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CURRENT AFFAIRS

Date: 13 February 2024

DEMAND FOR STATEHOOD BY LADAKH

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

WHY IN THE NEWS?

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

WHAT ARE THEIR DEMANDS?

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

BACKGROUND

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was previously part of the state of Jammu & Kashmir, became a Union Territory in August 2019 after Article 370 was repealed and the state was divided into two independent Union Territories.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

REASONS FOR LADAKH'S INTEREST IN SIXTH SCHEDULE INCLUSION:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ABOUT 6TH SCHEDULE OF THE CONSTITUTION

- The Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution outlines the administrative structure for specific regions in **Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram**, designating them as Autonomous Districts and Regions. This framework aims to **protect the cultural, linguistic, and land rights of the indigenous populations in these areas**. The Governor, under this schedule, has the authority to establish administrative centers and modify territorial boundaries within these autonomous regions.
- Initially comprising two parts, the Sixth Schedule now encompasses ten regions spread across the four states. Each region has distinct legislative, executive, judicial, and financial powers. The key features of the Sixth Schedule include:

1. **Executive Functions:** District and Regional Councils are responsible for overseeing the development and management of public amenities like schools, dispensaries, highways, and waterways. They also play a role in determining educational policies for primary schools.
2. **Legislative Functions:** District Councils in autonomous regions have the authority to enact laws concerning land, forests, village administration, marriage, social norms, and more, subject to approval from the state governor.
3. **Judicial Functions:** Council Courts handle disputes involving Scheduled Tribes within the district, with jurisdictional limitations on crimes punishable by death or a minimum five-year sentence.
4. **Financial Functions:** District and Regional Councils are involved in formulating budgets, imposing taxes on businesses, trades, and goods, and granting permits for mineral mining within their jurisdiction.

- The **significance of the Sixth Schedule** lies in providing a framework for the autonomous governance of tribal areas. It **ensures the preservation of indigenous rights and cultures while facilitating local development and administration.** Through its provisions, the Sixth Schedule aims to empower tribal communities by granting them legislative, executive, judicial, and financial autonomy within specified regions.

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

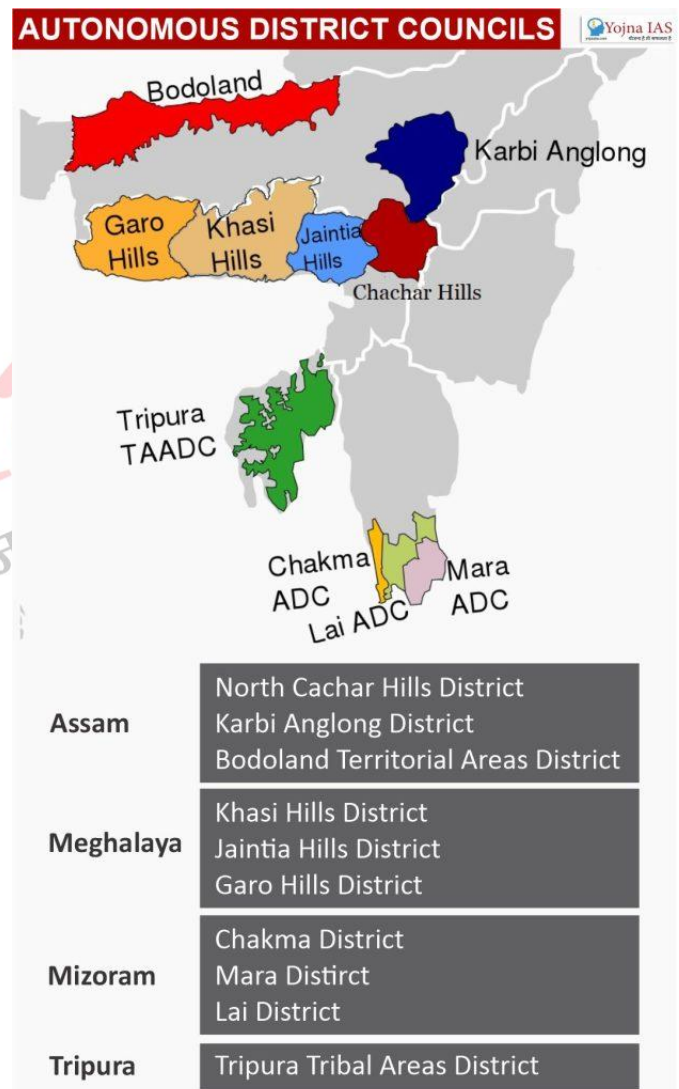
Q1) Consider the following statements:

1. The primary objective of the Sixth Schedule is to protect the minority languages
2. Governor of the state appoints the tribal advisory councils in the Sixth Schedule areas
3. Article 244 of the Constitution empowers the President to declare an area as a Scheduled Area

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: B



MAINS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

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

Himanshu Mishra

GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND EQUITY

SOURCE - THE HINDU AND PIB.

