



# PIB YOJANA KURUKSHETRA COMPILATION

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# GENERAL STUDIES PAPER II

## Voluntary Vehicle Scrappage Policy

### About the Policy

- The **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways** has recently announced a voluntary vehicle scrapping policy that is aimed at taking polluting, fuel-guzzling vehicles off the roads to reduce pollution and congestion.

### Aim

- To put it simply, the vehicle scrapping policy aims to take old, polluting vehicles off the roads and send them to the scrapyard.

### Impact

- This will help in encouraging fuel efficient, environment friendly vehicles, thereby reducing vehicular pollution and oil import bill.

### Background

- The vehicle scrapping policy has been a longstanding demand of the automobile sector.
- The apex auto industry body Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers urged the government to announce an incentive based scrapping policy ahead of the budget, while also seeking a reduction in GST on BS-VI vehicles to 18%.
- If we take 1990 as base year, there are approximately 37 lakh commercial vehicles and 52 lakh private vehicles eligible for voluntarily scrappage.**

### Details

- Vehicles would undergo fitness tests in automated fitness centres after 20 years in case of personal vehicles, and after 15 years in case of commercial vehicles
- The policy would cover an estimated 5.1 million light motor vehicles (LMVs) that are above 20 years of age and an additional 3.4 million LMVs that are above 15 years.
- It would also cover 1.7 million medium and heavy motor vehicles that are more than 15 years old, and currently are without valid fitness certificates.

### Draft Policy Outlines

- The ministry of road transport and highways, in its draft policy, stated that it would include a waiver of the registration fees and ask states to reduce the road tax on new vehicles purchased by having old ones scrapped in an environment friendly and scientific manner.
- Vehicles older than 15 years have very low resale value, and voluntarily sending them to the scrapyard will offer their owners monetary compensation that will help them to buy a new vehicle.
- Raising the registration fee for renewal after completion of 15 years.
- Higher fee for issue of fitness certificate and fitness testing for commercial vehicles older than 15 years;
- Restrictions by states on the entry of old vehicles in their city limits and higher road tax on cars older than 15 years.
- Passenger vehicles older than 20 years will invite similar disincentives.

### Conclusion

- The vehicle scrapping policy will lead to new investments and Job Creation.
- It would also help recycle key raw material made available by scrapping vehicles, such as steel, aluminium and plastic, thereby lowering automobile prices.

## Consumer Welfare Fund

### Why in News

- **Under the Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) Act, 1917, Government has set up the Consumer Welfare Fund (CWF) to promote and protect the welfare of the consumers.**
- It has worked successfully under the extant Consumer Welfare Fund (CWF) Guidelines, 2019 and achieved the objective for which it has been set up.
- The Government has not revised these guidelines.
  - Except during Covid-19 period, during which restrictions were imposed on movements, gatherings of persons and different kinds of other activities, agencies/organizations who were provided financial assistance from CWF have carried out the activities for which they were given the funds.

### Initiatives taken by the Government to promote and protect the welfare of the consumers

- a. A Pan-India consumer awareness campaign "**JagoGrahakJago**" through print, electronic, outdoor and social media through various agencies/ organizations/ Ministries like All India Radio, Doordarshan, National Film Development Corporation, Bureau of Outreach & Communication, Department of Posts, etc.
- b. Participation in various fairs/festivals/events to generate awareness among the consumers living in rural and backward areas of the country.
- c. Providing grant-in-aid to States/UTs to generate awareness in regional languages.
- d. Dissemination of consumer awareness messages through social media.
- e. Celebration of World Consumer Rights Day/National Consumer Day.
- f. **Bureau of Indian Standard (BIS) Mobile Care App.**
- g. The **Consumer Protection Act, 2019 (CP Act 2019)** has been implemented w.e.f. 20th July, 2020.
  - The new Act covers e-commerce transactions
  - It allows electronic filing of complaints, hearing and/or examining parties through video-conferencing for procedural ease and reduces inconvenience, introduced the concept of product liability bringing within its scope, the product manufacturer, product service provider and product seller for any claim for compensation, imposition of penalty on the manufacturer/endorser for a false or misleading advertisement and prohibiting them from endorsing a particular product or service, for mediation as an 'Alternate Dispute Resolution Mechanism' for making the process of dispute adjudication simpler & quicker and reduce pressure on Consumer Commissions. Under the CP Act, 2019, the Central Consumer Protection Authority has been set up as an executive agency w.e.f. 24.07.2020.
- Government has set up a **National Consumer Helpline (NCH) with toll free number 1800-11-4000** or short code 14404 to handle the consumer grievances.
- Further, to cater to the needs of consumers of different regions, **six Zonal Consumer Helplines have been set up each at Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Jaipur, Guwahati & Patna.**
- h. Consumer awareness programmes are organized through the network of BIS Offices across the country for promoting the concept of standardization, certification and quality consciousness among consumers as well as manufactures.
  - BIS has a full-fledged department, namely Complaints Management and Enforcement Department, functioning at its HQ in New Delhi, as the nodal department to cater to Consumer Complaints regarding standards.
  - Publicity about Standard Marks i.e. on ISI Mark, Hallmark and Registration Mark is given primarily through its network of branch and regional offices along with the Headquarters by BIS.

## One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC)

### Why in News

- **The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution in association with State/UT Governments is implementing 'One Nation One Ration Card' (ONORC) plan for nation-wide portability of ration cards under the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA).**
- So far, the facility has been enabled in 32 States/UTs covering nearly 69 Crore beneficiaries, almost 86% of NFSA population of the country.

## Salient Features

- Under ONORC, the beneficiaries, if desire, can lift their entitled foodgrains from any **ePoS (electronic Point of Sale device) enabled Fair Price Shop (FPS)** of their choice by using their same/existing ration cards with biometric authentication on the ePoS device at the time of lifting the foodgrains through portability.
- No direction has been given to States/UTs for issuance of new ration cards to beneficiaries under ONORC.
- However, for the sake of uniformity under ONORC operations, States/UTs have been advised to adopt a standard bi-lingual format for ration cards whenever they decide to issue/print new ration cards under NFSA in the future.

## About Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)

- Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) under NFSA is operated under the joint responsibilities of the Central and State/UT Governments.
- Under the joint responsibility, the State/UT Governments are responsible for
  - Identification of eligible beneficiaries under NFSA
  - Issuance of ration cards to them
  - Lifting of foodgrains from the designated depots
  - Distribution to ration card holders as per their entitlements through FPSs, etc.
- Thus, identification of eligible beneficiaries and issuance of ration cards to them for distribution of foodgrains under NFSA lies with the concerned State/UT Government.
- Presently, out of the total given coverage of 81.35 Crore persons under NFSA, around 80 Crore beneficiaries are receiving their entitled quota of foodgrains through TPDS on monthly basis.

## Section-38 of the NFSA

- **Directions under Section-38 of the NFSA have been issued to all States/UTs to cover all eligible disabled persons under the NFSA.**
- Besides, all States/UTs have also been advised to identify needy persons from the weaker sections of the society including disabled persons through time-to-time special drives, camps, etc. and issue NFSA ration cards to all eligible persons/households up to the defined coverage of persons under NFSA for their State/UT.

## Latest Figure/ Stats

- At present 69.09 Crore beneficiaries are covered under ONORC Scheme.
- Uttar Pradesh has registered highest number of beneficiaries under the scheme (14.66 Crore), followed by Bihar (8.71 Crore) and Maharashtra (7.00 Crore)

## Urban Local Bodies (ULB) reforms

### Why in News

- **Goa has become the 6th State in the country to successfully undertake Urban Local Bodies (ULB) reforms stipulated by the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance.**
- Thus, the State has become eligible to mobilise additional financial resources of Rs. 223 crore through Open Market Borrowings. Permission for the same was issued by the Department of Expenditure.
- Goa has joined five other States namely, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Rajasthan and Telangana, who have completed ULB reforms. On completion of this set of reforms, these five States have been granted a total additional borrowing permission of Rs. 10,435 crore.

## About Urban Local Bodies

- Reforms in ULBs and the urban utilities reforms are aimed at financial strengthening of ULBs in the States and to enable them to provide better public health and sanitation services to citizens.
- Economically rejuvenated ULBs will also be able to create good civic infrastructure.
- The set of reforms stipulated by the Department of Expenditure to achieve these objectives are:
  - a. The State will notify:
    - ✓ Floor rates of property tax in ULBs which are in consonance with the prevailing circle rates (i.e. guideline rates for property transactions) and;
    - ✓ Floor rates of user charges in respect of the provision of water-supply, drainage and sewerage which reflect current costs/past inflation.



- ✓ The State will put in place a system of periodic increase in floor rates of property tax/ user charges in line with price increases.

## Special Package for the States

- In view of the resource requirement to meet multiple challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of India had enhanced the borrowing limit of the States by 2 percent of their GSDP.
- Half of this special dispensation i.e. 1 percent of GSDP was linked to undertaking citizen centric reforms by the States.
- The four citizen centric areas for reforms identified by the Department of Expenditure were:
  - a. Implementation of One Nation One Ration Card System.
  - b. Ease of doing business reform.
  - c. Urban Local body/ utility reforms.
  - d. Power Sector reforms.

## Present Status

- Till now, 17 States have carried out at least one of the four stipulated reforms and have been granted reform linked borrowing permissions.
  - Out of these, 13 States have implemented the one nation one ration card system, 12 States have done ease of doing business reforms, 6 States have done local body reforms and 2 States have undertaken power sector reforms.
  - Total reform linked additional borrowing permission issued so far to the States stands at Rs.--- 76,512 crore.

## Mahabahu-Brahmaputra

### Why in News

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has recently launched the 'Mahabahu-Brahmaputra', lay the foundation stone of Dhubri Phulbari Bridge and perform Bhumi Pujan for construction of **Majuli Bridge Assam** via video conferencing.

### About Mahabahu-Brahmaputra

- The launch of Mahabahu-Brahmaputra will be marked by the inauguration of the Ro-Pax vessel operations between Neamati-Majuli Island, North Guwahati-South Guwahati and Dhubri-Hatsingimari; Shilanyas of Inland Water Transport (IWT) Terminal at Jogighopa and various tourist jetties on River Brahmaputra and launch of digital solutions for Ease-of-Doing-Business.
- The program is aimed at providing seamless connectivity to the Eastern parts of India and includes various development activities for the people living around River Brahmaputra and River Barak.
- **Ro-Pax services** will help in reducing the travel time by providing connectivity between banks and thus reducing the distance to be travelled by road.
  - The Ro-Pax operation between Neamati and Majuli will reduce the total distance of 420 Km currently being travelled by vehicles to only 12 Km, resulting in a substantial impact on the logistics of small-scale industries of the region.

### Other Initiatives

- The programme also includes shilanyas for construction of tourist jetties at four locations, namely, Neamati, Biswanath Ghat, Pandu and Jogighopa with the financial assistance of Rs. 9.41 crores from the Ministry of Tourism.
  - These jetties will promote river cruise tourism, generate local employment and also generate growth for local business.
- A permanent Inland Water Transport Terminal will also be built at Jogighopa under the program, which will connect with the Multi-Modal Logistics Park also coming up at Jogighopa.
  - This Terminal will help in reducing the traffic on the Siliguri Corridor towards Kolkata and Haldia.
  - It will also facilitate the uninterrupted movement of cargo even during flood season to various North-Eastern States like Meghalaya and Tripura and to Bhutan and Bangladesh as well.

### Dhubri Phulbari Bridge

- Prime Minister has laid the foundation stone for the four lane bridge over the Brahmaputra between Dhubri (on North Bank) and Phulbari (on South Bank).
- The proposed Bridge will connect Dhubri in Assam to Phulbari, Tura, Rongram and Rongjeng in Meghalaya.
- It will reduce the distance of 205 Km to be travelled by Road to 19 Km, which is the total length of the bridge.

### Majuli Bridge

- Prime Minister will perform Bhumi Puja for the two-lane Bridge on the Brahmaputra between Majuli (North Bank) and Jorhat (South Bank).

### About Majuli Island

- Majuli is a river island in the Brahmaputra River, Assam.
- In 2016, it became the first island to be made a district in India.
- The island is formed by the Brahmaputra River in the south and the Kherkutia Xuti, an anabranch of the Brahmaputra, joined by the Subansiri River in the north.
- It was formed due to course changes by the river Brahmaputra and its tributaries, mainly the Lohit.
- Majuli is the abode of the Assamese neo-Vaishnavite culture.

### Conclusion

- The Construction of the bridge will be hugely beneficial for the people of Majuli who for generations have been dependent on the ferry services to connect with the mainland of Assam.

## Comprehensive Economic Co-operation and Partnership Agreement between India and Mauritius

### Why in News

- The Union Cabinet has recently approved signing of the **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) between India and Mauritius**.

### Background

- Since 2005, **India has been among the largest trading partners of Mauritius**, and has been one of the largest exporters of goods and services to Mauritius.
- According to the International Trade Centre (ITC), in 2019, the main import partners of Mauritius were India (13.85%), China (16.69%), South Africa (8.07%), and UAE (7.28%).
- The bilateral trade between India and Mauritius has registered a growth of 233% from USD 206.76 million in Financial Year (FY) 2005-06 to USD 690.02 million in FY 2019-20.
- India's exports to Mauritius surged 232% from USD 199.43 million in FY 2005-06 to USD 662.13 million in FY 2019-20.
- India's imports from Mauritius increased 280% from USD 7.33 million in 2005-06 to USD 27.89 million in FY 2019-20.

### Salient features of India-Mauritius CECPA

- The India-Mauritius CECPA will be the first trade Agreement to be signed by India with a country in Africa.
- The Agreement is a limited agreement, which will cover Trade in Goods, Rules of Origin, Trade in Services, Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures, Dispute Settlement, Movement of Natural Persons, Telecom, Financial services, Customs Procedures and Cooperation in other Areas

### Expected Impact

- CECPA provides for an institutional mechanism to encourage and improve trade between the two countries.
- The CECPA between India and Mauritius covers **310 export items for India**, including food stuff and beverages, agricultural products, textile and textile articles, base metals and articles thereof, electricals and electronic item, plastics and chemicals, wood and articles etc.

- Mauritius will benefit from preferential market access into India for its 615 products, including frozen fish, speciality sugar, biscuits, fresh fruits, juices, mineral water, beer, alcoholic drinks, soaps, bags, medical and surgical equipment, and apparel.
- Indian service providers will have access to around 115 sub-sectors from the 11 broad service sectors such as professional services, computer related services, research & development, other business services, telecommunication, construction, distribution, education, environmental, financial, tourism & travel related, recreational, yoga, audio-visual services, and transport services.
- India has offered around 95 sub-sectors from the 11 broad services sectors, including professional services, R&D, other business services, telecommunication, financial, distribution, higher education, environmental, health, tourism and travel related services, recreational services and transport services.
- Both sides have also agreed to negotiate an Automatic Trigger Safeguard Mechanism (ATSM) for a limited number of highly sensitive products within two years of the Signing of the Agreement.

## Timelines

- The Agreement will be signed by the concerned from both the countries on a mutually convenient date and will come into force from 1st date of the following month.

## India-Mauritius Relation

- Mauritius is an important development partner of India.
- **India had extended a 'Special Economic Package' of USD 353 million to Mauritius in 2016.**
- The new Supreme Court building project is one of the five projects being implemented under this package and was jointly inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Prime Minister of Mauritius Pravind Jugnauth in July 2020.
- In October 2019, Prime Minister Modi and the PM of Mauritius had jointly inaugurated the **Phase -I of the Metro Express Project and the 100-bed state of the art ENT hospital project in Mauritius,** also built under the special economic package.

## National Monsoon Mission

### Why in News

- Under the Monsoon Mission, Ministry of Earth Sciences has developed the state-of-the-art weather and climate prediction models, which are now in operational use.
- These models include models for short range to medium range (1-10 days), extended range (10days to 30 days) and seasonal (up to one season).
- The models developed under the National Monsoon Mission (NMM) have shown very high skill in predicting important weather events on different time scales during the last 3years.

### About National Monsoon Mission

- The overall objective of NMM is to improve the monsoon prediction over India on all time scales and hence it is implemented for the whole country which includes all the States and UTs.
- It has the following targets:
  - Development of a seamless prediction system using monsoon mission model, on different time scales, like Seasonal (for whole Monsoon season), Extended range (up-to 4 weeks), Short range prediction (up-to 5days).
  - Initiate and coordinate working partnership between Indian and foreign institutes to develop a system for prediction of extremes and climate applications
  - Develop and implement system for climate applications having social impacts (such as agriculture, flood forecast, extreme events forecast, wind energy, etc.)
  - Advanced data assimilation system for preparing high quality data for model predictions.

### Major achievements

- Setting up of an advanced prediction system for Seasonal prediction; Extended range prediction and Very high-resolution Short-range prediction.
- Commissioning of a **Global Ensemble Forecast System (GEFS)** for short and medium range prediction at 12km.



- A remarkable improvement in the skill of the forecasts especially in the short to medium range has been noticed.
- The **Cyclone track and intensity prediction** has also shown a steady improvement over the last three years.
- The operationalization of **Monsoon Mission dynamical model (MMCFS)** to prepare operational seasonal forecast of monsoon rainfall and temperatures during the hot and cold weather seasons over India.
- Use of MMCFS and extended range prediction system for preparing regional seasonal forecast outlook for south Asia under WMO recognised Regional Climate Center and South Asia Seasonal Climate Outlook Forum (SASCOF) activities.
- Development of an **algorithm to monitor and predict the Monsoon Intra-seasonal Oscillations (MISO)** and Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) on the extended range.
- Development of an index to predict the genesis and evolution of tropical cyclones and other cyclonic disturbances over the north Indian Ocean.
- **Probabilistic Quantitative Precipitation Forecast** over all the Indian river basin have been operationally implemented.
- Probabilistic (percentile based) forecast for extreme wind, precipitation have been established.
- GFS/GEFS forecasts have been extensively used to provide guidance to Forest fire possibility and also to Renewable Energy Sectors namely, wind and solar.
- Development of a high resolution regional re-analysis product, IMDAA at very high resolution of 12km.
- Several scientists have been trained for modelling & forecasts through Monsoon Mission Program and capacity building activities have been done through targeted trainings.


### Recent Developments

- Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) has received several project proposals from various International institutes, for funding through Monsoon Mission.
- The **Scientific Review and Monitoring Committee (SRMC)** of Monsoon Mission reviewed those proposals and recommended the proposals, which are relevant to Monsoon Mission objectives and useful for prediction of Indian Monsoon and extreme weather conditions.
- The research & development and operational (services) activities of MoES in respect of weather and climate related phenomena is being addressed by one of the umbrella schemes **Atmosphere and Climate Research – Modelling, Observing Systems and Services (ACROSS)**.
  - The entire gamut of weather/climate prediction involves assimilation of meteorological observations, understanding the processes, research and development of dynamical models and providing the forecast services.
  - Each of these aspects is incorporated as sub-scheme under the umbrella scheme “ACROSS” and is being implemented through India Meteorological Department (IMD), Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune and National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF).
- **Sub-schemes:** There are nine sub-schemes under ACROSS which are as follows:
  - Commissioning of Polarimetric Doppler Weather Radars (DWRs)-IMD
  - Upgradation of Forecast System-IMD
  - Weather & Climate Services-IMD
  - Atmospheric Observations Network-IMD
  - Numerical Modeling of Weather and Climate-NCMRWF
  - Monsoon Mission II including High Resolution (12km) global ensemble forecast system (NITI Aayog identified activity) –IITM
  - Monsoon Convection, Clouds and Climate Change (MC4)-IITM
  - Centre For Climate Change Research (CCCR) including Virtual Water Center
  - Physics & Dynamics of Tropical Clouds (PDTC)
  - Atmospheric Research Testbeds (ART) for process studies and National Climate Reference Network (NCRN)
  - Metro Air Quality and Weather Service (MAQWS)
  - High Performance Computing System (HPCS)-IITM
  - National Facility for Airborne Research (NFAR)-IITM

### Measures taken to combat corruption

- Government of India, in pursuance of its commitment to “Zero Tolerance Against Corruption” has taken several measures to combat corruption which, inter alia, include:

- **Direct Benefit Transfer:** Disbursement of welfare benefits directly to the citizens under various schemes of the Government in a transparent manner through the Direct Benefit Transfer initiative.
- Implementation of **E-tendering in public procurements**.
- Introduction of e-Governance and simplification of procedure and systems.
- Introduction of Government procurement through the Government e- Marketplace (GeM).
- **Discontinuation of interviews in recruitment of Group 'B' (Non-Gazetted) and Group 'C' posts in Government of India.**
- Invocation of FR-56 (j) and AIS (DCRB) Rules, 1958 for retiring officials from service in public interest whose performance has been reviewed and found unsatisfactory.
- The All India Services (Disciplinary and Appeal) Rules and Central Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules have been amended to provide for specific timelines in the procedure related to disciplinary proceedings.
- **The Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988** has been amended on 26.07.2018. It clearly criminalizes the act of giving bribe and will help check big ticket corruption by creating a vicarious liability in respect of senior management of commercial organizations.
- **Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)**, through various orders and circulars recommended adoption of Integrity Pact to all the organizations in major procurement activities and to ensure effective and expeditious investigation wherever any irregularity / misconduct is noticed.
- **The institution of Lokpal** has been operationalised by appointment of Chairperson and Members. Lokpal is statutorily mandated to directly receive and process complaints as regards alleged offences against public servants under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.



