




# MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS CAPSULE (UPSC)

JULY 2023



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## PREFACE

Hello PRAYAAS' Students Community,

Fear of current affairs among UPSC students is justified due to the vastness of the current affairs, the dynamic nature of current events, the unpredictability of the exam, the need for a deep understanding, and the pressure to stay updated.

From above, we recognize that the UPSC examination demands a thorough understanding of current affairs and their implications on a broader scale. **Therefore, "PRAYAAS PRATHAM" is not merely a compilation of news headlines but a gateway to a deeper comprehension of the interconnected world we live in.**

Each article in this magazine is designed to foster critical thinking and analytical skills, essential for excelling in the UPSC examinations and becoming an astute civil servant.

As you delve into the pages of this magazine, we encourage you to engage actively with the content, ponder over the implications, and form your independent viewpoints.

At the end of Magazine, you will get **QR Code of weekly lectures by our faculty(Dhananjay Sir)**. These lectures are available **Free of Cost** to all Sincere Aspirants. In that lectures you will thoroughly understand each topic of these Monthly Compilation. Make Most use of it to understand topic better.

Till, December, we are Specifically focusing on Mains perspective. Mains focus will be on how to develop that thinking abilities and how to decipher topics for mains.

Start from January till prelims, we will shift our focus specifically on Prelims Perspective here our special focus on linking Current with Static.

The UPSC examinations not only assess your factual knowledge but also value your ability to analyse, synthesize, and present coherent arguments. **Let "PRAYAAS PRATHAM" be your ally in honing these essential skills.**

We are hopeful that this efforts from PRAYAAS will bring more clarity in Your UPSC Journey. As in the name of our institute "PRAYAAS Institute of Excellence", it will bring excellence in your current affairs and over all journey of UPSC.

Your Thankful,

Team PRAYAAS

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## GS 1

### Flooding in North India

#### Context-

- Several areas of India have been affected by a succession of intense rainfall events that have killed people and caused extensive damage, landslides, and flash floods.
- Numerous variables, including the monsoon, the western disturbance, the El Nino-Southern Oscillation (ENSO), the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), and climate change, have an impact on the distribution and intensity of rainfall.

Syllabus of Mains-GS3 - Disaster and disaster management.

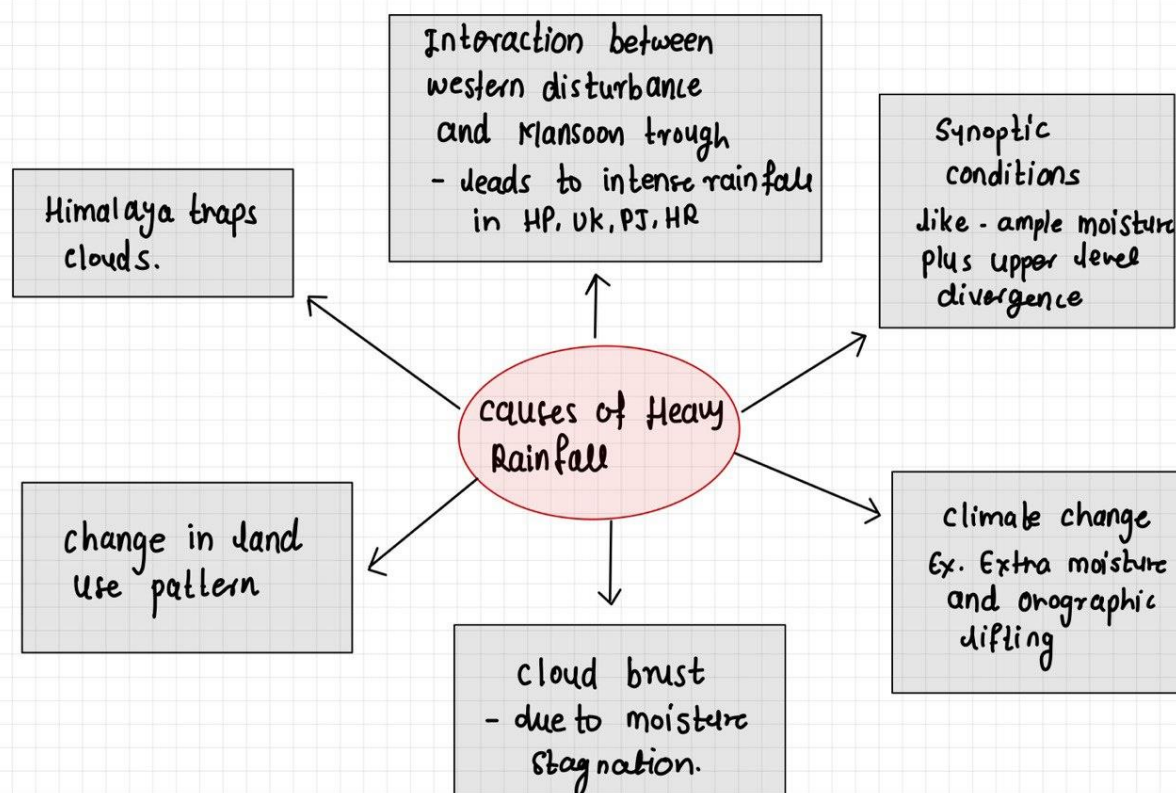
GS 1- Geographical features and their location-changes in critical geographical features (including waterbodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes.

#### Introduction

- Every year, India faces the twin difficulties of flooding and drought. The monsoon season, which accounts for over 75% of annual rainfall, is also characterised by high fluctuation and uncertainty.
- Floods strike havoc year after year as the monsoon season unfolds, leaving a trail of damage and sorrow in their wake.
- Floods are beginning to replicate the pattern of damage and destruction as the 2023 monsoon progresses. When we study the startling numbers, it becomes clear how serious this problem is: **at least one major flood event occurs each year, resulting in substantial loss of life and extensive damage to land, crops, buildings, and public services.**



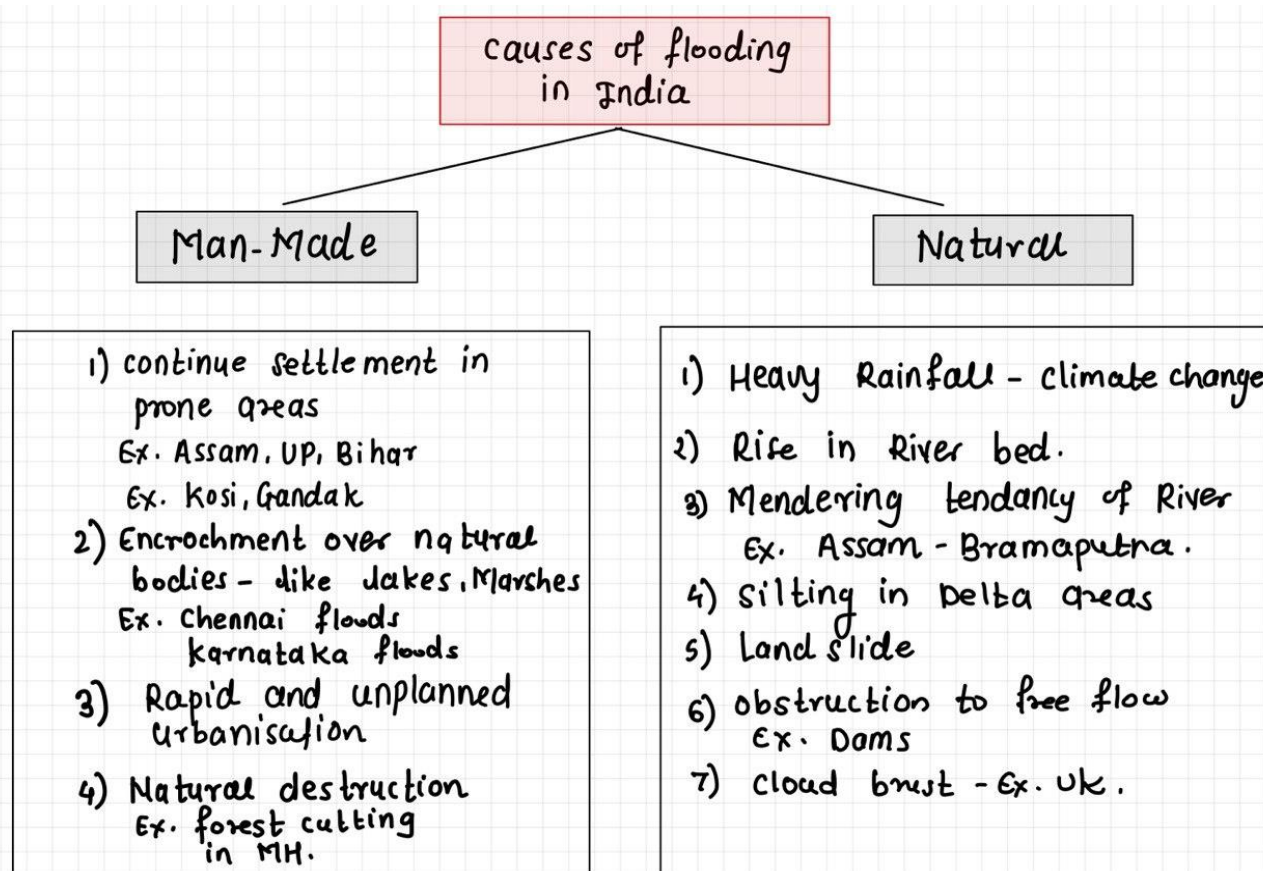
## Causes of Heavy Rainfall in North India



## Floods and their frequency in India:-

- **A flood is when there is an excess of water that covers normally dry ground.** River flooding is the most frequent type of flooding worldwide, however it can also happen along lakeshores and seacoasts.
- **As per National Disaster Management Authority**, India is highly vulnerable to floods. Out of the total geographical area of 329 million hectares (mha), more than 40 mha is flood prone.
- On average every year, 75 lakh hectares of land is affected, 1600 lives are lost and the damage caused to crops, houses and public utilities is Rs.1805 crores due to floods.

## Causes of flooding in India



## Consequence of Floods

### Negative Consequence: -

- Recurrent flooding of farming land and human settlement has grave consequences on the national economy and society.
- Floods do not just destroy valuable crops every year but also damage physical infrastructure such as roads, rails, bridges and human settlements.
- Millions of people are rendered homeless and are also washed down along with their cattle in the floods.
- Spread of diseases like cholera, gastro- enteritis, hepatitis and other water-borne diseases spread in the flood- affected regions.
- **Emotional trauma:** experiencing a wide range of emotions, flood-affected people often go through anxiety, fear, sadness, grief, and frustration during and after the disaster.

### Positive contributions of floods: -

- Each year, floods deposit fertile silt over farming fields, which is good for crops.

- **Majuli (Assam), the biggest riverine island in the world**, is the best example of good paddy crops after the annual floods in the Brahmaputra.
- New predators and prey are introduced to the areas, balancing the aquatic population.
- The flood offers groundwater recharge and high biological productivity.

## Flood management in India

- **Federal working-** The responsibility of flood management in India is divided between the Union and the State Governments with the Union Ministry of Agriculture being the central agency for coordination with states.
- **Sharing of responsibilities:** The role of the central government is technical and advisory in nature whereas the states are the actual implementers of the flood plans. Funds are also released by the centre to states in case of heavy flooding in any state.

## National Flood Risk Mitigation Project (NFRMP)

- It Aims at ensuring that preparations are in place to mobilise the resources and ability for relief, rehabilitation, rebuilding, and recovery from tragedies besides creating consciousness among susceptible communities.
- NDMA has been delegated to prepare a Detailed Project Report (DPR) on the Flood Risk Mitigation Project.

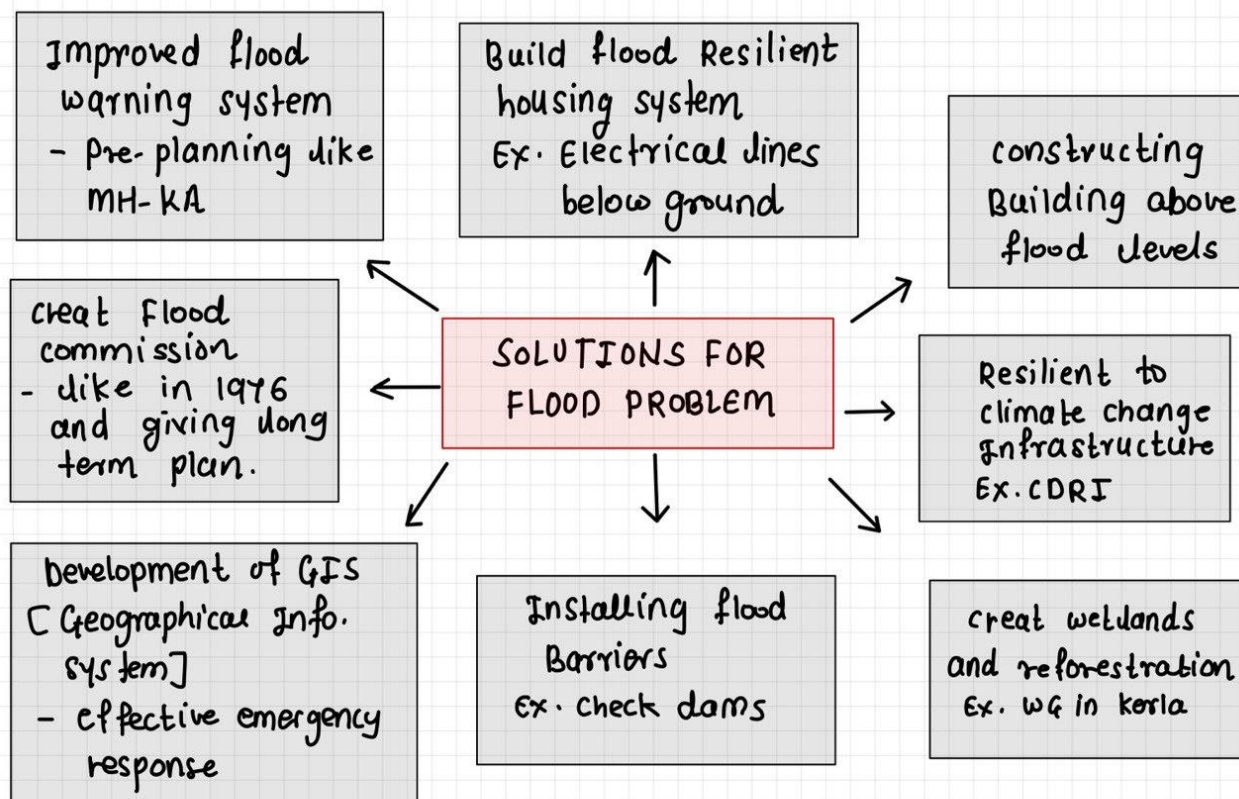
## Flood Management Programme

- The FMP scheme was launched by the Ministry of Jal Shakti under the central plan at a total cost of 8000 crores during the 11th Plan period (2007-12).
- The scheme delivers financial aid to the state governments for undertaking flood management works in critical areas.

## Why flood management failing in India?

- **New flood zones are coming up-** such as drier areas of Gujarat, Rajasthan and in urban areas especially tier 1 cities like Chennai, Hyderabad. This is leading to the failure of previous flood zoning and estimates.
- **Use of obsolete methods-** like aerial surveys of flooded areas by PM, CM's before releasing funds for flood management and use of decades-old flood zoning records.
- **Fire fighting approach-** the reaction to floods has been rather reactive than proactive. It is only after the flood has occurred that government machinery comes into action.

## Solutions to the flooding problems in India: -



## NDMA Guidelines:

### Structural Measures:

- By building reservoirs, checking dams etc. to store extra water in case of heavy discharge.
- Diversion of floodwater towards naturally and artificially built channels, wetlands etc. to reduce the impact.
- Flood protection structures in the form of embankments, walls to limit the overflow of floodwater towards the habitable areas.
- Activities like desilting, dredging increase the carrying capacity of the channel and reduce the spillover.
- In the catchment area, watershed management measures like tree plantation to increase the vegetation cover, reduce the erosion and run-off, increase the porosity of the soil and tackle any sudden surge.

### Non-structural measures:

- Floodplain zoning to regulate land use and reduce the damage due to flood. It involves activities like preventing habitation along low-lying and frequently flooding areas, Demarcating areas to be evacuated first in case of occurrence of flood and highlands where people are to be shifted during the flood.

- Flood proofing in the form of constructing flood shelters on the highlands, ensuring availability of food and fodder, flood proofing communication channels and ensuring unhindered availability of health services in case of occurrence of flood.
- All government departments and agencies must prepare their own flood management plans depending upon the topography, frequency of flood and vulnerability of the population.
- In a step towards community participation in flood mitigation, a centrally sponsored scheme by the NDMA “Aapda Mitra” has been launched to impart training to 200 community volunteers in 30 most flood-prone districts across the country to assist in flood rescue and rehabilitation.

