IAS PRELIMS 2020
COMPLETE REVISION OF CURRENT AFFAIRS through 500 MCQs

DAY: 9
QUESTIONS with ANSWER HINTS
1. Consider the following statements regarding National Blindness and Visual Impairment Survey 2019:

1. According to the survey, cataract is the leading cause of blindness in people above 50 years.
2. Blindness is more pronounced among illiterates as compared to literates.
3. The financial constraint is the most important barrier in accessing treatment.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

2. Recently SC struck down restructure of various Tribunals done through Finance Act, 2017. In this regard consider the following statement regarding Tribunals:

1. It is an administrative body established for the purpose of discharging quasi-judicial duties.
2. The provisions related to administrative tribunals were mentioned under part XIV A of the original constitution.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

3. Consider the following statements regarding the Right to Information Act (RTI) 2005:

1. A non-government organization financed indirectly by the funds of Government is a public authority under the act.
2. While the institution of the Supreme Court falls under the ambit of the act, the office of Chief Justice of India (CJI) has been exempted.

Which of the above statements are incorrect?
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) 2, 3 and 4 only

4. Consider the following statements regarding Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna:

1. The threshold yield for calculation of compensation to the farmer is based on an average yield of the crop for the last 2 cropping seasons.
2. Post-harvest losses up to a period of 30 days are covered under this scheme.
3. For horticulture and commercial crops, the premium paid by the farmer is 5% of the sum covered.
4. Selection of Implementing Agency (IA) in the state is done by the Union Ministry of Agriculture.

Which of the above statements are incorrect?
(a) 1, 2 and 4 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 4 only
(d) 2, 3 and 4 only

5. Consider the following statements regarding the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC):

1. OIC is the second largest inter-governmental organization representing the collective voice of Muslim world.
2. United Nations has observer status at OIC.
3. India recently made its maiden appearance at the foreign ministers’ meeting of OIC.

Which of the above statements are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3
6. Nilavembu Kudineer, seen in news recently, relates to:
   (a) A Siddha medicine providing protection against Chikungunya and Dengue.
   (b) A fruit bat species responsible for Nipah outbreak in Kerala.
   (c) An invasive plant species threatening Indian rhinos in Assam.
   (d) A fibre-yielding, perfectly sustainable rhizome.

7. Consider the following statements regarding pricing of essential drugs:
   1. The government directly regulates prices of medicines that are part of National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM).
   2. National Pharmaceuticals Pricing Authority (NPPA) monitors prices of both controlled and decontrolled drugs.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   (a) 1 only
   (b) 2 only
   (c) Both 1 and 2
   (d) Neither 1 nor 2

8. National Statistical Commission (NSC) Bill 2019 was in news recently. In this context, which of the following statement(s) is/are correct?
   1. NSC is the apex advisory body on statistical matters, but its suggestions are not binding on the government.
   2. NSC falls under Ministry of Commerce.
   3. India is not a follower of the UN Statistical Commission led systems since 1948.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:
   (a) 1 only
   (b) 1 and 2 only
   (c) 2 and 3 only
   (d) 1, 2 and 3

9. With reference to the Corruption Perception Index, 2019, consider the following statements:
   1. India's ranking as per CPI-2019 improved compared to the CPI-2018.
   2. As per the report, corruption is more pervasive in countries where big money can flow freely into electoral campaigns.
   3. Most of the countries in the world have shown little to no change in levels of corruption.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   (a) 1 and 2 only
   (b) 2 only
   (c) 2 and 3 only
   (d) 1 and 3 only

10. Consider the following statements regarding “Apiary on Wheels”:
    1. The initiative is launched by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
    2. It aims to address the challenges faced by the beekeepers by easy upkeep and migration of Bee Boxes having live Bee colonies.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?
   (a) 1 only
   (b) 2 only
   (c) Both 1 and 2
   (d) Neither 1 nor 2

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Correct Option (a)

Explanation:
- All statements are correct

Supplementary notes:
National Blindness and Visual Impairment Survey, 2019
- The survey was conducted by the AIIMS, Delhi and Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- The survey was conducted between 2015 and 2019.
- The survey was conducted in 31 districts of 24 states and the results were extrapolated for the entire country.
- India is the first country to launch National Program for Control of Blindness in 1976. The aim of the program is to reduce the blindness prevalence to 0.3% by 2020.