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# GENERAL STUDIES PAPER III

## Report of the Fifteenth Finance Commission

### About Finance Commission

- Finance Commission is a Constitutionally mandated body that is at the centre of fiscal federalism.
- Set up under **Article 280** of the Constitution, its core responsibility is to evaluate the state of finances of the Union and State Governments, recommend the sharing of taxes between them, lay down the principles determining the distribution of these taxes among States.
- The **Fifteenth Finance Commission was constituted on 27 November 2017** against the backdrop of the abolition of Planning Commission (as also of the distinction between Plan and non-Plan expenditure) and the introduction of the goods and services tax (GST), which has fundamentally redefined federal fiscal relations
- **Shri N.K. Singh is the Chairman of 15th Finance Commission of India.**

### Background of the Report

- The Report of Fifteenth Finance Commission is organised in four volumes.
- **Volume I and II**, as in the past, contain the main report and the accompanying annexes.
- **Volume III** is devoted to the Union Government and examines key departments in greater depth, with the medium-term challenges and the roadmap ahead.
- **Volume IV** is entirely devoted to the States. We have analysed the finances of each State in great depth and have come up with State-specific considerations to address the key challenges that individual States face.
- In total, main report has 117 core recommendations. Vol-III and IV has numerous suggested reforms for the Union ministries and State governments respectively.

### Detailed Report

#### a. Vertical devolution

- In order to maintain predictability and stability of resources, especially during the pandemic, **XVFC has recommended maintaining the vertical devolution at 41 per cent – the same as in our report for 2020-21.**
- It is at the same level of 42 per cent of the divisible pool as recommended by FC-XIV.
- However, it has made the required adjustment of about 1 per cent due to the changed status of the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir into the new Union Territories of Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir.
- In XVFC's assessment, gross tax revenues for 5-year period is expected to be 135.2 lakh crore.
  - Out of that, divisible pool (after deducting cesses and surcharges & cost of collection) is estimated to be 103 lakh crore.
  - **States' share at 41 per cent of divisible pool comes to 42.2 lakh crore for 2021-26 period.**
  - Including total grants of Rs. 10.33 lakh crore (details later) and tax devolution of Rs. 42.2 lakh crore, aggregate transfers to States is estimated to remain at around 50.9 per cent of the divisible pool during 2021-26 period.
- **Total XVFC transfers (devolution + grants) constitutes about 34 per cent of estimated Gross Revenue Receipts** of the Union leaving adequate fiscal space for the Union to meet its resource requirements and spending obligations on national development priorities.

#### b. Horizontal Devolution

- Based on principles of need, equity and performance, overall devolution formula is as follows.

Criteria	Weightage Given
Population	15.0
Area	15.0
Forest & ecology	10.0
Income distance	45.0
Tax & fiscal efforts	2.5
<b>Demographic performance</b>	<b>12.5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

- XVFC has re-introduced tax effort criterion to reward fiscal performance.
- **Revenue deficit grants:** Based on uniform norms of assessing revenues and expenditure of the States and the Union, XVFC has recommended total revenue deficit grants (RDG) of Rs 2,94,514 crore over the award period for seventeen States.
- c. Local Governments**
  - **The total size of the grant to local governments should be Rs. 4,36,361 crore for the period 2021-26.**
  - Of these total grants, Rs. 8,000 crore is performance-based grants for incubation of new cities and Rs. 450 crore is for shared municipal services.
  - A sum of Rs. 2,36,805 crore is earmarked for rural local bodies, Rs.1,21,055 crore for urban local bodies and Rs. 70,051 crore for health grants through local governments.
  - Urban local bodies have been categorised into two groups, based on population, and different norms have been used for flow of grants to each, based on their specific needs and aspirations. Basic grants are proposed only for cities/towns having a population of less than a million.
  - For Million-Plus cities, 100 per cent of the grants are performance-linked through the **Million-Plus Cities Challenge Fund (MCF)**.
- d. Health**
  - XVFC has recommend that health spending by States should be increased to more than 8 per cent of their budget by 2022.
  - Due to the inter-State disparity in the availability of medical doctors, it is essential to constitute an All India Medical and Health Service as is envisaged under Section 2A of the All-India Services Act, 1951.
  - The total grants-in-aid support to the health sector over the award period works out to Rs. 1,06,606 crore, which is 10.3 per cent of the total grants-in-aid recommended by XVFC. The grants for the health sector will be unconditional.
  - XVFC has recommend health grants aggregating to Rs. 70,051 crore for urban health and wellness centres (HWCs), building-less sub centre, PHCs, CHCs, block level public health units, support for diagnostic infrastructure for the primary healthcare activities and conversion of rural sub centres and PHCs to HWCs.
  - These grants will be released to the local governments.
  - XVFC has recommended Rs. 13,296 crore for training of the allied healthcare workforce. Out of this, Rs. 1,986 crore will be for NEH States and Rs. 11,310 crore for general States.
- e. Performance incentives and grants**
  - **XVFC has recommended grants of Rs. 4,800 crore (Rs. 1,200 crore each year) from 2022-23 to 2025-26 for incentivising the States to enhance educational outcomes.**
  - XVFC has recommended Rs. 6,143 crore for online learning and development of professional courses (medical and engineering) in regional languages (matribhasha) for higher education in India.
  - XVFC has recommended that Rs. 45,000 crore be kept as performance-based incentive for all the States for carrying out agricultural reforms for amending their land-related laws on the lines of NITI Aayog's model law incentive-based grants to States that maintain and augment groundwater stock, growth in agricultural exports production of oilseeds, pulses and wood and wood-based products
- f. Defence and Internal Security**
  - Keeping in view the extant strategic requirements for national defence in the global context, XVFC has, in its approach,
  - re-calibrated the relative shares of Union and States in gross revenue receipts.
    - This will enable the Union to set aside resources for the special funding mechanism that XVFC has proposed.
    - **The Union Government may constitute in the Public Account of India, a dedicated non-lapsable fund, Modernisation Fund for Defence and Internal Security (MFDIS).**
    - **The total indicative size of the proposed MFDIS over the period 2021-26 is Rs. 2,38,354 crore.**
- g. Disaster Risk Management**
  - **Mitigation Funds should be set up at both the national and State levels, in line with the provisions of the Disaster Management Act.**
    - The Mitigation Fund should be used for those local level and community-based interventions which reduce risks and promote environment-friendly settlements and livelihood practices.
    - For SDRMF, XVFC has recommended the total corpus of Rs.1,60,153 crore for States for disaster management for the duration of 2021-26, of which the Union's share is Rs. 1,22,601 crore and States' share is Rs. 37,552 crore.



- XVFC has recommended six earmarked allocations for a total amount of Rs. 11,950 crore for certain priority areas, namely, two under the NDRF (Expansion and Modernisation of Fire Services and Resettlement of Displaced People affected by Erosion) and four under the NDMF (Catalytic Assistance to Twelve Most Drought-prone States, Managing Seismic and Landslide Risks in Ten Hill States, Reducing the Risk of Urban Flooding in Seven Most Populous Cities and Mitigation Measures to Prevent Erosion).

#### h. Fiscal consolidation

- Fifteenth Finance Commission has
  - Provided range for fiscal deficit and debt path of both the Union and States.
  - Additional borrowing room to States based on performance in power sector reforms.
  - A threshold amount of annual appropriation should be fixed below which the funding for a CSS may be stopped.
  - Below the stipulated threshold, the administering department should justify the need for the continuation of the scheme. As the life cycle of ongoing schemes has been made co-terminus with the cycle of Finance Commissions, the third-party evaluation of all CSSs should be completed within a stipulated timeframe.
  - The flow of monitoring information should be regular and should include credible information on output and outcome indicators.
- FRBM Act** needs a major restructuring and recommend that the time-table for defining and achieving debt sustainability may be examined by a High-powered Inter-governmental Group.
  - This High-powered Group can craft the new FRBM framework and oversee its implementation.
  - It is important that the Union and State Governments amend their FRBM Acts, based on the recommendations of the Group, so as to ensure that their legislations are consistent with the fiscal sustainability framework put in place.
  - This High-powered Inter-Governmental Group could also be tasked to oversee the implementation of the 15th Finance Commission's diverse recommendations.
  - State Governments may explore formation of independent public debt management cells which will chart their borrowing programme efficiently.

#### Recommendations at a glance

S.no.	Grant Components	2021-26
1	Revenue Deficit grants	294514
2	Local governments grants	436361
3	Disaster management grants	122601
4	Sector-specific grants	129987
i	Sectoral grants for Health	31755
ii	School Education	4800
iii	Higher Education	6143
iv	Implementation of agricultural reforms	45000
v	Maintenance of PMGSY roads	27539
vi	Judiciary	10425
vii	Statistics	1175
viii	Aspirational districts and blocks	3150
5	State-specific	49599
	Total	1033062



## World Wetlands Day

### Why in News

- On World Wetland Day, the Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Sh. Babul Supriyo has announced the establishment of a Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management (CWCM), as a part of the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM), Chennai, an institution under the Ministry.
- The dedicated Centre would address specific research needs and knowledge gaps and will aid in the application of integrated approaches for conservation, management and wise use of the wetlands.
- Massive Scientific and Community based programs under Namami Gange was launched on World Wetland Day 2021.

### World Wetlands Day

- 2 February each year is World Wetlands Day to raise global awareness about the vital role of wetlands for people and our planet.
- This day also marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea.
- The year 2021 also commemorates the 50th anniversary of the signing of the **Ramsar Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971 in Ramsar, Iran, celebrated annually as World Wetlands Day.**



### About Wetlands

- Wetlands are some of the most productive habitats on the planet Earth.
- They often support high diversity of animals including mammals, birds, fishes and invertebrates and serve as nurseries for many species.
- Wetlands provide a range of ecosystem services that benefit humanity, including water filtration, storm protection, flood control and recreation.
- The theme for this year's World Wetlands Day is "Wetlands and Water"

### India and Wetland Diversity

- Wetlands in India stand across 5.31 m ha.
- Majority of the wetlands are man-made providing irrigation and allied facilities to dependent mankind.
- Most of these wetlands fall outside protected areas but are subjected to certain degree of protection from any illegal activity.
- Global treaty, Ramsar convention has safeguarded 2400 wetlands world-over, designating them as Ramsar sites.
- In India, as on today, 42 Ramsar sites have been declared based on their high degree of faunal assemblages including migratory birds.**
- India has nearly 4.6% of its land as wetlands, covering an area of 15.26 million hectares and has 42 sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites), with a surface area of 1.08 million hectares.

### Way Forward

- The Centre will help in building partnership and networks with relevant national and international agencies.
- WCM would serve as a knowledge hub and enable exchange between State/ UT Wetland Authorities, wetland users, managers, researchers, policy-makers and practitioners.
- The Centre would also assist the national and State/ UT Governments in the design and implementation of policy and regulatory frameworks, management planning, monitoring and targeted research for its conservation.
- It is utmost priority of the Government of India to protect all the remaining wetlands and safeguard their biodiversity as they produce an array of vegetation and other ecological products that can be harvested for commercial use.

## World Sustainable Development Summit 2021

### Why in News

- Recently, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has inaugurated World Sustainable Development Summit 2021 via video conferencing.
- The theme of the Summit is '**Redefining our common future: Safe and secure environment for all**'.

### About the Summit

- World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) is the annual flagship event of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI).
- This is the 20th summit.
- The Summit series brings together governments, business leaders, academicians, climate scientists, youth, and the civil society in the fight against climate change.
- With its focus on bringing the voices of youth and women to the forefront, the Summit intends to carry forward these vital discussions from the Global South to the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties in Glasgow.
- World Sustainable Development Summit 2021 is being held completely online, allowing participants to register and join remotely from anywhere in the world to attend our various thematic tracks, plenary sessions, business sessions, and an e-expo.



### Features of the WSDS 2021

- Corporate Conclave:** A platform for industry captains to brainstorm ideas for conducting businesses in a sustainable manner.
- Sustainable Development Leadership Award (SDLA):** Awarded every year since 2005 to an eminent global leader, the Award felicitates their contributions in the field of sustainable development.
- E-Expo:** An online expo on all three days of the Summit, wherein green and sustainable technologies from around the world will be showcased to a global audience through a virtual platform.
- Plenaries:** Panel discussions designed around select themes of environmental import – relating to the overall theme of the Summit. Speakers include policy makers, senior business leaders and academicians.
- Thematic Tracks:** The thematic tracks allow for discussions on finer nuances of the Summit focus areas. These tracks are populated by domain experts and practitioners providing feasible solutions to challenges faced by local and global communities in maintaining the balance between securing environmental sustainability and development.
- Virtual Sustainable Action Dialogues:** The discussions of the WSDS 2021 pre- events will now be held as virtual dialogues through the year
- Youth Connect:** To sensitise young students at the graduate level about issues of sustainability and climate change by securing their participation in the Summit's discussions.

### India and SDG

- India is committed to reduce emissions intensity of GDP by 33 to 35 percent from 2005 levels. A drop of 24 percent in the emission intensity has already been achieved.
- There was a commitment to achieving about 40 percent cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel based resources. And the share of non-fossil sources in installed capacity of electricity today has grown to 38 percent.
- India has a target of setting up 450 giga watts of Renewable Energy generating capacity by 2030.
- In march 2019, India achieved nearly hundred percent electrification.
  - This was done through sustainable technologies and innovative models. India invested in LED bulbs long before they became the norm globally.
  - Through the Ujala program, three 67 million LED bulbs became a part of people's lives.

- This reduced over 38 million tonnes carbon dioxide per year.
- The **Jal Jeevan Mission** has connected over 34 million house-holds with tap connections in just about 18 months.
- Through the **PM Ujjwala Yojna** more than 80 million house-holds below poverty line have access to clean cooking fuel. We are working to increase the share of natural gas in India's energy basket from 6 percent to 15 percent.
- An estimated investment of 60 billion dollars is lined up in developing domestic gas infrastructure. Work is under way to expand city gas distribution networks. Another 100 districts would be added to the network in the next three years.
- **Through the PM- KUSUM scheme, over 30 giga watts of solar capacity will be developed in the agriculture sector by 2022.**
- **Animal Protection:** Across India, people feel proud that: Over the last five to seven years, the population of lions, tigers, leopards and Gangetic river dolphin has gone up.
- **According to the FAO's Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020: India is among the top 3 countries to have gained in forest areas in the last decade.**

### About TERI

- The Energy and Resources Institute is a not-for-profit, research institute in New Delhi that specializes in the fields of energy, environment and sustainable development. Established in 1974, it was formerly known as the Tata Energy Research Institute.
- **The TAGLINE for TERI is : Creating Innovative Solutions For A Sustainable Future**

### CNG Tractor

#### Why in News

- **India's first-ever diesel Tractor, converted to CNG, was recently launched by the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Sh. Nitin Gadkari.**
- The conversion, carried out jointly by Rawmatt Techno Solutions & Tomasetto Achille India, will help farmers increase their income, by
  - lowering costs.
  - help to create job opportunities in rural India.

#### How can CNG be a better option

- It is a Clean Fuel as it has the lowest content of carbon and other pollutants.
- **It is Economical as it has zero lead and is non-corrosive, non-dilutive and non-contaminating** which helps in increasing the life of the engine and it requires less regular maintenance.
- It is Cheaper as CNG prices are far more consistent than fluctuating Petrol prices; also the average mileage of CNG vehicles is better than that of Diesel/Petrol driven vehicles.
- It is Safer as CNG tanks come with a tight seal, which reduces the possibility of explosion while refueling or in the event of a spill.
- It is the Future as at present around 12 million vehicles are already powered by natural gas throughout the world and more companies & municipalities are joining the CNG movement every day.
- It is part of Waste to Wealth as stubble (Parali) can be used as a raw material for producing Bio-CNG which will help the farmers to earn money by selling it to the Bio-CNG production units in their locality.

### Lithium in Mandya district of Karnataka

#### Why in News ?

- Government has recently informed that preliminary surveys on surface and limited subsurface by **Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD)**, a constituent unit of Department of Atomic Energy have shown presence of Lithium resources of 1,600 tonnes (inferred category) in the pegmatites of Marlagalla – Allapatna area, Mandya district, Karnataka.

## Significance

- The significance and quantity of lithium resources in Marlagalla-Allapatna area, Mandya district, Karnataka may be established only after the completion of exploration in the entire area.
- Subsequently, plan for commercial exploitation of the lithium deposits can commence after the technical, social and economic feasibility studies in the area.
- While we have discovered 1600kg Lithium reserves, other countries are far ahead in Lithium discovery and export. Bolivia is the leading producer with 2.10 crore tonnes lithium reserves, and Argentina has 1.70 crore tonnes of Lithium. India has a lot of catching up to do with respect to research and study of potential deposits.

## Importance of Lithium

- Lithium is a key element for new technologies and finds its use in ceramics, glass, telecommunication and aerospace industries.
- The well-known uses of Lithium are in Lithium ion batteries, lubricating grease, high energy additive to rocket propellants, optical modulators for mobile phones and as convertor to tritium used as a raw material for thermonuclear reactions i.e. fusion.
- The thermonuclear application makes Lithium as **“Prescribed substance” under the Atomic Energy Act, 1962** which permits AMD for exploration of Lithium in various geological domains of the country.
- Due to the continuously increasing demand of Lithium ion batteries, the requirement of Lithium has increased over last few years.

## What is a “Prescribes Substance” Under the Atomic Energy Act, 1962 ?

- Prescribed Substance means any substance including any mineral which the Central Government may, by notification, prescribe, being a substance which in its opinion is or may be used for the production or use of atomic energy or research into matters connected therewith.
- It includes **uranium, plutonium, thorium, beryllium, deuterium or any of their respective derivatives or compounds** or any other materials containing any of the aforesaid substances.

## Initiatives taken

- The public sector and the private players have recognised the potential of Lithium powered electric batteries in the renewable market.
- **TATA is working on 100% made in India Li-ion batteries.**
- Electric mobility, Energy Storage Systems, India has also signed an **MoU with Argentina** in the field of Lithium, to establish scientific-technological cooperation.
  - This will aid faster transition to battery use, which is a plus for renewable energy.
- The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** manufactures these batteries, but their quantity is presently limited, and they are severely restricted in use.
- In 2018, **Central Electro Chemical Research Institute in Tamil Nadu, in collaboration with RAASI Solar Power Private** Limited signed a Memorandum of Agreement for Li-battery operation and technology transfer to India.
- Further, **India and Australia have signed an agreement with respect to Lithium trade in 2019.**

## Conclusion/ Impact

- The import bill of Lithium has risen upto three-fold between 2017 to 2020.
- The growing demand for Lithium in India is driven by the goal of Indian government to become one of the largest electric vehicle markets world over.
- NITI Ayog has set an ambitious target to increase the number of electric vehicles by 30 percent by 2030.
- In line with these goals, the Lithium refinery will help make Gujarat a hub for Lithium-ion batteries, as there are already a few battery manufacturing plants that are being set up in Gujarat.
- This factory becomes important, because India currently relies on other nations like China, Japan, and Taiwan for its electric battery supply.
- This discovery will reduce import dependency and promote make in India, along with atmanirbhar bharat in the energy sector.



