

PERFECT 7

WEEKLY

CURRENT AFFAIRS

February : 2020 / Issue- 1

THE BRU-REANG AGREEMENT

A Step Towards Long Lasting Peace

- Oxfam Inequality Report 2020 : Time to Care
- Democracy Index 2019 and India : An Overview
- Need for an Arms Control Regime in Post INF World
- Are Endless Remedies Available for Capital Punishment?
- ICJ Rulings and Its Implications on Rohingyas
- Status of Women in India : A Long March Ahead



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DHYEYA IAS : AN INTRODUCTION



The guiding philosophy of the institute, throughout, has been creation of knowledge base. Dhyeya IAS inculcates human values and professional ethics in the students, which help them make decisions and create path that are good not only for them, but also for the society, for the nation, and for the world as whole. To fulfill its mission in new and powerful ways, each student is motivated to strive towards achieving excellence in every endeavor. It is done by making continuous improvements in curricula and pedagogical tools.

The rigorous syllabi not only instills in them, a passion for knowledge but also attempts to teach them how to apply that knowledge in real-life situations. The programmes lay emphasis on well-rounded personality development of the students and also in inculcating the values of honesty and integrity in them.

Vinay Kumar Singh
CEO and Founder
Dhyeya IAS



Dhyeya IAS is an institution that aims at the complete development of the student. Our faculty are hand-picked and highly qualified to ensure that the students are given every possible support in all their academic endeavors. It is a multi-disciplinary institution which ensures that the students have ready access to a wide range of academic material.

Our brand of education has broad horizons as we believe in exposure. Our students are encouraged to widen their knowledge base and study beyond the confinements of the syllabus. We aim to lend a gentle guiding hand to make our students recognize their inner potential and grow on their own accord into stalwarts of tomorrow's society.

Q H Khan
Managing Director
Dhyeya IAS

PERFECT 7 : AN INTRODUCTION



With immense pleasure and gratitude I want to inform you that the new version of 'Perfect-7', from the Dhyeya IAS, is coming with more information in a very attractive manner. Heartily congratulations to the editorial team. The 'Perfect-7' invites a wider readership in the Institute. The name and fame of an institute depends on the caliber and achievements of the students and teachers. The role of the teacher is to nurture the skills and talents of the students as a facilitator. This magazine is going to showcase the strength of our Institute. Let this be a forum to exhibit the potential of faculties, eminent writers, authors and students with their literary skills and innovative ideas.

Qurban Ali

Chief Editor

Dhyeya IAS

(Ex Editor- Rajya Sabha TV)



We have not only given the name 'Perfect 7' to our magazine, but also left no stone unturned to keep it 'near to perfect'. We all know that beginning of a task is most challenging as well as most important thing. So we met the same fate.

Publishing 'Perfect 7' provided us various challenges because from the beginning itself we kept our bar too high to ensure the quality. Right from the very first issue we had a daunting task to save aspirants from the 'overdose of information'. Focusing on civil services exams 'Perfect 7' embodies in itself rightful friend and guide in your preparation. This weapon is built to be precise yet comprehensive. It is not about bombardment of mindless facts rather an analysis of various facets of the issues, selected in a systematic manner. We adopted the 'Multi Filter' and 'Six Sigma' approach, in which a subject or an issue is selected after diligent discussion on various levels so that the questions in the examination could be covered with high probability.

Being a weekly magazine there is a constant challenge to provide qualitative study material in a time bound approach. It is our humble achievement that we feel proud to make delivered our promise of quality consistently without missing any issue since its inception.

The new 'avatar' of 'Perfect 7' is a result of your love and affection. We feel inspired to continue our efforts to deliver effective and valuable content in interesting manner. Our promise of quality has reached you in previous issues and more are yet to come.

Ashutosh Singh

Managing Editor

Dhyeya IAS

Send us your suggestions, comments, views and feedback for guiding us towards continuous improvement & enhancement of 'Perfect 7' on

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PREFACE

Dhyeya family feels honoured to present you 'Perfect 7' - a panacea for Current Affairs. 'Perfect7' is an outstanding compilation of current affairs topics as per the new pattern of Civil Service examination (CSE). It presents weekly analysis of information and issues (national and international) in the form of articles, news analysis, brain boosters, PIB highlights and graphical information, which helps to understand and retain the information comprehensively. Hence, 'Perfect 7' will build in-depth understanding of various issues in different facets.

'Perfect7' is our genuine effort to provide correct, concise and concrete information, which helps students to crack the civil service examination. This magazine is the result of the efforts of the eminent scholars and the experts from different fields.

'Perfect 7' is surely a force multiplier in your effort and plugs the loopholes in the preparation.

We believe in environment of continuous improvement and learning. Your constructive suggestions and comments are always welcome, which could guide us in further revision of this magazine.

Omveer Singh Chaudhary
Editor
Dhyeya IAS

Perfect 7

The Weekly Issue

Perfect 7

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Our other initiative



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DHYEYA TV

Current Affairs Programmes hosted

by Mr. Qurban Ali

(Ex. Editor Rajya Sabha, TV) & by Team Dhyeya IAS
(Broadcasted on YouTube & Dhyeya-TV)

SEVEN IMPORTANT ISSUES

1. THE BRU-REANG AGREEMENT : A STEP TOWARDS LONG LASTING PEACE

Why in News?

A four-party agreement was signed on January 16, between the Centre, the Mizoram government, the Tripura government, and an apex body of the internally displaced Brus in the presence of Home Minister to arrive at a solution for the Bru repatriation issue. The pact was signed one-and-a-half months after the latest initiative to send the Bru refugees back to Mizoram failed.

Background

The Bru or Reang are a community indigenous to Northeast India, living mostly in Tripura, Mizoram, and Assam. In Tripura, they are recognised as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG).

In 1995, following a clash between Mizos and Brus, the Young Mizo Association and Mizo Students' Association demanded that Brus be removed from the Mizoram's electoral rolls, contending that the tribe was not indigenous to Mizoram. This led to an armed movement led by the militant outfit Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF), and a political one by the Bru National Union (BNU). In 1997, following ethnic tension, around 5,000 families comprising around 30,000 Bru-Reang tribals were forced to flee Mizoram and seek shelter in Tripura. These people were housed in temporary camps at Kanchanpur, in North Tripura.

In 2009, an agreement was reached between the central government, the Mizoram government, the Tripura government and a Bru representative body called the Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum to repatriate Bru refugees to the Mamit, Kolasib and Lunglei districts of Mizoram.

Since 2010, Government of India has been making sustained efforts to permanently rehabilitate these refugees. The Union government has been assisting the two State governments for taking the care of the refugees. Till 2014, 1622 Bru-Reang families returned to Mizoram in different batches.

On 3rd July, 2018, an agreement was signed between the Union government, the two State governments and representatives of Bru-Reang refugees, as a result of which the aid given to these families was increased substantially. Subsequently, 328 families comprising of 1369 individuals returned to Mizoram under the agreement. There had been a sustained demand of most Bru-Reang families that they may be allowed to settle down in Tripura, considering their apprehensions about their security.

On 1st October, as the Centre's ninth repatriation attempt began, the tribe's food and cash supply was stopped – prompting the tribe to take to the streets. On 3rd October, the union home ministry started a round of talks with the state governments of

Mizoram and Tripura to legitimize the 30,000-odd refugees. In November, Bru refugees blocked a stretch in North

Who are the Bru Refugees?

The Brus spread across Tripura, Mizoram and parts of southern Assam are the most populous tribe in Tripura. Also known as Reangs in the state, they are ethnically different from the Mizos, with their own distinct language and dialect and form one of the 21 scheduled tribes of Tripura. While Mizoram has as many as 40,000 Brus living in the state, in Tripura, their numbers stand at approximately 32,000, spread across six refugee camps in the state. In Tripura, they are recognised as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG). The Bru are the second most populous tribe of Tripura after the Tripuris.

The Reangs are primarily an agrarian tribe. In the past, they mostly practised the Huk or Jhum cultivation like most other Tripuri tribes. However today, most of them have adopted modern agricultural practices. Many occupy high posts in the bureaucracy and a few have even started their own businesses. The Reang are an endogamous tribe who have had very little contact with the Bengali or other sub-tribe of Tripura. Recently, however inter-tribe marriages and inter-caste wedding have taken place. The marriage system is similar to other Tripuri tribe of Tripura.

Like the other Tripuri, the traditional dress of the Reang is simple and plain. Men traditionally wear a hand woven loin cloth and a piece of cloth as a wrapper for the upper body. Along with this a piece of woven cloth is wrapped around the head by Kamsoi and is known as Kamsoi maitang. Dance is an integral part of Reang life. The Hojagiri folk dance of Reang sub tribe is rather well known all over the world. 'Buisu', not 'bihu' is the most popular festival of reang tribes.

Tripura for 12 hours, demanding the Centre restore their food and cash benefits even as repatriation efforts continued.

Recently on 16th of January 2020 after 20 years, the union home ministry finally inked the tripartite pact which now paves the way for these displaced Bru tribals from Mizoram to permanently settle in Tripura.

What is in the Bru Agreement?

All Bru currently living in temporary relief camps in Tripura will be settled in the state, if they want to stay on. The Bru who returned to Mizoram in the eight phases of repatriation since 2009, cannot, however, come back to Tripura.

To ascertain the numbers of those who will be settled, a fresh survey and physical verification of Bru families living in relief camps will be carried out. The Centre will implement a special development project for the resettled Bru; this will be in addition to the Rs 600 crore fund announced for the process, including benefits for the migrants.

Each resettled family will get 0.03 acre (1.5 ganda) of land for building a home, Rs 1.5 lakh as housing assistance, and Rs 4 lakh as a one-time cash benefit for sustenance. They will also receive a monthly allowance of Rs 5,000, and free rations for two years from the date of resettlement.

All cash assistance will be through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), and the state government will expedite the opening of bank accounts and the issuance of Aadhaar, permanent residence certificates, ST certificates, and voter identity cards to the beneficiaries.

When will the Bru Resettlement Take Place?

Physical verification to identify beneficiaries will be carried out within 15 days of the signing of the deal. The

land for resettlement will be identified within 60 days, and the land for allotment will be identified within 150 days.

The beneficiaries will get housing assistance, but the state government will build their homes and hand over possession. They will be moved to resettlement locations in four clusters, paving the way for the closure of the temporary camps within 180 days of the signing of the agreement. All dwelling houses will be constructed and payments completed within 270 days.

Where will the Bru be Resettled?

Revenue experts reckon 162 acres will be required. Chief Minister of Tripura has held that the effort will be to choose khash or government land, but since Tripura is a small state (only 10,491 sq km), state government would explore the possibility of diverting forest lands, even reserve forest areas if necessary, to grant the new entitlements.

Diverting forest land for human settlements will, however, need clearance from the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), which is likely to take at least three months. Central government has promised to provide funds, if needed, to acquire forest land or government land.

In what Condition are the Migrants Now?

Under a relief package announced by the Centre, a daily ration of 600 g rice was provided to every adult Bru migrant and 300 g to every minor. Every adult received a daily cash dole of Rs 5; every minor Rs 2.50. Meagre allocations were made from time to time for essentials such as soap, slippers, and mosquito nets.

Most migrants sold a part of their rice and used the money to buy supplies, including medicines. They

depended on the wild for vegetables, and some of them have been practising slash-and-burn (jhum) cultivation in the forests. They live in makeshift bamboo thatched huts, without permanent power supply and safe drinking water, with no access to proper healthcare services or schools.

How is this Agreement Different from the Earlier Initiatives taken for the Bru?

Apart from their own Kaubru tongue, the Bru speak both Kokborok and Bangla, the two most widely spoken languages of the tribal and non-tribal communities of Tripura, and have an easy connection with the state. Their long stay in Tripura, albeit in exile and in terrible conditions, has also acquainted them very well with the state's socio-political ecology.

Successive state and central governments had thus far stressed only on peacefully repatriating the Bru, even though the enduring fear of ethnic violence remained a fundamental roadblock. The two other "durable solutions" for refugees and displaced persons suggested by the UN Refugee Agency — local integration or assimilation, and resettlement — were never explored.

Concerns and Challenges

The agreement to settle some 35,000 Bru tribal people in Tripura and not in Mizoram from where they were displaced, could encourage the creation of ethnocentric States in the northeast. The move, according to some rights activists has set a bad precedent. The "solution" has the potential of creating conflicts between the Brus and indigenous communities of Tripura, but addresses the insecurities of a tribe that survived and fled violence.

The northeast has had a history of ethnic conflicts — not only between the "indigenous" and "settlers" but inter-tribe too — and issues could

also arise within smaller sub-groups within the same tribe. For instance, the Rongmei Nagas, most of whom are based in Assam, are deprived of Scheduled Tribe status in Nagaland. Meghalaya meanwhile, has proposed an amendment to the Sixth Schedule for stripping tribes other than the dominant Garo, Khasi and Jaintia from benefits.

Conclusion

After the state signed a revised 'four-corner agreement' to resolve the 22-year-old refugee crisis, political parties and civil society organisations of Mizoram have also welcomed the

agreement. The agreement which was materialised after nine attempts of repatriation is likely to help the government to win the trust of tribals in the northeast.

This agreement will bring a permanent solution for the rehabilitation of thousands of Bru-Reang people in Tripura. The government believes that this agreement will bring a bright future for them. Bru-Reang people will be able to enjoy the benefits of all social-welfare schemes of governments. This major step, is important milestones in bringing fast paced development to the State of Tripura.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Topic: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

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2. OXFAM INEQUALITY REPORT 2020 : TIME TO CARE

Why in News?

A recent report showed that India's richest 1 per cent of the population hold 42.5 per cent of national wealth while the bottom 50 per cent, the majority of the population, owns a mere 2.8 per cent. According to an Oxfam 'Time to Care' report, India's top 10 per cent of the population holds 74.3 per cent of the total national wealth while the bottom 90 percent holds 25.7 percent of national wealth.

Introduction

Over the past decade leading academics, and even mainstream economic institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), have produced robust evidence of the corrosive effects of inequality. Affected communities, activists, women's rights organizations and faith leaders have spoken out and have campaigned for change around the world. The reality is that most world leaders are still pursuing policy agendas that drive greater gaps between the haves and the have nots. Leaders like President Trump in the USA and President Bolsonaro in Brazil are exemplars of

this trend, offering regressive policy menus like tax cuts for billionaires, obstructing measures to tackle the climate emergency or turbocharging racism, sexism and hatred of minorities. The debilitating impacts of inequality globally have seldom been as evident as they have since the middle of 2018. Citizens across developed and developing nations have taken to the streets to question prevailing economic policies and systemic corruption, which skew beneficial outcomes in favour of a minuscule fraction at the top of the socio-economic ladder.

Crucially, today's economic system is built on sexism. At the top, the fortunes of billionaires and super-rich men grow exponentially, often for minimal work and low value to society. At the bottom, women globally work 12.5 billion hours without pay or recognition every day, and put in countless more hours of underpaid professional care work. Their work is essential to our societies and to our economies; women care for children and sick and elderly people and do the bulk of domestic work, from cooking to fetching water and firewood. It also lays the foundations in society that

make possible enormous economic wealth accrued by others and helps to generate enormous economic wealth. Oxfam has calculated that the monetary value of women's unpaid care work globally is at least \$10.8 trillion annually – three times the size of the world's tech industry. This sexist and exploitative economic system is taking from the many and putting excessive riches in the pockets of the wealthy few. It is fuelling unacceptable levels of economic and gender inequality.

Oxfam Report Highlights

The scale of the gap between rich and poor today

- ◆ In 2019, the world's billionaires, only 2,153 people, have more wealth than 4.6 billion people.
- ◆ The 22 richest men have more wealth than all the women in Africa.
- ◆ The world's richest 1% have more than twice as much wealth as 6.9 billion people.
- ◆ Women are more vulnerable to income poverty than men. Extreme poverty rates are 4% higher for women globally than men.

- ◆ The monetary value of women's unpaid care work globally for women aged 15 and over is at least \$10.8 trillion annually – three times the size of the world's tech industry.
- ◆ Of all care workers, domestic workers are at the highest risk of exploitation. Globally, just 10% of domestic workers have equal protection in labour law compared with other workers and around half of them lack minimum wage protection.

Extreme Poverty vs Extreme Wealth: How Big is the Inequality Gap?

1. **Lining the Pockets of the World's Billionaires.** The very top of the economic pyramid sees trillions of dollars of wealth in the hands of a very small group of people, predominantly men, whose fortune and power grow exponentially. Billionaires have now more wealth than the 4.6 billion people who make up 60 percent of the planet's population. Meanwhile, around 735 million people are still living in extreme poverty. Many others are just one hospital bill or failed harvest away from slipping into it.
2. **Wealth Undertaxed:** While the richest continue to enjoy booming fortunes, they are also enjoying some of the lowest levels of tax in decades – as are the corporations that they own. Instead taxes are falling disproportionately on working people. When governments undertax the rich, there's less money for vital services like healthcare and education, increasing the amount of care work that falls on the shoulders of women and girls.
3. **Underfunded Public Services:** At the same time, public services are suffering from chronic underfunding or being outsourced

to private companies that exclude the poorest people. In many countries a decent education or quality healthcare has become a luxury only the rich can afford. It has profound implications for the future of our children and the opportunities they will have to live a better and longer life.

4. **Denied a Longer Life:** In most countries having money is a passport to better health and a longer life, while being poor all too often means more sickness and an earlier grave. People from poor communities can expect to die ten or twenty years earlier than people in wealthy areas. In developing countries, a child from a poor family is twice as likely to die before the age of five than a child from a rich family.
5. **Inequality is Sexist:** With less income and fewer assets than men, women make up the greatest proportion of the world's poorest households, and that proportion is growing. They are more likely to be found in poorly paid and precarious employment, supporting the market economy with cheap or free labor. They are also supporting the state through billions of hours of unpaid or underpaid care work, a huge but unrecognized contribution to our societies and economic prosperity.

Inequality in India

Regarding India, Oxfam report held that the combined total wealth of 63 Indian billionaires is higher than the total Union Budget of India for the fiscal year 2018-19 which was at INR 24,42,200 crore.

- ◆ The top 1% of Indians hold more than 4 times the amount of wealth held by 953 million people (or the bottom 70% of the population).
- ◆ It would take a female domestic worker 22,277 years to earn a top

CEO of a Tech company, makes in one year. With earnings pegged at INR 106 per second, would make more in 10 minutes than what the domestic worker would make in one year.