### NITI Aayog’s Committee Recommendations on Flood Management

It constituted a committee on flood management under the **chairmanship of Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar** which has suggested several measures like-

- **Priority to non-structural measures:** The committee held the view to provide priority to non-structural measures to mitigate the floods and shall go for long term and medium-term structural measures when and where those are unavoidable.
- **Creation of a national water model:** to feed information that can provide support services by predicting precipitation and forecasting.
- **Better dam management:** The report also pitched for the policy to provide flood cushion in the existing dams to accommodate peak time flood so that the tragedy like the Kerala floods doesn’t repeat itself.
- **Use of advanced technology:** It stressed the use of advanced technology like artificial intelligence, satellites, remote sensing and GIS for flood forecasting and warning systems.

### International models of flood management

- **Dutch Model of Flood Management:** - ‘Live with Water, Built with Nature’ sees cities as ‘waterscape’ and not ‘landscape’ as most of our cities are built along water bodies like riverbanks or coastal areas. The model proposes nature-based solutions for flood management in cities.
- **Yongning River Park model:-** In China where artificial wetlands are created in and around cities to allow periodic flooding in these parks and act as a buffer for cities and thus preventing flooding.

### Conclusion: -

- Flooding in India is expected to get worse and worse as a result of escalating effects of climate change. Adopting the **Sendai framework's Disaster risk resilience approach to flood control in India** is therefore urgently required.

- India's achievements in the successful management of the cyclone crisis in recent years, **as recognized by the UN also, can be a torchbearer.**

### Question for Practice-

- In India, floods are becoming the common features now days. Why does India suffer from so frequent flooding? Make some suggestions for how floods should be managed? (250W)

## Lightning in India

### Context-

- Lightning has been a cause of concern in India, leading to a significant number of fatalities each year. As demands arise from **states like Bihar and West Bengal to declare lightning a natural disaster,** the Union government has taken a cautious stance.
- **If approved,** victims would be entitled to compensation from the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF), of which 75% is contributed by the Central government.

Syllabus of Mains-GS3 - Disaster and disaster management

GS 1- Important Geophysical phenomena

### Basics

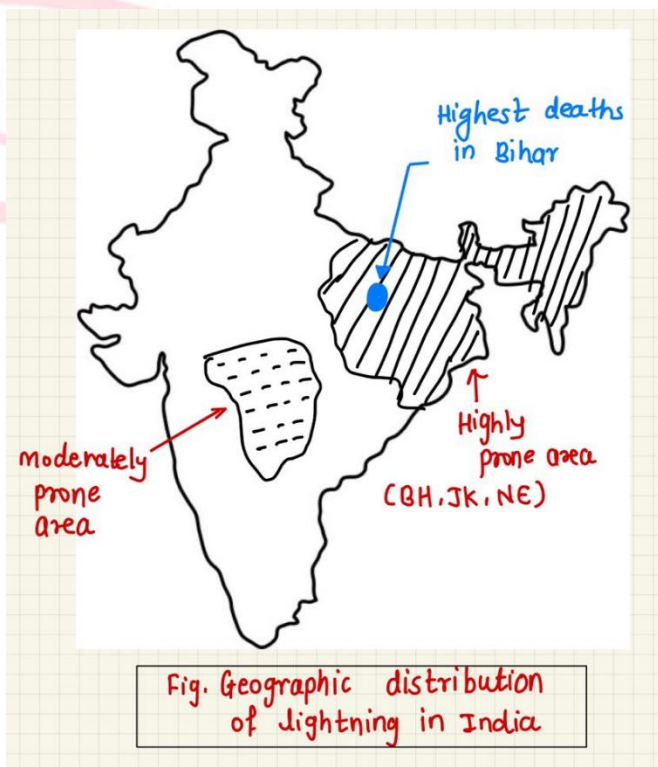
- Lightning is a striking natural occurrence caused by the accumulation of electrical charges within clouds and between clouds and the ground. This electrical discharge produces a dazzling flash of light and a sudden expansion of air, leading to the familiar thunder sound accompanying lightning.
- Cloud-to-ground lightning is particularly hazardous as it carries a significant electric voltage and current, posing a risk of electrocution to humans.
- India stands among the **top five nations globally in possessing an early warning system for lightning.**
- The system offers lightning forecasts with a range of five days to as close as three hours before lightning events occur, providing valuable lead time for precautionary measures.

**Data:**

- As per National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) In 2021, lightning accounted for 2,880 deaths, comprising 40% of all accidental deaths caused by "forces of nature."
- The trend indicates an increase in lightning-related fatalities compared to other natural events.

**Geographical Distribution in India**

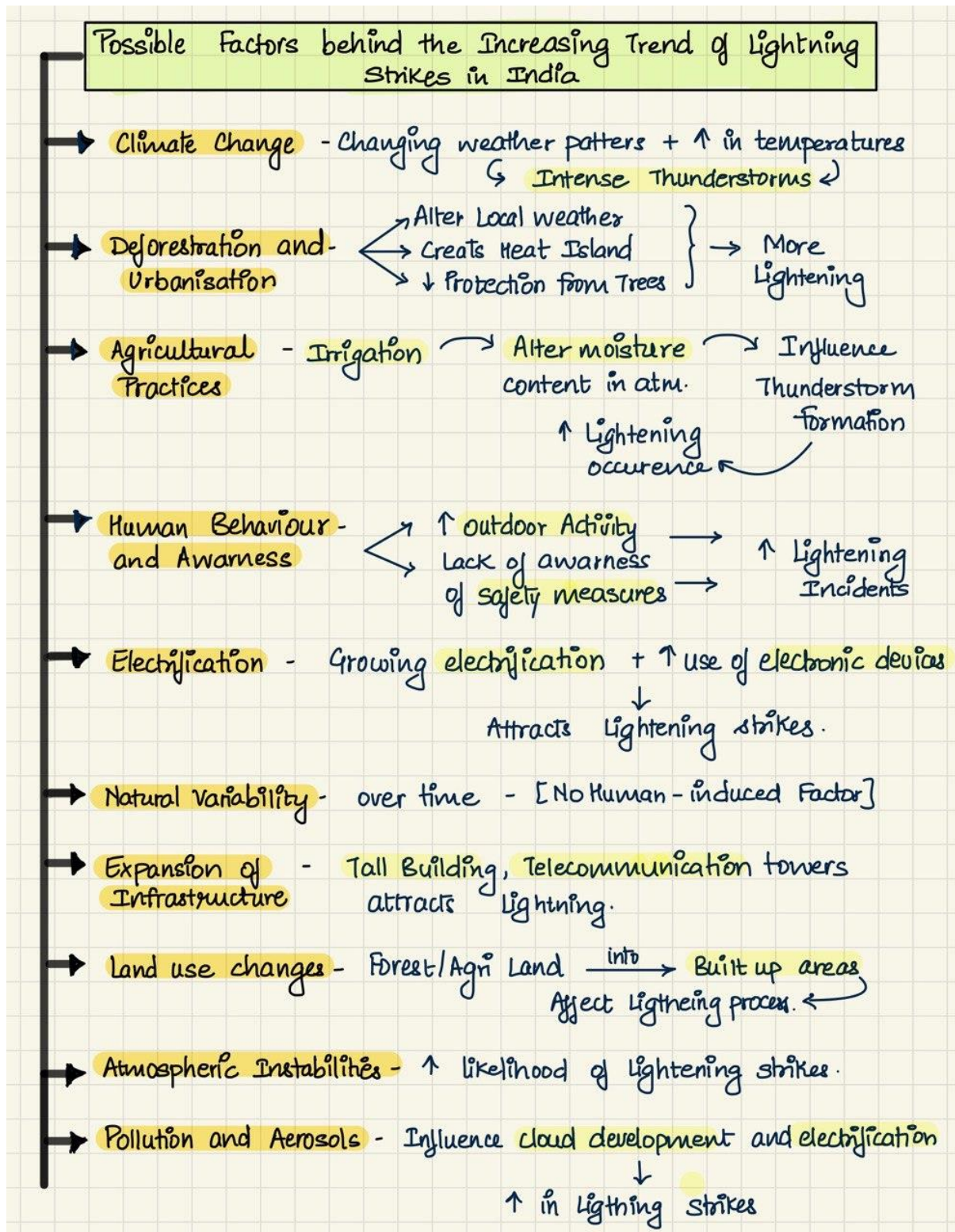
- Lightning frequency is highest in northeastern states and West Bengal, Sikkim, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Bihar.
- However, the number of lightning-related deaths is higher in central Indian states like Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha.
- Bihar is one of the most vulnerable states to lightning strikes, with a significant number of deaths reported annually.
- In 2023, till July 6, Bihar recorded 107 deaths due to lightning.



**Government's View:**

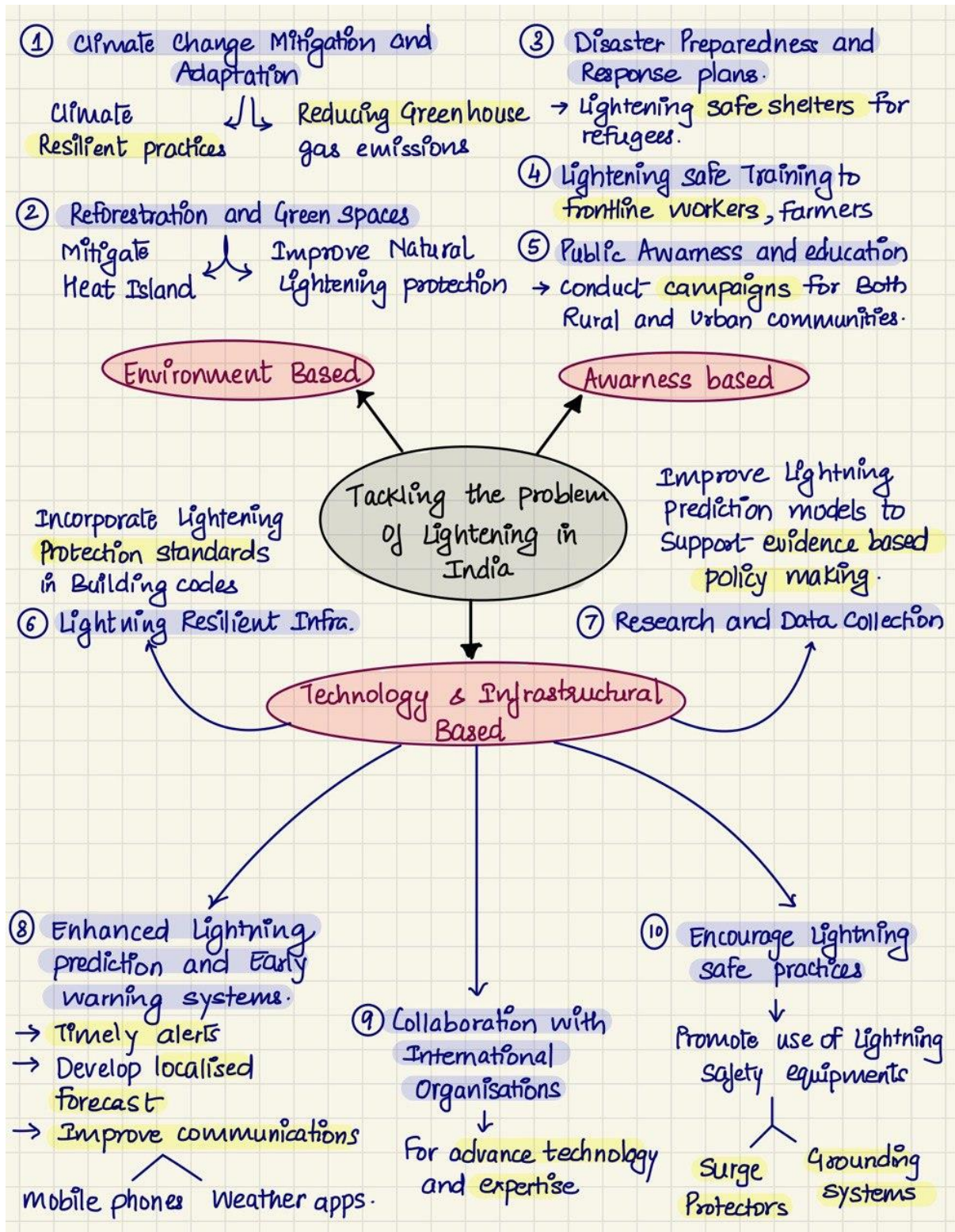
- The Union government opposes declaring lightning a natural disaster. The government believes that education and awareness can help prevent lightning-related deaths effectively.

## Possible Factors Behind the Increasing Trend of Lightning Strikes





## Options to Tackle the Problem of Lightning in India:



## Preparedness for Lightning Disaster:(NDMA Guidelines)

### **Public Awareness:**

- Conduct extensive public awareness campaigns to educate people about the risks associated with lightning and precautionary measures to be taken during thunderstorms.
- Use various **communication channels**, such as radio, television, social media, and community gatherings, to disseminate lightning safety information.

### **Early Warning Systems:**

- Establish and strengthen lightning prediction and early warning systems to provide timely alerts to vulnerable communities and sectors.
- Integrate lightning warnings into existing disaster warning systems for prompt dissemination.

### **Lightning Safety Training:**

- Provide specialized lightning safety training to frontline workers, such as farmers, outdoor laborers, and school staff, to enhance their understanding of lightning risks and safety measures.
- Conduct workshops and drills to prepare communities for lightning disaster scenarios.

### **Community-Based Interventions:**

- Encourage community participation in lightning disaster preparedness by forming local response teams and conducting risk assessments.
- Develop community-driven evacuation plans and identify lightning-safe shelters in vulnerable areas.

### **Building Codes and Standards:**

- Integrate lightning protection standards into building codes and infrastructure development guidelines to ensure the safety of new constructions.
- Conduct regular inspections to enforce compliance with lightning safety regulations.

### **Coordination and Capacity Building:**

- Foster inter-agency coordination among disaster management agencies, meteorological departments, and other stakeholders involved in lightning disaster management.
- Conduct capacity-building programs for state and district-level authorities to enhance their preparedness and response capabilities.

### **Lightning-safe Practices in Outdoor Activities:**

- Promote lightning-safe practices in outdoor activities, sports events, and recreational areas by providing lightning alerts and safe shelters.
- Encourage event organizers to include lightning safety measures in their event planning.

### **Mock Drills and Exercises:**

- Conduct regular mock drills and exercises to test the effectiveness of lightning disaster preparedness plans and enhance community response capabilities.
- Evaluate the outcomes of drills and make necessary improvements to the preparedness strategy.

### **Partnerships and International Cooperation:**

- Collaborate with research institutions, international organizations, and meteorological agencies to access advanced lightning detection technologies and expertise.
- Participate in global initiatives aimed at sharing best practices and lessons learned in lightning disaster preparedness.

### **Immediate precautions to ensure safety if lightning is striking:**

- **Seek Shelter:** Move indoors to a safe, enclosed building or a fully enclosed vehicle. Avoid standing under trees, open shelters, or metal structures, as they can attract lightning.
- **Stay Away from Water:** Avoid taking a bath, swimming, or using any water-related appliances during a thunderstorm, as water is a good conductor of electricity.
- **Stay Away from Electrical Appliances:** Do not use electronic devices or appliances connected to electrical outlets, as lightning can cause power surges and damage these devices.
- **Wait for 30 Minutes:** After the last sound of thunder, wait for at least 30 minutes before leaving your safe shelter. *Lightning can strike 10 Miles away from the thunderstorm*, and waiting ensures that it is safe to go outside.
- **Unplug Electronics:** Unplug sensitive electronic equipment to protect them from potential power surges caused by lightning strikes.
- **If Caught Outdoors:** If you are caught outdoors with no safe shelter nearby, crouch down on the balls of your feet to minimize your contact with the ground. **Do not lie flat**, as it increases the chance of being struck by lightning.

## Conclusion

- As India moves forward in addressing the lightning problem, partnerships with international organizations and meteorological agencies can provide access to advanced technologies and expertise.
- Through proactive coordination, capacity building, and disaster preparedness measures, the nation can strengthen its resilience against lightning-related disasters, safeguarding the lives and livelihoods of its citizens.
- Ultimately, a concerted effort from government agencies, communities, and individuals is essential to foster a safer and lightning-resilient India.



## GS 2

### Delhi Services Ordinance

#### Context-

- The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023 was promulgated by the President in May 2023 to provide for a comprehensive scheme of administration of services in Delhi.
- The Ordinance established a **"National Capital Civil Service Authority" consisting of the Chief Minister and two senior IAS officers**, allowing them to decide matters through majority voting.
- Critics argue that this move effectively creates a situation where the elected Chief Minister's views can potentially be overruled.

Syllabus of Mains-GS2 - Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and **issues arising out of these**

#### About Issue-

- The ordinance came after the **Supreme Court handed over the control of services in Delhi**, excluding police, public order and land, to the elected government.
- The ordinance seeks to set up a National Capital Civil Service Authority (NCCSA) for the transfer of and disciplinary proceedings against Group-A officers from services in the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi.
- The issuance of the Ordinance empowers the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi with control over services, thereby challenging the elected government's authority in matters of officials' transfer and posting.
- This development raises significant constitutional apprehensions regarding the delicate balance of power between the elected government and the Lieutenant Governor.