## About Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD)

- The prime mandate of Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research is to **identify and evaluate uranium** resources required for the successful implementation of Atomic Energy program of the country.
- **It comes under the office of Department of Atomic Energy (DAE).**
- For implementing this important task investigations are taken up across the length and breadth of the country from Regional Exploration & Research Centres located at New Delhi, Bengaluru, Jamshedpur, Shillong, Jaipur, Nagpur and Hyderabad (Headquarter & South Central Region).
- The Directorate is presently employing latest technology viz.
  - Time Domain EM system along with gamma-ray spectrometer and magnetometer for airborne geophysical surveys.
  - multi-disciplinary field operations viz. geological, geophysical, Geo-chemical surveys on regional as well as detailed scale and drilling activities by induction of state of the art hydrostatic rigs.

## National Beekeeping & Honey Mission (NBHM)

### Why in News

- **The Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Govt. of India, has recently approved the allocation for Rs. 500 crore for National Beekeeping & Honey Mission (NBHM) for three years (2020-21 to 2022-23).**

### About the Mission

- **Part of:** The mission was announced as part of the AtmaNirbhar Bharat scheme.
- **Aim:**
  - NBHM aims for the overall promotion & development of scientific beekeeping in the country to achieve the goal of 'Sweet Revolution' which is being implemented through National Bee Board (NBB).
  - It also aims to make farmers aware about the distribution of specialized Beekeeping equipments for production of high value products, viz. Royal Jelly, Bee Venom, Comb Honey, etc.
- **Ministry:** It is a Central Sector Scheme under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- **Objective**
  - Promote holistic growth of beekeeping industry for income & employment generation for farm and non-farm households.
  - To enhance agriculture/ horticulture production.
  - Developing infrastructural facilities, including setting up of Integrated Beekeeping Development Centre (IBDC)s/CoE, honey testing labs, bee disease diagnostic labs, custom hiring centres, Api-therapy centres, nucleus stock, bee breeders, etc.
  - Empowerment of women through beekeeping.
- **Focus areas:**
  - **Under Mini Mission-I:** create awareness about scientific bee keeping under Mini Mission-I
  - **Under Mini Mission II:** post-harvest management of beekeeping, beehive products, including collection, processing, storage, marketing, value addition, etc.
  - **Under Mini Mission-III:** Research & Technology generation in beekeeping.

### Implementation

- 11 projects of Rs. 2560 lakhs have been sanctioned under NBHM for Awareness & Capacity building in scientific beekeeping, empowerment of Women through beekeeping, technology demonstrations on impact of Honeybees on yield enhancement & quality improvements of agriculture/horticulture produce.
- **Two World Class State of the Art Honey Testing Labs, one at NDDB, Anand, Gujarat & one IIHR, Bengaluru, Karnataka, have been approved.**
- Export of honey has increased from 28,378.42 MTs (2013-14) to 59536.74MTs (2019-20) which is 109.80 % increase.



### About Bee-Keeping

- Beekeeping is an agro-based activity which is being undertaken by farmers/ landless labourers in rural area as a part of Integrated Farming System (IFS).
- Beekeeping has been useful in pollination of crops, thereby, increasing income of the farmers/beekeepers by way of increasing crop yield and providing honey and other high value beehive products, viz.; bees wax, bee pollen, propolis, royal jelly, bee venom, etc.
- Diversified agro climatic conditions of India provide great potential and opportunities for beekeeping/ honey production and export of Honey.

### Weather Apps

Name of the App	Details	Purpose
<b>Mausam For all</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ministry of Earth Sciences India has launched a new mobile application called "Mausam" for the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD).</li> <li>• The app was designed and developed in a joint effort made by ICRISAT's Digital Agriculture and Youth team, Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) in Pune, and IMD.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This will help users track weather updates and also bring in the enhanced forecast as well as warning services from the government.</li> <li>• Other than weather forecasts, users can access radar images and be warned of impending weather events.</li> <li>• The information on the app will be updated 8 times a day.</li> <li>• It will also provide the weather forecast for the next 7 days and the information of the past 24 hours for around 450 cities in India.</li> <li>• The application provides colour coded alerts – red, yellow and orange – for all the district, two times a day for 5 days to warn the people prior to extreme weather.</li> </ul>
<b>Meghdoot Farmer Exclusive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is developed by the India Meteorological Department, Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology and Indian Council of Agricultural Research and aptly named Meghdoot (cloud messenger)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The app's advisories come in 10 languages, including Marathi, Bengali, Gujarati, Odia and Hindi.</li> <li>• Weather forecast-based agro advisories to farmers in different regions in their own languages.</li> <li>• These advisories include wind speed, its direction, humidity and rainfall every three hours.</li> <li>• Other than weather information, the app also provides crop and livestock advisories for selected locations every Tuesday and Friday.</li> </ul>
<b>DAMINI-LIGHTNING For Lightning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune an autonomous Institute under the Ministry of Earth Sciences has installed a Lightning Location Network with about 48 sensors over various parts of the country and are connected to central processing unit at IITM, Pune.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using this network, by ESSO-IITM has developed an Mobile App, DAMINI-LIGHTNING. This App gives exact location of current lightning strikes, probable locations of impending lightning around area of 40 sq.km and movement and direction of thunderstorm.</li> </ul>

## FOREIGN RELATIONS

Serial No	Countries	Issue
1	<u>India and Bangladesh</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>19th Home Secretary Level Talks (HSLT) between India and Bangladesh were held virtually in the backdrop of 'MujibBarsho' and 50 years of Bangladesh Liberation War and establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries.</li> </ul>
2	<u>2nd MARITIME INDIA SUMMIT- 2021</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>The event is being organised by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) jointly with FICCI as Industrial Partner and EY as Knowledge Partner.</b></li> </ul>  <p>The image shows the official logo and banner for the Maritime India Summit 2021. The logo features a ship and the text 'MARITIME INDIA SUMMIT 2021'. The banner includes the dates '2nd to 4th March, 2021' and lists the organizing bodies: Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, FICCI, and EY. It also mentions the website 'www.maritimeindiasummit.in' and social media handles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 24 countries are set to participate in the summit.</li> </ul>
3	<u>India and Japan</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government of India and The Government of Japan signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) in January, 2021 on a basic framework for partnership for proper operation of the system pertaining to <b>"Specified Skilled Worker"</b>.</li> <li>Under this MoC, skilled Indian workers from fourteen sectors viz. nursing care; building cleaning; material processing industry; industrial machinery manufacturing industry; electric and electronic information related industry; construction; shipbuilding and ship-related industry; automobile maintenance; aviation; lodging; agriculture; fisheries; food and beverages manufacturing industry and food service industry have been identified for enhanced job opportunities for skilled Indian workers in Japan.</li> </ul>
4	<u>India-EU High Level Dialogue on Trade and Investment</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 1st High Level Dialogue (HLD), co-chaired by the Minister of Commerce and Industry Shri Piyush Goyal and the European Union Executive Vice-President &amp; Trade Commissioner Mr. Valdis Dombrovskis, was held on 5th February 2021.</li> <li>Commitment to the establishment of this Dialogue was a major outcome of the <b>15th India-EU Leader's Summit held in July 2020</b>, with an objective for a Ministerial level guidance towards the bilateral trade and investment relations.</li> <li>the Ministers emphasized the importance of global cooperation and solidarity in a post COVID-19 era and agreed for further deepening of bilateral trade and investment relationship through a series of regular engagements, aiming at quick deliverable for the businesses in these tough times.</li> <li>The Ministers also agreed to meet within the next three months, with an objective for reaching consensus on a host of bilateral</li> </ul>

		trade & investment cooperation issues viz. a bilateral Regulatory Dialogue; an India-EU Multilateral Dialogue to explore further possibilities of cooperation; etc.
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## SHORT NOTES

### Aadi Mahotsav

- Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu, Vice President of India has recently inaugurated the tribal festival Aadi Mahotsav in New Delhi.
- Aadi Mahotsav is an annual event that was started in 2017.
- Due to the pandemic, the 2020 edition of the festival could not be held.
- The theme of the festival is "A Celebration of the Spirit of Tribal Crafts, Culture and Commerce."
- Rich Dishes on offer :
  - Jharkhand : Dal Pitha, Dhooska, Chilka roti.**
  - Maharashtra : Gurudi, Jowar papad and roti on Mahalpatta.**
  - Tamil Nadu : Samai urundai, Ragi kali and Thenai rice preparations.**
  - Nagaland : Pork dishes.**

### Eklavya Model Residential Schools

- EMRSs are a flagship intervention of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs to provide quality education to tribal students in remote tribal areas.
  - The programme being implemented since 1998 have created a niche in the tribal education landscape of the country.
  - However, the scheme was revamped in 2018 to improve the geographical outreach of the programme and introduce several qualitative changes to improve learning outcomes in the schools.
  - By the year 2022, there is a target of establishing 740 EMRSs across the country covering every block with 50% or more ST population and 20,000 or more tribal persons, benefitting around 3.5 lakh tribal students.
  - Currently there are 588 schools sanctioned across the country in 28 States/UT with around 73391 students enrolled in the Schools.
- National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS)** was established in April, 2019 as an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs to run and manage the schools.
- Out of 28 States, where EMRSs are being established, the NESTS has executed MoUs with 21 State/UT Governments.

### Mega Investment Textiles Parks (MITRA)

- Government has proposed a scheme of **Mega Investment Textiles Parks (MITRA)** to enable the textile industry to become globally competitive, attract large investments, boost employment generation and exports.
- Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman said that this will create world class infrastructure with plug and play facilities to enable create global champions in exports.
- MITRA will be launched in addition to the Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI).

**Textile - Mega Investment Textiles Parks (MITRA)**

**Aims at making Textile Industry:**

1. Globally competitive
2. Attract large investments
3. Boost employment generation & exports

**Main features:**

- To create a world class infrastructure with plug and play facilities to enable create global champions in exports
- 7 Textile Parks will be established over 3 years

## CSIR has demonstrated its three innovative variants 'Compact, Medium, Heavy' category of Mob Control Vehicles (MCVs) to a team of MHA recommended members under leadership of IG (RAF), CRPF.

- The objective is to elevate modern technical support to paramilitary forces engaged in maintaining law and order situation; train and equip them with advanced options

Lieutenant General Chandi Prasad Mohanty assumed the appointment of the Vice Chief of the Army Staff.

## ASEAN India Hackathon

- Ministry of Education has launched the ASEAN-INDIA Hackathon.
- this Hackathon will provide a unique opportunity to India and ASEAN countries to solve their common identified challenges under two broad themes of "Blue Economy" and "Education" and thereby provide an opportunity to forward their economic and cultural ties through collaboration in education, science and technology.
- Government of India has also launched 1000 ASEAN PhD Fellowships exclusively for ASEAN citizens. Government of India has also launched 1000 ASEAN PhD Fellowships exclusively for ASEAN citizens.

## Ship Recycling capacity

- Budget 2021-22 has proposed to double the ship recycling capacity of around 4.5 Million Light Displacement Tonne (LDT) by 2024.**
  - Efforts will be made to bring more ships to India from Europe and Japan, as around 90 ship recycling yards at Alang in Gujarat have already achieved HKC (Hong Kong International convention) compliant certificates.
  - This is expected to generate additional 1.5 lakh jobs for the youth of the country.
- Budget has also proposed to launch a subsidy support scheme of Rs 1624 crore in global tenders floated by Ministries and CPSEs over 5 years to Indian shipping companies.
- Major ports will be moving from managing their operational services on their own to a model where a private partner will manage it for them, she said.

**PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS**

A scheme to provide subsidy support to Indian shipping companies in global tenders floated by Ministries and CPSEs.

- To promote flagging of merchant ships in India
- Rs. 1624 crore will be provided over 5 years.
- Will enable greater training and employment opportunities for Indian seafarers besides enhancing Indian companies share in global shipping.

**Recycling of Ships**

India has enacted Recycling of Ships Act, 2019 and acceded to the Hong Kong International Convention.

- Efforts will be made to bring more ships to India from Europe and Japan.
- Recycling capacity of around 4.5 Million Light Displacement Tonne (LDT) will be doubled by 2024.
- will generate an additional 1.5 lakh jobs for youth.

## 'Chauri Chaura' incident

- The Chauri Chaura incident took place on 4 February 1922 at Chauri Chaura in the Gorakhpur district of the United Province (modern Uttar Pradesh) in British India, when a large group of protesters participating in the Non-cooperation movement, clashed with police who opened fire.
- In retaliation the demonstrators attacked and set fire to a police station, killing all of its occupants. The incident led to the death of three civilians and 22 policemen.
- Mahatma Gandhi, who was strictly against violence, halted the non-co-operation movement on the national level on 12 February 1922, as a direct result of this incident.

## AGRI INDIA HACKATHON

- Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has started organising KRITAGYA- a National level hackathon in the month of August, 2020 to promote innovation in agriculture and allied sectors in the country.**
- Advantages of organising Agri-Hackathon are to give opportunity to the students along with faculties, innovators for showcasing their innovative approaches & technologies in agriculture and allied sectors.
- Evaluation criteria comprises of uniqueness of the idea, its suitability, value proposition and plan to scale-up technology.



## Agricultural Technology Management Agency(ATMA) Scheme

- It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme run to “Support to State Extension Programs for Extension Reforms” and is under implementation since 2005.
- Presently, Scheme is being implemented in 691 districts of 28 states & 5 UTs in the country.
- The scheme promotes decentralized farmer-friendly extension system in the country.
- Under the scheme Grants-in-Aid is released to the State Governments with an objective to support State Government’s efforts to make available the latest agricultural technologies and good agricultural practices in different thematic areas of agriculture and allied areas to farmers.
- During last one year, 17.32 lakh farmers have been trained under the scheme in different thematic areas.

**The Government has established 04 (four) Farm Machinery Training & Testing Institutes located at Budni (MP), Hissar (Haryana), Ananthapur (AP) and Biswanath Chariali (Assam) which are engaged in imparting training to various categories of trainees including farmers, in the field of Farm Mechanization.**

- These institutes have trained 10065 trainees during last one year.

**Central Government has approved Rs. 3500 crores for providing assistance to sugar mills for expenses on marketing costs including handling, upgrading and other processing costs and costs of international and internal transport and freight charges on export of sugar.**

- In order to ensure that the assistance is directly credited into the accounts of farmers, the sugar mill shall open a separate no-lien account in a nationalized bank/cooperative bank and furnish to that bank the list of farmers along with bank accounts details and extent of cane price dues payable to the farmers for the sugar season 2020-21 and cane price arrears of previous sugar seasons, duly certified by the Cane Commissioner / Director of Sugar of the state concerned.
- The bank shall credit the amount of assistance to the farmers’ accounts on behalf of the mills against cane dues payable and subsequent balance, if any, shall be credited into mill’s account.
- There are about 5 crore sugarcane farmers including their families, which will be benefited by this decision.

## Aero India 2021

- Aero India 2021 three-day mega event to showcase the prowess of Aviation Industry recently took place at Bengaluru.
- It was inaugurated by Hon’ble Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh and commenced with a flying display at Yelahanka Air Force Station.
- This is the 25th year of Aero India and the 13th edition of the event.

**Union Budget for Financial Year 2021-22 has proposed to set up 100 new Sainik Schools in the country, in partnership with NGOs/private schools/state owned schools etc.**

- All 100 schools are proposed to be affiliated to Sainik Schools Society. Such affiliated Sainik Schools will be provided with part financial support to incentivise the effort.
- The aim of establishing Sainik Schools is to prepare children academically, physically and mentally for entry into the National Defence Academy and to develop qualities of body, mind and character which will enable the young boys to become good and useful citizens.
- At present, there are 33 Sainik Schools functioning all over the country. From the academic session 2021-22, girl candidates are also eligible for admission to Class VI in all 33 Sainik Schools.

## Under PMSSY setting up of 22 new AIIMS has been sanctioned.

- This includes 10 AIIMS sanctioned during 2017-18 or thereafter.
- Six of the approved AIIMS i.e. Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Jodhpur, Patna, Raipur and Rishikesh are functional.
- Remaining 16 new AIIMS are in various stages of construction. State-wise location of these 16 AIIMS, date of their cabinet approval and approved cost is as below.
- MBBS course has started in 12 AIIMS i.e AIIMS at Mangalagiri, Nagpur, Kalyani, Gorakhpur, Bathinda, Rae Bareli, Deoghar, Bibinagar, Guwahati, Bilaspur, Jammu and Rajkot.



## Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)

- is a centrally sponsored scheme.
- Presently, it is being implemented in 32 States and Union Territories (UTs) across the country.
- As per design of the scheme, States/UTs implementing AB-PMJAY have the flexibility to run their own Health Protection Schemes in alliance with AB-PMJAY at their own cost.
- Under this arrangement, the States/UTs may use Health Benefit Packages, common IT platform and empaneled hospital network of PMJAY.
- The funding of the scheme is shared between Central and State Governments.
- The ratio of central share to state share for all States, except North-Eastern States and Himalayan States and Union Territories with legislature, is 60:40.
  - For North-Eastern States and Himalayan States, the ratio is 90:10.
  - In the case of Union Territories without legislatures, the Central contribution of premium is 100%.

## Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems

- It is a project under Indian government for creating a comprehensive and integrated system for effective policing through e-Governance.
  - The system includes nationwide online tracking system by integrating more than 14,000 police stations across the country.
  - The project is implemented by National Crime Records Bureau.
  - The concept of CCTNS was first conceived in the year 2008 by the then Home Minister, [P.Chidambaram] in the aftermath of 2008 Mumbai attacks.

## Interoperable Criminal Justice System (ICJS)

- Inter-operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS) is an ambitious project aiming to integrate the Crime and Criminals Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) project with the e-courts and e-prisons databases, as well as with other pillars of the criminal justice system such as Forensics, Prosecution, and Juvenile homes in a phased manner.
- **Significance of ICJS**
  - Quick data transfer among different pillars of criminal justice system, which will not only enhance transparency but also reduce processing time.
  - Enable National level crime analytics to be published at increased frequency, which will help the policy makers as well as lawmakers in taking appropriate and timely action.
  - Enable pan-India criminal/accused name search in the regional language for improved inter-state tracking of criminal movement.

## Nari Shakti Puruskar

- It is awarded to individuals/ groups/ NGOs/ institutions etc. for
  - Encouraging women to participate in decision making roles
  - Women's skill development in traditional and non-traditional sectors
  - Facilitating basic amenities for rural women
  - Promoting women in non-traditional sectors like science and technology, sports, art, culture concretely and for the significant work towards safety and security, health and wellness, education, life skills, respect and dignity of women etc.
- The award carries a citation and a cash reward of Rs. 2 Lakh.
- As per the Guidelines, any individual of at least 25 years of age and institutions having worked in the relevant field for at least 5 years are eligible to apply.

**National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC) has signed an MOU with M/s. Apollo Medskills Pvt Ltd.** for providing COVID Vaccination Administration training programme (as per guidelines of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare) to Nurses, Medical & Nursing students and Pharmacist belonging to the target group of National Backward Classes Finance and Development (NBCFDC) on a co-funding basis.

## Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE)

- It is aimed to attract, motivate, nurture and train talented and meritorious students to study science subjects and opt for careers in Research and Development (R&D) to build a pipeline of quality human resource, thereby widening the R&D human resource base of the country.

**CSIR-CMERI-Centre of Excellence for Farm Machinery has developed Off-grid Solar Biodiesel Hybrid Minigrid of 50kW peak capacity system for providing 24X7 power to Center for Excellence in Farm Machinery (CoEFM) Residential Colony at Gill Road, Ludhiana (Punjab).**

## National Science & Technology Entrepreneurship Development Board

- The National Science & Technology Entrepreneurship Development Board (NSTEDB), is functioning under the aegis of Department of Science & Technology. The functions of the NSTEDB are mentioned below:
  - To act as a policy advisory body to the Government in matters relating to S&T Entrepreneurship Development.
  - To guide the Department in implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Schemes/programmes related to S&T Entrepreneurship.
  - To guide in generating new programmes/schemes.

## One District One Focus Product

- The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare in consultation with the Ministry of Food Processing Industries has finalized the products for One District One Focus Product (ODOFP).
- The products have been identified from agricultural, horticultural, animal, poultry, milk, fisheries and aquaculture, marine sectors for 728 districts across the country.
- The list of products have been finalized after taking inputs from the States/UTs and Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).
- These identified products will be supported under the PM-FME scheme (PM Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises Scheme) of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries which provides incentives to promoter and micro-enterprises.

