

**NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT
ETC****Census 2021**

- The next census of India to be conducted in 2021 with March 1, 2021 as the reference date, except for the states of Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.
- The Census 2021 will be conducted in 18 languages out of the 22 scheduled languages (under 8th schedule) and English, while Census 2011 was in 16 of the 18 scheduled languages declared at that time.
- It also will introduce a code directory to streamline the process
- The option of "Other" under the gender category will be changed to "Third Gender". There were roughly 5 lakh people under "other" category in 2011.
- For the first time in the 140 year history of census in India, data is proposed to be collected through a mobile app by enumerators and they will receive an additional payment as an incentive.
- The Census data would be available by the year 2024-25 as the entire process would be conducted digitally and data crunching would be quicker.
- Data from the Census 2011 is still being released. E.g.: The dataset on migration was published recently.

Issue of Caste Data Collection

- Earlier in 2018, the Ministry of Home Affairs had declared that the Other Backward Class (OBC) category would be included in the Census 2021.
- However, the Registrar-General of India (RGI) has said that only SC/ST will be included as the unreliable nature of caste data collection decreases the credibility of the results. E.g.: A person belonging to the Yadav caste writes Yadu, Yaduvanshi, etc. in the form; there is no standardisation. People sometimes even confuse caste with gotra.
- The 2011 caste data, collected as part of the Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC), is yet to be released by the Centre.
- Even a committee formed under former vice-chairman of NITI Aayog, Arvind Panagariya to find a way to publish the 2011 Socio-economic and Caste Census data failed to provide any tangible outcome.
- The last caste-based census was conducted by the British in 1931.

Evolution of Census

- 'Rig-Veda' reveals that some kind of population count was maintained during 800-600 BC in India.
- Arthashastra by 'Kautilya' written in the 3rd Century BC prescribed the collection of population statistics as a measure of state policy for taxation.
- During the regime of the Mughal king Akbar, the administrative report 'Ain-e-Akbari' included comprehensive data pertaining to population, industry, wealth and many other characteristics.
- A systematic and modern population census, in its present form was conducted non synchronously between 1865 and 1872 in different parts of the country.
- However, the first synchronous census in India was held in 1881. Since then, censuses have been undertaken uninterruptedly once every ten years.
- India's last census was carried out in 2011 when the country's population stood at 121 crore. The Indian Census is one of the largest administrative exercises undertaken in the world.

CONSTITUTION AND POLITY**The Repealing and Amending Bill, 2019**

The Parliament has passed the Repealing and Amending Bill, 2019. The bill seeks to repeal certain enactments and to amend certain other enactments.

Highlights:

- It provides for repealing fifty-eight old Laws including the Beedi Workers Welfare Fund Act, 1976, and the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2001 which have no relevance today.
- It also repeals the Tea (Amendment) Act, 1980, the Central Road Fund (Amendment) Act, 2007, and the Central Universities Act, 2009.
- It seeks to make minor amendments to the Income Tax Act, 1961 and the India Institutes of Management Act, 2017.

- The Bill has been passed to ensure minimum legislation and maximum governance. Periodic review of old laws is a part of governance.
- Since 2014, the government has repealed 1428 obsolete central laws.

GOVERNANCE- WELFARE SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC.**Institutions of Eminence Scheme**

The University Grants Commission, has nominated 20 institutions for Institutes of Eminence tag (IOE). Nominations have been made on the recommendations of Empowered Expert Committee (EEC) headed by N Gopalaswami.

Objectives

- Excellence and Innovation: To provide for higher education leading to excellence and innovations in such branches of knowledge as may be deemed fit at post-graduate, graduate and research degree levels.
- Specialization: To engage in areas of specialization to make distinctive contributions to the objectives of the university education system.
- Global Rating: To aim to be rated internationally for its teaching and research as a top hundred Institution in the world over time.
- Quality teaching and Research: To provide for high quality teaching and research and for the advancement of knowledge and its dissemination

Criteria

- Global/National Ranking: Only those institutions which have appeared in any of the global/national ranks shall be recommended for the IoE status.
- Public institutions are assessed on the basis of QS-2020 world rankings, in case of a tie QS- 2019 rankings are used.
- Private institutions are assessed on the basis of their ranking in the QS India or National Institution Ranking Framework (NIRF), the NIRF ranking being used as a tie-breaker.
- Any institution that did not appear in any rankings (QS-2019, QS-2020 and NIRF) is excluded completely from the list of IOE tag.
- Greenfield Proposals: Only after exhausting the above criterion, if any slot remains vacant, consideration shall be given to yet to be established (Greenfield) proposals.
- The term greenfield project generally refers to the initiation of a project without the need to consider any prior work.
- The Greenfield Institutions would get 3 year period to establish and operationalise the institution, and thereafter, EEC will consider giving IoE status to such institutions.
- Satya Bharti Foundation (telecom major Airtel's philanthropic arm) became the second greenfield institution to be given IoE status, after Reliance's Jio Institute.

