-to-end encryption (E2EE) can protect people sharing illegal content because service providers are unable to provide access to the content to law enforcement.

LACK OF PROTECTION FOR METADATA AND FACILITATING DATA MISUSE :

- In any type of mutual communication, messages are encrypted, information related to the message such as date of message and sender's information etc. is visible even after sending the message, making it vulnerable to those who misuse the data in any way. It may prove helpful.

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK CURRENTLY IN PLACE IN INDIA FOR END-TO-END ENCRYPTION (E2EE) :

CURRENTLY, INDIA LACKS ANY SPECIFIC LEGISLATION RELATED TO END- TO- END ENCRYPTION (E2EE) :

- At present, there is no specific law regarding end-to-end encryption (E2EE) in India. Although many industry standards governing the banking, finance, and telecommunications industries include minimum encryption standards that are used to protect mutual transactions, these are limited to certain specific sectors and are not easily accessible to common consumers. Unable to access.

RESTRICTIONS ON END- TO- END ENCRYPTION (E2EE) TECHNOLOGIES :

- Currently, as per the terms of the licensing agreement between ISPs and DoT in India, consumers or users are not allowed to use encryption standards larger than 40 bits using symmetric key algorithms or comparable methods without prior approval. , while in India itself there are several additional rules and recommendations that allow the use of encryption levels higher than 40 bits for specific regions of India.

CONCLUSION: / SOLUTION PATH :

- Through the Information Technology in India (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, the Government of India seeks to encourage self-regulation of these social messaging platforms while protecting the right of individuals to privacy and freedom of expression. It keeps and guides these messaging platforms keeping in mind the privacy of the consumers, but still there are some criticisms which draw our attention towards government regulation in this regard as it is related to the issue of individual privacy. Lives. Only by finding a solution to this, the concept of India as a democratic and public welfare state can be confirmed.

IT RULES DO NOT FOLLOW HUMAN RIGHTS CONVENTIONS :

- India's new information technology (IT) rules violate the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) under the Human Rights Convention. Article 19(3) of the ICCPR provides for freedom of speech and expression. Which is for national security and public opinion or public health and morality. It is being said that all these things are being stopped due to the new IT rules.

THE GOVERNMENT WILL MANAGE THE DATA OF COMMON USERS :

- Despite there being a freedom of expression law in India, Special Messengers Company says that the government is monitoring the company and rapidly removing user generated content. This violates the right to freedom of expression in India. Common citizens of India have expressed

concern that a system is being prepared to remove content from digital platforms. Due to which those working between consumers and the company can take advantage of it.

THE MAIN REASON FOR THE DISPUTE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AND WHATSAPP :

- There is an ongoing dispute between the Government of India and WhatsApp regarding the end-to-end encryption (E2EE) technology of WhatsApp. Last month, WhatsApp had opposed the IT rule. It was alleged that consumers' right to privacy is in danger. The UN has been supporting end-to-end encryption (E2EE) since its inception. They believe that this is an effective technical safeguard. This protects the right to privacy.

GOVERNMENT COLLECTS DATA TO PROTECT THE UNITY AND INTEGRITY OF INDIA AND TO PREVENT COMMUNAL RIOTS/VIOLENCE :

- When any violence or messages harming the unity and integrity of India go viral. It is used when a woman is being portrayed in a compromising position or in an inappropriate manner or when sexual issues related to children have to be explored. So who has spread the message and for what purpose can be found out.
- There is tension between WhatsApp and the Government of India regarding the rule of traceability. End-to-end encryption is designed to protect the privacy of users. The government's argument is that if they get to read the messages of all the users, they will easily detect the person spreading rumors on social media and prevent any kind of communal riots or violence while implementing measures to safeguard the unity and integrity of India. Can be stopped.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM :

Q.1. Consider the following statements regarding the Online Security Bill (OSB) in India.

1. The Online Safety Bill (OSB) is a British proposed legislation to impose 'duty of care' obligations on online platforms to improve online safety.
2. Section 110 of the Terrorism and Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (CSEA) Content Identification and Online Security Bill (OSB) empowers the regulator to issue notices to most internet service providers.
3. Through traceability, the Government of India has made it mandatory for messaging platforms with more than five million users in India to 'enable the identification of the first originator' of a message.
4. There are four types of end-to-end encryption.

Which of the above statement /statements is correct?

(A) Only 1, 2 and 4

(B) Only 2, 3 and 4

(C) Only 2 and 4

(D) Only 1, 2 and 3

Answer – (D).

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM :

Q.1 How do the current online security bill in India and the individual's right to privacy and expression contradict each other ? Give a logical explanation.

UGC RULES, 2024

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "UGC RELEASES DRAFT GUIDELINES NAMED UGC RULES, 2024". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "GOVERNANCE" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has released new draft rules named "UGC (Fitness of Colleges for Receiving Grants) Rules, 2024" seeking feedback from the public. If accepted, the new criteria will supersede the 1975 UGC norms, which encompass all institutions recognised by the commission.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF UGC'S DRAFT GUIDELINES (UGC RULES, 2024)

- **Applicability and Accountability:** The proposed rules will apply to every college affiliated with universities established **under the UGC Act, 1956**. Emphasizing the importance of **Section 2(f)**, the UGC mandates colleges to be listed under this section for accountability and to ensure quality standards. This inclusion opens the door for colleges to attain the **coveted 12(B) status**, making them eligible for funding.
- **Eligibility Criteria for Grants:**
 1. To be eligible for grants, the UGC suggests that universities should either have **accreditation from the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)** or have a significant percentage of programs **accredited by the National Board of Accreditation (NBA)**.
 2. For colleges offering **less than three programs**, all eligible programs must be accredited. Failing accreditation, colleges should secure a position in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) thrice after five participations or twice after three participations.
- **Compliance Requirements:**
 1. The draft mandates that colleges adhere to government-set fees, refrain from additional

charges like capitation fees, and ensure at **least 75% of sanctioned teaching posts are filled.**

2. The colleges need to follow **reservation policies.** Notably, teachers must be compensated according to UGC, Central, or state government policies.

- **Application for Recognition:**

1. Colleges seeking recognition under **Section 12B of the UGC Act, 1956,** can apply online through the UGC portal.

2. The affiliating university is responsible for reviewing applications and recommending approval to the UGC **within 60 days.** The UGC reserves the right to withdraw the status if any violation is detected.

- **Future Implications and Public Feedback:**

The proposed guidelines, if approved, have the potential to reshape the landscape of educational funding and quality standards. As the UGC opens the floor for public comments, stakeholders, including educational institutions, policymakers, and the public, have the opportunity to provide valuable insights and perspectives on these significant changes.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: EVOLUTION OF UGC

- In 1944, the **Sargeant Report** laid the foundation for a national education system in India. Subsequently, the **University Grants Committee** was formed in **1945** to manage universities then.

- Post-independence, the University Education Commission (1948) recommended restructuring, leading to the **establishment of the University Grants Commission (UGC)** in **1953**, officially recognized **by the UGC Act 1956.** Currently, a proposal for the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) is under consideration.

- **Dual Mandate of UGC: Funding and Standards:** The UGC is distinctive for its **dual role** as a **grant provider and coordinator for standards in higher education institutions.** The funding responsibility is coupled with ensuring the quality and coordination of standards in these institutions, making it a pivotal entity in shaping the nation's educational landscape.

NIRF: SHAPING INSTITUTIONAL RANKINGS

The National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF), **initiated in 2015**, outlines a methodology to **rank Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)** in India. This government-led effort became **mandatory for all government-run institutions in 2018.** NIRF aims to **provide a comprehensive assessment of HEIs**, promoting healthy competition and enhancing the overall quality of education

CONCLUSION:

In the ever-evolving realm of education, the UGC's proposed guidelines represent a crucial step in aligning funding with quality standards. The emphasis on accreditation, rankings, and compliance reflects a concerted effort to ensure that financial support is directed towards institutions committed to

excellence. As the education sector awaits the finalization of these guidelines, it stands at the threshold of a transformative era that could redefine the dynamics of higher education in India.

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q1) Consider the following statements:

- 1) The primary role of the National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF) in India is Grant distribution
- 2) University Grants Commission (UGC) is responsible for accrediting higher education institutions in India
- 3) Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) initiative in India put emphasis on Higher Education

How many of the above statements are *Not* correct?

- a) One
- b) Two
- c) Three
- d) None

ANSWER: B

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Q1) Explore the role of public-private partnerships in higher education. How can collaboration between government and private entities contribute to the growth and development of educational institutions?

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) CHIPS

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "AI CHIPS" .THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

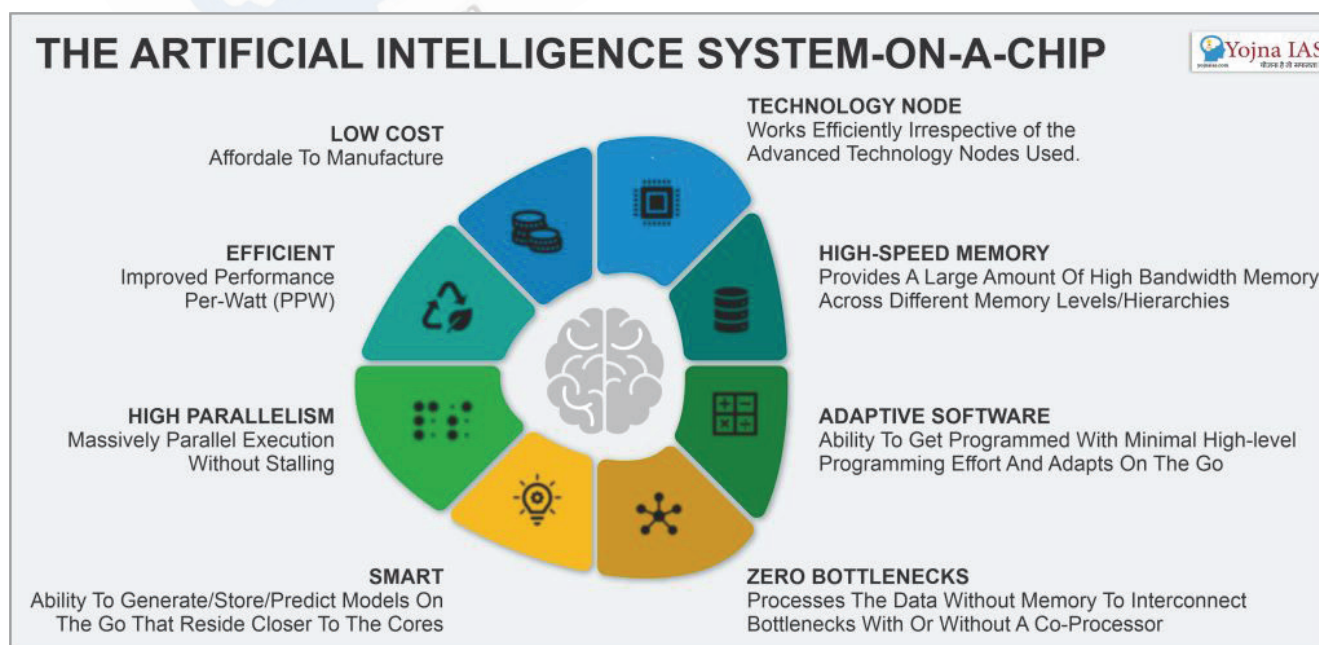
In a stunning display of tech prowess, Kerala's Digital University has unleashed the **Kairali AI Chip**, propelling India onto the global edge AI stage. This silicon marvel isn't just a chip; it's a paradigm shift, ushering in an era of intelligent machines operating closer to the data's origin.

