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on **MAJOR ISSUES** *for*
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POLITY & GOVERNANCE

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NPR - National Population Register

Debates

The Union Cabinet approved a proposal to update the National Population Register (NPR), which is linked to the Census. The exercise will cost Rs 8,500 crore, the government said.

BACKGROUND

■ General Features of the National Population Register

- The National Population Register (NPR) is to create a comprehensive identity database of every “usual resident” of the country.
- The database will have demographic details.
- The NPR, since it is linked to the Census, is seen as the first step towards a nationwide exercise to implement the National Register of Citizens (NRC).
- Though an NPR doesn’t necessarily mean it’s guaranteed there will be an NRC, it clears the path for a nationwide citizens’ list.
- This is seen as one of the reasons why some states like West Bengal and Kerala, which are opposed to the NRC, have stopped work on the NPR.
- NPR was first done in 2010 and was later updated in 2015 when it was linked with the Aadhar.

■ What is NPR?

- The NPR is a register of the usual residents of the country.
- It contains information collected at the local (village/sub-town), subdistrict, district, state and national level under provisions of the Citizenship Act, 1955 and the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003.

■ Who is usual resident of India?

- A usual resident is defined, for the purposes of the NPR, as a person who has resided in a local area for the past six months or more, or a person who intends to reside in that area for the next six months.
- The law compulsorily seeks to register every citizen of India and issue a national identity card.

■ Who will conduct NPR?

- The process of updating NPR will be carried out under the aegis of the Registrar General and ex-Officio Census Commissioner, India.

■ How is NPR different than census?

- While the process of NPR and Census will begin simultaneously, the two databases are not same.
- The decennial census is the largest single source of a variety of statistical information on different characteristics of the people of India.
- While NPR only contains demographic information, more details are required for census like information on demography, economic activity, literacy and education, and housing and household amenities besides others.
- The census is the basis for reviewing the country’s progress in the past decade, monitoring the on-going schemes of the government and plan for the future.

- The census provides detailed and authentic information on demography, economic activity, literacy and education, housing and household amenities, urbanisation, fertility and mortality, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, language, religion, migration, disability besides others.
- The enumerators also collect data related to cultivators and agricultural labourers, their sex, occupational classification of workers in the non-households industry, trade, business, profession or service by class of worker and sex.
- There will be a detailed survey on gender and literacy rate, a number of towns, slum households and their population.
- Information is also collected on sources of potable water, energy, irrigation, method of farming, whether a house is a concrete, thatched or others.

■ How is NPR different than NRC?

- National Population Register is a database of people living in India, citizens or not, but National Register of Citizens is a database of Indian citizens.
- The NRC process demands proof of citizenship from the respondents. Those who found in want of the proof may face deportation or detention in long run. But in NPR, there is no need to provide any document.

■ Will anyone lose citizenship because of NPR?

- It is possible that some names are missed in the NPR, still their citizenship will not be revoked because this is not the process of NRC.
- Also, there is no plan to use data collected during NPR to form the basis of NRC.

■ What is the use of NPR?

- NPR data helps identify the demographics of actual residents who will be direct beneficiaries of any schemes launched in the area.
- The NPR data will help government design and adapt schemes like Ayushman Bharat, Jandhan Yojna, or medium of instruction in schools as per the current demographics, thus making the schemes more effective.
- It will streamline data of residents across various platforms.
- It will help in implementing the idea of 'One Identity Card' that has been recently floated by the government
- It would also eliminate duplication in voter lists, government insists.

Need of Collegium System for Appointment of CEC & ECs

Debates

Recently, the Supreme Court has agreed to hear a public interest litigation seeking that the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners be appointed by a three-member collegium. The collegium will comprise the Prime Minister, the leader of opposition in Lok Sabha and the Chief Justice of India.

BACKGROUND

- Recently, a bench comprising Chief Justice S. A. Bobde and Justices B.R. Gavai and Surya Kant took note of submissions that the plea needed an urgent hearing. The plea was filed by Advocate Ashwini Upadhyay to

ensure more autonomy for the chief election commissioner's office and election commissioners. The plea has also sought an independent secretariat for the Election Commission of India and that it should also be given the power to make rules.

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) is an autonomous constitutional authority responsible for administering Union and State election processes in India.
- The body administers elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies, and the offices of the President and Vice President in the country.
- **Structure of the Commission**
 - ▶ Originally the commission had only one election commissioner but after the Election Commissioner Amendment Act 1989, it has been made a multi-member body.
 - ▶ The commission presently consists of one Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and two Election Commissioners (ECs).
 - ▶ The secretariat of the commission is located in New Delhi.

ANALYSIS

■ Historical demands for appointment of election commission

- The demand of collegium system was first raised in 1990 when the **Dinesh Goswami Committee** suggested the need for a selection committee or a panel to appoint the CEC (at that time ECI was a single-member body).
- Based on this recommendation, **70th Constitutional Amendment Bill, 1990** was introduced in the Parliament which demanded for the selection committee comprising of the Presiding Officers of both Houses and Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha.
- However, due to lack of political will, it was not passed and was withdrawn in 1993. Till date, no such bill was formed.
- **Global Practice:** In the USA, South Africa, Canada, etc. there is a mechanism for outside consultation with expert body for making suitable appointments.

■ Present System of Appointment of Election Commissioners

● Constitutional versus Executive Power of Appointment:

- ▶ There is no prescribed procedure for appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners as per the constitution. Under the Transaction of Business rules, the President shall appoint the CEC and EC based on the recommendations made by the Prime Minister.
- ▶ Therefore, it is the executive power of the President to appoint CEC and ECs.
- ▶ However, according to Article 324(5), the Parliament has the power to regulate the terms of conditions of service and tenure of ECs. It is under this article that the Parliament has made laws till date, and not under Art. 324(2) in which the Parliament can establish a selection committee for regulating the appointments made by the President.

● Aberrations in Appointment:

- ▶ Constituent Assembly Debates: The issue was debated in the Constituent Assembly which finally left over to the government to decide the appointments.
- ▶ Election Commission (Conditions of Service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Act, 1991 was passed to determine the conditions of service of the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners and to provide for the procedure for transaction of business by the ECI. However, the Parliament at that time decided not to put any collegium system for appointment.

■ Challenges in establishing a collegium system for appointments

● Similar Demand for other appointments

- ▶ For other constitutional positions similar demand can be raised where it is the imperative of the executive to make such appointments like for Attorney General or Comptroller & Auditor-General.

● **Constitutional Dilemma**

- ▶ According to Article 324(2), the President shall make the appointment till the time there is no law being made by the Parliament for this purpose.
- ▶ Because of the absence of such law, the possible statutory appointment process has been made a constitutional appointment (done under executive domain) by the President.
- ▶ Even in the debates of Constituent Assembly, it was argued that the appointments be made by the President in consultation with PM with the concurrence of two-thirds of the majority of the joint session of both the Houses of Parliament.

■ **Distinction between CEC & EC**

There is a difference between the position of a CEC & EC. The appointments to both the position may differ according to the task they perform. Therefore, to differentiate the process of appointment which is still done on an ad-hoc basis (because of absence of any constitutional law) becomes a challenging task that needs to be addressed properly to ensure the independent working of the commission.

■ **Demand for Collegium System**

- In the recent past, this demand has gained prominence in the backdrop of allegations raised by political parties regarding the independence of the Commission. Therefore, it is due to political necessity and not legal conundrum that there is a demand for multiparty approach in appointment process.

■ **Judicial Overreach:**

- The Supreme Court (SC) interprets any law on the basis of provisions of the constitution, and constitutionally decision for appointment procedure of EC comes under executive domain. Thereby, decision by the Supreme Court in this regard can possibly shake the harmonious balance of power.

■ **Required Electoral Reforms**

- Deficiencies in the present system of appointment process needs to be removed. And adequate safeguards must be put into place to ensure that ethical and capable people head the concerned positions.
- **Independence:** There must be similar election and removal procedure for CEC and ECs, and they must exercise the same powers unless specifically prescribed by a law. Also the expenses of ECI must be charged expenditure on Consolidated Fund of India.
- **Transparency:** Appointments through collegium or any other system as discussed in constitutional debate can bring more transparency in the appointment process.
- **Autonomy:** Even, the Law Commission in its 255th report on electoral reforms (2015) for ensuring greater autonomy to the ECI, recommended for the constitution of a selection committee.
- **Legislation:** There is a need for debate and discussions in the Parliament on the issue of independency of ECI and consequently passing of required legislation.

Law Commission 255th Report on Electoral Reforms: Strengthening the office of the Election Commission of India

- The Commission in its report inter-alia suggested, the ECI must be strengthened by:
- Giving equal constitutional protection to all members of the Commission in matters of removability;
- Making the appointment process of the Election Commissioners and the CEC consultative; and
- Creating a permanent, independent Secretariat for the ECI.

- **Equal Constitutional Protection: Article 324(5) of the Constitution must be amended** to equate the removal procedures of the two Election Commissioners with that of the Chief Election Commissioner.
- **Consultative Appointment Process:** The appointment of all the Election Commissioners, including the CEC, must be made by the President in consultation with a three-member collegium or selection committee, consisting of the Prime Minister; the Leader of the Opposition of the Lok Sabha (or the leader

of the largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha in terms of numerical strength); and the Chief Justice of India.

- Elevation of an Election Commissioner must be on the basis of seniority, unless the three member collegium/committee finds such Commissioner unfit.
- It also recommended, adding a new sub-clause as (2A) to Article 324 of the Constitution to provide for a separate independent and permanent Secretariat for the ECI along the lines of the Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha Secretariats under Article 98 of the Constitution. This will further improve the independence of the ECI.

CONCLUSION

The present political questions on the institution of election commission must not be confused with the constitutional questions. The political problems need a political solution supported by a strong legislation. The collegium system no doubt will open way for independence and transparency in the working of the election commission but it will also develop a tendency to snatch what belongs to the executive.

Should Reservation Policy be Relooked?

Debates

Recently, government has sought review of SC judgment that creamy layer should be applied to SC/ST.

BACKGROUND

- The union government has called upon the Supreme Court to form a seven Judge Bench to reconsider the formulation in **M. Nagaraj vs Union of India (2006)** that creamy layer should be applied to the SC and ST communities.
- In **Jarnail Singh case (2018)**, another Constitution Bench reaffirmed the applicability of creamy layer norms to SC/STs.
- While the Centre has accepted that the 'creamy layer' norm is needed to ensure that only those genuinely backward get reservation benefits, it is justifiably upset that this principle has been extended to Dalits, who have been acknowledged to be the most backward among the backward sections. Another problem is the question whether the exclusion of the advanced sections among SC/ST candidates can be disallowed only for promotions. Most of them may not fall under the 'creamy layer' category at the entry level, but after some years of service and promotions, they may reach an income level at which they fall under the 'creamy layer'. This may result in the defeat of the object of the Constitution amendments that the court itself had upheld to protect reservation in promotions as well as consequential seniority.

Constitutional Provisions Governing Reservation in India

- **Part XVI** deals with reservation of SC and ST in Central and State legislatures.
- **Article 15(4) and 16(4)** of the Constitution enabled the State and Central Governments to reserve seats in government services for the members of the SC and ST.
- The Constitution was amended by the **Constitution (77th Amendment) Act, 1995** and a new clause **(4A) was inserted in Article 16** to enable the government to provide reservation in promotion.
- Later, **clause (4A) was modified by the Constitution (85th Amendment) Act, 2001** to provide consequential seniority to SC and ST candidates promoted by giving reservation.
- **Constitutional 81st Amendment Act, 2000 inserted Article 16(4B)** which enables the state to fill the unfilled vacancies of a year which are reserved for SCs/STs in the succeeding year, thereby nullifying the ceiling of fifty percent reservation on total number of vacancies of that year.

Another landmark verdict in the history of affirmative action jurisprudence may be needed to settle these questions.

Historical background

- **William Hunter and Jyotirao Phule in 1882** originally conceived the idea of caste-based reservation system.
- The reservation system that exists today, in its true sense, was introduced in **1933 when British Prime-Minister Ramsay Macdonald** presented the '**Communal Award**'.
- The award made provision for separate electorates for Muslims, Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, Europeans and the Dalits.
- After long negotiations, Gandhi and Ambedkar signed the '**Poona Pact**', where it was decided that there would be a single Hindu electorate with certain reservations in it.
- After independence, initially reservations were provided only for SCs and STs.
- OBCs were included in the ambit of reservation in 1991 on the recommendations of **the Mandal Commission**.
- In the **Indra Sawhney Case of 1992**, the Supreme Court while upholding the **27 percent quota** for backward classes, struck down the government notification reserving 10% government jobs for economically backward classes among the higher castes.
- Supreme Court in the same case also upheld the principle that the combined reservation beneficiaries should not exceed 50 percent of India's population.
- The concept of 'creamy layer' also gained currency through this judgment and provision that reservation for backward classes should be confined to initial appointments only and not extend to promotions.
- Recently, the **Constitutional (103rd Amendment) Act of 2019** has provided **10% reservation** in government jobs and educational institutions for the "economically backward" in the unreserved category.
- The Act amends Articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution by adding clauses empowering the government to provide reservation on the basis of economic backwardness.
- This 10% economic reservation is over and above the 50% reservation cap.

