

GOVERNANCE**Sex Ratio and India**

According to the 2018 report on “vital statistics of India based on the Civil Registration System”, Arunachal Pradesh recorded the best sex ratio at birth in the country while Manipur recorded the worst sex ratio at birth.

- The report was published by the Registrar General of India.
- Sex ratio at birth is number of females born per thousand males. It is an important indicator to map the gender gap of a population.

Registrar General of India

- Registrar General of India was founded in 1961 by the Government of India under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- It arranges, conducts and analyses the results of the demographic surveys of India including Census of India and Linguistic Survey of India.
- The position of Registrar is usually held by a civil servant holding the rank of Joint Secretary.
- Civil Registration System (CRS) in India is the unified process of continuous, permanent, compulsory and universal recording of the vital events (births, deaths, stillbirths) and characteristics thereof. The data generated through a complete and up-to-date CRS is essential for socio-economic planning.

Key Points

- Arunachal Pradesh recorded 1,084 females born per thousand males, followed by Nagaland (965), Mizoram (964), Kerala (963).
- The worst sex ratio was reported in Manipur (757), Lakshadweep (839) and Daman & Diu (877), Punjab (896) and Gujarat (896).
- Delhi recorded a sex ratio of 929, Haryana - 914.
- The ratio was determined on the basis of data provided by 30 States and Union Territories as the requisite information from six States namely Bihar, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal is not available.
- Major states are states with populations 10 million and above as per the 2011 Census.
- The Sample Registration System (SRS) Report 2018 shows that sex ratio at birth in India, declined marginally from 906 in 2011 to 899 in 2018.
- Contrary to popular perception, India's sex ratio at birth declined even as per capita income increased nearly 10 times over the last 65 years, according to an IndiaSpend analysis of government data.
- This could be because rising income, which results in increased literacy, makes it easier for families to access sex-selective procedures.

Issues Related to Lower Sex Ratio at Birth:**Gender-imbalance:**

- Prof. Amartya Kumar Sen, in his world famous article “Missing Women” has statistically proved that during the last century, 100 million women have been missing in south Asia.
- This is due to discrimination leading to death, experienced by them from womb to tomb in their life cycles.
- An adverse child sex ratio is also reflected in the distorted gender makeup of the entire population.

Distortion in the Marriage System:

- Adverse ratio results in a gross imbalance in the number of men and women and its inevitable impact on marriage systems as well as other harms to women.
- In India, some villages in Haryana and Punjab have such poor sex ratios that men “import” brides from other States. This is often accompanied by the exploitation of these brides.
- There are concerns that skewed sex ratios lead to more violence against both men and women, as well as human-trafficking.

Way Forward**Bringing Behavioural Change:**

- Increasing female education and economic prosperity help to improve the ratio. In this pursuit, the government's Beti-Bachao Beti Padhao Campaign has achieved remarkable success in bringing behavioural change in the society.

Sensitizing Youth:

- There is an urgent need to reach young people for reproductive health education and services as well as to cultivate gender equity norms.
- For this, the services of Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) can be leveraged, especially in rural areas.

Stringent Enforcement of Law:

- India must implement the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994 more stringently and dedicate more resources to fighting the preference for boys.
- In this context, the Drugs Technical Advisory Board decision to include ultrasound machines in the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 is a step in the right direction.

INDIAN ECONOMY**Inflation Data: October 2020**

Recently, the wholesale price inflation data for the month of October 2020 was released.

The wholesale price-based inflation is measured by Wholesale Price Index (WPI).

Key Points**Wholesale Inflation:**

- Wholesale price inflation increased to the highest level in eight months, reaching 1.48% in October 2020, compared with 0% in October 2019 and 1.32% in September 2020.
- It was driven by manufactured items as per the data released by the commerce and industry ministry.
- The manufactured product group inflation hit a 19-month high of 2.1%, and core inflation accelerated to the highest level in 18 months at 1.7%.
- Core Inflation excludes volatile goods from the basket of commodities tracking Headline Inflation. These volatile commodities mainly comprise food and beverages (including vegetables) and fuel and light (crude oil).
- Core inflation = Headline inflation – (Food and Fuel) inflation

Implication:

- Increase in core inflation suggests improvement in demand conditions, which have improved after the Covid-19 related lockdown was lifted.
- As a large part of this is due to festival related demand, it will be too early to term this as a general recovery.

