

NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT ETC**Women And Political Participation**

A report released by Lokniti-CSDS and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung has looked at women and political participation from multiple perspectives.

Key findings:

- Socio-economic class also determines women's participation in electoral activities. Women belonging to the upper social (castes) and upper economic classes were found to be more active in electoral politics as compared to women placed at the bottom of the social and economic hierarchy.
- Women's participation as voters has seen a sharp increase over the years.
- Although the number of women candidates has increased, there still exists a wide gap. Only a little over one-fourth of the women respondents were keen to make a career in politics if given an opportunity.
- Half of the women respondents agreed that parties always prefer a male candidate while giving tickets. Only one-seventh of respondents disagreed and one in 10 had no opinion.
- Patriarchal norms/structure of the society were the biggest obstacles that prevented women from taking part in politics.

Premature Deaths In India

An analysis on Premature deaths in India was published in The Lancet Global Health. The study was funded by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and looked at about 9.7 million deaths in India in 2017.

Key findings:

- Every condition that was common in one part of India was uncommon elsewhere. For example, the North-eastern states, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Haryana, Gujarat, Kerala, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh account for 44% of India's cancer burden.
- Premature deaths due to various causes, expressed as Years of Life Lost (YLLs), too were unevenly distributed in terms of the burden on the states. For example, liver and alcohol-related YLL rates were high in the northeastern states, Bihar, Karnataka, and Maharashtra, accounting for 18% of national YLLs.
- Suicide YLL rates were highest in the southern states, accounting for 15% of national totals.
- Road traffic injuries were high in the northern states of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, accounting for 33% of national totals.
- Drowning YLL rates, meanwhile, were highest in the central states of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, and in Assam in the Northeast, accounting for 11% of national totals.
- In 2017, India had 486 million DALYs (disability-adjusted life years, a measure of the number of years lost due to ill health or disability). The ratio of DALYs to the 9.7 million deaths was about 50 to 1. More than three quarters of deaths and DALYs occurred in rural areas.

Related Info: By the World Health Organization definition, Years of Life Lost (YLLs) are calculated from the number of deaths multiplied by a standard life expectancy at the age of death.

GEOGRAPHY- PHYSICAL AND ECONOMIC**Big Bang Theory**

A research published in the journal Science has explained how the Big Bang took place around 13.8 billion years ago, which led to the beginning of Universe.

About:

- The Big Bang theory states that all matter that exists today in the universe sprung forth from a single point in an epic explosion.
- Now the researchers have defined the critical criteria where they can drive a flame to self-generate its own turbulence, spontaneously accelerate and transition into detonation.
- The key is applying the right amount of turbulence and mixing to an unconfined flame until it becomes self-perpetuating, at which point the flame begins to burn the ingested energy leading to a hypersonic -- exceeding the speed of sound -- supernova explosion.
- The team uncovered the criteria for creating a Big Bang-type explosion while exploring methods for hypersonic jet propulsion. The finding may have applications in faster air and space travel, and improved power generation.

Georges Lemaître?

- Georges Lemaître (1894 – 1966) was a Belgian astronomer.
- He was the first to identify that the recession of nearby galaxies can be explained by a theory of an expanding universe, which was observationally confirmed soon afterwards by Edwin Hubble.
- He also proposed what later became known as the "Big Bang theory" of the origin of the universe, initially calling it the "hypothesis of the primeval atom"

Pamba-Achankovil-Vaippar River Project

The Kerala government is preventing the implementation of the Pamba-Achankovil-Vaippar river link project as it will lead to diversion of water from Kerala to Tamil Nadu.

Project

- The project was envisaged in 1995 for producing 500 MW of power for Kerala and irrigating the lands in Tamil Nadu.
- The river link proposal envisages the diversion of water from the Pamba and Achankovil rivers in Kerala to the Vaippar basin in Tamil Nadu.

Pamba River

- It rises at an altitude of 1650m in the Peermade Plateau in the Idukki district of Kerala.
- It joins the Arabian Sea branching into a number of channels. The entire catchment area of Pamba lies in Kerala state.
- The Pamba basin is bounded on the east by Western Ghats and on the west by Arabian Sea.