ABOUT KAIRALI AI CHIP

- Kairali embraces the burgeoning world of edge AI, where **computations occur directly on devices where data arises**.
- It can help smartphones in translating the languages on the fly, analyzing complex images instantly, or making personalized recommendations without sending the data anywhere.
- This **decentralized intelligence**, powered by Kairali, promises **faster processing, lower latency, and enhanced data privacy** – a perfect recipe for revolutionizing countless applications.

SOME POTENTIAL USES-

- **Agriculture:** The chip revolutionizes precision farming, providing real-time monitoring of crop health, soil conditions, and environmental factors, optimizing resource usage for enhanced crop yields.
- **Aerospace:** The chip elevates Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and satellites by offering advanced processing power for navigation, data collection, and real-time decision-making with minimal power consumption. It also enhances the capabilities of drones for applications such as delivery services and environmental monitoring.
- **Mobile Phones:** Enhancing the efficiency of smartphones, the chip enables advanced features like real-time language translation, improved image processing, and AI-driven personal assistants.
- **Security and Surveillance:** The chip facilitates faster and efficient facial recognition algorithms, threat detection, and real-time analytics through its edge computing capabilities.
- **Automobile:** Serving as a game-changer for autonomous vehicles, the chip provides essential computing power for real-time processing of sensory information, ensuring safe and efficient autonomous driving.



ABOUT AI CHIPS

- AI chips, often called artificial intelligence chips, are **specialised processors** that improve the efficiency of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tasks. These chips play an important role in **speeding up the computation-intensive tasks that machine learning and deep learning algorithms require**.
- **Unlike traditional** Central Processing Units (CPUs), which are general-purpose, AI chips are optimised for specialised tasks, resulting in quicker and more energy efficient processing.
- **One famous type of AI chip** is the Graphics Processing Unit (GPU), which was originally meant to render visuals in video games but has since been repurposed for parallel processing tasks required by AI.
- Furthermore, **Field-Programmable Gate Arrays (FPGAs)** and **Application Specific Integrated Circuits (ASICs)** are gaining popularity because they can give even better efficiency by tailoring hardware to specific AI workloads.

HOW AI CHIPS WORK

- It is a **collection of computer programmes or algorithms** which stimulate activity and brain structure.
- **Deep Neural Networks (DNNs)** go through a training phase in which they gain new skills based on previous data.
- DNNs can then infer by using the skills learnt during deep learning training to make predictions on previously unknown data.
- Deep learning may accelerate and simplify the collection, analysis, and interpretation of massive volumes of data.
- Chips like these, with their hardware designs, compatible packaging, memory, storage, and connectivity solutions, enable AI to be incorporated into a wide range of applications, transforming data into information and subsequently knowledge.

BENEFITS OF AI (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE) CHIP-

- **Enhanced Performance:** AI chips are intended to address the special needs of artificial intelligence applications, resulting in much quicker processing rates and higher performance than standard processors. This acceleration is especially important for the complicated computations used in machine learning and deep learning techniques.
- **Energy Efficiency:** AI processors are optimised for parallel processing, which allows AI workloads to be executed more efficiently. This not only speeds up processes, but also lowers energy usage, making AI systems more sustainable and cost-effective in the long term.
- **Specialised Features:** Unlike universal processors, AI chips are designed for specific AI applications. This specialisation allows them to excel at tasks like picture recognition, natural language processing, and data analysis, resulting in more accurate and efficient outcomes.
- **Scalability:** AI chips help to scale AI systems. Their architecture enables smooth integration

with a variety of devices, ranging from edge devices such as smartphones and IoT devices to data centres, offering scalability to meet the expanding demands of AI applications.

- **Optimised Hardware Layout:** Manufacturers are always optimising the design of AI chips to increase efficiency and effectiveness. This optimisation takes into account size, weight, and power consumption to ensure that AI-powered devices can be used in a variety of applications and situations.
- **Real-time Processing:** AI chips allow for real-time data processing, which is vital in applications such as autonomous vehicles, where split-second decision-making is required for safety. This skill is especially useful in cases that require quick responses, such as cybersecurity and surveillance.

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q1) Consider the following statements:

- 1) AI chips in autonomous vehicles can be used to enhance safety features
- 2) AI chips in edge devices reduce the latency by processing AI tasks locally
- 3) General-purpose computing is a key feature of AI chips

How many of the above statements are true?

- a) One
- b) Two
- c) Three
- d) None

ANSWER: B

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

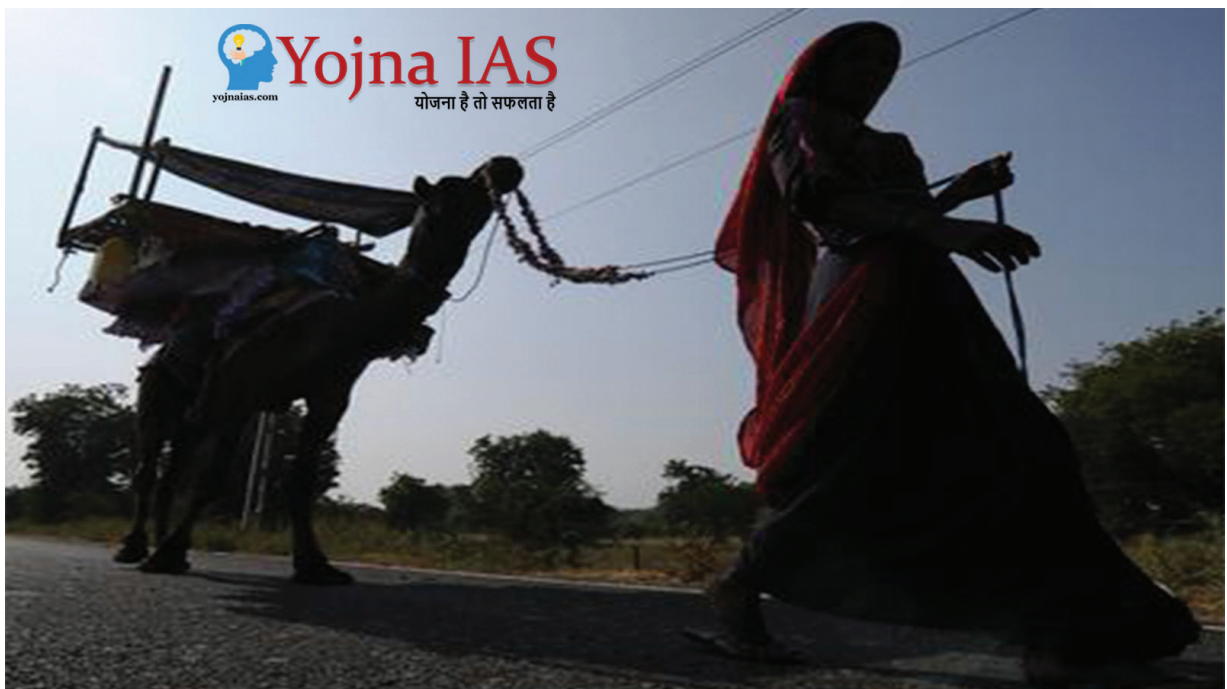
- Q1) Considering the environmental impact of technology, how can the design and manufacturing of AI chips be optimized to minimize their carbon footprint?**
- Q2) As AI chips become increasingly integrated into everyday devices, how do you foresee the ethical implications and privacy concerns associated with the widespread use of AI in various aspects of our lives, and what measures should be taken to address these issues?**

THE BLURRY PICTURE OF INTERNAL FEMALE MIGRATION AND THE PROBLEMS OF MIGRANT WOMEN WORKERS

SOURCE - THE HINDU AND PIB.

GENERAL STUDIES - SOCIAL JUSTICE, WOMEN'S MIGRATION, GENDER-DISOURSE, PERIODIC LABOR FORCE SURVEY, FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE.

WHY IN THE NEWS ?



- A recent report of the United Nations states that India is going through a kind of urban revolution. According to this report, by 2031, India's urban population will be approximately 60 crores. Three big cities of India due to displacement; Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai will be counted among the most densely populated cities in the world. The 2011 census reveals the fact that 80 percent of displacement is caused by or caused by women. **There are two reasons for this -**

(1) **Migration of women after marriage**

(2) **Increase in demand for women workers in the export-based economy during the liberal period.**

- Recent data shows that 101 percent of female workers have migrated compared to 48.7 percent of male workers.
- Both the Census and the National Sample Survey Office do not give prominence to work as the reason for women's displacement and consider only marriage as the main reason. Such survey

organizations continue to consider women's economic participation as secondary.

- While poor migrants are deprived of identity cards, housing and other economic services, women migrants are subjected to various types of discrimination. In the field of work, apart from basic facilities, they are deprived of maternity benefits and care.
- Most migrant women remain victims of sexual exploitation. They are paid less than male and local female workers. Female migrants with relatively low skills are employed in jobs hazardous to health.
- According to a study by CIVIDEP, 90 percent of women working in textile industries in Bengaluru suffer from physical and mental problems like respiratory problems, tuberculosis, depression and back pain.
- Unlike China's Hukou system, India does not have a system to register different categories of migrants, so that it can easily divide them into political, administrative, labor and economic-social categories.
- PLFS data shows that the major reason for migration among women is marriage (81%), followed by migration of family members (10%), employment (2.42%), and migration for educational opportunities (0.48%). Is. There is no provision to address secondary causes/motives such as climate shocks and food insecurity, which can be an important driver/carrier of migration for women.

INDIA MIGRATION REPORT 2020 – 21:



- In a study released in June 2022, the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation compiled data on migrants and short-term tourists. 0.7% of the country's population were recorded as 'temporary immigrants' during the period July 2020–June 2021. Temporary immigrants were defined as those who arrived in their homes after March 2020 and stayed there for at least more than 15 consecutive days but less than six months. More than 84% of these 0.7% temporary immigrants returned home due to the pandemic. In India, only 86.8% of women migrate after marriage, while 49.6% of men migrate in search of employment. The migration rate at all India levels in July 2020 – June 2021 was 28.9%, with 26.5% migration rate in rural areas and 34.9% in urban areas.
- Women recorded a high share of migration rate of 47.9%, 48% in rural and 47.8% in urban areas.