Inflation

- Inflation refers to the rise in the prices of most goods and services of daily or common use, such as food, clothing, housing, recreation, transport, consumer staples, etc.
- Inflation measures the average price change in a basket of commodities and services over time.
- Inflation is indicative of the decrease in the purchasing power of a unit of a country's currency. This could ultimately lead to a deceleration in economic growth.
- However, a moderate level of inflation is required in the economy to ensure that production is promoted.
- In India, inflation is primarily measured by two main indices — WPI (Wholesale Price Index) and CPI (Consumer Price Index) which measure wholesale and retail-level price changes, respectively.

Wholesale Price Index

- It measures the changes in the prices of goods sold and traded in bulk by wholesale businesses to other businesses.
- Published by the Office of Economic Adviser, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- It is the most widely used inflation indicator in India.
- Major criticism for this index is that the general public does not buy products at wholesale price.
- The base year of All-India WPI has been revised from 2004-05 to 2011-12 in 2017.

INDIAN POLITY**Article 32 of the Constitution**

Recently, the Chief Justice of India (CJI), during a hearing of a plea, said that the court is trying to discourage petitions filed under Article 32.

Key Points

- CJI's View: CJI noted that there is a spate of Article 32 petitions and reiterated that the High Court can also uphold fundamental rights (under article 226).
- Article 32 of the Constitution (Right to Constitutional Remedies): It is a fundamental right, which states that individuals have the right to approach the Supreme Court (SC) seeking enforcement of other fundamental rights recognised by the Constitution.
- The SC has power to issue directions or orders or writs for the enforcement of any of the fundamental rights. The writs issued may include habeas corpus, mandamus, prohibition, certiorari and quo-warranto.
- The right to move the SC shall not be suspended except as otherwise provided for by the Constitution. Thus, the Constitution provides that the President can suspend the right to move any court for the enforcement of the fundamental rights during a national emergency (Article 359).
- In case of the enforcement of Fundamental Rights, the jurisdiction of the SC is original but not exclusive. It is concurrent with the jurisdiction of the high court under Article 226.
- Original, because an aggrieved citizen can directly go to the SC, not necessarily by way of appeal.
- Concurrent means when the Fundamental Rights of a citizen are violated, the aggrieved party has the option of moving either the high court or the Supreme Court directly.
- Since the right guaranteed by Article 32 (ie, the right to move the SC where a fundamental right is infringed) is in itself a fundamental right, the availability of alternate remedy is no bar to relief under Article 32.
- However, the SC has ruled that where relief through the high court is available under Article 226, the aggrieved party should first move the high court.
- In the Chandra Kumar case (1997), the SC ruled that the writ jurisdiction of both the high court and the Supreme Court constitute a part of the basic structure of the Constitution.

Counter-Argument:

- Even as the SC underlines the powers of the high courts, it has in the past transferred cases to itself from the high courts.
- Most recently, the SC transferred the case involving land use for the national capital's Central Vista project to itself from the Delhi High Court. Incidentally, the petitioners had not sought such a transfer.
- When such transfers are made, the petitioners lose a stage of appeal that would otherwise have been available had the high courts heard and decided the case.
- Recently, the SC also conveyed its concerns that in many matters involving personal liberty, the High Courts are not exercising their jurisdiction as constitutional courts.

Article 226 of the Constitution

- Article 226 of the Constitution empowers a high court to issue writs including habeas corpus, mandamus, certiorari, prohibition and quo warranto for the enforcement of the fundamental rights of the citizens and for any other purpose.
- The phrase 'for any other purpose' refers to the enforcement of an ordinary legal right. This implies that the writ jurisdiction of the high court is wider than that of the SC.
- This is because the SC can issue writs only for the enforcement of fundamental rights and not for any other purpose, that is, it does not extend to a case where the breach of an ordinary legal right is alleged.
- The high court can issue writs to any person, authority and government not only within its territorial jurisdiction but also outside its territorial jurisdiction if the cause of action arises within its territorial jurisdiction.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**Conflict in Ethiopia**

The Ethiopian prime minister Abiy Ahmed has vowed to continue the military operation in the Tigray region amid concerns it could descend into civil conflict.



Key Points

- Military Operation: Abiy has declared war on the country’s Tigray region, which is ruled by the powerful Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF), in response to its attack on a federal military base in Tigray.