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

WHY IN THE NEWS?



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

GLOBAL GOOD-GENDER EQUITY AND EQUALITY COALITION :

- The initiative **“Women-led Development”** agenda launched by the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi has been globally supported at the World Economic Forum (WEF) 2024, with the committed support of more than 10,000 businesses from across the WEF world.
- At the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF), India participated in the spirit of **“Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam”**, aligning with the WEF’s overarching theme **“Rebuilding Trust”** for a shared future marked by global cooperation. Ready to shape.
- At WEF 2024, the Indian official delegation is led by **Union Minister of Women and Child Development Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani, Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Housing and Urban Affairs Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Union Minister of Railways, Communications, Electronics and IT Shri Ashwini Vaishnav, Shri RK Singh, Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry** and other senior officials of the Government of India participated.
- The Forum meeting announced the launch of the **“Global Good-Gender Equity and Equality”** with the support and collaboration of WEF and the Government of India.
- Announcing the launch of this alliance, Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani said – **“In a place where only politics is involved with the flow of money, we are here to join hands with industry, enterprise and humanity in this grand alliance. Being able to bring together the best.”**
- The collaboration has received support from industry leaders including Mastercard, Uber, Tata, TVS, Bayer, Godrej, Serum Institute of India, IMD Lausanne and over 10,000 industry partners.
- The alliance was organized and led by the CII Center for Women’s Leadership and supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
- The World Economic Forum has joined the alliance as a ‘Network Partner’ and Invest India as an ‘Institutional Partner’.
- In view of India’s enduring commitment to **‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’** and its continuous efforts towards **“Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and Sabka Prayas”** for **‘One Earth, One Family, One Future’**, the **Global Alliance for Gender Equality (‘Alliance for Global Good - Gender Equity and Equality’)** will definitely advance all gender related issues strongly.
- This year’s unique initiative at WEF was the first-ever Women’s Leadership Lounge (We Lead Lounge) by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), led by the Union Minister of Women and Child Development.
- The lounge hosted various panel discussions and meetings on the topics of **“women-led development”** and increasing women’s participation in the economy, bridging the digital gender gap, promoting women’s health, etc.
- The **“We Lead”** lounge also showcased handicrafts made by women entrepreneurs and products made by the Tea and Coffee Board of India for women-driven global prosperity.
- Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani participated in eight sessions of this annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF). These include **‘Restoring Confidence in Global Systems’, ‘BRICS in Expansion’, ‘Can India Seize Its Moment’ and ‘Country Strategy Dialogue on India’**. Her meaningful interventions in these sessions focused the attention of all the countries attending the meeting on the policies and initiatives of the Government of India with special emphasis on gender equality and women-led development.
- Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani, Additional Union Minister of WEF, held bilateral meetings with leaders from across the world. She met Her Excellency Noor Ali Alkhulaif, Minister of Sustainable Development of Bahrain, Her Excellency Mrs. Karien van Gennep, Deputy Prime Minister and

Minister of Social Affairs and Employment of the Netherlands and Her Excellency Ms. Caroline Edstadler. , also discussed issues of mutual interest and potential cooperation with Her Excellency Ms. Caroline Edstadler, Federal Minister for the European Union and the Constitution, Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria.



WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM :

- The World Economic Forum was founded in 1971 as a non-profit organization and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
- The World Economic Forum engages society's foremost political, cultural, business and other leaders to shape the regional and industry agenda at the global level.

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

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

UN WOMEN :