- The migration rate of males was 10.7%, which is 5.9% in rural and 22.5% in urban areas.
- National surveys such as the PLFS collect information on female migrants but often present an inaccurate picture. For example – surveys only ask respondents about their primary reason for migration. Do women also migrate independently? Is there any change in the status of migrant women in their families? Does migration remove women from patriarchy in one place and push them into patriarchy in another place? To get answers to all these questions, first we need to understand migration from a gender perspective.
- Around the world, more people are migrating than ever before. Many of them migrate in search of new opportunities and a better life for themselves and their families. Many people are forced to migrate due to disaster or conflict. Traditionally, moving from one area to another in search of better life prospects has been considered a man's job. However, along with men, women are also migrating in large numbers.

ACCORDING TO THE STUDY OF MIGRATION POLICY INSTITUTE –

- According to the World Bank report, the total number of migrant workers is estimated to be 164 million, accounting for almost half of the world's migrants in 2017. Yet little concrete effort has been made to incorporate gender into theories of international migration. According to a study by the Migration Policy Institute, in the 1960s and early 1970s, the phrase 'migrants and their families' was used to understand migration, which implicitly meant, 'male migrants and their wives and children.'

ROLE OF GENDER IN DISPLACEMENT :

- Women's movements raised questions about the invisibility of women as migrants, their perceived passivity in the migration process, and their place in the home. Women began to be included in research in the 1970s and 1980s. But this did not bring any significant change in the patriarchal thinking towards women due to the male-dominated social system. The important question was whether migration leads to modernization of women? The push-pull demographic model then viewed displacement as the result of individual decisions. It was understood that women's responsibilities as wives and mothers, and men's role as breadwinners, influenced women's decisions. Women are therefore less likely to participate in migration decisions and in the host country's labor force.

ROLE OF MARRIAGE IN MIGRATION OF WOMEN :

- Marriage continues to play an important role in women's migration. But with time economic factors like employment, business and education have gained importance. This reflects less reliance on marriage as a single factor behind women's migration. Between 2001 and 2011, the number of women migrating for work increased by 101%. This is double the growth rate for men (48.7%). Also, the number of women citing business as a reason for migration increased by 153%, which is four times the rate of men (35%). More women have also migrated for education.

PATTERN OF MIGRATION OF WOMEN :



- According to the 2011 census, there are a total of 31.4 crore internal migrants in India, out of which 30.96 crore are women, i.e. about 68 percent. According to the Migration in India 2020-21 report, marriage was a major reason behind the migration of more than 71% of the migrants. 86.8% of women and only 6.2% of men migrate for marriage. 9.2% of the migrants cited accompanying a earning member of the family or migration of parents as the reason, of which 17.5% were males and 7.3% were females.
- For some women, migration may mean increased social mobility, economic independence, and relative autonomy. For some, labor force participation may increase the burden as they still have to take care of household chores and children.
- Most of the people migrate within their own state, out of which 92.6% are women and 65.6% are men. 7.2% of women and 31.4% of men migrated to another state. 2.9% of men and 0.2% of women moved to another country. More than 63% of female internal migrants moved from rural areas to other rural areas, and only 18% of men. On the other hand, 33.5% of males and 15.6% of females migrated from rural to urban areas. This shows that most of the women migrate near their native places and the majority of men migrate from rural areas to urban areas, pointing to the economic disparity between village and city.

NEARLY 50 PERCENT OF THE COUNTRY'S YOUNG WOMEN ARE AWAY FROM EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT : REPORT

WOMEN MIGRATING FOR WORK OR EMPLOYMENT :

- A person's gender identity shapes every stage of the migration experience. Who migrates and where? How people migrate, there is an effect of class.
- Migration for work usually results in relief from poverty, even if it means a difficult life in India's

metropolises. For example, a migrant from the drought-prone Marathwada region of Maharashtra temporarily tripled her income after moving to Mumbai. Factors such as agricultural distress in rural areas, changing land use patterns, increasing mechanization, and deteriorating environment have increased poverty and unemployment levels for women, forcing them to move to urban areas for work.

- In urban areas, the emergence of gender-segregated labor markets following liberalization has led to many low-skilled, uneducated women finding opportunities in the informal sector. High female literacy as well as attainment of education is also motivating many women to migrate. However, roughly 80% of the country's migrant women work on a contract basis in the informal sector – in activities such as agriculture, construction, transportation, domestic work and mining. Manufacturing labor is the largest occupation for the female workforce in urban areas (there are 45 lakh women in this sector), followed by teaching (27.5 lakh) and domestic work (20 lakh).

PROBLEMS OF MIGRANT WOMEN :

- The biggest problem of migrant women is their invisibility. When we say 'migrant', only the image of men comes to our mind and even today, like in 1950, we are unable to see women and children beyond their dependence on men. Furthermore, there is also a huge lack of awareness about the schemes available after migration. Because of this, women are not able to avail the benefits of Anganwadi services and PDS. Along with this, women are also far away from financial literacy, use of phones and technology. In the cities they have to live in extremely unhealthy conditions in temporary shelters almost instead of working.
- Women constitute more than half (56.7%) of the non-agricultural informal sector, according to the latest data from the Periodic Labor Force Survey Annual Report, 2020 – 2021. Most of them come from marginalized communities, extremely resource-poor backgrounds and are the sole source of income for their families. Informal workers are covered by the Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act but they are often unaware of the law, making it extremely difficult for them to speak out against harassment. They also fear loss of livelihood and the stigma associated with the issue, which prevents them from reporting such violence.

MIGRATION RELATED CHALLENGES :

SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS :

- Migrants are not easily accepted in the new area to which they migrate and are not considered local residents. Therefore they are often treated as second class citizens.
- Language and Cultural Adaptation Any person immigrating to a new country faces many challenges ranging from cultural adaptation and language barriers to homesickness and loneliness.

ISSUES FACED BY DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES OR CLASSES :

- People who belong to poor, destitute or deprived communities often find it difficult to socialize with both the local people and the migrating groups in the new place they migrate to.

FORCED TO REMAIN FOREVER DEPRIVED OF SOCIAL BENEFITS AND POLITICAL RIGHTS :

- Migrant workers are deprived of many opportunities to exercise their political rights, such as the right to vote.
- Apart from this, those migrant workers have to face many problems in getting voter ID cards, proof of their residential address, and even making an Aadhar card, which is also due to the nomadic nature of their life and also due to the instability of residence. They have a tough time and are deprived of access to welfare schemes and policies.

LOSS OF INCOME AND LOSS OF LIVELIHOOD :

- Economic uncertainty and reverse migration due to the Corona pandemic has further increased their suffering. A survey of female migrant workers from 12 Indian states by UNDP found that their incomes fell by more than half during the pandemic compared to pre-pandemic levels.
- Another study found that the pandemic not only led to loss of livelihoods, but after a few months of the lock-down, far fewer women were working than men. This also had a serious impact on the nutrition and health of migrant women.
- The men who migrate in search of employment and the women who stay behind alone to take care of farming, household and children, is a different problem. More than 4.5% of women in rural areas and 1.5% of women in urban areas have husbands living somewhere else.

PROVIDING PAY EQUALITY, OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY, AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE, RELIABLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND SAFE CITIES :

- The first thing the government needs to do is collect accurate data.
- The government must ensure that women workers have access to quality and affordable child care, pay equality, occupational safety, affordable healthcare, reliable public transport and safe cities.
- Migrant women are considered to be the most vulnerable to job loss due to technological advancements, so it is essential that they are given skills training taking into account the role of technology in shaping the future of work.

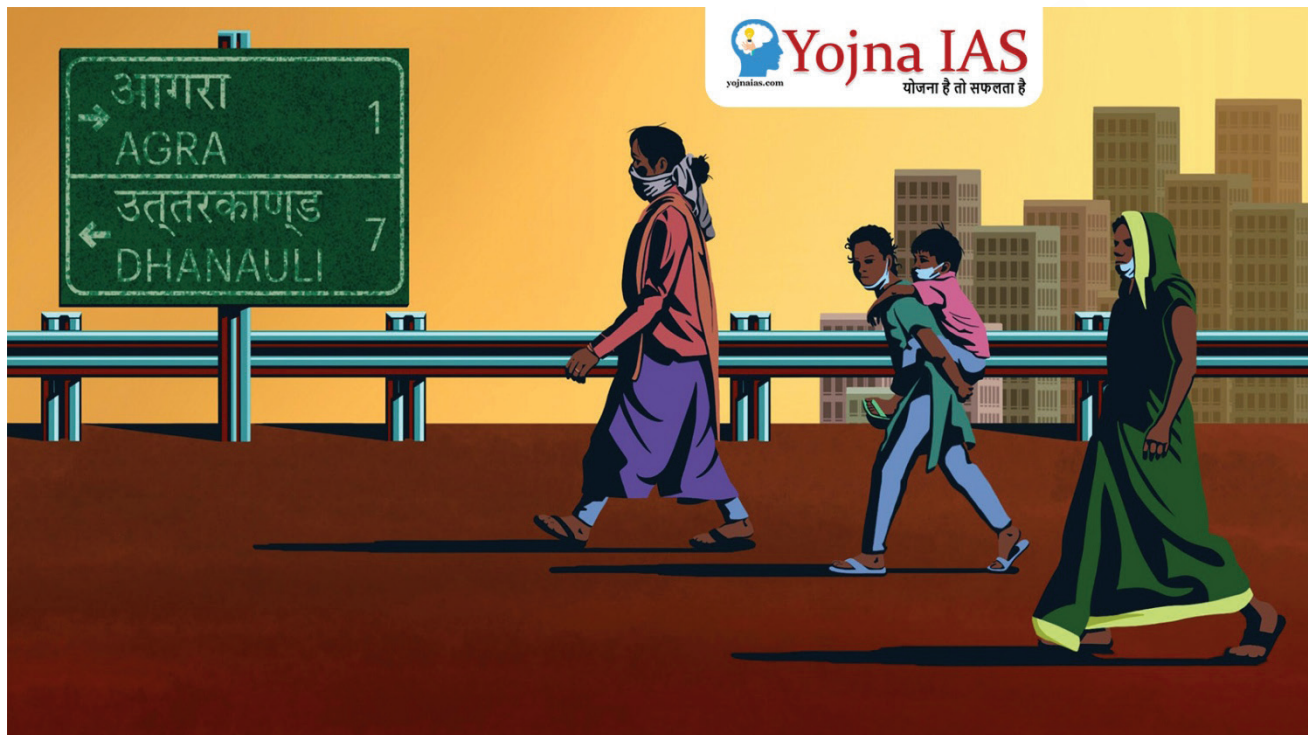
EMPLOYMENT IS NOT A SUFFICIENT SOLUTION FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

- The draft Migrant Labor Policy by NITI Aayog proposes to create a suitable policy for migrant workers but it largely ignores the specific needs and concerns of migrant women.
- In the present times when women must advance socially and economically after lagging behind men for decades, it seems that advancement itself is a major obstacle to their opportunities.
- One of the main reasons for this, on the one hand, is patriarchy and ignorance, while the other reason is migration from one place to another.
- There is a need for structural change in the entire system for women in India and there is a

strong need for better policy making, which is not only sensitive to the needs of women migrants, but also focuses on creating an integrated social security system for them. Perhaps then Indian society will be able to look at the mobility of women afresh.