Achankovil River

- The river rises in the Western Ghats in Pathanamthitta district of Kerala at an elevation of 700m.
- It joins the Pamba River at Veeyapuram.
- The river basin extends over an area of 1484 km² and lies entirely in Kerala State.

Vaippar River

- The river rises from the eastern slopes of the Varushanad hill range of the Western Ghats at an elevation of about 1500m in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu.
- It flows in an easterly and southeasterly direction before joining the Gulf of Mannar.
- The basin is bounded on the west by the Western Ghats, on the east by the Bay of Bengal.

CONSTITUTION AND POLITY**Supreme Court Ruling on Tribunals**

Recently, a five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court (SC), headed by Chief Justice of India has struck down the provisions of the amendments made by the Finance Act, 2017. The amendments had altered the structure and functioning of various tribunals. These amendments, made by the Finance Act, 2017 are sub judice in the SC as these were passed as a Money Bill.

Pertinent Questions Raised by the Supreme Court

- Changes in Tribunal Postings Through Rules
 - The Finance Act, 2017 amendments gave the Union government the power to govern appointments and modify service terms and conditions of members of tribunals.
 - In pursuance of this, the government formulated tribunal, Appellate tribunal and other Authorities Rules, 2017.
- Passed as Money Bill
 - Ordinarily, the Finance Act is enacted at the beginning of every accounting year to give effect to the government's fiscal policies.
 - However, the Finance Act, 2017 apart from setting the fiscal agenda, made changes which affected powers and composition of various tribunals. For example, National Green Tribunal, Income Tax Appellate Tribunal, etc.
 - Apart from it, there is a merger eight tribunals, bringing down the total number of tribunals from 24 to 19.

Observations made by the Supreme Court

- The SC struck down the amendments in entirety.
- It held that changing the governance of tribunal through rules is contrary to the doctrine of Separation of Powers and past judgements of the SC. Hence matters related to the appointment and reappointment of their members must be free from executive involvement.
- Therefore, the SC directed the government to reformulate the rules.
- The SC held until the new rules are formulated, the appointments will be as per existing laws, and not under the Finance Act, 2017.

- On account of the merger of tribunals, the SC directed the government to undertake a 'Judicial Impact Assessment' of all 24 tribunals and analyse the ramifications of the merger.
- The SC also highlighted the dismal state of tribunals. Therefore, in order to monitor the working of tribunals, the SC directed for constituting a statutory organisation called the National Tribunal' Commission.

GOVERNANCE- WELFARE SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC.

Right To Information (RTI)

The Supreme Court held that office of Chief Justice of India is a public authority under Right to Information (RTI) Act.

About:

- A five-judge Constitution Bench pronounced its verdict after listening to a petition filed against a 2010 Judgement of the Delhi High Court. The High Court in its order had declared the CJI's office a public authority and said that it should come under the RTI Act.
- The bench also said that only the names of judges recommended by the Collegium for appointment can be disclosed, not the reasons.
- It said that the Right to Privacy is an important aspect and it has to be balanced with transparency while deciding to give out information from the office of the Chief Justice.
- The outcome is that the office of the CJI will now entertain RTI applications.
- While the office of the CJI is now under the RTI's ambit, the CBI is exempt.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS

Criminalising Match-Fixing

In a first for a South Asian nation, Sri Lanka has criminalised several offences related to match-fixing.

About:

- Sri Lanka's Parliament passed The Prevention of Offences Related to Sports Bill that entails a prison term of up to 10 years for corruption in sports, as well as hefty fines up to 100 million Sri Lankan rupees.
- Under it, "any person related to a sport" who is directly involved in fixing, as well as those who "provide inside information", curators who prepare pitches to suit betting operators, and match officials who "deliberately misapply the rules" for money, will be punished.
- For the past two years, Sri Lankan Cricket has been embroiled in several instances of corruption and match-fixing. The cricket board has been under the scanner of Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) of International Cricket Council (ICC) since 2017.