- ◆ Women and girls put in 3.26 billion hours of unpaid care work (cooking, cleaning and caring for children and the elderly) each and every day—a contribution to the Indian economy of at least INR 19 lakh crore a year; which is 20 times the entire education budget of India in 2019 (INR 93,000 crores).
- ◆ Direct public investments in the care economy of 2% of GDP would potentially create 11 million new jobs. This would make up for the 11 million jobs lost in 2018.

Inequality: Issue and Challenges

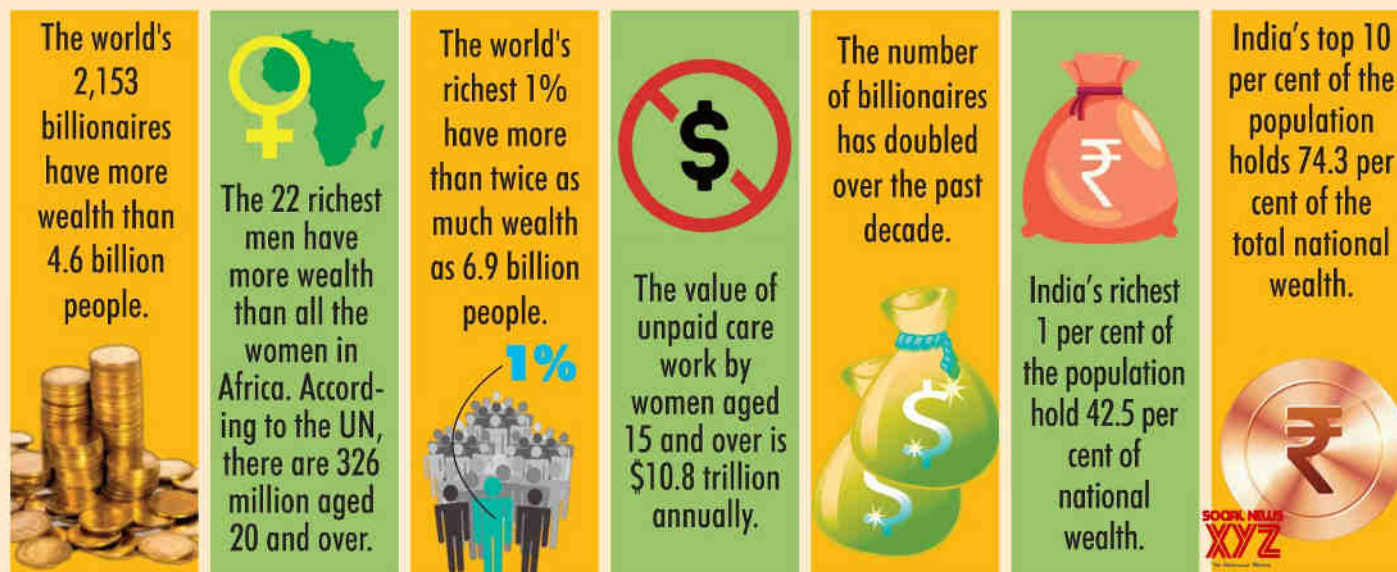
Extreme inequality is out of control. Hundreds of millions of people are living in extreme poverty while huge rewards go to those at the very top. There are more billionaires than ever before, and their fortunes have grown to record levels. Meanwhile, the world's poorest got even poorer.

Many governments are fueling this inequality crisis. They are massively under taxing corporations and wealthy individuals, yet underfunding vital public services like healthcare and education.

These policies hit the poor hardest. The human costs are devastating, with women and girls suffering the most. Despite their huge contribution to our societies through unpaid care work, they are among those who benefit the least from today's economic system.

Governments have fixated on growth and more often than not, been unresponsive to challenges faced by the most marginalized citizens. For decades they have pursued policies that enabled those at the top to build their power, wealth and influence

OXFAM REPORT'S KEY FINDINGS



(Source: Oxfam International)

IAN'S GRAPHICS

exponentially, leaving behind those at the bottom of the economy. This has led to a crisis point on economic inequality and care. But it doesn't have to be this way. Both dramatic levels of economic inequality and the looming care crisis can be tackled, but it will require concerted efforts and concrete policy decisions to mend the damage done and to build economic systems that care for all citizens. The solutions are there, but it should all begin with listening to the voices of those who have not been listened to in the past.

Extreme inequality is hurting us all - damaging economic growth, fueling crime, and squandering the hopes and ambitions of billions who are trapped at the bottom with no way out. It stops us from beating poverty and achieving equality between women and men. Such stark inequality is not inevitable - it is the consequence of political and economic choices. With extreme wealth comes power and influence - we're living in a world where the rules are rigged in favour of the few and at the expense of the many. So while the wealth of the few grows greater, the

poorest are left behind. The inequality crisis is also being fueled by the use of tax havens that allows multinational companies and super rich individuals to avoid paying their fair share of taxes. As much as \$7.6 trillion of personal wealth is being hidden in offshore accounts, and it has a devastating impact on poorer countries.

The growing gap between rich and poor is undermining the fight against poverty, damaging our economies and tearing our societies apart. Yet inequality is not inevitable - it is a political choice.

Governments around the world must act now to build a new, human economy that values what truly matters to society, rather than fueling an endless pursuit of profit. An economy that values the care work of women and girls instead of billionaires' wealth. An economy that works for everyone, not just a fortunate few.

The Special Case of Care Work

When we think of the gender gap our minds tend to leap to wage packets and

glass ceilings. But for women and girls the gender gap may be better illustrated by the long and often dangerous daily walks to fetch water, the countless hours they spend caring for others, cooking and cleaning. All these invisible tasks traditionally belong to them but are neither counted nor valued.

Care work is the 'hidden engine' that keeps the wheels of our economies, businesses and societies turning. And it is driven by women and girls who, with little or no time to get an education, earn a decent living, be involved in their communities or have a say in how our societies are run, are trapped at the bottom of the economy.

These are six solutions Oxfam believes are needed to close the gap between rich and poor and recognize the rights of carers and the importance of their work to communities. It proposes governments and corporations work together to:

- ◆ Invest in universal access to safe water, sanitation and domestic energy systems, as well as universal childcare, eldercare and care for people with disabilities.

TIME TO CARE

The world's billionaires, only **2,153 PEOPLE** in 2019, have more wealth between them than **4.6 BILLION PEOPLE**.



The combined wealth of the world's 22 richest men equals the wealth of all the women in Africa.



If you saved \$10,000 a day since the building of the pyramids in Egypt you would have only one-fifth the average fortune of the 5 richest billionaires.

The world's **RICHEST 1%** have more than twice as much wealth as **6.9 BILLION PEOPLE**.



The monetary value of **UNPAID CARE WORK** globally for women aged 15 and over is at least \$10.8 trillion annually –three times the size of the world's **TECH INDUSTRY**.



Taxing an additional 0.5% of the wealth of the richest 1% over the next 10 years is equal to investments needed to create:



117 MILLION JOBS

in education, health and elderly care and other sectors, and to close care deficits.

Way Forward

Growing academic and policy consensus suggests that progressive tax systems and adequate public spending on free public services and social protection systems are key to tackling both gender and economic inequalities and are a lifeline for women and girls living in poverty.

Public services such as health and education can redistribute and reduce the care workload and provide women with opportunities to choose the future and the employment they want. Further, as well as providing revenue, taxes can redistribute, helping to address inequality head on. However, when governments choose not to invest in these much-needed equalizing policies, they leave the most marginalized women and girls to fill the gap pushing them further into time and income poverty.

Fairer fiscal systems are essential to tackling the care crisis by raising the revenue needed to invest in a care system that meets everyone's needs, without relying on unpaid and underpaid work by women.

- ◆ End extreme wealth to end extreme poverty, by taxing wealth, high incomes, and cracking down on loopholes and inadequate global tax rules.
- ◆ Legislate to protect the rights of all carers and secure living wages for paid care workers.
- ◆ Ensure carers have influence on decision-making processes.
- ◆ Challenge harmful norms and sexist beliefs that see care work as the responsibility of women and girls and perpetuate economic and gender inequality.
- ◆ Value care in business policies and practices, such as creches and childcare vouchers, flexible working hours and paid leave.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: Issues relating to poverty and hunger.

General Studies Paper- III

Topic: Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.



3. DEMOCRACY INDEX 2019 AND INDIA : AN OVERVIEW

Why in News?

Recently, the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) — the research and analysis division of The Economist Group, which is the sister company to The Economist newspaper published a report that records how global democracy fared, analysing 165 independent states and two territories. The report prepared is called 'A year of democratic setbacks and popular protest'. A survey has been conducted by the Economist Intelligence Unit, based on which the said report and a Democracy Index have been released.

About the Index

The EIU's Democracy Index 2019 is reported to be based on five categories — electoral process and pluralism, functioning of government, political participation, political culture, and civil liberties. The report upon which the Index is based categorises the countries into following four types:

- ◆ **Full democracies** are nations where civil liberties and fundamental political freedoms are not only respected but also reinforced by a political culture conducive to the thriving of democratic principles. These nations have a valid system of governmental checks and balances, an independent judiciary whose decisions are enforced, governments that function adequately, and diverse and independent media. These nations have only limited problems in democratic functioning.
- ◆ **Flawed democracies** are nations where elections are fair and free and basic civil liberties are honoured but may have issues (e.g. media freedom infringement). These nations have significant faults in other democratic aspects, including underdeveloped political culture, low levels of participation in politics, and issues in the functioning of governance.
- ◆ **Hybrid regimes** are nations with regular electoral frauds, preventing them from being fair and free democracy. These nations commonly have governments that apply pressure on political opponents, non-independent judiciaries, widespread corruption, harassment and pressure placed on the media, anaemic rule of law, and more pronounced faults than flawed democracies in the realms of underdeveloped political culture, low levels of participation in politics, and issues in the functioning of governance.
- ◆ **Authoritarian regimes** are nations where political pluralism has vanished or is extremely limited. These nations are often absolute monarchies or dictatorships, may have some conventional institutions of democracy but with meagre significance, infringements and abuses of civil liberties are commonplace, elections (if they

Democracy Index 2019

India falls 10 places to 51st position

India slipped 10 places to 51st position in the 2019 Democracy Index's global ranking, according to The Economist Intelligence Unit, which cited "erosion of civil liberties" in the country as the primary cause for the downtrend. India's overall score fell from 7.23 in 2018 to 6.90.

Top 5

Rank	Country	Score
1	Norway	9.8
2	Iceland	9.58
3	Sweden	9.39
4	New Zealand	9.26
5	Finland	9.25

Bottom 5

163	Chad	1.61
164	Syria	1.43
165	Central African Republic	1.32
166	Dem Republic of Congo	1.13
167	North Korea	1.08

Saarc nations

Rank	Country	Score
51	India	6.90
69	Sri Lanka	6.27
80	Bangladesh	5.88
91	Bhutan	5.30
92	Nepal	5.28
108	Pakistan	4.25
141	Afghanistan	2.85

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit Report



take place) are not fair and free, the media is often state-owned or controlled by groups associated with the ruling regime, the judiciary is not independent, and there are omnipresent censorship and suppression of governmental criticism.

Observations in the Report

The Index is topped by Norway (9.87) and followed by Iceland, Sweden and New Zealand. North Korea (1.08) figures at the bottom.

While dropping India's rank to 51st spot the report noted that the average global score also recorded its worst value ever, down from 5.48 in 2018 to 5.44, driven by a sharp regression in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa, a lesser one in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, and by stagnation in the remaining regions that were covered. In the Asia and Australasia region, India ranks eighth, behind Taiwan and Timor-Leste.

As per the report almost one-half (48.4%) of the world's population live in a democracy of some sort, although only 5.7% reside in a "full democracy", down from 8.9% in 2015 as a result of the US being demoted from a "full democracy" to a "flawed democracy" in 2016.

The total score of some 68 countries declined from 2018, but almost as many (65) recorded an improvement. Thailand registered the biggest improvement in score owing to an election in March 2019, which was the first since the military coup d'état in May 2014, while China registered the greatest decline as discrimination against minorities, especially in Xinjiang, intensified, and digital surveillance of the population continued apace.

The report describes the year in Asia as one filled with "drama and tumult," with Hong Kong being the epicentre of protest in the continent.

At the global level, it was found the report "the sheer number of protests spanning different time zones" caught the attention of commentators everywhere.

India's Status

The latest edition of the Democracy Index is disappointing for India. The world's biggest democracy slipped 10 places in the 2019 global ranking to 51st place. The survey attributes the primary cause of "the democratic regression" to "an erosion of civil liberties in the country".

India's overall score fell from 7.23 to 6.9, on a scale of 0-10, within a year (2018-2019) — the country's lowest since 2006. India was graded in electoral process and pluralism (8.67), government functioning (6.79), political participation (6.67), political culture (5.63) and civil liberties (6.76).

The report talks about the repeal of both Article 370 and Article 35A and how ahead of the move, "the government deployed a large number of troops in J&K, imposed various other security measures and placed local leaders under house arrest, including those with pro-India credentials."

As per the report, "the government also restricted Internet access in the State." It says the NRC exercise in Assam excluded 1.9 million people from the final list, and that "the vast majority of people excluded from the NRC are Muslims." While the government says that most of the people excluded from the list are immigrants from Bangladesh, the government of Bangladesh "denies the same". It also cites the critics' claim that the exercise "targets the Muslim population and will lead to demographic changes along religious lines".

On the CAA, the report points out that the new citizenship law has enraged the large Muslim population, stoked communal tensions and

generated large protests in major cities.

India a Flawed Democracy

The Index also categorises India under "flawed democracies". According to the report, there are only 22 "full democracies" as compared to 54 "authoritarian regimes" and as many "flawed democracies," that includes the US too.

Opportunities beyond Democracies

Not to suggest that India should become more authoritarian but if observed closely an important trend in the modern global business strategy is to analyse the political decision-making process in different countries to ascertain the extent of risk exposure for investments. The return on investment becomes less important, or at least not as significant a concern as exposure to risk, in the real world of investments.

Perhaps this is why the world's major economies have been heavily investing in countries that are less democratic than those with long democratic traditions and collective decision making culture, like in India. The moneybags of the West have found it comfortable to deal with dictators and despots in underdeveloped countries. A nation like China, which cannot boast of having the best of democratic traditions, has been the major recipient of investments from the developed world and institutions patronised by them.

The logic behind choosing authoritarian states over democracies as preferred investment destinations is that the former have a less complicated mechanism, or without multiple layers, of decision-making, which facilitates direct contact with the top leadership. This guarantees exclusive business opportunities and greater flexibility without bothering about rules, regulations, ethics, and established business norms.

Limitations of the Report

Unlike reports by UN agencies and standard research institutions and universities, The Economist is a political journal, which reports and comments on current topics. The publication has every right to take sides and not be completely unbiased in its reports and editorial comments.

The Economist needs to have a truly global expertise in conducting surveys given the size of Indian democracy. The five very broad categories that are considered and quickest possible time that the report come out in only add to the challenges of the agency that prepares reports like this.

The report authoritatively confirms that “many of the 200 million Muslims do not have papers to prove they are Indian”. This implies that The Economist team must have surveyed directly about 200 million Muslims. Alternatively, it must have engaged the services of some expert survey agency that is nowhere mentioned in the report. In this situation, the questions on credibility and authenticity of the report and hence the index are bound to arise.

While making observation on repeal of Articles 370 and 35A the report takes deployment of troops and shutdown of in the state as one of its basis for giving score to India on civil liberties but it does make any observation regarding the complexities of history and political dynamics involved with state. Also, these measures taken by the government, despite temporarily being restrictive on people, should never be portrayed as entire country becoming less democratic.

Again, in case of report's notes on CAA, it lacks basic insight as the Act has no provisions that are against any rights of Indian citizens. Had the report by The Economist tried to communicate to its readers that the fear and consequent vandalism and violence is unfounded and motivated by groups having vested

interests, the report would have been received with more credibility.

Suggestions

The democratic set up is natural choice of an Indian mind. Everyone is for it and no one against. But still, if it has been pointed out that on certain aspect we as a government and people need to improve, we must welcome it. However, limited by resources and technological upgradation, the government must devise a way so that the restriction during an unpopular but necessary policy implementation is minimum.

As there is no country without its people, so the people also need to be more democratic and law abiding in their exercise of various liberties ensured for them by our Constitution. Be it politics, government, media or even common citizens; it is people who need to be more democratic in their attitudes. This is attainable by making people more aware, informed and educated. This is not only supportive for the people if they have to protest on something but it is also conducive for the government for properly communicating its policy to the larger masses.

This is where role of media takes central importance as they have immediate and broadest access to the masses that they can use to educate people and stop translation of unfounded fear into loss of public property and all round disturbance.

If the state and citizens in India are to have a relation of parent-patriae, it has to be a mutual one. Also, SC has made certain observations regarding access to internet being part of freedom speech and expression i.e. 19 (1)(a). As per the SC, “Expression through the Internet has gained contemporary relevance. It is one of the major means of information diffusion. Therefore, the freedom of speech and expression through the medium of internet is an integral part of Article 19(1)(a)”.

The court merely confined itself to declaring that the freedoms of speech, expression and conducting business on the Internet are fundamental rights integral to Article 19 of the Constitution and subject to reasonable restrictions. Along with this, the apex court has also ordered the government to make a committee to review the internet services in the affected regions in time bound fashion.

Conclusion

The reports and rankings that global organisation and political journals publish have their inbuilt limitations and compulsions. While taking a clue in our lacunae regarding the subject of the report, we as a country should only be guided by it neither impacted nor directed.

With regard to the democracy index, its limitations are already pointed out. So, independently of how we stack up against other countries, we have to beat our own record. The record is of being democratic minded people by nature.

India has to take care of the two dimensions of its democratic upgradation. One is with regard to making it a robust, participative and lifelike democracy from within that is by improving the government and the people from within the country. The second is regarding meeting the parameters that the indices of globally accepted organisations put for every country.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance-applications, models, successes, limitations and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures.

Topic: Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.



4. NEED FOR AN ARMS CONTROL REGIME IN POST INF WORLD

Context

It has been one year since the beginning of the end of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and there's still little clarity on what the future portends—especially in Asia.

Washington seeks to broaden the existing United States (US)- Russian agreement by including China in a new trilateral arms control framework. For many years, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) acted as a security guarantee for China. Nonetheless, China's growing military power and influence are producing counterpressures for China to deepen its participation in arms control.