- Several steps should be taken to solve this. National surveys should compile more information about their socio-economic conditions after migration as little is known about it. For example, the PLFS indicates that a minute percentage (about 7%) have access to social security benefits, with no data for the rest of the population. There is also a lack of time-use data for migrants as India has not yet standardized it. Time-use data will significantly help advance knowledge regarding unemployed female migrants.

SOLUTION PATH / CONCLUSION :



- There should be proper arrangement for data collection of migrant women.
- Women's economic participation and their contribution to the nation should be taken into consideration.
- Aadhaar cards of migrant women should be made on priority. They should be given the benefit of Jan Dhan Yojana provided by the government. They should be given the facilities of the National Health Security Mission.
- Austria, Belgium, Norway, UK. On the lines of other countries, there should be arrangements for vocational training for migrant women. They should be given access to support services.
- A lot can be learned from Vietnam's scheme called 'We the Women'.
- The state of Kerala provides free medical facilities and insurance to approximately 3 crore female migrant workers. This should be followed.

- A lot can be learned from Vietnam's scheme called 'We the Women'.
- A separate national policy can be made for women migrants, which will specifically focus on the problems of women migrants, and try to provide them all possible assistance. Political inclusion of migrants will make urban governance more democratic and gender equitable.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM :

Q.1. Consider the following statements in the context of internal migration of women in India.

1. 101 percent of female workers have migrated compared to 48.7 percent of male workers.
2. According to the Periodic Labor Force Survey, the major reason for migration among women is marriage (81%).
3. For women, migration can mean increased social mobility, economic independence, and relative autonomy.
4. According to the latest data from the Periodic Labor Force Survey Annual Report, 2020 – 2021, women constitute more than half (56.7%) of the non-agricultural informal sector.

Which of the above statement /statements is correct?

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

Answer – (D).

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM :

Q.1. Highlighting the main reasons for internal migration of women in India, discuss the major problems of migrant women workers and various suggestions for their solutions.

SUB-CATEGORISATION OF SC COMMUNITIES

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "SUB-CATEGORISATION OF SC COMMUNITIES". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "POLITY AND GOVERNANCE" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Indian government has formed a high-level committee, chaired by the Cabinet Secretary, to examine the issue of dominating Scheduled Caste (SC) communities obtaining more benefits than the most backward. This initiative is specifically in response to the **Madiga** community's requests in Telangana.

MANDATE GIVEN TO THE COMMITTEE

- The committee's principal goal is to **investigate alternate approaches to resolve issues raised by diverse SC communities** across the country.
- While the group was formed in response to the Madiga community's concerns, **its scope goes beyond a single community or state.**
- It strives to examine and devise a **mechanism for the equal distribution of benefits, plans, and initiatives** to the most backward communities among the country's over **1,200** Scheduled Castes, which have been pushed out by more forward-thinking and dominating ones.

ABOUT SUB-CATEGORISATION OF SC IN INDIA:

- **Sub-categorisation** is the process of dividing or classifying a larger category into smaller, more precise subcategories depending on certain criteria or qualities. In the context of SC in India, **sub-categorisation** may imply further classification within the SC group based on characteristics such as socioeconomic position or historical disadvantage.
- **Madigas of Telangana:** The **Madiga community**, which accounts for 50% of all SCs in Telangana, has struggled to gain access to government incentives intended for SCs due to the Mala community's dominance. Despite their large number, the Madiga group claimed to have been excluded from SC-related projects. They have been fighting for the sub-categorisation of SCs since 1994, and it was this demand that prompted the establishment of the **Justice P. Ramachandra Raju Commission in 1996**, followed by the National Commission in 2007.

LEGITIMACY OF SUB-CATEGORISATION WITHIN CASTES

- Several states, including **Punjab, Bihar, and Tamil Nadu**, have attempted to implement reservation laws at the state level in order to subdivide SCs over the last two decades. The Supreme Court is building a larger Constitution Bench to decide the case, causing all plans to be stalled in the courts.
- **E. V. Chinnaiah vs. State of Andhra Pradesh (2004):** In this decision, the Supreme Court ruled

that once a community is listed on the Presidential List for Scheduled Castes under **Article 341** of the Constitution, they are merged into a single bigger class of people, casting a wide net for reservation reasons. The Bench ruled that the State lacked legislative authority to create sub-classifications within a single class, which would violate the Right to Equality.

THE UNION GOVERNMENT'S STANCE

- **In 2005**, the Union government investigated legal possibilities for sub-categorising SCs. At the time, the former Attorney General of India stated that this was feasible, but only if there was **“unimpeachable evidence to indicate a necessity”**.
- Furthermore, both the National Commissions for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes opposed altering the Constitution at the time. They contended that establishing a sub-quota within the present quota is insufficient, highlighting the urgent need to prioritise the disbursement of existing initiatives and benefits to these areas.

Article	Provisions	Description
Article 15 (5)	Special provisions for backward classes, SCs, STs in admissions to private educational institutions, aided or unaided.	Added by the 93rd amendment in 2005. Allows states to make special provisions for admission of these categories in private institutions.
Article 16(4)	Reservation of vacancies in public services.	Permits the state to reserve certain vacancies in public services for backward classes not adequately represented in those services.
Article 16(4B)	Consideration of unfilled vacancies.	Allows the state to treat unfilled reserved vacancies as a separate class of vacancies, not subject to the 50% reservation limit.
Article 340	Power to appoint a Commission.	Provides the President with the authority to appoint a Commission to investigate the conditions of backward classes and recommend measures for their advancement.
Article 338B	Constitutional status for National Commission.	Through the 102nd Amendment, grants constitutional recognition to the National Commission for Backward Classes, enhancing its role in safeguarding the interests of backward classes.

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR:

- **Graded Inequalities:** The primary justification for sub-categorization arises from perceived graded inequalities among Scheduled Caste (SC) populations.
- **Access Disparities:** The argument is that even within marginalised areas, some have less access to basic facilities, resulting in more forward communities continually receiving advantages despite outnumbering the more backward ones.
- **Requirement for Separate Reservation:** Advocates contend that the best course of action is to divide towns into smaller groups and reserve separate reservations for the less developed SC category.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST:

- **Addressing the Root Cause:** The SC and ST Commissions dispute the idea that making different reservations within a category addresses the issue's underlying causes.
- **All Levels of Representation:** The commissions stress the importance of representation at all levels and argue that the more regressive SC communities lag far behind the more progressive SC groups.
- **Inadequate Candidates:** Even with reserved seats at higher levels, the consideration of the most backward SCs may not have enough candidates to maintain the current disparity.
- **Prioritising Current Programmes:** To ensure thorough upliftment, both commissions advise sending current programs and government benefits to these sections before considering any further classification.

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q1) Consider the following statements:

- 1) The primary objective of reservations in India is economic development
- 2) The Mandal Commission was established during the tenure of Rajiv Gandhi
- 3) 103rd Amendment introduced Article 16(4B) allow the State to make provisions for reservation in matters of promotion to SCs and STs in public services

How many of the statements above are correct?

- a) One
- b) Two
- c) Three
- d) None

ANSWER: B

Q2) In the context of reservations, what does the term “creamy layer” refer to?

- a) Economically privileged individuals within reserved categories
- b) Individuals with fair skin complexion
- c) Highly educated individuals
- d) Individuals from urban areas

Answer: A

Q3) With reference to Indian Constitution, consider the following statements:

- 1) Under Article 340, the President can establish a Commission with members chosen by him to study the situation of socially and educationally disadvantaged groups in India.
- 2) Article 340 was added by the 102nd Amendment to the Constitution.
- 3) National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) was formed under the provisions of the 102nd Amendment Act, 2018.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: C

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q1) In your view, has the reservation system led to the emergence of a more inclusive and diverse society in India? Why or why not?

Q2) Do you believe that the reservation system fosters a sense of dependency among certain communities, or does it empower them to compete on an equal footing? Share your perspective.

INDIA – FRANCE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

SOURCE – THE HINDU AND PIB.

GENERAL STUDIES – INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, INDIA-FRANCE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, HORIZON 2047, COP 33, G20 SUMMIT.

WHY IN THE NEWS ?



- At the invitation of the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, His Excellency Mr. Emmanuel Macron, President of the French Republic, paid a state visit to India as the Chief Guest for the 75th Republic Day of India. **This is President Macron's second state visit to India and the sixth visit by a French leader as the guest of honor on Republic Day.**
- India and France are celebrating the 25th anniversary of their mutual strategic partnership this year. France is India's first strategic partner country in the western world. Not only this, India is also the first non-European partner for France. In such a situation, it is important to invite Macron as the chief guest in the Republic Day Parade. This is also a mutual gesture of friendship with PM Modi. It is also a big thing that in the year 2023, PM Modi and President Macron met at least a dozen times. Many of these meetings took place during bilateral and many big multinational programs. Last year, Macron also came to India to participate in the G-20 summit organized under the chairmanship of India.
- French President Emmanuel Macron has reached India as the chief guest on Republic Day. He was welcomed in Maharaja style in Jaipur. Prime Minister Narendra Modi welcomed him on reaching Jantar Mantar. After this, Macron participated in a road show in the Pink City with PM Modi. Whenever PM Modi and Macron meet, both the leaders warmly embrace each other. It is symbolic, which shows that India and France are strongly embracing each other, cooperating in every possible field. The 'friendship' between India and France is also special. This is also one of the reasons why French citizens and President Macron are among India's closest friends.
- President Macron's visit to India for the Republic Day follows the Prime Minister's historic visit to France as the guest of honor on the French National Day on 14 July 2023, during which the two leaders unveiled an ambitious plan Horizon 2047. **Horizon 2047**, marking the centenary of India's independence, is a 'milestone' for the bilateral relations between the two countries. It is unprecedented for the two leaders to be guests of honor on consecutive national days and

the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the declaration of the strategic partnership between the two countries is of utmost importance. The presence of the President of the French Republic at the 75th Republic Day of India is a symbol of our shared commitment to democracy, liberty, equality, fraternity and justice, and a strong pillar for the deepening of our mutual friendship and the strength of our mutual strategic partnership. .