#### Issues with the Ordinance

##### **Issue of "Triple Chain of Accountability":**

- In May 2023, the Supreme Court explicitly recognised this by formulating the concept of the "triple chain of accountability".

##### **Power Struggle:**

- The ordinance has led to a power struggle between the elected government and the Lieutenant Governor.

### Issues with Provisions:

- Ordinance gives the Lieutenant Governor the power to make appointments to key bureaucratic positions in Delhi.
- It also gives power to transfer and post officials, which was previously the sole responsibility of the elected government.
- The ordinance also states that in case of any difference of opinion between the Lieutenant Governor and the elected government, the former's opinion will prevail.

### Governance Issue:

- Ordinance has created confusion and uncertainty among the civil service officers working in Delhi government departments.
- The ordinance has also affected the delivery of public services and welfare schemes in Delhi.

### Violation of the principle of federalism:

- Elected government claims that the ordinance violates the Constitution, which gives them the power to make appointments and transfer officials.

### Possible Consequences of the Ordinance

- It may create a constitutional crisis and a power tussle between the Centre and the Delhi government over the control of civil services in the national capital.
- It may undermine the autonomy and democracy of the Delhi government and the will of the people who elected it.
- It may hamper the effective administration and governance of Delhi, as the civil service officers may face uncertainty and confusion over their roles and responsibilities.
- It may invite legal challenges and judicial scrutiny, as the ordinance seems to violate the Supreme Court's judgment and **Article 239AA** of the Constitution.

### What is Article 239AA of the Constitution?

- Inserted into the Constitution by the 69th Amendment Act, 1991, Article 239AA conferred special status on Delhi following the recommendations of the S Balakrishnan Committee that was set up in 1987 to look into Delhi's demands for statehood.
- **According to this provision, the NCT of Delhi** will have an administrator and a Legislative Assembly. Subject to the provisions of the Constitution, the Legislative Assembly, "shall have the power to make laws for the whole or any part of the NCT with respect to any of the matters in the State List or

Concurrent List in so far as any such matter is applicable to Union territories,”  
**except on the subjects of police, public order, and land.**

### Argument in Favour of the Delhi Services Ordinance:

- Ordinance is **necessary to balance the local and national interests of the people of Delhi with the democratic will of the entire nation** reflected through the President of India.
- The **ordinance ensures that the Centre has a say in the administration of services in the national capital, which is vital for maintaining public order, security and development.**
- Ordinance is **in line with Article 239AA of the Constitution**, which gives special status to Delhi as a Union Territory with a legislative assembly and **allows Parliament to make laws on matters that are normally within the exclusive domain of the States, such as services.**
- The **ordinance does not violate the Supreme Court’s judgment**, which only held that the Delhi government has legislative and executive powers over services but **did not bar Parliament from making laws on the same subject.**
- **Ordinance seeks to clarify and streamline the scheme of administration of services in Delhi, which has been a source of conflict and confusion for a long time.**

### Argument Against the Delhi Services Ordinance:

- Ordinance **undermines the principles of representative democracy and responsible governance, which are the pillars of India’s constitutional order.**
- Ordinance also **reduces the role of the Chief Minister and the council of ministers to a rubber stamp, as they can be overruled by two bureaucrats in the NCCSA, who are ultimately accountable to the Lieutenant Governor and the Centre.**
- Ordinance **violates and nullifies the Supreme Court’s judgment**, which held that the Delhi government has legislative and executive powers over services in the national capital, except matters relating to public order, police and land.
- ordinance also **violates the principle of federalism**, which is a basic feature of the Constitution, and encroaches upon the domain of the States.

### Issue with the Current Governance Model of Delhi

#### **Erosion of Democratic Mandate:**

- The Lieutenant Governor (LG), who has the **final say in governance, does not have to respect the laws or directions of the assembly**, which represents the will of the people of Delhi.

**Violation of Executive Responsibility:**

- The LG, who is the chief executive, does not have to answer to the assembly, which goes against the principle of executive responsibility.

**Infringement of Legislative Privilege:**

- The assembly has the right to make its own rules for its functioning, which is a part of its legislative privilege.

**Obstruction of Decision-Making:**

- The need for LG's consent for many decisions has caused delays in decision-making, which has affected the development and governance of the city.

**Ambiguity of Accountability:**

- The split of duties between the elected government and the Lieutenant Governor has created problems in assigning responsibility for actions and decisions.

**Contradiction of Cooperative Federalism:**

- The Act not only opposes cooperative federalism but also reverses the fundamental principles laid down by the Supreme Court in Government of NCT Delhi vs Union of India case (2018).

**Way Forward:****Expert Committee Formation:**

- An expert committee comprising legal, constitutional, and administrative experts can be formed to provide recommendations on resolving the issue.

**Dialogue and Negotiation:**

- Engaging in meaningful dialogue and negotiation between the central government and the Delhi government is crucial for resolving the issue.
- Both parties should come together to discuss their respective concerns and interests, seeking a mutually agreeable solution that respects the democratic principles and the unique status of Delhi as the national capital.

**Respect for Constitutional Principles:**

- Throughout the resolution process, it is vital for all stakeholders to demonstrate a commitment for upholding constitutional principles, including democratic governance, separation of powers, and the rights of elected representatives.



## Promulgation and Re-promulgation of Ordinances

### Context-

- Many raises' questions about the practice of issuing ordinances to make law and that of re-issuing ordinances without getting them ratified by Parliament.

### What are Ordinances in Indian Polity?

- **Article 123 of the Constitution** of India grants the President certain law-making powers to promulgate ordinances when either of the two Houses of Parliament is not in session, in urgent situations.
- Hence, it is not possible for the ordinances to be issued by Parliament.
- When an ordinance is promulgated but the legislative session is yet to commence, the ordinance remains in effect as law. It has the same force and effect as an Act of the legislature.
- But it requires subsequent ratification by Parliament within six weeks of its reassembly.
- An ordinance promulgated by the President has a **maximum validity of six months and six weeks** from the date of its promulgation.
- The Governor of a state can also issue ordinances under Article 213 of the Constitution of India, when the state legislative assembly is not in session.
- If the two Houses start their sessions on different dates, the later date is considered (Articles 123 and 213).
- **Note:** An ordinance like any other legislation **can be retrospective** i.e., it may come into force from a back date. **It may also modify or repeal any act of Parliament or another ordinance.**

### Withdrawal:

- The President can withdraw an Ordinance, and both Houses of Parliament can pass resolutions to disapprove it, potentially leading to its lapse. Rejection of an ordinance would, however, imply the government has lost majority.
- However, If an Ordinance enacts a law that **falls outside the purview of Parliament's competence, it is considered void.**

### Data on Ordinances-

- Historically, in the 1950s, central ordinances were issued at an average of 7.1 per year. However, the number peaked in the 1990s at 19.6 per year. The last couple of years has also seen a high spike in ordinance promulgation (16 in 2019, 15 in 2020 and 10 in 2021).
- There has been a **steady decrease in the number of ordinances** promulgated by the Centre since 2021.
- States have also been using the ordinance route to enact laws.

- For example, in 2020, Kerala issued 81 ordinances, while Karnataka issued 24 and Maharashtra 21.

### Repromulgation of Ordinance:

- When an Ordinance lapses, the government can choose to re-promulgate it if necessary.
- In a 2017 case, the Supreme Court ruled that repeated re-promulgations without legislative consideration would be unconstitutional and a violation of the legislature's role.
- The court emphasised that the power to issue an Ordinance should be treated as an emergency measure and not as a means to bypass the legislature.

### Advantage and Disadvantages of Ordinances

Advantages	Disadvantages
They allow <b>quick and effective action</b> on urgent matters.	They <b>bypass the democratic process</b> of law-making and <b>reduce parliamentary oversight.</b>
They enable <b>policy implementation without legislative hurdles.</b>	They <b>undermine the principle of separation of powers</b> and encroach on the domain of the legislature.
They <b>provide legal certainty and clarity</b> in case of a judicial gap or ambiguity.	They create legal instability as they are temporary and subject to change or repeal.
They <b>reflect the responsiveness and accountability</b> of the executive branch.	They may be <b>misused for political or personal gains</b> or to avoid public scrutiny or debate.

### Issues with the Ordinance Route

#### Usurpation of Legislative Power:

- As lawmaking is a legislative function, this power is provided for urgent requirements, and the law thus made has an automatic expiry date.
- To repromulgate is to effectively extend the life of an ordinance and lead to the usurpation of legislative power by the executive.

**Undermining the Doctrine of Separation of Powers:**

- Separation of powers as a **“basic feature” of the Constitution** However, article 123 places no numeric limits on ordinances.
- In this way, the repromulgation undermines the separation of powers, as it effectively allows the executive to make permanent legislation without legislative input or approval.

**Ignoring Supreme Court’s Judgements:**

- Even after tough judgments on the use of ordinances, both the Centre and state governments have ignored the Supreme Court’s observations.
- **For example**, an ordinance to amend the Land Acquisition Act was issued in December 2014, and repromulgated twice – in April and May 2015.

**Abuse of the constitutional process:**

- Repromulgation of ordinances is constitutionally impermissible since it represents an effort to overreach the legislative body which is a primary source of law-making authority in a parliamentary democracy.

**Lack of Clarity on word emergency:****Making Functional representative democracy ill by executive****Destabilize checks and balances system****Way Ahead:**

- Every ordinance issued must be laid before both the Houses of Parliament or state legislature within six weeks from the reassembly of Parliament or state legislature and it ceases to exist if it is not approved within six weeks of reassembly.
- **44th Constitutional Amendment** has reiterated that the **satisfaction of the President to promulgate ordinance could be challenged** in case an ‘immediate action’ was not required.
- Our Constitution has provided for the separation of powers among the legislature, executive and judiciary where enacting laws is the function of the legislature.
- The executive **must show self-restraint**.
- It should use ordinance making power only in unforeseen or urgent matters and not to evade legislative scrutiny and debates.

## Past Judicial Pronouncements on Ordinances

### R.C. Cooper v. Union of India (1970):

- This case challenged the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Ordinance, 1969, which nationalised 14 major banks in India.
- The Supreme Court held that the President's satisfaction regarding the necessity of an ordinance is not immune from judicial review and can be challenged.
- The Court also held that an ordinance is subject to the same constitutional limitations as an Act of Parliament and cannot violate any fundamental rights or other provisions of the Constitution.

### A.K. Roy v. Union of India (1982):

- This case challenged the National Security Ordinance, 1980, which provided for preventive detention of persons for up to one year without trial.
- The Supreme Court upheld the validity of the ordinance but laid down some safeguards for its operation, such as periodic review by an advisory board, communication of grounds of detention to the detenu, and opportunity for representation against detention.
- The Court also observed that an ordinance should not be used as a substitute for parliamentary legislation and should be resorted to only in cases of extreme urgency or unforeseen emergency.

### D.C. Wadhwa v. State of Bihar (1987):

- This case challenged a series of ordinances issued by the Governor of Bihar between 1967 and 1981 on various subjects, some of which were promulgated several times without being placed before the state legislature.
- The Supreme Court **struck down all the ordinances as unconstitutional and held that re-promulgation of ordinances is a fraud on the Constitution and a subversion of the democratic legislative process.**
- The Court also held that an ordinance lapses automatically if it is not approved by the legislature within six weeks of its reassembly and cannot be continued by repromulgation.

## Conclusion

- Indian Constitution has provided for the separation of powers among the legislature, executive, and judiciary where enacting laws is the function of the legislature.
- The executive must show self-restraint and should use ordinance making power only in unforeseen or urgent matters and not to evade legislative scrutiny and debates.

- As the Supreme Court said, **repromulgation would most certainly be a colourable exercise of power for the Government** and it needs to be avoided.
- The power to make ordinances holds the potential for positive impact by promoting order and addressing immediate concerns. However, it must be ***exercised with careful consideration of individual rights and community needs.***
- Balancing regulation with fairness and accountability is crucial to ensure that ordinances serve their intended purpose while respecting the principles of democracy and justice

### Previous Year's Question (PYQs)

Q. Resorting to ordinances has always raised concern on violation of the spirit of separation of powers doctrine. While noting the rationales justifying the power to promulgate ordinances, analyse whether the decision of the Supreme Court on the issue have further facilitated resorting to this power. Should the power to promulgate the ordinances be repealed? (2015)

## Governor- State Relations

### Context-

- **Kerala Governor locked in a standoff with elected government on a range of issues** including appointments to the state-run Kerala University and also threatened to sack ministers who “lowered the dignity” of his office.
- The **recent decision of dismissal and suspension of a Minister in Tamil Nadu by the Governor has sparked a Constitutional Controversy.** The **Governor reversed his decision later and suspended the dismissal order.**

### Governor's Powers to Dismiss Ministers

#### Article 164:

- **Under Article 164 of the Constitution,** the **Chief Minister is appointed by the Governor without any advice from anyone.** But he **appoints the individual Ministers only on the advice of the Chief Minister.**
- The Article implies that the **Governor cannot appoint an individual Minister according to his discretion.** Therefore, the **Governor can dismiss a Minister only on the advice of the Chief Minister.**

### **Constitutional Limitations on Governor's Discretion:**

- The power to choose or dismiss a Minister lies with the Chief Minister, who represents the will of the people.
- **B.R. Ambedkar**, during the Constituent Assembly debates, unequivocally stated that the Governor has no independent executive functions under the Constitution.
- The **inclusion of the "pleasure of the Governor" in Article 164** of the Constitution refers only to the formal act of issuing dismissal orders upon the advice of the Chief Minister.

### **Concerns Related to the Issue of Dismissal of Minister**

#### **Constitutional Misadventure:**

- **Removing a Minister is a matter of moral judgment, not a legal requirement.**  
The Governor's decision to dismiss a Minister without the Chief Minister's recommendation is a constitutional misadventure.

#### **Sets Wrong Precedent:**

- This unprecedented and deliberately provocative act of dismissing a Minister of a government without the recommendation of the Chief Minister of the State, may set a precedent and has the potential to destabilise State governments putting the federal system in Jeopardy.

#### **Collapse of Constitutional System:**

- If Governors are allowed to exercise the power of dismissal of individual Ministers without the knowledge and recommendation of the Chief Minister, the **whole constitutional system will collapse.**

### **Constitutional Provisions Related to the Governor**

- **Article 153 says** that there shall be a Governor for each State. One person can be appointed as Governor for two or more States.
- A Governor is appointed by the President and is a nominee of the Central Government.
- It is stated that the Governor has a dual role.
- He is the constitutional head of the state, bound by the advice of his Council of Ministers (CoM).
- He functions as a vital link between the Union Government and the State Government.

**Articles 157 and 158 specify eligibility requirements for the post of governor. A governor must:**

- Be a citizen of India.
- Be at least 35 years of age.
- Not be a member of the either house of the parliament or house of the state legislature.
- Not hold any office of profit.

**Powers:**

- Governor has the power to grant pardons, reprieves, etc. (Article 161).
- There is a CoM with the CM at the head to aid and advise the Governor in the exercise of his functions, except some conditions for discretion. (Article 163).
- The Governor appoints the Chief Minister and other Ministers (Article 164).
- Governor assents, withholds assent, or reserves the bill for the consideration of the President passed by the Legislative Assembly (Article 200).
- Governors may promulgate the Ordinances under certain circumstances (Article 213)

**Causes of Governor- State friction**

- **Lacunae in appointment/removal process:** Governor have *become political appointees and there is no provision for impeaching the Governor*, who is appointed by President on Centre’s advice.
- **No security of tenure:** Governor has 5-year tenure, though he can be removed by President at any time.
- **No time limit for granting assent to a State Bill:** It has been held in Purshothaman v. State of Kerala case (1962), under Article 200, there is no time limit for granting the assent and lack of guidance regarding matters he should accord or withhold assent.
- **Legitimacy:** Since Governor is not elected, his power to undo the will of the Legislature by just declaring that he is withholding his assent, raises concerns of legitimacy.
  - Additionally, no court is entitled to go into justification of such withholding.
- Lack of guidelines to exercise Governor’s powers, including for appointing a CM or dissolving Assembly and thus Governors have been accused of acting on behest partisan politics.
- Lack of mechanisms to resolve differences regarding how Governor and state must engage publicly when there is a difference of opinion.

## Attempts have been Made to Address Concerns over the Alleged Partisan Role Played by Governors:

### Changes regarding the Selection of Governors:

- The **National Commission To Review the Working of the Constitution appointed by the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government** in 2000 suggested that the Governor of a State should be appointed by the President, after consultation with the Chief Minister of that State.