Introduction

The US and Russia have more than 90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons. It is believed that they have the potential to destroy the Earth many times. The nuclear treaty between the two countries was curbed because of the INF treaty. Despite this, on August 2, 2019, the US announced the formal separation of itself from the INF treaty with Russia. President Donald Trump cited Russia's missile 9M729 and China as not being part of the treaty behind his decision. He said that under this treaty, while the US and Russia were prohibited from making special types of nuclear weapons, China was not part of it.

According to US by taking advantage of this treaty, China is rapidly increasing the number of its missiles in Asia as a thought-out strategy to compete with America and its allies. China is also angry with the US withdrawal from the INF treaty, but it is also true that it does not want to be part of this treaty. Chinese experts say that by withdrawing from the treaty, the US has indicated aggression

regarding its nuclear program and missiles. According to him, he wants to put pressure on Russia along with China through this. However, Chinese scholars have warned that if the US deploys its missiles in Asia in the future, its allies may suffer. America's withdrawal from the INF treaty will affect the military balance in Asia, the global arms control regime, its relations with Asian allies and Sino-Russian relations.

Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty

The 1987 INF treaty was signed by the then US President Ronald Reagan and the Soviet Union leader Mikhail Gorbachov after long negotiations between the two countries. This treaty came into existence on 1 June 1988. It was the most successful and far-reaching treaty in history in the field of arms control. Under this treaty, the US and Russia prohibited the testing of two classes of nuclear weapons.

- ◆ The first class consisted of medium-range missiles dropped from the ground,
- ◆ The second class consisted of such short-range missiles.

This included destroying nuclear missiles from 500 km to 5,500 km off the ground and destroying medium-range weapons in Europe. When the missile had a range of more than 5,500 km, it was considered as Strategic Ballistic Missile, which came under the New Strategic Offensive Arms Control Treaty (New Start). Under the INF treaty, US President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov agreed to destroy 2,692 small and medium-range missiles, including the Soviet Union with 1,446 missiles (including 654 SS-20 missiles), while the US 846 missiles were destroyed. These missiles were

both deployed against each other. The treaty helped end the nuclear arms race during the Cold War. This paved the way for a compromise between the two superpowers. Because of this, strategic nuclear weapons were destroyed and thousands of deployed weapons were removed. It played an important role in establishing peace and stability in international politics during the Cold War era, especially in Europe. It helped a lot in reducing the possibility of confrontation, increasing mutual trust between countries and ending the Cold War.

Conflict-bound INF treaty

Many decades of hard work are involved in reaching the point where we are today. Opponents of the arms control and disarmament ideology forget the thinking behind such treaties. The role played by these treaties in maintaining peace in the world has been forgotten. The INF treaty was largely successful, but it was always overshadowed by controversies. In 2014, then US President Barack Obama accused Russia of violating the treaty. The atmosphere worsened after 2017, when Russia began deploying the ground-launched cruise missile 9M729. The INF treaty prohibited the testing and deployment of missiles with a range of 500–5,500 km, whereas this missile falls within this scope. The Trump government started pressuring Russia over it from 2017, but in October 2018 President Trump suddenly changed strategy and announced his exit from the agreement on February 2, 2019. The same day, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced that Russia is violating the INF treaty even today. He also formally announced the US to end the treaty. US newspaper The Wall Street Journal quoted intelligence agencies as saying that Russia has four battalions

of 9M729 missiles. According to the National Intelligence Director, this missile can carry nuclear warheads.

With the end of the INF treaty, the deployment of medium-range missiles in Europe and the Indo-Pacific region outside Europe can also be accelerated. Under the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New Start), verification of how many nuclear weapons the US and Russia have, was agreed upon. It will also end in February 2021, unless Trump and Putin agree to extend it for another five years. The truth is that even though the US has discussed the problems related to the INF treaty a lot, it has never presented any evidence regarding its alleged violation of Russia. Despite this, the US gave Russia an ultimatum that if it does not destroy the 9M729 missiles including the launchers-equipment and is not ready to investigate it in the future, then it will exit the treaty.

Expansion of Chinese Missiles

In 2013, the US National Air and Space Intelligence Center revealed, 'China has the most active and many types of ballistic missiles in the world.' China is also improving the quality of ballistic missiles so that in this area in terms of nuclear weapons, its dominance could be established.

- ◆ Where China is located in the Indo-Pacific region, it has an advantage both geostrategic and geopolitical.
- ◆ China has deployed medium-range ballistic missiles Dong Feng-21 (DF-21 / CSS-5) near the Indian border as an offensive strategy. China's CSS-5 missiles have been deployed to target India's civilians.
- ◆ The missiles that China has deployed cover many areas of Russia, Japan, South Korea, Europe. Also, many military bases in the Indo-Pacific region of America are also in their ranks.
- ◆ China has not given any public information about its nuclear

weapons, but it is estimated to have 240 to 400 nuclear warheads.

- ◆ It is true that China is preparing for a limited conflict with the US over Taiwan, Senkaku Island and South China Sea. This has given rise to the possibility of war in these areas.
- ◆ China is preparing its plan for this by looking at the capacity of America. To what extent can the US intervene in the event of its attack on Taiwan, this aspect is also included in its planning. China's strategists have also kept this aspect in mind, which weapons the US can use in such a situation.

China is also preparing its nuclear capability keeping in mind the efforts to modernize the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

Need to bring China into INF Treaty

Many Western defense analysts have been saying for a long time that China has made large-scale ground-to-surface missiles aimed primarily at the Taiwan's entrenchment, targeting Guam's island with other major US targets. And there is bullying on America's allies in Asia. The purpose of this move of China is also to prevent American, Australian and Indian nine soldiers from entering the region. China wants to scare India, Japan, South Korea and Association of South East Asian Nation (ASEAN) countries in Asia with these medium-range missiles carrying nuclear weapons.

China's aggressive stance in the region has made America's traditional allies like Australia, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam and New Zealand worried. Also, the work it is doing in the South China Sea and China's claims on strategic waterways have further increased the concerns of the countries of the region. With such weapons dominating the China region, intercontinental ballistic missiles and hypersonic glide weapons

are increasing the ability to attack the American continent.

The way the China was expanding its weapons, the INF treaty was constantly being neutralized. Many experts working in the field of arms control believe that unless China is brought under its ambit, it is difficult to succeed in it. By the way, bringing China into the INF treaty will not be easy for Russia and the US, but for many reasons it is necessary to be a part of it.

US's Asia Policy and China

The US wants to deploy its missiles around the island chain and bring important bases of China under its control. With this, it wants to remove regional imbalances by neutralizing China's moves on the South and East China Sea. This will also boost the spirits of America's allies. In fact, despite China's increasing military power and activism, US allies such as Australia, Japan, South Korea and the Philippines are not ready for this.

On the other hand, after the US withdrew its medium and intermediate-range missiles after the withdrawal of the INF Treaty, it would severely affect global strategic balance and stability, increasing tension and mistrust, international nuclear disarmament and multilateral arms control procedures. Will disrupt and also disturb peace and security.

Following the US withdrawal from the INF treaty, Fu Kang, director general of the Department of Arms Control at China's Foreign Ministry, also warned China's neighbors not to act prudently and not to allow the deployment of US missiles in their territory. The US wants to deploy missiles in the island of Guam because the distance from here to the Chinese coast is less than 3,000 kilometers. The US has already deployed ground-dropping missiles on the island of Guam, but it will be difficult to stop it if China attacks.

Need for an Arms Control Treaty

If meaningful steps are not taken soon on arms control, then after about a year from now, there will be no treaty on nuclear weapons. After the end of the INF agreement, there is no doubt in starting a new arms race. The US and Russia have also tested new cruise missiles. Countries possessing nuclear weapons do not trust each other. In such a situation, the world has come to such a crossroads, where all those weapons control systems are seen scattered, which the planners had created to keep the world safe from the dangers of nuclear war. Today such a system of arms control is needed. The world expects both the superpowers to continue at least the New Start Treaty, which aims to limit the number of nuclear weapons of the US and Russia. There is talk of including other nuclear power countries of the world like Pakistan, India, Israel, North Korea and Iran in the talks on New Start. Today, mistrust between America and Russia has deepened. In such a situation, the need for an arms control treaty cannot be denied.

India and INF Treaty

India has to understand the changed situation in the matter of nuclear control closely. India will have to prepare accordingly. Arms control system is weakening due to geopolitical developments, development of new techniques, interest of the major powers and lack of political will. After

the end of the INF Treaty, policy makers in India need to pay attention to three things;

- ◆ First, diplomacy should be used to deal with any international pressure arising after the breaking of the treaty.
- ◆ Secondly, if there is a new treaty for this, will other countries with nuclear weapons also come under its purview? If this happens, it can increase India's troubles.
- ◆ Third, how to further protect, enhance and develop its missile programs. India should see what happens to the major powers of the world in this matter. India should prepare its plan accordingly.

India should now focus on developing hypersonic missiles (which hit at least five times the speed of sound) with missiles equipped with conventional nuclear capability. Nuclear-power countries are now investing in hypersonic weapons. China has already invested a lot in it. At the same time, India, along with Russia, is producing indigenous and supersonic BrahMos missiles, which kill at twice the speed of sound. India will have to plan its missile program keeping in mind the future challenges. It should accelerate domestic efforts and focus immediately on increasing international cooperation on hypersonic weapons.

Conclusion

There have been serious differences over nuclear weapons and international

security for a long time. In the last decade, the situation of arms control has deteriorated, which has increased the threat to global security. Many countries have meanwhile made a stock of arms. It is also true that the number of nuclear weapons is declining. But US's withdrawal from the INF treaty and the deployment of new missiles can do two things - first, Russia and China are ready for new nuclear disarmament to prevent the Indo-Pacific region becoming a target for nuclear weapons, turning it into a battlefield. Be it, just as Moscow agreed to the INF treaty in the early 1980s due to the deployment of nuclear missiles in Europe. Second, if they do not agree to the new treaty, then their economy will be weakened due to the arms race, so that they will eventually be forced to do it.

The US, Russia, China or any other emerging superpower cannot be convinced when the missiles race, unless the countries concerned initiate a treaty to stop it and find a way together to restore mutual trust. With this, both Russia and the United States should look into extending the timelines for the New Start Treaty.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

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5. ARE ENDLESS REMEDIES AVAILABLE FOR CAPITAL PUNISHMENT?

Why in News?

In a hearing before the Delhi High Court, the counsel for the Delhi government and the MHA informed the court that according to the Tihar Prison Manual rules and previous Supreme Court orders, if there is a

pending mercy petition, there is an automatic stay on the execution of the death penalty.

The high court pulled up the authorities, saying there has been no application of mind and that the system is suffering from cancer in response to

the submission that as per prison rules they have to wait for the other co-convicts to exhaust their mercy pleas as well. The court made the remarks while declining to hear the plea by Mukesh challenging the death warrant in Nirbhaya Case.

Introduction

Mercy petition has been one of the most debated and stressed topics in the arena of law and justice at domestic and international levels. Be it the House of Commons or a convention of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, Mercy petition and Capital punishment cohabit each other or it can be said that the need for knocking the doors of the President arises only after the convict has been sentenced to the death penalty.

In India, the clemency powers are given to the President of India as well as the Governor of the states through Article 72 and 161 of the Constitution of India 1950 respectively. The insertion of these articles authorizes the executive to grant Pardon, commute, suspend, reprieve, respite and to remit the capital punishment even if sentenced by the highest court of the land. The brainchild behind the insertion of article 62 is bonafide in nature which gives a death row convict a chance to cross-check any errors committed by the Supreme Court.

Provisions for Mercy Petition under Indian Law

As per the Constitutional framework in India, mercy petition to the President is the last constitutional resort a convict, when he has been punished by the court of law. A convict can present a mercy petition to the President of India under Article 72 of the Constitution of India.

Similarly, the power to grant pardon is conferred upon the Governors of States under Article 161 of the Constitution of India.

Article 72

- (1) The President shall have the power to grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment or to suspend, remit or commute the sentence of any person convicted of any offence—

Review Petition and Curative Petition

Review Petition: In India, a binding decision of the Supreme Court/High Court can be reviewed in Review Petition. The parties aggrieved on any order of the Supreme Court on any apparent error can file a review petition. Taking into consideration the principle of stare decisis, courts generally do not unsettle a decision, without a strong case. This provision regarding review is an exception to the legal principle of stare decisis.

Article 137 of the Constitution provides that subject to provisions of any law and rule made under Article 145 the Supreme Court of India has the power to review any judgement pronounced (or order made) by it. Under Supreme Court Rules, 1966 such a petition needs to be filed within 30 days from the date of judgement or order.

Curative Petition: A curative petition is the final and last option for the people to acquire justice as mentioned and promised by the Constitution of India. The concept originated from the case of Rupa Ashok Hurra Vs. Ashok Hurra and Anr. where the following question arose before the court of law- 'whether an aggrieved person is entitled to any relief against the final judgment/order of the Supreme Court, after the dismissal of a review petition?'

A curative petition is required to be certified by a senior advocate and then it is circulated to the three senior most judges and the judges who delivered the impugned judgment. There is no time limit for filing a curative petition and it is guaranteed under Article 137 of the Constitution of India.

Nirbhaya Case: It is intriguing to note that the convicts, who have been sentenced to death after following due process of law which has been upheld even at the highest level of Indian judiciary, have been delaying their execution on one pretext or the other. It appears that convicts enjoy more rights in the country than the victims or their relatives. In Nirbhaya case where four accused are being awarded death sentence, each convict separately filing 'curative petition' is a blatant abuse of judicial procedures. As on 29th Jan 2020, Supreme Court junked Mukesh Singh's plea as being on flimsy grounds then Akshay Thankur another accused in the same crime filed another 'curative petition'. Before this Pawan and Vinay, convicted in the same crime too filed separate 'curative petitions', which got rejected.

- (a) in all cases where the punishment or sentence is by a Court Martial;
- (b) in all cases where the punishment or sentence is for an offence against any law relating to a matter to which the executive power of the Union extends;
- (c) in all cases where the sentence is a sentence of death.

Thus, Article 72 empowers the President to grant pardons, etc., and to suspend, remit or commute sentences in certain cases.

Article 161 Provides:

Power of Governor to grant pardons, etc., and to suspend, remit or commute sentences in certain cases
 The Governor of a State shall have the power to grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment or to suspend, remit or commute the sentence of any person convicted of any offence against any law relating to

a matter to which the executive power of the State extends.

Process of Making a Mercy Petition

There is no statutory written procedure for dealing with mercy petitions, but in practice, after extinguishing all the reliefs in the court of law, either the convict in person or his relative on his behalf may submit a written petition in writing to the President. The petitions are received by the President's secretariat on behalf of the President, which is then forwarded to the Ministry of Home Affairs for their comments and recommendations.

A convict under the sentence of death is allowed to make the petition within a period of seven days after the date on which the Superintendent of jail informs him about the dismissal of the appeal or special leave to appeal by the Supreme Court. The Home Ministry in consultation with the concerned State Government discusses the merits of the petition. After the consultation,

recommendations are made by the Home Minister and then, the petition is sent back to the President for his decision.

Note: Even though the President and Governor are the executive heads, but they cannot exercise their discretion with regard to their powers under Articles 72 and 161. He is advised by the council of ministers under article 74 and 163. Both the executive heads are required to act on the advice of the appropriate government—Central and State Government. The advice of the appropriate Government binds the Head of the state.

The President can either accept or reject the mercy plea as per the advice by the council of ministers. However, the Constitution doesn't provide for a specified time limit to accept/reject the mercy petition. He can keep the petition in abeyance for an indefinite period if he wishes to.

President's pardon/rejection/delay is also subjected to judicial review. Delay in deciding mercy plea is a relevant ground for commuting the death sentence to life imprisonment. In this time period, the convict can seek judicial redress of grievances against the rejection of mercy plea. Also note that if the President grants an unfair pardon, SC can overrule it.

Who can file a Mercy petition on behalf of a convict on death row?

Anybody, including foreign nationals, can send a mercy petition with regard to such a person to the President's Office or the MHA. Mercy pleas can also be sent to the Governors, who forward them to the MHA for necessary action. A convict can file a mercy plea from jail either through prison officials or through his lawyer or even his family. Mercy petitions can also be emailed to the Home Ministry or the President's Secretariat.

What happens when a Convict Moves a Mercy Petition?

In case, the petition is filed within seven days then it is the duty of the Jail

Superintendent to stay the execution of the death sentence. However, this does not mean that after the expiry of seven days a convict cannot file a mercy petition. In such exceptional cases or intervening circumstances, it is the concerned state government that will decide the question of deferring the death sentence.

Rejection of Mercy Petition

Rejection of mercy petition must be forthwith communicated to the prisoner and his family in writing. Death row convicts are entitled to a copy of the rejection of the mercy plea. Minimum 14 days interval should be there between the receipt of communication of rejection and the date of execution. This time gap will enable the prisoner to prepare mentally, "make peace with god", and to "settle his earthly affairs". This will also enable the prisoner to have a final meeting with family. The Superintendent of Jail has the obligation to ensure that the family member of the prisoner receives the communication of rejection in time.

Capital Punishment and Rarest of the Rare Case Doctrine

While there is baffling subjectivity in imposition of capital punishment in India, globally, 104 countries have completely abolished death penalty whereas 29 others have abolished it de-facto (meaning no execution of any person has been carried out in the last 10 years). Indian laws do not hold a steady perspective of capital punishment but neither do they dissuade it completely.

The Doctrine of Rarest of Rare was established in the case of *Bacchan v. State of Punjab*. The Supreme Court, in this case, endeavoured to cut out a doctrine particularly for offences culpable with death to decrease the ambiguity for courts regarding when to go for the highest punishment of

the land. However, the scope of this phrase was left undefined. Later, in the case of *Macchi Singh v. State of Punjab*, the court tried to lay down criteria for assessing whether a crime fell into the category of "rarest of rare."

The year 2008 accounted for the case of *Prajeet Kumar Singh v. State of Bihar*, wherein the court ruled exactly on what would constitute a "rarest of rare case." The Court held that a death sentence would be awarded only, "when a murder is committed in an extremely brutal, grotesque, diabolical, revolting or dastardly manner so as to arouse intense and extreme indignation of the community."

Death Penalty in India has been restricted to the "rarest of rare" cases, yet, there are still various statutes that prescribe capital punishment despite the offences not being serious enough. Section 121 (waging war against the state), section 302 (murder), section 364A (kidnapping with ransom), etc. of the Indian Penal Code 1860 and other provisions like The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act 1987, Prevention of Terrorism Act 2002, Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989, Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act etc. prescribe offences punishable with capital punishment. The most common cases involving major death row convicts are terrorism and rape-cum murder cases.