Key findings of the report
- Cataract is the leading cause of blindness in people above 50 years, according to the survey.
- The prevalence of blindness in India is 1.99%.
- Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh has the highest population suffering from blindness.
- Around 3.67% of the districts are blind and 21.82% suffer visual impairment.
- Blindness is more pronounced among illiterates as compared to literates. Around 3.23% illiterates are blind and 0.43% literates are blind.
- Blindness is more prevalent in rural population (2.14%) as compared to urban (1.8%).
- Approximately 93% of cases of blindness and 96.2% visual impairment cases in this age group were avoidable.

Causes of blindness
- Aphakia – Absence of lens in the eye
- Untreated non-infectious corneal opacity-scarring of cornea
- Cataract related surgical complication was the second highest cause for blindness.
- The outcomes of cataract surgery are not good everywhere. Around 40% of cataracts were done in government facilities. Rest of the surgeries took place in private and non-profit facilities. Of these, only 57.8% saw good visual outcome. Cost was the biggest barrier in accessing cataract surgeries.
- Around 22.1% of blindness was caused because of cost as a barrier. Around 22.1% of blindness were caused due to lack of awareness

Barriers to accessing treatment
- Among men, the most important barriers are financial constraints (31%) and local reasons (21.5%).
- Among women, local reasons (23.1%) and financial constraints (21.2%) were the most important barriers.

Correct Option: (a)

Explanation:
- Statement 2 is incorrect: Provisions related to tribunals in India were added by the 42nd constitutional amendment act of 1976.

Supplementary notes:
Tribunals in India
‘Tribunal’ is an administrative body established for the purpose of discharging quasi-judicial duties.

Tribunals function as an effective mechanism to ameliorate the burden of the judiciary.

The original Constitution did not contain provisions with respect to tribunals.

The 42\textsuperscript{nd} Amendment Act of 1976 added a new Part XIV-A to the Constitution.

This part is entitled as ‘Tribunals’ and consists of only two Articles—Article 323 A dealing with administrative tribunals and Article 323 B dealing with tribunals for other matters.

The government of India via Section 184 of the Finance Act 2017 gave the central government the authority to decide the qualifications, terms and other service conditions of tribunal members.

Recently, the Supreme Court of India in November 2019 struck down the restructuring of various tribunals in the country done through the Finance Act, 2017.

The court also recommended setting up of an independent statutory body "National Tribunals Commission" to oversee the selection process of members, fixing criteria for appointment, salary, allowances and for removal of chairpersons and members of tribunals.

**3. Correct Option: (a)**

**Explanation:**

**Statement 2 is incorrect:** As per the November 2019 judgement of the supreme court, the office of CJI is now covered under the RTI act.

**Supplementary notes:**

**Right to Information Act 2005**

- In a landmark verdict, the Supreme Court in November 2019 held that the office of the Chief Justice of India is a public authority and falls within the ambit of the Right to Information Act.

- According to Section 2(h) of Right To Information (RTI) Act, 2005 “public authority” means any authority or body or institution of self-government established or constituted:
  - by under the Constitution;
  - by any other law made by the state legislature;
  - by notification issued or order made by the appropriate Government;

- And includes any:
  - body owned, controlled or substantially financed;
  - non-Government organization substantially financed, directly or indirectly by funds provided by the appropriate Government

- As per the bench, the office of the CJI is part and parcel of the institution i.e. the Supreme Court which itself is a public authority, so is the office of the CJI.

- However, the disclosure of personal information of judges is discretionary under Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act and his statute has given the discretion to the Public Information Officer (PIO).

**4. Correct Option: (a)**

**Explanation:**

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** Threshold yield is calculated on the basis of the average yield of the crop for the last seven years.

- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** Post harvest losses are covered for a period of 14 days only.

- **Statement 4 is incorrect:** Selection of Implementing Agency (IA) is done by the concerned State Government and not the central government.

**Supplementary notes:**

**Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna**

- The scheme was launched by the government of India on 18th February 2016.

- It provides a comprehensive insurance cover against the failure of the crop thus helping in stabilising the income of the farmers.

- In the event of a crop loss, the farmer will be paid based on the difference between the threshold yield and actual yield.

- The threshold yield is calculated based on average yield for the last seven years and the extent of compensation is set according to the degree of risk for the notified crop.

- The scheme is being administered by the Ministry of Agriculture and is compulsory for loanee farmers availing Crop Loan /KCC account for notified crops and voluntary for other others.
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The scheme ensures farmers against a wide range of external risks — droughts, dry spells, floods, inundation, pests and diseases, landslides, natural fire and lightning, hailstorms, cyclones, typhoons, tempests, hurricanes and tornadoes.

The scheme also covers post-harvest losses up to a period of 14 days.

The farmer has to pay a premium of 2 per cent of the sum insured for all Kharif crops and 1.5 per cent of it for all rabi crops.

For horticulture and commercial crops, the premium is 5 per cent of the sum covered. The remaining premium is paid by the government.

The scheme is implemented by empanelled general insurance companies.

Selection of Implementing Agency (IA) is done by the concerned State Government through bidding.

6. Correct Option: (a)

**Explanation:**
- **Option (a) is correct:** The Tamil Nadu government had distributed Nilavembu Kudineer concoction to treat people infected with dengue during the outbreak in late 2017.

**Supplementary notes:**

**Nilavembu Kudineer**

- Under *in vitro* conditions, Nilavembu Kudineer (a Siddha medicine) was found to provide protection against Chikungunya virus while it was effective as a treatment during acute phase of Dengue infection. Dengue subtype-2, which is the most prevalent subtype in India, was used for testing the formulation. There was significant antiviral activity of the formulation at 3% of human dose onwards. Currently, there is no treatment for dengue and chikungunya.

- The Tamil Nadu government had distributed Nilavembu Kudineer concoction to treat people infected with dengue during the outbreak in late 2017.

- A team of researchers from the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB), Delhi found that the Nilavembu Kudineer formulation was modulating the host response in the case of both chikungunya and dengue virus but in a different manner. The mode of action of the concoction is antiviral in the case of dengue while immuno-modulatory in chikungunya infection.

- Safety studies showed that Nilavembu Kudineer concoction was non-toxic starting from 3% (about 1.8 milligram per milliliter) of human dose. However, the researchers found that andrographis, which is the active ingredient of Nilavembu Kudineer, when used alone was extremely toxic at 3% of human dose. Human dose is prepared by mixing 5...
grams of Nilavembu Kudineer in 240 ml of water. It is then boiled and reduced to 30 ml and consumed.

7. Correct Option: (c)

Explanation:
- Both statements are correct

Supplementary notes:

Pricing of Essential Drugs
- National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) was constituted vide Government of India Resolution as an attached office of the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP), Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers as an independent Regulator for pricing of drugs and to ensure availability and accessibility of medicines at affordable prices.

- Functions and responsibilities:
  - To implement and enforce the provisions of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order in accordance with the powers delegated to it.
  - To deal with all legal matters arising out of the decisions of the Authority.
  - To monitor the availability of drugs, identify shortages, if any, and to take remedial steps.
  - To collect/ maintain data on production, exports and imports, market share of individual companies, profitability of companies etc, for bulk drugs and formulations.
  - To undertake and/ or sponsor relevant studies in respect of pricing of drugs/ pharmaceuticals.
  - To recruit/ appoint the officers and other staff members of the Authority, as per rules and procedures laid down by the Government.
  - To render advice to the Central Government on changes/ revisions in the drug policy.
  - To render assistance to the Central Government in the parliamentary matters relating to the drug pricing.