- President Macron was also accompanied by a strong high-level delegation, including the ministers of the armed forces, culture, European and foreign affairs, as well as senior French government officials and CEOs and industry leaders. Three French Air and Space Force aircraft flew alongside Indian Air Force aircraft on the duty path, and a French military contingent participated in the Republic Day parade.
- Since the announcement of the Strategic Partnership in 1998, India and France have developed a partnership of extraordinary trust and confidence, stability and strength based on shared democratic values, strong belief in sovereignty and strategic autonomy, a shared commitment to a multipolar world, the rule of law and the principles of the UN Charter. **Prime Minister Modi and President Macron reaffirmed their vision that the India-France Strategic Partnership can help build prosperity and resilience in their economies, advance the security of their countries, and build a more sustainable and healthy future for the planet. , can find solutions to global challenges, can revitalize. Multilateralism helps create a stable international order and a more united and cohesive world.**
- Prime Minister Modi of India and President Macron reaffirmed their shared vision for bilateral cooperation and international partnership as outlined in Horizon 2047 and other documents of the July 2023 Summit. They appreciated the progress in bilateral cooperation and sought to further strengthen their shared commitment to sovereignty and strategic autonomy under the three broad pillars of bilateral cooperation – Partnership for Peace and Prosperity, Partnership for the Planet and Partnership for People. Expressed commitment to accelerate further. They held wide-ranging discussions on long-term global challenges and current international developments, and agreed to intensify their global and regional engagement through multilateral initiatives and institutions, inspired by their common interests and visions.
- President Macron congratulated Prime Minister Modi for his leadership of India's chairmanship at the successful G20 Leaders' Delhi Declaration, which resulted in its smooth functioning, its ambitious outcomes and the achievement of new initiatives and consensus on **"One Earth, One Family, One Future"**. He welcomed the inclusion of the African Union in the G20, saying it enhanced the inclusive and representative character of the forum. They agreed that the consensus achieved in Delhi has strengthened the G20 as a key forum to advance an inclusive global agenda and the commitment to support Brazil for the presidency in 2024.
- India and France reaffirmed their commitment to jointly address the interconnected challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. Prime Minister Modi appreciated President Macron's international initiatives in 2023, including the New Global Financing Pact summit in June, which led to the Paris Agreement for People and Planet, and the One Planet – Polar Summit in Paris. The two leaders looked forward to the third **United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3)** to be held in Nice in 2025. They commended the UAE's leadership in the successful organization of COP28 in Dubai and welcomed the COP outcome, particularly the UAE's consensus on the decisions taken. First on the global stocktake, the Framework on Global Goals on Adaptation, the Work Program on Just Transition and the operationalization of funding arrangements, including

a Fund to respond to loss and damage. The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to move forward in their next Nationally Determined Contribution with ambitious goals.

- President Macron appreciated India's offer to host **COP 33** in 2028. He also reaffirmed France's support for India's candidature at the International Energy Agency. India's IEA membership will be mutually beneficial and contribute to the stability and development of the international energy market and energy transition. The two leaders agreed to launch a comprehensive dialogue on global issues, with a special focus on the multilateral framework to hold consultations on political matters and other global issues such as oceans, climate change, biodiversity, pollution and digital. The two leaders reaffirmed their determination to end plastic pollution and called for consensus building for an ambitious outcome this year on negotiations to establish a legally binding treaty to end plastic pollution. France and India will also enhance their cooperation in the context of the three COPs of the **Rio Convention (Climate, Biodiversity and Desertification)** to build joint ambition and promote synergy. In the context of preparations for UNOC 2025, France welcomed India's decision to join the "Mercator" initiative, which aims to create a global '**digital twin**' of the ocean. Finally, President Macron invited the Government of India to participate in the global forum. Buildings and Climate", co-organized by France and the United Nations Environment Programme, will take place in Paris on 7 and 8 March 2024.
- Prime Minister Modi and President Macron reiterated their commitment to further deepen the long-term partnership between the two countries, based on their common vision for the **Indo-Pacific region**. The leaders stressed the importance of the region to their respective sovereign and strategic interests. They also acknowledged the important role of their partnership in the region for progress towards a free, open, inclusive, secure and peaceful Indo-Pacific and beyond. Referring to the Comprehensive Roadmap for the Indo-Pacific, which was finalized in July 2023, they expressed satisfaction at the expanded nature of their engagement in the region.
- Defense and security partnership has been the cornerstone of the India-France partnership in the Indo-Pacific region, encompassing a wide range of bilateral, multinational, regional and institutional initiatives, particularly in the Indian Ocean region. They also agreed to intensify their cooperation in the south-west Indian Ocean, based on joint surveillance missions conducted off the French island territory of La Reunion in 2020 and 2022. They also welcomed the expansion of those interactions into India's maritime neighborhood. These interactions can contribute positively to the securitization of strategic sea routes of communication. Furthermore, the two leaders welcomed the progress in bilateral talks and the identification of specific opportunities for friendly countries in the region to use India as a base for manufacturing and exporting defense equipment.
- The two leaders also committed to reviving trilateral cooperation with Australia, deepening it with the UAE and exploring new collaborations in the region.
- Noting the importance of joint and multilateral initiatives to support sustainable economic growth, human well-being, environmental sustainability, resilient infrastructure, innovation and connectivity in the Indo-Pacific region, the two leaders called on their governments to identify concrete projects. Said to. Additionally, the two leaders called for the early launch of the Indo-Pacific Trilateral Development Cooperation Fund to facilitate scaling up green technologies being developed in the region. They agreed to explore opportunities to coordinate economic projects and programs in the Pacific region. Both the leaders acknowledged the projects being run by the French Development Agency in India.

- The leaders of both India and France recalled the launch of the **India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC)** on the sidelines of the **G20 Summit** in Delhi in September 2023. President Macron congratulated Prime Minister Modi for his leadership in this historic initiative. The two leaders agreed that the project will be of immense strategic importance and will significantly increase the capacity and flexibility of commerce and energy flows between India, the Middle East and Europe. Prime Minister Modi welcomed the appointment of President Macron's special envoy for this project. The two leaders recalled their discussions at the July summit in Paris on various other connectivity projects from Southeast Asia to the Middle East and Africa and agreed to explore specific projects.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF INDIA – FRANCE RELATIONS :

- French President Emmanuel Macron's visit to India for the 75th Republic Day celebrations is not only a milestone in diplomatic relations but also underlines the deep and personal friendship that has developed between Macron and Prime Minister Narendra Modi since 2018. The visit cemented France as one of India's closest allies, and the story of their cordiality has become central to the India-France strategic partnership. From the very beginning, the two leaders have demonstrated a shared vision for their nations and a commitment to strengthening bilateral relations.
- Macron's strategy for running the government matches that of PM Modi to a great extent. This is why he was elected President of France in 2017. He became the youngest president in French history and the youngest head of state since Napoleon III. The personal chemistry between Modi and Macron was evident during his visit to India in 2018, where they jointly launched the International Solar Alliance (ISA). This initiative aimed at promoting solar energy demonstrated their mutual commitment to sustainable development and combating climate change.
- French aircraft and helicopters (Ouragan, Mystere, Alize, Alouette, Jaguar etc.) have been part of India's air fleet since the 1960s.
- France shared Viking and Centaur rocket technologies with India in the 1970s and France assisted in setting up a rocket launcher center in Sriharikota, India.
- In 1984, the US withdrew from an agreement to provide nuclear fuel for the Tarapur Nuclear Plant, citing domestic legal constraints. At that time France had helped India in supplying nuclear fuel.
- The India-France strategic partnership is firmly rooted in a multipolar world that rests on reformed and successful multilateralism, a strong belief in strategic autonomy, an unwavering commitment to international law and faith in these principles.
- In the India-France strategic partnership, both sides are dedicated to upholding the common values of democracy, fundamental freedoms, rule of law and respect for human rights.
- The main pillars of our strategic partnership with France are cooperation in the areas of defense and security, space exploration and civil nuclear energy.

STRATEGIC – PARTNERSHIP :



- India-France maritime security cooperation has made significant progress in recent years, focusing on the Indian Ocean. India is keen to strengthen partnerships with countries across the region with its growing economic, maritime military capabilities and strategic ambitions in the broader Indo-Pacific region. On the other hand, France, while recognizing the geopolitical changes, has begun to emphasize its desire to strengthen its partnership along with its identity as an Indo-Pacific nation. The Indian Ocean has become a priority area of discussion in the recent India-France bilateral talks as both the countries are keen to expand their long-term strategic partnership in the maritime domain. Bilateral talks between French President Emmanuel Macron and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi were held in Paris, France on August 22, 2019. Prime Minister Modi was on a state visit to France for the 45th G7 Summit at the invitation of the President of France. Following the bilateral talks, inter alia, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed to implement arrangements between the **Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and the Center for National Space Studies (CNES)** France for joint maritime domain awareness in the Indian Ocean. This follows an earlier MoU signed in March 2018 between ISRO and CNES aimed at co-developing an ocean surveillance satellite system focused on the Indian Ocean. These agreements are an important step in India-France cooperation for maritime security in the IOR.
- When both the countries entered into a strategic partnership between France and India in 1998, there were major changes in their mutual strategic partnership relationship.
- The three main pillars of this strategic alliance are military cooperation, space cooperation and civil nuclear cooperation.
- Important in the strategic partnership relations between the two nations is the fact that both countries favor a multipolar world governed by democracies rather than being polarized into two blocs at the global political level.
- France has consistently supported India for permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).
- France has also been a strong supporter of India's membership in all four multilateral export control regimes, namely the Australia Group, the Wassenaar Arrangement, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and the Missile Technology Control Regime (AG).
- India's acceptance into WA, MTCR and AG was possible with the assistance of France.

- The fight against international terrorism is among the priorities of both the countries.

ECONOMIC – COOPERATION :

- India and France have agreed in 2018 to expand their bilateral trade to 15 billion euros by 2022 and to “timely relaunch talks” on a free trade agreement between India and the EU.
- French – Indian trade, which had been growing steadily, declined significantly in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 crisis (€9 billion as opposed to €11.5 billion in 2019).
- A large proportion of French exports are made up of communications equipment, chemicals, and the pharmaceutical and chemical industries.
- France is India’s 17th largest customer and ranks 27th among supplying countries with 1% market share.
- Currently more than 540 French companies are working as subsidiaries in various industries in India and employ about 300,000 people.
- More than 20 cities in India already have sustainable urban development projects being carried out by French companies. Additionally, India and France are working together as a part of the “**Smart Cities**” programme.

CIVIL – NUCLEAR – COOPERATION :

- In 1950, the **French Atomic Energy Commission (CEA)** offered technical assistance to India to develop civil nuclear technology. This proposal was further realized in 1951 when the two countries signed a bilateral agreement “**for the research and construction of beryllium-powered reactors**”. India’s development of nuclear technology has benefited greatly from France.
- France was the only Western country to praise India’s peaceful nuclear explosion in 1974, which was cited as evidence of India’s progress in the nuclear field.
- Extending its support to India, France continued to supply fuel to India’s Tarapur nuclear plant after the US and Canada ended their agreements in 1974 in protest against peaceful nuclear explosions.
- France publicly disagreed with US sanctions against India following the 1998 nuclear tests and contributed to the creation of a favorable environment for India’s interaction with the IAEA.
- On September 30, 2008, an agreement on civil nuclear cooperation was signed between India and France. According to this agreement, France will rapidly implement the 9,900 MW Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project (JNPP) and build six 1,650 MW European Pressurized Reactor (EPR) nuclear reactors.

INDIA – FRANCE BILATERAL TRADE RELATIONS :

- Bilateral trade with France has seen steady growth over the past 10 years, which is expected to reach US\$10.75 billion.
- Recently, trade contracts worth about \$16 billion have been signed between the two countries.