## **TROPEX 21: Indian Navy's largest war game – the biennial Theatre Level Operational Readiness Exercise (TROPEX 21) - commenced in early January.**

- The exercise is being conducted over a vast geographical expanse in the Indian Ocean Region including its adjunct waters and is aimed at testing combat readiness of the Navy in a complex multi-dimensional scenario set in the context of the current geo strategic environment.
- Sea-Vigil : Indian Navy had conducted coastal defence exercise 'Sea Vigil' along the entire coastline and Island territories of India on 12-13 January 2021.
- Exercise Sea Vigil was followed by a large-scale Tri-Service joint amphibious exercise **AMPHEX-21**, which was conducted in the Andaman and Nicobar group of Islands from 21-25 January.

## National Child Labour Project (NCLP)

- Government is implementing the National Child Labour Project (NCLP) Scheme for rehabilitation of child labour in the country.
- Survey for identification of working children is the immediate starting point for launching and implementing the NCLP Scheme.
- The NCLP Project Societies headed by District Magistrate/Collector, are required to conduct survey within three years since the last survey for which an amount of Rs. 4.00 Lakh per survey per district is provided by the Government of India.

## Meri Saheli :

- 'Meri Saheli' initiative was launched as Pilot Project by Railway Protection Force (RPF) across South Eastern Railway for security of women passengers in trains originating in that zone.

- Considering its success in instilling a sense of security among women passengers, this initiative has been rolled over to all zonal railways across Indian Railways' network from 17.10.2020.
- Meri Saheli Initiative was launched to provide safety and security to lady passengers travelling by trains for their entire journey from originating station to terminating station.
- Dedicated teams of lady RPF personnel have been formed across all zonal railways for its implementation.

## 40th INCA International Congress

- National Atlas & Thematic Mapping Organisation (NATMO), under Ministry of Science & Technology has recently organised 40th INCA International Congress in Kolkata.
- **The focal theme of 40th INCA International Congress is 'Digital Mapping Innovations in Make India Initiatives'.**
- The Surveyor General of India and the Director General of Geological Survey of India is Sri Nabin Tomar.

## TIFAC

- Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC) has recently celebrated its 34th Foundation Day.
- It has launched 2 initiatives
  - SAKSHAM (Shramik Shakti Manch)- a dynamic job portal for mapping the skills of Shramiks vis-à-vis requirements of MSMEs to directly connect Shramiks with MSMEs and facilitate placement of 10 lakh blue-collar jobs.
  - Seaweed Mission for commercial farming of seaweeds and its processing for value addition towards boosting national economy were launched on the occasion.

## Specialty Steel

- Specialty steels – also referred to as alloy steel – contain additional alloyed materials that deliver special properties to the final product. Specialty steels are engineered to provide superior performance under specific conditions.
- **Government has approved inclusion of 'Specialty Steel' under the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Schemewith** a 5-year financial outlay of Rs 6322 Cr to promote the manufacturing of 'Specialty Steel' within the country by attracting capital investment, generate employment and promote technology up-gradation in the steel sector.

## National Coal Index (NCI)

- It is a price index which reflects the change of price level of coal on a particular month relative to the fixed base year.
- The base year for the NCI is FY 2017-18.
- Prices of coal from all the sales channels of coal, including import, as existing today are taken into account for compiling the NCI.
- The amount of revenue share per tonne of coal produced from auctioned blocks would be arrived at using the NCI by means of defined formula.
- NCI is composed of a set of five sub-indices: three for Non Coking Coal and two for Coking Coal.

## Industrial Corridor Projects

- National Industrial Corridor Development & Implementation Trust (NICDIT) has been constituted for unified development of Industrial Corridors in the country.
- Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) is the first Industrial Corridor which is being implemented in the country wherein substantial progress has been made. Four industrial nodes under implementation in Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) are as under,
  - Dholera Industrial City, Gujarat (22.5 sq. km)
  - ShendraBidkin Industrial Area, Maharashtra (40 sq. km)
  - Integrated Industrial Township, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh (745 acres)
  - Integrated Industrial Township, VikramUdyogpuri, Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh (1100 acres)

**The Government of India, the Government of Chhattisgarh and the World Bank today signed a \$100 million project to develop sustainable production systems that allow tribal households in remote areas of Chhattisgarh to practice round-the-year production of diversified and nutritious food.**

- CHIRAAG - Chhattisgarh Inclusive Rural and Accelerated Agriculture Growth Project will be implemented in the southern tribal-majority region of the state where a large population is undernourished and poor.

### **As per the World Investment Report 2020 of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD),**

- India's position among top economies attracting FDI inflows has improved to 9th position in 2019 from 12th in 2018.
- India registered its highest ever FDI inflows of USD 74.39 billion (provisional) during 2019-20.
- Even during the Covid pandemic between April and November, 2020, total FDI inflows of USD 58.37 billion has been received.
- The FDI inflows in the food processing sector also increased from USD 628.24 Million in 2018-19 to USD 904.7 Million in 2019-20.

### **Indian Astronomers have reported one of the strongest flares from a feeding supermassive black hole or blazar called BL Lacertae.**

- Analysis of the flare from this blazar, one of the oldest astronomical objects, can help trace the mass of the black hole and the source of this emission.
- Such analysis can provide a lead to probe into mysteries and trace events at different stages of evolution of the Universe.
- Blazars or feeding supermassive black holes in the heart of distant galaxies receive a lot of attention from the astronomical community because of their complicated emission mechanism.

**Final production batch of Long Range Surface to Air Missiles (LRSAM), designed and developed by DRDO in collaboration with various industry partners and integrated by BDL, was flagged off recently at DRDL, APJ Abdul Kalam Missile Complex, Hyderabad in the presence of Dr. G Satheesh Reddy, Secretary, DDR&D and Chairman DRDO.**

- LRSAM is jointly developed by DRDO and IAI Israel to equip latest ships of Indian Navy. This LRSAM Missile system can provide point and area defence against various aerial targets including fighter aircraft, subsonic & supersonic cruise missiles.

**Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India and the World Health Organization South East Regional Office (WHO SEARO) signed a Letter of Exchange (LoE) for the secondment/deputation of an AYUSH expert to WHO's regional traditional medicine programme in New Delhi, India amidst a signing ceremony organized at WHO-SEARO, New Delhi.**

### **E-Chhawani portal**

- Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh has launched E-Chhawani portal and mobile app in New Delhi.
- The portal has been created to provide online civic services to over 20 lakh residents of 62 Cantonment Boards across the country.

### **Sub Mission on Plant Protection and Plant Quarantine (SMPPQ)**

- Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare performs regulatory, monitoring, surveillance and Human Resource Development functions through a scheme "Sub Mission on Plant Protection and Plant Quarantine (SMPPQ)" with the aim of minimizing loss to quality and yield of agricultural crops from the ravages of insect pests, diseases, weeds, nematodes, rodents etc. and to shield our bio-security from the incursion and spread of alien species.
- During 2020-21, India became the first country in the world to control locusts by using drones after finalizing protocols and Standard Operating Procedures.



Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) and Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) have granted conditional exemption for Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) usage to Kochi Metro Rail Limited, Kerala for Integrated Urban Regeneration & Water Transport System Project (IURWTS).

## Improvements in the EoDB

- The reforms stipulated in this category are:
  - Completion of first assessment of 'District Level Business Reform Action Plan'.
  - Elimination of the requirements of renewal of registration certificates/approvals/licences obtained by businesses under various Acts.
  - Implementation of computerized central random inspection system under the Acts wherein allocation of inspectors is done centrally, the same inspector is not assigned to the same unit in subsequent years, prior inspection notice is provided to the business owner, and inspection report is uploaded within 48 hours of inspection.
- **In view of the resource requirement to meet the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of India had on 17th May, 2020 enhanced the borrowing limit of the States by 2 percent of their GSDP.**
  - Half of this special dispensation was linked to undertaking citizen centric reforms by the States. The four citizen centric areas for reforms identified were
    - a. Implementation of One Nation One Ration Card System
    - b. Ease of doing business reform
    - c. Urban Local body/ utility reforms
    - d. Power Sector reforms.
- Till now, 18 States have carried out at least one of the four stipulated reforms and have been granted reform linked borrowing permissions.
  - Out of these, 13 States have implemented the one nation one ration card system,
  - 15 States have done ease of doing business reforms.
  - 6 States have done local body reforms.
  - 2 States have undertaken power sector reforms.

**Miss Jiya Rai, a 12 year old daughter of a Naval sailor Madan Rai, created history by swimming from Bandra-Worli Sea Link to Gateway of India, a distance of 36 Km in 08 hrs and 40 minutes on 17 Feb 21. She is a known case of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and dedicated the swimming feat to raise awareness about Autism.**

- Autism is a developmental disorder characterized by difficulties with social interaction and communication, and by restricted and repetitive behavior.

## Software Defined Radio (SDR)

- Indigenously developed Software Defined Radio (SDR), which have enhanced data transmission capability, enhanced voice clarity and data transmission accuracy in spectrally noisy environments, support multiple waveforms, greater system security and better communication survivability in clear and secure mode is going to be introduced to meet the operational requirements of the Indian Army.
- The **Combat Net Radio (CNR) is presently being the mainstay of communications for the Indian Army** in the battlefield. The contemporary CNR equipment in the Indian Army supports voice communication only and has limited or no data transmission capability.

**Joint User Trials for Helina (Army Version) and Dhruvastra (Air Force Version) Missile Systems have been carried out from Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) platform in desert ranges. The missile systems have been designed and developed indigenously by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).**

- The Helina and Dhruvastra are third generation, Lock on Before Launch (LOBL) fire and forget Anti-Tank Guided Missiles that can engage targets both in direct hit mode as well as top attack mode.
- The system has all-weather day and night capability and can defeat battle tanks with conventional armour as well as with explosive reactive armour.
- It is one of the most-advanced anti-tank weapons in the world. Now, the missile systems are ready for induction.



## “NaiRoshni” scheme

- **It is a scheme of Ministry of Minority Affairs for Leadership Development of Minority Women**
- **It is being implemented across India with an aim to empower and instill confidence in women by providing knowledge, tools and techniques for interacting with Government systems, banks and other institutions at all levels.**
  - This includes empowerment of the trainee women so that they become independent and confident members of the society.
- The overall objective of the scheme is to embolden the minority women to move out of the confines of their homes and community and assume leadership roles in society.
- **The scheme provides for six days training programme followed by handholding for a period of one year.**
- The training is provided on various pre-designed Training modules covering issues relating to women viz.
  - Leadership of Women through participation in decision making.
  - Educational Programmes for women.
  - Health and Hygiene.
  - Legal rights of women.
  - Financial Literacy.
  - Digital Literacy.
  - Swachh Bharat.
  - Life Skills.
  - Advocacy for Social and Behavioural change.
- **The Scheme is being implemented through Non-Governmental Organisations empanelled under the NaiRoshni Scheme as per scheme guidelines in force.**
- In **Seekho Aur Kamao (Learn & Earn) Scheme**, 33% of the total beneficiaries are women. Similarly in NaiManzil scheme, 30% of the total beneficiaries are women.
- These schemes help in economic empowerment of the Minority women.

## SANKALP and Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship (MGNF)

- **SANKALP (Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion), under Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, is a World Bank loan assisted programme to strengthen the district skill administration and the District Skill Committees (DSCs).**
- The two-year academic programme comes with an in-built component of on-ground practical experience with the district administration.
- The fellows under MGNF will acquire academic expertise and technical competency in understanding the overall skill ecosystem along with being attached to DSCs and help them manage the skill development planning at district level through the mechanism of formulating District Skill Development Plans (DSDPs).
  - For retaining the standard of academic excellence and reputation in MGNF, the Ministry is seeking academic partnership with only the IIMs and have roped in nine IIMs namely - IIM Bangalore, IIM Ahmedabad, IIM Lucknow, IIM Kozhikode, IIM Visakhapatnam, IIM-Udaipur, IIM Nagpur, IIM Ranchi and IIM-Jammu for the national roll out of MGNF.
- **Additionally, MSDE has partnered with Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA) to conduct capacity building programmes for District officials from the states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Lakshadweep.**
- SANKALP programme will also support in Training of Trainer (ToT) system in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode that a collaborative approach between industry and the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) ecosystem.
- A strategic partnership has been formed between key stakeholders of MSDE, Automotive Skill Development Council (ASDC), Indo-German Programme for Vocational Education and Training (GIZ-IGVET) and Maharashtra State Skill Development Mission to implement the pilot project.

## POSH

- “Skill training on Gender Sensitisation and Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) at the workplace” in partnership with Management and Entrepreneurship and Professional Skill Council (MEPSC) as the Implementation Agency for the project was recently launched.

## SPECIAL ARTICLE

### Ramsar Convention-Marking 50 Years

#### What is it ?

- **The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands.**
- It is also known as the Convention on Wetlands.
- It is named after the city of Ramsar in Iran, where the convention was signed in 1971.

#### About the Convention and its mission

- The Convention's mission is "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world".
- The Convention uses a broad definition of wetlands.
  - It includes all lakes and rivers, underground aquifers, swamps and marshes, wet grasslands, peatlands, oases, estuaries, deltas and tidal flats, mangroves and other coastal areas, coral reefs, and all human-made sites such as fish ponds, rice paddies, reservoirs and salt pans.
- Under the "three pillars" of the Convention, the Contracting Parties commit to:
  - work towards the wise use of all their wetlands;
  - designate suitable wetlands for the list of Wetlands of International Importance (the "Ramsar List") and ensure their effective management;
  - cooperate internationally on transboundary wetlands, shared wetland systems and shared species.
- The Contracting Parties approved the Fourth Strategic Plan for 2016-2024 at COP12.
- **The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) provides administrative services to the Convention on Wetlands.** The Convention Secretariat follows IUCN procedures and policies as applicable.

#### List of wetlands

- The list of wetlands of international importance included 2,331 Ramsar sites in May 2018 covering over 2.1 million square kilometres (810,000 sq mi).
- The countries with most sites are the United Kingdom with 175 and Mexico with 142.
- The country with the greatest area of listed wetlands is Bolivia, with around 148,000 square kilometres (57,000 sq mi).

#### World Wetlands Day

- **2nd of February each year is World Wetlands Day, marking the date of the adoption of the convention on 2 February 1971.**
- Established to raise awareness about the value of wetlands for humanity and the planet, WWD was celebrated for the first time in 1997, and has grown remarkably since then.
- In 2015 World Wetlands Day was celebrated in 59 countries.

#### Ramsar convention and India

- **The convention entered into force in India on 1 February 1982.**
- **India currently has 42 sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites)**



## Ramsar Sites in India through MAP

### Northern India



### Eastern India

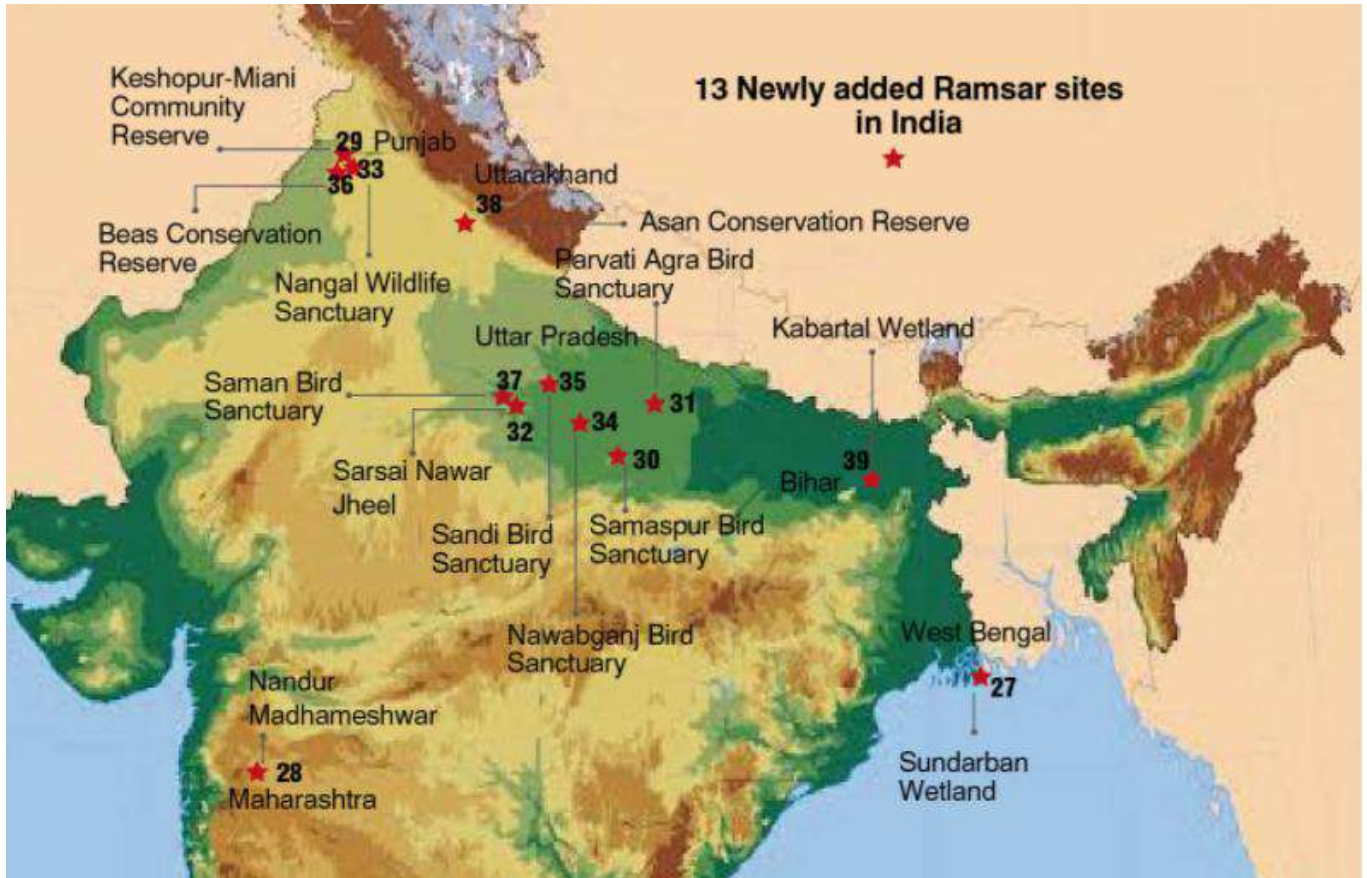


### Southern-India





### New Additions



### Latest entries in the Ramsar List

- 23rd December, 2020 : Tso Kar Wetland Complex is India's 42<sup>nd</sup> Site.
  - It is found at more than 4,500 metres above sea level in the Changthang region of Ladakh.
  - The complex includes two connected lakes, the freshwater Startsapuk Tso and the larger hypersaline Tso Kar; it presents a notable example of two such lakes existing in close proximity.
- 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2020 : Lonar Lake, on the Deccan Plateau in Maharashtra State is India's 41<sup>st</sup> Ramsar Site.
- 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2020 : Sur Sarovar commonly known as Keetham Lake, a human-made reservoir in the State of Uttar Pradesh in northern India, is 40<sup>th</sup> Indian Ramsar Site.
- 16<sup>th</sup> October 2020 : Asan Conservation Reserve, a 444-hectare stretch of the Asan River running down to its confluence with the Yamuna River in Dehradun district of Uttarakhand, is India's 39<sup>th</sup> Ramsar Site.
- 16<sup>th</sup> October 2020 : Kabartal Wetland, also known as Kanwar Jheel, covers 2,620 hectares of the Indo-Gangetic plains in the northern Bihar State. It is India's 38<sup>th</sup> Ramsar Site.

**UPSC CSE 2021**

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# YOJANA

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APTI PLUS

## Oral tradition and Indian Literature

### Introduction

- The Vedas have been preserved without the loss of a single syllable through a complex and intricate system of racial down the centuries.
- The writing was introduced much later in Indian history due to the influence of the foreign scholars, and literature as writing emerged only during the British regime.
- We have to consider the fact that the authority of writing was established by the British courts since the British could not have trust in the statements of the native witnesses.
- According to a prayer from the Rigveda, “**speech is firmly rooted in the mind and the mind is established in speech**”. The integrated personality has such power and authority that it is a fit instrument for expressing the truth.