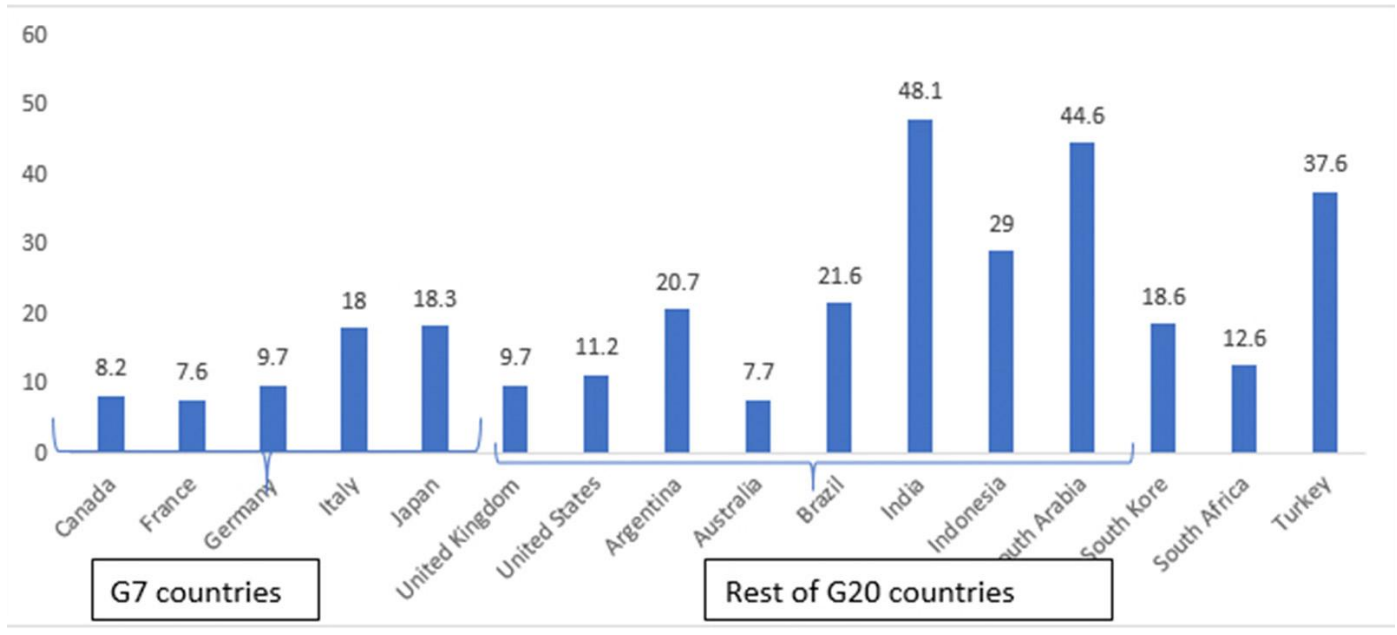
- UN Women was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2010 to accelerate progress in meeting the needs and rights of women and girls around the world.
- UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards to achieve gender equality and engages governments and citizens to design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

INITIATIVES STARTED BY INDIA TO REDUCE GENDER GAP :

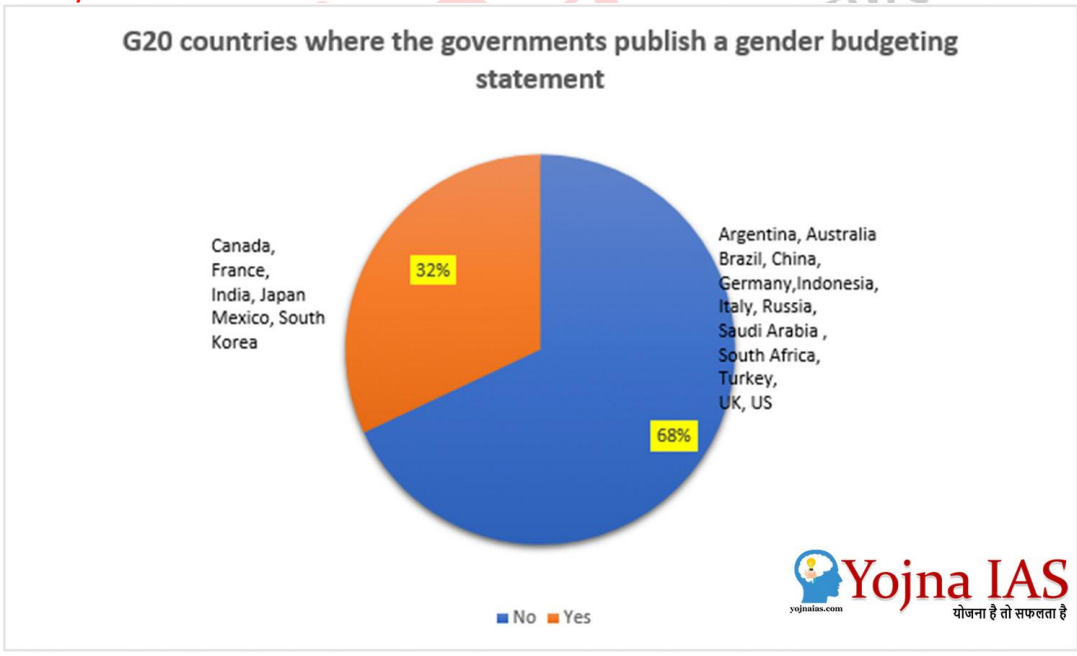


Following are some of the major initiatives launched by India to reduce the gender gap in social, economic and political life –

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



CONCLUSION / SOLUTION :



- According to the World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Index 2023, there has been a slight improvement in India’s ranking in terms of gender equality. However, despite this, India is still far behind the countries around the world. Despite an improvement of eight points in India’s ranking this time compared to last year, India’s ranking is at 127th among 146 countries across the world. In the World Economic Forum’s 2022 report, India’s ranking was 135 among 146 countries.



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



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

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM :

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

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

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

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

Answer - (D)

PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM :

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

Akhilesh kumar shrivastav