### Proposal by Sarkaria Commission:

- The Sarkaria Commission, set up in 1983 to look into Centre-state relations, proposed that the **Vice President of India and Speaker of Lok Sabha should be consulted by the Prime Minister in the selection of Governors.**

### Punchhi Committee Proposal:

- The Justice Madan Mohan Punchhi Committee, constituted in 2007 on Centre-state relations, proposed in its report that a **committee comprising the Prime Minister, Home Minister, Vice President, Speaker, and the concerned Chief Minister should choose the Governor.**
- The Punchhi Committee recommended **deleting the “Doctrine of Pleasure” from the Constitution, but backed the right of the Governor to sanction the prosecution of ministers against the advice of the state government.**
- It also argued for a **provision for impeachment of the Governor by the state legislature.**

## Supreme Court’s View:

### Shamsher Singh & Anr vs State Of Punjab (1974):

- In this case, a **seven-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court** said that the President and Governor, custodians of all executive and other powers under various Articles, **shall exercise their formal constitutional powers only upon and in accordance with the advice of their Ministers save in a few well-known exceptional situations.**

### Nabam Rebia And Etc. vs Deputy Speaker And Ors (2016):

- In this case, the **Supreme Court cited the observations of B R Ambedkar: “The Governor under the Constitution has no function which he can discharge by himself; no functions at all. While he has no functions, he has certain duties to perform, and the House will do well to bear in mind this distinction.”**



- **SC ruled that Article 163** of the Constitution does not give the Governor a general discretionary power to act against or without the advice of his Council of Ministers

#### **Mahabir Prasad v. Prafulla Chandra 1969:**

- The case revolved around the question of the nature of the governor's pleasure under article 164(1).
- The governor's pleasure under article 164(1) is subject to Article 164(2). Thus, the withdrawal of the governor's pleasure must coincide with the withdrawal of support to the ministry by the assembly.

#### **Conclusion**

- A legislature should establish **clear guidelines for the exercise of powers by the Governor.**
- In India, as a parliamentary democracy, the authority of Parliament should be respected, just as the democratically elected State Legislature should have a similar role and importance.
- Governors seem to have an exaggerated notion of their own roles under the Constitution. They are expected to defend the Constitution and may use their powers to caution elected regimes against violating the Constitution, but this does not mean that they can use the absence of a time-frame for decision-making and the discretionary space given to them to function as a parallel power centre.

#### **Mains PYQs**

- Q. Whether the Supreme Court Judgment (July 2018) can settle the political tussle between the Lt.Governor and elected government of Delhi? Examine. (2018)
- Q. Discuss the essential conditions for exercise of the legislative powers by the Governor. Discuss the legality of re-promulgation of ordinances by the Governor without placing them before the Legislature. (2022)

## Neighbourhood First Policy

### Context-

- The **22nd report of the Committee on External Affairs** on India's Neighbourhood First Policy was submitted to the Parliament.

### What is mean by it?

- The "Neighbourhood First Policy" is a foreign policy initiative of India aimed at strengthening ties and enhancing cooperation with its neighbouring countries.
- It prioritizes building strong relationships, promoting regional stability, and fostering economic integration among the South Asian nations.
- The policy reflects India's commitment to maintaining peace, stability, and prosperity in its immediate neighbourhood.
- It uses the **principles of Samman (respect), Samvad (dialogue), Shanti (peace), Samriddhi (prosperity) and Sanskriti (culture)** for better engagement.
- Policy forges a strong neighbourhood relation **based on a consultative, non-reciprocal, outcome-oriented approach** with India's Neighbours.

### Historical Context:

- India's historical and cultural ties with neighbouring countries.
- Legacy of colonialism and the impact on regional dynamics.
- Challenges posed by historical disputes and conflicts.

### Salient features of India's Neighbourhood First' policy:

#### Immediate priority to neighbours:

- Priority is to improve the relations with immediate neighbours as peace and tranquillity in South Asia is essential for realizing development agenda.

#### Promotion of Peace and Stability:

- Resolving outstanding disputes through diplomatic channels.
- Preventing cross-border terrorism and militancy.
- Facilitating conflict resolution mechanisms among neighbours.

#### Economic Integration and Connectivity:

- Enhancing trade, investment, and economic cooperation.
- Developing regional connectivity through infrastructure projects.
- Promoting the vision of the South Asian Economic Union.

#### Cultural and People-to-People Exchange:

- Promoting cultural diplomacy and preserving shared heritage.

- Encouraging academic, artistic, and social exchanges.
- Facilitating ease of travel and people-to-people interactions.

**Security Collaboration:**

- Strengthening intelligence-sharing and counter-terrorism efforts.
- Collaborating on maritime security to ensure safe sea lanes.
- Addressing transnational challenges like human trafficking and drug smuggling.

**Resolving bilateral issues:**

- Focus is on resolving bilateral issues through mutual agreement. **For instance**, India and Bangladesh have signed a pact to operationalise the historic Land Boundary Agreement (LBA).

**Disaster management:**

- India's offer cooperation on disaster response, resource management, weather forecasting and communication and also capabilities and expertise in disaster management for all South Asian citizens.
- **For example**, India provided immense assistance to its neighbour Nepal in the aftermath of the 2016 earthquake.

**Committee Recommendations for a better neighbourhood policy: -****Enhancing Border Infrastructure:**

- There will be a focus on developing additional Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) and Land Customs Stations (LCS) at the borders.
- The aim is to bolster efficient trade and connectivity. Moreover, the establishment of border haats is also envisioned.

**Strengthening People-to-People Ties:**

- The promotion of tourism and the exchange of shared cultural and historical values within the neighbourhood will be encouraged.
- This seeks to foster stronger interpersonal connections and mutual understanding.

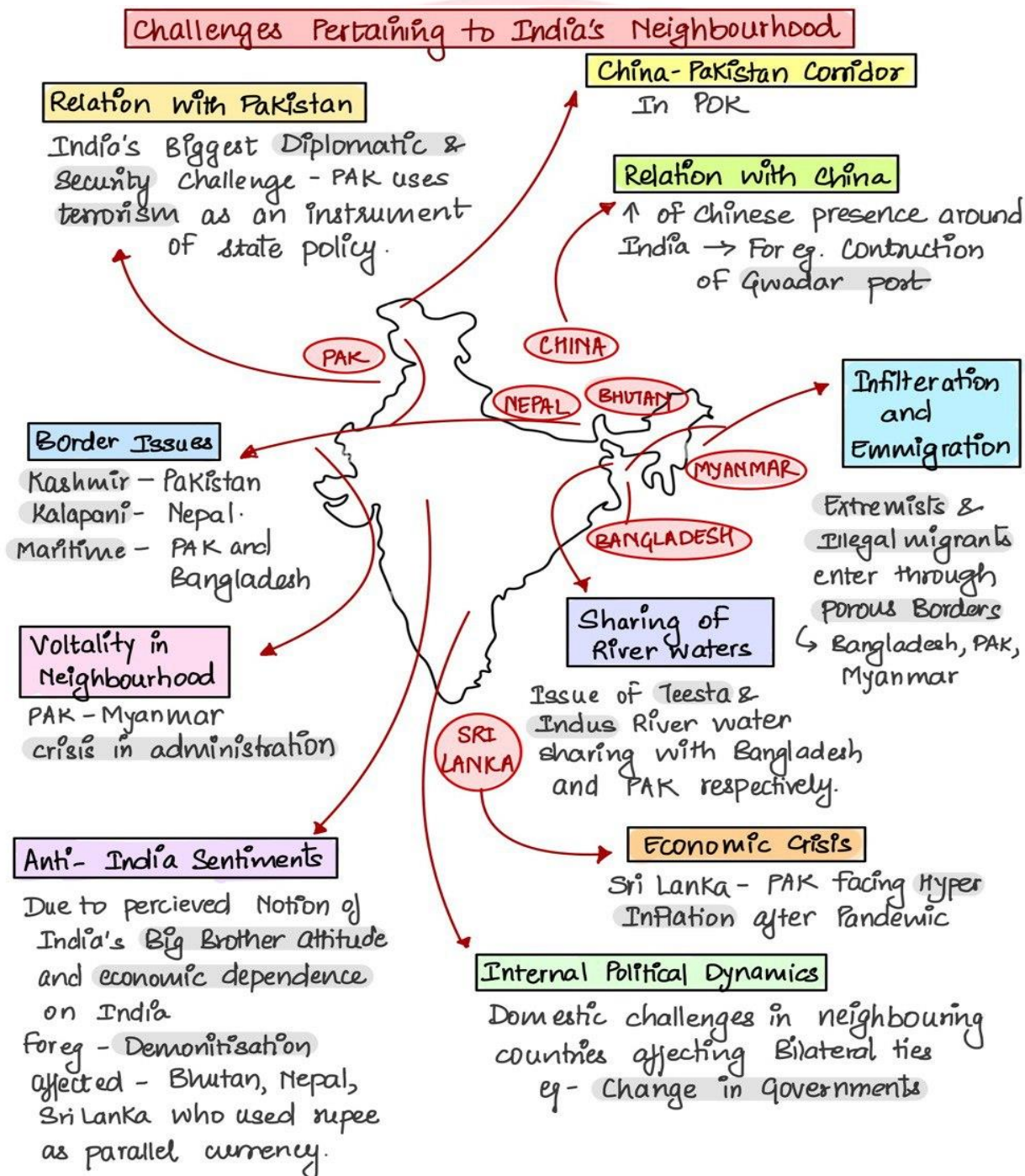
**Sustaining Diplomatic Channels:**

- Maintaining open diplomatic avenues with neighbouring nations remains a priority, ensuring that any emerging issues are addressed through dialogue and negotiation.

**Continuing Development Initiatives:**

- The ongoing efforts, such as extending humanitarian aid, executing developmental projects, and providing Lines of Credit, will persist.
- These initiatives contribute to the growth and stability of neighbouring countries.

**Challenges and concerns pertaining to India’s neighbourhood: -**



## Successes and Achievements:

### Bilateral Agreements:

- Landmark agreements resolving border disputes (e.g., India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement). Trade and economic agreements promoting regional integration.

### Regional Initiatives:

- Participation in regional forums like SAARC, BIMSTEC, and BBIN.
- Joint initiatives in areas like disaster management and climate change.

### Infrastructure Development:

- Projects like the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway.
- Development of ports and connectivity corridors (e.g., Chabahar port in Iran).
- Infrastructure projects like road from Delaram to Zaranj and parliament building in Afghanistan; Greater Male Connectivity Project in Maldives.

### Humanitarian assistance:

- Providing Covid-19 vaccines doses of management assistance during calamities eg. Operation Maitri in Nepal.

## Way forward:

### Transportation:

- As the largest country, India should be leading to establish cross-border transport and communication links.

### Strengthening Markets:

- India should work with its neighbour in strengthening their markets and its own infrastructure to its neighbours.

### Soft power:

- India's soft power and common culture provide an opportunity for India to strengthen its cultural roots further in the region.

### Gujral Doctrine:

- India's neighbourhood policy should be based on the principles of Gujral Doctrine.
- This would ensure India's stature and strength cannot be isolated from the quality of its relations with its neighbours and there can be regional growth as well.

## Conclusion: -

- Neighbouring nations share deep-rooted connections stemming from historical legacies, cultural ties, linguistic affinities, and geographical proximity. Given the interlinked nature of their policies, nurturing amicable associations becomes indispensable. **Sustaining harmonious relations with these countries is pivotal for India's enhanced progress and advancement.**
- India's Neighbourhood First Policy reflects its commitment to fostering peaceful coexistence, mutual co-operation, and shared prosperity with its neighbouring countries. It recognizes that a stable and prosperous neighbourhood is vital for India's own development and security.
- India's immediate neighbourhood directly impacts it geopolitically, geo-strategically and geo-economically because of its vicinity. Thus, working with them is important for India to rise as a superpower.

## India-Sri Lanka

### Context-

- India sent written financing assurances to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), becoming the first bilateral creditor of the island nation to officially support its crucial debt restructure programme after last year's economic meltdown.
- Recently, India and Sri Lanka released a statement titled **"Promoting Connectivity, Catalysing Prosperity: India-Sri Lanka Economic Partnership Vision."**
- Furthermore, several Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were executed, including agreements to implement UPI digital payment services within Sri Lanka and to establish the Indian Rupee as the preferred currency for trade, as well as for initiatives related to renewable energy and economic advancement projects in Trincomalee.

### Basics

- Geographically, Sri Lanka is positioned to the south of India, with the Palk Strait acting as the separation between them. This proximity has greatly influenced the dynamics of their bilateral relationship.
- **Significance of Proximity:** It has been a pivotal factor in shaping their interactions. Their shared presence in the Indian Ocean holds strategic importance due to its role in facilitating trade and military operations.
- **Sri Lanka as a Strategic Point:** Sri Lanka's geographical position places it at a crucial point where significant shipping lanes intersect. This intersection enhances its importance as a focal point for India's efforts to exercise control over key maritime routes. As a result, both countries have had to navigate and

manage their diplomatic and strategic relations in consideration of these geographical realities.

### Regarding Economic and Connectivity Relations between India and Sri Lanka:

#### Trade Relationship:

- The India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement (ISFTA), established in 1998 and enacted in 2000, has been a pivotal factor.
- Notably, India has emerged as the primary and largest trading partner for Sri Lanka, with the bilateral merchandise trade reaching a total of US\$ 5.45 billion in 2021.
- Additionally, India's role as a significant contributor to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Sri Lanka has been substantial.

#### Connectivity Measures:

- Various agreements, such as Open Sky and Air Bubble arrangements, have been established to reinstate and enhance air connectivity between the two nations. These agreements aim to foster easier travel and stronger links between India and Sri Lanka.

### Significance of Indo- Sri Lankan Bilateral Relations: -

#### Historical Connections:

- India and Sri Lanka share an extensive history of cultural, religious, and trade links dating back to ancient eras.
- The two nations have deep-rooted cultural bonds, with a considerable number of Sri Lankans having ancestral ties to India.
- The influence of Buddhism, which originated in India, is also significant in Sri Lanka's religious landscape.

#### Economic Relations:

- Sri Lanka views India as its third largest export market, trailing only the US and UK.
- The India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement benefits over 60% of Sri Lanka's exports. Furthermore, India holds a pivotal role as a significant investor in Sri Lanka's economy.
- Cumulatively, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows from India is increasing with time.

#### Defence Collaboration:

- India and Sri Lanka engage in collaborative military exercises, exemplified by the joint Military endeavour known as "Mitra Shakti," as well as the Naval

exercise named "SLIN." These exercises reflect the close defence cooperation between the two nations.

### **Geopolitical Significance:**

- Sri Lanka's location in the Indian Ocean region as an island State has been of strategic geopolitical relevance to India's maritime interests in region.

### **India's 'Neighbourhood First Policy:**

- Sri Lanka is at the core of our 'Neighbourhood First' policy and SAGAR doctrine.

### **Maritime interests:**

- It is important for the coast guards of the two countries to establish the safety and security of the Indian Ocean region.

### **Cultural and People-to-People Ties:**

- Shared historical and cultural heritage.
- Regular exchange of scholars, artists, and cultural groups.
- Indian diaspora's presence in Sri Lanka, especially in sectors like education and trade.

## **Areas of Convergence in India-Sri Lanka Relations:**

### **Trade Dimension:**

- The southern region of Sri Lanka serves as a conduit for a significant portion of global oil trade and approximately half of the world's container shipping.

### **Geopolitical Alignment:**

- Sri Lanka is a crucial collaborator in India's "Neighbourhood First" strategy and its vision of "Security and Growth for All in the Region" (SAGAR).

### **Strategic Importance:**

- Sri Lanka's geographical position at the intersection of the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal holds military significance. It is in proximity to the designated zone for Indian Naval fleet transitions.

### **Cultural Bonds:**

- Both nations share profound historical cultural connections, with Buddhism acting as a shared cultural link.
- The presence of a substantial Tamil population in Sri Lanka maintains close people-to-people relationships with the Tamil community in India.



In essence, these areas of convergence epitomize the alignment between India and Sri Lanka in trade, geopolitical objectives, military collaboration, and cultural affinity.

## Areas of Divergence in India-Sri Lanka Relations:

### **Trust Deficit:**

- The **uneven nature of India-Sri Lanka relations** has contributed significantly to a lack of trust. This has **influenced a prevailing anti-India sentiment in Sri Lanka.**

### **Fishing Disputes:**

- Instances of the Sri Lankan Navy firing upon Indian fishermen in the Palk Strait have strained relations. Disagreements over fishing rights and the use of mechanized trawlers are at the core of these tensions.
- **Continued Katchchatheevu Island dispute:** Through the 1974 agreement, India agreed to Sri Lanka's sovereignty over Katchchatheevu Island but with some safeguards to its Indian fishermen through Article 5 but it was vague enough for the Sri Lankan government to deny the fishing rights. Tamil Nadu is seeking the retrieval of Katchchatheevu from Sri Lanka

### **Economic and political crisis:**

- Recent crisis has affected the country's ability to engage with India and implement policies that promote economic cooperation and regional stability.

### **Strategic issues due to increased Chinese presence:**

- As part of the **Maritime Silk Route (MSR) policy, China built Colombo and Hambantota ports.**
- China's rapidly growing economic footprint (and political clout as a corollary) in Sri Lanka is straining India-Sri Lanka relations.

### **Tamil Question:**

- The issue of Tamil minority rights in Sri Lanka remains a sensitive topic, with India advocating for national reconciliation through a political settlement (13th amendment) of the ethnic issue.