### Background

- Ancient India had both ‘writing’ and ‘speech’ and the basic distinction between them defined their functions too.
  - **Writing** which is alienated from the writer or the author survives him and therefore is meant for the consumption of the posterity.
  - **Speech**, on the other hand, which being a living part of the speaker’s personality is meant in order to communicate with a live audience.
- **The works of Pampa, the first Kannada poet of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, have the characteristics of a written work.**
  - Pampa says that he composed the historical narrative of the Mahabharata and presented it as an ‘inscription’ to the world.
  - An inscription is writing in its pure form. It is spatial and monumental, which means is bound by space and is meant to commemorate some present event.
  - Pampa lived during a time when the vernacular languages of India were being raised to the status of writings, and the chief purpose of the writing then was to commemorate. Pampa found contemporary history as exciting as that of the Mahabharata and what he presented in his poem is the metaphorical relation between the two ages.
- The form of a written poetic text is a ‘closed’ one due to the spatiality of the writing. It has a beginning, middle, and end.
  - The structure of the poem is tight and so accurate that if you add even a word to it or remove something from it, the structure gets disturbed.
  - The meaning of the poem depends upon the structure, and the structure embodies the meaning.
- **The oral tradition in India is still prevalent, especially in the area of folk literature.**
  - The balled singers have a rich repertory of a variety of songs which they sing to a large audience.
  - The plays performed by Talamaddale groups are without a dramatic script and even the plays called ‘Sannatas’ are, to a great extent, improvised.
  - Folk stories are, without any exception, tales told by grand-parents to children. The characteristics feature of this literature is the openness of the form.
- The works belonging to the oral tradition continue to change in the form and detail depending upon the demands of the audience.

### Conclusion

- All Indian languages, except Sanskrit, when they reached the status of writing, continued to develop their literature, drawing inspiration from both written and oral traditions.
- In India, the oral tradition does not belong to a pre-literature age representing a primary condition of civilisation. On the other hand, both traditions can co-exist in a given period of Indian history.
- The folk-traditions have been alive even during the present century. The main reason for this curious co-existence of these traditions is the fact these two traditions, although they present separate sets of values, are not ethically different from each other.
- The written tradition in Indian literature starts with the modern period since almost all the writers are literate.
  - Poetry is now being read rather than being heard.
  - The effect of this written tradition is most felt in the metrical structure of modern poetry.

- Poets have taken resort to the free verse in order to liberate their poetry from the mechanism of old meters, but they don't know how to escape from the mechanism of free verse.

## Tholkappiam: The Ancient Grammar

### Introduction

- Tholkappiam, a grammatical treatise in Tamil is the most ancient one, the age of which is considered by most as the fifth or sixth century B.C. No other contemporary work is available.
- The massive devastations that took place in the seas of the Southern Peninsula had wiped off large quantities of palm leaf manuscripts which contained many works of grammar and literature.

### Background

- It is beyond all doubts that Tholkappiam had followed the traditional grammatical regulations of several thousand years.
- It has not sprouted up suddenly from a barren track.
- In its backdrop a long grammatical tradition had been alive which has provided enormous material to build up the first available grammatical treatise, the Tholkappiam.

### The Antiquity of Tholkappiam

- The Archaeological and historical evidences prove that Tholkappiam had emerged some two thousand five hundred years ago when the whole of the Indian subcontinent was ruled by several kings and chieftains.
- Tholkappiam states that the Tamil land was ruled by 'three famous munificent patrons'.
- The prefatory verse of Tholkappiam denotes the southern boundary of Tamil land was 'Kumari' which actually represents the Kumari hills.
- In those days, the Tamil land existed between the Venkatam hills and Kumari hills.
- Before the advent of Tholkappiam, the land in the south had been further extended largely and was close to the Australian continent.
- The Indus Valley civilisation is of the ancient Tamil speaking people, and the script found there, deciphered by Rev. Fr. Heras and Sir John Marshall, clearly shows the identity with the Tamil existing script.
  - Tholkappiam speaks of the script form of certain letters and they are developed from the Indus Valley script. In the Indus Valley script, consonants do not have dots over them.
  - In Tholkappiam, as a later development the same letters are said to have dots.

### Introductory Verse

- A prefatory verse to Tholkappiam rendered by one Panamparanar, a contemporary to Tholkappiam provides the following valuable information in fifteen lines of the verse.
  - The Tamil land in the age of Tholkappiam is in between the northern Venkata hills and the southern Kumari. This Kumari denotes the hills that disappeared later.
  - Tholkappiam deals with the written and spoken Tamil versions that prevailed in Tamil land.
  - Tholkappiam is a three-fold work dealing with the alphabets, words, content and form.
  - Tholkappiam had referred to the ancient Tamil works and collected all appropriate materials of his age and anthologised into an impeccable dissertation.
  - Tholkappiam was presented before the learned audience of the Pandya king named Nilamtharu thriuvil Pandian.
  - The Chairperson at that time was Athankottu Asan. This Athankottu Asan had been an exponent of ethical justice and had mastery in the four Vedas.
  - The author of Tholkappiam is Thulkuppiur, which is his proper name.

### Composition

#### 1. Eluththu Athikarum

- This chapter on the alphabets of the Tamil language, contains nine subdivisions. In these, it tells about the following.
- The thirty primary letters starting from 'a' to 'n'.
- The three dependant letters, the short u, the short 'e' and three dotted letters 'Aytham'.

- The thirty primary letters contain twelve vowels and eighteen consonants.
- The twelve vowels, in their turn, contain five short vowels and seven long vowels.
- Among the consonants, there are three varieties: hard consonants, soft consonants and medieval consonants.

## 2. Col Athikanuu

- This chapter deals mostly with the four kinds of words.
- They are-nouns, verbs, various types of particles and indeclinable or attributes.
- The words when they combine, certain particles will not be visibly found. Such combinations are called 'Takai'.
- The most remarkable feature in the Colathikaram is the two divisions of matter-the superior beings (Uyar Thinai) and the inferior beings (Ahrinai).
- These two 'Thinnis' are further divided into five genders.
- The verbs have the quality of showing the three tenses-the past, present and future.

## 3. Porul Athiknrum

- This chapter deals with the Content and Form.
- It denotes the subject matter and formative techniques of a poem.
- It speaks more of the content of poetry. and it is really quintessence of the interior and exterior life of ancient Tamils.
- In Porul Athikaram, the two major divisions called the Ahaththinai (subject matter dealing with the divine love and family life) and Puraththinai (subject matter dealing with the heroism, munificence, honour, friendship and other external characteristic features) are dealt with grammatically.
- In one subdivision called Meyppattial (the expression of the eight types of inner feelings) which are called the Rasas are being dealt with extensively by Tholkappiar.

## Conclusion

- To summarise, Tholkappiam has many singularities such as,
  - a. A grammar of spoken and written tongue.
  - b. A grammar that has recorded the past expertise of grammatical traditions.
  - c. A grammar in which the 'Porulathikaram' the two folded walks of life, the Aham and Puram.
  - d. A grammar not only deals with the usage of language but also speaks of the cultural history and the geographical and environmental studies of ancient Tamil land, the psychological contemplations and metaphysical quests of the ancient Tamil people and above all the verse making techniques of age old Tamil tradition.
- The Tamils are fortunate to recover Tholkappiam intact without any loss which has escaped from huge deluges that usurped many valuable works of their glorious ancestors.

## Evolution of Indian Literature

### Introduction

- The key to this diversity of India is the linguistic density of the Indian sub-continent and the willingness absorb all wonderful things from any language or culture that people came across.
- Much before civilisation dawned on many parts of the world, Indians were dabbling in and producing literature in a variety of genres. This early head start gave distinct advantage for Indian litterateurs as and when new genres popularised elsewhere in the world came to India. They simply grabbed them with both hands. This is because the foundation, the root was already firm, that is, the diversity of genres and the ability to pick up new ones.

### Background

- In the initial days, there were no hard and fast rules and hence no separation between singing, poetry, dance, philosophy etc. what one will discover is that the Kavis (in the early days, the term was used to denote seers and later it was restricted to poets) outpouring most astonishing poetry and music (as in Sama Veda), highest philosophy (as in Rig Veda) etc.
- Exotic poetry and grammar were being developed in Southern regions as well, in Tamil.
- Thus, we see early Sangam poetry that not only reflects the poet's thoughts and emotions but also provide a large number of clues to the highly civilised society that was in existence at that time.



- Plenty of oral traditions were flourishing across the land and the songs, tales, proverbs, legends, etc. continue till date from that time in all the languages.
  - From the earliest time to commencement of medieval period, the majority of the literature of India was predominantly oral and poetry and play dominated the scene.
  - As the number of languages gained writing systems, grammar, etc., the written literature slowly gathered pace and gained prominence over oral literature.
- Religious literature, Scientific Literature, Economic Literature, Political Science, Poetry, Drama, Stories and every allied field gained prominence in India during this period.
- Function and role of translation is not merely the hallmark or cornerstone of the evolution of Indian literature but of Indian culture itself.
  - This aspect has been highly underrating and even downplayed not only outside the sub-continent but in India. That is sad given the multilingual and multicultural nature of Indian civilisation from the beginning.

## Modern Times

- In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century many writers across the languages tried to emulate their Western counterparts, especially when it came to stories and novels.
  - The same period and up to 1947 saw the emergence of a unique type of literature-independence literature.
  - Almost all the genres especially prose and poetry writings, focused more or less on patriotic fervour.
- In the 1<sup>st</sup> two decades after the Indian independence, when the country was coming to terms with the development and modernity, many poems, stories, novels and plays in many languages focused on the rural landscape, bringing out the travails of agrarian societies.
  - For the next three decades came the stories and novels highlighting new problems that society faced-labour unsettling, problems faced by women going for jobs, urban legends and so on.
  - In fact, this period also witnessed the evolution of Indian cinema and many were inspired by the stories and novels.
- In the contemporary scenario, many new genres and sub-genres have come into Existence-Fantasy, Science Fiction, Flash Fiction, Mythology in a new avatar, Instagram poetry etc.
- Rapidly advancing technology and the digital world have reduced the gap between the author and the reader. In fact, it has encouraged many youngsters to take up literature in a serious way.
  - Self-publication and digital platforms have also helped in this cause.

## Challenges and Way Forward

- Although there is concern over the quality of the new sub-genres are there, Indian literature has always found newer ways of reinventing itself despite minor hiccups on the way.
- While poetry publishing is going down, more and more publishers are taking up children's literature.
  - That India is a very young country in the sense that most of the population is young and is helping.
- Indian literature always had its own, unique style from the beginning. Contrary to the popular perception twenty years ago, Indian literature did not go the Western way and taking up of Mythology in a significant way in many languages and presenting the same to suit the sensibilities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is one example.

## India and the World

### Indian Literature

- Defined and determined by plurality, comparativism, translation and multilingualism, Indian literature is in a position to provide their own model to the world literature that may decolonise world literature, otherwise a field largely hegemonised by the Anglophone West.
- **Foregrounding four salient features of Indian Literatures in contemporary times undergirding their proximity to world literature, i.e.**
  - **Multilingualism**
  - **Translation**
  - **Comparativism**
  - **Straddling between global and local concerns.**

## English Language

- English in India has claimed a space alongside, even encompassing the vernacular Indian tongues, asserting its ability to articulate local moorings, angsts and desires.
- Literature in different Indian languages draw as much from each other and their textures of location, myths and oral traditions, as they do from their interaction with the Anglophone West.
  - In fact, English writings in India draw from local textures of everyday life as much as the Bhasha literatures draw from the modernist agenda of colonial regimes, and their interaction with English under the spectre of colonial education system and colonial modernity.
  - The genre of novel in India, for instance, was first tried in Bhashas- Malayalam, Odia, Marathi, Bengali- and only later in English.
- Considering that Bhashas were a “site of significant projects of reform and dissent” during the colonial times, to assume that literatures in English speak of global concerns whereas literatures in India languages in concentrated on local concerns, cultural roots and narrow social views is a fallacy.

## Multilingualism

- It is the defining marker of the literary landscape of India, possibly in more pluriversal and cosmopolitan ways than what the world literature can only aspire for.
- Most Indian writers are bilingual or multilingual.
- Many keep between English and Bhasha such as Micheal Madhusudan Dutt, Henry L Derozio, Toru Dutt, Krupabai Sathianadan, Rabindranath Tagore, Ahmad Ali, Girish Karnad, Arbind Adiga and a host of others.
- The linguistic choices made by writers reflect their involvement in the multi-layered sensibilities at work in the polyglot cultural universe to which they belonged.
  - Ahmed Ali mediated in literary debates in Urdu literary sphere as much as he did in the English literary in India.
  - Raja Rao simultaneously wrote in Kannada and French along with English.
- Not only this, writers who wrote in more than one Indian language were also not free from these ambivalences.
  - Premchand, for instance, while writing his works in Urdu and Hindi responded to multiple social sensibilities in different registers in his writings.
- Multilingualism led to the centrality of translation for Indian literature as in the case of world literature.
  - One of the oldest classics in Malayalam, Chemmen, was one of the first South Indian novels to be translated and find acclaim. Several Sanskrit and Prakrit texts of poetry are being picked up for translation by the leading poets and translators.
  - Arvind Krishna Mehrotra's the Absent Traveller is the translation of Prakrit languages poetry into English while more recently, Gopal Krishna Gandhi's translation of Tiruvalluvar's Tirukkural confirms Indian English poet's and writers' increasing interest in the vas treasures of Bhasha literature.
- The works of Amitav Ghosh, Arundhuti Roy and Mahasweta Devi have problematized the idea of universal environmentalism by foregrounding the indigenous and tribal people's resistance to the forces of neoliberalism. Writers like Vijaydan Detha, Heisnam Kanhailal bring to bear folkloric sensibilities upon modern literature.

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## Way Forward

- In the post-liberalisation Indian economy, the diaspora is no longer a movement from east to west, from struggle to opportunity, from bondage to freedom in search of better opportunities evidenced by the return movements of writers like Chetan Bhagat and Arvind Adiga.
- Even in terms of book publishing, most international publishers are moving into India language publishing and opening their offices in India.
- These new literary iterations fostered by changed social and cultural dynamics and prodded by the changing and complex relationship between English and the Bhashas in the twenty-first century India have transformed the scenario of Indian literature(s).

## Urdu Language and Literature

### Background

- Urdu is an Indo-Aryan language which is a comparatively younger member of the great fraternity of Indian languages.
- There seems to be a broad agreement among the Linguists and literary historians in the regard that the evolution of Urdu Language began taking shape around 10<sup>th</sup> century in areas surrounding Delhi and was the result of the admixture of Shauraseni Apabhhransh, Khariboli and Brij Bhasha with Persian, Arabic and Turkish words.
- In the earlier period, the language was also referred to as Hindi, Hindvi and Rekhta before it finally came to be called by the name Urdu around 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### Evolution

- Urdu words had started making their way into the sayings and poetic works of Nizamuddin Aulia (1238-1325), Amir Khusro (1253-1325), Baba Farid (1173-1266), Namdev (1270-1350), Kabir (1398-1448) and Guru Nanak (1469-1539).
  - It shares with Hindi a similarity in phonology and grammar.
  - Urdu and Hindi sounds are the same except for minor variations.
  - The Khanqahs (hospices) and Dargahs of Sufi saints like Nizamuddin Aulia, which was located in Delhi on the banks of river Yamuna became hubs of inter-religious and inter-regional interaction which also helped in the evolution of a composite language like Urdu.
  - These places threw their doors open to one and all, irrespective of caste, creed, faith and religion.

### Progressive Movement in Literature

- A significant milestone in Urdu literature was the launch of the progressive movement in literature with Mulk:Raj Anand and Sajjad Zaheer in 1935.
  - At the first All India Progressive Writers conference held at Lucknow in 1936 and presided by Munshi Premchand.
  - It was made clear that the canons of appreciating beauty have to be changed.
  - Literature cannot exist in an imaginary world with so many people around us suffering. Their struggle should also be reflected in contemporary literature.
- Later, the progressives were accused of ideological extremism and making literature a tool of communist propaganda.
  - The strong reaction to their "propaganda" literature came in the form of a modernist trend.
- In the 1960s, the opposition to the progressive movement started picking up. However, there is no denying that the progressive movement drew our attention to the harsh realities of life.
- After the two world wars during 1914-17 and 1942-45, the grip of colonialism started weakening as the freedom movements across Asia and Africa gained momentum. Ultimately, new nations emerged with new aspirations and hopes.
  - As India's freedom struggle intensified in the early twentieth century, many poets and writers took to patriotic writing and jumped wholeheartedly into the freedom struggle.
  - In the later period, the sharp ideological divide in literature lessened and many writers felt they could not pen their thoughts with ideological commitments becoming an albatross around their neck. The post-modernist period and then the present age threw new topics for literary expression ever.

## Works in Urdu

### Urdu Poetry

- Poetry is the most popular genre of Urdu literature. The subtle effectiveness of its expression has a unique ability to convey the message in such a way that we find an echo of our sentiments in an Urdu verse.
  - The first recorded collection of poetry is attributed to Wali Dakhani (1667-1707).
  - In the north, Delhi becomes the hub of Urdu poets like Khan Arzoo (1687-1756), Hatim (1699-1791) and Mirza Mazhar Jan-e-Janaan (1699-1781).
- In the eighteenth century, Urdu poetry touched new heights with the arrival of Mir Taqi Mir (1723-1810) on the literary horizon.
- An iconic, extraordinary talented and multi-faceted figure in the cultural history of the Indian subcontinent was Amir Khusro.
- He was a soldier, courtier, mystic, poet, philosopher, musician and singer, all rolled into one. Amir Khusro wrote beautiful poetry which paved the way for the future poetic journey of the Urdu language. Sample this:
- **The notable poets of the 18<sup>th</sup> century are:** Sauda (1713-1781), Mir Dard (1720-1785), Qaim Chandpuri (1722-1793), Insha (1752-1817), Qalandar Baksh Jurat (1748-1809) and Mashafi Ghulam Hamdani (1751-1824).
- The nineteenth century is considered to be a golden period of Urdu literature. It produced poets like Zauq, Bahadur Shah Zafar, Momin and Ghalib.
  - Ghalib is considered to be a great Urdu poet who added wit and intellect to the emotions and sensitivities of poetic expression. He tells us how he overcame sorrow.

### Urdu Prose

- We find the first recorded pieces of Urdu prose in Diccuni Urdu around the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The earlier prose is mostly the teachings of the Sufi saints to their disciples. The first significant work of literary prose is "Sabras" by Wajhi in 1635.
- In the North, Karbal Katha is considered to be the first piece of prose written in 1731.
- After winning the Battle of Plassey in 1757, the East India Company tightened its hold on the administration of India. It got the rights to collect revenue in Bengal and Bihar. This made the interactions of the British officials with the common people a functional requirement. This was not possible without the British officials knowing the local languages.
  - To teach them Indian languages like Hindi and Urdu, the Governor General of British India, Lord Wellesley established the Fort William College at Kolkata in July 1800.
- The turning point in Urdu fiction came with the arrival of **Munshi Premchand** (1880-1936) on the literary horizon.
  - Premchand articulated the concerns of the poor, oppressed and the suffering masses. His simple language and straight forward style transformed the contours of fiction writing.
- Writers like Sajjad Zaheer, Krishan Chander, Ismat Chughtai and Rajinder Singh Bedi (1915-1984) were social realists who exposed society's decay and falsehood.
- Qurratulain Hyder was a novelist of extraordinary creativity with a deep sense of history and culture.
  - Her autobiographical novel Kare Jahan Daraz Hai was serialised by the monthly Ajkal (Urdu). She was awarded the Jnanpith award and the Padma Bhushan.
  - Her works include Aag ka Dariya, Gardish-e-Rang-Chaman and Chandni Begum.