- **Article 330 and 332** provides for specific representation through reservation of seats for SCs and STs in the Parliament and in the State Legislative Assemblies respectively.
- **Article 243D** provides reservation of seats for SCs and STs in every Panchayat.
- **Article 233T** provides reservation of seats for SCs and STs in every Municipality.
- **Article 335** of the constitution says that the claims of STs and SCs shall be taken into consideration constitutively with the maintenance of efficacy of the administration.

Judicial Scrutiny of Reservation

- **The State of Madras v. Smt. Champakam Dorairajan (1951)** case was the first major verdict of the Supreme Court on the issue of Reservation. The case led to the First amendment in the constitution.
- The Supreme Court in the case pointed out that while in the case of employment under the State, Article 16(4) provides for reservations in favour of backward class of citizens, no such provision was made in Article 15.
- Pursuant to the Supreme Court's order in the case the Parliament amended Article 15 by inserting Clause (4).
- In **Indra Sawhney v. Union of India (1992)** case the court examined the scope and extent of Article 16(4).
- The Court has said that the creamy layer of OBCs should be excluded from the list of beneficiaries of reservation, there should not be reservation in promotions; and total reserved quota should not exceed 50%.
- The Parliament responded by enacting 77th Constitutional Amendment Act which introduced Article 16(4A).
- The article confers power on the state to reserve seats in favour of SC and ST in promotions in Public Services if the communities are not adequately represented in public employment.
- The Supreme Court in **M. Nagaraj v. Union Of India 2006** case while upholding the constitutional validity of Art 16(4A) held that any such reservation policy in order to be constitutionally valid shall satisfy the following three constitutional requirements:
 - ▶ The SC and ST community should be socially and educationally backward.
 - ▶ The SC and ST communities are not adequately represented in Public employment.

ANALYSIS

■ Why reservation is needed?

- To correct the historical injustice faced by backward castes in the country.
- To provide a level playing field for backward sections as they cannot compete with those who have had the access of resources and means for centuries.
- To ensure adequate representation of backward classes in the services under the State.
- For advancement of backward classes.
- To ensure equality as basis of meritocracy i.e. all people must be brought to the same level before judging them on the basis of merit.

- ▶ Such reservation policy shall not affect the overall efficiency in the administration.
- In **Jarnail Singh vs Lachhmi Narain Gupta case of 2018**, Supreme Court holds that reservation in promotions does not require the state to collect quantifiable data on the backwardness of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.
- The Court held that creamy layer exclusion extends to SC/STs and, hence the State cannot grant reservations in promotion to SC/ST individuals who belong to the creamy layer of their community.
- In May 2019 the Supreme Court upheld the Karnataka law that allows reservations in promotions for SCs and STs with consequential seniority.

■ Arguments against Reservation

- Reservation in state services led to divisions and enmity among government employees vitiating the atmosphere at workplace.
- Reservation was introduced to ensure that the historically underprivileged communities were given equal access to resources but irrespective of the economic progress they continue to remain socially disadvantaged.
- Reservation destroys self-respect, so much so that competition is no longer on to determine the best but the most backward.
- Reservations are the biggest enemy of meritocracy which is the foundation of many progressive countries.
- It has become a tool to meet narrow political ends through invoking class loyalties and primordial identities.
- The dominant and elite class within the backward castes has appropriated the benefits of reservation and the most marginalised within the backward castes have remained marginalised.
- Reservation has become the mechanism of exclusion rather than inclusion as many upper caste poor are also facing discrimination and injustice which breeds frustration in the society.

■ Reasons behind Increasing Demands of Reservation

- Reservation is increasingly seen as a remedy for the adverse effects of ill-thought out development policies as for governments, it is easier to talk of reservations inspite of doing some work.
- In developed states like Haryana, Gujarat and Maharashtra, in spite of their economies being relatively better, three things have been worrying the people:
 - ▶ Acute agrarian distress,
 - ▶ Stagnation in employment growth and
 - ▶ Distortions in the development trajectory.
- Increasing reservation demands among upper castes also arising from the fear of losing privilege opportunities and the inability to cope with change

WAY FORWARD

- Reservation is fair, as far as it provides appropriate positive discrimination for the benefit of the downtrodden and economically backward Sections of the society.
- But when it tends to harm the society and ensures privileges to some at the cost of others for narrow political ends, it should be done away with, as soon as possible.

- The communities excluded from reservations harbour animosity and prejudice against the castes included in the reservation category.
- When more people aspire for backwardness rather than of forwardness, the country itself stagnates.
- Meritocracy should not be polluted by injecting relaxation of entry barriers, rather than it should be encouraged by offering financial aid to the underprivileged.
- A strong political will is indispensable to find equilibrium between justice to the backwards, equity for the forwards and efficiency for the entire system.

Countrywide NRC- Its Implications

Debates

Recently, Union home minister said in Parliament that the Nation Register of Citizens (NRC) would be prepared for every state in the country.

BACKGROUND

- **The National Register of Citizens (NRC) is a register containing names of all genuine Indian citizens.** At present, **only Assam has such a register.**
- The exercise may be extended to other states as well. **Nagaland** is already creating a similar database known as the **Register of Indigenous Inhabitants**. The Centre is planning to create a National Population Register (NPR), which will contain demographic and biometric details of citizens.
- National Register of Citizens, 1951 is a register prepared after the conduct of the Census of 1951.
- **Purpose:** To separate “illegal” immigrants and deport them.
- **Nodal Agency:** Registrar General and Census Commissioner India.

NRC in Assam

- The issue of its update assumed importance as Assam witnessed large-scale illegal migration from erstwhile East Pakistan and, after 1971, from present-day Bangladesh.
- This led to the six-year-long Assam movement from 1979 to 1985, for deporting illegal migrants.
- The All Assam Students' Union (AASU) led the movement that demanded the updating of the NRC and the deportation of all illegal migrants who had entered Assam after 1951.
- The movement culminated in the signing of the Assam Accord in 1985.
- It set March 25, 1971, as the cut-off date for the deportation of illegal migrants.
- Since the cut-off date prescribed under articles 5 and 6 of the Constitution was July 19, 1949 - to give force to the new date, an amendment was made to the Citizenship Act, 1955, and a new section was introduced.
- It was made applicable only to Assam.
- There had been intermittent demands from AASU and other organisations in Assam for updating the NRC, an Assam based NGO filed a petition at the Supreme Court.
- In December 2014, a division bench of the apex court ordered that the NRC be updated in a time-bound manner.
- The NRC of 1951 and the Electoral Roll of 1971 (up to midnight of 24 March 1971) are together called Legacy Data. Persons and their descendants whose names appeared in these documents are certified as Indian citizens.

- On 31st August, the updated National Registry of Citizens was released in Assam after a Supreme Court deadline. Of the 3.3 crore applicants, 3.11 crore figured in the final citizens' list, while about 19 lakh residents were excluded.
- Assam government rejected NRC data released on 31st August.

ANALYSIS

■ Aim

Census and National Population Register is counting residents while the proposed NRC will count citizens. Its objective is to weed out non-citizens and deport them to their countries of origin or put them in detention camps.

■ Implications of Nationwide NRC

- It puts an entire population under suspicion of alienage. Under the foreigners' Act 1946, the burden of proof rests on the individual charged with being a foreigner. Moreover, Citizenship Act provides no mechanism for identifying aliens.
- **Cost of Authentication:** Preparation of a countrywide NRC requires lot of resources. The Assam NRC is reported to have costed Rs 1600 crores. To prepare a countrywide NRC we need an estimated outlay of Rs 4.26 lakh crore. It would also need deployment of 1.33 crore officials when total number of government employees in India was 2.9 crore in 2011-12.
- **Lot of time to prepare it:** It is a regressive exercise and will take lot of time to prepare it.
- **Panic among people:** The necessary documents required to be included in NRC has created panic and fear in Assam and many committed suicides as they were not having the documents to prove their citizenship even when their ancestors have been living here for hundreds of years. If NRC done at national level it would have graver ramifications.
- **Fraying plural social fabric of this nation:** If the NRC carves out paths to statelessness for groups that are disfavoured, the citizenship Amendment Bill creates paths to citizenship for preferred groups. The implicit assumption in the NRC is that the infiltrators are Bangladeshis Muslims who must be disenfranchised as they have illegally acquired the citizenship. The citizenship Amendment Bill on the other hand promises citizenship to migrants belonging to all groups except Muslims – who will be eligible for fast-track citizenship because they are persecuted minorities in Afghanistan, Pajistan and Bangladesh. However, it does not offer the same to the victims of sectarian religious persecution in neighbouring countries, such as the Ahmadiyas or the Rohingyas. It is a hypocrisy on part of the state.

CONCLUSION

Constitutionally, India is a political community whose citizens avow the idea of the nation as a civic entity, transcending ethnic differences. The NRC-CAB combination signals a transformative shift from a civic-national conception to an ethno-national conception of India, as a political community in which identity determines gradations of citizenship. Hence, the rationale for a nationwide register of citizens, its feasibility, and, above all, its moral legitimacy, is questionable.

Subsidies in Higher Education

Debates

Recently, the proposed fees hike of residential hostels in Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) has sparked a widespread protest and controversy over subsidies in higher education.

BACKGROUND

- When more than **fifth** of the population is below official poverty limits and 93% of the workforce is engaged in unorganised sector, subsidized education provides access to quality education to the poor.
- **Subsidies in education generate a host of positive externalities** such as health improvement, reduction in poverty, crime and population growth.
- It directly or indirectly influences almost all facets of social life, and therefore should be viewed as a non-negotiable public good and by far the most potent social investment.
- Public expenditure on education has gone up to 4.6% in 2018 from 3.8% in 2014. It is still lowest as compared to BRICS nation's public spending on education.

ANALYSIS

■ Advantages of Subsidies in Higher Education

● Inclusiveness and Equity:

- ▶ Subsidies in higher education have enabled the marginalised and socio-economically backward sections of the society to get access to quality higher education which has largely been the domain of dominant groups in the society.
- ▶ Inclusiveness and equity are very important characteristics of a good public institution. And, over the years, this has actually increased in public institutions and that is entirely because of subsidy.

● Economic:

- ▶ The subsidized education plays a significant role in building an economy as in case of India. Students engaged with research and specialised education go on to become better contributors to the economy. Higher education boosts innovation, creative thinking and innovations.
- ▶ For Example: Software segment which comprise of huge share in India's GDP is a shining example of positive externalities from subsidies in higher education.

● Demographic Dividends:

- ▶ India is one of the youngest nations in the world comprising huge chunk of population in favourable demographic phase. However, this young populations educational and skill status is not aligned to the requirements of the market.
- ▶ Therefore, subsidies in higher education sector have a greater role to play in reaping the benefits of demographic dividends.

● Social Mobility:

- ▶ Earlier, higher education used to be the exclusive preserve of elites, and other socially and economically backward classes were deprived of higher education.
- ▶ But now a large number of poor and the marginalised have begun to express their aspirations for social mobility through access to higher public education institutions.

● Human Capital:

- ▶ Students of all sections of society from top institutions can occupy the higher positions in government in forms of engineers, doctors, bureaucrats etc.

Liberalisation and Higher Education in India

In the post-liberalisation era, public expenditure in higher education went through a period of stagnation in real terms, and the per student public expenditure actually declined dramatically. All this happened while private higher education saw a phase of impressive expansion. So, while the overall intake of students in higher education increased considerably in the post-liberalisation era, a large proportion of this expansion was accounted for by expanding private sector. Growth in national income did not result in an increase of public expenditure for education as a whole. It stagnated. Within the education sector as a whole, there was a shift in the focus of funding in the 1990s from higher education to primary education.

■ Problem with Subsidies in Higher Education in India

- **Free Riders:** Subsidies are intended to serve the vulnerable section of society. However, it is often seen that these benefits of subsidies are exploited by middle and elite section of society.
- **Subsidies do not guarantee quality education:** Access without assured quality is no access. Also, there has been a lot of clamour that subsidies hampers meritocracy.
- **Unevenness in distribution of subsidies:** There is considerable unevenness in the distribution of public finances. Student subsidies for premier institutions like the IITs and engineering colleges are incomparably higher than those for universities and colleges, particularly for liberal arts institutions.
- **Privatisation:** Private institutions are generally not likely to be amenable to measures promoting access and equity. Therefore, a large number of private education institutions remain inaccessible to economy weaker sections.

WAY FORWARD

■ Better Targeting:

Eliminating free riders is the biggest challenge in dissemination of subsidies. Technological improvement like aadhar, direct benefit transfer third party verification, can be used to eliminate inclusion and exclusion errors.