### **13th Amendment of the Sri Lankan Constitution:**

- It envisages devolution of necessary powers to the provincial councils to address the just demand of the Tamil people for equality, justice, peace, and respect within a united Sri Lanka.
- **India supports its implementation,** but the Sri Lankan government is yet to “fully implement” the 13th Amendment.

## India's Role in Assisting Sri Lanka during the 2022 Economic Crisis:

### First Responder:

- India promptly extended support as a "first responder" during the economic crisis, showcasing its commitment to aiding its neighbour.

### Letter of Support to IMF:

- India was the first to provide a letter of support for Sri Lanka's financing and debt restructuring efforts to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

### Financial Aid and Assistance:

- India extended substantial financial assistance, totalling nearly US\$4 billion.
- This aid encompassed food, currency swaps, credit lines, and other crucial financial support measures.

### Essential Supplies:

- In addition to financial support, India dispatched essential commodities such as fuel, food, and fertilizers to Sri Lanka, addressing immediate needs.

### Deep Engagement:

- India engaged in comprehensive discussions involving the Sri Lankan government, IMF, and the Paris Club to finalize debt relief and financial arrangements.

### Enhanced Bilateral Relations:

- This assistance reinforced bilateral ties, demonstrating India's commitment to standing by Sri Lanka during challenging times.

### Neighbourhood First Policy:

- India's assistance aligned with its "Neighbourhood First" policy, emphasizing the importance of aiding, and cooperating with neighbouring countries.

### Strengthened Diplomacy:

- The crisis highlighted the efficacy of India's diplomatic approach in offering timely and substantial support.

### Regional Stability:

- By aiding Sri Lanka, India contributed to regional stability, recognizing the interconnectedness of economic well-being in the South Asian region.

**Long-term Collaboration:**

- This collaborative effort has the potential to lay the foundation for deeper economic cooperation and strategic ties between the two nations.

**In summary,** India's proactive and multifaceted response to Sri Lanka's economic crisis not only showcased its commitment to regional cooperation but also underscored the importance of strong bilateral relations.

**Way-Forward:****Continued Engagement:**

- India's role as a swift responder amid recent financial and political crises can serve as a catalyst for fostering improved ties with Sri Lanka.

**Regional Collaboration:**

- Utilizing platforms like BIMSTEC and SAARC offers avenues for expanded cooperation and joint problem-solving.

**Permanent Resolution to Fishermen Issue:**

- Both nations should engage in bilateral discussions to find a lasting solution to the ongoing fishermen's predicament.

**Counter-Terrorism Measures:**

- Given recent instances of terrorism linked to the Islamic State ideology in Sri Lanka, enhanced collaboration in counterterrorism, both bilaterally and regionally, becomes imperative.

**Building Confidence:**

- India should be attuned to Sri Lanka's status as a smaller nation, prioritizing the alleviation of Sri Lanka's concerns and apprehensions.

**People-to-People Bonds:**

- Encouraging cultural interactions, tourism, and educational partnerships can deepen mutual understanding and goodwill between the populations of both countries.

**Conclusion: -**

- In conclusion, the India-Sri Lanka relationship is a multifaceted one, encompassing historical ties, economic collaboration, strategic cooperation, and cultural affinity. While challenges and divergences exist, such as trust deficits and sensitive issues, continued efforts towards diplomatic engagement, regional partnerships, and people-to-people connections can

pave the way for deeper understanding, economic growth, and regional stability.

- India's **timely support during Sri Lanka's economic crisis showcases the orchestration of responsible neighbourliness**. As the **curtains rise on this stage of cooperation, the spotlight remains on nurturing bonds that resonate with lasting understanding and mutual prosperity**.

## Uniform Civil Code

### Context-

- Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised the crucial need for the implementation of a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in India.
- Also, the **22nd Law Commission has recently** issued a fresh notification on June 14th, seeking to solicit viewpoints from a wide range of stakeholders, including public and religious organisations, on the matter of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC).
  - Law Commission of India is a **non-statutory body** constituted by the Union government.
  - The **22nd Law Commission is chaired by former Karnataka High Court Chief Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi**.
- The Uniform Civil Code (UCC) has sparked a wide range of perspectives and discussions.
- Earlier, in October 2022, Centre told the Supreme Court that the Constitution obligated the State to have a UCC for its citizens.

### What Is Uniform Civil Code (UCC)?

- A Uniform Civil Code would provide for one law for the entire country, applicable to all religious communities, in their personal matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption, etc.

### Constitutional position: -

- The framers of the Constitution recognised the need for uniform personal laws but placed it in the Directive Principles of State Policy.
- **Article 44 of the Constitution** says that *“the State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India”*.
- Article 44 is among the Directive Principles of State Policy. Directive Principles are not enforceable by court but are supposed to inform and guide governance.

### Current Position: -

- Currently, ***Indian personal law is fairly complex***, with each religion adhering to its own specific laws. Separate laws govern Hindus including Sikhs, Jains and Buddhist, Muslims, Christians, and followers of other religions.
- UCC has been supported by some as a way to promote national integration and gender justice but opposed by others as a threat to religious freedom and diversity.
- The **only state in India that has a UCC is Goa**, which retained its common family law known as the Goa Civil Code after it was liberated from Portuguese rule in 1961.

### Principle behind UCC:

- The concept of a UCC is rooted in the idea of equality and uniformity before the law and it aims to replace the personal laws based on religious practices that currently govern matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption, and succession.

### Personal Laws in India:

- Currently, not only Muslims but also Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, Sikhs, Parsis, and Jews are governed by their own personal laws.
- Personal laws are determined based on religious identity.
- The reformed Hindu Personal Law still incorporates certain traditional practices.
- **Differences arise when** Hindus and Muslims marry under the Special Marriage Act, where Hindus continue to be governed by Hindu Personal Law, but Muslims are not.

### Constitutional Aspects of Uniform Civil Code (UCC):

#### Deliberations in Constituent Assembly:

- During the formulation of the Indian Constitution, the debates showcased a range of opinions. Some members advocated for UCC to foster gender equality and secularism, while others expressed reservations about safeguarding religious and cultural freedoms.

#### Directive Principles of State Policy:

- **Article 44 of the Indian Constitution** emphasizes the state's commitment to strive for a uniform civil code for all citizens across India's territories.

### Secular Tenets:

- India's Constitution upholds secularism, mandating the separation of religion and state. UCC aligns with this principle by ensuring equal treatment regardless of religious affiliations.

### Equality and Non-Discrimination:

- Article 14 ensures equality before the law, and the Constitution prohibits discrimination based on religion, caste, sex, race, or birthplace. UCC would reinforce these principles by guaranteeing equal rights and treatment irrespective of religious backgrounds.

### Advancement of Gender Equity:

- The Constitution guarantees gender equality and protection against gender-based discrimination. UCC is perceived as a mechanism to enhance gender justice.

## Previous efforts of UCC

### Shah Bano judgement

- In 1986, the Supreme Court's Shah Bano judgment for maintenance was considered as a first step towards UCC.
- However, **it was nullified by the Parliament** by passing an amendment to maintain the status quo.

### Incremental changes over the years

- Incremental change has happened over the decades.
- Hindu succession was reformed by Parliament in 2005, and Christian divorce rights were made gender equal in 2001.
- The courts have steadily affirmed women's rights of maintenance, adoption, etc. in various judgments, strengthening reform in minority communities.

### Stand of the 21st Law Commission on the matter

- In 2018, 21st Law Commission underlined that the Uniform Civil Code is **neither necessary nor desirable at this stage**.
- It argued for reform of family laws of every religion through amendments and codification of certain aspects **so as to make them gender-just**.
- It further said that cultural diversity cannot be compromised to the extent that our urge for uniformity itself becomes a reason for threat to the territorial integrity of the nation.

## Importance and Necessity of Uniform Civil Code (UCC):

### Consistent Principles:

- A unified code would establish consistent principles for critical matters like marriage, divorce, and succession. This would provide settled guidelines, avoiding confusion arising from conflicts within various personal laws.

### Promotion of Secularism:

- A single set of laws governing personal affairs, regardless of religion, epitomizes genuine secularism. It would curtail gender discrimination rooted in religious norms and bolster the secular fabric of the nation.

### Safeguarding Vulnerable and Women's Rights:

- UCC would shield marginalized sections, particularly women who've suffered under personal laws. By unifying communities, it guarantees women the right to dignified lives and autonomy over their bodies.

### Mitigation of Discord:

- Uniform laws for the populace could foster peace and potentially reduce conflicts, leading to religious harmony and tranquil coexistence.

### Elimination of Religion-based Bias:

- Personal laws currently segregate individuals on religious grounds. A universal law would extend justice to those facing discrimination.

### Eradication of Unjust Traditions:

- Rational and unified personal laws can abolish unjust customs, like talak system.

### End to Vote Bank Politics:

- Adopting UCC would dismantle religious-based divisions in politics, fostering a more cohesive society.

### Administrative Efficiency:

- UCC would simplify administration over India's vast population.

### Global UCC Precedents:

- Numerous Muslim nations, such as Morocco and Pakistan, have embraced UCC.

**National Integration:**

- A uniform code would cultivate national unity by removing allegiance to conflicting laws with divergent ideologies.

**Best Practices:**

- **Goa's Uniform Civil Code** has been lauded as a model, showcasing the potential success of such a system.

**In summary**, the significance and necessity of UCC lie in its ability to establish uniformity, secularism, gender justice, and societal cohesion, thereby aligning India's legal framework with global practices while ensuring national unity.

**Obstacles to Implementing Uniform Civil Code (UCC):****Infringement of Fundamental Rights:**

- Religious institutions argue that **UCC might intrude upon religious affairs, potentially infringing upon the fundamental rights guaranteed by Article 25** of the Constitution.

**Erosion of Diversity:**

- UCC could homogenize a diverse nation, disregarding the unique customs and traditions of various groups. Tribals, for instance, may experience an identity crisis due to the imposition of a uniform code.

**Communal Polarization:**

- The implementation of UCC could disproportionately affect minorities and potentially spark social upheaval, fostering communal tensions.

**Threat to Multiculturalism:**

- India's strength lies in its multicultural identity. A universal law might dilute this distinct feature of the nation.

**Lack of Political Consensus:**

- UCC is a delicate subject, and securing political agreement is challenging in a multi-party democratic setup.

**Minority Vote Bank Politics:**

- Minorities are often perceived as voting blocs by political parties, making UCC implementation difficult due to potential resistance.



**Federal Structure:**

- Several experts argued that **UCC could encroach upon states' legislative competence, thereby infringing on principles of cooperative federalism.**
- It is argued that states are better positioned to assess and legislate personal laws to suit their people's needs, given their proximity to grassroots realities.

**Constitution recognises the customary laws and procedures prevailing in NE states:**

- **In North Eastern States**, the constitution through VI schedule recognizes the customary laws and procedures prevailing in their society.
- Hence, there will be practical difficulties in the formulation as well as implementation of UCC.

In essence, the hurdles to implementing UCC revolve around potential conflicts with fundamental rights, the risk of diminishing diversity and multiculturalism, communal tensions, political complexities, and concerns of marginalized groups.

**Important Cases Related to UCC: -****Shah Bano Begum v. Mohammad Ahmed Khan (1985):**

- The Supreme Court upheld the right of a Muslim woman to claim maintenance from her husband under Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code, even after the expiry of the Iddat period.
- It also observed that a UCC would help in removing contradictions based on ideologies.

**Sarla Mudgal v. Union of India (1995):**

- The Supreme Court held that a Hindu husband cannot convert to Islam and marry another woman without dissolving his first marriage.
- It also stated that a UCC would prevent such fraudulent conversions and bigamous marriages.

**Shayara Bano v. Union of India (2017):**

- The Supreme Court declared the practice of triple talaq as unconstitutional and violative of the dignity and equality of Muslim women.
- It also recommended that the Parliament should enact a law to regulate Muslim marriages and divorces.

## Approach/ Way-Forward for Implementing UCC:

### Balanced between Unity and Uniformity:

- The proposed UCC must encapsulate India's diverse culture while promoting unity.
- **Unity holds more significance than strict uniformity.**
- The Constitution accommodates both integrationist and limited multicultural perspectives, allowing space for cultural differences.

### Inclusive Consultation:

- Engagement with a wide array of stakeholders, including religious leaders, legal experts, and community representatives, is essential for UCC formulation.
- Diverse perspectives and needs must be taken into account, ensuring fairness and legitimacy.

### Striking Equilibrium:

- The Law Commission should target practices that conflict with constitutional standards.
- Cultural practices must align with gender justice and substantive equality objectives.
- Avoiding the exacerbation of reactive culturalism among communities is crucial.

### Progressive Reform in Personal Laws:

- Muslim clergy should lead reforms in Muslim Personal Law, identifying discriminatory elements and considering progressive viewpoints.
- Addressing issues like polygamy and unilateral divorce would align with cultural values.

### Constitutional Lens:

- Upholding cultural autonomy and accommodation is inherent in the Indian Constitution.
- Article 29(1) safeguards the distinct cultural identity of all citizens.
- Muslims should evaluate whether practices like polygamy align with their cultural ethos.

### Awareness:

- The common citizen must understand the rationale behind UCC and benefits. This will require a concerted effort by the government, civil society, and the media to sensitise the public on this issue.

### Adopting a piecemeal approach:

- The goal of a UCC should ideally be reached in a piecemeal manner, like the recent amendment on the age of marriage. This could also pave the way for internal reform and change within the religious dispensation.
- **Certain Indian laws already follow a uniform code in most civil matters –** Indian Contract Act, Civil Procedure Code, Partnership Act, Evidence Act etc.

### Focus on Equity and Justice:

- The primary objective should be crafting a just code that fosters equality and justice.

**In essence**, the roadmap for UCC implementation involves balancing unity and diversity, involving diverse stakeholders, striking equilibrium between cultural preservation and progressive reform, respecting constitutional principles, and maintaining a steadfast commitment to equity and justice.

### Conclusion

- In the grand tapestry of India's legal landscape, the Uniform Civil Code stands as both a challenge and a promise. **As the nation navigates this intricate path, the key lies in harmonizing unity with diversity, where every stitch is woven with inclusivity. By engaging diverse voices, striking equilibrium between tradition and progress, and ensuring justice prevails**, India can thread the needle of a Uniform Civil Code that truly reflects its essence—unity in diversity, justice for all.
- Religious traditions often respond to top-down reforms by growing more conservative and hence resist reforms. Hence, we need to follow a bottom-up approach. The demand for UCC must come from the people. It can only emerge through an evolutionary process, which preserves India's rich legal heritage, of which all the personal laws are equal constituents.
- The implementation of a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in India requires a balanced approach that respects multiculturalism and diversity. Inclusive discussions with stakeholders, including religious leaders and legal experts, are essential to ensure diverse perspectives are considered. The focus should be on eliminating practices that hinder equality and gender justice while avoiding reactive culturalism. The reform process of Muslim Personal Law should be led by the Muslim clergy, and Muslims should critically examine practices to promote equality and justice. The aim is to develop a just and inclusive UCC that upholds constitutional values.

## GS 3

### Internationalization of Rupee

#### Context:-

- India's push for rupee invoicing in international trade has gained momentum with the recent Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2023, which proposes invoicing, payment, and settlement of trade in Indian rupees.
- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has **put in place the mechanism for rupee trade settlement with as many as 18 countries.**

Syllabus of Mains-GS3 - Effects of liberalization on the economy

#### What is Internationalisation of Indian Rupee?

- It refers to the process of making the Indian rupee a globally accepted currency, similar to other major currencies like the US dollar, Euro, and Japanese yen etc.,
- This process aims to promote India's economic growth and development by increasing the use of the rupee in cross-border transactions, foreign investment, and global trade.
- It **requires the liberalization of India's capital account**, which means allowing free flow of capital in and out of the country without any restrictions.
- India currently has full convertibility of the rupee in current accounts such as for exports and imports. **However, India's capital account convertibility is not full.** There are ceilings on government and corporate debt, external commercial borrowings and equity.

#### Data-

- Currently, while the **dollar accounts for 88% of international trade, Rupee accounts for less than 1.7% of global trade.**

#### Benefits of internationalizing rupee

- **Increased global acceptance:** Internationalization of the rupee can increase its global acceptance, which can lead to more international transactions being conducted in the rupee, thereby reducing the demand for foreign currencies and reducing exchange rate risks.
- **Mitigate exchange rate risk** - Internationalization of the INR can lower transaction costs of cross-border trade and investment operations by mitigating exchange rate risk.

- **Reduce risk** – Eliminates the risk of exposure to currency volatility faced by Indian businesses. Ex- US Dollar volatility in recent times
- **Exports becoming competitive** - Reducing currency risk can reduce the cost of doing business and can hence help in making exports more competitive in the global market.
- **Increased financial integration** - Help to integrate the Indian financial system with the global financial system.
- This could lead to **increased investment and economic growth**.
- **Reduced need for foreign exchange reserves** - The need to maintain foreign exchange reserves can reduce if a sizeable share of India's trade can be settled in terms of the domestic currency.
- **Lowering of Transaction Costs:** The internationalization of the Rupee can reduce the need for currency conversion, thereby lowering transaction costs for businesses and individuals conducting international trade.

