

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

❖ **The delay in the decennial Census**

➤ **CONTEXT:** The decennial Census of 2021 has been pushed forward yet again and is unlikely to start till September 2023, at least.

- The Additional Registrar General of India communicated to States on January 2, without specifying a reason, that the date of freezing of administrative boundaries has been extended till June 30.
- The Census can only begin three months after the boundaries have been frozen, and the completion of the Census in its two phases takes at least 11 months.
- Thus, even if started in an urgent fashion from October, the possibility of its fruition in 2023 or early 2024 is ruled out, as general elections are due in March-April 2024.

➤ **How is the Census conducted?**

- India's first proper or synchronous Census, one which begins on the same day or year across regions of the country, was carried out in 1881 by the colonial administration and has since happened every 10 years, except the one that was supposed to be carried out in 2021.
- The decennial census is carried out by lakhs of enumerators empanelled and trained by the government in two phases.
- The first phase is the housing Census, where data on housing conditions, household amenities and assets possessed by households are collected and the second phase is where data on population, education, religion, economic activity, Scheduled Castes and Tribes, language, literacy, migration, and fertility are collected.
- The freezing of boundary limits of administrative units such as districts, sub-districts, tehsils, and police stations, happens between two consecutive censuses as State administrations often create new districts or merge, or reorganise the existing units.

➤ **How many times has the 2021 Census been delayed?**

- The Census is still conducted under the Census Act of 1948, which predates the Constitution.
- Notably, the Act does not bind the government to conduct the Census on a particular date or to release its data in a notified period.
- The Centre's intent to conduct the 2021 Census was notified in the Gazette of India on March 28, 2019. The freeze on administrative boundaries was to be effective from January 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021, before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In 2020, the census was postponed indefinitely and several requests were received from States for permission to create new units, the date of freezing of boundaries was first extended till December 31, 2020. It was extended again till December 31, 2021, then June 30, 2022 and further again to December 31, 2022.
- On December 14, 2022, Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai informed the Rajya Sabha, "due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Census 2021 and the related field activities have been postponed until further orders."
- According to UN statistics, multiple countries had delayed their census exercises due to the pandemic, but many of them, like the U.S., U.K., China, and Bangladesh, have completed the count by now.

➤ **What are implications of the delay?**

- The Census data is crucial for various administrative functions, welfare schemes, and other surveys. the government should take a quick call and the delay is not good and has ramifications as the Finance Commission allocates funds to States on the basis of Census figures and any delay could put them at a disadvantage.
- Besides, outdated Census information (available from the last Census in 2011) often becomes unreliable and affects those who do and do not receive the benefits of welfare schemes.
- As per the National Food Security Act, 2013, 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population — totalling 67% of the country's population — are entitled to receive subsidised food grains from the government under the targeted public distribution system (PDS).
- According to the 2011 Census, India's population was about 121 crore, and PDS beneficiaries were approximately 80 crore. However, economists pointed out that population growth over the last decade means that if the 67% ratio is applied to 2020's projected population of 137 crore, PDS coverage should have increased to around 92 crore people.
- According to experts Census data are critical for other sample surveys conducted in the country as they use the Census data as a 'frame' or list from which a representative sample of the population is selected for surveys. For the latest edition of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) released in 2022, it was the 2011 data that served as the sampling frame.
- The Constitution talks about the use of Census data for delimitation of constituencies and for determining the quantum of reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The provisional data compiled by

the RGI till June 2022 shows the number of districts in the country has increased from 640 in 2011 to 736 presently, sub-districts are up from 5,925 to 6,754, and villages have decreased from 6,40,934 in 2011 to 6,39,083 in 2021. This means significant changes in the demography and the need for amenities from government health to educational facilities.

- Besides, the Census is crucial to determine the population of migrants and migration patterns. The start of the pandemic saw a sea of migrants on the country's roads, and the only data available with the government was from 2011, which could not answer queries on the numbers, causes and patterns of migration.
- Former bureaucrats also advise, that the exercise of collecting data for the National Population Register (NPR), which was to happen with the first phase of the Census, should now be delinked, owing to its politically sensitive nature and the urgency of the Census.
- **What about the proposed digital Census?**
- The upcoming Census will also be the first Census both in digital mode and through paper schedules (questionnaires/forms).
- In 2022, the Union government amended the Census Rules framed in the year 1990 to allow the details to be captured and stored in an electronic form and also make a provision enabling self-enumeration by respondents.
- The Home Ministry informed the Parliament in December 2022 that mobile and web applications for the collection of data and a portal (CMMS) for management and monitoring of various Census-related activities had been developed at a cost of ₹24.84 crore so far.