An amendment in the year 2013 provided for the death penalty in case he inflicts an injury upon woman during rape which causes her death or to be in a persistent vegetative state. The death penalty can also be handed down to repeat rape offenders under the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013.

Guidelines on Various Procedures before Executing a Death Convict:

The following are the guidelines issued by the Supreme Court bench comprising Chief Justice P. Sathasivam, Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justice Shiva

Kirti Singh on various procedures before executing a death convict:

1. Solitary or single life confinement prior to the rejection of the mercy petition by the President is unconstitutional and should not be adopted.
2. Legal Aid: The prisoner is entitled to legal aid under Article 21 until his last breath and rejection or no rejection by the President of his plea does not take away that right.
3. The Court prescribed an elaborate procedure in placing the mercy petition before the President.
4. Even after rejection of the mercy petition by the President, the convict can approach a writ court for commutation of the death sentence or challenge the rejection of the mercy petition and legal aid should be provided to the convict at all stages.
5. When a mercy petition is received or communicated by the State Government after the rejection by the Governor, necessary materials such as police records, judgment of the trial court, the HC and the SC and all other connected documents should be called at once fixing a time limit for the authorities for forwarding the same to the Ministry of Home Affairs.
6. The rejection of Mercy Petition by the Governor or the President should forthwith be communicated to the convict and his family in writing.
7. Death convicts are entitled as a right to receive a copy of the rejection of the mercy petition by the President and the Governor.
8. It is necessary that a minimum period of 14 days be stipulated between the communication of the rejection of the Mercy Petition and the scheduled date of execution.
9. There should be regular mental health evaluation of all death row convicts and appropriate medical care should be given to those in need.

10. Copies of relevant documents should be furnished to the prisoner within a week by the prison authorities to assist in making mercy petition and petitioning the courts.

11. Prison authorities should facilitate and allow a final meeting between the prisoner and his family and friends prior to his execution.

12. Compulsory Post Mortem to be conducted on death convicts after the execution.

Present Scenario

The Central government has moved a plea before the Supreme Court to consider "victim centric" guidelines. This petition has been filed on the date that was originally scheduled for the death penalty of the Nirbhaya case convicts. The plea has sought modification of the guidelines laid down in the 2014 judgment of the Supreme Court in the Shatrughan Chauhan case, which had directed that the convicts must be given time to file mercy petitions before the death penalty can be carried out.

The plea requests that a limit should be set out to file a curative petition, while the 14 day period for mercy plea should be reduced to 7 days.

The government has argued that the guidelines laid down are "accused centric".

- ◆ "Even after the aforesaid elaborate scrutiny at more than one judicial level and in more than one stages, this Hon'ble Court was pleased to lay down certain guidelines in the said judgement which imposes further restrictions on the execution of death sentence." It further argued that the guidelines "do not take into account an irreparable mental trauma, agony, upheaval and derangement of the victims and their family members, the collective conscience of the nation and the deterrent effect

which the capital punishment intends to make".

- ◆ As the multiple petitions by the Nirbhaya convicts have created outrage in the country, the plea also calls for reducing the timeline for punishment in cases where multiple persons have been convicted of the same crime.
- ◆ "In case of multiple convicts of such horrific crimes who are awaiting death sentence, mandating the issuance of warrant by competent Court within seven days of rejection of mercy petition and execution of death sentence within seven days thereafter irrespective of the proceeding, if any, taken by his co-convicts." The rules currently in place call for death penalty to be carried out for all convicts at the same time.

This, according to the government, allows convicts to move different petitions one after the other and delay the process.

Conclusion

While taking care of the rights of the convicts, it is more important and need of the hour to lay down guidelines in the interest of the victims, their families and in larger public interest, lest the convicts found to be guilty of such horrible, and dreadful, cruel, abominable, ghastly, gruesome and heinous offences would be permitted to play with the majesty of law and prolonged the execution of the sentence awarded to them in accordance with the law.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary; Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.



6. ICJ RULINGS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON ROHINGYAS

Why in News?

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) unanimously adopted “provisional measures” on January 23, 2020, that require Myanmar to prevent genocidal acts against Rohingyas and take steps to preserve evidence. The ICJ was acting on an application by Muslim-majority Gambia last November which accused Myanmar’s military of committing genocide to wipe out the Rohingya population. More than 780,000 Rohingya fled across the border into neighbouring Bangladesh to escape the onslaught.

Background of the Proceedings

On 11 November 2019, the Republic of The Gambia filed in the Registry of the Court an Application instituting proceedings against the Republic of the Union of Myanmar concerning alleged violations of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

In its application, The Gambia argues in particular that Myanmar has committed and continues to commit genocidal acts against members of the Rohingya group, which it describes as a “distinct ethnic, racial and religious group that resides primarily in Myanmar’s Rakhine State”. The application contained a request for the indication of provisional measures, seeking to preserve, pending the Court’s final decision in the case, the rights of the Rohingya group in Myanmar, of its members and of The Gambia under the Genocide Convention.

ICJ Rulings

Following “Provisional Measures” were indicated on 23 January 2020, by ICJ to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on the “Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of

the Crime of Genocide (The Gambia v. Myanmar)”:

- ♦ The Republic of the Union of Myanmar shall, in relation to the members of the Rohingya group in its territory, take all measures within its power to prevent the commission of all acts within the scope of the Convention, in particular:
 - a) killing members of the group;
 - b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to the members of the group;
 - c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; and
 - d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- ♦ Myanmar to ensure that its military, as well as any irregular armed units which may be directed or supported by it and any organizations and persons which may be subject to its control, direction or influence, do not commit any acts described above, or of conspiracy to commit genocide, of direct and public incitement to commit genocide, of attempt to commit genocide, or of complicity in genocide;
- ♦ Myanmar shall take effective measures to prevent the destruction and ensure the preservation of evidence related to allegations of acts;
- ♦ Finally, Myanmar shall submit a report to the Court on all measures taken to give effect to this Order within four months, as from the date of this Order, and thereafter every six months, until a final decision on the case is rendered by the Court.

International Court of Justice

The Court is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. It was established by the United Nations Charter, which was signed in 1945 in San Francisco (United States), and began work in 1946 in the Peace Palace in Hague (Netherlands).

The Court has a dual role:

- To settle, in accordance with international law the legal disputes submitted to it by States (Contentious Function);
- To give advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by duly authorized UN organs and agencies (Advisory Function).

Only States are eligible to appear before the Court in contentious cases. At present, this essentially means the 193 Member States of the United Nations.

The jurisdiction of the Court in contentious proceedings is based on the consent of the States to which it is open. Since States alone are entitled to appear before the Court, public (governmental) international organizations cannot be parties to a case before it. However, a special procedure, the advisory procedure, is available to such organizations and to them alone.

In cases of doubt as to whether the Court has jurisdiction, it is the Court itself which decides. The judgment is final and without appeal. Should one of the States involved fail to comply with it, the other party may have recourse to the Security Council of the United Nations. The Court discharges its duties as a full court but, at the request of the parties, it may also establish ad hoc chambers to deal with particular cases (six cases have been dealt with by such chambers since 1946).

Risk of Irreparable Prejudice and Urgency

In view of the fundamental values sought to be protected by the Genocide Convention, the Court considers that the rights in question in these proceedings, in particular the right of the Rohingya group in Myanmar and of its members to be protected from killings and other acts threatening their existence as a group, are of such a nature that prejudice to

them could cause irreparable harm. The Court notes that the reports of the Fact-Finding Mission have indicated that, since October 2016, the Rohingya in Myanmar have been subjected to acts which are capable of affecting their right of existence as a protected group under the Genocide Convention, such as mass killings, widespread rape and other forms of sexual violence, as well as beatings, the destruction of villages and homes, denial of access to food, shelter and other essentials of life. The Court is of the opinion that the Rohingya in Myanmar remain extremely vulnerable, observing in particular that the Fact-Finding Mission concluded in September 2019 that the Rohingya people remained at serious risk of genocide.

In light of these considerations, the Court finds that there is a real and imminent risk of irreparable prejudice to the rights invoked by The Gambia.

Significance of the Order

- ◆ The ICJ provisional measures order is legally binding on the parties. In November 2019, Myanmar explicitly recognized the ICJ's authority and in December, Aung San Suu Kyi, representing Myanmar before the ICJ in her capacity as foreign minister, acknowledged the court's role as a "vital refuge of international justice."
- ◆ Under article 41(2) of the ICJ Statute, the court's provisional measures orders are automatically sent to the UN Security Council. Such an order will increase pressure on the council to take concrete action in Myanmar, including through a binding resolution to address some of the indicators of genocidal intent outlined in the comprehensive 2018 report of the international fact-finding mission.
- ◆ The ICJ order brings increased scrutiny of Myanmar's horrific brutality against the Rohingya and

raises the political cost of the UN Security Council's weak response to the crisis so far.

- ◆ In filing the genocide case, Gambia has the backing of the 57 members of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. Later, Canada, Netherlands and Britain welcomed Gambia's case against Myanmar as they considered it "their obligation to support the Gambia before the ICJ, as it should concern all of humanity." The growing global support for Gambia's case raises the stakes for Myanmar to engage in the ICJ process in a meaningful way and change its approach to the Rohingya. The Myanmar government cannot hide behind its powerful friends or the banner of sovereignty to escape its responsibilities under the Genocide Convention.

Myanmar's Contention

- ◆ **Standing Party:** Gambia did not have prima facie standing to bring a case before it in relation to Myanmar's alleged breaches of the Genocide Convention because The Gambia was not specially affected by such alleged violations. Also there was no dispute between the Parties since The Gambia acted as a "proxy" for the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation ("OIC").
- ◆ **Exaggeration:** Myanmar's leader Aung San Suu Kyi says the Rohingya have "exaggerated" abuses. The Independent Commission of Enquiry (ICOE) released the findings of its investigation, The ICOE conceded some security personnel had used disproportionate force and committed war crimes and serious human rights violations, including the "killing of innocent villagers and destruction of their homes". But the crimes did not constitute genocide, the panel decided.

Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

The Convention on Genocide was among the first United Nations conventions addressing humanitarian issues. It was adopted in 1948 in response to the atrocities committed during World War II and followed General Assembly Resolution in which the UN recognised that "genocide is an international crime, which entails the national and international responsibility of individual persons and states." India is also a signatory to this convention.

The jurisprudence of the International Court of Justice considers the prohibition of genocide as peremptory norms of international law. Moreover, the ICJ recognises that the principles underlying the Convention are principles which are recognised by civilised nations binding on States, even without any conventional obligation. Noteworthy, the Convention provides for a precise definition of the crime of genocide, in particular in terms of the required intent and the prohibited acts. It also specifies that the crime of genocide may be committed in time of peace or in time of war.

Convention, defines genocide as committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group. These acts could be: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

In the Convention the punishment is there for genocide but also covers other related crimes like: conspiracy to commit genocide; direct and public incitement to commit genocide; attempt to commit genocide; and complicity in genocide. Additionally the punishments are not just meant for constitutionally responsible rulers but also covers public officials or private individuals.

- ◆ **Existence of War:** Myanmar has held that there was an ongoing conflict between rebels like Rohingyas, who were rebelling for succession and the Myanmar's military. It held that the military action was a response to the attacks on military by Rohingya muslims. Myanmar has accused Rohingyas

of killing other minorities in the Rakhine state. Myanmar has said, that it was a response to extremist threat.

- ◆ **Clearance Operations:** Myanmar stated that violations of international humanitarian law may have occurred during what it characterizes as "clearance operations" carried out in Rakhine State in 2017.

Way Forward

The UN's highest court has recognised the suffering of Rohingyas. Though there is still a long way to go before this order becomes reality and we see actual improvements in the lives of the Rohingya, but the affected people had

their first taste of justice. Additionally it was a stunning rebuke of Aung San Suu Kyi, especially after she went personally to The Hague to defend the actions of the Myanmar military.

ICJ has made clear that it intends to supervise the implementation of the judgement. Though not unprecedented, the regularity with which Myanmar had to submit reports is striking.

Myanmar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs reacted to the ICJ's order as a "distorted picture of the situation". Though the order is binding but ICJ has no way of enforcing it. On the other hand, there is fear amongst Rohingyas to go back to Myanmar as they fear similar treatment. The

refugee crisis which has spilled over to the neighbouring nations calls for a composite formula to settle the issue which should encompass the needs of the refugees and balance their fundamental rights with the associated security issues. What must be taken care is that the matter of human suffering should not become the powerplay of international politics and international organisations.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

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7. STATUS OF WOMEN IN INDIA : A LONG MARCH AHEAD

Why in News?

The National Girl Child Day is observed annually on January 24. First initiated in 2008 by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the idea behind marking the day is to raise awareness about discrimination that girls face, the support they need and equal access to education, and good health.

Introduction

In Indian society, while on one hand girls are treated as forms of goddesses and are celebrated. They have actively participated in the freedom movement, led entire environmental movements like 'Chipko Aandolan' and in contemporary time they are endeavoring in every walk of life shoulder to shoulder with boys and men; but on the other hand there is very gloomy picture too that is painted with colours of female infanticide, gender discrimination in education, health and pay, cyber bullying, acid attacks and heinous crimes like rape and murder. It is in this regard that we

explore various dimensions associated with girls and women in today's India.

The objective to celebrate National Girl Child Day is to increase awareness among the people and ensure every girl gets equal importance as their counterparts; to increase awareness against the social stigma and discrimination faced by girl and to generate awareness on the issue of declining Child Sex Ratio and create a positive environment around valuing the girl child. It is in this regard that we will try to explore various dimensions associated with girls and women in today's India.

Women and their Challenges in India

While government and non-government organisations are working hard to empower the women yet, there are a few limitations that check the procedure of women empowerment in India. Social standards and family structure in creating nations like India, shows and sustain the subordinate

status of women. One of the standards is the proceeding with inclination for children over the introduction of a girl child take which is present in all social orders and groups. The general public is more one-sided for male boy child in appreciation of instruction, sustenance and different open doors.

Population

As per Census 2011, India's population was 121.06 Cr and the females constituted 48.5% of it. The gap in sex ratio in rural and urban India is decreasing over the decades, over all it is 940 females for 1000 males as per the census 2011. The States like Kerala, Puducherry and Tamil Nadu have better sex ratio while the Daman & Diu has sex ratio less than 700. There are 918 females to 1000 males in the age-group 0-6 years, the disparity is high in sex ratio of rural & urban area existing in Daman & Diu and Gujarat, these state/UT are having less females as compared to males in urban Area.

Health and Education

By and large regardless of when life expectancy is measured, at birth or later ages, women outlive men.

As per Census 2011, the literacy rate at all India level was 72.98% and the literacy rate for females and males are 64.63% and 80.9% respectively. During the last decade, the highest improvement in literacy rate was observed for rural females (24%). The adult literacy rate for females in rural areas was 56.8% vis-a- vis 74.8% in urban areas whereas for males the same in rural areas was 72.3% vis-a-vis 83.7% in urban areas.

Gender Gap in literacy rate has declined from 21.6 in 2001 to 16.3 in 2011. The gender gap in literacy rate has declined by 24.7% in 2011 in respect of 2001. In 2014 - 15, there were 93 girls per 100 boys in primary class, 95 in middle class, 91 in secondary class and 90 in senior secondary class.

India has a very poor public health outcomes, but educating girls can change that. Nationally, according to 2017 government data, 34 out of every 1,000 newborns do not survive till their first birthday, of whom 25 do not live beyond their first 28 days. These figures are improving, because of concerted efforts by the national programme—but the gap is much too large for a country aspiring to be a world-beater on most fronts.

Female literacy is one of the most powerful levers to improve a society's health and economic well-being. Ensuring that the girl child is educated sets off a virtuous chain reaction—improved literacy leading to delayed age of marriage, fewer and healthier children and corresponding reduction in poverty.

In many parts of rural India there is immense pressure on women to produce boys, who will supposedly be the "breadwinners". Multiple pregnancies with inadequate spacing adversely affect the health of mother and child. The good news is that where

there has been an improvement in literacy and delayed marriage, the fertility rate (average number of children per woman) has reduced. A woman who is educated, older when she gets married and plans fewer babies will proactively seek out good antenatal care. The message is clear: greater female literacy translates into better health outcomes in the short run and poverty alleviation in the long run. In this context, Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao makes a lot of sense.

Participation in Economy

Participation of women in economic activities in formal sectors of industries, services and agricultural sector is measurable, but activities of women in informal sectors such as house works, training and education of children, activities in agricultural sectors and household services are still not measured.

Women constitute roughly half of the economically active population, but their contribution to economic activity is far below the potential. Unlocking this large potential could work as catalyst in achieving goals as set under Sustainable Development Goals.

In 2011, the Workforce Participation Rate at all India level was 25.51% for female and 53.26% for males. While there was no rural – urban gap for males (53%), there was considerable rural – urban gap for females (rural - 30%, urban - 15.4 %).

As per NSS (National Sample Survey) 68th Round, in rural areas the most of the females and male workers are self-employed at 59.3 and 54.5% respectively. However, in urban areas, the percentage of female self-employed are 42.8% and also the same percentage of females are regular/salaried employees. Also, the average per day wage/salary earning for regular wage/salaried employees is skewed in disadvantage of women.

Participation in Decision Making

Women have proved to the world that there is literally nothing that is

unconquerable by them. They have taken over male bastions and proved successful in their own ways. Women today are law makers; we have had president and prime minister in our nation who were women. Despite all this, there is still huge gap between men and women when it comes to participation in decision making.

As of 2018, the percentage of women in Central Council is 12.2%, the percentage has been the same since 2016. There are 6 women in cabinet and 3 women are Minister of State. The number of women members in Rajya Sabha has decreased from 31 in 2014 to 25 in 2020. The highest number of female judges is 12 in Madras High Court. There are 3 women judge in Supreme Court of India.

The women participation in Panchayati Raj institution is highest in Jharkhand at 59% followed by Rajasthan and Uttarakhand at 58% each. In terms of elected women, the highest female representation is found in UP at 297235 and MP at 198409.

Social Obstacles in Women's Empowerment

Though women have achieved success in various spheres of life, the dark areas of humanism do exist even in modern days. We have evidences from NCRB (national crime records bureau) regarding cases of rapes, mental and physical harassments, dowry deaths, cases of domestic violence, etc. This all can be attributed to the attitude with which girls and women in our country are viewed. Women today are definitely empowered with self confidence and boldness to carry on the world without fear, yet in terms of women safety, there are still lots to be achieved.