■ Differential Fee Structure:

- Rationalisation of fee structure according to the demand of programmes based on marketability, affordability and input cost and according to different income groups could pave the way for optimal utilization of subsidies.
- Providing free or subsidized higher education to students from lower income groups could pave the way for a more equitable and just society.
- Some large public universities should now approach the 20% mark as recommended by the **Punnayya Committee and National Knowledge Commission**.

■ Regulatory Mechanism

- A proper regulatory mechanism should be placed in order to make private institutions in line with the government's goal of making higher education accessible and affordable to vulnerable section.
- **Increase Public Spending on Education:** Per-student public funds have to increase drastically in order to maintain the principle of equity and inclusiveness.

CONCLUSION

Education is one of those genuinely long-term businesses. A public effort is needed to frame a different management style, better autonomy and accountability. Subsidies can help in improving access to higher education and bridge socio-economic divides across communities in the country. However, these must be rationalised in order to reap optimum benefits.

Fake News Menace in India: Dangers and how to tackle it?

Debates

I&B ministry said that fake news is more dangerous than paid news and there is need for government and media to combat it jointly

BACKGROUND

- **Fake news are news, stories or hoaxes created to deliberately misinform or deceive readers.** Fake news, defined by the **New York Times** as “a made-up story with an intention to deceive”
- Usually, these stories are created to **influence people’s views, push a political agenda or cause confusion** and can often be a **profitable business for online publishers.**
- Fake news stories can deceive people by looking like trusted websites or using similar names and web addresses to reputable news organizations.
- There are **three elements to fake news; Mistrust, misinformation and manipulation.**
- **Popular Fake Examples from India:**
 - Muzzafarnagar riots of 2013: fake video fuelled communal passions
 - UNESCO has declared ‘Jana Gana Mana’ best national anthem in the world (WhatsApp)
 - Dying Woman Molested, Video shows (The Hindu Newspaper)
 - Fatwa in Saudi Arabia; Men can eat wives when hungry (AajTak)
 - GPS tracking nanochip in 2000 Rupee notes (Nov 2016)
 - Child kidnapping rumours lead to lynchings by a mob in Jharkhand
 - Missing JNU student Najeeb Ahmed has joined the ISIS
- **Deep Fake**
 - It is dangerous than fake news. It is a technique for human image synthesis based on artificial intelligence.
 - It is used to combine and superimpose existing images and videos onto source images or videos using a machine learning technique known as generative adversarial network.
 - Because of these capabilities, deep fakes have been used to create fake celebrity pornographic videos or revenge porn. Deep fakes can also be used to create fake news and malicious hoaxes

ANALYSIS

■ Causes for Rise in Fake News

- **Internet and Social media:** Many people now get news from social media sites and networks and often it can be difficult to tell whether stories are credible or not. Social media sites can play a big part in increasing the reach of these types of stories.
- **Lack of Checking Authenticity:** Everyone is busy in sharing/liking/commenting on news items without checking the authenticity of news.
- **No codes of practice for Social Media:** The internet has enabled a whole new way to publish, share and consume information and news with very little regulation or editorial standards.

- **Stratified Organization of Fake News:** Fake news is no longer being considered a rare or isolated phenomenon, but appears to be organized and shrewdly disseminated to a target population. It is believed that the high possibility of these organized bodies coming into existence with the help of political influence.

Laws Governing Fake News

- There is no specific law against fake news in India. Free publication of news flows from **Article 19** of the Constitution guaranteeing freedom of speech.
- **Press Council of India**, a regulatory body, can warn, admonish or censure the newspaper, the news agency, the editor or the journalist or disapprove the conduct of the editor or the journalist if it finds that a newspaper or a news agency has violated journalistic ethics.
- **News Broadcasters Association (NBA)** represents the private television news and current affairs broadcasters. The self-regulatory body probes complaints against electronic media.
- **Indian Broadcast Foundation (IBF)** also looks into the complaints against contents aired by channels.
- **Broadcasting Content Complaint Council (BCCC)** admits complaints against TV broadcasters for objectionable TV content and fake news.
- **Indian Penal Code (IPC)** has certain sections which could curb fake news: **Section 153** (wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot) and **section 295** (injuring or defiling place of worship with intent to insult the religion of any class) can be invoked to guard against fake news.
- **Civil or Criminal Case for Defamation** is another resort against fake news for individuals and groups hurt by the fake news. **IPC Section 499** (defamation) and **500** (whoever defames another shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both) provide for a defamation suit.

- **Vernacular Social Media Platforms:** The immense popularity of vernacular social media platforms in India is exploited for the spread of fake news.

■ Dangers/Threats posed by Fake News

● Political

- ▶ Political parties try to gain political advantages by polarizing the voter's mind which further intensifies the tensions between different sections of society.
- ▶ Political campaigning has progressed from mere appeals in the name of identity or loyalty or tall promises to something akin to psychological warfare.
- ▶ **Economic:** As communal tendencies emerge in politics due to the spread of fake news economic development has taken back seat. The problems faced by the problems are not solved by the government.
- ▶ **Society:** It can disturb the social fabric of the society and tensions among communities persists for long times. It can lead to violence between two or more communities thereby creating enmity and hatred between them. It reduces the tendencies of cooperation between different communities.
- ▶ **International:** Deep fakes are used by countries to target other countries and bring chaos or desired political changes. China and Russia are using deep fakes to target the hostile countries to gain political and trade benefits.
- ▶ **Faith in Media:** People's faith in social, print and electronic media reduces which could affect the benefits of these Media as well the spirit of democracy as media being the fourth estate of democracy. In its purest form, fake news is completely made up, manipulated to resemble credible journalism and attract maximum attention and, with it, advertising revenue.

■ How to tackle it?

● Education and Awareness

- ▶ The **government must take the initiative to make all sections of the population aware** of the realities of this information war and evolve a consensus to fight this war. It must also take strict action against the fake news providers.
- ▶ Government should take active measures for promoting awareness among people about fake news and their consequences.
- ▶ Italy, for example, has experimentally added 'recognizing fake news' in school syllabus. India should also seriously emphasize cybersecurity, internet education, fake news education in the academic curriculum at all levels.

● Strict Regulation:

- ▶ News being spread using chatbots and other automated pieces of software should automatically be selected **for special screening**.
- ▶ Government should **have independent agency**: to verify the data being circulated in social and other media. The agency should be tasked with presenting real facts and figures.
- ▶ **An ombudsman Institution**: It deals with the credibility of news sources and ensures that the facts are reported.

● Legislation to Curb Fake News:

- ▶ Any future legislation to curb fake news should take the whole picture into account and not blame the media and go for knee-jerk reactions; in this age of new media anyone can create and circulate new for undisclosed benefits.
- ▶ Government should **have mechanism for immediately issuing of notice** against sites/people/agencies involved in spreading fake news.
- ▶ **Accountability of Social Media**: Social media websites should be made **accountable** of such activities so that it becomes their responsibility to have better control over the spread of fake news.

● Help From Individuals and Civil Society:

- ▶ Public should **not blindly trust** any sensitive news and should not forward it to others.
- ▶ Public **should inform concerned department** about any fake post as soon as they come across.
- ▶ They should act as active vigilant for maintaining peace and harmony in the society.
- ▶ NGO's and other civil society groups can play important role in spreading awareness about the ill effects of fake news.
- ▶ Ordinary consumers of news can play a big role by, first, waking up to the reality that all they read on WhatsApp and Twitter is not the gospel truth, and then, by refusing to pass on what they cannot independently verify with other sources.
- ▶ **Using Artificial Intelligence**: The artificial intelligence technologies, particularly machine learning and natural language processing, might be leveraged to combat the fake news problem. AI technologies hold promise for significantly automating parts of the procedure human fact checkers use today to determine if a story is real or a hoax.

CONCLUSION

Political campaigning has progressed from mere appeals in the name of identity or loyalty or tall promises to something akin to psychological warfare. Parties must desist from spreading fake news or giving patronage to such media organizations. At the same time mainstream as well social media must be accountable for spreading fake news. Both government and media have to combat the fake news menace collectively.

Lateral Entries – A reform in Indian Administration

Debates

The Union government recently appointed nine private sector specialists in various fields as joint secretaries in various ministries under its lateral recruitment policy.

BACKGROUND

Posts of joint-secretaries are usually manned by officers of Indian Administrative Service, Indian Police Service, Indian Forest Service and Indian Revenue Service among others who are selected through a three-phased rigorous selection process undertaken by the UPSC.

ANALYSIS

■ What is lateral entry?

- It is the appointment of private sector professionals and academicians in the government organisation bypassing the traditional route.
- Traditionally to get into the posts of Deputy Secretary, Director and Joint Secretary in Government organisations, the candidate has to belong to Indian Civil Services which is filled by persons from - Indian Administrative Service, Indian Police Service and Indian Revenue Service.
- Two-third of the vacancies in these services is filled by candidates who clear the three gruelling stages of UPSC Civil Services Exam– Preliminary, Main Exam, and Interview.
- One-third of the vacancies in these services are filled by promotion of eligible candidates working in different State Services.
- Lateral entry into posts of government organisation means bypassing these two options.

■ Inefficiency in the administration and thus the need for lateral entry

- The lack of specialisation across the top tier of Indian bureaucracy is a concern that has remained unaddressed until now.
- The assurance of a secure career path in these services has been held to be this administrative system's biggest lacuna.
- The quasi-monopolistic hold of the career civil services on senior management position breeds complacency; inhibits innovative thinking and prevents the inflow of new ideas from outside government.
- These weaknesses have been compounded by a heavy reliance on seniority, an inadequate annual reporting system, and frequent transfers.
- It has discouraged initiative by reducing competition in the higher echelons of government.
- There is a huge shortfall in a number of recruits- 20% shortages of IAS officers in 24 state cadres of India. The Baswan Committee has pointed out this huge deficit of officers.
- There is unwillingness among officers of the state to undertake Centre deputation. They find the field work in the districts of states more interesting than the paper work of the offices during Central deputation.

■ What are the existing recommendations?

- The first Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) had pointed out the need for specialization as far back as in 1965.

- The Surinder Nath Committee and the Hota Committee followed suit in 2003 and 2004, respectively.
- In 2005, the second ARC recommended an institutionalized, transparent process for lateral entry at both the Central and state levels.
- Government think tank Niti Aayog had in a report highlighted that it was essential that specialists be inducted into the system through lateral entry on fixed-term contract.

■ How will lateral entry fulfil it?

- It will bring in fresh talent into the bureaucracy.
- Career promotions in the IAS move along seamlessly with few impediments along the way. Attempts to introduce 'meritocracy' hasn't quite worked out. Bringing in experts from the professional sphere is expected to shake the IAS out of their comfort zone.
- When civil servants are made to compete with outside talent, the lethargic attitude will diminish and induce competition within the system.
- The IAS was designed for a time when the State was all-powerful. That reality somewhat changed with liberalisation in 1991, where the state was compelled to cede more space to markets. Therefore, it becomes more critical for the government to ascertain the impact its policy decisions have on various stakeholders such as the private sector, non-profits, and general public, i.e. those who have experienced government from the outside.
- Lateral entry has been adopted by Australia, Belgium, New Zealand, the UK, the Netherlands and the US.

■ What are the drawbacks of lateral entry?

- One of the distinguishing aspects that the current crop of IAS officers can hold up is their experience in the field, serving some of the poorest districts in our hinterlands. Those entering from privileged backgrounds and the private sector may have never seen a village school.
- The exposure and sensitivity to the country's complex socio-political milieu and to the needs of the common man, which widespread field experience provides to these Services, may not be available in the private sector since the private sector does not have the same width and depth of exposure to this type of field experience.
- Lateral entrants from the private sector and academia and bureaucrats all are having different work culture. They may not work well with each due to differences in their working methodologies.
- The IAS establishment is likely to balk at lateral entrants who haven't made it through probably the hardest open competitive exam in the world. This lateral recruitment will be an unfair treatment to them.
- An issue of conflict of interest when it comes to entrants from the private sector.
- The potential loss of internal talent. The best talent can be attracted only if there is reasonable assurance of reaching top level managerial positions.

WAY FORWARD

- The lateral entrants should, therefore, have mandatory 'district immersion', serving at least five of their first ten years in field postings. The hard grind of such field postings will make lateral entry self-selecting, drawing in only those with commitment and aptitude.
- Transparency- the details of selection process should be made available to public by the Centre with its online publication. This is so because without accountability, reform is merely an uncertain change.
- Any such reform must be complemented with other measures. For example, the worst performing civil servants must be eased out of service after 15 years based of course on criteria that are both transparent and accountable. This will open up space for lateral entrants as well, leaving the IAS a little less top heavy.
- The remedy lies not through lateral induction but through more rigorous performance appraisal and improved personnel management.
- The recruitment in the lateral entry can be done for specific mission-mode projects. Eg, Nandan Nilekani for the Aadhaar Project.