- Both India and France agree that it is important for both to fast-track trade and investment agreements between India and the EU.
- Currently, more than a hundred Indian businesses have set up business in France, compared to around 1,000 French companies.
- Indian businessmen saw having their business in the United Kingdom as an entry point for their business into Europe. Now, with Brexit fast approaching, India is also considering France as an option.

INDIA – FRANCE DEFENSE RELATIONS :

- India and France are committed to advancing their defense ties, working to improve interoperability and continuing discussions among themselves to build joint forces cooperation.
- India and France have signed an agreement for the provision of mutual logistics supply support between the two countries.
- **One of the pillars of India-France strategic partnership has been defense industrial cooperation between India and France.**
- Both French President Macron and Indian Prime Minister Modi have praised the progress France has made in previous agreements, especially in completing the delivery of Rafale fighter jets.
- The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to advance their cooperation in the defense industry for the mutual benefit of both countries under the 'Make in India' scheme. He also extended his support to the existing and upcoming alliances between defense companies of the two countries.
- The most famous French defense products purchased by India from France are the Rafale fighter aircraft and the P-75 Scorpene project.
- Three different military exercises are organized between India and France which include Shakti, Varun and Garuda military exercises.
- Dassault Reliance Aerospace Limited (DRAL), a joint venture between French aerospace company Dassault Aviation and India's Reliance Group, has a manufacturing facility at Mihaan in Maharashtra.

INDIA – FRANCE SPACE COOPERATION :

- The French space agency, CNES, and the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) have a long history of joint space programs and satellite launches, dating back fifty years.
- Both India and France released a "Joint Vision for Space Cooperation" in 2018, based on their shared historical relations in the field of civil space.
- Addressing global challenges such as climate change, where both sides will continue their collaboration for climate monitoring on the joint missions Megha-Tropiques and SARAL-Altika, the ongoing research of the Trishna satellite for land infrared monitoring, and the Oceansat 3-Argos mission. .

- An agreement has been signed by France and India for cooperation on the Gaganyaan mission.
- The French space agency, CNES, will support the development of scientific experiment plans and supply French equipment, supplies and medical equipment to the Indian astronauts.
- The option to train medical support personnel for Indian astronauts flying in space with India by 2022 was praised by both Prime Minister Modi and President Macron.

ATTITUDE OF INDIA AND FRANCE TOWARDS CLIMATE CHANGE :



- Both India and France are increasing mutual cooperation towards each other in fighting climate change and promoting environmental protection.
- France has started working in India since 2008 with the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), a mission dedicated to the preservation of global public goods.
- India and France jointly established the International Solar Alliance (ISA) in November 2015 during COP21 to promote the development of solar energy.
- Priorities shared by France and India include the blue economy and coastal resilience. They have also been launched with the aim of enhancing our mutual cooperation in marine scientific research and our understanding of the oceans.

BLUE ECONOMY :

- The term “**Blue Economy**” refers to the sustainable use of ocean resources and ocean development initiatives for economic growth, increased livelihoods and employment opportunities, and the health of ocean ecosystems.
- It provides an inclusive framework that enables coastal countries to make marine resources available to all people.
- It also reaffirms the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG14, “Life Below Water.”

- The idea mostly focuses on improving social justice and human well-being while reducing environmental threats and ocean ecological depletion.

MUTUAL CULTURAL COOPERATION BETWEEN INDIA AND FRANCE :

- French citizens and French people have deep faith in Indian culture.
- In an effort to promote their respective cultures, India and France co-host festivals: Namaste France showcased India in France in late 2016, while Bonjour India was held in India in late 2017 and early 2018. .
- France hosted India as a special guest at the Paris Book Fair 2021, while France hosted India as a special guest at the New Delhi World Book Fair 2022.
- Shri A.S. For his significant contribution to the development of France-India space cooperation, France has honored Kiran Kumar with its highest civilian honor.
- GeneStor, an Indian-based diagnostics company, has been recognized as the best investment in France.
- Soumitra Chatterjee, an Indian, has been awarded France's highest artistic honor.

EDUCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION BETWEEN INDIA AND FRANCE :

- There has been a gradual increase in bilateral educational cooperation between India and France in recent years. Universities and private organizations of India and France have signed about 300 MoUs among themselves.
- Indo-French Center for Promotion of Advanced Research (CEFIPRA), operational for 25 years, as the focal point for promoting cross-border scientific cooperation in fundamental and applied research, frontier technologies and exchange of scientists and postdoctoral researchers. Works in.
- Both French and Indian universities and research institutions are interested in furthering their technical and scientific cooperation. India and France have launched the "Raman-Charpak Fellowship", which will allow exchange of doctoral students from the two countries.
- Supported by scholarship programs and cooperation between Indian and French educational institutions, 10,000 Indian students have been enrolled in French universities in 2019 with a target of 20,000 by 2025.
- India and France have launched Educational Exchange Program (EEP) among themselves. Provides a comprehensive framework for bilateral academic cooperation, including mutual recognition of degrees, strengthening research programs and promoting student-scholar research mobility through a flexible visa regime.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM :

Q.1. Consider the following statements regarding India-France strategic partnership.

1. This is the second state visit of French President Macron to India on the occasion of Republic Day of 2024 and the tenth visit of a French leader as the guest of honor on Republic Day.
2. India and France reaffirmed their commitment to jointly address the interconnected challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.
3. India and France are celebrating the 25th anniversary of their mutual strategic partnership in the year 2024.

Which of the above statement /statements is correct ?

- (A). Only 1 and 2
(B). Only 2 and 3
(C) Only 1 and 3.
(D). All of these.

Answer - (B)

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAINS EXAM :

Q.1. "The Indian Ocean has become a priority area of discussion in the India-France bilateral talks as both countries are keen to expand their long-term strategic partnership in the maritime domain." In the light of this statement, discuss in detail the various dimensions of India - France strategic partnership.

PAYTM PAYMENTS BANK LTD FORBIDDEN FROM RECEIVING NEW DEPOSITS

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "PAYTM PAYMENTS BANK LTD FORBIDDEN BY THE RBI FROM RECEIVING NEW DEPOSITS" .THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "INDIAN ECONOMY" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Paytm Payments Bank Ltd has been forbidden by the Reserve Bank of India from receiving new deposits and conducting credit transactions commencing in March 2024. This ruling essentially prevents Paytm Payments Bank from providing all of its main services, including accounts and wallets.

WHAT DOES THE RBI DIRECTION SAY?

- Prevented Paytm Payments Bank from providing almost all of its core services. After February 29, Paytm will no longer accept deposits or top-ups in any customer account, prepaid instrument, wallet, FASTags, National Common Mobility Card (NCMC), or other similar services.
- The RBI stated that the nodal accounts of parent company One97 Communications and Paytm Payments Services should be cancelled as soon as possible, but no later than February 29.
- Settlement of all pipeline transactions and nodal accounts, commenced on or before February 29, must be completed by March 15, and no transactions will be permitted beyond that date.
- Customers are free to withdraw or spend money from their Paytm accounts, which include savings and current accounts, prepaid instruments, FASTags, NCMC, and so on, as long as they do not exceed their available balance.

ABOUT PAYMENT BANKS?

- Payment banks, a brainchild of the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**, emerged in 2014 as a new breed of financial institutions aimed at bridging the gap between traditional banks and unbanked segments of the population. It was based on the recommendations of the **Nachiket Mor Committee**. Unlike their full-fledged counterparts, payment banks come with a distinct set of features and limitations, catering to a specific financial needs

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF PAYMENT BANKS:

1. **Limited deposit taking:** Payment banks can accept deposits up to **₹200,000** per customer, encouraging convenient savings without hefty initial sums.
2. **No credit facilities:** Unlike traditional banks, they cannot issue loans or credit cards, focusing solely on deposit and payment services.
3. **Digital-first approach:** They leverage technology to provide digital and mobile banking solutions, ensuring wider accessibility and financial inclusion.
4. **Basic financial products:** They offer services like bill payments, money transfers, debit cards, and limited overdraft facilities.

PAYMENTS BANK	SMALL FINANCE BANK
Can accept deposits, but only up to 1 lakh per individual customer	Allowed to take deposits of any amount
Can't lend in any form	Can lend but the focus will on small lending
Can open small savings accounts	Can finance small business units, small marginal farmers, micro and small industries and unorganised sector entities
Can provide remittance services	Can provide remittances as well as credit cards
Allowed to issue automated teller machine (ATM) or debit cards	Allowed to issue ATM or debit cards
Not allowed to issue credit cards	Has to ensure that 50% of loan portfolio constitutes advances of up to 25 lakh
Can distribute products such as mutual funds, insurance and third-party loans	Can distribute financial products such as mutual funds, insurance and pension

BENEFITS FOR CUSTOMERS:

1. **Easy access to banking:** Payment banks simplify entry into the formal financial system, especially for individuals who lack access to traditional bank branches.
2. **Convenient digital services:** Their digital focus makes banking more accessible and user-friendly, particularly for tech-savvy customers.
3. **Security and regulation:** Backed by the RBI, payment banks offer a secure environment for deposits and transactions.
4. **Financial inclusion:** They play a crucial role in bringing unbanked and underbanked populations into the mainstream financial system.
5. **Low-Cost Services:** Payment banks often operate with lower overhead costs due to their digital-first approach and limited service offerings. Thus, can provide services with lower fees and reduced or no minimum balance requirements.
6. **Quick and Easy Account Opening:** Payment banks often simplify the account opening process, allowing users to register and access basic banking services quickly.

LIMITATIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. **Deposit restrictions:** The cap on deposits might not suit individuals with higher savings requirements.
2. **Limited product range:** The absence of credit facilities and certain investment options restricts their service scope compared to traditional banks.
3. **Transaction charges:** Some payment banks levy transaction charges, which might not be ideal for frequent users.
4. **Dependency on Technology Infrastructure:** Payment banks heavily rely on technology for their operations. Any disruptions in digital services can hinder their ability to provide services.
5. **Low Transaction Volumes:** In certain regions or during economic downturns, payment banks may face challenges in achieving sufficient transaction volumes.

INDIA RIGHT NOW HAS 6 PAYMENT BANKS:

1. Airtel Payment Bank
2. India Post Payment Bank
3. Fino payment bank
4. Paytm Payment Bank
5. NSDL Payment Bank
6. Jio Payment Bank

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q1) Consider the following statements:

- 1) 200,000 is the maximum deposit amount allowed in a payment bank.
- 2) Payment banks can provide loans to farmers
- 3) Payment banks primarily operate through online platforms

How many of the above statements are correct?

- a) One
- b) Two
- c) Three
- d) None

ANSWER: B

Q2) What is the name of the government initiative that aimed to boost financial inclusion through various measures, including the introduction of payment banks?

- a) Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)
- b) Atal Pension Yojana (APY)
- c) Stand Up India
- d) Beti Bachao Beti Padhao

ANSWER: A

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

Q1) Evaluate the effectiveness of financial literacy initiatives conducted by payment banks in educating users about the benefits and responsible use of digital banking services.