Benefits

- Autonomy: Institutes with IOE tag will be given greater autonomy and freedom to decide fees, course durations and governance structures.
- Grant: The public institutions under IOE tag will receive a government grant of Rs. 1,000 crore, while the private institutions will not get any funding under the scheme.

Adarsh Smarak Scheme

Recently, the Union Ministry of Culture has released its 100-day agenda which also includes digging rainwater harvesting pits at over 100 major monuments covered under the Adarsh Smarak scheme.

The other initiatives include installing big screens and audio systems at two dozen spots where a large number of devotees gather for prayers or aarti, rolling out 25 science museums on wheels to reach out to rural students.

Adarsh Smarak Scheme

- The scheme was launched in 2014 for providing improved visitor amenities, especially for the physically challenged.
- The scheme comes under the Ministry of Culture.
- A total of 100 Monuments protected by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) are being developed and maintained as Adarsh Monuments under the scheme.
- The civic amenities are being augmented at these sites.
- Objectives of the Scheme

- To make monument visitor friendly.
- To upgrade/provide washrooms, drinking water, signages, cafeteria, and wi-fi facility.
- To provide interpretation and audio-video centers.
- To streamline wastewater and garbage disposal and a rainwater harvesting system.
- To make the monument accessible to differently-abled.

INDIAN ECONOMY

SANKALP Scheme

Recently the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has called for SANKALP Scheme to focus on district-level skilling ecosystem through convergence and coordination. To enhance the district level ecosystem, the Ministry has taken the following initiatives:

- Skill India Portal: A system to capture and converge skill data even at the district level.
- Grants: Nine States namely Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Maharashtra, Manipur, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh were given grants.
- Aspirational Districts: In addition to these State, grants have also been released to 117 aspirational districts under Aspirational Skilling Abhiyaan.

Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Scheme (SANKALP)

- Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood (SANKALP) is an outcome-oriented programme of Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) with a special focus on decentralised planning and quality improvement.
- It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme which is collaborated with the World Bank.
- It aims to implement the mandate of the National Skill Development Mission (NSDM).
- The main objectives of the scheme are:
 - Convergence: Creating convergence among all skill training activities, both State-led and Government of India funded, at the state level.
 - Quality: Improving the quality of skill development programs through building a pool of quality trainers, developing model curriculum and content, and standardizing assessment and certification.
 - Evaluation System: Establishing a robust monitoring and evaluation system for skill training programs.
 - Inclusiveness & Opportunity: Providing access to skill training opportunities to the disadvantaged sections. Creating industry-led and demand-driven skill training capacity.
 - Similar to SANKALP scheme, the government has also launched the STRIVE scheme for skill development.

Fit and Proper Regime

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has notified guidelines on Fit and Proper criteria for elected directors on the boards of Public Sector Banks (PSB).
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has mandated that the elected directors of public sector banks (PSBs) are to be appointed by the Nomination and Remuneration Committee (NRC) of the board of the respective banks.
- Under Fit and Proper criteria, RBI has mandated all the banks to constitute a Nomination and Remuneration Committee (NRC) consisting of a minimum of three non-executive directors from amongst the board of directors.
- Of these non-executive directors, not less than one-half shall be independent directors and should include at least one member from the Risk Management Committee of the board.
- Fit and proper regime is intended to keep centre's nominated directors away from the PSB board and ensure minimum political intervention.
- Members of Parliament, state legislatures, and local governments not eligible to be members of PSB boards

New mobile app launched to assist farmers

The Ministries of Earth Sciences and Agriculture have launched a new mobile application called Meghdoot. The app has been developed by experts from the India Meteorological Department (IMD) and Indian Institute of Tropical meteorology and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research

Features of the App:

- The mobile app will provide location, and crop and livestock-specific weather-based agro advisories to farmers in local languages. The information would be updated twice a week on Tuesdays and Fridays
- It will provide forecast relating to temperature, rainfall, humidity, and wind speed and direction. This information is critical for farmers. The app will also provide advisories to farmers on how to take care of their crops and livestock.
- The app would provide information in the form of images, maps and pictures. It has also been integrated with WhatsApp and Facebook to help farmers share advisories among themselves.
- The app would be available for 150 districts in different parts of the country. It will be extended to rest of the country in a phased manner over the next one year.
- Further, IMD has developed new website to disseminate weather and climate. The website has district-wise weather warnings in easy to view and read formats. It will also act as a centralized portal to all the meteorological offices in India to update the warnings, bulletins and other data in real-time.