Any new system will take time to evolve. So one can only hope that those at the top see this through till it becomes efficient and transparent and ensure a way to keep the public informed about it objectively.

Article 370 Abrogated

Debates

The government removed the special status for Jammu and Kashmir in India's Constitution. Special status was withdrawn by abrogating Article 370.

BACKGROUND

- **Article 370 granted special autonomous status to Jammu & Kashmir and exempted it from the Indian Constitution (except Article 1 and Article 370 itself) and permitted the state to draft its own Constitution.**
- It **restricted Parliament's legislative powers in respect of J&K.** For extending a **central law on subjects included in the Instrument of Accession (IoA)**, mere **"consultation"** with the state government is needed. But for extending it to **other matters, "concurrence"** of the state government was **mandatory**. The IoA came into play when the Indian Independence Act, 1947 divided British India into Independent India and Pakistan.
- Indian Parliament needed Jammu & Kashmir government's nod for applying laws in the state — **except defence, foreign affairs and communications.**

ANALYSIS

■ Was Article 370 a temporary provision?

- It is the **first article of Part XXI of the Constitution.** The heading of this part is '**Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions**'.
- Article 370 could be **interpreted as temporary in the sense that the J&K Constituent Assembly had a right to modify/delete/retain it; it decided to retain it.** Another **interpretation was that accession was temporary until a plebiscite.**
- In **Sampat Prakash (1969)** the SC **refused to accept Article 370 as temporary.** A five-judge Bench said "Article 370 has never ceased to be operative". Thus, it **was considered to be a permanent provision.**
- The Supreme Court in **April 2018** said that despite the headnote **using the word "temporary", Article 370 is not temporary.**

■ Issues due to Article 370

- **Affects unity and integrity:** It wreaks havoc on **the unity and integrity of the country** as it **creates boundaries for the people of J&K** by providing them **with separate constitution and rights.** It builds **emotional and psychological barriers** between the people of Kashmir and the rest of India, thus fostering a psychology of separatism.
- **Rising militancy and separatism:** The separatist lobby in the state **has used this barrier** to build a **mindset of alienation among the people.** The poor and the down-trodden people of the state were exploited by the separatist leaders to keep this special status alive. **It has led to rising militancy in the region.** Most of **youth take to stone pelting, remain unemployed and are devoid of welfare development.**
- **Violation of Right to Equality:** No outsider can settle in the state, own any property and cannot vote in the state. Article 35 A had been used to define **permanent residents.** This violates the **fundamental right to equality** for Indian citizens and creates barriers for investment and thus development.
- **Corrupt and radical administration:** The **state administration** had been completely subverted from **within by the separatist leaders** who had infiltrated into the system over a period of time. This has led to government resources being used to further promote the propaganda of separatists.

- **Affects International image:** Existence of this statute is used by Pakistan and its proxies in the valley to mock at the very concept of 'India being one from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. This affects India's image on the international platform.
- **Government's procedure in changing Kashmir's special status overnight**
- The President issued a **presidential order under Article 370 (1) of the Constitution**. Since, it can be issued only with the Jammu and Kashmir government's **concurrence**; the notification uses the words "with the concurrence of the Government of the State of Jammu and Kashmir". This presumably means the **Governor**, who is now administering the State under **President's Rule**, has given his concurrence on **behalf of the State government**.
 - This **Order supersedes the 1954 Order** and declares that all the provisions of the Constitution of India, shall apply to Jammu and Kashmir too.
 - However, some special measures were still needed for the scrapping of Article 370 altogether. Therefore, a few clauses were added to **Article 367 of the Constitution**.
 - ▶ Article 367 contains "Interpretations". The new clauses say that all references to the State government shall mean "the Governor".
 - ▶ The reference to the "Constituent Assembly" in a proviso to Article 370 (3) has been **amended to read "Legislative Assembly of the State"**. This is the proviso that says the President can declare that Article 370 is no more operative only on the recommendation of the Constituent Assembly. As there is no Constituent Assembly in existence now, there is no body to "recommend" the demise of Article 370. Therefore, the State Assembly has to play that role.
 - ▶ The issuance of the Presidential Order has set the stage for the abrogation of Article 370. Here, the **government has made use of the fact that Jammu and Kashmir is under President's Rule**. Under the Proclamation issued under Article 356 of the Constitution, by which the President takes over the administration of a State, Parliament usually performs the legislative functions of the State Assembly.
 - The Union Home Minister **introduced two statutory resolutions**:
 - ▶ To recommend that the President issue a notification rendering Article 370 **inoperative**.
 - ▶ To accept the **Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill**. The Bill envisages converting Jammu and Kashmir into a Union Territory with a legislature, and carves out Ladakh region as another Union Territory, but without a legislature.
- **Concerns regarding the process adopted to abrogate Article 370**
- The **first concern is due process**. The assembly does not exist at the moment either, and the notification suggests that it was the Governor's concurrence that was obtained to render the provisions irrelevant. **This is clearly not sufficient**.
 - The process has been pushed **through without consultations** with Kashmir's political leaders, who have been under detention.
 - The **reorganisation of states requires the consent of the state assembly concerned**. In this case, J&K has been bifurcated, and statehood diluted to UT status, **without any deliberations in the assembly**.
 - Like all Indian citizens, **Kashmiris seek greater democracy**. Elements keen to destabilise India would **seek to build a narrative that Delhi is taking away powers from the local level**.
 - It is important that the process of turning the state into a UT does not lead to alienation.
- **Development by abrogating Article 370**
- It would head **towards ending separatism, nepotism and corruption** and would provide welfare to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.
 - Women **will enjoy greater rights** as all the laws made at the centre will be implemented without any hindrance.
 - SC, ST and individuals from other backward communities in other regions would enjoy special benefits as the central laws for welfare of these communities.
 - The **financial benefits for central government employees**, including security forces, like LTC, HRA and more will be provide to those posted in Jammu and Kashmir.

- The **vacant posts** in Jammu and Kashmir will be filled. This will benefit the **youth** of Jammu and Kashmir. **Local youth will receive employment.**
- **State companies as well as private companies** will be encouraged to create jobs for the local youths in the state.
- J&K and Ladakh have the potential to become the biggest tourist destination in the world.
- Film industry would come to J&K for shooting their projects. Sport training, scientific education will help the youth of J&K to showcase their talent across the world.
- **Several herbal and organic products** are spread across J&K and Ladakh. If they are identified and marketed in the global market, then it will greatly benefit the people and farmers of these regions.

■ Challenges

- It may swell the ranks of separatists.
- It may feed the rage and increase the distance between Srinagar and New Delhi.
- It may even push mainstream politicians to promote extremists views.
- It could lead to more bloodshed and encourage Pakistan to fish in muddied waters.

WAY FORWARD

- The government should launch a comprehensive outreach programme to all Kashmiris.
- It must remain on guard to ensure Pakistan, and radical militants, do not take advantage of the situation.
- It should simultaneously engage in dialogue with Kashmiri political actors, civil society, media, citizens and allay their apprehensions.
- The Centre must show to Kashmiris that its intent of removing the special status is to create more opportunities, and prosperity.

National Education Policy

Debates

The draft of New National Education Policy has been recently submitted by the Committee led by Dr. Kasturirangan on education policy.

The draft has been shared by the ministry of human resource development (MHRD) for public comment.

There were protests in many parts of the country mainly from Tamil Nadu regarding a clause in the draft recommending mandatory Hindi teaching in all schools as one of the three-language formula introduced from class 1. Consequently the committee has removed this clause from the draft.

ABOUT

- The National Policy on Education (NPE) is a policy formulated by the Government of India to promote education amongst India's people. The policy covers elementary education to colleges in both rural and urban India.
- The first NPE was promulgated in 1968 by the government of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, and the second by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1986.
- Most recently the government of India has appointed a new committee under K. Kasturirangan to prepare a Draft for the new National Education Policy in 2017 for the next two decades.

BACKGROUND

■ National Policy on Education, 1968

- This first policy on education was based on the recommendations of the Kothari Commission (1964-1966).
- The policy aimed at compulsory education for all children upto the age of 14 years and better training and qualification of teachers.
- The policy called for focus on learning of regional languages, outlining the “three language formula” to be implemented in secondary education - the instruction of the English language, the official language of the state where the school was based, and Hindi.
- The policy also encouraged the teaching of the ancient Sanskrit language, which was considered an essential part of India’s culture and heritage.

■ National Policy on Education, 1986

- This policy aimed at special emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalise educational opportunity, especially for Indian women, Scheduled Tribes (ST) and the Scheduled Caste (SC) communities.
- It launched “Operation Blackboard” to improve primary schools nationwide.
- The policy expanded the Open University system with the Indira Gandhi National Open University, which had been created in 1985.
- The policy called for the creation of the “rural university” model, based on the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, to promote economic and social development at the grassroots level in rural India.

■ Modification of 1986 National Policy on Education in 1992

- It aimed to conduct a common entrance examination on all India basis for admission to professional and technical programmes in the country.
- For admission to Engineering and Architecture programmes, the government laid down a Three – Exam Scheme (JEE and AIEEE at the National Level and the State Level Engineering Entrance Examinations (SLEEE) for State Level Institutions).
- This was done to take care of varying admission standards in these programmes and to maintain professional standards.
- It also solved the problems of overlaps and reduced physical, mental and financial burden on students and their parents due to multiplicity of entrance examinations.

ANALYSIS

■ Key provisions of the draft of 2017

- **Early childhood care and education:** High-quality early childhood care and education will be provided for all children between the ages of 3 and 6 by 2025. This will be done within institutions such as schools and anganwadis, which would have a mandate to take care of the overall well-being of the child—nutritional, health, and education.
- **Ensuring foundational literacy and numeracy:** Every student will start achieving age-appropriate foundational literacy and numeracy by 2025. A slew of programmes and measures have been articulated for this purpose.
- **Transformed curricular and pedagogical structure:** The curriculum and pedagogical structures will be designed anew, based on children’s cognitive and socio-emotional development. The curriculum will be integrated and flexible with equal emphasis on all subjects and fields.
- **Universal access and retention in schools:** All children between ages 3 and 18 will be in school by 2030. The Right to Education Act will be extended from pre-school to class XII. Currently this is from 6-14 years of age.
- **Teachers at the centre:** The profession of teaching, and so teachers, will be at the centre of the education system, focused on the student and educational aims. All schools will be fully resourced with teachers—with working conditions for an energetic work culture.

- **New institutional architecture for higher education:** India's current 800 universities and over 40,000 colleges will be consolidated into about 10,000-15,000 institutions of excellence to drive improvement in quality and expansion of capacity. This architecture will have only large multi-disciplinary institutions, with significant investment.
- **Three types of higher education institutions will be there:** Type 1 universities focused on research but also teaching all programmes, undergrad to doctoral; Type 2 universities focused on teaching all programmes while also conducting research and; Type 3 colleges focused on teaching undergrad programmes. All types will grant their own degrees. There will be no system of university affiliations.
- **High-quality liberal education:** All undergraduate education will be broad-based liberal education that integrates the rigorous study of sciences, arts, humanities, mathematics and vocational and professional fields with choices offered to students. Multiple exit and entry points will be offered, with appropriate certification after one, two, three and four years of study. There will be a four-year undergraduate programme available in addition to three-year programmes.
- There will be a substantial increase in public investment to expand and vitalize public education at all levels.

■ Reasons behind introduction of these new provisions

- A healthy mind resides in a healthy body. Hence for a child to learn something the first and foremost requirement is good health. He should be provided with complete nutrition. The institutions of school and anganwadi will provide this support to families for children younger than three years of age—within their homes.
- Today, students are not being able to read, write and do elementary math. Hence special emphasis was needed to be given for foundational literacy and basic numeracy.
- Until now the studies and the co-curricular activities (like – playing sports, dancing, painting, etc.) were treated differently and lesser emphasis was given to the co-curricular. But in this new draft, there will be no separation of curricular, co-curricular or extra-curricular areas in schools. Examination systems will be radically changed to assess real learning, make them stress-free, and aim for improvement instead of the passing of judgements.
- Earlier there were provisions of “temporary” teachers. This was causing a lesser dedication from the teachers towards teaching as they were fearful of their employment. Under this new draft no temporary teachers will be allowed.
- All positions of teachers will be filled with competent and qualified teachers. A development-oriented performance management system will be put in place. The teacher education system will be transformed, with rigorous teacher preparation through a four-year integrated stage and subject-specific programmes offered only in multi-disciplinary institutions.
- Provision of liberal education at higher levels with imaginative and flexible curricula will help to develop critical thinking, creative abilities and other fundamental capacities in the students.

