

NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT ETC**95 per cent women in India involved in unpaid labour**

In India, 95 per cent or around 195 million women are employed in the unorganized sector or in unpaid labour, says a report released by consultancy firm Deloitte.

About the report

- The report titled ‘Empowering Women & Girls in India for the Fourth Industrial Revolution’ was released during the Gender Equality Summit 2019 by UN Global Compact Network India.
- The share of women in the workforce fell to 25 per cent and the female Labour Force Participation rate (FLPR) stands at 26 per cent; with 195 million women work in the unorganised sector or do unpaid work says the report.
- It adds that involving women in the workforce can help achieve future aspirations that can boost India’s GDP by 27 per cent.
- However, this will only be possible if participation of women increases in workplace to same number as men.

Highlights of the report

- Limited access to education, information, technology, social and political participation.
- In India, the female labour force participation has had a decadal fall from 36.7 per cent in 2005 to 26 per cent in 2018, with 95 per cent (195 million) women employed in the unorganised sector or in unpaid work.
- In the education sector, 39.4 per cent girls aged between 15–18 dropped out of schools and colleges
- In terms of digital literacy, only 34 per cent women in India have access to mobile technology, according to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER).

INDIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE, HISTORY**Dictionary of Martyrs of India’s Freedom Struggle (1857-1947)**

Hon’ble PM has released the Dictionary of Martyrs of India’s Freedom Struggle, at an event.

Dictionary of Martyrs Project

- The project for compilation of “Dictionary of Martyrs” of India’s Freedom Struggle was commissioned by the Ministry of Culture, to the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) to commemorate the 150th anniversary of uprising of 1857.
- In this dictionary a martyr has been defined as a person who died or who was killed in action or in detention, or was awarded capital punishment while participating in the national movement for emancipation of India.
- It includes ex-INA or ex-military personnel who died fighting the British.
- Information of about 13,500 martyrs has been recorded in these volumes.

Who are included?

- It includes the martyrs of 1857 Uprising, JallianwalaBagh Massacre (1919), Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-22), Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-34), Quit India Movement (1942-44), Revolutionary Movements (1915-34), Kissan Movements, Tribal Movements, Agitation for Responsible Government in the Princely States (Prajamandal), Indian National Army (INA, 1943-45), Royal Indian Navy Upsurge (RIN, 1946), etc.

Five Volumes

- Volume 1: In this volume, more than 4400 martyrs of Delhi, Haryana, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh have been listed.
- Volume 2: In this volume more than 3500 martyrs of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Jammu & Kashmir have been listed.
- Volume 3: The number of martyrs covered in this volume is more than 1400. This volume covers the martyrs of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Sind.
- Volume 4: The numbers of martyrs covered in this volume is more than 3300. This volume covers the martyrs of Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura.
- Volume 5: The number of martyrs covered in this volume is more than 1450. This volume covers the martyrs of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

CONSTITUTION AND POLITY**Mediation in Ayodhya dispute**

A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court has referred the Ayodhya dispute for mediation in a bid to

heal minds and hearts. The mediation would start in a week in Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh of which the disputed area is a part with the process conducted in-camera.

Legal provisions for Mediation

- Under Section 89 of the Civil Procedure Code, judges must ensure that all avenues to resolve a dispute outside the Court have been exhausted. The Section reads: Where it appears to the Court that there exist elements of a settlement which may be acceptable to the parties, the Court shall formulate the terms of settlement and give them to the parties for their observations.
- After receiving the observations of the parties, the Court may reformulate the terms of a possible settlement and refer the same for:
 - Arbitration (a process by which parties select an independent person, who renders a decision regarding the case)
 - Conciliation (it attempts to make parties come to an agreement, about the problem at hand)
 - Judicial settlement including settlement through LokAdalat or
 - Mediation

India's Official Secrets Act

- The Attorney-General has asked for “criminal action” against those responsible for making “stolen documents” on the Rafale deal public, has brought the Official Secrets Act into focus.
- The colonial-era law meant for ensuring secrecy and confidentiality in governance, mostly on national security and espionage issues.
- Governments have also faced criticism for misusing the law against journalists and whistleblowers.