### Urdu Journalism

- The first Urdu newspaper Jam-e-Jahan Numawas launched in Kolkata in 1822 by Harihar Dutta.
  - He was the son of Tara Chand Dutta, an eminent Bengali journalist and founder of Sambad Kaumudi a Bengal weekly.
- Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's (1888-1958) newspapers Al-Hilal and Al-Balagh and Mohammad Ali Jauhar's (1879-1931) papers Comrade and Hamdard took up the cudgels against the British rule.
- After independence, Urdu newspapers continued to present news and views. Urdu newspapers and magazines continue to enjoy popularity among the readers.
- To meet the challenge of digitisation they have been coming with e-papers. During 2019-20, 6909 Urdu publications were registered with the Registrar of Newspapers for India.



## Urdu in Educational and Social Reforms

- Urdu language and literature touched its peak in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.
  - It was preceded by the educational and social reform movement of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, who founded the MAO collage at Aligarh in 1877.
  - Sir Syed advocated purposive and socially relevant literature and journalism and scientific outlook and temper.
  - The Aligarh School inspired poets and writers like Altaf Hussain Hali to write educative and reformist poetry.
  - It added to the standard of scholarship, objectivity, clarity of expression in prose and insisted on empirical approach.

## The National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL)

- The NCPUL is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Education, Department of Secondary and Higher Education, Government of India.
  - Established on April 1, 1996, the organisation was established to promote, develop and propagate the Urdu language.
  - It acts as the principal coordinator as well as the monitoring authority for promotion of Urdu language and learning.
- Further, many state governments have also set up Urdu academies in their states to promote the languages.

## Conclusion

- Urdu is an important Indian language which is included in the eighth schedule of the Indian constitution. According to the 2011 Census of India, the total number of Urdu speakers are 5.07 Crore.
- Urdu literature, particularly its poetry, continues to evoke interest among the readers and lovers of art and literature worldwide.
- In today's world, a language can find newer ways to connect with its speakers thanks to the advancement in technology.
- Rapid technological strides have completely transformed the lives.
  - A recent western survey showed a declining trend for reading long texts among the youth.
  - The fast pace of modern life has made leisurely ways a thing of the past. Computers, laptops and mobiles are the new writing tools replacing the old pen and paper.
  - As more users shift to reading on digital devices and formats, the language and its script will also have to adapt to the same to reach its target readership.
  - There is also a renewed interest in the publishing industry in the field of translated works of Indian languages enabling an exchange within literary traditions.
- As language speakers are spread across different parts of the world, Urdu can hope for a wider and deeper engagement with the people through the avenues of social media in a borderless world.

## Marathi Literature

### Introduction

- The journey of Marathi Literature covers about seven centuries.
- It begins with the old Yadav Dynasty and flows down to the present times. 'Mahanubhav Panth' and 'Warkari Sampradaya' laid the foundation of Marathi literature and were influenced by the 'Nath Panth' (9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> century).
- **Nath Panth**
  - Nath Panth is a medieval movement.
  - It combined ideas from Buddhism, Shaivism and Yoga traditions of India.
  - Gorakhnath is considered the originator of the Nath Panth.
  - Nath tradition has extensive Shaivism related to the logical literature of its own, most of which is traceable to the 11<sup>th</sup> century or later.
  - The Nath tradition was influenced by other Indian traditions such as Advaita Vedanta monism.
  - Further, Nath Panth influenced movements like Vaishnavism, Shaktism, Mahanubhav Panth and Bhakti Movement.
- **Mahanubhav Panth** was founded by Sarvadnya Shri Chakradhar Swami in 1100-1200.
  - This cult accepted all members irrespective of their castes.

- Mahanubhav literature generally comprises works that describe the incarnations of gods, the history of the sect, commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita, poetical works narrating the stories of the life of Shri Krishna to explain the philosophy of Mahanubhava.
- **Leela Charitra** is thought to be the first biography written in the Marathi language.
  - It was written by Mhaimbhat (1278). Mhaimbhat's second important literary creation was 'Shri Govinda Prabhu Charitra'. This was a biography of Swami's Guru, Shri Govinda Prabhu.
  - It was probably written in 1288, soon after the death of Shri Govinda Prabhu.
- The origin and growth of Marathi literature is directly linked with the rise of the Yadava dynasty. Around the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the Yadavas declared independence. The Yadavas of Devagiri used Marathi as their court language.
- In Maharashtra, the **Bhakti movement** began in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century.
  - It was in the rule of Yadavas the tradition of Saints emerged.
  - Vedic tradition lost its value of social degradation, poverty, fear and helplessness.
  - Bhakti movement emerged out of the desire to uplift the downtrodden class out of dehumanisation and give them a milieu which could allow them to reach the way of God without obstacle.
  - It was the need of time to move to a salvation. Bhakti movement was the result of the rejection of inequality of inequality and ritualism.
- **Bhakti movement** ignited the minds of countless poor and downtrodden people.
  - Saints like Dnyaneshwar and Vitthal sang in their local, colloquial language. People in large numbers began to attract to Warkari sect.
  - They felt that they were getting acceptance, respect, and a chance to reach closer to God. Warkari sect tried to outcast inequality based on discrimination.
  - It inspired people to follow the path of passionate devotion.
- The style of the literature of early period is called **Archaic Marathi**.
  - Namdev being a poet of later date than Mukundraj and Dnyaneshwar, his style is somewhat more modern and we find the purity of diction permeating all his poems.
  - The influence of the literacy activity of the time was so great that the spirit was taken up by Namdev's whole family, even by his maidservant Janabai.
  - Namdev died in the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and no writings of significance were produced in Maharashtra for about two hundred years from that date.
- The third is the most brilliant period in the history of Marathi literature. It extends from the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the close of Peshwa rule. It was almost a period of two hundred years.
  - Three great poets Ramdas, Tukaram and Mukteshwar were born in only a year or so about 1603 A.D.
  - Saint Tukaram, the greatest poet in Marathi literature preached asceticism, toleration and devotion to God.
- He, too, sharply criticised rigidity in social structure imposed by the upper caste. He took the Bhakti movement to its height.
- He was a 'Warkari' of devotionism tradition.
- Saint Tukaram genre of literature which is meterical (traditionally the ovi meter), simple, direct, and fuses folk stories with deeper spiritual themes.
- His great contribution is found in his use of local language in contrast to his predecessors such as Dnyaneshwar and Namdev who were known for compiling a similar depth of thought with a grace of style.
- 'Tukaramgath' is the Marathi language compilation of his works, which covers a wide range of human emotions and life experiences. Some of his Abhangas are autobiographical.
- He includes a discussion about the conflict between 'Pravritti' and 'Nivritti' i.e. between having a passion for life, family and business and the desire to renounce, leave everything behind and individual liberation i.e. 'Moksha'.
- Ramdas was a saint of keen insight. He was an ardent preacher.
  - He wrote 'Dasbodh' containing sermons on abstract as well as practical topics.
- Mukteshwar too, by his translation of 'Mahabharata' motivated masses.
  - This period of two centuries produced poets of a very high order. Among those were Vaman Pandit, Shridhar, Moropant and Mahipati.
  - The Shayari tradition of the 7<sup>th</sup> century also became very popular which gave rise to folk singing from called as 'Powadas' immortalising historical events. It mainly glorifies valour and heroic deeds of Shivaji.
- The Marathi Poetry written during the first decade of the post-independence period is called the 'Navkavita' (New Poetry).

- Amongst these new poets, Mardhekar and Vinda Karandikar had the strong urge to embody the tumultuous reality of their time.
  - Their poetry dealt with the unbearable heat of the time. Thereafter the 'Post-Sixties' poets contributed substantially to the development of Marathi poetry.
  - Sharchchandra Muktibodh was a leading poet who enriched mainstream Marathi poetry.
  - It voiced the concerns of the middle class from the Marxist point of view. Although all these poets were writing during the same period, their temperament was remarkably different from each other.
- After 1960, the poets who emerged from the little magazine movement succeeded in creating a space for themselves in the mainstream Marathi literature.
    - The poets in the little magazine movement infused new life into Marathi poetry.
    - They added a modern, unique and contemporary dimension to the poetry. They succeeded in discovering the roots of their literary tradition and established an association with it.

### During British Period

- Literary criticism in Marathi is thought to have existed in the British period. It extended during the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and present times. There are five significant major periods of Marathi criticism.
  - **First Period (1818-1874):** This period marked the influence of Sanskrit criticism. Western thoughts in criticism also played a major role in shaping our criticism. Ganesh Shastri Lele's 'Sahityashastra' (1872) and Daji Pradhan's 'Rasmadhav' 1867) both works reflect influence of Sanskrit criticism.
- Mahadev Moreshwar Kunte wrote a preface on the poetry written on Shivaji.
- He discussed literary principles, epic poetry, romantic and classical cults in his preface.
  - **Second Period (1874-1920):** Vishnushastri Chiplunkar laid the foundation of Marathi literary criticism in this period. Haribhau Apte and V.K.Rajwade also contributed with their brilliant literary arguments in shaping the Marathi literary criticism. Shripad Krushna Kolhatkar also wrote criticism on the drama tradition of his time. N.C. Kelkar also wrote prolific criticism.
  - **Third Period (1920-1940):** Literary debate on 'Art for the Sake of Art' and 'Art for the Sake of Life' was a major topic of discussion during this period. Khandekar and Phadke were proponents of this debate.
  - **Fourth Period (1940-60):** Bal Sitaram Mardhekar was the most influential critic of this period. He wrote 'Wangmayin Mahatmata' (1955). He discussed the relation between aesthetics and literature. M.P. Rege, Prabhakar Padhye and R.B Patankar wrote major critical commentaries.
  - The last period of literary criticism is considered from 1960 onwards. Post-independence Marathi criticism not only discussed modern literature but also studied in detail the ancient literature and literary theories.
  - In this modern period, G.B. Sardar, D.K. Bedekar, Narhar Kurundkar wrote important critical commentaries. The new criticism at present time focusses on its principles and ultimate objectives.

### 21<sup>ST</sup> Century Malayalam Novels

- **Mishra Bhojanam** was a community feast organised in 1917 by Sahodaran Ayyappan.
  - The feast where people of all castes dined together was a revolutionary venture during those days.
  - By connecting the past with the present, Ajayan's novel set in the villages of 'Ochanthuruthu' and 'Pulachonmar' retells the history with a fresh flavour.
- **Punnapra-Vayalar**, a revolutionary struggle in the history of Kerala is depicted in "Ushnarasi" by K.V. Mohan Kumar.
  - It has been translated into English with the title "Manhunt".
- **Feminist thoughts** for the liberation from patriarchal ties are still alive in Kerala and its reflections become clearer in the novels of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. "Barsa" is a novel about the female resistance against religious dogma.
  - K.R. Meera's "Aarachar" (Hangwoman) tells the story of a family of executioners with a long lineage, beginning in the fourth century BC. The protagonist of the novel, Chetna, is a determined woman who struggles to inherit this profession.

## Modern Odia Poetry

### Background of Folk Literature

- Since the beginning of the 19th century, systematic research into various aspects of the literary oral traditions or folk literature has been taken up throughout the world.
- Eminent Western scholar John Beams, while serving as the Collector of Baleswar, during the last phase of the 18th century had initiated the task of collection, compilation and deliberation of folk literature in Odisha.
  - A seminal treatise, 'Folklore of Odisha', written by him was published in 'Indian Antiquary' in 1872.
  - Subsequently, Gopal Chandra Praharaj, Chakradhar Mahapatra and Dr. Kunja Bihari Dash etc., had largely succeeded in establishing folk literature as a substantive discipline through collection, documentation and discussion of Odia folk literature.
- In the present context of globalization, folk literature or folklore has been well recognized as a scientific study of societal process and development, like the other branches of social sciences.
- Comparatively, due to India's unique socio-cultural diversity than elsewhere, the study and research in the field of folk literature have become justifiably accelerated. It is also a positive development that increasingly specialized sessions on folkloristic are now being organized in various fora.

### Prominent poets of Folk Literature

#### 1. Sarala Das

- Sarala Dasa (Born as Siddheswara Parida) was a 15th-century Poet and scholar of Odia literature.
- He is best known for three Odia books — Mahabharata, Vilanka Ramayana and Chandi Purana —
- He was the first scholar to write in Odia. As an originator of Odia literature, his work has formed an enduring source of information for succeeding generations.

#### 2. Radhanatha Ray

- Radhanath Ray was an Odia writer of initial modernity era in Odia poetry during the later part of nineteenth century.
- The writings of Radhanatha that imbibed selected themes from Western literature has indeed infused vividly in the canvas of Odia literature.
- The application of folk elements has adequately been manifested in his poems.
- Based on oral traditions and myths, he wrote several poems. Poems, such as 'Kedargouri', 'Nandikeshari', 'Usha' and 'Jajatikeshari', etc., embodied myths and metaphysical themes. Radhanatha's other poem, 'Chilika' also, on several instances, relied heavily on folklore to propagate its branches, foliage and to bloom

#### 3. Nanda Kishore Bala

- The poems of Palli Kabi Nandakishore are like the treasure trove in Odia literature. One can effortlessly spot the rawness of the village life in his poetry.
  - It will be most appropriate to say here that the soul of his poems always had the tone, tenor and form of the folk songs.
  - Further, it will not be out of place to mention that his writing is enriched by precious and well-chosen folk elements.

#### 4. Sachi Routray

- The poems of Sachi Routray have undergone several experimentations, resulting in changes and transformation in forms and contents.
  - The crises, post World War II had generated unprecedented convulsion, gripping man and his existence into questions.
  - This is the time when Routray took embargo in the existing myth, metaphor, symbolism, and simile to faithfully portray the unsavory and nauseating realities faced by mankind, then.
  - He was the first poet of Odisha to bring in a finer confluence between poetic style and vocabulary application.
  - His poetry book 'Pallishree' is impregnated profusely with myriad elements of the rural life of Odisha.
  - Folk elements have gone directly into the making of the poem 'Rak ta Bija Ra Abhijan', an appendage in his book 'Abhijan'.

#### 5. Prasanna Kumar Mishra

- Eminent folklorist and poet Prasanna Kumar Mishra is a fine wordsmith of repute, who has delved deeper, to find meaning and essence in folk literature, accepting it as his main pursuit of life.



- He has taken pains to collect a large number of folk songs, thereby contributing substantial to enrich the cultural resource base of the people in general.
- Apart from this, it is noticeable that his current writings have ample leaning towards folk elements. A collection of poetry, Manimar Priya' is an asset in the field of folk literature.
- While the other names of life were hopelessness and loneliness characterized by existential anomic, at the very time, progressive literature was in the making, roughly starting from the year 1936 through 1949.
  - During the phase, writers were not far off from the folk elements or rather they found active substances to feast.
  - 'Champa Phulu' of poet Guru Prasad Mohanty and poet Benudhara Rout's 'Katha Ghoda Pani Pi' are but just two representative examples of such interactions.
  - Folk literary styles, rhythms and elements successfully manifested across the writings of poet Sarat Chandra Pradhan. He has deployed folk rhythm eloquently with ease, to feel life afresh, far away from the perfunctory, in saying.

### Modern Poets

- Amongst modern poets, Sitakanta mahapatra has shown extraordinary dexterity in its professed application that is just multifarious and abounding.
- The infusion of myths and puranic epitaphs in modern poetry is not only confined to the precinct of simple but has also transformed the societal realities into dramatic symbolism.
  - In turn, it has transposed individual experiences into a recipe for the masses. Myths further sharpen the edges of poetic expression.
- Being less descriptive, yet more figurative, poet Sitakanta Mahapatra has so meticulously employed the motif, storyline, rhythm, etc. of folklore into his writings that the primordial truths and its basal characteristics have come alive, zinging to the fore in easily comprehensively forms. In this respect, we can take a small example of his poem, 'Ghasa Phula' for clarity.

### Conclusion

- In today's turbulent times, the world is passing through colossal uncertainties. In the ensuing context of upheaval, the establishment of time-tested normative order, based on values, assumes enormous importance.
- A just societal moral dispensation can only be enforced ubiquitously through the pursuit and propagation of folk literature. Therefore, the need for folk literature has certainly increased manifold.
- It proves that folklore cannot be confined to a specific time frame or era in the life of a society and its historical literary tradition.

## Heer Ranjha

### Introduction

- In Punjab, the most famous legend is that of Heer Ranjha, Four noted Punjabi poets. Besides numerous others have versified this story.
- The most popular version of Heer Ranjha was written in the 18th century by Waris Shah.
- Some historians say that the story was the original work of Shah, written after he had fallen in love with a girl named Bhag Bhari.
- The common people, however, have never considered themselves strictly bound by the original hut have always felt free to add to or improve upon it.

### Storyline

- The story is about two lovers, Heer a beautiful village girl from a rich and noble family; and Ranjha, a poor farm boy.
- He looked after Water buffaloes belonging to Heer's father. They both fell in love but Heer's parents were against their marriage.
- Heer was married by force to a rich young man.
- Ranjha, very saddened by this, became a hermit (a person who lives alone away from other people and spends his time meditating about God).
- He later tried to meet Heer but he failed, and they both died in the end of broken hearts.

## Conclusion

- The story is still very popular today.
- Many young girls and boys who fall in love have to face the same problems.
- Some people believe that there were two real young lovers called Heer and Ranjha, long ago. They say that they died and were buried together in a tomb near Jhang, in Punjab.

## Post-independence Hindi Literature

### Introduction

- The freedom in 1947 brought along with it joy, enthusiasm and hopes, fraught with the sorrow of tragic partition of the country.
  - It was natural to be enthused at the prospect of freedom after a century-long struggle of the masses, but the joy was subdued by the tragedy of partition, displacement of lakhs of people, dreary communal violence and loss of lives.
  - The martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi within one year of independence was a traumatic event. This was also reflected in Hindi literature.
  - The violence and cruelty witnessed during the partition and subsequent communal riots put a deep scar on the psyche of the people.

### Background

- Before independence, two prominent trends were prevalent in Hindi poetry.
  - One of these was progressive poetry, patronised by poets like Nagarjun, Kedarnath Agarwal, Dinkar, Trilochan, Muktibodh and Shamsheer.
  - The other stream was of the Experimentalist poetry, led by Agyeya. It started with Taarsaptak (1943) and Doorsa Saptak (1951)- both were collections of the poems of seven poets each.
  - This stream was established as Nai kavita (new poetry).

### Post-Independence Scenario

- In the post-independence prose genres of Hindi literature, these two trends are visible in the development of stories and novels.
  - At one end, there were writers like Yashpal, Bhisham Sahni, Amarkant, Shekhar Joshi, Rani Masoom Raza, Phanishwar Nath Renu, Nagarjun, Krishna Sobti, Mannu Bhandari, Kamleshwar and Upendranath Ashk; while Agyeya, Ilachandra Joshi, Jainendra, Nirmal Varma, Mohan Rakesh and others, were on the other.
  - Different literary movements flourished after independence in the realm of Hindi literature-from Nai Kavita and Nai Kahani to progressive and Janvadi (people's) stories and poetry writing.
  - Simultaneously, Aanchlik (literature reflecting dialectical-regional variations) literary trends in stories also flourished, prominently in the writings of Phanishwar Nath Renu, Nagarjun, Shivprasad Singh and others.
- The decade of 1950 was the period of stability, development and diversity in Indian society and diversity, both in Indian literature and society.
  - In the political arena, India's constitution was adopted, followed by elections to the parliament and state assemblies.
  - This paved the way for the establishment of democracy in India.
- Hindi novel developed manifold during this period, expressing the historical traditions and contemporary reality of society.
  - On the one hand, Yashpal, Rani Masoom Raza, Bhisham Sahni, and others were writing novels of epical proportions on the tragedy of partition, while phanishwar Nath Renu, Nagarjun, Bhairav Prasad Gupta, Shiv Prasad Singh and others were exploring the struggles and strife of Indian rural life.
  - Scholars like Rahul Sankritayan and Rangayee Raghav were re-interpreting Indian history through their novels. Noted scholar-critic Hazari Prasad Dwivedi also wrote his historical-cultural novels during this period.
- In the realm of Hindi literary criticism, a clash of realistic and individualistic trends was witnessed during 1950s and 1960s on the one hand, while traditions were being evaluated on the other. Nand Dulare Bajpai, Nagendra,

Ramvilas Sharma, Shivdaan Singh Chauhan, Namvar Singh, Muktibodh, Vijaydev Narayan Sahi and Devishankar Awasthi were among the prominent critic of this period.