WAY FORWARD

- It is recommended of doubling of public funding to 6% of the GDP and increasing overall public expenditure on education to 20% from the current 10%. This is desirable but does not appear to be feasible in the near future given that most of the additional funding has to come from the States. There should be involvement of private sector in implementing the schemes.
- Expanding coverage under the RTE Act to include pre-school children is extremely important, but should perhaps be introduced gradually, keeping in mind the quality of infrastructure and teacher vacancies.
- Language issues have to be handled sensitively in view of their emotional overtones, as witnessed recently. Further imposing a particular language should not be followed instead the mother language and regional ones should be promoted.

Women Reservation in Parliament

Debates

Regional parties have decided that at least a third of their candidates in the Lok Sabha elections will be women.

Biju Janata Dal (BJD) declared 33% reservation for women in the forthcoming elections. While Trinamool Congress (TMC) declared to allocate 41% of Lok Sabha poll tickets to women.

BACKGROUND

- The Women's Reservation Bill, 2008 that reserves 33% of seats in parliament for women was approved by the Rajya Sabha, but failed to find support in Lok Sabha.
- According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 2014 women make up only 11.8 percent of the Indian Lok Sabha and 11.4 percent of Rajya Sabha
- Among its South Asian neighbors, India ranks fifth in women's political representation in parliament falling behind Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal.
- In 1952, women participation was as low as 5% of entire house. The growth to 11% even after 72 years into democracy has been slow and dismal.

ANALYSIS

- **Feminizations of Indian politics:** India was one of the earliest states in the world that saw female head of the state. Currently also females occupy important positions in cabinet in defense and foreign portfolio. Yet these inspiring examples are handful in relation to current share of females in Indian population which is around 49%.
- According to the **Economic Survey 2018**, prevailing cultural attitudes regarding gender roles, domestic responsibilities, female illiteracy, lack of confidence or finances and the threat of violence, are just some of the obstacles women face
- Domestic work and rearing children are still tasks primarily performed only by women. There is a huge stigma associated with women who choose to work, and even more for women who choose to join politics.
- Thus low representation of women in the legislature can be traced to the patriarchal structure of Indian politics. In addition to this lack of reservation for women in parliament and state assemblies is due to unwillingness among political parties to give tickets to women, a general lack of awareness of electoral politics among women and the lack of family support.
- **Lack of Consensus:** Lapse of Women reservation bill and its pending since last one decade has shown that politicians have failed to agree to 33% reservation as there is also debate among regional and national political parties over the percentage of reservation.
- **Why representation Matters:** In 1994, India ratified the 73rd and the 74th amendments to the Indian Constitution, granting women 1/3 reservation in rural and urban democratic bodies. Women leaders of panchayat (village councils) often serve as positive role models for many girls. Women sarpanchs accounted for 43 per cent of total gram panchayats (GPs) across the country, exhibiting active leadership of women in local government.
- **Economic development and women empowerment:** Some of the most economically advanced countries like USA grapple with skewed gender ratio in Parliament. It does not reach global gender average of 24% of lower house seats by women. On the other hand in **Rwanda** around two third of its seats are held by women, it is the highest female representation in parliament.
- Countries like **Bolivia and Cuba** also have more women in parliament than men. This shows that level of economic development does not necessarily promise women a place in legislatures as some advanced

societies too can be plagued by gender bias and political unwillingness. Even when women enter they are often given junior roles, and usually restricted to “**soft issue**” portfolios, such as social affairs and family.

- Thus what truly makes a difference is that gender quotas are sincerely implemented. As happened with reservation at village bodies and municipalities through 73rd and 74th amendment act. It was seen that women panchayat leaders are more likely to invest in priorities for women because they understand and share these priorities. States like Odisha and Bihar 19 other states, have increased this reservation to 50% from 33%. Thus Political empowerment can be the first step towards a more inclusive and equal society
- Women are emerging as a strong political force in Indian democracy with this they must have bigger voice in decision making. However this has to start with gender sensitization at school and college level. Discriminatory attitude and gender stereotyping is the result of many years of social conditioning which can be broken with inspiring examples and political support.
- Globally, some women are beating the odds to rise to high political office. Germany’s Chancellor **Angela Merkel**, the longest serving female head of government. **Nancy Pelosi** has become the most powerful women in American politics. New Zealand’s Prime Minister **Jacinda Ardern** has proved that motherhood is no barrier to the top job, becoming the second leader in history to give birth while in office.

WAY FORWARD

- Women reservation bill or issues related to women political participation should not just be confined to time of elections. It should be in fact part of political discourse throughout.
- Lack of confidence and finance among women should be addressed to encourage more participation from them.
- Bottoms up approach can help in removing entry barriers for women. Political parties should nominate more women in their internal working committee and field more women candidates during elections.
- While women contribute about 50% to Indian population. 33% is an under representation in legislatures. Efforts must be made to push for percentage that adequately represents the dreams and aspirations of women.

Elections and Political Funding

Debates

The lack of transparency in political funding is a cause for concern and electoral bonds have made it worse.

Corporate funding of political parties

■ What used to happen?

- The conventional system of political funding relied on donations. These donations, big or small, came from a range of sources from political workers, sympathizers, small business people and even large industrialists.
- The conventional practice of funding the political system was to take donations in cash and undertake these expenditures in cash.
- The sources were anonymous or pseudonymous. The quantum of money was never disclosed.
- This system ensured flow of unclean money coming from unidentifiable sources.

■ The “electoral bond” scheme:

- Government of India notified the Electoral Bond Scheme 2018 vide Gazette Notification No. 20 dated 02nd January 2018. As per provisions of the Scheme, **Electoral Bonds may be purchased by a person, who is a citizen of India or incorporated or established in India.**

- A person being an individual can buy Electoral Bonds, either singly or jointly with other individuals. **Only the Political Parties registered under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (43 of 1951) and which secured not less than one per cent of the votes polled in the last General Election** to the House of the People or the Legislative Assembly of the State, **shall be eligible to receive the Electoral Bonds.**
- The bonds will be **issued in multiples of Rs 1000, Rs 10,000, Rs 1 Lakh, Rs 10 Lakh and Rs 1 Crore** and can be **bought by the donor with a KYC compliant account.**
- They **cannot be purchased by paying cash.** The maximum amount that a political party can receive as donation in cash is capped at Rs 2000. Electoral bonds thus permit them to raise higher sums.
- The Electoral Bonds shall be **encashed by an eligible Political Party only through a Bank account** with the Authorized Bank.
- **Electoral Bonds shall be valid for fifteen days from the date of issue** and no payment shall be made to any payee Political Party if the Electoral Bond is deposited after expiry of the validity period. The Electoral Bond deposited by an eligible Political Party in its account shall be credited on the same day.
- Every **political party** in its returns **will have to disclose the amount of donations it has received through electoral bonds to the Election Commission.**

ANALYSIS

■ Operational experience of the scheme:

- The concerns ranging from transparency, voluntary disclosure and chances of victimization still prevails. The scheme has not been able to set aside the **“fear” of being misused** by the party in power.
- Exact and clear description of **“who gave what to whom” cannot be revealed** under the act. Hence, it goes **against the spirit of Right to Information act.**
- **How to make funding transparent:**
- Only those political parties should be eligible to receive funding which are engaged in political activity all through the year, whether there is an election or not.
- The electoral bonds scheme needs replacement with a more transparent means of funding political parties, where **both the donor and political recipient are identified clearly.**
- In the **“direct state funding to candidates”** mechanism, the candidate will be reimbursed according to their final share of the votes cast.

■ How state funding at candidate level will bring positive externalities:

- It will become possible for new and cleaner candidates from outside the mainstream parties to join politics.
- It will ease the pressure on parties themselves to give tickets to criminals and other rogues primarily because they can manage their own funding (thus, **a step towards decriminalizing politics**).
- Parties themselves will become more internally democratic, as candidates will not be over-dependent on party bosses for cash (**boost to inner party democracy**)
- State funding will have qualitative effect: better candidates and cleaner party funding.

■ A generic and “do-able”:

- If the assumption is based on the fact that each Lok Sabha constituency needs Rs 5 crore of candidate funding, with the top three candidates sharing this amount in the ratio of their vote shares, 543 constituencies will cost Rs 2,715 crore. This is an entirely acceptable level of spending for clean politics once in five years.

■ Can the above approach be used without altering state exchequer’s cash flow?

- There is an availability of Rs 5 crore to each Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha candidate from Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (**MPLADS**). The total cost of MPLADS funding for all MPs is nearly Rs 4,000 crore every year, and scrapping the scheme even for one year (preferable in the election year) in an MP’s five-year term will be enough to bankroll state funding of Lok Sabha candidates.

■ State funding of elections - Past recommendations

- **Indrajit Gupta Committee on State Funding of Elections (1998):** Endorsed state funding of elections, seeing “full justification constitutional, legal as well as on ground of public interest” in order to establish a fair playing field for parties with less money. The Committee recommended **two limitations to state funding**. Firstly, that **state funds should be given only to national and state parties allotted a symbol and not to independent candidates**. Secondly, that in the short-term state funding should only be **given in kind**, in the form of certain facilities to the recognized political parties and their candidates.
- **Law Commission Report on Reform of the Electoral Laws (1999):** Total **state funding of elections is “desirable” so long as political parties are prohibited from taking funds from other sources**. Only partial state funding is possible given the economic conditions of the country. Additionally, it strongly recommended that **the appropriate regulatory framework be put in place with regard to political parties** (provisions ensuring internal democracy, internal structures and maintenance of accounts, their auditing and submission to Election Commission) before state funding of elections is attempted.
- **Ethics in Governance, a report of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2008):** Recommended **partial state funding** of elections for the purpose of reducing “illegitimate and unnecessary funding” of elections expenses.
- **National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution, 2001:** Did not endorse state funding of elections but concurred with the 1999 Law Commission report that the **appropriate framework for regulation of political parties would need to be implemented before state funding is considered**.

Citizenship Amendment Bill, 2019

Debates

The Union Cabinet has cleared the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill that seeks to grant citizenship to non-Muslim refugees from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan if they faced religious persecution there.

The Act amends the Citizenship Act, 1955, in order to grant Indian nationality to Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians who come to India after facing religious persecution in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

ABOUT

■ What is the Citizenship (Amendment) Act?

- The Act doesn't spell it out clearly, but the fact that it entitles Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians facing religious persecution in the three nations, to seek Indian citizenship, highlights the exclusion of Muslims.
- This amendment is of the Citizenship Act, 1955 which requires the applicant to have resided in India for 11 of the previous 14 years. The amendment relaxes this requirement from 11 years to six years, for Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians from the three nations.

■ How is citizenship acquired in India?

- In India, citizenship is regulated by the Citizenship Act, 1955. The Act specifies that citizenship may be acquired in India through five methods – by birth in India, by descent, through registration, by naturalisation (extended residence in India), and by incorporation of territory into India.

■ About Illegal Migrants-

- An illegal migrant is prohibited from acquiring Indian citizenship.
- An illegal immigrant is a foreigner who either enters India illegally, i.e., without valid travel documents, like a visa and passport, or enters India legally, but stays beyond the time period permitted in their travel documents.
- The Act provides that the following minority groups will not be treated as illegal migrants: Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan. However, to get this benefit, they must have also been exempted from the Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920 by the central government.
- The Act says that on acquiring citizenship: (i) such persons shall be deemed to be citizens of India from the date of their entry into India, and (ii) all legal proceedings against them in respect of their illegal migration or citizenship will be closed.
- An illegal migrant can be prosecuted in India, and deported or imprisoned.

■ Provisions of the Act across the Country-

- The Act clarifies that the proposed amendments on citizenship to the specified class of illegal migrants will not apply to certain areas. These are:
 - (i) the tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Tripura, as included in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution, and
 - (ii) the states regulated by the "Inner Line" permit under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulations 1873.
- These Sixth Schedule tribal areas include Karbi Anglong (in Assam), Garo Hills (in Meghalaya), Chakma District (in Mizoram), and Tripura Tribal Areas District.
- Further, the Inner Line Permit regulates visit of all persons, including Indian citizens, to Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, and Nagaland.

■ Issues surrounding the Act-

- The Act makes only certain illegal migrants eligible for citizenship.
- These are persons belonging to the six specified religious communities, from the three specified countries, who entered India on or before December 31, 2014, and do not reside in the Sixth Schedule areas or in the states regulated by the Inner Line Permit states.
- This implies that all other illegal migrants will not be able to claim the benefit of citizenship conferred by the Act, and may continue to be prosecuted as illegal migrants.
- **Article 14** of the Constitution guarantees equality to all persons, citizens and foreigners, thus differentiating between people on the grounds of religion would be in violation of the constitution.
- The Act provides differential treatment to illegal migrants on the basis of (a) their country of origin, (b) religion, (c) date of entry into India, and (d) place of residence in India.
- The Act classifies migrants based on their country of origin to include only Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh. While the Statement of Objects and Reasons (SoR) in the Act reasons that millions of citizens of undivided India were living in Pakistan and Bangladesh, no reason has been provided to explain the inclusion of Afghanistan.
- The Act also creates further differentiation between the specified class of illegal migrants based on when they entered India (before or after December 31, 2014), and where they live in India (provisions not applicable to Sixth Schedule and Inner Line Permit areas). However, the reasons provided to explain the distinction is unclear.
- Assam has a major problem regarding infiltration of Bangladeshi illegal immigrants. This Act does not consider Bangladeshi Hindus as illegal immigrants.