Majority of cases under crimes against women out of total IPC crimes against women were registered under 'Cruelty by Husband or His Relatives' (31.9%) followed by 'Assault on Women with Intent to Outrage her Modesty' (27.6%), 'Kidnapping & Abduction of Women' (22.5%) and

'Rape' (10.3%). The crime rate per lakh women population is 58.8 in 2018 in comparison with 57.9 in 2017.

A total of 67,134 children (19,784 male, 47,191 female and 159 transgender) were reported missing in 2018. During the year 2018, a total of 71,176 children (22,239 male, 48,787 female and 150 transgender) were recovered/traced.

During 2016, the highest percentages of rape victims were reported for the age group 18-30 years at 42%. The second highest percentage of rape victims belonged to the age group of 16-18 years with 22% of victims. As per the trend of suicides, incidence for male is higher for females. During 2015, the percentage of suicide was highest for house wives at 53% while 10% of female students committed suicide.

Government Initiatives

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao: This scheme started by the BJP-led NDA government in January 2015 aims at reducing the CSR (Child Sex Ratio), provide equal opportunities for education. This is a joint initiative undertaken by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and HRD Ministry. The scheme had an initial funding of Rs 100 crore.

Sukanya Samridhhi Yojana: This scheme started by the government helps parents save for the girl child's education and marriage from the beginning. The girl child should be less than 10 when the account is opened. The account can remain operational till the girl is 21.

Mahila Samridhi Yojana (MSY), Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY), Women Entrepreneur Development programme Mahila Samakhya, Swayasidha, Swa Shakti Group, Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP), Swalamban, etc. Creches/ Day care centre for the children of working and ailing mother, Hostels for working women, Swadhar, Integrated Child Development Services

(ICDS), Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescence Girls (RGSEAG), The Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme for Children of Working Mothers, Integrated Child Protection scheme (ICPS), Dhanalakshmi, Ujjawala, Scheme for Gender Budgeting (XI Plan), Working Women's Forum, Indira Mahila Kendra, Mahila Samiti Yojana, and Indira Priyadarshini Yojana are other important schemes and programmes that aim at emancipation of girl/women.

Constitutional Provisions for Empowering Women in India

- ◆ Equality before law for all persons (Article-14).
- ◆ Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth (Article 15(I)).
- ◆ However, special provisions may be made by the state in favors of women and children Article 15(3).
- ◆ Equality of opportunity for all citizens relating to employment or appointment to any office under the state (Article 16).
- ◆ State policy to be directed to securing for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood (Article 39(a); (v) equal pay for equal work for both men and women (Article 39(d)).
- ◆ Provisions to be made by the state for securing just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief (Article 42).
- ◆ Promotion of harmony by every citizen of India and renouncement of such practices which are derogatory to the dignity of women Article 51A(e).
- ◆ Reservation of not less than one-third of total seats for women in direct election to local bodies, viz; Panchayats and Municipalities (Articles 343(d) and 343 (T).

Way Forward

These constitutional provisions empower women and put them on

equal footing with respect to men and the in-place legal safeguards deter the crimes against girls and women. Governments, both at the centre and at the states, have launched various schemes that target women's/girl's educational, health-related, safety or overall development. With all this already in force, yet the girl child or women are at disadvantage most of the time solely due to their being females. This reality calls for a practical change of attitude with which the society sees them.

One way of dealing with this is adding significance to the activities that women and girls perform within home but don't fetch monetary gain. The same was also pointed out in last year's economic survey. Evaluating the significance of contributions in monetary terms forces women to become like men not equal to men. It should be welcomed if birth of a girl child is celebrated and made into a popular campaign and women are respected in their very own nature i.e. the way they are made not by burdening them with economic and gender inferiority and calling forced-sameness as empowerment.

As it is "we the people" who make this nation, so it is imperative that the onus of changing the situation of women and girls is on us. After all, no scheme, programme or even awareness campaign can be successful without people's participation in it.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/ Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.



SEVEN SUBJECTIVE QUESTIONS WITH MODEL ANSWERS

1. The Bru-Reang Agreement : A Step Towards Long Lasting Peace

Q. Recently four-party agreement has been inked to resolve the 22 year old Bru refugee crisis. Discuss the efficacy of this agreement in resolving ethnic conflict in Northeast.

Hints:

- ◆ A four-party agreement was signed on January 16, between the Centre, the Mizoram government, the Tripura government, and an apex body of the internally displaced Brus in the presence of Home Minister to arrive at a solution for the Bru repatriation issue.
- ◆ All Bru currently living in temporary relief camps in Tripura will be settled in the state, if they want to stay on. The Bru who returned to Mizoram in the eight phases of repatriation since 2009, cannot, however, come back to Tripura.
- ◆ The agreement to settle some 35,000 Bru tribal people in Tripura and not in Mizoram from where they were displaced, could encourage the creation of ethnocentric States in the northeast. The move, according to some rights activists has set a bad precedent. The “solution” has the potential of creating conflicts between the Brus and indigenous communities of Tripura, but addresses the insecurities of a tribe that survived and fled violence.
- ◆ The northeast has had a history of ethnic conflicts — not only between the “indigenous” and “settlers” but inter-tribe too — and issues could also arise within smaller sub-groups within the same tribe. For instance, the Rongmei Nagas, most of whom are based in Assam, are deprived of Scheduled Tribe status in Nagaland. Meghalaya meanwhile, has proposed an amendment to the Sixth Schedule for stripping tribes other than the dominant Garo, Khasi and Jaintia from benefits.
- ◆ After the state signed a revised 'four-corner agreement' to resolve the 22-year-old refugee crisis, political parties and civil society organisations of Mizoram have also welcomed the agreement. The agreement which was materialised after nine attempts of repatriation is

likely to help the government to win the trust of tribals in the northeast.

2. Oxfam Inequality Report 2020 : Time to Care

Q. Extreme inequality is damaging economic growth, fueling crime, and squandering the hopes and ambitions of billions who are trapped at the bottom with no way out. Discuss it in the context of recently released Oxfam report on inequality.

Hints:

- ◆ A recent report showed that India's richest 1 per cent of the population hold 42.5 per cent of national wealth while the bottom 50 per cent, the majority of the population, owns a mere 2.8 per cent. According to an Oxfam 'Time to Care' report, India's top 10 per cent of the population holds 74.3 per cent of the total national wealth while the bottom 90 percent holds 25.7 percent of national wealth.
- ◆ Regarding India, Oxfam report held that the combined total wealth of 63 Indian billionaires is higher than the total Union Budget of India for the fiscal year 2018-19 which was at INR 24,42,200 crore.
- ◆ Extreme inequality is hurting us all - damaging economic growth, fueling crime, and squandering the hopes and ambitions of billions who are trapped at the bottom with no way out.
- ◆ The inequality crisis is also being fueled by the use of tax havens that allows multinational companies and super rich individuals to avoid paying their fair share of taxes. As much as \$7.6 trillion of personal wealth is being hidden in offshore accounts, and it has a devastating impact on poorer countries.
- ◆ Growing academic and policy consensus suggests that progressive tax systems and adequate public spending on free public services and social protection systems are key to tackling both gender and economic inequalities and are a lifeline for women and girls living in poverty.

3. Democracy Index 2019 and India : An Overview

Q. Democracy in India has degraded as per a recent report. Discuss how reflective the observations of the report are as compared to the realities in the country.

Hints:

- ◆ The latest edition of the Democracy Index is disappointing for India. The world's biggest democracy slipped 10 places in the 2019 global ranking to 51st place. The survey attributes the primary cause of "the democratic regression" to "an erosion of civil liberties in the country".
- ◆ Unlike reports by UN agencies and standard research institutions and universities, The Economist is a political journal, which reports and comments on current topics. The publication has every right to take sides and not be completely unbiased in its reports and editorial comments.
- ◆ The Economist needs to have a truly global expertise in conducting surveys given the size of Indian democracy. The five very broad categories that are considered and quickest possible time that the report come out in only add to the challenges of the agency that prepares reports like this.
- ◆ While making observation on repeal of Articles 370 and 35A the report takes deployment of troops and shutdown of in the state as one of its basis for giving score to India on civil liberties but it does make any observation regarding the complexities of history and political dynamics involved with state. Also, these measures taken by the government, despite temporarily being restrictive on people, should never be portrayed as entire country becoming less democratic.
- ◆ India has to take care of the two dimensions of its democratic upgradation. One is with regard to making it a robust, participative and lifelike democracy from within that is by improving the government and the people from within the country. The second is regarding meeting the parameters that the indices of globally accepted organisations put for every country.

4. Need for an Arms Control Regime in Post INF World

Q. Discuss how will the world order address new challenges and opportunities in a post-INF world.

Hints:

- ◆ The 1987 INF treaty was signed by the then US President Ronald Reagan and the Soviet Union leader

Mikhail Gorbachov after long negotiations between the two countries. This treaty came into existence on 1 June 1988. It was the most successful and far-reaching treaty in history in the field of arms control. Under this treaty, the US and Russia prohibited the testing of two classes of nuclear weapons.

- ◆ With the end of the INF treaty, the deployment of medium-range missiles in Europe and the Indo-Pacific region outside Europe can also be accelerated. Under the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New Start), verification of how many nuclear weapons the US and Russia have. It will also end in February 2021, unless Trump and Putin agree to extend it for another five years.
- ◆ If meaningful steps are not taken soon on arms control, then after about a year from now, there will be no treaty on nuclear weapons. After the end of the INF agreement, there is no doubt in starting a new arms race. The US and Russia have also tested new cruise missiles. Countries possessing nuclear weapons do not trust each other. In such a situation, the world has come to such a crossroads, where all those weapons control systems are seen scattered, which the planners had created to keep the world safe from the dangers of nuclear war.
- ◆ Today such a system of arms control is needed. The world expects both the superpowers to continue at least the New Start Treaty, which aims to limit the number of nuclear weapons of the US and Russia. There is talk of including other nuclear power countries of the world like Pakistan, India, Israel, North Korea and Iran in the talks on New Start.

5. Are Endless Remedies Available for Capital Punishment?

Q. Discuss the rationale behind the guidelines issued by SC on various procedures before executing a death convict. Is there a need to re-examine?

Hints:

- ◆ The following are the guidelines issued by the Supreme Court bench comprising Chief Justice P. Sathasivam, Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justice Shiva Kirti Singh on various procedures before executing a death convict:
- ◆ Solitary or single life confinement prior to the rejection of the mercy petition by the President is unconstitutional and should not be adopted.
- ◆ The Court prescribed an elaborate procedure in placing the mercy petition before the President.

- ◆ The rejection of Mercy Petition by the Governor or the President should forthwith be communicated to the convict and his family in writing.
- ◆ The Central government has moved a plea before the Supreme Court to consider "victim centric" guidelines.
- ◆ The guidelines "do not take into account an irreparable mental trauma, agony, upheaval and derangement of the victims and their family members, the collective conscience of the nation and the deterrent effect which the capital punishment intends to make".
- ◆ While taking care of the rights of the convicts, it is more important and need of the hour to lay down guidelines in the interest of the victims, their families and in larger public interest.

6. ICJ Rulings and Its Implications on Rohingyas

Q. Discuss the significance of ICJ order in context of alleged atrocities in Myanmar over Rohingyas community.

Hints:

- ◆ The ICJ was acting on an application by Muslim-majority Gambia last November which accused Myanmar's military of committing genocide to wipe out the Rohingya population.
- ◆ The International Court of Justice (ICJ) unanimously adopted "provisional measures" on January 23, 2020, that require Myanmar to prevent genocidal acts against Rohingyas and take steps to preserve evidence.
- ◆ The ICJ provisional measures order is legally binding on the parties.
- ◆ Under article 41(2) of the ICJ Statute, the court's provisional measures orders are automatically sent to the UN Security Council. Such an order will increase pressure on the council to take concrete action in Myanmar.
- ◆ The ICJ order brings increased scrutiny of Myanmar's horrific brutality against the Rohingya and raises the political cost of the UN Security Council's weak response to the crisis so far.
- ◆ The refugee crisis which has spilled over to the neighbouring nations calls for a composite formula to settle the issue which should encompass the needs of the refugees and balance their fundamental rights with the associated security issues.

- ◆ What must be taken care is that the matter of human suffering should not become the powerplay of international politics and international organisations.

7. Status of Women in India : A Long March Ahead

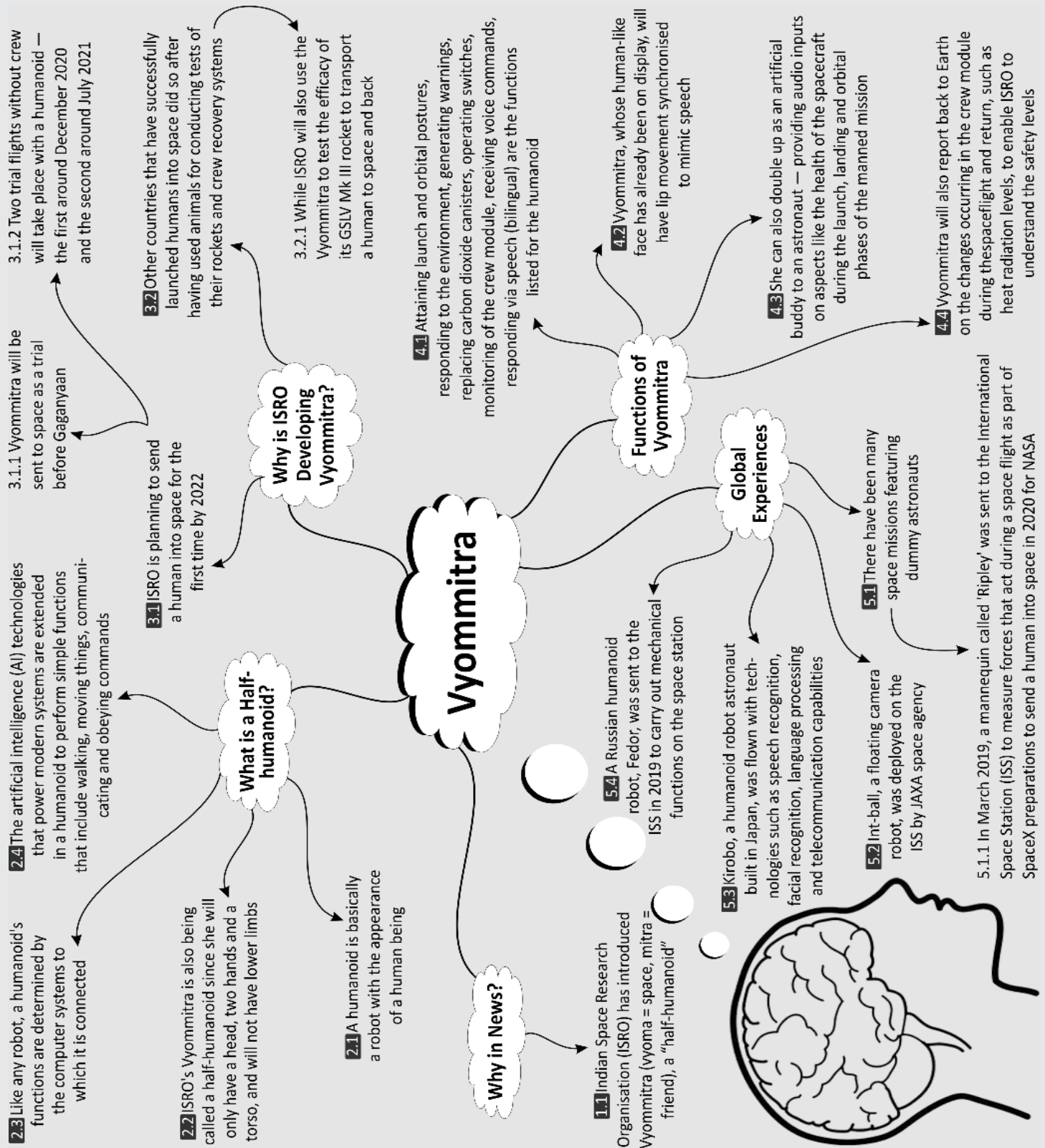
Q. Examine the various challenges faced by Indian women in contemporary times. Also discuss the various government initiatives in this regard.