INTERNATIONAL RELATION

❖ **Indians abroad**

➤ **CONTEXT:** Inaugurating the 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Indians living overseas are “brand ambassadors” of the country on foreign soil.

- Over the years, the convention, which began under the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government in 2003, has grown in size and scope, particularly since 2015, when the Ministry of External Affairs turned the event into a biennial affair.
- The ongoing Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention in Indore is the 17th edition of the event, which commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi to India on January 9, 1915 from South Africa. But the story of the Indian expat goes back further.

➤ **History of the Indian expat**

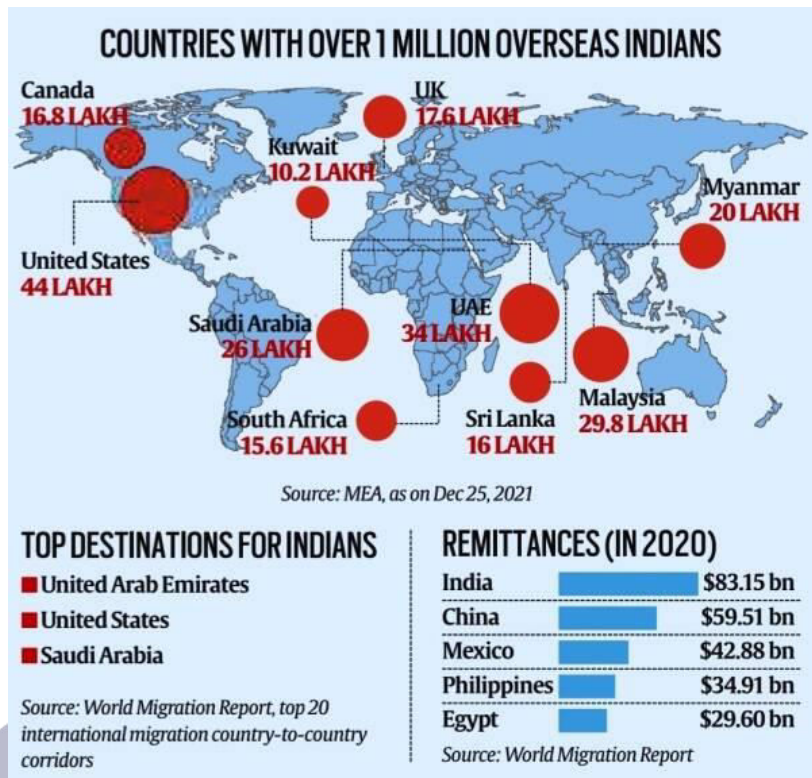
- The term diaspora traces its roots to the Greek diaspeiro, which means dispersion.
- The Indian diaspora has grown manifold since the first batch of Indians were taken to counties in the east pacific and the Caribbean islands under the ‘Girmitiya’ arrangement as indentured labourers.
- The 19th and early 20th centuries saw thousands of Indians shipped to those countries to work on plantations in British colonies, which were reeling under a labour crisis due to the abolition of slavery in 1833-34.
- Surinamese President Chandrikapersad Santokhi, who addressed the convention as a special guest, referred to this migration, saying 2023 marks the 150th year of the first such journey of Indians to Surinam.
- As part of the second wave of migration, nearly 20 lakh Indians went to Singapore and Malaysia to work in farms.
- The third and fourth wave saw professionals heading to western countries and workers going to the Gulf and west Asian countries in the wake of the oil boom.

➤ **Various classifications**

- Overseas Indians are classified into three categories: Non-Resident Indians (NRI), Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs), Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs).
- NRIs are Indians who are residents of foreign countries. The PIO category was abolished in 2015 and merged with the OCI category. However, existing PIO cards are valid till December 31, 2023, by which the holders of these cards have to obtain OCI cards.
- According to the MEA, PIO refers to a foreign citizen (except a national of Pakistan, Afghanistan Bangladesh, China, Iran, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Nepal) who at any time held an Indian passport, or who or either of their parents/ grandparents/great grandparents was born and permanently resided in India as defined in Government of India Act, 1935, or who is a spouse of a citizen of India or a PIO.
- A separate category of OCI was carved out in 2006. An OCI card was given to a foreign national who was eligible to be a citizen of India on January 26, 1950, was a citizen of India on or at any time after January 26, 1950, or belonged to a territory that became part of India after August 15, 1947. Minor children of such individuals, except those who were a citizen of Pakistan or Bangladesh, were also eligible for OCI cards.