The Official Secrets Act

- The Indian Official Secrets Act, 1904 was enacted during the time of Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India from 1899 to 1905.
- It was an amended and more stringent version of The Indian Official Secrets Act (Act XIV) of 1889, brought in at a time when a large number of powerful newspapers had emerged in several languages across India.
- Fearless editors opposed the Raj's policies on a daily basis, building political consciousness among the people, and facing police crackdowns and prison terms to uphold their mission and convictions.
- One of the main purposes of the Act was to muzzle the voice of nationalist publications.
- In April 1923, a newer version of the Official Secrets Act was notified.
- The Indian Official Secrets Act (Act No XIX of 1923) replaced the earlier Act, and was extended to all matters of secrecy and confidentiality in governance in the country.

Ambit of the Act

- The secrecy law broadly deals with two aspects — spying or espionage, which is dealt with in Section 3 of the Act, and disclosure of other secret information of the government, which is dealt with in Section 5.
- The secret information can be any official code, password, sketch, plan, model, article, note, document or information.
- Since the classification of secret information is so broad, it is argued that the colonial law is in direct conflict with the Right to Information Act.
- Under Section 5, both the person communicating the information, and the person receiving the information, can be punished by the prosecuting agency.

Did the law undergo any changes over the years?

- No. However, the Second Administrative Reforms Commission (SARC) Report, 2006, suggested the Act should be substituted by a chapter in the National Security Act that incorporates the necessary provisions.
- The reason: it had become a contentious issue after the implementation of the Right to Information Act.
- The OSA does not define “secret” or “official secrets”. Public servants could deny any information terming it a “secret” when asked under the RTI Act.
- The SARC report stated that as the OSA's background is the colonial climate of mistrust of people and the primacy of public officials in dealing with the citizens, it created a culture of

secrecy. However, confidentiality became the norm and disclosure the exception. This tendency was challenged when the Right to Information Act came into existence.

Other Issues:

- Another contentious issue with the law is that its Section 5, which deals with potential breaches of national security, is often misinterpreted.
- The Section makes it a punishable offence to share information that may help an enemy state.
- The Section comes in handy to book journalists when they publicise information that may cause embarrassment to the government or the armed forces.
- The Delhi High Court in 2009 has ruled that publishing a document merely labelled as “secret” shall not render the journalist liable under the OSA.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS

International Women’s Day 2019

International Women’s Day is celebrated on March 8 every year. It is a day when the world comes together to appreciate womanhood and their importance in society. The day also celebrates the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women.

History:

- Earlier, it was called National woman’s day and was acknowledged by the U.S. on February 28, 1909. This was done because of the labour movement which was started in 1908 where 15000 female employees went on strike in New York City to protest against poor working conditions.
- National Women’s Day was recognised as International Women’s Day only in 1910 after German women’s rights activist Clara Zetkin suggested at an International Conference.

Themes:

- This year the themes for International Women’s Day are #BalanceforBetter, which is described as a “call-to-action for driving gender balance across the world” and “More Powerful Together”. The themes stress upon the need for more men to get involved in the fight against gender equality and feminism.

Why March 8?

- It was on this day that women in Soviet Russia gained the right the vote in 1917, hence March 8 was declared a national holiday for them. The United Nations General Assembly invited member states to proclaim March 8 as the UN Day for women’s rights and world peace in 1977.

India, Russia sign deal on nuclear submarine:

India has sealed a \$3-billion deal with Russia for leasing a nuclear-powered attack submarine for the Indian Navy for a period of 10 years.

- Under the pact, Russia will have to deliver the Akula class submarine, to be known as Chakra III, to the Indian Navy by 2025.
- It will be the third Russian submarine to be leased to the Navy. India Navy has taken two more submarines from Russia on lease. The first Russian nuclear-powered submarine — christened INS Chakra — was taken in 1988 under a three year lease. A second INS Chakra was taken on lease in 2012 for a period of 10 years.