Background:

- After becoming Ethiopia’s Prime Minister in April 2018, Abiy Ahmed reached out to the political opposition, ushered democratic reforms, lifted curbs on the media and made peace with Eritrea - moves that won him the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019.
- Eritrea is a sworn enemy of the TPLF, which shares a long border with the Tigray region.
- He also removed TPLF from senior government positions. His push to concentrate more power in the hands of the government alienated the TPLF further.
- Abiy has formed a new political coalition, the Prosperity Party, all constituents of the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), except the TPLF, joined the new platform.
- When the federal government postponed the general elections in August to 2021 citing the coronavirus pandemic, Tigray politicians accused him of a power grab and held elections, in September, in the region, in defiance of the government.
- Rising tensions led to an attack on the military base.

Tigray People’s Liberation Front:

- It is a militia-turned-party, which was part of the coalition that brought an end to the military dictatorship in 1991.
- TPLF leader Meles Zenawi took over as the interim President in 1991 and became the first elected Prime Minister in 1995.
- He is largely seen as the architect of the country’s ethno-federal system and remained in power till 2012.
- It had played a dominant role in the country’s ruling coalition, the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF - put together by Zenawi).
- Though the EPRDF contains regional political parties such as the Amhara Democratic Party, the Oromo Democratic Party and the Southern Ethiopian People’s Democratic Movement, the TPLF remained the dominant political force.
- The Tigray people make up roughly 6% of the population, while the Oromos have a 34% share and the Amharas 27%. The Oromos have alleged marginalisation and called for better representation.
- Over the years, the government led by the EPRDF, was accused of being increasingly authoritarian and there were frequent mass protests in the regions.
- In 2018, the EPRDF chose Abiy, a former military intelligence officer, to lead the government amid growing protests and a political deadlock.
- Abiy’s Stand: Abiy, the country’s first Oromo leader, claimed that his actions are not driven by ethnic calculations but rather aimed at addressing the historic power imbalance in the country and making peace with the neighbours.

Implications:

- TPLF has fired rockets into Eritrea from Tigray, threatening a wider regional war in the Horn of Africa.
- Horn of Africa houses the countries of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia.
- Rebels also fired rockets into the neighbouring Amhara region. Even if Abiy is serious about keeping the operation short, it could spill out of control given the underlying complexities of the conflict. The TPLF has thousands of fighters under their command.
- Also, the Tigray region shares a border with Sudan. The TPLF enjoyed good relations with Sudan's ousted dictator Omar Bashir.
- Sudan has an unresolved border dispute with Ethiopia. If Sudan's new rulers keep the old links with the TPLF active and the border open for the rebels, the conflict could go on.
- Earlier this year, in the midst of Ethiopia's long-standing conflict with Egypt over the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam over the Blue Nile, Sudan had already found itself forcefully involved in the spat.
- There have also been reports of atrocities targeting civilians by both sides. Many have even fled to Sudan.

India-Ethiopia Relations

- Ethiopia is one of the largest recipients of long term concessional credit from India in Africa.
- Lines of Credit worth more than USD1 billion have been sanctioned to Ethiopia for sectors such as rural electrification, sugar industry and railways.
- Tele-Education and Tele-Medicine services under the Pan African e-network Project was launched in Addis Ababa in July 2007.
- The Tele-Education project has been replicated by the Ethiopian side and linkages established between the Addis Ababa University and the Indian Institutes of Technology at Delhi and Kanpur.
- Bilateral trade between Ethiopia and India stood at USD 1.28 billion in 2018-19, out of which Indian exports to Ethiopia were USD 1.23 billion and imports were USD 55.01 million.
- There are more than 586 Indian companies in Ethiopia employing more than 55,000 people with licensed investment of over USD 4 billion.
- About 58.7% of Indian investments are in the manufacturing sector, followed by agriculture (15.6%).
- Indian Mission has been celebrating the International Day of Yoga in Addis Ababa. Mission held Gandhi@150 celebrations in Addis Ababa (Oct 2020).

Way Forward

- Abiy can reach out to regional political leaderships, especially the TPLF, find common ground, and run the country peacefully by restoring the balance between ethnicities and regions and decentralising the federal government.
- The protection of civilian safety and security is essential. The African Union can play a role in this.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM**Vulture Action Plan**

Recently, the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) launched a Vulture Action Plan 2020-25 for the conservation of vultures in the country.