### Challenges to internationalize rupee:

- **Exchange Rate Volatility:** Internationalising the rupee exposes it to greater exchange rate volatility. Fluctuations in the value of the rupee can impact trade competitiveness, foreign investment flows, and financial market stability.
- **Process being complex** - Rupee-trade arrangements have not been easy to implement.
  - **Example-** Trade arrangement with Russia is not yet fully operational even after a year-long engagement between the two partner countries.
- **Large trade deficit** - With Russia would saddle Russia since with large rupee balances, it would have to find a way to use or invest.
- **Small market** - The Indian economy is not as large as some other economies, so there is less demand for the rupee in the global financial markets.
- **Too much regulation** - The Indian government has a number of controls on the rupee and these controls make it difficult for the rupee to be used as a global currency.
- **Lack of liquidity** - The Indian rupee is not as liquid as some other currencies, so it can be difficult to buy and sell large amounts of rupees.
- **Geopolitical Factors:** Geopolitical factors such as political instability, wars, and sanctions can have a significant impact on the Internationalization of a currency. India needs to have stable relations with other countries and avoid getting caught in geopolitical conflicts that could impact the use of the INR as an international currency.

## Current Status for the Rupee's Internationalization

### Limited Progress in Internationalisation:

- The rupee is far from being internationalized, the daily average share for the rupee in the global foreign exchange market hovers around 1.6%, while India's share of global goods trade is mere 2%.

### Steps Taken to Promote Internationalisation:

- India has taken some steps to promote the internationalisation of the rupee (e.g., enable external commercial borrowings in rupees), with a push to Indian banks to open Rupee Vostro accounts for banks from Russia, the UAE, Sri Lanka and Mauritius and measures to trade with about 18 countries in rupees instituted.
- However, such transactions have been limited, with India still buying oil from Russia in dollars.

### Constraints on Currency Exchange:

- **India does not permit full capital account convertibility** (i.e., allowing free movement of local financial investment assets into foreign assets and vice-versa), with significant constraints on the exchange of its currency with others, driven by past fears of capital flight (i.e., outflow of capital from India due to monetary policies/lack of growth) and exchange rate volatility, given significant current and capital account deficits.

### Concerns of Neighbouring Countries:

- The rupee's internationalization cannot make a start without accounting for the concerns expressed by India's neighbours.
- The **demonetisation of 2016 also shook confidence** in the Indian rupee, especially in Bhutan and Nepal.
- Both countries continue to fear additional policy changes by the RBI (including further demonetisation).
- The move, in 2023, to withdraw the ₹2,000 note has also impacted confidence in the rupee.

## Steps taken to promote the internationalisation of the Indian rupee

- **Liberalisation of capital account:** The RBI has progressively relaxed restrictions on capital flows to and from India, thereby facilitating greater cross-border investment and trade.
- **Currency swap agreements:** The RBI has signed currency swap agreements with several countries, which allow for the exchange of rupee and foreign currency between the central banks of the two countries.

- **Promotion of rupee-denominated bonds:** The government has allowed Indian companies to issue rupee-denominated bonds in international markets, which has helped to increase the demand for the rupee.
- **Bilateral trade agreements:** The government has signed several bilateral trade agreements with other countries, which has facilitated greater cross-border trade and investment and increased the use of the rupee in international transactions.
- **Encourage Exporters/Importers for Transactions in Rupee:** Optimising the trade settlement formalities for rupee import/export transactions would go a long way.
- **Offer Tax Incentives:** Offer Tax Incentives to Foreign Businesses to Utilise the Rupee in Operations in India.
- **Ensure Currency Management Stability and Improve the Exchange Rate Regime:** Avoid sudden or drastic changes such as devaluation or demonetisation that can impact confidence. Ensure consistent and predictable issuance/retrieval of notes and coins.
- **Encourage Cross-Border Trade in Indian Rupee:** Government should encourage cross-border trade with other countries, especially neighboring countries like Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh, in Indian Rupee instead of other currencies.

#### Committee-

#### **Pursue the Recommendations of the Tarapore Committees :**

- Such as reducing fiscal deficits lower than 3.5%, reducing gross inflation rate to 3%-5%, and reducing gross banking non-performing assets to less than 5%.

#### Conclusion:

- There is need for careful planning and coordination between policymakers, market participants, and regulators to ensure a smooth and successful transition towards the internationalisation of the Indian rupee.
- Overall, increase in the international use of the Indian rupee will go a long way in positioning India as a more attractive destination for foreign investment and trade.
- India should learn from China's Experience of China's success in internationalizing the renminbi (RMB) and it also had trade surplus across the world.

## Direct Benefit Transfer in India

### Context-

- **Yojana magazine** June 2023

Syllabus of Mains-GS2 – Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.  
Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance.

### Introduction

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has praised the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) Scheme, **calling it a ‘logistical marvel’ that has reached hundreds of millions of people.**
- An IMF Deputy Director said that DBT programme has helped people with low income levels **especially women and the elderly praising the technological innovation behind it.**
- Further, developing countries can learn a lot from India’s DBT initiative. Earlier, the President of the World Bank Group had also urged other nations to adopt India’s move of targeted cash transfers instead of broad subsidies, noting **that “India managed to provide food or cash support to 85% of rural households and 69% of urban households”**

### Data-

- Helped by digital cash transfers, India managed to provide food or cash support to a **remarkable 85% of rural households and 69% of urban households.** – World Bank
- At the same time, DBT and accompanying governance reforms have been estimated to save the Government of India cumulatively a sum of Rs 2.23 lakh crore up till March 2021 or **close to 1.1% of GDP.**

### DBT and DPSP

- The right to a dignified living guaranteed under the Fundamental Rights (Article 21) is actualised through provisions made under the Directive Principles of State Policy.
- Accordingly, the DBT gives more teeth to Article 21 by efficiently and efficaciously implementing schemes to address issues like inequalities in income, opportunities and resources, strengthening the health, and securing right to work and public assistance to those in need all elements of the Directive Principles of State Policy.



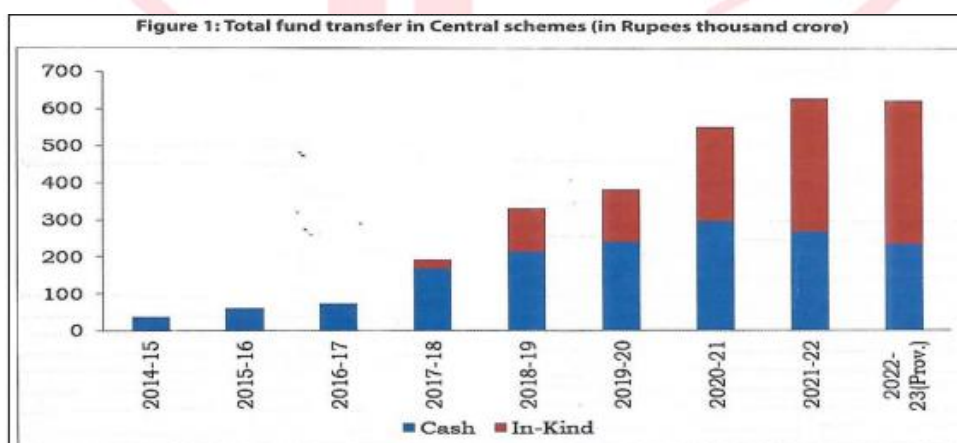
## What Is DBT?

- The DBT was originally envisaged as a scheme, where the welfare benefits provided by the Government are directly credited to the bank or postal account of the accurately identified beneficiary.
- It was launched about a decade ago as a transformative programme in public service delivery using modern Information & Communication Technology.
- Till date, the DBT in India not only entails cash support to eligible beneficiaries but also in-kind transfers to them, covering over 300 Central and more than 2000 State schemes.
- Widely known include farmer income support programmes like the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM KISAN), pensions for the old aged, Divyangjan, widows, etc.
- The DBT has been a force multiplier in facilitating the transfer of social safety net payments directly from the govt to beneficiaries' bank accounts, helping reduce leakages, curb corruption and provide a tool to effectively reach households to increase coverage.
- The World Bank (2022) also recognised the need for countries to back the DBT-styled public interventions into action plans for disaster resilience.
- The positive impact of DBT in India on the economic and social position of women within and beyond their households

### Components of DBT:

- Primary components in the implementation of DBT schemes include Beneficiary Account Validation System, a robust payment and reconciliation platform integrated with Reserve Bank of India (RBI), National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), Public & Private Sector Banks, Regional Rural Banks and Cooperative Banks (core banking solutions of banks, settlement systems of RBI, Aadhaar Payment Bridge of NPCI etc.

### Progress of DBT in India



## Advantages of DBT:

### Expanded the Coverage of Services:

- In a mission-mode approach, it endeavoured to open bank accounts for all households, expanded Aadhaar to all and scaled up the coverage of banking and telecom services.

### Instant and Easy Money Transfer:

- It created the Aadhaar Payment Bridge to enable instant money transfers from the government to people's bank accounts.

### Financial Assistance:

- In rural Bharat, DBT has allowed the government to provide financial assistance effectively and transparently to farmers with lower transaction costs – be it for fertilisers or any of the other schemes.

### Transfer of Funds & Social Security:

- In urban India, the PM Awas Yojana and LPG Pahal scheme successfully use DBT to transfer funds to eligible beneficiaries. Various scholarship schemes and the National Social Assistance Programme use the DBT architecture to provide social security.

### A Door to New Opportunities:

- DBT under rehabilitation programmes such as the Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS) opens new frontiers that enable social mobility of all sections of society.

### Good Governance:

- It has brought transparency and reduced instances of pilferage from the distribution of Central Government-sponsored funds.

### Digitalisation or Cashless Economy:

- DBT is assisting India in accelerating its transition toward a cashless economy;
- The prospect of receiving money directly has motivated people to open bank accounts and also acting as a driver in promoting savings.

## Challenges to DBT:

### Unfamiliarity With DBT:

- Beneficiaries of DBT do not know what to do when their payments get rejected, often due to technical reasons such as incorrect account numbers and incorrect Aadhaar mapping with bank accounts.

- More importantly, the workers/beneficiaries have rarely been consulted regarding their preferred mode of transacting.

**Breeding of Corruption:**

- The digital exclusion and unfamiliarity of beneficiaries with DBT, has created new forms of corruption.
- This was evidenced in the massive scholarship scam in Jharkhand, where many poor students were deprived of their scholarships owing to a nexus of intermediaries, government officials, banking correspondents and others.

**Inadequate Rural Banking:**

- There are just 14.6 bank branches per 1 lakh adults in India. It is sparser in rural India.
- Moreover, rural banks are short-staffed and tend to get overcrowded.
- Accessing banks in rural areas **leads to loss of one wage day for the worker.** Also, people must spend money on transportation to access the bank to withdraw their payments/subsidies.

**Aadhaar Authentication Issues:**

- Dependence on Aadhaar for authentication can lead to exclusion of those without Aadhaar cards or facing technical issues.
- **Privacy concerns and data security challenges** related to Aadhaar usage need to be addressed.

**Connectivity and Infrastructure:**

- Poor internet connectivity and technological infrastructure in rural areas can hamper real-time data updates and fund transfers.
- Investing in better connectivity and infrastructure is essential to ensure smooth DBT operations.

**Grievance Redressal Mechanism:**

- Establishing an efficient and accessible grievance redressal mechanism for beneficiaries is crucial to address issues like payment delays or incorrect payments.
- Timely resolution of grievances can build trust in the DBT system.

**Interdepartmental Coordination:**

- Coordinating with various government departments and agencies involved in the implementation of different welfare schemes can be challenging.
- Ensuring seamless data sharing and collaboration among stakeholders is necessary for successful DBT.

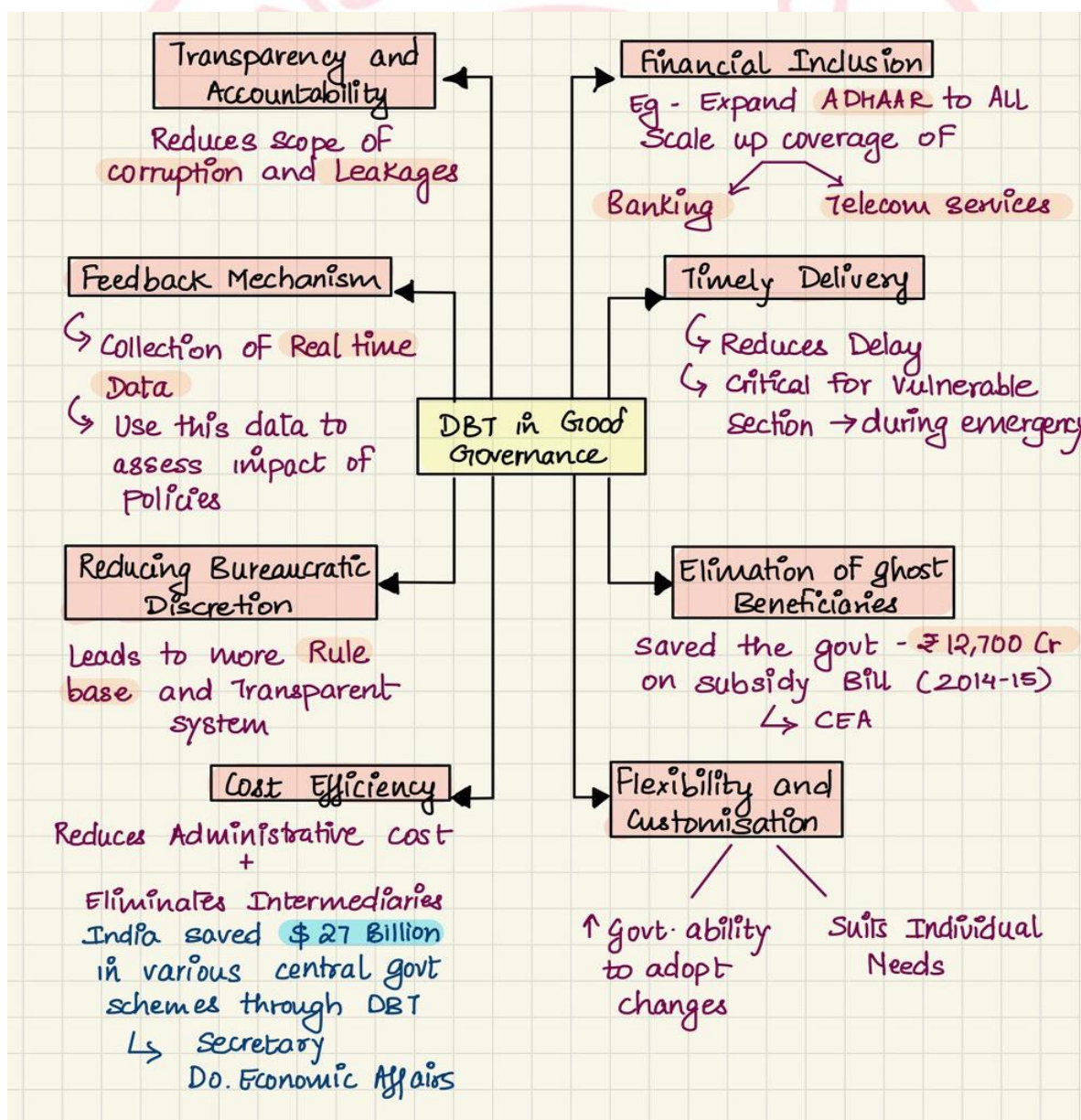
**Cost and Administrative Burden:**

- Implementing and managing DBT systems require significant financial and administrative resources.
- Balancing cost-effectiveness with program efficiency is a key challenge for policymakers.

**Behavioural Barriers:**

- Changing beneficiaries' behaviour from traditional subsidy-based systems to DBT may require education and awareness campaigns.
- Overcoming resistance to change is essential for the program's success.

**Use of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) in good governance**



## Future Scope of DBT

### DBT 2.0

- It will focus on an online eligibility verification mechanism using Aadhaar.
- The digitisation and Aadhaar seeding of such documents ensure citizen-friendly, real-time, and cost-effective verification or authentication.
- The DigiLocker and API Setu offer convenient digital platforms to issue and access eligibility certificates in electronic and machine-readable format.
- In his address on the occasion of the Civil Services Day on 21 April 2023, the Prime Minister alluded to this approach.

### DBT 3.0

- It seeks to usher in a transformative shift in the scheme of benefit delivery to citizens. As things stand, citizens have to discover the Government schemes for which they would be eligible and apply to the concerned scheme implementing agency for availing the benefits.
- However, by pooling in data residing in various government databases, the State can suo motu reach out to eligible citizens and start delivering the envisaged benefits to them by obtaining their consent and willingness thereof.

### Conclusion: -

- For the far-reaching contemporary impacts of, and the possibility of futuristic reforms in India's DBT paradigm, it is one of India's most remarkable contributions to the discourse in ongoing G20 discussions.
- It clearly has the potential to promote harmony within our 'One Family' and engender hope for our 'One Future'.
- DBT brings efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability in the Government system and infuse confidence of citizen in the governance. Therefore, with the use of modern technology and IT tools will realize the dream of **Maximum Governance Minimum Government**.