ISSUES RELATED TO INTERNAL SECURITY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Flood Management and Border Areas Programme (FMBAP)

The Union Cabinet has approved the “Flood Management and Border Areas Programme (FMBAP)” for Flood Management Works in entire country and River Management Activities and works related to Border Areas for the period 2017-18 to 2019-20 with a total outlay of Rs.3342.00 crores.

Salient features:

- The Scheme “FMBAP” has been framed by merging the components of two continuing XII Plan schemes titled “Flood Management Programme (FMP)” and “River Management Activities and Works related to Border Areas (RMBA)”.
- The aim of the Scheme is to assist the State Governments to provide reasonable degree of protection against floods in critical areas by adopting optimum combination of structural and non-structural measures and enhancing capabilities of State/ Central Government officials in related fields.
- The works under the scheme will protect valuable land from erosion and flooding and help in maintaining peace along the border.
- The Scheme aims at completion of the on-going projects already approved under FMP. Further, the scheme also caters to Hydro-meteorological observations and Flood Forecasting on common rivers with the neighbouring countries.

- The Scheme also includes survey and investigations, preparation of DPR etc. of water resources projects on the common rivers with neighbouring countries like Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project, SaptaKosi-Sun Kosi Projects in Nepal which would benefit both countries.

Benefits:

- The FMBAP Scheme will be implemented throughout the country for effective flood management, erosion control and anti-sea erosion.
- The proposal will benefit towns, villages, industrial establishments, communication links, agricultural fields, infrastructure etc. from floods and erosion in the country.
- The catchment area treatment works will help in reduction of sediment load into rivers.

Funding pattern:

- The funding pattern for FM Component for works in general category States will continue to be 50% (Centre): 50% (State) and for projects of North Eastern States, Sikkim, J&K, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, the funding pattern will continue to be 70% (Centre): 30% (State). RMBA component being specific to activities in border areas with neighbouring countries and in accordance with bilateral mechanisms, the projects / works will continue to be funded as 100% grant-in-aid / central assistance.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE ETC

The Delta 32 effect

A study published this week in Nature points out that one London HIV Patient received the bone marrow donation from a person who was born with a rare mutation, Delta 32. The transplant wiped out the immune cells vulnerable to HIV and replaced them with cells that are resistant to the virus.

History of HIV remission

- The London Patient is the second HIV-infected to experience a long-term remission from the virus.
- About 12 years ago, an American living in Germany — the Berlin Patient — also received a Delta 32 transplant and has remained free of the virus, ever since.
- However, attempts to replicate the procedures undergone by the Berlin Patient in other HIV-infected people proved unsuccessful.
- The virus returned as soon as they stopped the standard medications.

Doubts Regarding Total cure of HIV

- There are reasons that the hopes of a total victory against HIV that have arisen after this week's Nature study be tempered with realism.
- Bone-marrow stem transplants are risky — they make a patient vulnerable to life-threatening diseases like acute anaemia — and are expensive procedures.
- They are not likely to be the treatment option for a vast majority of the 37 million HIV-infected; it's hard enough to find tissue-matched donors for so many people, let alone locate one that also has the Delta 32 mutation.

New ways to fight HIV

- The London Patient's recovery offers a viable pathway to combat HIV.
- The Nature study demonstrates the potency of gene-editing as therapy for those infected with the virus, similar to the treatment for sickle-cell disease, haemophilia and certain types of cancer.
- Researchers in different parts of the world are working on procedures to edit people's immune cells to make them HIV resistant — they would mimic Delta 32.
- They are also trying to develop reverse vaccination — much like for small pox — where an immune response is engineered to target the virus.
- Currently, those affected by HIV can have near normal lifespans.
- However, the cocktail of drugs needed to keep the virus at bay are expensive, and have serious side effects. The London Patient's recovery portends that cure from HIV is not far away.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

When you truly don't care what anyone thinks of you, you have reached a dangerously awesome level of freedom.