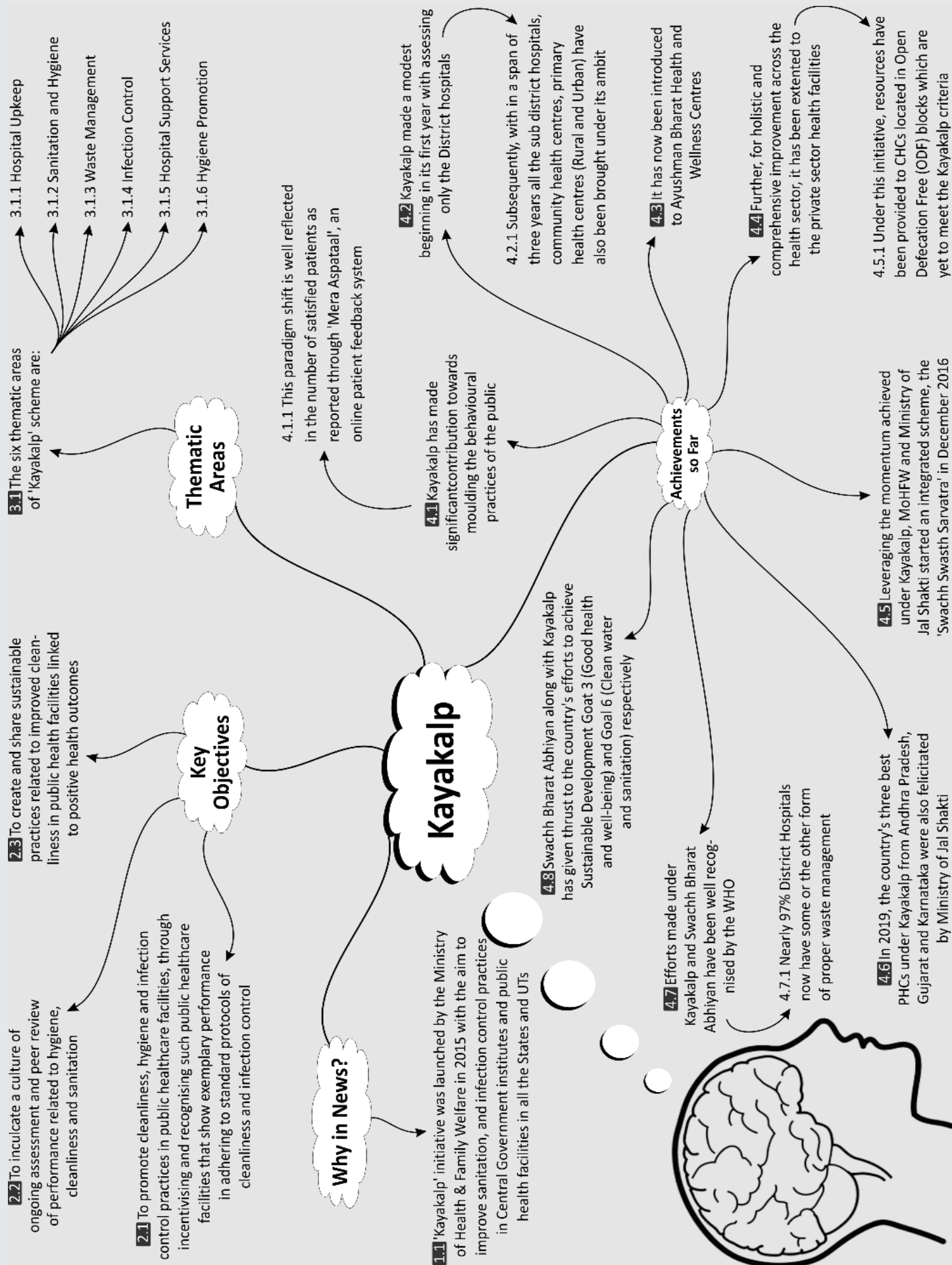
Hints:

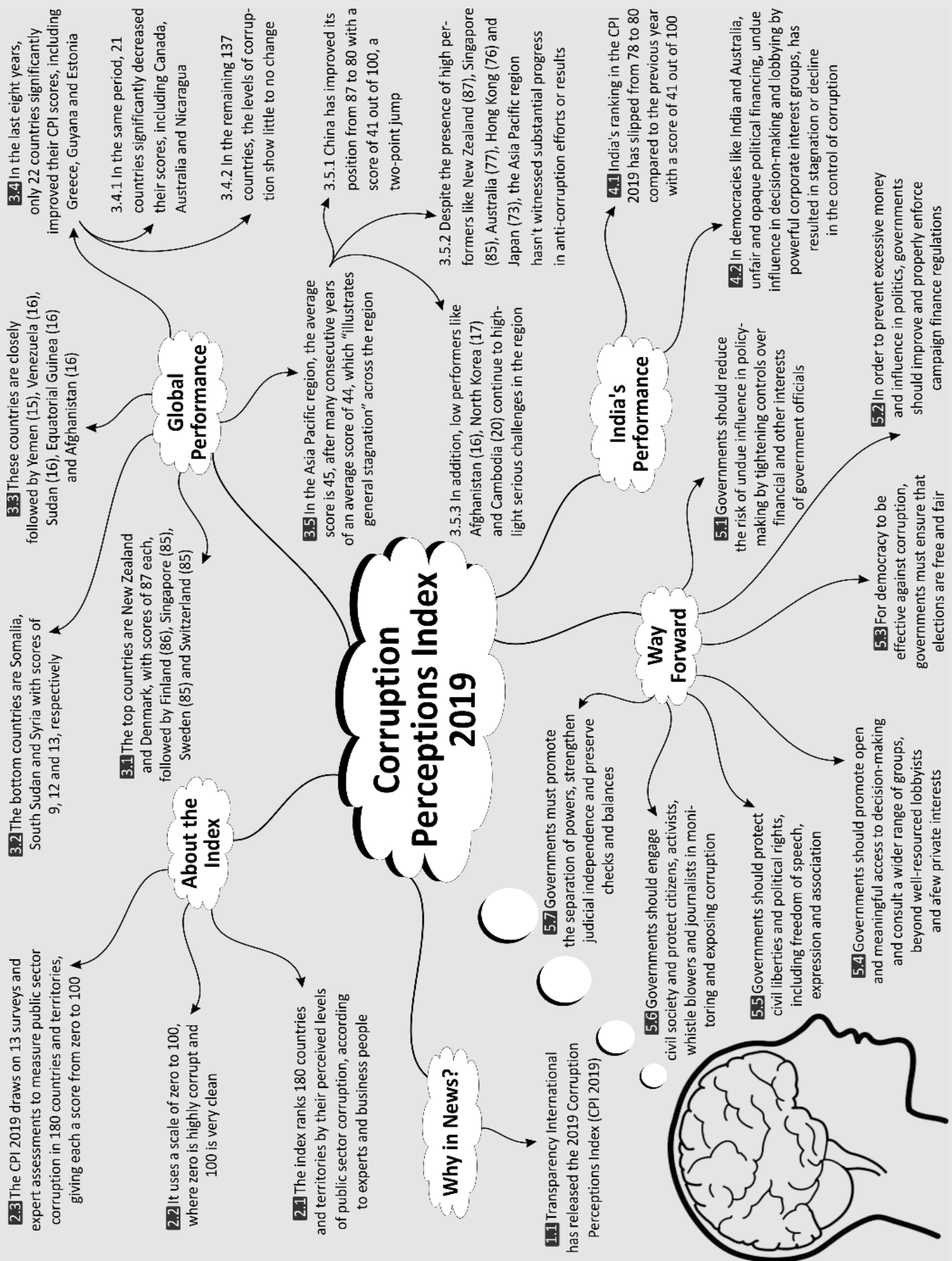
- ◆ While government and non-government organisations are working hard to empower the women yet, there are a few limitations that check the procedure of women empowerment in India.
- ◆ As per Census 2011, the literacy rate at all India level was 72.98% and the literacy rate for females and males are 64.63% and 80.9% respectively.
- ◆ Female literacy is one of the most powerful levers to improve a society's health and economic well-being.
- ◆ Participation of women in economic activities in formal sectors of industries, services and agricultural sector is measurable, but activities of women in informal sectors such as house works, training and education of children, activities in agricultural sectors and household services are still not measured.
- ◆ Though women have achieved success in various spheres of life, the dark areas of humanism do exist even in modern days.
- ◆ We have evidences from NCRB (national crime records bureau) regarding cases of rapes, mental and physical harassments, dowry deaths, cases of domestic violence, etc.
- ◆ **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao:** This scheme started by the BJP-led NDA government in January 2015 aims at reducing the CSR (Child Sex Ratio), provide equal opportunities for education.
- ◆ **Sukanya Samridhhi Yojana:** This scheme started by the government helps parents save for the girl child's education and marriage from the beginning.
- ◆ Mahila Samridhi Yojana (MSY), Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY), Women Entrepreneur Development pro-gramme Mahila Samakhya, Swayajidha, Swa Shakti Group, Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP), Swalamban etc. are other important schemes and programmes that aim at emancipation of girl/women.