■ In context to Overseas Citizens of India-

- The Act also amends the provisions on registration of Overseas Citizens of India (OCI).
- OCI cardholders are foreigners who are persons of Indian origin.

- For example, they may have been former Indian citizens, or children of current Indian citizens.
- An OCI enjoys benefits such as the right to travel to India without a visa, or to work and study here. At present, the government may cancel a person's OCI registration on various grounds specified in the Act.
- In case of a cancellation, an OCI residing in India may be required to leave the country.
- The Act adds another ground for cancelling OCI registration — violation of any law notified by the central government. However, the Act does not provide any guidance on the nature of laws which the central government may notify.

CONCLUSION

The Citizenship Amendment Act has not been sitting well with the Assamese as it **contradicts the Assam Accord of 1985**, according to which illegal migrants heading in from Bangladesh after March 25, 1971, would be deported. Also, the Act has introduced religion as a new concept into the citizenship law. Thus, the proposed legislation has polarised the Northeast and triggered a process of social and political realignment in the entire nation. This whole situation undermines the secularity of India. As the Constitution of India rejects discrimination on the grounds of religion, the proposed law makes religion a new basis of identification. Hence, there is an urgent need for India to undertake a balancing act here.

Cramped Jails in India: Need for Reforms

Debates

Recently, National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) has released the "Prison Statistics India - 2017".

BACKGROUND

- Indian jails continue to remain congested and overcrowded with an average occupancy rate of 115% of their capacity.
- In 16 of the 28 states covered in the report, occupancy rate was higher than 100%. Uttar Pradesh (165%), Chhattisgarh (157.2%), Delhi (151.2%) and Sikkim (140.7%) fared the worst.
- More than 68% of those imprisoned are under-trials, indicating that a majority were poor and were unable to execute bail bonds or provide sureties.
- Out of the total number of prisoners, the number of convicts, under-trial inmates and detenues account for 30.9%, 68.5% and 0.5% respectively. Other prisoners account for 0.2% of total prisoners.
- A total of 378 prisoners escaped from lawful custody during 2017.
- The number of deaths in prisons has increased marginally by 5.49% in 2017 when compared to 2015.
- Gujarat has the highest number of under-trial prisoners who are Pakistani nationals. The state has 59 Pakistani under-trial prisoners out of the total 101 overseas prisoners in the state. Jammu and Kashmir has the second-highest Pakistani national under-trials at 35.

ANALYSIS

■ Major Challenge for Prisons across the country

Despite the Supreme Court and other institutions regularly raising the issue of prison reforms and decongestion in jails, it is evident that the measures taken have been piecemeal in most States. The major challenges for prison system in India are:

- **Overcrowding of Civil Jails** : While overall occupancy rates in jails have come down from 140% in 2007 to 115% in 2017, only a few States have, in this period, gone about building more jails or increasing capacity in prisons in line with the changes in inmate population.
- **Lack of Personnel**: The vacant posts in the jail administration constitute another major challenge for prisons across the country.
- **Healthcare for Prisoners**: People believe that prisoners are sent to prison as punishment, and not for punishment. This implies that the loss of an individual's right to liberty is enforced by containment in a closed environment. Thus keeping the individual in the custody of the state, should not, however, have a deleterious effect on him.
- **Role of Judiciary in Protecting the Rights of Prisoners**: Judiciary in every country has an obligation and a Constitutional role to protect Human Rights of citizens. As per the mandate of the Constitution of India, this function is assigned to the superior judiciary namely the Supreme Court of India and High courts.
- **The Problems of Under-trials**: Criminal Law of India is a replica of colonial times. It is hostile to the poor and the weaker sections of society.
- **Taking Prisoners' Rights Seriously**: In the case of Hussainara Khatoon v. State of Bihar, a shocking state of affairs in regard to the administration of justice came forward. An alarmingly large number of men and women, including children are behind prison bars for years awaiting trial in the court of law.

■ Prison Reforms

- The focus on improving prison oversight and reducing prolonged, illegal or unnecessary detention we must push for reforms in prison system along these lines:
 - ▶ prioritize the proper functioning of prison oversight mechanisms
 - ▶ advocate for early access to counsel and improve legal aid practices
 - ▶ partner with law schools to develop legal aid clinics that provide free legal support to prisoners
 - ▶ assess the pre-trial practices of court
 - ▶ work with governments for early repatriation of foreign national prisoners
 - ▶ ensure timely release and rehabilitation of vulnerable groups in prison
 - ▶ build capacity of criminal justice functionaries related to prisons
 - ▶ litigate in public interest and on behalf of individuals
 - ▶ undertake research on various aspects of criminal justice system particularly using right to information
 - ▶ develop resources and training material on wide range of issues

Case Study

- Some States such as Tamil Nadu have reduced their prison occupancy rate (to 61.3%) by increasing the number of jails and their capacity.
- Besides increasing the jails and their capacity, steps have been taken for reducing arrests for actions unless there is a cognisable offence made out.

WAY FORWARD:

- In its report in May 2017, the Law Commission highlighted the inconsistencies in the bail system as one of the key reasons for overcrowding in prisons. Expediting the trial process for such prisoners is the most important endeavor. There are ways to decongest prisons by granting relief to under trials.
- The Commission recommended that those detained for offences that come with a punishment of up to seven years of imprisonment should be released on completing one-third of that period and for those charged with offences that attract a longer jail term, after they complete half of that period.
- For those who have spent the whole period as undertrials, the period undergone should be considered for remission.

- It also recommended that the police should avoid needless arrests, while magistrates should refrain from mechanical remand orders.
- It is imperative that these recommendations are incorporated into law soonest.
- Prison statistics provide information on the kind of facilities available for reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners, robust policies must be formulated, which would ensure successful reintegration of prisoners and provide those serving life-term imprisonments an opportunity to reform.

Sabrimala Temple Verdict

Debates

The Supreme Court, in a majority opinion of 4:1, lifted the centuries-old practice of prohibiting women from the age of menarche to menopause to enter the Lord Ayyappa temple at Sabarimala in Kerala.

Sabarimala Temple

- **Location:** Sabarimala is a Hindu pilgrimage center located at the Periyar Tiger Reserve in the Western Ghat, Kerala.
- **Deity:** The Sabarimala shrine is an ancient Hindu temple of Lord Ayyappan, who is also known as Sasta or Dharmasasta.
- The temple is a prominent pilgrimage site among the Hindu devotees in the state of Kerala.
- It witnesses the second largest seasonal pilgrimage after the Islamic holy site of Mecca in Saudi Arabia.
- An estimated 3.5 crore Hindu pilgrims visited the shrine last year.

Restriction

- The Sabarimala temple restricts entry only for menstruating women, i.e., women in **the age group of 10 to 50 years**
 - The restriction is on account of perceived idea of “purity”.
 - The ban on ‘menstruating women’ was enforced under Rule 3(b) of the Kerala Hindu Places of Public Worship (Authorization of Entry) Rules 1965.
 - The board states that “Women who are not by custom and usage allowed to enter a place of public worship shall not be entitled to enter or offer worship in any place of public worship”.
 - It claims, through the Travancore Devaswom Board, that its deity, Lord Ayyappa, is a “Naisthik Brahmachari” and women entry will affect the celibacy of the deity.

Constitutional Articles involved

■ Article 15

- Article 15: No person shall be discriminated on the basis of religion, race, caste, **sex** or place of birth.
- Article 15(b): Every person shall have equal access to public places like public parks, museums, wells, bathing ghats and temples etc.

■ Article 25

- It states that every individual is “equally entitled to freedom of conscience” and has the right “to profess, practice and propagate religion” of one’s choice.

■ Article 26

- Freedom to manage religious affairs subject to public order, morality and health, every religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the right.
- to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes;
- to manage its own affairs in matters of religion;
- to own and acquire movable and immovable property; and
- to administer such property in accordance with law

■ Article 51A (e)

- Article 51A(e) states that it is the duty of everyone to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

Time line of the case:

- 1991: The Kerala high court upheld the ban in the S. Mahendranvs. Secretary, Travancore case and directed the Devasom Board to implement it.
- 2008: Kerala's LDF government files an affidavit supporting a PIL filed by women lawyers questioning the ban on the entry of women in Sabarimala.
- 2016: **The India Young Lawyers Association** revived the issue in Supreme Court through a PIL contending that Rule 3(b) violates constitutional guarantees of equality, non-discrimination and religious freedom (Articles 14, 15 and 25).
- November 2016: Kerala's Left Front government favours the entry of women of all age groups filing an affidavit to the effect.
- 2017: Supreme Court referred the case to a constitutional bench of 5 members

Key points from the judgment:

- Women to be allowed entering Sabrimala Temple.
- The managerial rights of religious authorities under Article 26(b) of the Constitution cannot override the individual woman's religious freedom guaranteed under Article 25(1). The former is intended to safeguard, not annihilate, the latter.
- Ban a form of untouchability and violates Article 17 of Indian Constitution.
- Biological reasons can't be accepted in freedom for faith.
- Women are not lesser or inferior to man.
- Patriarchal ideas can't triumph over devotion.
- To deny worship is to deny one of the most basic postulates of liberty.

ANALYSIS

■ Arguments in favour of entry:

- Preventing women's entry to the Sabarimala temple with an irrational and obsolete notion of "purity" offends the equality clauses in the Constitution.
- It denotes a patriarchal and partisan approach.
- **Article 15(1)**: The entry prohibition takes away the woman's right against discrimination guaranteed under Article 15(1) of the Constitution.
- **Article 25(1)**: It further curtails the religious freedom assured by Article 25(1).
- **Article 51A(e)**: Prohibition of women's entry to the shrine is done on the basis of womanhood and the biological features associated with womanhood, which Article 51A (e) aims to renounce.

■ Earlier SC judgment regarding similar matters:

- In Commissioner, Hindu Religious Endowments, Madras, vs. Shri Lakshmindra Thirtha Swamiar of Sri Shirur Mutt (1954), the seven judge bench of the Supreme Court observed that:
- What was protected under Articles 25 and 26 was the essential part of the religion, which was to be ascertained by its basic tenets. Therefore, discrimination in matters of entry into temples was neither a ritual nor a ceremony associated with the Hindu religion.
- The Supreme Court's Constitution Bench in Sri Venkatramana Devaruvs State of Mysore (1958) observed that:
- In case of conflict between the right of a religious denomination and that of an individual, it was the individual's right that was to be given preference.

SIGNIFICANCE OF JUDGMENT:

This judgment is considered as a radical judgment which would help to rationalize religious practices which are prevailing in Indian society. This judgment protects women's rights in public places and ensures the individual liberty to them. However, critics believe that as religious institutions are not included in the long list of public places mentioned in Article 15 (2) and this is overreach of judiciary on religious matters.

Adultery No More Criminal Offense in India

Debates

The Supreme Court has scrapped the pre-independence provision of adultery law under section 497 of Indian Penal Code (IPC). The apex court termed the law arbitrary and against the constitutional ideals of liberty, equality and freedom. The judgment comes on a petition declaration of Section 497 as unconstitutional.

BACKGROUND

Adultery law (Section 497) read along with CrPC 198(2) had given the husband the right to get his wife's lover prosecuted. If found guilty, the adulterer faces up to five years behind bars. The married woman was barred from getting her husband prosecuted for adultery under the law. It was only the 'outsider' the lover of the married woman who was supposed to be prosecuted. Therefore, it had become a tool for controlling the sexuality of woman by levelling her to a commodity owned and controlled by husband.

■ Abdul Aziz vs. State of Bombay (1951):

- Soon after independence in 1951, the adultery law under section 497 of IPC was challenged in Abdul Aziz vs. State of Bombay. The petitioner contended that the law violated the right of equality guaranteed under Article 14 and 15 of the constitution.
- The dominant argument in the court was that the law discriminated the men by not making women equally culpable in an adulterous relationship. However SC upheld the validity of the section 497 by pointing out that neither a man nor a woman can prosecute their disloyal spouses. It is only the 'outsider' to the relationship who can be prosecuted and that too by the aggrieved husband alone.
- A woman who indulges in extramarital relationship is exempted from the punishment and provided protection under article 15(3) of the constitution. The constitution bench negated the argument that the section 497 is violating the right to equality as enshrined in Article 14 and 15 of the constitution. The bench further said that constitution provides special provisions with regard to protection of women and children. Hence, Article 14 and Article 15 of the Indian Constitution read together validate section 497 of the IPC. The

crux of the Abdul Aziz vs. The State of Bombay Supreme court judgement was that the married woman (prey) is the victim and the man (outsider) is “the author of the crime.