Key Points**Background:**

- Vulture numbers saw a decline as much as 90% in some species in India since the 1990s in one of the most drastic declines in bird populations in the world.
- Between the 1990s and 2007, numbers of three presently critically-endangered species, the Oriental white-backed, long-billed and slender-billed vultures decreased massively with 99% of the species having been wiped out.
- The number of red-headed vultures, also critically-endangered now, declined by 91% while the Egyptian vultures by 80%.
- The decline in vulture populations came into limelight in the mid-90s..

Reason for decline:

- The cause of the decline was established as diclofenac, a veterinary nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) in 2004, which is used to treat pain and inflammatory diseases such as gout in carcasses that vultures would feed off.
- Just 0.4-0.7% of animal carcasses contaminated with diclofenac was sufficient to decimate 99% of vulture populations.
- The MoEFCC released the Action Plan for Vulture Conservation 2006 with the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) banning the veterinary use of diclofenac in the same year.
- Objectives of the Action Plan for Vulture Conservation 2020-2025.

Drug control:

- To ensure minimum use of Diclofenac.
- To Prevent the poisoning of the principal food of vultures, the cattle carcasses, with veterinary NSAIDs, by ensuring that sale of veterinary NSAIDs is regulated and is disbursed only on prescription and by ensuring that treatment of livestock is done only by qualified veterinarians.
- To carry out safety testing of available NSAIDs on vultures and to develop new ones which do not affect vultures.
- To ensure that DCGI must institute a system that automatically removes a drug from veterinary use if it is found to be toxic to vultures.
- Such a system would ensure that drugs other than diclofenac that are toxic to vultures like aceclofenac and ketoprofen are banned for veterinary use.

Upscaling conservation:

- To establish Additional Conservation Breeding Centres along with Vulture Conservation Centres with samples and information collected from the wild analysed and stored at these centres.
- To implement the Vulture Safe Zone programme at eight different places in the country where there are existing populations of vultures.
- To launch conservation plans for the Red-headed and Egyptian vultures, with breeding programmes for both.
- To declare a Vulture Safe Zone only when no toxic drugs are found in undercover pharmacy and cattle carcass surveys, for two consecutive years, and the vulture populations are stable and not declining.
- To build Four rescue centres for different geographical areas like Pinjore in the north, Bhopal in central India, Guwahati in Northeast and Hyderabad in South India.

Other Efforts:

National:

- The Central Zoo Authority (CZA) and Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) also established the Vulture Conservation Breeding Programme.
- A Vulture Care Centre (VCC) was set up at Pinjore, Haryana in 2001 to study the cause of deaths of vultures in India.
- The Jatayu Conservation Breeding Centre in Pinjore is the world's largest facility within the state's Bir Shikargah Wildlife Sanctuary for the breeding and conservation of Indian vulture species.

International: SAVE (Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinction)









- The consortium of like-minded, regional and international organizations, created to oversee and coordinate conservation, campaigning and fundraising activities to help the plight of south Asia's vultures.

Objective: To save three critically important species from extinction through a single programme.

SAVE partners: Bombay Natural History Society, Bird Conservation Nepal, RSPB (UK), National Trust for Nature Conservation (Nepal), International Centre for Birds of Prey (UK) and Zoological Society of London.

Vultures in India

- India is home to nine species of vultures, but most of them face the danger of extinction.
- The nine species of vultures & their International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) status are:

Sr. No.	Name of the Vulture Species	IUCN status	Pictorial Representation
1.	Oriental White-backed Vulture (Gyps Bengalensis)	Critically Endangered	
2.	Slender-billed Vulture (Gyps Tenuirostris)	Critically Endangered	
3.	Long-billed Vulture (Gyps Indicus)	Critically Endangered	
4.	Egyptian Vulture (Neophron Percnopterus)	Endangered	
5.	Red-Headed Vulture (Sarcogyps Calvus)	Critically Endangered	
6.	Indian Griffon Vulture (Gyps Fulvus)	Least Concerned	
7.	Himalayan Griffon (Gyps Himalayensis)	Near Threatened	
8.	Cinereous Vulture (Aegypius Monachus)	Near Threatened	
9.	Bearded Vulture or Lammergeier (Gypaetus Barbatus)	Near Threatened	

Why vultures should be protected:

- The scavenging lifestyle that gives them a bad reputation is, in fact, that makes them so important for the environment, nature and society.
- Vultures feeding on dead animals help areas getting rid of carcasses that, otherwise, would provide foul smells and scenery for a much longer period hence also known as nature's cleanup crew.
- Vultures also play a valuable role in keeping wildlife diseases in check.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. Traditional knowledge of water conservation is the only sustainable way to counter the dangers of national water emergencies. Discuss. (250 words)

Ans:

Water resources of a country constitute one of its vital assets, but its availability is changing fast both in terms of quantity as well as quality.