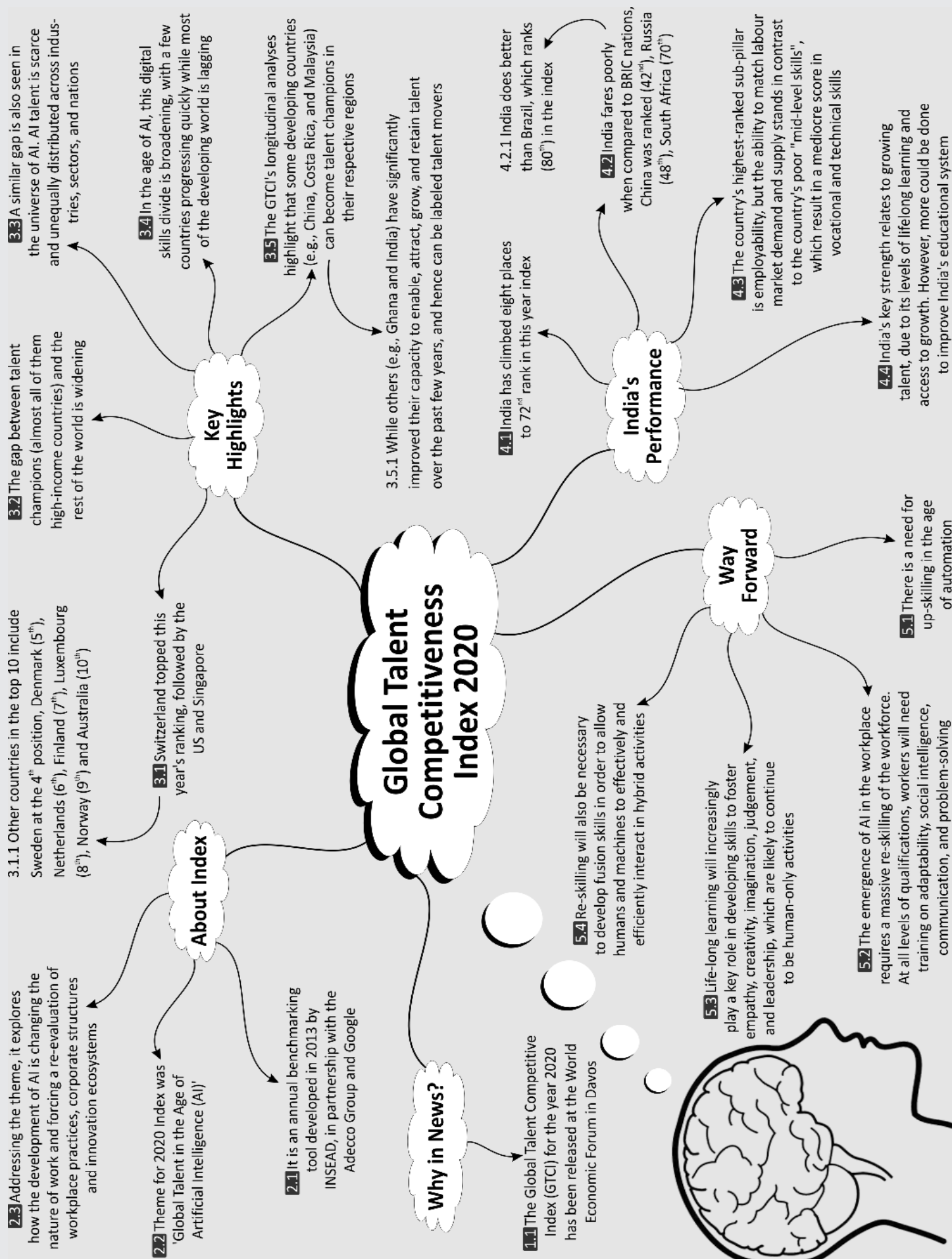


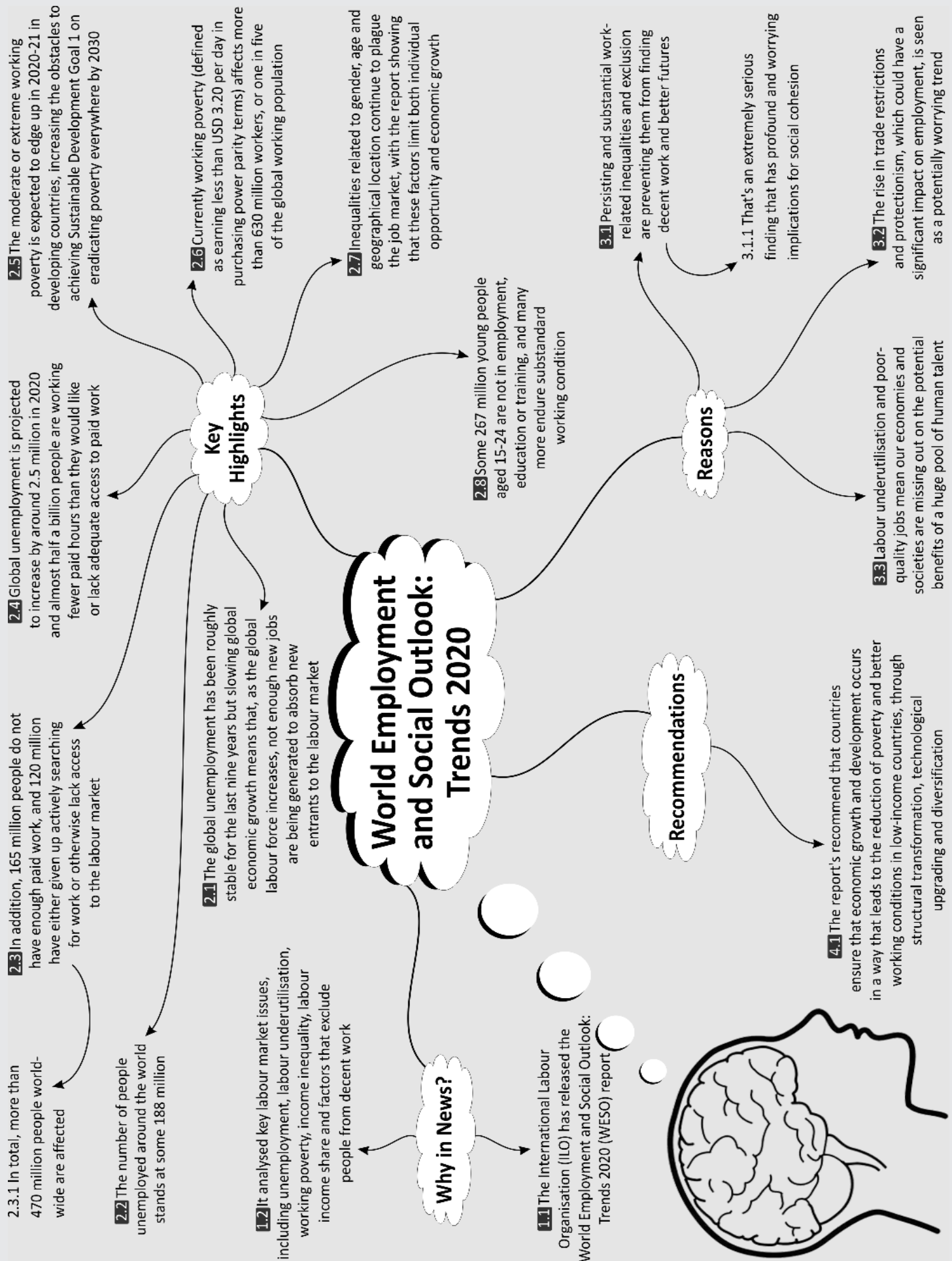
SEVEN BRAIN BOOSTERS

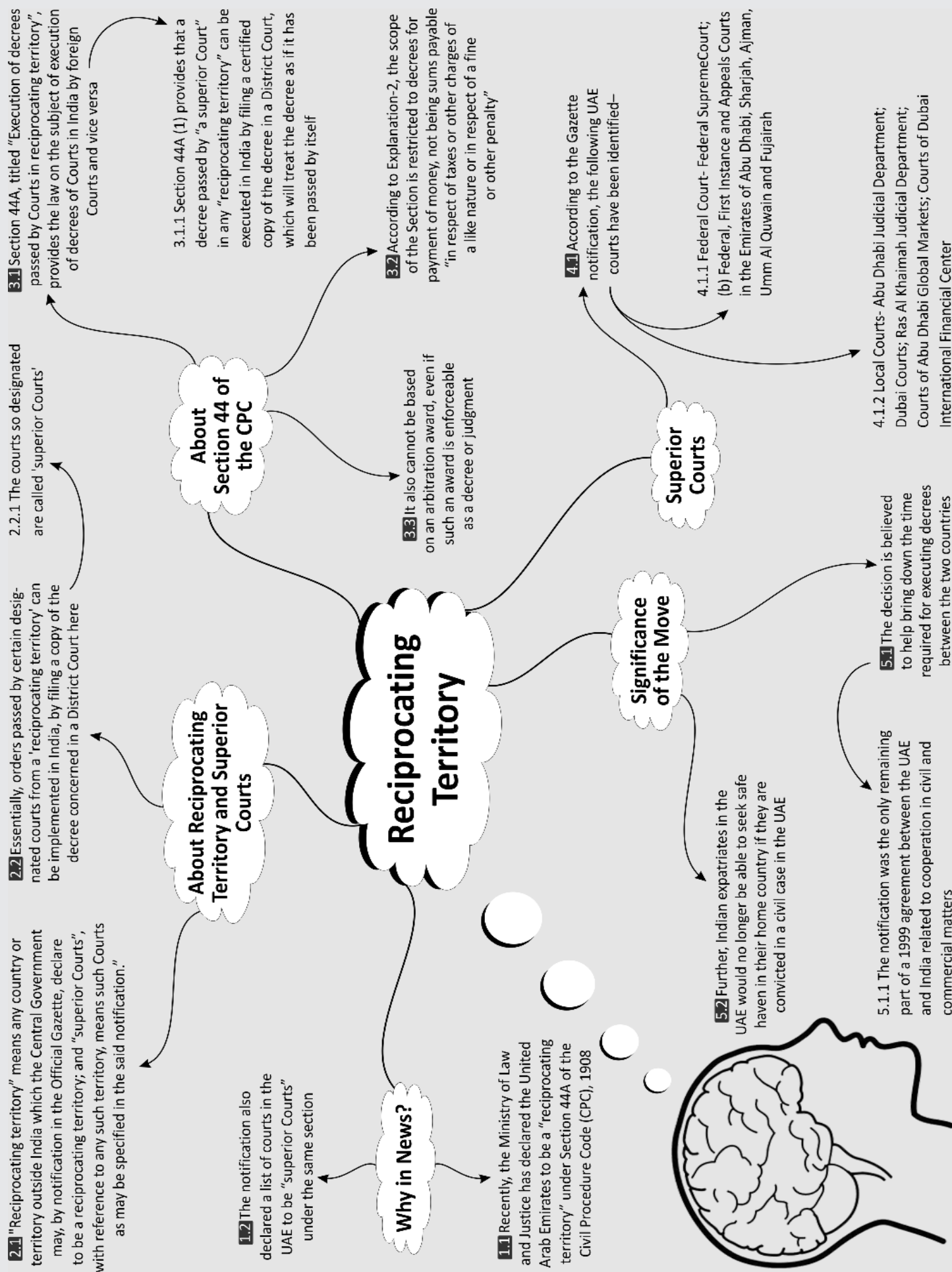


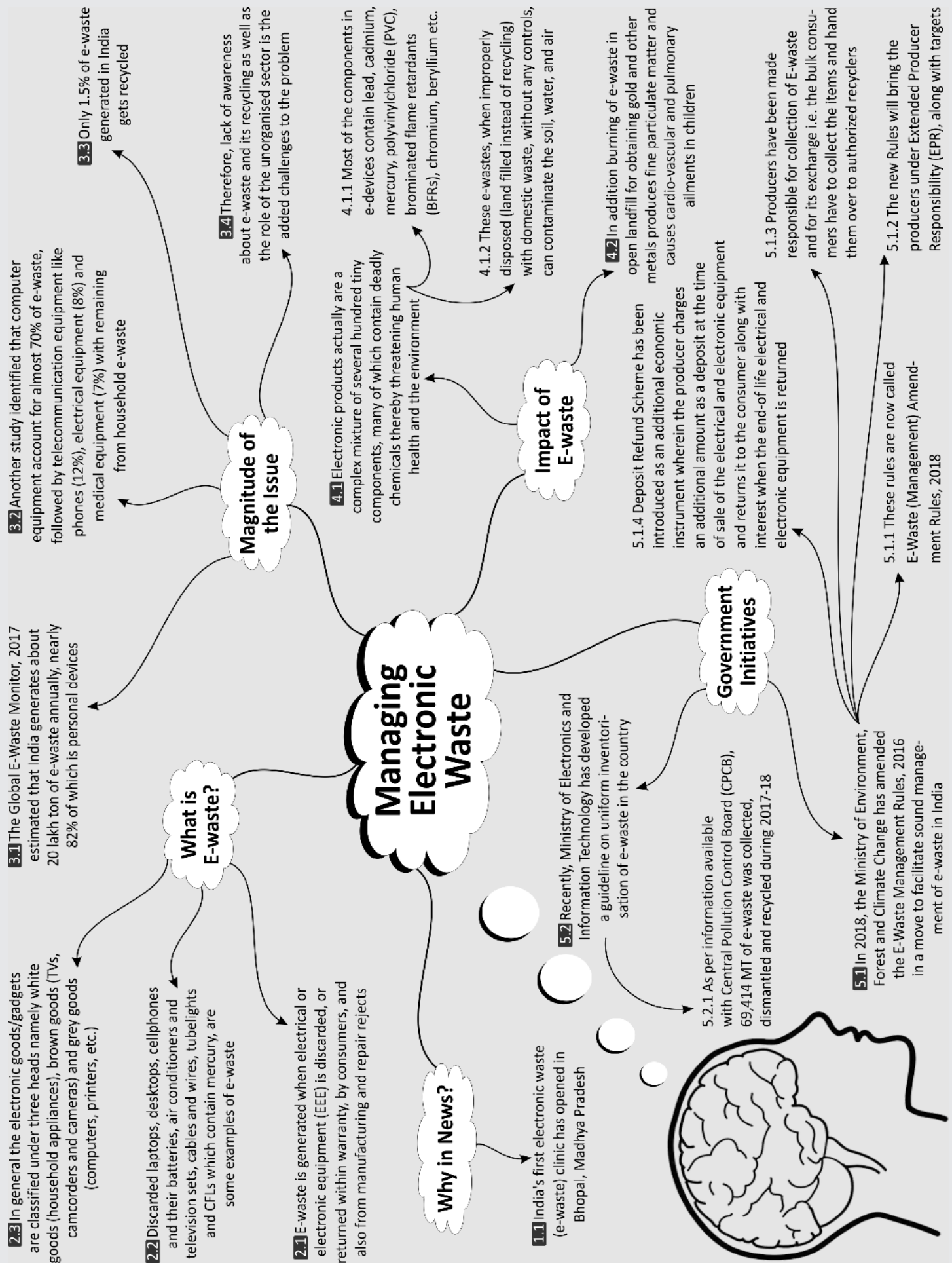












SEVEN MCQ's WITH EXPLANATORY ANSWERS

(Based on Brain Boosters)

1. Vyommitra

Q. The word 'Vyommitra' is sometimes mentioned in news. Consider the following statements in this regard:

1. It is a half-humanoid since she will only have a head, two hands and a torso, and will not have lower limbs.
2. Vyommitra will be sent to space as a trial before Gaganyaan, which will be launched in 2022.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation: Both statements are correct. Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has introduced Vyommitra, a "half-humanoid". A humanoid is basically a robot with the appearance of a human being. ISRO's Vyommitra is also being called a half-humanoid since she will only have a head, two hands and a torso, and will not have lower limbs.

Vyommitra will be sent to space as a trial before Gaganyaan. Two trial flights without crew will take place with a humanoid — the first around December 2020 and the second around July 2021.

2. Kayakalp

Q. Consider the following statements with respect to 'Kayakalp Scheme':

1. 'Kayakalp' initiative was launched by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare in 2015.
2. It aimed to improve sanitation, hygiene and infection control practices in Central Government schools as well as state government schools.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct. 'Kayakalp' initiative was launched by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare in 2015.

Statement 2 is incorrect. It was launched to promote cleanliness, hygiene and infection control practices in public healthcare facilities, through incentivising and recognising such public healthcare facilities that show exemplary performance in adhering to standard protocols of cleanliness and infection control in Central Government institutions and public health facilities in all states and UTs.

3. Corruption Perceptions Index 2019

Q. With reference to the 'Corruption Perception Index 2019', consider the following statements:

1. It has been released by Transparency International.
2. It has been topped by New Zealand and Denmark.
3. India has been ranked at the 80th position.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (d)

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct. Transparency International has released the 2019 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI 2019).

Statement 2 and 3 are correct. The top countries are New Zealand and Denmark, with scores of 87 each, followed by Finland (86), Singapore (85), Sweden (85) and Switzerland (85).

India's ranking in the CPI 2019 has slipped from 78 to 80 compared to the previous year with a score of 41 out of 100.

4. Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2020

Q. Consider the following statements with respect to 'Global Talent Competitive Index 2020':

1. It has been released by World Economic Forum.
2. Theme for 2020 Index was 'Global Talent in the Age of Artificial Intelligence (AI)'

3. It has been ranked India at the 78th position.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only b) 2 only
c) 2 and 3 only d) 3 only

Answer: (b)

Explanation: **Statement 1 is incorrect.** The Global Talent Competitive Index (GTCI) for the year 2020 has been released at the World Economic Forum in Davos. It is an annual benchmarking tool developed in 2013 by INSEAD, in partnership with the Adecco Group and Google.

Statement 2 is correct. Theme for 2020 Index was 'Global Talent in the Age of Artificial Intelligence (AI)'.

Statement 3 is incorrect. India has climbed eight places to 72nd rank in this year index.

5. World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2020

Q. Consider the following statements with respect to 'World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2020':

1. It has been released by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).
2. The number of people unemployed around the world stands at some 188 million.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation: **Both statements are correct.** The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has released the World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2020 (WESO) report.

As per the report, the number of people unemployed around the world stands at some 188 million. In addition, 165 million people do not have enough paid work, and 120 million have either given up actively searching for work or otherwise lack access to the labour market. In total, more than 470 million people worldwide are affected.

6. Reciprocating Territory

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. Ministry of Law and Justice has declared the United Arab Emirates to be a "reciprocating territory".

2. It means orders passed by certain designated courts from a 'reciprocating territory' can be implemented in India.

3. The decree can be executed in India by filing a certified copy of the decree in the Supreme Court of India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only b) 2 and 3 only
c) 3 only d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a)

Explanation: **Statement 1 and 2 are correct.** Recently, the Ministry of Law and Justice has declared the United Arab Emirates to be a "reciprocating territory" under Section 44A of the Civil Procedure Code (CPC), 1908.

Essentially, orders passed by certain designated courts from a 'reciprocating territory' can be implemented in India.

Statement 3 is incorrect. Section 44A (1) provides that a decree passed by "a superior Court" in any "reciprocating territory" can be executed in India by filing a certified copy of the decree in a District Court, which will treat the decree as if it has been passed by itself.

7. Managing Electronic Waste

Q. With reference to the 'e-waste', consider the following statements:

1. Most of the components in e-devices contain lead, cadmium, mercury, polyvinylchloride (PVC), brominated flame retardants (BFRs), chromium, beryllium etc.
2. E-waste can cause cardio-vascular and pulmonary ailments in human beings.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation: **Both statements are correct.** Electronic products actually are a complex mixture of several hundred tiny components, many of which contain deadly chemicals thereby threatening human health and the environment. Most of the components in e-devices contain lead, cadmium, mercury, polyvinylchloride (PVC), brominated flame retardants (BFRs), chromium, beryllium etc.

In addition burning of e-waste in open landfill for obtaining gold and other metals produces fine particulate matter and causes cardio-vascular and pulmonary ailments in children.



SEVEN IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIMS

1. Who was the chief guest at the Republic Day of India in 2020?

- Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro

2. Who has been elected as the Prime Minister of Lebanon recently?

- Hassan Diab

3. Who has been honoured with 26th Annual Crystal Award by World Economic Forum?

- Deepika Padukone (for her leadership in raising mental health awareness)

4. Which state government has launched 'Mukhyamantri Krishak Durghatna Kalyan Yojana'?

- Uttar Pradesh

5. Which Indian city is the most polluted city by Greenpeace India report?

- Coal-belching Jharia in Jharkhand

6. Which state government has launched 'Shiv Bhojan' scheme, which is aimed at providing a meal to the poor for just Rs 10?

- Maharashtra

7. Which state government has made the reading of Preamble of the Constitution mandatory in schools on every Saturday?

- Madhya Pradesh

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SEVEN PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAINS EXAM

1. "Jal Jeevan Mission" will provide a massive fillip to the ease of living for women as well as women empowerment. Elaborate.
2. What are electoral bonds? Discuss why several political parties and experts are questioning the rationale of electoral bonds.
3. What is enemy property in India, and how has the government dealt with it? Discuss.
4. The growth models followed by India since independence haven't really delivered what they were expected to, and we have seen disparities worsen despite rapid GDP growth. Do you agree? Analyse.
5. Electoral literacy is essential for stronger democracy. Elucidate.
6. What is Integrity pact? Is Integrity pact a effective tool against corruption in India? Discuss.
7. Critically evaluate the power and role of speaker regarding the anti-defection law.



SEVEN IMPORTANT NEWS

1. Archaea

Scientists at the National Centre for Microbial Resource — National Centre for Cell Science (NCCMR-NCCS) in Pune have reported a new archaeon (a kind of microorganism), which they discovered in Sambhar Salt Lake in Rajasthan. The new archaeon has been named *Natrialba swarupiae*, after Dr Renu Swarup, secretary, Department of Biotechnology, for her initiative in supporting microbial diversity studies in the country.

About Archaea

Archaea (singular archaeon) are a primitive group of microorganisms that thrive in extreme habitats such as hot springs, cold deserts and hypersaline lakes. These slow-growing organisms are also present in the human gut, and have a

potential relationship with human health. They are known for producing antimicrobial molecules, and for antioxidant activity with applications in eco-friendly waste-water treatment. Archaea are extremely difficult to culture due to challenges in providing natural conditions in a laboratory setting.

Scientists in China, Israel, Russia and a few countries in Europe are working on the taxonomy of archaea, but going by the number of publications that are coming out on all bacterial taxonomy, the studies on archaea are outnumbered. As archaea are relatively poorly studied, very little is known about how archaea behave in the human body.

Search and Discovery

Sambhar Lake has been poorly studied for microbial ecology studies. With a salt production of 0.2 million tonnes per annum, it is also a hypersaline ecosystem which provides an opportunity for microbial ecologists to understand organisms that thrive in such concentrations. Once the new organism was found, it took researchers one year to complete the study because archaea grow so slow. Based on a mandatory genome analysis, researchers found that the organism has potential gene clusters that helps maintain the metabolism of the archaea to survive in extreme harsh conditions. This particular organism also harbours specific pathways for DNA replication, recombination and repair. ■

2. Xenobot

Scientists in the United States have created the world's first "living machines" — tiny robots built from the cells of the African clawed frog, that can move around on their own. They have named the millimetre-wide robots "xenobots" — after the species of aquatic frog found across sub-Saharan Africa from Nigeria and Sudan to South Africa, *Xenopus laevis*.

Key Highlights

The xenobots "can move toward a target, perhaps pick up a payload (like

a medicine that needs to be carried to a specific place inside a patient) — and heal themselves after being cut.

Xenobots don't look like traditional robots - they have no shiny gears or robotic arms. Instead, they look more like a tiny blob of moving pink flesh. The researchers say this is deliberate -- this "biological machine" can achieve things typical robots of steel and plastic cannot.

Significance

Xenobots could be used to clean up radioactive waste, collect microplastics

in the oceans, carry medicine inside human bodies, or even travel into our arteries to scrape out plaque. The xenobots can survive in aqueous environments without additional nutrients for days or weeks -- making them suitable for internal drug delivery.

Aside from these immediate practical tasks, the xenobots could also help researchers to learn more about cell biology -- opening the doors to future advancement in human health and longevity. ■

3. Delhi under National Security Act

Delhi's Lieutenant Governor has passed an order authorizing the city's police, controlled by the Union home ministry, to place the national capital under the National Security Act (NSA). This law allows the police to detain a person without trial for months should it be satisfied that the individual poses a threat to national security. The city, as per the order, has been put under the NSA for three months starting 19 January.

It comes at a time when the national capital has been witnessing a number of protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC). However, the Delhi Police said it is a routine order that has been issued in every quarter and has nothing to do with the current situation.

What is NSA?

The National Security Act (NSA) of 1980 is an act of the Indian Parliament which was brought to action on September 23, 1980. It is meant to provide for preventive detention in certain cases and for matters where the authorities are convinced that an individual hampers law and order of the state or country. This act extends to all over India, apart from the state of Jammu and Kashmir. It contains 18 sections and empowers the Central and state governments to detain a person to prevent him/her from acting in any manner prejudicial to the security of India, the relation of India with foreign countries and the maintenance of public order.

Criticism

India has had mass protests and sporadic bouts of tumult after it amended its citizenship law in a manner widely seen as discriminatory. While Delhi has had peaceful demonstrations against the Centre's citizenship policy, with instances of unruly unrest in some localities, there is no visible sign of anything worse. As for a terror plot, the alleged terrorist links of a J&K police officer apart, a red alert on this menace doesn't seem justified either. While national security is paramount, the Centre must ensure that the NSA's harsh provisions are not misused to quell democratic dissent. Delhi, due for polls, must feel free to voice itself. The vibrancy of our democracy depends on it. ■

4. Yada Yada Virus

A novel virus detected in Australian mosquitoes has been provisionally named the Yada Yada virus (YYV). YYV takes its name from 'The Yada Yada', an episode of the television sitcom Seinfeld, which aired on the American network NBC on April 24, 1997. The Cambridge dictionary defines the phrase as an informal exclamation used to describe boring speech.

About Yada Yada Virus

Yada Yada is an alphavirus, a group of viruses that the researchers described

as "small, single-stranded positive-sense RNA viruses (that) include



species important to human and animal health, such as Chikungunya virus and Eastern equine encephalitis virus (and which) are transmitted primarily by mosquitoes and (are) pathogenic in their vertebrate hosts".

Even so, the novel virus poses no threat to human beings, because it is a

part of a group of viruses that only infect mosquitoes. Other viruses in the same group include the Tai forest alphavirus and the Agua Salud alphavirus. Therefore, while the discovery of the virus does not have any direct implications for human beings, but the discovery of YYV expands the "diversity and geographic range" of mosquito-specific alphavirus complexes, which may help in revealing the origin of the virus and "host switching". ■

5. India has Joined WEF Reskilling Initiative

India has joined as a founding government member the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Reskilling Revolution, an initiative to provide one billion people with better education, skills and jobs by 2030. The scheme

aims to future-proof workers from technological change and help economies by providing new skills for the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Founding governments include Brazil, France, India, Pakistan, the

Russian Federation, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the United States. While, business partners include PwC, Salesforce, ManpowerGroup, Infosys, LinkedIn, Coursera Inc. and The Adecco Group.

Challenges for India

According to our Future of Jobs 2018 report, more than one-half of India's workforce will need to be reskilled by 2022 to meet the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The report also found that talent availability is the single

most important factor in determining job locations for international businesses with operations in India, and that 67% of businesses surveyed expected to outsource functions by 2022 in response to changing skill requirements. These challenges in preparedness for the new world of

work have the potential to hamper the country's future growth and productivity, and require concerted action by the public and private sectors to close skills gaps among the current workforce, preparing the next generation of talent for the future of jobs. ■

6. Nature Risk Rising Report

Nature Risk Rising has been published by the World Economic Forum (WEF) in collaboration with Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC). It is the first in a series of reports from the

New Nature Economy project. The series aims to catalyse public-private momentum in 2020, with a focus on the UN Convention on Biological Diversity's milestone summit (COP15) in Kunming, China, and the related Business for Nature mobilization.

Key Highlights

Nature loss is a planetary emergency. Humanity has already wiped out 83% of wild mammals and half of all plants and severely altered three-quarters of

ice-free land and two-thirds of marine environments. One million species are at risk of extinction in the coming decades – a rate tens to hundreds of times higher than the average over the past 10 million years.

Around \$44 trillion of economic value generation – over half the world's total GDP – is moderately or highly dependent on nature and its services. Nature loss matters for most businesses – through impacts on operations, supply chains, and markets. Humanity urgently needs to rethink its relationship with nature, in order to halt and reverse the alarming degradation of the natural world. ■

China, the European Union and the US have the highest absolute economic value in nature-dependent industries

Construction, agriculture & food and beverages are the three largest industries that depend most on nature.

Pollination, water quality and disease control are three examples of the services that an ecosystem can provide. Construction, agriculture & food and beverages are the three largest industries that depend most on nature. As nature loses its capacity to provide such services, these industries could be significantly disrupted. ■

7. Brexit

Britain's effort to leave the European Union (EU) was finally approved by Queen Elizabeth recently, clearing the way for the United Kingdom (UK) to make the move to independence. Royal approval was the last obstacle toward Brexit. Britain is due to leave the bloc on January 31, 2020. A consent vote in the EU Parliament will take place on January 29.

New Deal

Mr. Johnson took over as PM in July 2019 and set about renegotiating Mrs May's deal. Mr Johnson succeeded in replacing the backstop with new customs arrangements. Unlike the previous deal, the revised one will allow the UK to sign and implement its own trade agreements with countries

around the world. However, the revised deal effectively creates a customs and regulatory border between Northern Ireland and Great Britain. This means some goods entering Northern Ireland from Great Britain would be subject to checks and pay EU import taxes (known as tariffs). These would be refunded if goods remain in Northern Ireland (ie are not moved to the Republic of Ireland).