➤ **Numbers and geographical spread**

- According to an August 22, 2022 report of the Parliamentary committee on external affairs, as on December 31, 2021, there were 4.7 crore Indians living overseas. The number includes NRIs, PIOs, OCIs, and students. Excluding students, the number stands at 3.22 crore, including 1.87 crore PIOs and 1.35 crore NRIs.
- According to the World Migration Report, prepared by the International Organisation for Migration under the United Nations, India has the largest emigrant population in the world, making it the top origin country globally, followed by Mexico, Russian and China.
- Numbers shared by the government in Parliament in 2022 show that the geographical spread of the Indian diaspora is vast. The countries with over 10 lakh overseas Indians include United States of America (44 lakh), United Kingdom (17.6 lakh), United Arab Emirates (34 lakh), Sri Lanka (16 lakh), South Africa (15.6 lakh), Myanmar (20 lakh), Malaysia (29.8 lakh), Kuwait (10.2 lakh) and Canada (16.8 lakh).



➤ **Remittances**

- Remittances, according to the World Bank, are a vital source of household income for low- and middle-income countries like India.
- According to the latest World Bank Migration and Development Brief, released in November 2022, "For the first time a single country, India, is on track to receive more than \$100 billion in yearly remittances."
- The World Migration Report notes that India, China, Mexico, the Philippines and Egypt are (in descending order) among the top five remittance recipient countries, "although India and China were well above the rest". In 2020, the two neighbours received the largest amounts of international remittances in Asia, with a combined total of more than \$140 billion.

➤ **Involvement in politics**

- The vocal political positions taken by a section of the Indian diaspora, particularly in the US and the UK, is a fairly recent phenomenon.
- For instance, the Hindu American Foundation, a Hindu advocacy group based in the US, was set up in 2003, the same year the Pravasi Bharatiya Convention was launched. At the launch, then PM Vajpayee had said overseas Indians can "project the truth about India to the world in a credible and effective manner" and counter "propaganda".
- In his recent speech, PM Modi echoed similar sentiments, urging Pravasi Bharatiyas to amplify India's "development story".

➤ **Charges of bias**

- The August 2022 report of the house panel, pointed out that conventions such as the Pravasi Bharatiya Sammelan appear to be leaving out a large section of the diaspora that is not wealthy.
- It expressed apprehension that "low/semi-skilled and blue collar workers may not find place or feel comfortable to participate in the said celebration as the general profile of participants is seen to be of very high level.
- The Committee have a strong view that the participation and involvement should be more broad-based accommodating the vulnerable sections of the diaspora community too.

PRELIMS

1. **Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)**

- **CONTEXT:** National Health Authority (NHA) introduces new system to measure and grade performance of hospitals empaneled under Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY scheme

- With an objective to shift the focus of measuring performance of hospitals from volume of services provided to the value of healthcare services, National Health Authority (NHA) is introducing a new system to measure and grade hospital performance under the flagship scheme Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY).
- Traditionally, from the payer's perspective, the healthcare model has been focussed on the quantity of services delivered, where case-based bundled payment is made on the basis of the number of services provided.
- The new initiative will introduce the concept of 'value- based care', where payment will be outcome based and providers will be rewarded according to the quality of the treatment delivered. Under the new model, the providers will be rewarded for helping the patients improve their health, which consequently will reduce the effects of disease in the population in the long term.
- Under value-based care, the performance of AB PM-JAY empanelled hospitals will be measured based on five performance indicators such as:
 - ✓ Beneficiary Satisfaction
 - ✓ Hospital Readmission Rate
 - ✓ The extent of Out-of-Pocket Expenditure
 - ✓ Confirmed Grievances
 - ✓ Improvement in-patient's Health-Related Quality of Life.