EMPLOYER RATING SURVEY

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "EMPLOYER RATING SURVEY". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "INDIAN ECONOMY" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

In a progressive move towards promoting gender equality and enhancing women's workforce participation in India, the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) and the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) have collaboratively launched the **Employer Rating Survey**. This initiative aims to assess and encourage employers' commitment and support for fostering a more inclusive work environment for women.

UNDERSTANDING THE EMPLOYEES' PROVIDENT FUND ORGANISATION (EPFO):

The EPFO is a governmental organization entrusted with managing provident fund and pension accounts for the organized sector workforce in India. Administered by the Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India, it operates under the Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952. Boasting one of the world's largest clientele, the EPFO plays a crucial role in overseeing the financial transactions related to social security on an extensive scale.

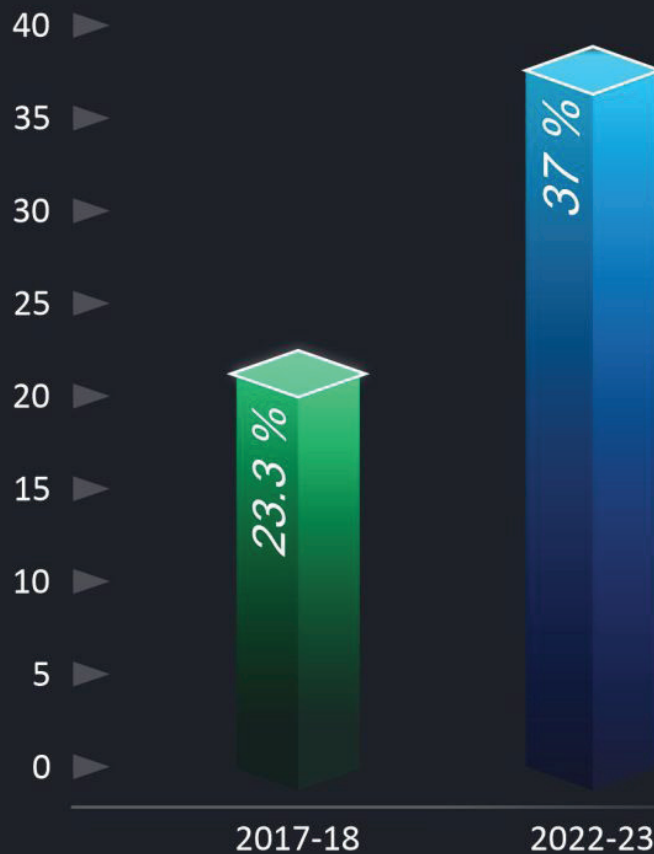
KEY ASPECTS OF THE EMPLOYER RATING SURVEY:

- Launched at the event "**Women in the Workforce for Viksit Bharat**," the survey seeks to evaluate and rate employers based on their commitment and support for increasing women's participation in the workforce.
- It serves as a comprehensive tool to gauge progress and efforts made by employers in creating an environment conducive to women's employment.
- The survey comprises a detailed questionnaire distributed to approximately 300 million customers nationwide, covering aspects such as the existence of internal committees for addressing sexual harassment, provision of crèche facilities, transportation during late hours, and adherence to equal pay principles.

STATE OF WOMEN'S LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN INDIA:

- While the **Women's Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR)** has seen improvement in recent years, a considerable portion of this increase pertains to unpaid work.
- According to the **Periodic Labor Force Survey (PLFS)**, the female participation rate rose to **27.8%** in **2022-23** from **17.5%** in **2017-18**. However, the majority of this increase is attributed to women categorized as "helpers in household enterprises" who do not receive regular salaries. In contrast, the **LFPR for males** increased from **75.8%** in 2017-18 to **78.5%** in 2022-23.

Rise in Female Labour Force Participation Rate leading to women-led development



CAUSES OF LOWER WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE LABOR FORCE:

- **Patriarchal Social Norms:** Deep-rooted norms and gender roles limit women's access to education and employment. Societal expectations often prioritize women as caregivers, discouraging their active involvement in the workforce.
- **Gender Wage Gap:** Women in India face significant wage disparities compared to men. The 2022 World Inequality Report highlights that men capture 82% of labor income, acting as a deterrent for women in seeking formal employment.
- **Unpaid Care Work:** Women shoulder a disproportionate burden of unpaid care and household duties in India, restricting their time and energy for paid work. This unequal division poses a significant obstacle to women's participation in the labor force.

- **Social and Cultural Stigma:** Some communities associate social and cultural stigma with women working outside the home. Prevailing norms questioning women's roles in the workforce contribute to lower labor force participation rates.
- **Lack of Flexible Work Options:** The absence of flexible or remote work options, particularly for women with familial responsibilities, hinders their ability to balance work and family commitments. Employer reluctance to adopt flexible policies contributes to women's underrepresentation.
- **Limited Access to Education:** Unequal access to education impedes women's entry into the labor force. Girls in some regions face barriers in accessing quality education, limiting their skill development and employment opportunities.
- **Inadequate Support Systems:** The absence of support systems, such as crèche facilities, hinders working mothers. Without childcare support, women may struggle to balance work and family responsibilities, leading to a decline in workforce participation.
- **Occupational Segregation:** Women are often concentrated in specific industries, contributing to occupational segregation. Limited representation in certain sectors restricts women's choices and opportunities for career advancement, perpetuating gender inequalities in the workforce.

IMPACT OF HIGHER WOMEN'S LABOR PARTICIPATION ON SOCIETY:

Higher women's labor participation positively impacts society in various ways:

- **Economic Growth:** Increased involvement of women in the workforce directly contributes to economic growth by enhancing productivity and overall economic output.
- **Poverty Reduction:** Access to income-generating opportunities for women helps lift households out of poverty, leading to improved living standards, better education, and healthcare access.
- **Human Capital Development:** Educated and economically active women positively influence the education and health outcomes of their children, contributing to improved human capital development and societal progress.
- **Gender Equality and Empowerment:** Higher women's workforce participation challenges traditional gender norms, fostering gender equality, and enabling women to have greater control over their lives.
- **Reduced Gender-Based Violence:** Economic empowerment through employment reduces women's vulnerability to gender-based violence, providing financial independence and the ability to make choices aligned with well-being.
- **Fertility and Population Growth:** Studies show that as women participate more in the workforce, fertility rates tend to decline, contributing to more sustainable population growth.
- **Labor Market and Talent Pool:** Increasing women's participation addresses skill shortages, leading to a more efficient allocation of talent and resources in diverse and inclusive workplaces.
- **Innovative Solutions and Perspectives:** A diverse workforce, including women, brings a range of perspectives, fostering innovation and creativity within organizations for effective solutions to societal challenges.

INITIATIVES TO SAFEGUARD WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT:

Various initiatives and labor codes have been implemented to safeguard women's employment in India. The Code of Wages, 2019, Industrial Relations Code, 2020, Social Security Code, 2020, and Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020, are instrumental in ensuring fair labor practices. Additionally, **schemes** such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, One Stop Centre, SWADHAR Greh, NARI SHAKTI PURASKAR, Mahila Police Volunteers, Mahila Shakti Kendras, and the NIRBHAYA Fund are aimed at addressing gender-related challenges.

WAY FORWARD:

- To truly enhance women's workforce participation, discussions on gender equality must transcend compartmentalizing women's lives into work and personal spheres.
- Policy solutions should be derived from women's negotiations within their cultural context, emphasizing increased autonomy and flexible work options.
- The promotion and support of higher women's labor force participation are not just matters of gender equality but are crucial drivers of societal progress and development.

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTION:

Q1) Consider the following statements:

- 1) The objective of the "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" scheme in India is to ensure women's safety in workplaces
- 2) "Mahila Shakti Kendras (MSK)" function as a comprehensive support system for women at the district level.
- 3) SWADHAR Greh" primarily focuses on providing assistance to Victims of human trafficking and domestic violence

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: B

Q2) Which scheme aims to provide temporary accommodation, rehabilitation, and support for women in distress, including those without family support?

- a) Mahila Shakti Kendras (MSK)
- b) Beti Bachao Beti Padhao

- c) SWADHAR Greh
- d) NARI SHAKTI PURASKAR

ANSWER: C

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION:

- Q1) Discuss the impact of deep-rooted patriarchal norms on women's access to education and employment opportunities in the context of women's development in India. Suggest measures to address these challenges.

- Q2) Examine the significance of education in breaking gender disparities. Discuss how limited access to quality education can perpetuate inequalities and hinder women's participation in the labor force. Propose policy measures to address this educational gap.

POPULATION PRIORITIES: INTERIM BUDGET 2024 AND CENSUS

GENERAL STUDIES – GROWTH OF INDIAN ECONOMY, BUDGET, INTERIM BUDGET, CENSUS, POPULATION CONTROL, FERTILITY RATE, NATIONAL FAMILY HEALTH SURVEY, DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND.

WHY IN THE NEWS ?



- Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in her interim budget speech that – “A high-powered committee will be constituted to consider the challenges arising from the rapidly increasing

population and demographic changes.”

- There is no direct evidence available to support this statement in the backdrop of repeated postponements of the decennial census by the Central Government.
- This is the first time in India since 1881 that census has not been conducted in any decade.
- At present the population of India is about 1 billion 40 crores.
- The Sample Registration System statistical report and National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-21) conducted in the year 2020 show that the total fertility rate (TFR) in India has fallen to 2.
- Even at present, some states – Bihar (2.98), Meghalaya (2.91), Uttar Pradesh (2.35), Jharkhand (2.26) and Manipur (2.17) – have higher fertility rates (TFR) than the average national fertility rate (TFR). That means it is 2.1.
- The high population growth seen in the 20th century has now been nearly controlled.
- The fertility rate (TFR) has come down from 5.7 in 1950 to 2 in 2020, although this figure varies in different regions.
- The population share of the southern states of India has declined from 26 per cent in 1951 to 21 per cent in 2011, which is mainly a result of the rapid decline in TFR due to better socio-economic outcomes and education and this situation is reflected in This is despite high migration rates in the states.
- While India’s current surveys are solid and necessary, they are not a substitute for a comprehensive census. The continued delay in conducting the census reflects the poor condition of the Union Home Ministry, which is motivated by other priorities rather than implementing an important program of the Indian government.
- Demographic changes and increasing life expectancy rates in India have resulted in many challenges as well as some opportunities.
- A developing country can benefit from the demographic dividend only when there are enough jobs for a relatively high proportion of the working-age population and people can enjoy some of the social protections that remain with them as they age. Prove to be helpful.
- This dividend is likely to be wasted in India due to high unemployment and a relative slowdown in the last few years in the creation of non-agricultural jobs that increase productivity and meet skilled employment needs.
- If this “high-powered” committee is meaningfully engaged in addressing questions related to jobs and social security and the challenges faced by citizens due to rapid urbanization and mechanization of work, it will play an important role. But if this committee looks at population from the perspective of religion and immigration, it will only divert the governance and government from making good use of the rapidly dwindling democratic dividend in the country.
- The interim budget for 2024 has been presented ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, but it is different from the populist announcements of the 2019 interim budget.
- The entire focus of the present government is on the infrastructural development in the country.