### PYQ

- Reforming the government delivery system through the Direct Benefit Transfer Scheme is a progressive step, but it has its limitations too. Comment. (2022)

### Question for Practice-

- DBT Scheme is a good step toward reforming the government delivery system. Discuss. (250 words)

## KURUKSHETRA – June 23

### Fostering Water Management for Food Security

#### Context-

- Article in Kurukshetra Magazine.

Syllabus of Mains-GS3 - Issues of buffer stocks and food security

GS 1- Geographical features and their location-changes in critical geographical features (including waterbodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes.

#### Introduction-

- Water management and conservation are now top objectives on a global scale due to factors including population growth, climate change, altered land use patterns, changes in the water cycle, notably in rainfall patterns, and desertification.
- Water management for food security is a pressing global concern, particularly in areas like India, where agriculture plays a vital role. The agricultural sector is the biggest consumer of water globally, accounting for about 70% of all surface and groundwater withdrawals. India uses 80-90% of the total water for agriculture.

#### Data

- **By 2025** the demand of Total water requirement will be 1023 BCM (Billion Cubic Meter)
- In 2010 demand of Total water requirement is 813 BCM (Billion Cubic Meter)
- **In this, Major portion of water is drawn for use by the agriculture sector, followed by other sectors like drinking water, Industry and Energy etc.**
- By 2050 the demand of Total water requirement will be 1447 BCM (Billion Cubic Meter)
- The mean annual flow in all the river basins in India is estimated to be 1,869 cubic km. However, only about 690 cubic km (37 per cent) of the available surface water can be utilized because: Over 90% of annual flow of the Himalayan rivers occur over a four-month period.
- Potential to capture such resources is complicated and limited by suitable storage reservoir sites.
- India also relies excessively on groundwater resources, which accounts for over 50% of irrigated area with 20 million tube wells installed.

## Water Resources in Agriculture: Availability and Projections

- The availability of both surface and groundwater varies from one region to another.
- Groundwater contributes more than 79 per cent of the total ultimate potential through minor irrigation.
- At the same time, water scarcity coupled with high demand in farming, small and fragmented land holdings, depleting soil organic carbon, and degradation are challenging the sustainability factor in farming.

### Why Fostering Water Management for Food Security is Necessary?

#### Rising Demand for Food:

- With the world population expected to reach nearly 10 billion by 2050, there is an increased demand for food. Efficient water management ensures that this growing demand can be met without depleting our water resources.

#### Climate Change:

- Changing climatic patterns have resulted in water scarcity in certain areas and floods in others. Effective water management helps in building resilience against such adverse effects of climate change, thereby ensuring food security.

#### Depletion of Water Resources:

- Overexploitation of water resources, particularly for irrigation, has led to their rapid depletion.

#### Uneven Distribution of Water Resources:

- Water resources are not evenly distributed across the globe, leading to areas of abundance and areas of scarcity. Efficient water management can help in the optimal utilization of these resources, ensuring food security in all regions.

#### Socio-economic Considerations:

- A large section of the global population is dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. Efficient water management **not only ensures food security but also economic security for these individuals.**

## Measures to mitigate the water footprints of crops.

#### Promote Efficient Irrigation Systems:

- Micro-irrigation systems, such as drip and sprinkler irrigation, are being promoted under the 'Per Drop More Crop' initiative. These systems deliver

water directly to the plant roots, reducing evaporation and runoff, thus significantly reducing the water footprint.

### **Crop Diversification:**

- The government is encouraging farmers to grow less water-intensive crops. Crop rotation and multi-cropping are also promoted as they can enhance soil fertility and reduce the water footprint.

### **Natural Farming Methods:**

- Practices such as the Bhartiya Prakratik Krishi Paddhati (BPKP) promote natural farming, which requires 50-60% less water and electricity compared to conventional farming methods.

### **Promote Rainwater Harvesting:**

- Rainwater harvesting is being encouraged at both the farm and community level to collect and store rainwater for later use. This can significantly reduce the demand for groundwater and thus the water footprint.

### **Increase educational programs:**

- The Sahi Fasal campaign educates farmers about water-efficient farming methods and appropriate crop selection based on regional water availability. **For instances**, nutritious Millets such as Shree Anna Bajra and Shree Anna Jowar are encouraged for cultivation in water scarce regions of the country.

### **Use of Water-Efficient Goods:**

- The Bureau of Water Use Efficiency (BWUE) has published Indian Standards for micro-irrigation products to promote water efficiency in agriculture.

### **Monitoring and Regulation:**

- Regular monitoring of Water Use Efficiency (WUE) across all sectors helps to identify areas for improvement and devise effective strategies for reducing the water footprint.
- This will also help in achieving SDG target 6.4, which focuses on 'substantially increase water- use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity by 2030'.

### **Community Participation:**

- The government encourages community participation in water conservation. Self-help groups and cooperatives disseminate techniques like rainwater



harvesting, groundwater recharge, and the use of micro-irrigation technology to farmers.

## Initiatives by the Government of India

### Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY):

- It was launched during 2015-16 with the vision of extending the coverage of irrigation "Har Khet ko Pani" and improving water use efficiency, i.e., 'Per Drop More Crop'.
- It offers an end-to-end solution for irrigation through source creation, distribution, management, field application, and extension activities and is an amalgamation of schemes.

### Per Drop More Crop:

- This scheme focuses on enhancing water use efficiency, productivity and reduction in inputs costs through Micro Irrigation technologies, i.e., drip and sprinkler irrigation systems.
- It is being implemented under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) from 2022-23.
- A Micro Irrigation Fund of initial corpus 5000 crore rupees was created with NABARD to facilitate the States in mobilising the resources for expanding coverage of Micro Irrigation by taking up special and innovative projects.

### Sahi Fasal Campaign:

- It is a component of the National Water Mission initiated by the Ministry of Jal Shakti for raising awareness amongst the farming community on water efficient farming through selection of agricultural crops that utilises water more efficiently and micro irrigation technology.

### Bhartiya Prakratik Krishi Paddhati:

- It promotes natural farming and aims at minimising the cost of cultivation, recreation of soil ecosystem, resource conservation, enhancing farmers' income, and ensuring environment sustainability.

## Community Participation in Water Conservation

- To limit the adverse impacts of large-scale water projects, public policy-makers and development practitioners have advocated a gradual shift from state assisted large-scale water resource management projects to community-based and participatory water resource management programmes.
- Civic participation in the management processes of any public development endeavour results in better outcomes.

**Water Conservation Programmes implemented by various States: -**

State	Initiative
Andhra Pradesh	Neeru-Chettu for rejuvenating and revitalising natural resources.
Bihar	Jal Jeevan Hariyali for identification, restoration, and renovation of all public water storage structures - ponds / canal / pines, etc.
Gujarat	Sujalam Sufalam Jal Sanchay Abhiyan for deepening water bodies in the state before monsoon arrives to increase storage of rainwater to be used during times of scarcity.
Haryana	Jal Hi Jeevan Hai for encouraging farmers to adopt crop diversification and sow crops which require less water like Maize, Arhar, etc., instead of water guzzling crops such as paddy so as to conserve water.
Odisha	Pani Panchayat for ensuring voluntary activity of group of farmers engaged in the collective management (harvesting and distribution) of surface water and groundwater (wells and percolation tanks).
Maharashtra	Jalyukt Shivar Abhivaan for deepening and widening of water streams, construction of cement and earthen stop dams, works on nullahs and digging of farm ponds.
Rajasthan	Mukhya Mantri Jal Swawalamban Abhiyan for extending conservation efforts to manage rainfall, runoff, groundwater & in-situ soil moisture.

**Why is Community Planning and Participation in Water Conservation needed?**

- Community's involvement in planning and execution ensures success in the endeavour by enhancing the **economic viability** of the implementation of development interventions.
- Their operation and maintenance, the better upkeep of assets due to inherent community belongingness and increasing the life span of the system so created.
- Effective planning and implementation of water conservation-related schemes demand active community engagement through Farmer's Group, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), Self- Help Groups (SHGs), and Cooperatives.

**Issues in Community Planning**

- Arrest the rapid depletion of groundwater levels through judicious extraction by the farm and nonfarm sectors.
- Control construction activities in rural areas and remove encroachments of the erstwhile water bodies.
- To identify water courses, revive, de-silt rural water bodies, and improve water storage capacities.
- Steps to be taken to address issues due to erratic rainfall, droughts, or drought-like conditions.
- To ensure integration of crop-planning, crop-rotation, and crop-diversification planning with the conservation plans of the community.

### Ways to address the issues in Community Participation

- Social mobilisation, initiation of need analysis, preparation of the Water Security Plan, Irrigation Plan and Village Action Plan.
- Discuss and deliberate on the sustainability of water schemes - both drinking and irrigation purposes,
- explore new revenue sources like user fees, operation, and maintenance fees, if any, for smooth operation, maintenance, and conservation of water systems.
- Prepare a water reserve audit, water safety plan to ensure recharge, storage, and availability of water and to meet issues relating to quality water usage.
- Demand and support setting up of the technical support cells in consultation with the District/ Block administration to ensure convergence in the community and near the water project areas.
- Coordinate with District or Block level authorities for promoting timely execution of water projects and fund utilisation.
- Coordinate with District or Block level authorities for adopting technologies and digital medium for monitoring of water schemes.
- Arrange training and capacity building programmes on rainfall data capture, water collection, storage, and usage for grass-root workers like health workers, anganwadi workers, science teachers, high school students, panchayat members, retired army officials, etc. Monitor water availability, water sources, and water quality.

### Conclusion:

- Water conservation programmes would be successful in achieving their objectives only if the community and the end-beneficiaries were duly engaged in various stages of the programme's implementation - from the stage of identifying the need to prioritisation of conservation activities, implementation, and community monitoring of water works.

### Conclusion

- **Water is a state subject and requires cooperation to harness steps for augmentation, conservation, and efficient management** of water resources across States. Natural resource conservation is needed to guide land and water allocation to ensure sustainable agriculture and socio-economic development. Ecosystem services, and incentives should be considered to encourage efficient use of water.
- The **imperative to foster** water management for food security is clear, given the projected population growth, climate change implications, and increasing water stress.

- With agricultural practices consuming the majority of India's water resources, promoting water-efficient farming techniques and technologies is key.
- Policymakers and scientists are actively working on bringing about a shift from intensive to resource-efficient, climate-smart farming, but much work remains to be done.

### PYQs

- What is water stress? How and why does it differ regionally in India? (2019-GS1)
- The effective management of land and water resources will drastically reduce the human miseries. Explain. (2016-GS1)

### Question for Practice

- Community Planning and Participation has huge role in Water Conservation. Discuss with Suitable examples. (150W-10M)

## Multidimensional Poverty Index 2023 - NITI Aayog Report

### Context-

- The **NITI Aayog has published the second edition** of the Multidimensional Poverty Index titled 'National Multidimensional Poverty Index: A progress of Review 2023'.

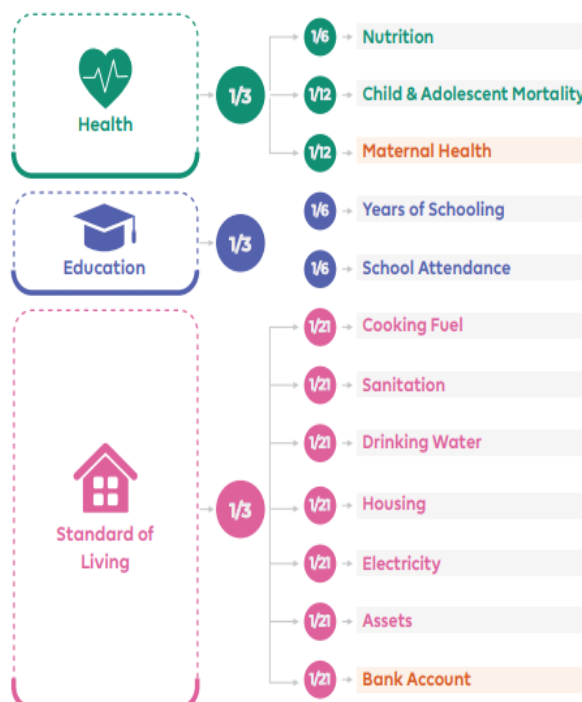
### What is Multidimensional Poverty?

- A person who is poor can suffer multiple disadvantages at the same time – for example they may have poor health or malnutrition, a lack of clean water or electricity, poor quality of work or little schooling.
- Focusing on one factor alone, such as income, is not enough to capture the true reality of poverty.
- Multidimensional Poverty is a measure of poverty that captures deprivations in education and access to basic infrastructure in addition to income or consumption at the USD 1.90 international poverty line (as per World Bank).

## National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)

- The MPI has been used by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its flagship Human Development Report since 2010.
- In this context, NITI Aayog had published the first edition of national Multidimensional Poverty Index for India in 2021.
- This year’s report has been **prepared based on the latest National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-21 ) and is the 2nd edition of the National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI).**
- It has three equally weighted dimensions – Health, Education, and Standard of living.

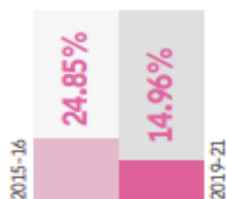
Indicators and their weights



## Key Highlights of the Report

### Highlights: MPI Progress Report 2023

Steep decline in **Poverty Headcount Ratio**



**135 million** (13.5 crore)

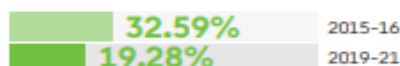
people exited multidimensional poverty between 2015-16 and 2019-21



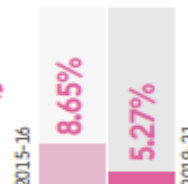
India on track to achieve **SDG Target 1.2** (reducing multi-dimensional poverty by at least half) much ahead of 2030

All **12** indicators have shown improvement suggesting that impact of Government interventions is increasingly visible on ground

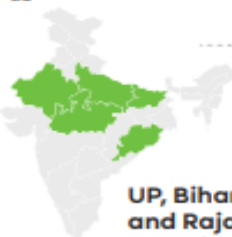
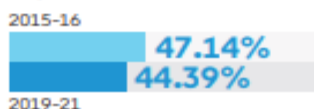
Fastest decline in percentage of multidimensional poor in rural areas from



Reduction in the incidence of poverty in urban areas



The **Intensity of poverty**, which measures the average deprivation among the people living in multidimensional poverty improved from about



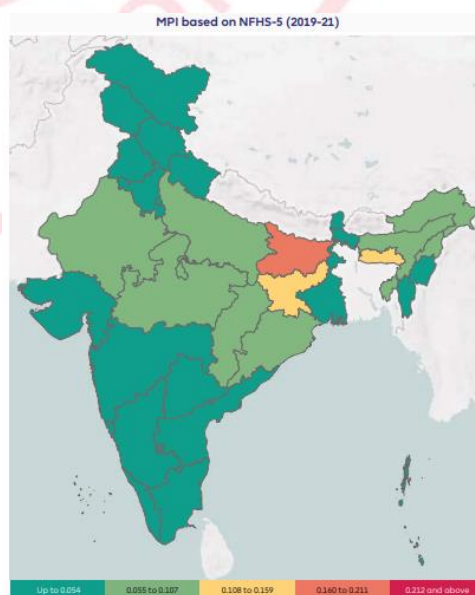
UP, Bihar, MP, Odisha and Rajasthan recorded steepest decline in number of **MPI poor**



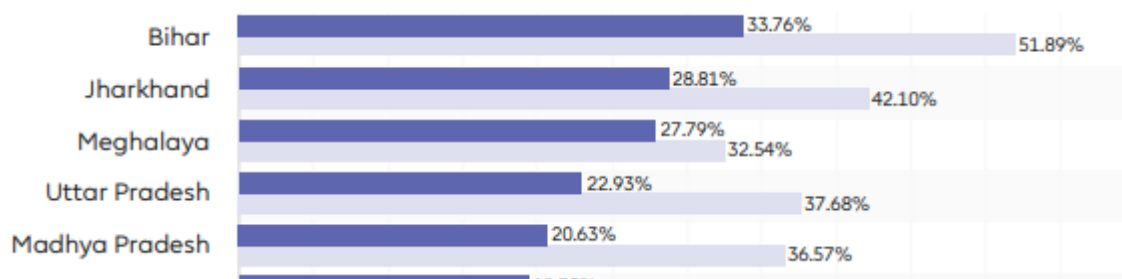
Improvement in **nutrition, years of schooling, sanitation, and cooking fuel** played a significant role in reducing the MPI value

### State-Level Progress:

- In terms of number of MPI poor, Uttar Pradesh saw the largest decline in the number of poor individuals, with 3.43 crore (34.3 million) people escaping multidimensional poverty.
- The states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Rajasthan also witnessed significant progress in reducing multidimensional poverty.
- Bihar saw the fastest reduction in MPI value in absolute terms with the proportion of multidimensional poor



reducing from 51.89% to 33.76% in 2019-21 followed by Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.