➤ **About**

- PM-JAY is the world's largest health insurance/ assurance scheme fully financed by the government.
- Launched in February 2018, it offers a sum insured of Rs.5 lakh per family for secondary care (which doesn't involve a super specialist) as well as tertiary care (which involves a super specialist).
- Under PMJAY, cashless and paperless access to services are provided to the beneficiaries at the point of service, that is, hospital.
- Health Benefit Packages covers surgery, medical and day care treatments, cost of medicines and diagnostics.
- ✓ Packaged rates (Rates that include everything so that each product or service is not charged for separately).
- ✓ These are flexible but the hospitals can't charge the beneficiary more once fixed.
- **Beneficiaries:** It is an entitlement-based scheme that targets the beneficiaries as identified by latest Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) data. Once identified by the database, the beneficiary is considered insured and can walk into any empaneled hospital.
- **Funding:** The funding for the scheme is shared – 60:40 for all states and UTs with their own legislature, 90:10 in Northeast states and Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal and Uttarakhand and 100% Central funding for UTs without legislature.
- **Nodal Agency:** The National Health Authority (NHA) has been constituted as an autonomous entity under the Society Registration Act, 1860 for effective implementation of PM-JAY in alliance with state governments. The State Health Agency (SHA) is the apex body of the State Government responsible for the implementation of AB PM-JAY in the State.

2. **land subsidence**

- **CONTEXT:** Almost a week after cracks appeared in many roads and hundreds of houses of Joshimath, Uttarakhand, authorities recently declared it a landslide and subsidence-hit zone.
- The announcement came after a high-level meeting took place among the senior officials of the Central government, Uttarakhand state officials, and top officers from agencies including the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Geological Survey of India (GSI) and the National Institute of Hydrology (NIH).
 - So far 68 families have been evacuated to temporary relief centres and around 90 more will be evacuated soon.
- **What is land subsidence?**
- According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), subsidence is the "sinking of the ground because of underground material movement".
 - It can happen for a host of reasons, man-made or natural, such as the removal of water, oil, or natural resources, along with mining activities. Earthquakes, soil erosion, and soil compaction are also some of the well-known causes of subsidence.
 - The US-based agency's website also mentions that this phenomenon can "happen over very large areas like whole states or provinces, or very small areas like the corner of your yard."
- **What can be the reasons behind Joshimath's subsidence?**

- The exact reason behind Joshimath land subsidence is still unknown but experts suggest that the incident might have occurred because of unplanned construction, over-population, obstruction of the natural flow of water and hydel power activities. Not only this, the area is a seismic zone, which makes it prone to frequent earthquakes.
- the possibility of such an incident happening in the region was first highlighted around 50 years when the MC Mishra committee report was published and it cautioned against “unplanned development in this area, and identified the natural vulnerabilities.”
- According to experts, Joshimath city has been built on an ancient landslide material — meaning it rests on a deposit of sand and stone, not rock, which doesn't have high load-bearing capacity. This makes the area extremely vulnerable to ever-burgeoning infrastructure and population.
- Moreover, the lack of a proper drainage system might have also contributed to the sinking of the area.
- Experts say that unplanned and unauthorised construction has led to the blocking of the natural flow of water, which eventually results in frequent landslides.
- residents have blamed NTPC's Tapovan Vishnugad Hydro Power Project for the incident..
- subsidence in Joshimath might have been triggered by the reactivation of a geographic fault (defined as a fracture or zone of fractures between two blocks of rock) where the Indian Plate has pushed under the Eurasian Plate along the Himalayas.

ANSWER WRITING

Q. What is Cultural relativism? What are the problems which cultural relativism presents to morality?

Introduction

Cultural relativism is the ability to understand a culture on its own terms and not to make judgments using the standards of one's own culture. Using the perspective of cultural relativism leads to the view that no one culture is superior to another culture when compared to systems of morality, law, politics, etc.

■ Significance of Cultural Relativism:

- It is a concept that cultural norms and values derive their meaning within a specific social context.
- This is also based on the idea that there is no absolute standard of good or evil, therefore every decision and judgment of what is right and wrong is individually decided in each society.
- The concept of cultural relativism also means that any opinion on ethics is subject to the perspective of each person within their particular culture.
- In a holistic understanding of the term cultural relativism, it tries to promote the understanding of cultural practices that are unfamiliar to other cultures.
- Increasing knowledge of cultural diversity in the world has created doubts about objective morality.
- This led cultural relativists to conclude that there are no moral standards that transcend culture and by which the standards of a culture can be judged.