- The situation is further aggravated by the looming climate change which is going to alter the paradigm of management of water resources. Hence there is a need for conservation of water in this age of rapid urbanisation
- India with its rich culture and heritage in terms of images, rituals, traditional knowledge to conserve water, cultural practices and metaphors on water wisdom can suffice the efforts of water conservation in a traditional way by using cultural images on water, ancient practices and work by water warriors to affirm the value of traditional heritage on water wisdom.

India has wide temporal and spatial variation in the rainfall with some season/ areas having high rainfall while others remaining dry. Because of these variations, different parts of the country have developed different traditional methods from ancient times to conserve and store water. Some of these includes:

- **Tanks in Karnataka:** these are artificial reservoirs to store water taking advantage of depression.
- **Stepwell:** these are found in Rajasthan and Gujarat. It incorporated a cylinder well that extended down to the water table—provided water for drinking, washing, bathing, and the irrigation of crops.
- **Pyne-ahar:** system of south Bihar on which the cultivation of paddy depends.
- **Kuls:** these are diversion channels that carry water from a glacier to village. Often spanning long distances, with some over 10 km long, kuls have been around for centuries. They are the lifeline of people of Spiti valley of Himachal Pradesh and in Jammu too.
- **Tanka system:** it is used in Rajasthan, which is a cylindrical ground pit which receives rainwater from the nearby catchment area.
- **Bamboo drip irrigation:** used in the northeast, suitable for irrigation in hilly terrains.

Advantages of traditional water conservation methods:

Sustainable and cost-effective: Traditional methods of water conservation are small scale projects that are sustainable and cost-effective

Protects the environment: Along with water conservation, traditional methods serve other purposes as well. One of them is environmental protection, unlike modern methods like dams which do more harm than help, traditional methods do not disturb the environment.

Community participation: In order to make traditional methods work, the whole of the community needs to work. For example, for rainwater harvesting, every house needs to have a system installed. Community participation gives people a sense of belonging and hence, work more efficiently.

Suitable to local mass: the local people are familiar with the traditional methods of water conservation and hence it becomes easier for them to adapt to these methods.

Disadvantages of traditional water conservation techniques:

Low efficiency: the efficiency rate of traditional techniques is low. Therefore, they are not suitable for a large urban population.

Not suitable for urban masses: there is very less vacant land available in urban areas for traditional infrastructures. Also, urban masses are not familiar with these ideas.

Lack of leadership: to make traditional methods successful, the whole community needs to give their contribution. In the absence of a strong leadership, these techniques may turn into failures.

Conclusion

- These traditional systems are ecologically safe, viable and cost-effective alternatives to rejuvenate India's depleted water resources. But using only traditional methods is not enough. Productively

combining these structures with modern rainwater saving techniques, such as percolation tanks, injection wells and subsurface barriers, could be the answer to India's perennial water woes.

DAILY QUIZ

1. Consider the following statements:

1. Under Article 32, the Supreme Court has power to issue writs for the enforcement of any of the fundamental and legal rights of citizens only.
2. The High Court can not issue writs to any authority outside its territorial jurisdiction.

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. Consider the following statements about Ethiopia:

1. Ethiopia is a landlocked country sharing borders with Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya and Somalia.
2. The country has recently declared war with its enemy state of Eritrea.

Which of the statements given above is/are not correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) **2 only**
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

3. Consider the following statements:

1. Inflation signifies decrease in the purchasing power of currency.
2. Inflation of any form is not good for the economy.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) **1 only**
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 and 2

4. Consider the following statements:

1. Vulture Action Plan 2020-25 aims to ensure minimum use of Diclofenac.
2. All the species of vultures in India are critically-endangered.

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 Vital statistics of India based on the Civil Registration System report 2018, consider the following statements:

1. Haryana recorded the worst sex ratio at birth.
2. The report was published by the Census Commissioner of India.

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**