## Reasons behind Multi-Dimensional Poverty in India:

### Lack of Inclusive Economic Growth:

- India has achieved impressive economic growth in recent decades, but it has not been equally distributed among different segments of society. The Gini coefficient, which measures income inequality, has increased from 0.32 in 1983 to 0.36 in 2019.

### Income Inequality:

- A significant wealth gap exists in India, with a small portion of the population holding a large share of the wealth, leading to unequal distribution of resources.
- Top 10% of income earners in the country earn around 50% of the total income, while the bottom 50% receives less than 15%. (Oxfam)

### Sluggish Agricultural Performance and Poverty:

- Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for about 50% of the Indian population, but it contributes only around 17% to the GDP.
- The agriculture sector faces many challenges, such as fragmented and subdivided landholdings, lack of capital, illiteracy about new technologies, use of traditional methods of cultivation, wastage during storage, climate change, and natural disasters.
- National Crime Records Bureau (**NCRB**) **reported that 10,281 farmers committed suicide in India in 2019.** This indicates the severity of the distress faced by the farming community.

### Lack of Access to Education:

- Inadequate access to quality education, especially in rural areas, contributes to low human capital development and perpetuates the cycle of poverty.

- The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) data (2019-2020) showed that 31.4% of women in the age group of 15-49 years had no formal education, compared to 18.2% of men.
- According to the National Family Health Survey 2019-21 (NFHS-5), which was conducted in 2019-20, there are an estimated 16.2 million children in India aged 6-17 years who are not attending school.

#### **Limited Healthcare Services:**

- Insufficient access to quality healthcare services and nutrition leads to higher rates of illness and malnutrition, affecting overall well-being and productivity.
- According to the National Health Profile (NHP) 2019, there is one government doctor for every 10,926 people and one government hospital bed for every 1,844 people.

#### **Unemployment and Underemployment:**

- High levels of unemployment and underemployment in both urban and rural areas limit income generation opportunities and perpetuate poverty.
- unemployment rate in India was 8.11% in April 2023, according to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE). This is the highest unemployment rate in India since April 2020.

#### **Poor Infrastructure:**

- Inadequate infrastructure, including limited access to clean water, sanitation facilities, and electricity, hinders economic and social development.

#### **Regional Disparities:**

- There are significant regional disparities in economic development, with certain states and rural areas lagging behind others.

#### **Vulnerability to Natural Disasters:**

- India is prone to natural disasters like floods, cyclones, and droughts, which can devastate livelihoods and further exacerbate poverty.
- According to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), over 450 million people in India are exposed to various natural disasters, including floods, cyclones, earthquakes, droughts, and landslides.



## Way -Forward

### Quest for Continuous Growth:

- There is a need of continuous growth of 7% during the next 25 years. This requires a Gross Fixed Capital Formation rate of 28%

### Targeted Poverty Alleviation Programs:

- Design and implement targeted poverty alleviation programs that address the specific needs of different vulnerable groups.
- Ex. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (**MGNREGA**)

### Adopt a Multi-Dimensional Strategy:

- The export-led growth strategy like China and South Korea may not work for India, particularly in the context of changed global trade situation.
- The emphasis should be on agriculture and related activities, manufacturing and exports. India has emerged strongly in the services area.

### Investment in Human Capital:

- Prioritize investment in education and healthcare to empower individuals and improve their earning capacity and overall well-being. (**Amartya Sen- Capacity Building approach**)
- Ex. PMKVY (Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana)

### Employment Generation:

- Promote job creation and entrepreneurship through skill development programs, industrial development, and micro-finance initiatives.
- Ex. PM Savnidhi

### Strengthen Social Safety Nets:

- Enhance social protection measures to provide a safety net for vulnerable populations during economic downturns and emergencies.
- Ex. Atal Pension Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana

### Include a Provision for Basic Income:

- In an uncertain world, the need for the provision of basic income becomes even more urgent.

## Conclusion

- Over the past 75 years, India has developed a robust and varied economy, and it stands as the world's fifth-largest economy, which is a significant achievement.
- However, when considering per capita terms, India's ranking of 149 out of 194 countries in 2022 indicates that there is much progress yet to be made.
- To elevate the economy, sustained growth is crucial, and India possesses the potential for it. While the current external circumstances may not be favourable, we must adapt and find ways to thrive. By adopting the right strategies and fostering an investment-friendly environment, a continuous growth rate of 6 to 7% remains achievable.
- It is essential to recognize that the journey towards alleviating poverty and achieving a more equitable society requires concerted efforts from all stakeholders – government, private sector, civil society, and citizens. By working together, we can create an environment where economic prosperity is not just a privilege of a few but a reality for all. Let us forge ahead with determination, innovation, and compassion, leaving no one behind on our path to a prosperous and poverty-free India.

## Question for practice

- Why Multi dimension poverty still exists in India after 75 years of Independence. What can be done to reduced Multi dimension poverty in India? (150W)

## Bhoomi Samman 2023

### Context-

- Recently, the President of India presented the “Bhoomi Samman” 2023 at a function organised by the Union Ministry of Rural Development.

Syllabus of Mains-GS3 - Land reforms in India

GS2- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

## What is “Bhoomi Samman”?

- The “Bhoomi Samman” is a prestigious award scheme launched by the Union Ministry of Rural Development to recognize and incentivize the achievements of states and districts in the implementation of the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP).

- The award is presented by the President of India to the state secretaries and district collectors along with their teams who have excelled in achieving saturation of the core components of DILRMP, such as: Computerization of land records, Digitization of cadastral maps, Integration of textual and spatial data, Survey/re-survey using modern technology, Computerization of registration, Interoperability between registration and land records.

## Advantages of Digitalisation of Land Records:

### **Easy Accessibility:**

- Digital land records can be accessed online from anywhere, making it convenient for citizens, government officials, and investors to obtain land-related information.

### **Transparency and Accountability:**

- Digital records reduce the scope for tampering or manipulation, ensuring greater transparency and accountability in land transactions and ownership details.

### **Securing Land Rights:**

- Digital land records help protect the land rights of marginalized and vulnerable communities, ensuring equitable access to land resources.

### **Reduced Paperwork:**

- Moving from manual records to digital formats significantly reduces paperwork, streamlining administrative processes and saving time and resources.

### **Minimizing Land Disputes:**

- Digital records provide clear and easily verifiable documentation, reducing disputes over land ownership and boundaries.

### **Efficient Land Management:**

- Digitalization facilitates better land resource management, enabling the government to make informed decisions on land use, planning, and development.

### **Integration with Other Services:**

- Digital land records can be integrated with other government services like property tax collection, building permits, and utilities, enhancing overall efficiency.

**Supporting E-Governance Initiatives:**

- Digital land records contribute to the larger e-governance framework, enabling the government to offer citizen-centric services through digital platforms.

**Preservation and Disaster Recovery:**

- Digital records are more resilient to physical damage and can be backed up to ensure data preservation and efficient disaster recovery.

**Encouraging Investments:**

- Reliable and accessible digital land records instil confidence in investors, both domestic and foreign, leading to increased investments in real estate and infrastructure sectors.

**Enhanced Land Valuation:**

- Access to historical land records and transaction data allows for more accurate land valuation, aiding in fair property assessment and taxation.

**Enabling Land Title Certification:**

- Digital records can be used as a basis for establishing clear land titles, facilitating property transactions and reducing legal complexities.

**Geospatial Mapping and Planning:**

- Integration with Geographic Information System (GIS) enables precise geospatial mapping, aiding in urban planning, disaster management, and environmental protection.

**Reducing Administrative Burden:**

- Digitalization automates several manual tasks, reducing the administrative burden on government officials, leading to increased efficiency and effectiveness.

**Challenges Associated with Digitisation of Land Records****Outdated and Incomplete Data:**

- Converting physical records to digital formats may encounter challenges due to the existence of outdated or incomplete data, requiring extensive data validation and cleansing.

**Land Title Disputes:**

- The digitization process may reveal discrepancies and conflicting claims to land titles, leading to legal disputes and complexities that need resolution.

**Technical Infrastructure:**

- Insufficient technological infrastructure in rural areas can hinder the implementation of digitization initiatives, affecting data upload and retrieval.

**Data Security and Privacy:**

- Digitized land records require robust data security measures to protect sensitive information from unauthorized access and cyber threats.

**Capacity Building and Training:**

- Adequate training for government officials and staff is essential to ensure proper usage of digital platforms and tools for managing land records.

**Interoperability and Standardization:**

- Ensuring interoperability between different digital platforms and standardization of data formats is crucial for seamless integration of land records.

**Land Surveying Challenges:**

- Accurate geospatial data collection and surveying present technical challenges, especially in remote and inaccessible areas.

**Land Record Frauds:**

- Despite digitization efforts, there may still be possibilities of fraudulent activities such as fake land registrations and unauthorized modifications to digital records.

**High Initial Investment:**

- Setting up the infrastructure and implementing digitization projects require significant initial investments, posing financial challenges for some regions or governments.

**Data Migration Risks:**

- The process of migrating physical records to digital formats carries risks of data loss or corruption, necessitating careful planning and backup measures.

**Digital Divide:**

- The digital divide between urban and rural areas can exacerbate disparities in access to land records, affecting landholders' rights and access to services.

## Way Forward

### Blockchain-based Land Records:

- Implement a blockchain-based system to store and manage land records.
- Blockchain's decentralized and immutable nature ensures transparency, reduces the possibility of fraud, and fosters trust in land transactions.

### Drone Surveys and GIS Mapping:

- Use drones equipped with high-resolution cameras and Lidar technology to conduct accurate surveys of land parcels.
- Integrate the data with Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping to create a dynamic and real-time representation of land records.

### Standardization and Interoperability:

- Establish uniform data standards and formats to ensure compatibility and seamless integration of land records across different departments and systems. This will enable efficient data sharing and retrieval.

### Dispute Resolution Mechanism:

- Establish an efficient and transparent dispute resolution mechanism to address land title disputes that may arise during or after digitization.
- Utilize alternative dispute resolution methods to expedite resolution processes.

### Stakeholder Engagement and Awareness:

- Conduct awareness campaigns to educate stakeholders about the benefits of digitization and address their concerns.
- Engage with traditional record keepers and involve them in the digitization process to ensure their cooperation.

## Conclusion

- Overall, overcoming the challenges of digitization through careful planning, technological innovation, and stakeholder collaboration will lead to a more transparent, accountable, and efficient land governance system that can drive socio-economic development and benefit all citizens.
- In the **blossoming garden of technological progress**, the digitization of land records emerges as a vibrant bud with the promise of transparency, efficiency, and equitable governance. Through this digital bouquet, governments can cultivate a landscape of harmony, where the fruits of progress are shared by all, and the seeds of prosperity are sown for generations to come.

## PYQ

- Discuss the role of land reforms in agricultural development Identify the factors that were responsible for the success of land reforms in India. (2016).

## Question for Practice

- The digitization of land records has been hailed as a transformative step towards good governance and efficient land management. Analyse the key benefits and challenges associated with the digitization of land records. (250W-15M)

## GS 4

## Buddha's Relevance to the Modern Youth

### Context-

- The **President of India urged the youth to draw inspiration from the teachings of Lord Buddha**, on Dharma Chakra Pravartana Divas (3rd July 2023)- **PIB**
- The President reflected on how Lord Buddha's first sermon on Asadha Purnima planted the seeds of the middle path of the Dhamma.

## How can Youth Draw Inspiration from Buddha to Navigate Life's Challenges

### Mindfulness as a Foundation:

- One of the central tenets of Buddha's teachings is the practice of mindfulness.
- Mindfulness encourages individuals to cultivate a deep awareness of the present moment, fostering an enhanced understanding of their thoughts, emotions, and actions.
- In a world saturated with distractions, young people can draw inspiration from Buddha's emphasis on being fully present and engaged.
- By practicing mindfulness, youth can learn to manage stress, improve focus and concentration, and nurture a greater sense of self-awareness, leading to improved mental well-being and personal growth.

### Impermanence and Non-Attachment:

- Buddha's teachings emphasize the impermanence (the state or fact of lasting for only a limited period of time) of all phenomena and the futility of attachment.
- In a materialistic society driven by instant gratification, youth can find solace and inspiration in the understanding that everything is transient.

- By recognizing the impermanence of both joy and suffering, young individuals can cultivate a mindset that is adaptable, resilient, and open to change.
- Learning to let go of attachment to outcomes, possessions, and **even relationships can free the youth from unnecessary suffering** and allow them to embrace life with greater equanimity.

### **Compassion and Empathy:**

- In a world where divisions and conflicts persist, young people can find inspiration in Buddha's teachings on loving-kindness and compassion.
- By cultivating empathy, youth can develop a deeper understanding of others' struggles, fostering a sense of unity and connection.

### **Self-Discovery and Inner Transformation:**

- Young people, often grappling with questions of identity and purpose, can draw inspiration from Buddha's teachings on self-exploration.
- By engaging in introspection and self-reflection, youth can gain insights into their true nature, passions, and aspirations.

### **Engaging in Social and Environmental Responsibility:**

- Buddha's teachings emphasize the interconnectedness of all beings and advocate for responsible action.
- The youth can actively engage in social and environmental responsibility by working towards equality, justice, and sustainable practices.
- They can participate in community initiatives, advocate for marginalized groups, and champion environmental conservation.
- By embodying these teachings, they contribute to building a more equitable, harmonious, and environmentally conscious society.

## **Conclusion**

- The relevance to Buddhism can be traced from the words of Dalai Lama who stated that the 20th century was a century of war and violence, it was the work of humanity to ensure the 21st century goes on the way of peace and dialogue.

## **Major Teachings of Lord Buddha:**

### **The Three Marks of Existence:**

- These are the characteristics of all phenomena that one should understand and accept. They are impermanence (anicca), unsatisfactoriness (dukkha), and non-self (anatta).

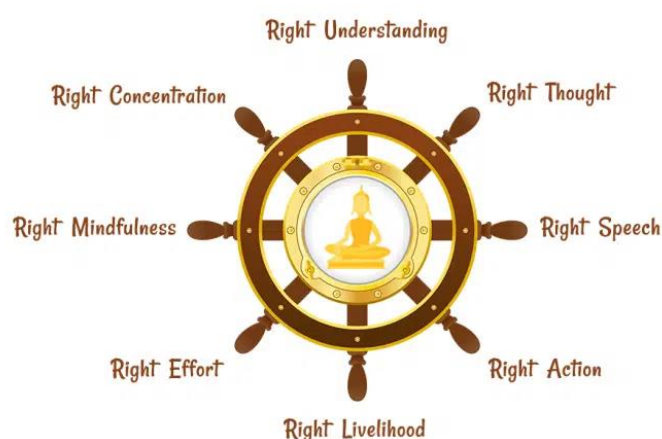
### **The Four Noble Truths:**



- These are the truths about the nature of suffering, its cause, its cessation, and the path to its cessation. The cause of suffering is ignorance, attachment, and aversion.

The cessation of suffering is possible by following the Noble Eightfold Path:

## THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH



### The Division of Wisdom

- 1.) Right Understanding
- 2.) Right Thought

### The Division of Ethical Conduct

- 3.) Right Speech
- 4.) Right Action
- 5.) Right Livelihood

### The Division of Mental Discipline

- 6.) Right Effort
- 7.) Right Mindfulness
- 8.) Right Concentration

### The Four Sublime States:

- These are the positive mental qualities that one should cultivate and radiate to all beings. They are loving-kindness (metta), compassion (karuna), sympathetic joy (mudita), and equanimity (upekkha).
- By developing these states, one can foster harmony, empathy, altruism, and peace.

### The Five Precepts:

- These are the basic ethical principles that Buddha laid down for his lay followers.
- **They are:** to abstain from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and intoxication.
- They help us to avoid harming ourselves and others, to respect life and property, to maintain purity and honesty and to preserve clarity and awareness.

### PYQ for Practice-

Q. What teachings of Buddha are most relevant today and why? Discuss. (UPSC GS-4 Mains 2020)

## **Features Of the Module**

Thus, to help you in streamlining your current affairs preparation, we at PRAYAAS are introducing this CURRENT AFFAIRS module for you.

### **Features Of the Module**

- June to December 2023
- One lecture per week on Sunday
- The session will be of 3-4 hours.
- Weekly CA from newspaper - Specifically Mains Perspective

Mains focus will be on how to develop that thinking abilities and how to decipher topics for mains.

### **January to May 2024**

- One session per week- Specifically Prelims Perspective
- Special focus on linking Current with Static

## **Session will be open to all sincere aspirants.**

### **Venue For the Session**

- Latkar Office (Classroom)  
PRAYAAS Institute of Excellence, 1st Floor, Latkar Press, Pant Pratinidhi Road, Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak Rd, opp. New English School, Pune City, Pune, Maharashtra, 411001

QR Code of Lectures

July First Week



July Second Week



July Third Week



July Fourth Week



Join our Free Initiative of  
Daily Answer Writing



Join our PAREEKSHAN 2.0 Mains  
Test Series