- They continued to write even beyond that period and have written many important books.
- During this period, some old genres of writing faded away and some new genres emerged.
  - The most important fading genre was Gadya Kavya (poetic prose), while every few lalit Nibandhs (Aesthetic Essays) were written after independence.
- Women's writing emerged with a new gusto in Hindi literature around the 1980s. this has vastly influenced the content and direction of Hindi literature.
  - Among old generation writers of this stream were Krishna Sobti, Mannu Bhandari and Usha Priyamwada; followed by the new-comers like Chitra Mudgal, Raji Seth, Mridula Garg, Nasira Sharma, Mamta Kalia and many others.
  - The trend of women's writing further strengthened and more and more writings with self-awareness and intellectual acumen enriched Hindi literature.
  - Mahadevi Verma, in her 'Shrinkhala kee Kadiyan' (Links of a Chain) deliberated upon the issue of women's emancipation.
  - Global movements of women's liberation have also sharpened the vision of women's writings in Hindi.
- The generation of Hindi writers emerging in the 1990s had many challenges before them.
  - Socialist regimes in different parts of the world were either disintegrated or were disintegrating. With that, the socialist dream of emancipation from capitalist exploitation and suppression also evaporated.
  - Simultaneously, capitalism was spreading in India with its new banner of globalisation.
  - People were getting intoxicated by the emerging consumerism and the market culture.
  - For the younger generation, the hypnotic and mind-boggling campaign of globalisation was more alarming than amazing.
- The objective of globalisation is to establish the overwhelming victory of capitalism.
  - It means westernisation of the entire world, which, de facto, is to put the world under the US umbrella.
  - This will result in the destruction of the environment and the spread of the culture of violence. These trends are visible now.
  - Therefore, the meaningful creativity of the new generation of Hindi writers is resisting globalisation and its impacts.
  - The new generation of writers are facing the dual pressure of globalisation and cultural nationalism. This pressure is reflected in their writings in different shades of anger, depression, tensions and disappointment.
  - Besides, new modes of mass communication, technology and virtual world have also impacted literature and the litterateurs. This has its bearing on the sensitivities related to nature, society and culture.
- In 1990s, Dalit writings emerged in Hindi literature.
  - They enriched literature with their self-realisation and experiences.
  - They made literature a vehicle of their emancipation in oppressive Indian society. Dalit literature is quite different from the aesthetic Hindi literature.
  - It reflects the realities of life in their society, their travails and sorrows, and the resultant anger.
  - Both men and women Dalit writers are enriching Hindi literature.
  - Dalit literature is diversified with writings in different genres like autobiographies, novels, plays, stories, poems, biographies, literary criticism, etc. they have created new aesthetics to express their specific realities.
- Tribal people have their mother tongue, in which they have continuously been expressing their joys and sorrows, tortures and their resistance.
  - Earlier, their literature was oral, but now, after their languages/dialects are developing their scripts, their literature has started coming in writing form.
  - This literature is being translated in to Hindi, English, Bengali and other languages.
  - Literature on tribal life and their struggles is being written in many Indian languages, including Hindi, Bengali, Odia and Telegu.

## Conclusion

- The present world of Hindi literature is witnessing neither any mass movement nor an effective literary movement.
- Therefore, writers themselves have to carve out a creative relationship with their society and times. In fact, they are already doing it.
- This is reflected in the diversity of vision and expression in the writings of present generation writers.

- They can see through the prism of society and express the realities effectively.

## Information Technology

- Despite the challenges and limitations, India has made all-round progress in technology, although our accomplishments in areas such as space and nuclear power are more noticeable.
- Areas such as manufacturing and semiconductor can be specifically named in which quite a few positives are occurring in the present time of the corona pandemic.

## India--The Future Hub of Manufacturing

- The government has recently approved manufacturing proposals in India of five global and five Indian companies (Lava, Micromax, Padget, UTL Neolyncs, and Optiemus), which under the Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI), have committed to manufacturing 12,500 billion phones over five years.
- They have also committed that 60 percent of the cost of production will be met from exports.
- In 2017, when ISRO launched 104 satellites into space on a single spacecraft and accomplished its first Mars mission before that, India's dominance in this field was established without any doubt.

## Challenges

- A revolution swept the telecom sector in 1984 when the government, under the leadership of Sam Pitroda, picked up the scientific teams from the TRC and TIFR to establish the Center for Development of Telematics (C-DOT).
- Rural telephone exchanges developed by Indians came up that could operate in harsh conditions and without air conditioning.
- To break up the monopoly of large foreign companies and to promote indigenous software and hardware development, the Department of Electronics was established in the 1970s.
- The Electronics Corporation of India Limited, Computer Maintenance Corporation, and State Electronics Development Corporation were established. Later, many indigenous private companies also joined this race, and computerisation of offices started.
- When the use of information technology in Railway's passenger reservation project began in 1986, it made many processes easy and services accessible.
- Param, which was India's first supercomputer, became a symbol of modern India's technological progress.
  - The Center for Development of Advance Computing (C-DAC) was established to cater to India's computing sector's growing needs, especially the need for a supercomputer.
  - It triggered a series of new developments in the digital sector by developing a supercomputer named 'Param'.

## Opportunities

- The Prime Minister has opened new vistas of development and national pride by talking about, 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat and 'Vocal for Local'.
  - Data for July 2020 indicate that sales of Chinese mobile phone brands in India have begun to decline.
  - Chinese brands accounted for 81% of the total mobile phones sold in India in March, By July, the number came down to 72 percent.
- The work initiated by Make in India and Digital India continues unabated.
  - Among the many incentive schemes included under self-reliant India, the success of the Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI) of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology is exceptional.
  - Under this incentive scheme of about 41 thousand crores, 22 companies have shown interest in manufacturing mobile phones in India.
  - These include Indian companies such as Lava and Micromax and global companies such as Apple and Samsung.
  - The plan will make India a global hub for the mobile phone manufacturing industry.

## Way Forward

- Due to Digital India, huge success has been achieved in bringing one billion Indians online.
  - Smartphones available at an affordable price in India.
  - Internet connectivity (data) at reasonable rates and the world-class infrastructure of telecommunications have made the amazing revolution of digitisation come true.



- The \$10 billion investment by Google into India proves that global companies' faith in India's growth story has not been affected by the Coronavirus crisis, nor by the possibility of the conformation with China.
- Within the next five to seven years, Google will help take the country's information technology system to the next stage by investing around 75 thousand crores.
- Apple has indicated that it is seriously considering transferring its manufacturing facilities from China to India.
- The signs are unmistakable. India neither lacks potential nor opportunities. India's ambitions in the field of IT can no longer be constrained.

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# KURUKSHETRA

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APTI PLUS

## Empowering Youth: Towards Rebuilding Rural India

### Introduction

- With about 65percent of its population under 35 years of age, India is one of the youngest nations in the world. According to Census 2011estimates, 70 percent of youth population in India comprises of rural youth.
- To harness the potential of India's rural youth, it is very important that young people are propelled to channelize their creativity, skill and knowledge for rebuilding rural India.

### Government Initiative

- Ministry of skill development and Entrepreneurship was formed in 2014.
- The National Skill Development Mission (NSDM) was launched on July 15 2015 to provide a strong institutional framework to implement and scale up skill development efforts across the country.
  - Under NSDM, more than 1 crore youth are being important skills training long term and short term training program.
- **Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY)** is a skill and placement initiative for rural India and one of the clusters of initiatives of Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) that seeks to promote rural livelihoods under the Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)-the Mission for poverty reduction.
  - Skill development through the Rural Self Employment and Training Institutes (RSETIs), enables trainee to take bank credit and start his/her own Micro-enterprise.
  - DDU-GKY and RSETI schemes cover rural areas in all States of the country.
- Long-term skill training is provided through the **Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs)** functional across the country.
- As a part of the '**Transformation of Aspirational Districts**' programme launched in 2018 there has been a special focus on skill training of youth in 112 aspirational districts, including those from vulnerable and marginalised sections of society, with various stakeholders and agencies coming forward to empower youth in aspirational districts.
- **Unnati Platform:** Niti Aayog in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Employment Ministry of MSME, Ministry of Youth Affairs and with support from the corporate sector has taken the initiative to create this digital livelihood access platform.
  - This has immense potential to connect blue and grey collar workers with job opportunities employers across the country.
- '**AatmaNirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping (ASEEM)**': Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has also launched AI-based 'AatmaNirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping (ASEEM)' digital platform to bridge the demand-supply gap of skilled workforce across sectors.
- The Digital India campaign launched by the Government of India is to provide encouragement to a digital-savvy youth and leverage the growing internet penetration, especially among the younger population, which could be drivers of digital literacy and promotion in the entire country.
- **Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA)** was launched to promote digital literacy in rural India. PMGDISHA is strengthened through the network of the Common Service Centres (CSCs) that deliver various digital services to small towns and rural areas.
- **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM):** Under the Government flagship initiative, Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), implemented by NITI Aayog, Atal Tinkering labs set-up across the country are helping school students find innovative solutions to problems faced by the communities.

### Agriculture

- Several agriculture start-ups are presently using data and technology to identify potential challenges to crops, build more efficient supply chains and deliver inputs to farmers at lower costs. Youth have played a leading role in such start-ups that can be scaled-up nationwide.

### National Education Policy, 2020

- The newly launched national education policy 2020 can become a great opportunity to the empowerment of youth.
- The policy targets face why integration of vocational education programs into mainstream education is by exposing vocational subjects in middle and secondary schools.

- The emphasis on vocational education will be significant in enhancing employability and all round development of rural youth.

### Fit India Movement and International yoga day

- In line with the philosophy of Swami Vivekananda the feat India Movement was launched by the government to harness the power of youth **United Nations General Assembly adopted the international yoga day on India's proposal since 2015 International yoga day is celebrated across the world with youth in the youth leading the celebration in India.**
- A special Emphasis is given to sports and nurturing the talent of budding sports persons to khelo India national programme for development of sports launched in October 2017.
- a. The ministry of sports and youth affairs has recently approved the inclusion of 4 indigenous games Gatka, Kalaripayattu, Thang-ta, Mallakhambaare to be a part of Khelo India Youth Games 2021 which is going to be held in Haryana.



**Mallakhamba**  
(State Sports of Madhya Pradesh)



**Kalaripayattu**  
(Kerala)



**Gatka**  
(Sikhs of Punjab)



**Thang-Ta (Manipur)**

### Way Forward

- We need to continue to engage youth through cultural, digital and social media platforms so that they become aware about their rights and duties and emerge as forerunners in rebuilding rural India.
- Youth leaders, civil society, government and non-government organisations all need to work together in close coordination for the all-round development of youth in rural India.

## Rural Youth and Agricultural Transformation

### Introduction

- Agriculture sector is vital for health and growth of national economy as it contributes around 17 percent in GDP, 13 percent to exports and 55 percent to employment.
  - Additionally, agriculture sustains food and nutritional security for a 1.32 billion strong nation in a self-reliant mode.
  - However, India needs to constantly push-up agriculture and allied activities for enhancing per unit productivity in a sustainable manner to meet future demand of food, fodder and fibre.
- To meet the objective, Indian think-tank have suggested to transform agricultural practices leveraging science, technology and innovations with out-of-box solutions for persisting issues that mar productivity, profitability and prospects for higher income.
- The involvement of youth is integral to agriculture as they possess requisite zeal, energy and vigour along with innate drive to take risks and swim against the tide which is needed in farm sector.



## Background

- Current trend of migration from rural India to Urban India poses threat to both Rural and Urban India.
- Indian urban population is likely to reach 600 million by 2030.
  - Out of total migrants from rural to urban areas, youth account for nearly 30 percent, which is an issue of worry for policy planners.
- Agriculture in India faces various problems like :
  - Unstable Income.
  - Depleting natural resources
  - Poor image of farming as a profession.
  - Shrinking land holdings.
  - Inadequate access to finance
  - Limited marketing avenues.
  - Paucity of mentorship or guidance.
- Waning interest of rural youth has led to ageing of Indian farming community which is a bad omen for future of agriculture and food security.

## Government Initiative

- In 2006, the National Commission on Farmers, headed by Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, first raised the issue of participation of rural youth in agricultural development.
- Later, the subject was included in the National Policy for Farmers, adopted by parliament in 2007, as one of its objectives.

## Opportunities and Offers

- To attract rural youth towards agriculture, as a first step, agriculture needs to be transformed into a high-profitable venture with low risks and stable income.
- Farm activities will have to be diversified with cash yielding, low volume, high-value and demand-driven quality output.
  - Adoption of integrated farming models, precision farming, organic farming, protected cultivation, multiple and vertical use of farmland and pisciculture are some other potential options to increase farming income multi-fold.
  - Value-addition and primary food processing (cleaning), grading, packing whole or packing ready-to-cook normal or freeze-dried cuts are easy to adopt enterprises especially for youth.
  - In line with national missions, 'Start up India' and 'Stand up India' several programmes have been launched to promote agri-start-ups along with several verticals of agriculture.

## Initiatives Taken

- **As per 2019 NASSCOM report**, India is home to more than 450 agritech start-ups, growing at a rate of 25 percent year-on-year basis.
  - This sector has received more than 298 million US dollars in funding as of June 2019.
- **Frontier areas of smart technologies**, such as Artificial Intelligence, remote sensing, data analytics, various Internet of Things (IoT) devices, ICT apps, farming automations and drone technologies, are providing ample choices to select one, based on individual skills and resources.
- **'Agri-clinic and Agribusiness Centres'** is another scheme of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' welfare to foster entrepreneurship in agriculture sector.
  - Under this scheme, fresh and unemployed agriculture graduates are imparted a short-term training (2 months) on entrepreneurship development, that is followed by establishment of need-based agribusiness ventures.
  - The objective of the scheme is to provide gainful employment to rural youth in their own villages vis-a-vis attract investment in agriculture.
- **'Attracting and Retaining Youth in Agriculture' (ARYA)**: This project identifies rural youth (under the age of 35 years) and orients them towards entrepreneurial skill development for gaining sustainable income and livelihood.
  - Massive reverse migration of people, from urban areas to villages during nationwide lockdown due to COVID-19 pandemic has emphasised the importance of ARYA as a potential source of employment generation.

- ICAR took the initiative to develop a road map by organising a specific conference in 2018 on the theme, 'Motivating and Attracting Youth in Agriculture' (MAYA).
- The Government intends to make agricultural education more relevant and responsive for development of entrepreneurship skills in students.
  - Hence, a comprehensive scheme, entitled 'Student READY' (Rural Entrepreneurship Awareness Development Yojana), was launched from the academics session 2016-17.

### Way Forward

- Indian Council of Agricultural Research recently revamped the higher agricultural education network and launched World Bank assisted '**National Agricultural Higher Education Project**' (NAHEP) in Agricultural Universities across the country.
  - The project is promoting efficiency and competitiveness with a view to make agricultural education more attractive to talented students.
- To attract and sustain the youth in agriculture sector, we need to develop a potent strategy with comprehensive backing from government bodies and public policy making institutions.

## Empowering Rural Youth Need, Challenges and Way forward

### Introduction

- India's young population constitutes a potential demographic dividend, which needs to be properly addressed and harnessed towards positive, constructive and purposeful activities by imparting quality education, skill based training, access to Information and Communication Technology and urgent attention to improving their quality of life.
- It is essential that our economy has the ability to support the increase in the labour force and the youth have the appropriate education, skills, health awareness and other enablers to productively contribute to the economy.
- **However, in India, only 4.69 percent of the workforce has formal vocational skills compared to 60 to 90 percent of the workforce in developed countries.**

### Necessity of Youth Employment

- In our country, rural youths' access to education and training is often limited by financial barriers (e.g. Training and transportation costs) and non-financial barriers (e.g. scarce education and training infrastructure, inflexible training schedules).
- For poor rural children and adults, the opportunity costs for education and training may be too high to give up their income-generating activities and unpaid duties that help sustain their families.
- Many rural people do not have basic education. This also hampers their access to technical and vocational training or other skills development.
- Unequal gender relations and traditional gender roles entail specific difficulties for rural girls and women in accessing education and training.
- Education and training is often of inadequate quality.



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WELCOME

### Government Initiatives

- **National Youth Policy, 2014** was formulated which seeks to define the vision of the Government of India, for youth of the country and identify the key areas in which action is required to realise their optimum potential in the area of education, employment and skill development, entrepreneurship, health and healthy lifestyle, sports, promotion of social values, community engagement, participation in politics and governance, youth engagement, inclusion and social justice.
- **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship through National Skill Development Corporation has implemented Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY-2015-16) with a target to cover 24 lakh youth in the country.**
  - The scheme has been revamped and modified as Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY-2016-2020) as 'Skill Development Component' of umbrella PMKVY.
  - PMKVY is a grant-based scheme, providing free of cost skill development training and skill certification.
- **Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood (SANKALP)** is a centrally-sponsored scheme with a project of total size \$ 675. million, including World Bank assistance of \$ 500 million, aimed at creating convergence among all skill training activities, improve quality of skill development programmes through building a pool of quality trainers and assessors, model curriculum and content, establish robust monitoring and evaluation system.
- **National Career Service (NCS)** is a Mission Mode project set in motion by Ministry of Labour and Employment, for establishing quick and efficient career related services across the country by revamping the existing nation-wide set-up of Employment Exchanges into IT-enabled Career Centers.
- With a view to remove the rural - urban divide, **Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Rurban mission**, started by the Govt. in 2016, aims at development of rural clusters which have latest potential for growth by provisioning of economic activities, developing skills and local entrepreneurship and providing infrastructural amenities and thus developing a cluster of smart villages.
- Central Government spends about Rs. 2,710 per youth on education, skill development, employment, and healthcare and food subsidies, the total amount pegged at more than Rs. 90,000 crore.
  - Assuming that States spend an equal amount, the total investment in our youth would be 1.28 percent of Gross Domestic Product on health and 3.1 percent on education hardly commensurate with their population and potential.
- In August 2019, erstwhile Ministry of Human Resource Development announced NISHTHA-National Initiative on School Teachers Holistic Advancement Programme, to train over 4.2 million teachers across the country.

### Way Forward

- It is an appropriate time to launch an Indian Youth Guarantee (IVG) programme, akin to the European Union Youth Guarantee (EU-VG) but tuned to our country's context.
  - Such an initiative, with statutory backing, can function as a facilitatory framework for ensuring gainful and productive engagement of youth.
  - Its strategic goal should be to ensure that within a fixed time frame, young people either find a good quality job suited to their education and experience or acquire skills required to find a job through an apprenticeship.
- Kofi Annan rightly said "**Young people should be at the forefront of global change and innovation. Empowered, they can be key agents for development and peace. If, however, they are left on society's margins, all of us will be impoverished. Let us ensure that all young people have every opportunity to participate fully in the lives of their societies.**"

## Role of Allied Sector in Rural Employment Generation

### Introduction

- Despite a fall in its share in national cut-out and employment, agriculture and allied sector still remains the country's major source of livelihood for more than half of the population of the country.
  - As per census 2011, of the 313 million main workers in the country, 166 million (56.6 percent) were engaged in these activities.

### Challenges

- Agricultural production is very much dependent upon the rainfall. It is highly susceptible to the natural calamities and risks like droughts, floods, pests, diseases etc.

- Apart from this, Indian agriculture is characterised with the presence of excess manpower in the form of large scale disguised and seasonal unemployment.
  - According to an estimate, nearly 25 percent of manpower engaged in agriculture is disguisedly unemployed.
- In order to make agriculture a lucrative profession by protecting the farmers from income shocks and providing additional employment opportunities throughout the year, it is necessary to promote the allied sector activities like animal husbandry, pisciculture, horticulture, floriculture, apiculture, sericulture, forestry and logging and mining and quarrying etc.