Too much of reforms has led to slowdown: NITI Aayog CEO

NITI Aayog CEO has said that a huge set of reforms undertaken by the government has led to the current slowdown in the economy. He said that the reforms undertaken by government includes (a)GST (Goods and Services Tax) (b)IBC (Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code) and (c)RERA(Real Estate Regulatory Authority).

Other Concerns: He has also advocated a series of policy decisions to revive the economy such as

- Firstly, the government needs to bring in greater levels of liquidity.
- Secondly, it needs to revive the private sector investment as we can never create wealth without the private sector.
- Thirdly, the government needs to get out of business in a range of areas and it needs to recycle a lot of government assets such as roads. Fourthly, the government must push for major structural reforms.
- He has also suggested that gas grids, pipelines, transmission lines should be privately owned. He said that Niti Aayog had recommended a vast range of public sector units to be privatised.
- He also talked about the government's push for electric vehicles (EV) in the country. He said that the government would work to develop India as a hub for manufacture and export of EVs.

MISC

Ramon Magsaysay Award 2019

Indian journalist Ravish Kumar has been awarded the 2019 Ramon Magsaysay Award for "harnessing journalism to give voice to the voiceless". The other winners of the award are:

- Myanmar's Ko Swe Win- Journalist;
- Thailand's Angkhana Neelapajit- Human Rights Activist;
- Philippines' Raymundo Pujante Cayabyab- Musician; and
- South Korea's Kim Jong-Ki- Activist working with violence and mental health issues in youth.

Ramon Magsaysay Award

- The Ramon Magsaysay Award was established in 1957 and is considered as Asia's premier prize and highest honour.
- It is named after Ramon Magsaysay, the third president of the Republic of the Philippines.
- Till 2009 awards have traditionally been given in five categories: government service; public service; community leadership; journalism, literature, and creative communication arts; and peace and international understanding.
- However, post 2009, the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation annually selects the awardees for the field of Emergent Leadership. Awardees are presented with a certificate, a medallion with an embossed image of Ramon Magsaysay and cash prize.
- The award is internationally-recognized as the Nobel Prize counterpart of Asia and is the highest award given to Asian individuals and organizations.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Keep Calm and Practice Answer Writing.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns: Critically examine the implications of Demographic Disparity in India.

The demographic character of India's population is changing rapidly; however there is huge heterogeneity across regions and states as evident from the following statistics-

- According to Sample Registration Survey (SRS) data, 2016, the natural rate of growth of population (per thousand people) is lower in all major south Indian states compared to the all-India average of 14. For e.g. In Tamil Nadu, it was 8.7 and in Kerala, 6.8
- Tamil Nadu's total fertility rate (TFR) was very low at 1.6, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana (1.7), Kerala and Karnataka (1.8) too had low TFR.
- Contrarily, north Indian states recorded very high TFR- Bihar reported the highest at 3.3 followed by Uttar Pradesh (3.1). Madhya Pradesh (2.8) and Rajasthan (2.7)
- Further, according to the 2011 census, southern states have the highest relative share in working-age (21-65 years) and post working-age (66 years and above) population in India. They also have the lowest relative share in pre working-age (up to 20 years) population.

Implications of Demographic disparity for India

- Filling labour deficits: Demographic heterogeneity in India provides a unique opportunity to fill the labour deficit within the country through inter-state migration. Of late, there has been a relatively large inflow of migrants from the northern belt, to the southern region owing to latter's higher unskilled wage rates.
- Integration and Social cohesion: Migration from northern and other states to South India has provided the opportunity for integration of culture and social cohesion where the communities have learnt to coexist and adapt to differences.
- Political Representation (Parliament Seats): Since 1976, the number of seats in Parliament and in the state legislatures have been frozen and will continue to be through 2026 on the basis of the population enumerated in the 1971 Census. Once the freeze is lifted, it is likely to create more political imbalances and conflicts as it could result in a redistribution that goes against the southern states on the grounds that their population share has come down compared to earlier.
- Financial Ramifications (Tax Devolution): 15th Finance Commission has recommended the Usage of 2011 population data in the tax distribution formula. With growing demographic disparity, using 2011 data would result in lower resource allocation for southern states and penalize for achieving below replacement level population growth.
- Cultural Differences: Rapid influx of migrants to South India might give rise to cultural conflicts as natives may not be immune to rapid cultural changes such as in language. For example: Bengaluru had seen a vigorous agitation against Hindi signage, driven by the fact that Hindi is the language of migrants to the city.
- Social Unrest: There is possibility of increased conflict and social unrest in south Indian states due to cultural change or erosion in bargaining power of local labour force due to increased influx of migrants from North and East Indian states.
- Prosperity quotient: South Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Kerala have been performing well economically and has significantly being able to reap its demographic dividend. However, "prosperity quotient" (total wealth created in a state divided by its total population) of the populated North Indian states such as Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh has lagged behind and has pulled down economic growth.
- Policy Challenges: India's demographic disparity pose significant policy challenges as government would have to formulate different policies to tackle the North South Divide- Child and Young population in North vs. ageing population of the South.