- The government directly regulates prices of medicines that are part of NLEM by capping their ceiling prices at the simple average of all drugs in a particular segment with market share of at least 1%. For all other medicines, companies are allowed to hike prices by up to 10% in a year.

- Set up in 1997, NPPA has been entrusted with the task of fixation/revision of prices of pharma products, enforcement of provisions of DPCO and monitoring of prices of controlled and decontrolled drugs.

8. Correct Option: (a)

Explanation:
- Statements 2 and 3 are incorrect: NSC falls under Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (Mospi). India is a follower of the UN Statistical Commission led systems since 1948.

Supplementary notes:

National Statistical Commission
- Facing criticism over the credibility and independence of India’s official statistics, the government has through the draft National Statistical Commission (NSC) Bill 2019 proposed a statutory ‘National Statistical Commission’.
  - The new bill proposes to set up a full-time NSC, a permanent secretariat, dedicated funds and powers to supervise core statistical products.
  - NSC Bill 2019 envisages financial autonomy for the commission through an independent ‘National Statistical Fund’, but it would be bound by directions that the Centre will give time from time.
  - The fund will include resources received by NSC through government grants, fees and charges.

- History: The draft bill draws on the 2011 report of a committee headed by N.R. Madhava Menon.
  - The Menon committee had first recommended the setting up of an audit and assessment wing under NSC, to be headed by a “Chief Statistical Auditor”.
  - The draft bill also retains the regulatory powers over core statistics that the Menon committee had envisaged.
  - India is a follower of the UN Statistical Commission led systems since 1948.
National Statistical Commission

- The Government of India through a resolution dated 1st June, 2005 set up the NSC.
- Setting up of the NSC followed Cabinet’s decision to accept recommendations of the Rangarajan Commission, which reviewed the Indian Statistical System in 2001.
- NSC was constituted with effect from 12th July 2006 with a mandate to evolve policies, priorities and standards in statistical matters.
- NSC has four Members besides a Chairperson, each having specialization and experience in specified statistical fields.
- NSC is the apex advisory body on statistical matters, but its suggestions are not binding on the government.

9. Correct Option: (c)

Explanation:
- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** India’s rank in CPI-2019 slipped from 78 to 80 compared to last year.

Supplementary notes:

Global Corruption Perceptions Index

- India’s ranking in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI-2019) has slipped from 78 to 80 compared to the previous year, said Transparency International, while questioning the “unfair and opaque political financing” in the country.
- Its score of 41 out of 100 remains the same.
- In democracies like India and Australia, unfair and opaque political financing, undue influence in decision-making and lobbying by powerful corporate interest groups, has resulted in stagnation or decline in the control of corruption.
- The latest CPI report has revealed that a majority of countries are showing little to no improvement in tackling corruption.
- **As per the report, corruption is more pervasive in countries where big money can flow freely into electoral campaigns and where governments listen only to the voices of wealthy or well-connected individuals.**
- In the Asia Pacific region, the average score is 45, after many consecutive years of an average score of 44, which “illustrates general stagnation” across the region. China has improved its position from 87 to 80 with a score of 41 out of 100, a two-point jump.
- According to Transparency International, while often seen as an engine of the global economy, in terms of political integrity and governance, the region performs only marginally better than the global average.
- **In the last eight years, only 22 countries significantly improved their CPI scores, including Greece, Guyana and Estonia. In the same period, among the 21 countries that saw a significantly fall in their scores are Canada, Australia and Nicaragua. In the remaining 137 countries, the levels of corruption show little to no change.**

10. Correct Option: (b)

Explanation:
- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** Union Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises has launched the Apiary on Wheels.

Supplementary notes:

Apiary on Wheels

- Apiary on Wheels is a unique concept designed by the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC).
- It aims to address the challenges faced by the beekeepers by easy upkeep and migration of Bee Boxes having live Bee colonies.
- This initiative was launched as a part of the National Honey Mission.
- The Honey Mission was launched in 2017 by the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC).
- **Aim:** To Provide sustainable employment and income to rural and urban unemployed youth by conserving the honeybee habitat and tapping untapped natural resources.