Global and Indian scenario:

- Match-fixing is a serious crime in a number of other cricketing nations, including England and Australia.
- Although cricket betting is illegal in India, it is legal in many other countries where session bets can be placed on matches happening in India.
- In 2018, in a report titled "Legal Framework: Gambling and Sports Betting including in Cricket in India", the Law Commission recommended that "match-fixing and sports fraud" be deemed as "criminal offences", and be dealt with "severe punishments".

6th World Congress on Rural And Agricultural Finance

The 6th World Congress on Rural and Agricultural Finance was recently held in New Delhi.

About:

- The 6th World Congress is being jointly hosted by Asia-Pacific Rural and Agricultural Credit Association (APRACA), National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India.
- This 6th version of the congress was attended by 300 delegates across the globe who engaged in interactive discussions to unleash the potential role of rural and agricultural finance.

Asia-Pacific Rural and Agricultural Credit Association (APRACA):

- APRACA, representing 81-member institutions from 21 countries, is a regional association that promotes cooperation and facilitates mutual exchange of information and expertise in the field of rural finance.
- Secretariat: Bangkok, Thailand.
- APRACA is one of the three regional agricultural credit associations, along with NENARACA (Near East – North Africa Agricultural Credit Association) and AFRACA (African Rural and

Agricultural Credit Association) that were established, with the help of FAO, following the 1975 World Conference on Agricultural Credit.

PRELIMS SPECIFIC- DAYS, AWARDS, EVENTS ETC**World Diabetes Day 2019**

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has launched an initiative to expand access to affordable insulin on the occasion of World Diabetes Day (14th November).

- This year's theme for World Diabetes Day is "Family and Diabetes".
- 14th November marks the birthday of Sir Frederick Banting, who co-discovered insulin along with Charles Best in 1922.

The burden of disease:

- More than 420 million people worldwide affected by diabetes.
- China has the highest number of patients (11.43 cr.) followed by India (7.29 cr.) in 2017.

Issues related to treatment:

- High costs of insulin
- Insufficient essential medicines and technologies

Steps taken by Government of India:

- India's National Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) Target is to prevent the rise in obesity and diabetes prevalence.
- National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancers, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS) in 2010 to provide support for diagnosis and cost-effective treatment at various levels of health care.

ODISHA DEVELOPMENT**Odisha Gears Up For Conservation Of Olive Ridley Turtles**

The Odisha government has geared up the efforts for the protection and conservation of the endangered Olive Ridley turtles during the mass nesting. The government directed the departments of Fishery, Forest and Marine police to operate in close coordination and ensure strict enforcement of the conservation rules. The institutions like Integrated Test Range, Defence Research and Development organisation (DRDO), Dhamara Port, Gopalpur Port and Paradeep port authorities were requested to follow the black-out and light deeming practices to save the turtles from possible delusion.

Olive Ridley

Olive Ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) is smallest and most abundant of all sea turtle found in world. It gets its name from its olive coloured carapace, which is heart-shaped and rounded. It is best known for their unique mass nesting called Arribada, where thousands of females come together on the same beach each year to lay eggs.

- It is found in warm waters of Pacific and Indian oceans. They are found along both-eastern and western coasts of India. It spends entire lives in ocean and migrates thousands of kilometers between feeding and mating grounds in course of a year.
- Breeding season: Olive Ridley turtles commence their journey from Indian Ocean towards Bay of Bengal during their mating season in October and November every year. A single female can lay upto 100 to 150 eggs in a pit dug on beaches. Six weeks later these eggs hatches and newly hatched turtles start journey to their Indian Ocean habitat.
- Threats: Accidental killing of adult turtles through entanglement in trawl nets and gill nets due to uncontrolled fishing during their mating season around nesting beaches. Poaching for meat, shell and leather, and their eggs. Development and exploitation of nesting beaches for ports and tourist centres.
- Protection Status: Though found in abundance, their numbers have been declining over the past few years. It is included in Vulnerable category by the IUCN Red list. In India, it is protected under Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Moreover, trading in its products are banned under CITES.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Your comfort zone is the biggest discomfiture.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. A focus on improving the condition of women of India can immensely contribute to poverty alleviation. Discuss.