## Allied Sector

- 1. Animal Husbandry :** The livestock sector has emerged as a sustainable secondary source of income and generating gainful employment during the phases of seasonal unemployment, particularly to the landless, small and marginal farmers.
  - India has been the largest producer of milk in the world since 1998.
  - Realising the potential of animal husbandry sector to strengthen the rural economy, the budgetary allocations have witnessed a rise through various schemes and initiatives like; National Livestock Mission, Rashtriya Gokul Mission, National Programme for Dairy Development, National Programme for Bovine Breeding, National Kamdhenu Breeding Centres etc.
- 2. Pisciculture:** The country has rich and diverse fisheries resources due to its vast coast line and varied inland resources in the form of rivers, canals, lakes, ponds, tanks, reservoirs etc.
  - The sector provides livelihood to about 16 million fishers and fish farmers at the primary level and almost twice the number along the value chain.
  - The sector has been one of the major sources of foreign exchange earnings, with India being one of the leading seafood exporting nations in the world.
  - To bring about blue revolution through sustainable development of the fisheries sector Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana was launched on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2020. Under the scheme, total estimated investment of Rs. 20,050 crores is to be implemented over a period of 5 years.
  - The scheme sets an ambitious target to enhance the fish production to 22 million tonnes by 2024-25 and generate about 15 lakhs direct gainful employment opportunities.
- 3. Horticulture:** The Horticulture sector is recognised to have the potential to augment rural income, enhance employment opportunities and promote exports earnings.
  - The diverse agro climatic conditions and wide varieties of soil in the country make it possible to grow almost all types of horticultural products like fresh fruits, vegetables, root and tuber crops, flowers, aromatic and medicinal crops, spices and plantation crops.
  - There has been an unprecedented growth of this sector during the last two decades.
  - India ranks second in fruits and vegetables production in the world, after China.
  - The country ranks first in the production of banana, papaya, mango, lemon, ginger and okra.
  - However, despite huge production of horticultural crops, India's share in world exports amounts to less than 1.5 percent.
- 4. Floriculture:** Floriculture has immense potential for generating gainful self-employment among small and marginal farmers.
  - The diverse agro-climatic conditions enable the growth of all types of flowers in one or the other part of the country round-the-year.
  - Due to increased demand of floriculture products in the home market and abroad, farmers have been shifting from sustenance to commercial production of flowers.
  - The liberalisation of industrial and trade policies paved the way for the development of export oriented production of flowers.
  - The Government has set up six agri-export zones for floriculture; one each in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Sikkim and Uttarakhand and two in Tamil Nadu.
  - The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), has introduced several schemes for promoting floriculture exports from the country.
- 5. Apiculture:** Apiculture or beekeeping is a lucrative profit giving venture with very low or negligible investment.
  - Bee keeping is not restricted to extraction of honey only, but other products such as royal jelly, bee wax, pollen, and propolis and bee venom also yield good income to the farmers.
  - India ranked eighth in the world in honey production in 2017-18. India is one of the leading honey exporting countries.



- The Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare has been giving thrust on promotion and development of scientific apiculture in the country.
  - A new central sector scheme entitled National Beekeeping and Honey Mission (NBHM) has been launched to achieve the goal of **Sweet Revolution** in the country.
- 6. Sericulture:** India is the second largest producer of silk (after China) in the world with its unique distinction of being the only country producing all the four commercially known varieties of silk viz. Mulberry, Eri, Tasar and Munga.
- India's silk industry provides gainful employment to over 9.43million persons of which a sizable number belong to the economically weaker sections of society.
  - For the development of sericulture and silk industry in the country, The Central Silk Board was established immediately after independence in 1948.
  - In 2017, in order to strengthen the beneficiary oriented components in sericulture, the central sector scheme- Silk Samagra, was launched.
- 7. Agro Processing:** Agro processing not only enables to reduce the post-harvest wastages but also helps to fetch fair and remunerative prices to the producers through value addition in their agricultural produce.
- The food processing sector faces a conducive growth environment, owing to the availability of fresh, abundant & affordable raw material on the one hand and favourable government policies on the other.
  - Moreover, due to rising consumer affordability, rapid urbanization and change in lifestyle, the preference for processed agro-products has been increasing rapidly.
  - Realising the importance of food processing sector for the economy, a central sector scheme, Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana, with the total outlay of Rs.6, 000 crore was launched in 2016.

## Conclusion

- Employment generation along with improving employability of rural masses has always been the priority of the Government.
- Various steps and policy initiatives have been taken for generating employment through substantial investment and increased public expenditure on the schemes and programmes formulated for this purpose.
- The main focus is on strengthening the rural economy by reviving agriculture and allied sectors in the country.
- In addition to boost income from crop cultivation, the focus of attention should be on promoting allied and non-farm activities in rural areas so that farmers can get gainful employment during the slack season.
- These ancillary activities not only supplement the income generation from cultivation, but also act as insurance to the farmers against the shocks and fluctuations in farm income due to natural calamities.

## Employment and Entrepreneurship Opportunities For Skilled Youth

### Introduction

- In India, presently there are many opportunities for youth in the agriculture and agri business sector.
- Technological breakthroughs, increased concern for food safety and hygiene, innovations in agricultural marketing have created a range of new jobs across the agri value chain.

### Opportunities

- Precision farming has created a demand for services of skilled professionals in farm machinery, greenhouse farming, pesticide and fertiliser application, micro-irrigation and solar energy.
- Organic farming has generated renewed interest world-wide and in India, organic products are growing between 25 and 30 percent, annually.
- In the fisheries sector, scientific cultivation and management practices such as cage culture, recirculation aquaculture systems, bio-floc culture, ornamental fisheries, seaweed cultivation cold water fisheries and others have opened new window of opportunities.
- A raft of smart technology applications based on AI, Big Data, Internet of Things have enabled farmer-entrepreneurs to take smart decision and adopt better farm management practices and access the best of market opportunities.

## Challenges

- Despite this rapid expansion, All-India data from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (2018-19) shows that only 11.3 percent of the workforce in the age group of 15-59 years have received some form of Vocational Education and Training (VET) and share of formal VET is just 2.39 percent.
  - The data highlights that in the demand for skilled professionals, there still exists a huge skill gap and the supply of skilled labour falls short of the demand.
  - However, the picture is changing now due to a rapid expansion of short-term training infrastructure, improved coverage, and opportunities for socially and economically weaker sections, greater funding availability and higher participation of the industry and private sector.
- Some of the important milestones of the past few years are the foundation of the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) in 2008 and the launching of Skill India Mission in 2015.

## Initiatives to overcome the challenges

### Central Scheme

- In order to make skill courses more accessible to the youth, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana or PMKVY was launched with an aim to train 10 million youth between 2016 and 2020.
  - Agriculture training can be taken in 182 different job roles under PMKVY.
- Other than PMKVY, opportunities for short-term training in agriculture-related job roles are available under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), Mission for integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) and Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushal Vikas Yojana (DDUGKY), Aajeevika under National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), and Barefoot Technician Programme under Mahatma Gandhi National Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

### State Schemes

- Apart from the Central schemes, States run their own forward-looking and aspirational skill development schemes that are NSQF-aligned and linked to employed creation.
  - Some such schemes in which ASCI is involved in curriculum design, assessment, and certification are the Utkarsh Bangla scheme of West Bengal, Placement Linked Skill Training Programme of Assam, SURYA scheme of Haryana, Employment Linked Skill Training Programme of Rajasthan, Entrepreneurship and Employment Linked Skill Training Programme of Uttarakhand, skill training Programmes under APSSDC, UPSDM, and BSDM.

### Skill Courses in Schools and Colleges

- The New Education Policy 2020 as cleared by the Union Cabinet has proposed to make VET as an integral part of school and higher education in a phased manner.

### Apprenticeships

- The National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) has significantly improved the scope, access, and effectiveness of the apprenticeship programme.

### Involvement of Industry

- Industry participation in the skill ecosystem is critical for bridging the skill gaps, in-service and apprenticeship training, training of trainers, and absorption of trained candidates.

### Support for Entrepreneurs

- Many of the youth want to start their business enterprises after the training programme.
- Initiative for Development of Entrepreneurs in Agriculture (IDEA) under RKVY, Venture Capital Finance Assistance (VCA) of Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC), ASPIRE scheme of the Ministry of MSME, Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP) are a few initiatives aimed at boosting entrepreneurship.

## Conclusion

- Agriculture is truly the backbone of India's economy, reverberating with a new dynamism and excitement.
- The sector is poised for a big leap forward towards a sustainable future. India's skill ecosystem has geared up to be an effective tool to harness the power and enthusiasm of youth.

## Empowering Rural Youth through Water and Tourism Sector

### Introduction

- COVID-19 pandemic around the world has taken global economies a setback with a 5.2 percent contraction in global GDP in 2020.
- India also witnessed a dip in the Gross Domestic Product, increase in unemployment, mass migration and other dire consequences of the ongoing pandemic.
- Loss of livelihood and reverse migration to rural India not only up stretched the dissatisfaction among the youth but also created a strain on local resources to offer employment as per their skill set.

### Opportunities

- **Water Sector :** As per the United Nations report on Water and jobs, it has been estimated that half of the world's workforce i.e., about 1.5 billion people are dependent and employed in one of the eight water and natural resources dependent industries.
- As predicted that rapid population growth, climate change and urbanisation will put a pressure on the water resources, consuming and conserving each and every drop of water has become important.
- Hence, there is an urgent need to promote and push economy to inculcate the habit of reusing, recycling and treating wastewater in the system. Making rural India ODF++, collecting and reusing wastewater has its own relevance which can only help in conserving and consuming water efficiently but can also create job opportunities in wastewater sector.
- On a similar note, Water contamination is an important concern that poses huge health burden on rural community. The prolonged, persistent and post-limit exposure to toxins may lay a heavy toll on health of human and livestock population.
- Jal Jeevan Mission (JMM) operational guidelines has mentioned to identify and train five women from every village to undertake water quality surveillance through Field Test Kits (FTKs) and sanitary inspection.
- Another role of water is to support major livelihood of the economy. Availability of water for effective irrigation is crucial to agriculture sector ensuring food security for the country.
  - Unrestrained extraction of groundwater has started to put pressure on available resources hampering agricultural productivity.
  - Around 89percent of India's groundwater is consumed by irrigation sector. Hence, the need of the hour is to build and revive surface water sources.
  - Realising the potential of traditional water harvesting structures in managing and supporting agriculture, several civil society organisations and government departments have tried and contributed in the reviving traditional water structures.
- **Tourism Sector:** The tourism industry, one of the largest contributor to India's GDP, has been hit due to COVID-19.
- Uncharted rural India can attract large number of domestic travellers offering them an authentic taste and serene beauty of India. It is also to be acknowledged that India's natural heritage has been rated the sixth greatest in the world by the World Economic Forum.
- Hence, the promotion of domestic village tourism can empower rural youth offering them an opportunity to earn livelihood from logistics and accommodation support, travel guide services etc.
- Recently launched, Government's scheme 'Dekho Apna Desh' is one such initiative to promote domestic tourism in India, intended to enhance tourist footfalls, so as to help develop the local economy.
- Another segment of tourism industry which can empower rural youth can be 'Education tourism'. Practical training and exposure have always been considered important.

### Conclusion

- The skilled and unskilled workers residing in rural India needs to be empowered through different interventions across sectors while defining their entrepreneurial skills to boost the Indian economy.
- Two such sectors can be water and tourism sectors which have some hidden potential to push start the economy by empowering rural youth.

## Employment Opportunities for Rural Youth

### Introduction

- Shift in occupational structure over the past few decades, employment has turned out to be one of the key tools of survival in the country.
- With improving literacy rate and improving Human Development Index ranking, demand for employment has raised in the country.

### Challenges

- Despite of the good literacy figures, a fraction of population (especially the rural parts) lacks awareness about existing employment opportunities existing in the country.
- The employment of an individual depends on many factors. One of the major problems that exist is matching the requirements of employment generators to the profiles of the employment seekers.
- Those who have a good academic record and have all the desired skills, enter high paying jobs, while there are many who have only a low paying job which may not improve their existing livelihood.

### Initiatives Taken

- Since a large fraction (around 69 percent) of the population lives in the rural areas, thereby, seeing the existing gaps between employment opportunities and employment seekers in the rural India, many efforts have been made by the Government of India for the rural young employment seekers with most of the schemes targeting rural youths as beneficiaries.
  - One of the oldest schemes, MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) offers 100 days of guaranteed wage employment to every household whose adult member volunteers to do unskilled manual work.
  - **Another such scheme is Skill India which includes Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana which provides training opportunities to the youth.**
- There are short term training programmes under this scheme for the college/school dropouts and the unemployed.
- Further under this scheme comes Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP), UDAAN, Standard Training Assessment and Reward Scheme (STAR), Polytechnic Schemes and Vocationalisation of Education.
- SANKALP scheme focuses upon strengthening the institutional mechanisms for skill development and increase access to quality and market-relevant training for youth across the country.
- The Udaan scheme was an initiative of the Government of India for the state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). It is funded by the Ministry of Home Affairs and was implemented by National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).
  - **Advanced Vocational Training Scheme (AVTS):** The aim of the scheme is to upgrade and update the skills of serving industrial workers, this was launched in 1977.

### Present Status

#### Periodic Labour Force Survey Report:

- The following report states that the share of regular wage employees has increased by 5 percent between 2011-12 and 2017-18.
- The proportion of total self-employed workers however remained unchanged at 52 percent during this period.
- The distribution of workers in casual labour category is decreased by five percentage points from 30 per cent in 2011-12 to 25 percent in 2017-18 with the decline being in rural areas.

### Conclusion

- All the Government schemes aimed at providing employment have played a significant role in improving the employment scenario for the rural youths, but the Government schemes alone cannot bring along major changes which are required.
- A fraction of responsibility lies with the private sector via medium of Corporate Social Responsibility for providing such societal goals.



- Despite of combined efforts of Government and the private sector in the year 2020, the employment scenario was worst hit due to unexpected arrival of the COVID-19.
- Youth force of any country is an advantage to its development goals if used in an appropriate productive manner. Thus, time is for training the youths of the nation for a better future ahead.

## Empowering Rural Artisans to make them Aatma Nirbhar

### Introduction

- The art and handicrafts sector is the second largest employment generator after agriculture. According to the 2011 Census, there are over 68 lakh artisans in the country of which 55 percent are women.
- India is the world's largest producer and exporter of handmade carpets since 2013-2014.

### Background

- India is home to a large number of tribal people known as Adivas is and has the second largest tribal population in the world. India still has more than 200 tribal communities.
- The government has initiated a number of steps to develop socio economic conditions of tribal population in the country.
  - One of those initiatives led to the formation of Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED) in 1987.
  - TRIFED enables the tribal artisans even from the innermost regions to participate in the process of their socio-economic development through formulation of decent earning methods.
- Recognising that the artisans are constantly struggling to sustain themselves, the Central government launched, in its first term, a trade facilitation centre and crafts museum in Varanasi in 2014.
- The objective was to bring weavers and artisans under the same roof and give them marketing opportunities.
- Government introduced a programme called Poorv Kaushalya ko Manyata better known as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as a component of its flagship scheme- the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana.

### Other Important Government Initiatives

- **PMKVY (2016-2020)** is a grant based scheme, providing free of cost skill development training and skill certification in 371 job roles to increase employability of the youth.
- The Skill India programme of the government also has a dedicated handicrafts and carpet skill council aimed at preserving cultural heritage.
- The Skill India programme has identified close to 90 job roles across sub-sectors such as carpets, ceramics, glassware, traditional fashion jewellery, and handcrafted textiles, handicrafts such as incense sticks and bamboo metal ware, paper Mache, stone craft, wood ware and handicraft toys.
- Ministry has collaborated with school boards such as the Central Board for Secondary Education to catch
- Young citizens.
  - The objective is to acquaint the youth with India's cultural heritage at an early age to equip them with skills and give them a possible career option.
  - Similar initiatives have also been taken in Jharkhand and Punjab.
- **SANKALP (Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion):** It is an initiative of the Ministry of Skill Development.
  - It aims to encourage best practices at the local level.
  - Inclusion is one of the key pillars of SANKALP and efforts are made to ensure that skill development programmes reach the under-served and marginalised groups.
  - The project is focused on skilling women artisans to provide them basic, intermediate and advanced skill training along with entrepreneurship development and linkages.
- **The Ministry of Minority Affairs has been organising Hunar Haats under USTTAD (Upgrading the Skills and Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development) scheme.**
  - The USTTAD scheme aims at preserving and promoting the rich heritage of the traditional arts and crafts of the minority communities.
  - The scheme also supports craftsmen and artisans through Hunar Haat to market their products in exhibitions in India and overseas.
  - The last Hunar Haat in real and virtual space in 2020 was held in Rampur, Uttar Pradesh in December.

- **Handicraft artisans can avail of MUDRA loan and margin money provided by the Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts).**
  - Under the National Handicrafts Development Programme in 2018-19 and 2019-20, the office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) implemented the Direct Benefit Scheme for artisans as a welfare measure.
- **The Mahila Coir Yojana scheme** exclusively for training rural women artisans in spinning of coir yarn/various coir processing activities is provided to rural women.
- The Workshed scheme for Khadi artisans gives financial assistance for construction of workshed to artisans belonging to BPL category through Khadi institutions with which the Khadi artisans are associated.
- The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises has been implementing a Scheme for Promoting Innovation, Rural Industry and Entrepreneurship (**ASPIRE**) to create new jobs in traditional and agri-based industries.
- Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI) aims to organise such industries and artisans into clusters to make them competitive and provide support for their long-term sustainability, sustained employment, and enhanced marketability of products.

## Conclusion

- Since rural artisans belong to the unorganised sector, government schemes are imperative to strengthen them economically.
- According to Compendium of Geographical indication Tags of India, a good number of handicraft products were registered crafts under Geographical Indication (GI) Tag.
- This will work wonders and help artisans get credibility for their products. Some of the handicrafts that have been given GI tags recently are Madhubani paintings of Bihar, Kangra paintings of Himachal Pradesh, Kutch embroidery of Gujarat, bronze ware from Karnataka, and Phulkari from Punjab.

## Rural India-The Periphery of Development

### Introduction

- In recent times, the rural areas have seen substantial development because government policies aimed at improving rural housing, sanitation and welfare have contributed to transforming its landscape.
- To accelerate the long-term vision of developing the potential of tribal youth and women and integrate them into the mainstream, Ministry of Tribal Affairs In collaboration with Facebook has Introduced GOAL programme to provide mentorship to tribal youth through digital mode.
- Additionally, rural women- focused programmes such as 'Nai Roshni' have been instituted to empower women who are key change agents, contributing to inclusive and sustainable growth in rural communities.
- For the general development of rural areas, the government has assured to provide electricity and clean cooking facilities to all willing rural families by 2022 under Ujjwala and Saubhagya Yojana.
- Swachh Bharat Mission will be expanded to undertake sustainable solid waste management in every village.

### Bridging the Urban-rural Divide

- **Internet** has become the bridge between urban and rural parts of the country as well as a catalyst to rural development. Digital technology has facilitated important quality of life improvements in rural areas.
  - Access to online markets, food delivery, and streaming entertainment, for example, has narrowed the gap between the experience of urban and rural populations.
  - Rural youth have increased gains from economic activities through easy access to market information and global markets.
  - These parallel processes help provide a competitive landscape for pricing and fair competition.
- **Digital penetration** has also improved access to finance, education, and healthcare, which are important pillars to enhancing the quality of life, affecting rural economic productivity in the long term.
  - Technologies like UPI, Aadhaar have been a driving force of financial inclusion by providing financial products and services to the previously unbanked and/or under banked.
  - Advanced technology in healthcare through remote diagnostic capabilities and web portals that disseminate basic health information has improved healthcare outcomes and hence, the productivity in rural areas.
- **Digitally enacted education** is envisaged as a panacea to solving issues in imparting quality education in rural India.

- Along with the National Education Policy 2019 that includes online learning as an alternative, the government has taken various initiatives to promote digital learning under the National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT).

### Technology in Agriculture

- The global increase in food demand, increased adoption of technology in agriculture and assistance in monitoring livestock performance and health are some of the key drivers to the rise of 'Smart Agriculture Market'.
- The seven sectors of satellite mapping, e-market platforms, livestock traceability, climate sensing stations, product traceability, agriculture drones, and smart farming together have the potential to create approximately 2.1 million additional jobs with an annual job value of around INR 34,000 crores for the agriculture sector in the next decade.
- Developing a new generation of '**Agri-preneurs**' will be a stimulant to achieve the government's goal of doubling farmers' income in real terms by 2022.

### Way Forward

- The government and other social development organisations should initiate policies explicitly targeted at reverse migration.
- The government ensures that social structures are set up to help rural youth in India move forward.
- This includes an improved education system, qualitative healthcare and connectivity.
- Effective government policies and programmes continue to strengthen social and human capital, develop skills, and stimulate self-confidence among our youth.
- As a result, their ability to act improves and their productivity increases.

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