■ Problems with Cultural Relativism:

- **Cultural relativism leads to many unacceptable implications. For Example:**
- A culture may try to marginalize or decimate a minority. It cannot be justified on the ground that it is admissible within that society's ethos.
- It propagates the idea that differences should be settled by the majority and as an accepted feature of the culture.
- If slavery or infanticide is practiced in a culture, it can be regarded as failing to measure up to the universal standard of morality.

Conclusion

Cultural relativism presents the challenge to ethics as universal standards of right or wrong, as it comes from the claim that moral judgments are relative to the individual or particular societies and are not universally applicable.

MCQs

- Consider the following statements with respect to Census in India:
 - The first complete Census was conducted in the first decade of the 20th century.
 - Population in India has steadily and continuously increased in the last century.
 - The Census is conducted under the Census Act of 1948 which bind the government to conduct the Census on a particular date or to release its data in a notified period.

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

a) 1 and 2 only b) 2 and 3 only c) 1 and 3 only **d) 1,2 and 3**
- With reference to the latest data consider the following
 - India 2. Mexico 3. Philippines 4. China 5. Egypt

Arrange the above countries in descending order according to top five remittance recipient in the world

a) 1,2,3,5,4 b) 1,3,2,4,5 c) 2,3,4,1,5 **d) 1,4,2,3,5**

3. In the context of India, which of the following factors is/are contributor/contributors to reducing the risk of a currency crisis?
1. The foreign currency earnings of India's IT sector.
 2. Increasing government expenditure.
 3. Remittances from Indians abroad.
- Select the correct answer using the code given below.
- a) 1 only **b) 1 and 3 only** c) 2 only d) 1, 2 and 3
4. With reference to Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna (AB-PMJAY) consider the following statements:
1. It has been launched to achieve Universal Health Coverage.
 2. It is the world's largest health assurance scheme fully financed by the government and the cost of implementation is shared between the Central and State Governments.
 3. It is only applicable to the people aged 60 and above.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- a) **1 and 2 only** b) 2 and 3 only c) 1 and 3 only d) 1,2 and 3
5. With reference to land subsidence, consider the following statements:
1. Over-population
 2. Obstruction of the natural flow of water
 3. Hydel power activities
 4. Soil compaction
 5. Triggered by the reactivation of a geographic fault
- Which of the above can be a possible reason for land subsidence in a region?
- a) 1,2 and 3 only b) 2,5 and 5 only c) 1,2,4 and 5 only **d) All of the above**
6. With reference to recent judgement of Supreme Court consider the following
Assertion (A) Supreme court recently Uttarakhand government's move to set up a committee on the Uniform Civil Code (UCC)
Reason (R) Only the Centre can set up a committee for the implementation of the UCC
Choose the correct answer using the codes given below
- a) Both (A) and (R) are true and (R) is the correct explanation of (A)
 - b) Both (A) and (R) are true but (R)
 - c) (A) is true but (R) is false
 - d) Both (A) and (R) are false**
7. A rare Himalayan Griffon vulture was rescued from Kanpur recently, with reference to the vulture consider the following
1. Himalayan Griffon vulture inhabits the higher regions of the Himalayas and the Tibetan Plateau.
 2. They are scavenger birds and are listed as Near Threatened by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?
- a) 1 only b) 2 only **c) Both 1 and 2** d) Neither 1 nor 2
8. With reference to recent scientific assessment of Ozone layer depletion consider the following
1. The latest assessment predicts that earth's protective ozone layer is healing at a pace that would fully mend the hole over Antarctica by 2040
 2. The scientific assessment that is held once-every-four-years.
- Which of the above statement/s given above is/are correct?
- a) 1 only **b) 2 only** c) Both 1 and 2 d) Neither 1 nor 2
9. Recently Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh unveils the theme for National Science Day 2023, with reference to this consider the following
1. The National Science Day (NSD) is celebrated every year on 28 February to commemorate the discovery of the 'Raman Effect'.
 2. The theme of National Science Day 2023 is 'Integrated Approach in Science and Technology for Sustainable Future'.
 3. The 'Raman Effect' for which C.V. Raman was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1930.
- Choose the correct statement/s using the codes given below
- a) **1 and 3 only** b) 1 and 2 only c) 2 and 3 only d) 3 only
10. Which of the following status is/are given under Swachh Bharat Mission- Urban (SBM-U)?
1. ODF+
 2. ODF++
 3. Water+
- Choose the correct answer using the codes given below
- a) 1 and 2 only b) 2 and 3 only c) 1 and 3 only **d) 1,2 and 3**