■ Sowmithri Vishnu vs. Union of India (1985):

- The next important judgment regarding adultery law under Section 497 came in Sowmithri Vishnu versus Union of India case of 1985. The Centre has cited this judgment in its 2018-affidavit to back Section 497 of the IPC. In Sowmithri Vishnu case, the Supreme Court held that women need not be included as an aggrieved party in the name of making the law even handed. It also explained as to why women should not be involved in prosecution in the cases of adultery.
- The Supreme Court held that men were not allowed to prosecute their wives for the offence of adultery in order to protect the sanctity of marriage. For the same reason, women could not be allowed to prosecute their husbands. The judgment retained the offence of adultery as a crime committed by a man against another man. The Supreme Court also rejected the argument that unmarried women should be brought under the purview of the adultery law. It held that bringing such an unmarried woman in the ambit of adultery law under Section 497 would mean a crusade by a woman against another woman. The ambiguity related to adultery law remained unresolved.

■ Revathy vs. Union of India (1988):

- The Supreme Court held that not including women in prosecution of adultery cases promoted “social good”. It offered the couple a chance to “make up” and keep the sanctity of marriage intact. The Supreme Court observed that adultery law was a “shield rather than a sword”. The court ruled that the existing adultery law did not infringe upon any constitutional provision by restricting the ambit of Section 497 to men.
- Besides the three Supreme Court judgments, there were two more important legal views in connection with adultery law.
- The Law Commission of India Report of 1971 (42nd report) and the Malimath Committee on Criminal Law Reforms of 2003 recommended amendment to the adultery law. Both argued to make Section 497 of the IPC gender neutral.

ABOUT

■ The 2018 Judgement:

- The Supreme Court verdict has thrown light on the many issues related to women while scrapping the pre-independence provision of adultery law from the Indian Penal Code.

■ The crux of the judgement is as follows:

- Criminalising adultery is “absolutely, manifestly arbitrary and unconstitutional”. It would tantamount to punishing the people, who lived in an unhappy marriage. Attaching criminality to adultery is a retrograde step. Adultery can be a ground for a civil remedy i.e., dissolution of marriage. Justice Rohinton F. Nariman said that Section 497 was based on a chauvinistic notion. The provision, which is over 150 years old, is a relic of the past, brought in much before the Constitution introduced the fundamental rights of equality, liberty and dignity. Women are treated as “chattel” of the husband.
- He championed the sexual autonomy of women within marriage. Partners in marriage should have respect for each other’s sexual autonomy. Marriage does not mean ceding autonomy of one to the other. Ability to make sexual choices is essential to human liberty. Even within private zones, an individual should be allowed her choice. Society imposes impossible virtues on a woman. It raises her to a pedestal, confines her to spaces. Treats her as objects capable of being punished and says she should be pure, but has no qualms to rape her, assault her, commit female foeticide, discriminate against her within a home etc.

ANALYSIS

The Supreme Court judgement will be a landmark judgement in providing women equal footing in social contracts like marriage. The adultery law has for decades become a means to exploit a married woman and inflict many atrocities. It was a means to question and control the sexuality of the woman. It has played an important role in enhancing and consolidating the following notions of exploitations of women:

■ **Regressive Society:**

Laws which were made more than 150 years ago under an alien rule if still prevalent, continue the legacy of colonial structure of the society. Women in independent India have been protected by special provisions in constitution (article 15(3)); provided right to vote, right to participate in the economic development of the country. All that would be meaningless if she would be subject to the will of their male partners under the fear of laws like adultery.

■ **Consolidating patriarchy:**

Section 497 of IPC emanated in such social structure and times in which patriarchy and control over women was rampant. It was a colonial law to control and subjugate women even in social contracts. All the communities in India at that time whether British, Hindu, Muslim etc. regarded sexuality of women as something to be controlled and owned by the male no matter whether inside or outside the marriage. Practices such as kanyadaan, virginity and sexual chastity are created to reinforce the belief that there is a lack of ownership of a woman's own body as these are by-products of how patriarchy operates for all those who are concerned. It was part of an era in which women were deprived of her political and economic freedoms. She was at the lower ladder of the social hierarchy transcending the caste, class and other barriers.

■ **Means of Exploitation:**

Although, the adultery law was intended to protect the sanctity of marriage and consolidate patriarchal notions of society, it also became the means of domestic violence. The question mark over the sexuality of women often led men to use acts of physical and mental violence whenever the women transgressed the so called male notions of obedient wife.

■ **Treated breach of civil contract as criminal offense:**

The adultery law treated breach of civil contract as criminal offense. It reinforced the notion that the societal norms are far greater good than the personal or individual freedom. The act of adultery was seen not as the product of unhappy marriage but a cause of unhappy marriage. Persons under adultery law were convicted (male by the court) and married woman (by society) for their personal acts of freedom of choice. It was assumed that the choices, likes and dislikes of women after marriage were to be subsumed and subordinated to that of her husband.

■ **Deprives married women of her rights:**

The cumulative effect of patriarchal notions of which adultery was an indispensable part impinges the rights of women in almost all her public and private spheres. Adultery law had given a full hand to the male partners to control not only the sexuality of women but also empowered him to determine the counters of social and economic sphere of women. It is not surprising that India is one of the worst performers in terms of women participation in labour force as per the International Labour Organisation. The economic and financial dependence as well as the vulnerabilities of dependence life all emanates and have their roots in the internalized patriarchal customs and legal institutions of which adultery was one small bolt.

■ **Contextualising the verdict as progressive realisation of rights:**

- The Supreme Court verdict on adultery law is in sync with its other recent judgements such as Right to Privacy for the progressive realisation of rights.
- In Puttaswamy vs Union of India, 2017 SC underlined that Right to Privacy is inherent in the right to life, equality and fundamental freedoms. Right to Privacy includes right to have intimate relations of one's choice and right to sexual orientation and identity. The continuation of adultery law as it was would have been in contravention of what SC has transpired in Right to Privacy judgement.
- In Navtej Johar verdict of 2018 SC rendered the section 377 unconstitutional to the extent that it criminalises consensual relationship of any kind between the adults. The Supreme Court highlighted that the section 377 consigned a group of citizens to the margins and was destructive of their identities. The Adultery law also discriminated women, one of the most marginalised and oppressed groups of the society. So the recent verdict is in tandem with the other judgements of the Supreme Court.

■ **Contextualising the verdict as a means for social good:**

- The verdict will provide a space for women to decide on her body if not completely but at least a beginning in that direction. There are apprehensions that the verdict may render the whole institution of marriage

disabled. It may lead to social chaos. However such arguments cannot sustain the adultery law at the cost of individual rights of the half of the population of this country that are women.

- Moreover, marriage is a social institution based on consent and adultery is not the cause but the outcome of the unhappy marriage. The recourse to divorce should not be a norm but a principle and logical way for a woman to escape from the atrocities of men also a means for a male to relieve herself from stressful marriage life.

Freedom of Press Index 2019

Debates

India has dropped two places on a global press freedom index to be ranked 140th out of 180 countries in the annual Reporters Without Borders.

The World Press Freedom Index 2019', topped by Norway, finds an increased sense of hostility towards journalists across the world.

ABOUT

- Violence against journalists including police violence, attacks by Maoist fighters and reprisals by criminal groups or corrupt politicians is one of the most striking characteristics of the current state of press freedom in India.
- At least six Indian journalists were killed in connection with their work in 2018.
- These murders highlighted the many dangers that Indian journalists face, especially those working for non-English-language media outlets in rural areas.

BACKGROUND

- Paris-based Reporters Sans Frontieres (RSF), or Reporters Without Borders, is a non-profit organization that works to document and combat attacks on journalists around the world.
- In its 2019 index, RSF finds that hatred of journalists has degenerated into violence, contributing to an increase in fear around the world.

■ How is the Index compiled?

- The degree of freedom available to journalists in 180 countries is determined by pooling the responses of experts to a questionnaire devised by RSF.
- This qualitative analysis is combined with quantitative data on abuses and acts of violence against journalists during the period evaluated.
- The criteria evaluated in the questionnaire are pluralism, media independence, media environment and self-censorship, legislative framework, transparency, and the quality of the infrastructure that supports the production of news and information.
- To compile the Index, RSF has developed an online questionnaire with 87 questions focused on these criteria.
- Scores are calculated on the basis of the responses of the experts selected by RSF combined with the data on abuses and violence against journalists during the period evaluated.
- Ever since the 2013 index, countries have been given scores ranging from 0 to 100, with 0 being the best possible score and 100 the worst.

- This makes the Index more informative and makes it easier to compare one year with another.

■ World Press Freedom Index 2019: Key Pointers

- The coordinated hate campaigns waged on social networks against journalists who dare to speak or write about subjects that aggravate Hindutva followers are alarming and include calls for the journalists concerned to be murdered.
- The campaigns are particularly virulent when the targets are women.
- The emergence of a #MeToo movement in the media in 2018 has lifted the veil on many cases of harassment and sexual assault to which women reporters have been subjected.
- Criminal prosecutions are meanwhile often used to gag journalists critical of the authorities, with some prosecutors invoking Section 124a of the penal code, under which “sedition” is punishable by life imprisonment.
- The mere threat of such a prosecution encourages self-censorship.
- When not detained, Kashmiri journalists working for local media outlets are often the targets of violence by paramilitaries acting with the central government’s tacit consent.

ANALYSIS

■ World Press Freedom Index and India: Underlying reasons and Corrective measures

- For a country that prides itself on the strength of its democracy, India’s record in upholding the freedom of press has been consistently poor.
- The physical violence against journalists is largely responsible for India’s low ranking.
- Any investigative reporting that annoys the ruling party or any criticism of Hindutva, elicits a torrent of online insults and calls for the death of the reporter or writer responsible, most of it coming from the troll army.
- There are institutional shackles which constrain a reporter’s right to free speech, and consequently, prevent important stories from being published.
- **Censorship Begins From Within:** Most journalists including editors are employed on contracts of three years or less, with an exit clause that permits them to leave or be fired on a notice of between one and three months. As a result, journalists have lost the courage to speak up or write about any issue that owners and managements do not want them to, including the issue of their own unstable working conditions.
- **Balancing Freedom of Trade and Freedom of Speech:** The concentration of ownership of media implies that the influence and power which result in distribution of news and culture among other forms of expression and opinion-building in the country is now vested in only a handful of people.
- The space for providing factual information as well as expressing views that are not in favor of (or even against the interests of) India’s biggest corporate conglomerates has shrunk.
- The free press is expected to uphold society’s civil and political freedom; however, the distribution of information in India is neither free nor fair.
- Industrial houses have been investing in media companies and indirectly gaining control over them.
- This reinforces the view that investors are investing in the media for their access and proximity to power and authority, and thereby also indulging in lobbying, rent-seeking behavior.
- **Legal Safeguards to Protect a Whistleblower is in shambles:** A journalist is only as good as their source. Thus, maintaining their anonymity must be paramount. India, however, has a patchy record when it comes to protecting whistleblowers.
- The stunted development of source protection privilege law in India has meant that news gatherers’ interactions with confidential sources are colored by ambiguity.
- Despite two sets of recommendations by the Law Commission of India, neither the government nor the judiciary has displayed an inclination to directly address the issue. Courts have adopted an impressionistic and ad hoc approach in deciding cases bearing upon source protection.

- The casualties of the quagmire are news gatherers, sources, the public, and the spirit of a democratic nation.
- The phenomenon of “paid news” wherein newspapers, magazines and TV channels are paid for eulogies of particular candidates and political parties, which then masquerade as independent news has eroded credibility of the media.
- Coverage of regions that the authorities regard as sensitive, such as Kashmir, continues to be very difficult.
- Foreign reporters are barred from the region and the Internet is often disconnected there.

■ How to move up the ladder?

- **Pluralism: Create** a plural and vibrant society free from fear and abuse.
- **Media independence:** Increase the degree to which the media is able to function independently of sources of political, governmental, business and religious power and influence.
- **Environment and self-censorship:** Improve the environment in which news and information providers operate.
- **Legislative framework:** Liberalize the impact of the legislative framework governing news and information activities.
- **Transparency:** Make the institutions and procedures that affect the production of news and information open and transparent.
- **Infrastructure:** Scrutinize and improve the quality of the infrastructure that supports the production of news and information.
- **Abuses:** Increase data protection and make rule of law highly effective.



Naga Peace Accord: Dilemma for the Rest of India's Northeast

Debates

The NSCN (IM), the largest Naga group, is unwilling to sign an accord with the Centre without a separate Naga flag and constitution.

BACKGROUND

■ Who are Naga's?

'Naga' is a generic term which refers to a group of over 30 tribes inhabiting not only the boundaries along and within Nagaland, but also some hilly regions of the adjoining states of Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh, and some parts of the bordering nation, Myanmar.