The Finance Minister said that she will present a detailed roadmap of developed India in the July budget.

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in her interim budget speech on Thursday, February 1, “The government sees the country/India as divided into only 4 castes – women, farmers, youth and poor.”
- This time the interim budget has been presented to continue the essential services of the government. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has presented her first interim budget this year and sixth time as the Finance Minister of India.
- The last interim budget in the year 2019 was presented by Union Minister Piyush Goyal, who was holding additional charge of the Finance Ministry after Arun Jaitley fell ill. Sitharaman was appointed Finance Minister after the Modi government came to power for the second time. As the Finance Minister of India, he presented the full budget on July 5, 2019. This was his first budget as Finance Minister in the year 2019.

MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN UNION BUDGET AND INTERIM BUDGET :



The interim budget is presented just before any general election in the country, while the full budget (Union Budget) is presented in the Parliament by any elected government. Following are the main differences between Union Budget and Interim Budget –

- The full budget or Union Budget is an annual budget presented by the central government in the Parliament, while the interim budget is presented just before the general elections.
- The full budget or Union Budget is passed after full discussion in the Lok Sabha, while the interim budget is presented without any discussion in the Parliament. Which is also called ‘Vote on the account’.
- In the Union Budget, details of income and expenditure of the previous financial year are given in detail, whereas in the Interim Budget, a general statement of income and expenditure of the previous financial year is presented. It is offered only to continue the essential services of the government.
- The Union Budget is always presented for an entire financial year, also called the full budget,

whereas the interim budget is presented for expenditure covering a period of approximately 3 to 4 months of the financial year, including during an election year.

- In the Union Budget, many new schemes are announced by the government and funds are also earmarked for it, whereas no new schemes are announced in the interim budget.
- The Union Budget has two different parts. One of them is about the expenditure of the government, while the other part is based on the plan of the government to raise funds through various measures, whereas the interim budget does not give complete information about the sources of income of the government. It is introduced to meet the necessary expenses of the government before the formation of the next government.
- The full budget is presented by the government with a majority in Parliament, while the interim budget is presented in the year between the next Lok Sabha elections and the expiry of the previous Lok Sabha.

VOTE ON ACCOUNT :

- Vote on Account is passed through Interim Budget (Interim Budget in Hindi). This allows the government to meet administrative expenses for the remaining days of the financial year. It is passed without any major discussion in the lower house of the Parliament. Unlike a regular budget where the budget is passed only after proper discussion. It is like an advance grant to the government of that time until the demand for grant is voted on and the Finance Bill and the Appropriation Bill are passed in Parliament. The amount of grant is generally one-sixth of the total estimated expenditure for the entire year under various demands for grants. Unlike the regular budget which is valid for one year, Vote on Account is usually valid for a period of two months.

MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN INTERIM BUDGET AND VOTE ON ACCOUNT :

Interim Budget and Vote on Account Budget are meant to serve the purpose of the government in meeting administrative expenses. The main differences between Interim Budget and vote on account are as follows –

- Interim Budget is passed when it is not possible for the government to present a full budget at the time of general elections. Whereas Vote on Account is passed through Interim Budget (Interim Budget in Hindi). It seeks parliamentary approval for the government of the day to meet the expenses for the remaining part of the financial year.
- The interim budget contains both receipts and expenditure statements. Whereas Vote on Account only lists the expenditure details to be borne by the government.
- The budget must be discussed in the lower house of parliament and passed to allow the government to meet its administrative expenses. Whereas since Vote on Account is treated as a formal matter, it can be passed by the Lower House of Parliament without any discussion.
- The government has enough power to make changes in tax administration even in the budget. Whereas the Vote on Account does not have the right to make any changes in the direct cost. Any change in direct tax can be brought only by a Finance Bill.
- It is like a budget which is presented for a transition period. However, it is presented for the

entire year like a regular budget. Whereas Vote on Account is passed through Interim Budget.

CENSUS :

- Meaning of Census – To count the total number of people/citizens of any country. It is the process of collecting, compiling, analyzing and disseminating demographic, economic and social data of all individuals in any country at a specific time.
- It also throws light on the characteristics of the population.
- The census conducted in India is one of the largest administrative exercises conducted in the entire world.

IMPLEMENTING MINISTRY :

- In India, the decennial census of India is implemented and conducted by the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India.
- The decennial census of India is conducted by the Ministry of Home Affairs of India.
- After independence, the Census Organization was established in India in 1951 to conduct a census every ten years, which is under the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

LEGAL/CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS RELATED TO CENSUS :

- For the first time in independent India, the Census Act, 1948 was introduced in the form of a bill by the then Home Minister of India, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.
- Census in India is a subject in the Union List of India which is mentioned under Article 246 of the Constitution of India.
- In India, census work is done throughout the country under the mentioned provisions of the Census Act, 1948.
- Census is listed at serial number 69 of the Seventh Schedule of India in the Constitution of India.

PROVISION OF PENALTY AND GUARANTEE OF CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION COLLECTED :

- The information gathered/collected from individuals/citizens is guaranteed confidentiality by the Government of India under the Census Act, 1948. Under this Act, there is a provision of penalty for both the public and census officers in case of non-compliance of this rule or violation of any provision of the Act.
- The information collected during the census is so confidential that it is not accessible even to the Supreme Court and High Courts of India.

GRADUAL HISTORY OF CENSUS IN INDIA :

ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL HISTORY :

- India's ancient literature 'Rigveda' provides information about the population census conducted in India during 800-600 BC.
- From 'Arthashastra' written by Kautilya, we get information that collection of population data was prescribed as a measure for formulating state policy for taxation done in the third century BC.
- In the medieval period, 'Ain-e-Akbari', the administrative report of the reign of Mughal emperor Akbar, provides comprehensive data related to India's population, industry, wealth and many other characteristics

PRE-INDEPENDENCE CENSUS OF INDIA :

- The history of census in India began around 1800 AD when England started its census.
- In India, census was conducted by James Prinsep in Allahabad (year 1824) and Banaras (year 1827-28).
- The first complete census of an Indian city was completed in Dhaka (now in Bangladesh) by Henry Walter in the year 1830.
- The second census of India was completed by Fort St. George in the year 1836-37.
- The Government of India had ordered local governments to conduct a five-yearly census of population in the year 1849.
- The first non-synchronous census of India was conducted in the year 1872 during the reign of Governor-General Lord Mayo.
- On February 17, 1881, under British rule, W.C. The first synchronous census of India was conducted by Plowden (Census Commissioner of India).
- In India, census has been conducted continuously once every ten years since then till the present time.

FIRST CENSUS IN INDIA (1881) :

- During British rule in India, the first census was conducted with special emphasis on classifying the demographic, economic and social characteristics of the entire Indian continent (except Kashmir, French and Portuguese colonies).

SECOND CENSUS (1891) :

- The second census was conducted in the year 1881 during the British rule in India on the same system as the first.

- It included 100 percent of all people and also included the upper parts of present-day Burma, Kashmir and Sikkim.

THIRD CENSUS (1901) :

- In the third census conducted in India, remote areas of Balochistan, Rajputana, Andaman Nicobar, Burma, Punjab and Kashmir were also included.

FIFTH CENSUS (1921) :

- The population of India was continuously increasing till the census of 1921 and this increase continued even after the census of 1921. This was the decade when the 1918 flu pandemic struck, killing at least 12 million people. The decade 1911–21 has been the only decade so far to see a decadal decline in population of 0.31%.
- The census year 1921 is also known as “The Great Divide” in the demographic history of India.

ELEVENTH CENSUS (1971) :

- This was the second census of India after India’s independence.
- In this, for the first time a column was added in the form of a question for information about the fertility of married women.

13TH CENSUS (1991) :

- Compared to the year 1981 when children aged four or more were considered literate, in this census for the first time the concept of literacy was changed and children aged seven or more were considered literate.
- This was the fifth census of independent India.

14TH CENSUS (2001) :

- For the first time, there was a huge change at the level of technology in the fourteenth census of India.
- In this census the census was scanned through a high speed scanner and the handwritten data of the schedule was converted into digital form through Intelligent Character Reading (ICR).
- In this, handwriting was captured from an Intelligent Character Reading (ICR) image file.
- This census used an advanced version of Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology in which printed characters are captured.

15TH CENSUS (2011) :

- The 2011 census saw a significant decline for the first time in the case of EAG states (Empowered Action Group): Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh,

Rajasthan and Odisha.

SIXTEENTH CENSUS (2021) :

- This Census 2021 was postponed due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- For the first time, the census will be conducted in digital form, in which there is also a provision for self-counting.
- In this, for the first time, information will be collected about such families and members living in families whose head is a transgender.
- This census had columns only for male and females.
- For the first time in this census, a column for transgender or third gender or other gender has also been added.
- This census has not been made public yet.

IMPORTANCE OF CENSUS OF INDIA :

- Largest single source of statistical information: Indian Census is the largest single source of obtaining various types of statistical information about the citizens or people of India.
- Various researchers use census data to analyze and predict population growth and trends.
- Helpful in planning and policy making and good governance: In India, information collected through census is used for administration, planning and policy making as well as management and evaluation of various programs by the government. Therefore, Census of India is helpful in any kind of planning and policy making and maintaining good governance in India.
- Helpful in delimitation of constituencies and allocation for representation: Census of India data is also used for delimitation of any constituencies and allocation for representation in Parliament, State Assemblies and local bodies.
- Helpful for establishment of business and industry: Use of census data of India helps in better access for establishment of any business and industry. It helps business houses and industries to plan to strengthen their business in areas where they did not have access till now.
- Helpful in providing grants to the states: The Central Finance Commission in India provides grants to the states on the basis of population data available through the Census of India. Therefore, Census of India is helpful in providing grants to the states in India.

SOCIO – ECONOMIC AND CASTE CENSUS (SECC) :

- The Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) was conducted in the year 2011 for the first time since 1931.
- Under this, an effort is made to know about every Indian family in rural and urban India and to obtain the following information –

- about economic status so that the Central/State authorities can use it to define poor/poor or deprived people and for this a variety of indicators can be developed.
- The designation of specific castes has been done to enable the government to re-evaluate which caste groups are economically worse off and which are better off.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM :

Q.1. Consider the following statements with reference to the Interim Budget.

1. The Interim Budget is presented just before the general elections.
2. The Interim budget is presented during the election year, to cover expenses for a period of approximately 3 to 4 months of the financial year.
3. No new schemes of any kind are announced in the interim budget.
4. Complete information about the sources of income of the government is not given in the interim budget.

Which of the above statement /statements is correct ?

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

Answer - (D)

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM :

Q.1. What do you understand by Budget? Explain the impact of the Budget on the population dividend by outlining the main differences between the Union Budget and the Interim Budget.