The rest of the deal remains largely unchanged from the one negotiated by Mrs May. Known as the withdrawal agreement, it includes: the rights of EU citizens in the UK and British citizens in the EU; how much money the UK is to pay the EU (initially thought to be £39bn).

Background

Brexit was originally due to happen on 29 March 2019. That was two years after then Prime Minister Theresa May triggered Article 50 - the formal process to leave - and kicked off negotiations. Under Mrs. May, the deadline was delayed twice after MPs rejected her Brexit deal - eventually pushing the date to 31 October 2019.

After replacing Mrs. May as PM, Mr Johnson was required to seek a third extension after MPs failed to pass a revised Brexit deal into law. The new deadline has been set for 31 January 2020, three and a half years after the referendum was held. ■

SEVEN IMPORTANT HIGHLIGHTS FROM PIB

1. NITI Aayog's Vision for the National Data and Analytics Platform

NITI Aayog has released its vision for the National Data and Analytics Platform (NDAP).

About Platform

The platform aims to democratize access to publicly available government data. It will host the latest datasets from various government websites, present them coherently, and provide tools for analytics and visualization. NDAP will follow a user-centric approach and will enable data access in a simple and intuitive portal tailored to the needs of a variety of stakeholders.

NDAP will spearhead the standardization of formats in which

data is presented across sectors and will cater to a wide audience of policymakers, researchers, innovators, data scientists, journalists and citizens.

The development of NDAP will take place over a period of one year. The first version of the platform is expected to be launched in 2021. The process will follow a user-centric approach, and will incorporate feedback received from various users and stakeholders throughout the course of its development.

Significance

India has made tremendous progress in generating and using data for



policymaking and programme implementation. It is now time to build on these efforts to further strengthen the data ecosystem. NDAP, with its mission to be a one-stop and user-friendly data platform, will go a long way in transforming India's data ecosystem.

2. 10th National Voters' Day

The 10th National Voters' Day (NVD) was celebrated across the country on 25th January. The theme for NVD 2020 was 'Electoral Literacy for Stronger Democracy' reiterating the commitment of Election Commission of India (ECI) towards electoral literacy for all to ensure maximum participation and informed & ethical voting. This year marks an important milestone in the history of Indian democracy as Election Commission of

India (ECI) completes 70 years of its journey. The main purpose of the NVD celebration is to encourage, facilitate and maximize the enrollment, especially for the new voters. Dedicated to the voters of the country, the Day is utilized to spread awareness among voters for promoting informed participation in the electoral process. New voters or first time electorate are handed over their Elector Photo Identity Card in the National Voters' Day function.

Key Highlights

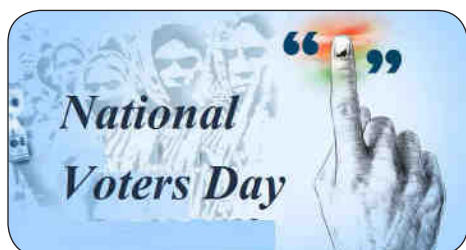
ECI has played a pivotal role in reaching out to voters in the remotest corner to include their names in the electoral roll and to encourage them to exercise the

Right to Vote, resulting in the historic voter turnout of 67.47% in 17th Lok Sabha Election.

ECI took several efforts like to ensure the gender gap was reduced to less than 0.1% in the last Lok Sabha General Election and Electoral Literacy Clubs' efforts and use of vernacular language in reaching out to even in the remotest areas.

Background

The NVD is celebrated all over the country on January 25 every year since 2011 to mark the Foundation day of Election Commission of India, which was established on this day in the year 1950.



3. Padma Awards 2020

On the occasion of Republic Day every year, the government of India has announced the Padma Awards. Padma Awards - one of the highest civilian Awards of the country, are conferred in three categories, namely, Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri. The Awards are given in various disciplines/ fields of activities, viz.- art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service, etc. 'Padma Vibhushan' is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service; 'Padma Bhushan' for distinguished service of high order and 'Padma Shri' for distinguished service in any field.

This year the President has approved conferment of 141 Padma Awards including 4 duo cases (in a duo case, the Award is counted as one). The list comprises of 7 Padma Vibhushan, 16 Padma Bhushan and 118 Padma Shri Awards. The Padma Vibhushan awardees are George Fernandes (Posthumous), Arun Jaitley (Posthumous), Sir Anerood Jugnauth, M. C. Mary Kom, Chhannulal Mishra, Sushma Swaraj (Posthumous) and Sri Vishveshateertha Swamiji Sri Pejvara Adhokhaja Matha Udupi (Posthumous).

About Awards

The Padma Awards are one of the highest civilian honours of India

announced annually on the eve of Republic Day.



The Awards are given in three categories: Padma Vibhushan (for exceptional and distinguished service), Padma Bhushan (distinguished service of higher order) and Padma Shri (distinguished service). The award seeks to recognize achievements in all fields of activities or disciplines where an element of public service is involved. The Padma Awards are conferred on the recommendations made by the Padma Awards Committee, which is constituted by the Prime Minister every year.

4. World Banks' Loan for Maharashtra Agribusiness and Rural Transformation Project

The Government of India, the Government of Maharashtra and the World Bank has signed a loan agreement of USD 210 million to support small holder farmers participate in competitive agriculture value chains, facilitate agri-business investments, increase market access and productivity in focus commodities, and build resilience of crops to recurrent floods or droughts in the Indian state of Maharashtra.

Key Highlights

The Project will help build capacity of the nodal departments and institutions; increase private sector investments

in agricultural value chains; remove constraints for producers and entrepreneurs in accessing emerging domestic and export markets; build the capacity of the state to respond to commodity-price fluctuations by providing access to timely information on markets and production trends; and enhance adoption of climate resilient production techniques in the state.

The project will be implemented in all 36 districts of Maharashtra. Over one million farming households will directly benefit from the project. At least 43 percent of farmers and farm-workers participating in project activities are expected to be women. Specific focus

will be given to women-led enterprises and the participation of women in the decision-making processes of farmer producer organizations.

The focus of the project on enhancing the capacity of the state to effectively manage and deliver agricultural technical support and services, increasing credit linkages to formal financing institutions, improving Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) standards and investing in business development services will help small holder farmers become more competitive and increase their links to organized domestic and export markets.

5. Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar 2020

In order to recognise the excellent work done by individuals and institutions in India in the field of disaster management, Government of India has instituted an annual award known as Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar. The award is

announced every year on 23rd January, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.

Key Highlights

For the year 2020, Disaster Mitigation & Management Centre (DMMC),

Uttarakhand (in the institution category) and Shri Kumar Munnan Singh (Individual category) have been selected for the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar for their commendable work in Disaster Management. In case the winner

being an institution, it shall receive a certificate and a cash prize of Rs. 51 lakhs. This cash prize shall be utilized by the winning institution for Disaster Management related activities only. In case of the winner being an individual, winner shall receive a certificate and a cash prize of Rs. 5 lakhs.

For the year 2019, 8th Battalion of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) located at Ghaziabad, had been selected for the award for its commendable work in disaster management.

About DMMC

DMMC discharges the functions of

State Disaster Management Authority under the Government of Uttarakhand. Since its establishment in 2006, it has coordinated various post disaster functions relating to coordination, requisition, information exchange and media briefing, including those after 2010, 2012 and 2013 major disaster incidences.

6. India Achieved Complete Phase Out of Hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC)-141 b

India has successfully achieved the complete phase out of Hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC)-141 b, which is a chemical used by foam manufacturing enterprises and one of the most potent ozone depleting chemical after Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). (HCFC)-141 b is used mainly as a blowing agent in the production of rigid polyurethane (PU) foams.

India has consciously chosen a path for environment friendly and energy efficient technologies while phasing out Ozone Depleting Substances (ODSs). Importantly, India is one among the few

countries globally and a pioneer in some cases in the use of technologies, which are non-Ozone Depleting and have a low Global Warming Potential (GWP).

Significance

The phase out of HCFC-141b from the country has twin environmental benefits viz. (i) assisting the healing of the stratospheric ozone layer, and (ii) towards the climate change mitigation due to transitioning of foam manufacturing enterprises at this scale under HPMP to low global warming potential alternative technologies.

What are ODSs?

Ozone depleting substances are man-made gases that destroy ozone once they reach the ozone layer. The ozone layer sits in the upper atmosphere and reduces the amount of harmful ultra violet radiation that reaches Earth from the sun. Ultraviolet radiation can have detrimental effects on both humans and the environment such as inducing skin cancer and cataracts, distorting plant growth and damaging the marine environment.

7. Establishment of Chairs named after Eminent Women in Universities

On the occasion of National Girl Child Day, the Ministry of Women and Child Development will set up 10 Chairs in different fields with an aim to carry out research activities to encourage women. The initiative called Establishment of Chairs in the Universities in the name of eminent women administrators, artists, scientists and social reformers is being launched with the assistance of University Grants Commission (UGC).

The main objective is to inspire women to pursue higher education and to achieve excellence in their area of work. This initiative of highlighting and celebrating women achievers of the country will motivate young girls and women towards higher studies.

Subject

The proposed name of chair are Devi Ahilyabai Holkar for Administration, Mahadevi Varma for Literature, Rani Gaidinliu for Freedom Fighter (North East), Anandibai Gopalrao Joshi for Medicine & Health, Madurai Shanmukhavadiyu Subbulakshmi for Performing Art, Amrita Devi (Beniwal) for Forest/Wildlife Conservation, Lilavati for Mathematics, Kamala Sohoni for Science, Lal Ded for Poetry & Mysticism and Hansa Mehta for Educational Reforms.

The financial implications of the proposal is Rs. 50 lakh per Chair per year and the total expenditure

for establishing ten Chairs will be approximately Rs. 5 crore per annum. The Chairs are to be established for a period of 5 years initially as per the guidelines.

Functions

Academic functions of the Chairs will be to engage in research and, in turn, contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the area of the study, strengthen the role of university/academics in public policy making and to design and execute short-term capacity-building programmes for teachers in higher education focused towards the designated discipline of the Chair.

SEVEN IMPORTANT CONCEPTS THROUGH GRAPHICS

Regional Groupings

1. USMCA

- The United States commenced bilateral trade negotiations with Canada more than 30 years ago, resulting in the US-Canada Free Trade Agreement, which entered into force on January 1, 1989. In 1991, bilateral talks began with Mexico, which Canada joined. The NAFTA followed, entering into force on January 1, 1994.
- That makes NAFTA the world's largest free trade agreement. The gross domestic product of its three members is more than \$20 trillion. NAFTA is the first time two developed nations signed a trade agreement with an emerging market country.
- The three signatories agreed to remove trade barriers between them. By eliminating tariffs, NAFTA increases investment opportunities.
- On September 30, 2018, the United States, Mexico, and Canada renegotiated the North American Free Trade Agreement. The new deal is called the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). It must be ratified by each country's legislature. As a result, it wouldn't go into effect before 2020.
- The new deal changes NAFTA in six areas. The most important is that auto companies must manufacture at least 75% of the car's components in the USMCA's trade zone.



2. MERCOSUR

- The Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR for its Spanish initials) is a regional integration process, initially established by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, and subsequently joined by Venezuela and Bolivia -the latter still complying with the accession procedure. Venezuela joined Mercosur's four founding countries as a full member in 2012, but was suspended in late 2016.
- MERCOSUR is an open and dynamic process. Since its creation, its main objective has been to promote a common space that generates business and investment opportunities through the competitive integration of national economies into the international market.
- As a result, it has established multiple agreements with countries or groups of countries, granting them, in some cases, the status of Associated States – this being the situation of the South American countries.
- These participate in activities and meetings of the Bloc and have trade preferences with the States Parties. MERCOSUR has also signed commercial, political or cooperation agreements with a diverse number of nations and organizations on all five continents.



3. Andean Community



- The Andean Community (Comunidad Andina, CAN) is a trade bloc of four countries - Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay are associate members while Panama, Mexico, and Spain are Observers.
- The Headquarters of CAN are located in Lima, Peru.
- The trade bloc was called the Andean Pact until 1996 and came into existence when the Cartagena Agreement was signed in 1969.
- The regional integration in the Andean countries began with the signing of the Cartagena Agreement (by Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru) in 1969 creating the Andean Pact with the objective of creating a Customs Union and a Common Market.
- In 2001, the Andean Passport was created, enabling citizens of member states to travel between the countries without visa. In 2005, the integration of Latin American and Caribbean regions gained priority in the agenda of Andean Community. In 2006, the Andean Free Trade Area became fully operational after Peru was fully incorporated.
- CAN community deals with trade in goods, trade in services, customs union, circulation of persons, common market, common foreign policy, border development, social agenda, sustainable development and economic policies.

4. European Union



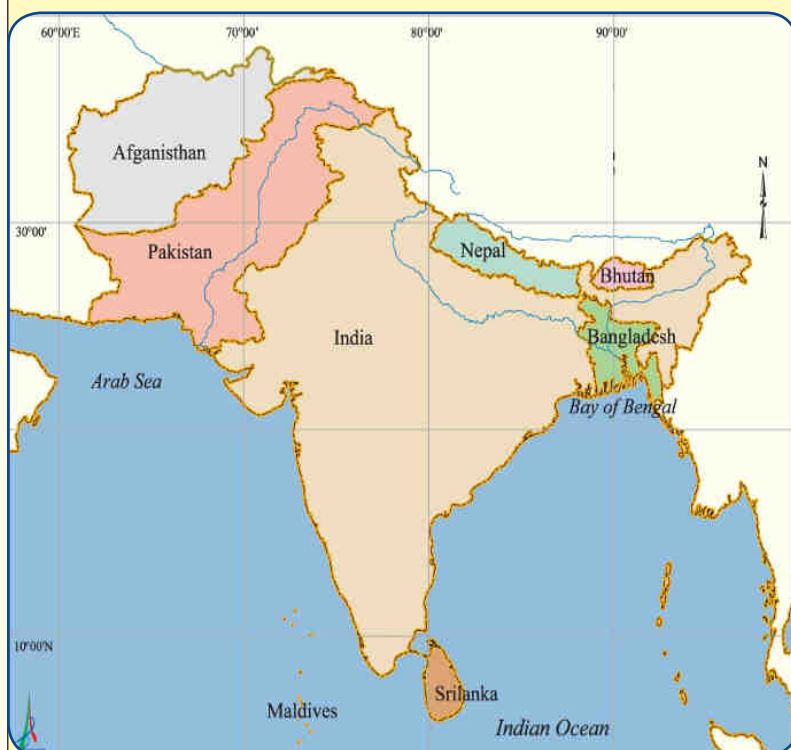
- The European Union (EU) is a political and economic union of 28 member states that are located primarily in Europe. These countries came together to make things better, easier and safer for people. They agreed to work together and help each other.
- The goals of the EU are to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its citizens; offer freedom, security and justice without internal borders; a highly competitive market economy with full employment and social progress, and environmental protection; promote scientific and technological progress; enhance economic, social and territorial cohesion and solidarity among EU countries; and establish an economic and monetary union whose currency is the euro.
- The EU values are common to the EU countries in a society in which inclusion, tolerance, justice, solidarity and non-discrimination prevail.
- These goals and values form the basis of the EU and are laid out in the Lisbon Treaty and the EU Charter of fundamental rights.
- In 2012, the EU was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for advancing the causes of peace, reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe.
- The EU is governed by the principle of representative democracy, with citizens directly represented at Union level in the European Parliament and Member States represented in the European Council and the Council of the EU.

5. CARICOM

- The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is a grouping of twenty countries: fifteen Member States and five Associate Members.
- It is home to approximately sixteen million citizens, 60% of whom are under the age of 30, and from the main ethnic groups of Indigenous Peoples, Africans, Indians, Europeans, Chinese, Portuguese and Javanese. The Community is multi-lingual; with English as the major language complemented by French and Dutch and variations of these, as well as African and Asian expressions.
- CARICOM came into being on 4 July 1973 with the signing of the Treaty of Chaguaramas by Prime Ministers Errol Barrow for Barbados, Forbes Burnham for Guyana, Michael Manley for Jamaica and Eric Williams for Trinidad and Tobago. The Treaty was later revised in 2002 to allow for the eventual establishment of a single market and a single economy.
- CARICOM rests on four main pillars: economic integration; foreign policy coordination; human and social development; and security.



6. SAFTA



- The South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) is the free trade arrangement of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). The agreement came into force in 2006, succeeding the 1993 SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement. SAFTA signatory countries are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. In 2011, Afghanistan joined SAFTA.
- The basic principles underlying SAFTA are as under; overall reciprocity and mutuality of advantages so as to benefit equitably all Contracting States, taking into account their respective level of economic and industrial development, the pattern of their external trade, and trade and tariff policies and systems; negotiation of tariff reform step by step, improved and extended in successive stages through periodic reviews; recognition of the special needs of the Least Developed Contracting States and agreement on concrete preferential measures in their favour; inclusion of all products, manufactures and commodities in their raw, semi-processed and processed forms.
- SAFTA was also formed in order to increase the level of trade and economic cooperation among the SAARC nations by reducing the tariff and barriers and also to provide special preference to the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) among the SAARC nations to establish framework for further regional cooperation.

- A fully functioning SAFTA is an essential first step in the vision of an economic union. Leaders of South Asia should complete SAFTA with the right mix of reforms so that the benefits of deeper integration can begin to be seen on the horizon.

7. UNASUR

- The Union of South American Nations is an intergovernmental body modeled after the European Union, Known as UNASUR.
- UNASUR was conceived in an agreement dating back to 2004 that sought to promote regional integration by bringing together members of Mercosur and the Andean Community of Nations. In May 2008, leaders from 12 South American countries inked the Constitutive Treaty to create UNASUR with the goal of enhancing regional economic and political integration.
- The group was formed by incorporating the members of two preexisting trade unions—Mercosur and the Andean Community of Nations.
- The current UNASUR members are: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Suriname, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. UNASUR countries suspended Paraguay in June 2012 after the country's democratically elected president was impeached in what some considered a "constitutional coup."
- Its purpose is to develop a South American forum for addressing political, social, economic, environmental and infrastructure issues, that will reinforce the identity of South America and will contribute to the strengthening of Latin America and the Caribbean, based on a sub-regional perspective and in consonance with other regional integration experiences, to provide it with greater pull and representation in international forums.
- It has 3 main bodies namely, Council of Delegates; Council of Foreign Ministers and Council of Heads of State and of Government.





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