■ History of Naga resurgence:

- **Inner Line Permit:** The British were not keen to extend their empire into the Naga Hills due to the hostile attitude of the hill tribes, who always took the British as an occupation force out to control the freedom

of the Nagas and interfere with their distinct cultural identity. In the given situation, the British found it convenient to protect them with the Inner Line Permits.

- Thereafter, the spread of Christianity and establishment of modern political, administrative, and educational institutions led to an educated, elite class amongst the Nagas.
- In 1918, Nagas, with the help of the British officials, formed the Naga Club.
- In 1935, the then Government of India Act designated the Naga Hill districts as “excluded areas” wherein the Nagas could continue to maintain their traditions, culture and lifestyle with little interference from the federal or provincial governments. This ultimately led to the formation of the Naga National Council in 1946.
- A nine-Point Agreement was signed in June 1947 between the Naga leaders and Akbar Hydari, then Governor of Assam, wherein it was agreed that, ten years after the signing of the agreement, the Nagas would be free to decide their own future.
- The Nagas even boycotted the first general elections of independent India in 1952 on expected lines.
- In 1956, the Naga militants, under the leadership of Phizo, created a secret government known as the Naga Federal Government (NFG) with around 1,500 armed guerrilla fighters.
- This started the so-called ‘freedom struggle for Greater Nagaland better known as ‘Nagalim’.
- The Indian government, in a reactive approach, first, sent in the Army to control insurrections and, subsequently, Nagaland was given the status of an Indian state in 1962, with the existing boundaries of the state.
- Due to this kind of resurgence the Naga insurgency is referred as the mother of all insurgencies in the north-eastern states.

ANALYSIS:

■ Why the complexities of the Nagaland problem have kept peace at bay for a long time?

- The government itself never had a long-term vision to delve into this issue in an integrated manner. The governments have been buying time to tire out and disintegrate the various factions of the Naga movement.
- **Wrong approach of government:** All the governments of the day have attempted to solve the problem in isolation, taking one north-eastern state at a time, not realising that while each of the respective state’s insurgency had its own character and start point.
- **State politics:**
 - ▶ The Indian Constitution provides for a federal structure, however, when the Centre intervenes with additional security forces, including the Army, the onus shifts from the state to the central government. This has been the one single factor that has allowed the states to play politics with the peace processes in the state and shift the blame for the failure on the Centre, thus, causing inordinate delays in finding peace in the region time and again.
 - ▶ In the negotiations for the peace processes, the states seem to have distanced themselves from success or failure, denying their own stakes in normalising the situation.
- **Extension of ceasefire agreements:** A number of ceasefire agreements that were once worked out with the various insurgent groups, continue to get extended indefinitely, thereby chasing the now seemingly elusive peace.

■ What is Naga Peace accord 2015?

- It is the accord signed in August 2015 by the Government of India and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) to end the insurgency.
- The framework agreement is based on the “unique” history of Nagas and recognising the universal principle that in a democracy sovereignty lies with the people.
- NSCN given up its demand for ‘Greater Nagaland’ and vowed allegiance to the constitution of India.
- The details of the accord are yet to come in public domain.

■ Main challenges to the Naga Naga Peace accord 2015:

- Defining of Greater Nagaland, called 'Nagalim'.
- Integration of adjoining Naga inhabited areas.
- Unity amongst all Naga groups, despite the NSCN (IM) being the strongest and the lead group.
- Building up of greater confidence among the Naga groups, the state government and the Centre.

The National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN):

- It is a Naga nationalist separatist group operating mainly in Northeast India, with minor activities in northwest Myanmar (Burma).
- The main goal of the organisation is to establish a sovereign Naga state, "Nagalim".
- There are two major factions of NSCN
 - ▶ **NSCN (K)**, led by S. S. Khaplang.
 - ▶ **NSCN (I-M)**, led by Isak Chishi Swu and Thuingaleng Muivah.

■ What should be the government's Policy Prescription and Action Plan?

- Surrendering arms and weapons as a pre-condition for peace talks.
- No suspension of operations by the security forces supported by subsistence allowance by the government.
- A comprehensive and thought through rehabilitation package that must cater to, and be in sync with, the ground realities and not comprise half-baked politically-expedient media grabbing shows.
- Enhancing the capacity and capabilities of the state security apparatus, including state armed police forces to deal with these groups so that the Army is pulled out of all these states, and also relieves the states from the AFSPA.
- Develop these states as viable self-sustaining economic entities and not keep them dependent entirely upon central aid packages to the tune of over 90 percent dependency, as is the case currently.
- There is a need to follow a comprehensive and all-inclusive developmental model for these states with better accountability of the 'fund flow,' since large amounts of funds are allotted by the central government due to the financial non-viability of these states.
- Connectivity to the mainland and a greater push for development of the border areas will go a long way in ensuring better assimilation of the northeast and its people.
- Government need to engage more with the India's immediate neighbours, particularly Bhutan and Bangladesh.

WAY FORWARD:

- It needs to be accepted that regardless of the government in power at the Centre, the consistent Indian policy for conflict resolution in the northeast has been one of buying time through talks. Most of these talks have lacked good governance models.
- An equally pressing reality is that New Delhi, for decades, has not really known the ground realities of the northeast despite its best efforts – resulting in the absence of economic viability combining with an all-inclusive model of development for this region. A huge amount of infrastructure, particularly road connectivity and investments, especially in the power sector are the needs of the hour.
- For far too long, India has protected these areas with Inner Line Permits, and it is time to open them up and allow the people of the region to enjoy the fruits of modern amenities.
- The northeast is full of natural resources that could be put to optimum usage for the betterment of the native people's lives and will aid in bridging this area to connect India to its eastern and south eastern neighbours even though considerable time has been lost in keeping the insurgency in the northeast in a state of suspended animation.



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BATCH: 10 - PT MAXIMA

DAILY TEST

Total 63 Tests:

10 NCERT + 29 Sub Sectional + 6 Sectional +
5 Current Affair + 10 Mock Test + 3 CSAT

STARTS

**1 MARCH
2020**

TEST SCHEDULE

Test No.	Date	Subject	Subject	Topics Covered
Polity (01 March to 08 March, 2020)				
Test 1	1 March, 2020	Polity 1	NCERT	Fundamentals (NCERT 11th & 12th)
Test 2	2 March, 2020	Polity 2	NCERT	Fundamentals (NCERT 11th & 12th)
Test 3	3 March, 2020	Polity 3	Sub-Sectional	Constitutional Development + Preamble + Union Territories + Citizenship
Test 4	4 March, 2020	Polity 4	Sub-Sectional	FR + DPSP + FD + Other Constitutional Provisions such as Emergency Provisions etc.
Test 5	5 March, 2020	Polity 5	Sub-Sectional	Executive + Legislature + Judiciary - 1
Test 6	6 March, 2020	Polity 6	Sub-Sectional	Executive + Legislature + Judiciary - 2
Test 7	7 March, 2020	Polity 7	Sub-Sectional	Governance + Socio Economic Development + Reforms + Bills + Welfare Schemes + Policies
Test 8	8 March, 2020	Polity 8	Sectional	Polity & Governance
Economy (12 March to 18 March, 2020)				
Test 9	12 March, 2020	Economy 1	NCERT	Fundamentals (NCERT 11th & 12th)
Test 10	13 March, 2020	Economy 2	NCERT	Fundamentals (NCERT 11th & 12th)
Test 11	14 March, 2020	Economy 3	Sub-Sectional	Basic Concepts of National Income
Test 12	15 March, 2020	Economy 4	Sub-Sectional	Budgeting + Fiscal and Monetary Policy Agricultural and Industrial Policy
Test 13	16 March, 2020	Economy 5	Sub-Sectional	External Sector + International Institutes
Test 14	17 March, 2020	Economy 6	Sub-Sectional	Money, Banking Financial Market and Other Provisions
Test 15	18 March, 2020	Economy 7	Sectional	Indian Economy
Environment (21 March to 27 March, 2020)				
Test 16	21 March, 2020	Environment 1	NCERT	Fundamentals of Environment (NCERT Biology 12th - Ch. 10 to 16)
Test 17	22 March, 2020	Environment 2	Sub-Sectional	Environment and Ecology
Test 18	23 March, 2020	Environment 3	Sub-Sectional	Biodiversity
Test 19	24 March, 2020	Environment 4	Sub-Sectional	Environmental Pollution and Management
Test 20	25 March, 2020	Environment 5	Sub-Sectional	Climate Change + Global Warming
Test 21	26 March, 2020	Environment 6	Sub-Sectional	Environmental Governance
Test 22	27 March, 2020	Environment 7	Sectional	Environment and Ecology

Test No	Date	Subject	Subject	Topics Covered
HISTORY & CULTURE (30 March to 07 April, 2020)				
Test 23	30 March, 2020	History 1	NCERT	Fundamentals (Ancient + Medieval) (NCERT Old + New 11th & 12th)
Test 24	31 March, 2020	History 2	NCERT	Fundamentals (Modern) (NCERT Old + New 11th & 12th)
Test 25	1 April, 2020	Culture 3	Sub-Sectional	Visual Arts + Performing Arts
Test 26	2 April, 2020	Culture 4	Sub-Sectional	Religions + Languages + Literature + Institutions
Test 27	3 April, 2020	History 5	Sub-Sectional	Ancient India
Test 28	4 April, 2020	History 6	Sub-Sectional	Medieval India
Test 29	5 April, 2020	History 7	Sub-Sectional	Modern India (1757 – 1885)
Test 30	6 April, 2020	History 8	Sub-Sectional	Modern India (1885 – 1947)
Test 31	7 April, 2020	History 9	Sectional	History and Culture of India

GEOGRAPHY (10 April to 18 April, 2020)				
Test 32	10 April, 2020	Geography 1	NCERT	Fundamentals World Geography (NCERT 11th & 12th)
Test 33	11 April, 2020	Geography 2	NCERT	Fundamentals Indian Geography (NCERT 11th & 12th)
Test 34	12 April, 2020	Geography 3	Sub-Sectional	Geomorphology + Indian Physiography
Test 35	13 April, 2020	Geography 4	Sub-Sectional	Climatology + Indian Climate
Test 36	14 April, 2020	Geography 5	Sub-Sectional	Oceanography + Biogeography
Test 37	15 April, 2020	Geography 6	Sub-Sectional	Demography + Human Geography + Census
Test 38	16 April, 2020	Geography 7	Sub-Sectional	Economic Activities + Agriculture + Minerals + Energy
Test 39	17 April, 2020	Geography 8	Sub-Sectional	Industry + Transport + Trade + Communication
Test 40	18 April, 2020	Geography 9	Sectional	Geography of India and World

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY (21 April to 25 April, 2020)				
Test 41	21 April, 2020	Science & Tech 1		NCERT Biology + Everyday Science + + Institutions + Award
Test 42	22 April, 2020	Science & Tech 2		Sub-Sectional Biotechnology + Health + Nuclear tech
Test 43	23 April, 2020	Science & Tech 3		Sub-Sectional Space + Defence
Test 44	24 April, 2020	Science & Tech 4		Sub-Sectional IT + Telecom + IPR + Nanotech + Robotics
Test 45	25 April, 2020	Science & Tech 5		Sectional Science and Technology

CSAT (28 April to 30 April, 2020)				
Test 46	28 April, 2020	CSAT-1	Sectional	Reasoning
Test 47	29 April, 2020	CSAT-2	Sectional	General Mental Ability
Test 48	30 April, 2020	CSAT-3	Sectional	Reading Comprehension

CURRENT AFFAIRS (03 May to 07 May, 2020)				
Test 49	3 May, 2020	Current Affairs-1		Current Affairs June + July + August 2019
Test 50	4 May, 2020	Current Affairs-2		Current Affairs September + October, 2019
Test 51	5 May, 2020	Current Affairs-3		Current Affairs Nov + Dec 2019 + Jan, 2020
Test 52	6 May, 2020	Current Affairs-4		Current Affairs Feb + March + April, 2020
Test 53	7 May, 2020	Current Affairs-5		Current Affairs Economy Survey + Budget + Indian Year Book 2020

FULL MOCK TESTS (08 May to 19 May, 2020)

Test No.	Date	Test
Test 54	8 May, 2020	MOCK 1 PAPER 1 & 2
Test 55	9 May, 2020	MOCK 2 PAPER 1 & 2
Test 56	12 May, 2020	MOCK 3 PAPER 1 & 2
Test 57	13 May, 2020	MOCK 4 PAPER 1 & 2
Test 58	14 May, 2020	MOCK 5 PAPER 1 & 2
Test 59	15 May, 2020	MOCK 6 PAPER 1 & 2
Test 60	16 May, 2020	MOCK 7 PAPER 1 & 2
Test 61	17 May, 2020	MOCK 8 PAPER 1 & 2
Test 62	18 May, 2020	MOCK 9 PAPER 1 & 2
Test 63	19 May, 2020	MOCK 10 PAPER 1 & 2

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