Ans

Women constitute almost half of the country's population, therefore improving their condition in the country can immensely contribute to poverty alleviation. Women's empowerment plays a catalytic role towards achievement of transformational economic, political and social changes required for sustainable development. Many reports and studies suggests that womens' typically spend their income on food and healthcare for children, which is in sharp contrast to men, who spend a higher proportion of their income for personal needs.

Improvement in Women's Conditions and Poverty Alleviation

- **Health:** Improvement in the health indicators of women can significantly contribute to overall health of family and the new borns. Since the significant amount of earnings of underprivileged are spent on medical treatment, improved women's health and their newborns can drastically reduced household expenditure.
- **Education** is the major tool for eliminating poverty. Educated women are more sensitive toward their children's education and contribute more to their development.
- **Agriculture:** FAO estimates that if women farmers had the same access to tools and credit as men, agricultural output in 34 developing countries would rise by an estimated average of up to 4%, translating to up to 150 million fewer hungry people.
- **Equal Wages:** Wage disparity between men and women has serious implication on poverty. Equal wages for females would ensure increased household income and productive expenditure on health and nutrition of the whole family.
- **Skill Development:** Women are significantly involved in collecting minor forest produce and household based industries. Enhancing their skills can directly reduce their economic dependence on their husbands, which in-turn will increase their decision making power in productive expenditure and family matters.
- **Political:** A society where the female voice is sought and heard, where the principles of equity (fairness) and equality (opportunity) co-exist, is a more powerful and effective society.
- Increasing due representation of women in decision making at grassroot level can effectively helps better targeting government poverty alleviation programs.

Conclusion: Poverty and empowerment issues cannot be adequately addressed where only half of the population is positively and actively engaged, therefore actively engaging women as the driver for bringing positive change and eliminating poverty from the country is the key to focus on. However, the government in its recent social sector program has effectively engaged the women centric efforts like rural sanitation through Swachh Bharat, improving health outcomes through POSHAN Abhiyan and UJJWALA Scheme etc. A lot is required to be done to achieve zero hunger and poverty alleviation in the country.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQs

1. With reference to the Asia-Pacific Rural and Agricultural Credit Association (APRACA), consider the following statements:
 1. It is a regional association that promotes cooperation and facilitates mutual exchange of information and expertise in the field of rural finance.
 2. Its secretariat is in Delhi.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - (a) **1 only**
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
2. With reference to the Big Bang theory, consider the following statements:
 1. It states that all matter that exists today in the universe sprung forth from a single point in an epic explosion.
 2. The researchers have recently defined the critical criteria where they can drive a flame to self-generate its own turbulence, spontaneously accelerate and transition into detonation.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) **Both 1 and 2**
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
3. Right to Information Act, 2005 is regarded as one of the finest legislations in the world in bringing accountability in governance. Which of the following “information” comes under the Right to Information Act?
 1. Electronic Voting Machine (EVM)
 2. Unaided religious trusts
 3. Office of Chief Justice of India
 Select the correct answer using the code given below:
 - (a) **1 and 3 only**
 - (b) 3 only
 - (c) 1 and 2 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3 only
4. With reference to a report released by Lokniti-CSDS and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung on women and political participation, consider the following statements:
 1. Women’s participation as voters has seen a sharp decrease over the years.
 2. Women belonging to the upper social (castes) and upper economic classes were found to be more active in electoral politics as compared to women placed at the bottom of the social and economic hierarchy. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) **2 only**
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
5. With reference to the analysis on Premature deaths in India published in The Lancet Global Health, consider the following statements:
 1. Liver and alcohol-related Years of Life Lost rates were high in the southern states.
 2. Suicide Years of Life rates were highest in the northeastern states, accounting for 15% of national totals.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) **Neither 1 nor 2**
6. Which of the following is the first South Asian nation to criminalise several offences related to match-fixing?
 - (a) Nepal
 - (b) **Sri Lanka**
 - (c) Bhutan
 - (d) India
7. Consider the following statement with reference to Olive Ridely Turtles.
 1. It is listed as vulnerable in the IUCN red list.
 2. Operation Olivia has been initiated by Indian Coast Guard from protection of the species.
 Which of the above statements is/are incorrect?
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) **Neither 1 nor 2**