Way Forward

- Broad-based Criteria for Political Representation: while determining political representation the delimitation commission should incorporate other criteria's such as economic dimensions so that the South do not lose out their political representation owing to less population growth.
- Broad-based Criteria for Tax Devolution: 2011 population criteria for tax devolution should not undermine the interest of southern states. Other determinants should be included and given due weightage for efficient fiscal transfer to ensure equity among states, balanced regional development, stability and integrity in the federal structure of India
- National and Regional convergence: The GST Council, inter-state councils and zonal councils should be strengthened and could play a significant role to address issues arising out of demographic disparity in India.
- Providing basic amenities to Migrants: The need to ensure basic amenities and social security to the migrant population across India necessitates a comprehensive policy on migration.
- Lessons to be learnt from South: The north Indian states with higher population growth should focus on family planning, bridging gender disparity, skills training, poverty reduction and integrating population policy with economic policy to reap the benefits of its rising youth population.
- Addressing cultural conflicts: To bridge cultural differences, it is important to promote the idea of unity in diversity. The 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat' programme which aims to actively enhance interaction between people of diverse cultures living in different States and UTs in India is a right step forward.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS BASED MCQS

1. Consider the following statements w.r.t the Census of India
 1. The next census of India will be conducted in 2021 covering entire India.
 2. It will be conducted in all 22 scheduled languages of the constitution.
 3. The first synchronous census in India was held in 1881.
 Which of the statements is/are correct?
 (a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2
 (c) **3 only** (d) 1, 2 and 3
2. Which of the following acts are subject to be amended under the recently passed Repealing and Amending Bill, 2019?
 1. Workers Welfare Fund Act, 1976,
 2. Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2001
 3. Income Tax Act, 1961
 4. Central Road Fund (Amendment) Act, 2007
 Select the correct answer using codes given below
 (a) 1, 2 and 3 (b) 2, 3 and 4
 (c) 1, 3 and 4 (d) **1, 2, 3 and 4**
3. Consider the following statements w.r. t 'Eminence tag'
 1. All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) approves the grant of tag to institutions.
 2. Under the scheme of 'Institutions of Eminence (IoE)' Government aims to bring higher educational institutions in top 500 of world ranking in the next 10 years.
 Which of the statement is/are correct?
 (a) 1 only (b) **2 only**
 (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
4. Consider the following statements w.r.t Adarsh Smarak Scheme
 1. The scheme comes under the Ministry of Culture
 2. The scheme was launched in 2014 for providing improved visitor amenities, especially for the physically challenged
 Which of the statement is/are correct?
 (a) 1 only
 (b) 2 only
 (c) **Both 1 and 2**
 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
5. Which of the following statements is/are incorrect w.r.t 'Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood (SANKALP)' Scheme?
 1. It is an outcome-oriented scheme of Ministry of Human Resource Development.
 2. It is a Central Sector Scheme being implemented in mission mode through United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
 3. The scheme aims to implement the mandate of the National Skill Development Mission (NSDM).
 Select the correct answer using the code given below:
 (a) 1 only (b) **2 only**
 (c) 1 and 2 (d) 2 and 3
6. The 'Fit and Proper' Criteria, recently seen in news is related to which of the following?
 - (a) **Elected Directors of Public Sector Banks**
 - (b) Voluntary Retirement Scheme
 - (c) Procurement Rules for Local Authorities
 - (d) Recruitment in Armed Forces
7. Recently introduced by Govt of India, the mobile application "Meghdoot" is related to which sector?
 - (a) **Agriculture**
 - (b) Aviation
 - (c) Space
 - (d) Information and Technology
8. Consider the following statements w.r.t Ramon Magasaysay Award:
 1. Indian journalist Ravish Kumar has been awarded the 2019 Ramon Magsaysay Award.
 2. The award is internationally-recognized as the Nobel Prize counterpart of Asia.
 3. It is named after Ramon Magsaysay, the third president of the Republic of the Philippines.
 Which of the statements is/are correct?
 (a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2
 (c) 2 and 3 (d) **1, 2 and 3**