

11 July 2019: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. GS1 Related

B. GS2 Related

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. [India can repeal Article 370 at will: Centre](#)
2. [HC seeks response from Centre on validity of NIA Act in J&K](#)
3. [Single tribunal to hear water disputes](#)

C. GS3 Related

ECONOMY

1. [CSO must rethink informal sector estimates](#)
2. [RBI panel moots change in timings for foreign exchange market](#)

SECURITY

1. [IAF to adopt ASRAAM missile for fighter fleet](#)

D. GS4 Related

E. Editorials

ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. [Turning down the heat](#)

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. [Caution needed](#)

ECONOMY

1. [A demographic window of opportunity](#)
2. [A case for nutrition counselling](#)

F. Tidbits

G. Prelims Facts

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

A. GS1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. [India can repeal Article 370 at will: Centre](#)

Context:

The government has informed Parliament that no foreign government or organisation has any locus standi in repealing Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir as matters relating to the Constitution of India are internal and only for the Indian Parliament to deal with.

Article 370:

- Article 370 of the Indian constitution is an article that gives autonomous status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

- The article is drafted in Part XXI of the Constitution: Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions.
- The Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir, after its establishment, was empowered to recommend the articles of the Indian constitution that should be applied to the state or to abrogate the Article 370 altogether.
- After the J&K Constituent Assembly later created the state's constitution and dissolved itself without recommending the abrogation of Article 370, the article was deemed to have become a permanent feature of the Indian Constitution.

Article 35 A:

- Article 35A lets the J&K Legislature decide the “permanent residents” of the State, prohibits a non-J&K resident from buying property in the State and ensures job reservation for its residents.
- It decides who all are ‘permanent residents’ of the State and confer on them special rights and privileges in public sector jobs, acquisition of property in the State, scholarships and other public aid and welfare.
- The provision mandates that no act of the legislature coming under it can be challenged for violating the Constitution or any other law of the land.

Details:

- While responding to a question on whether repeal of Articles 370 and 35A will in any way violate any United Nations regulation or any international obligation of the country, Minister of State for Home said, “Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India. Matters relating to the Constitution of India are internal and entirely for the Indian Parliament to deal with. No foreign government or organisation has any locus standi in the matter.”
- Home Minister Amit Shah had told the Lok Sabha that Article 370 was a “temporary provision.”

2. HC seeks response from Centre on validity of NIA Act in J&K

Context:

The Jammu & Kashmir High Court has directed the Union Home Ministry, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and the J&K Government to submit its objections to a plea questioning the functioning of the NIA in the State.

Details:

- Father of a resident of Budgam, who was arrested by the NIA, has filed a writ petition questioning the NIA Act and its implementation in J&K.
- Hearing the plea the Bench, issued notices to the Union of India through its Secretary to Government, Ministry of Home Affairs; Director General, NIA; Investigating Officer concerned NIA Jammu & Kashmir State; Principal Secretary to the government Home Department, J&K; and the Station House Officer of Kothi Bagh, Srinagar.

Issues:

- The advocate argued that The NIA Act is ultra vires to the Constitution of Jammu & Kashmir as the Parliament of India lacked legislative competence of such an enactment, which otherwise falls within the exclusive legislative domain of the State of Jammu & Kashmir.
- The plea also questioned the *suo moto* transfer of cases to the Director General, NIA.

The advocate raised the following issues:

- It's in departure of the routine procedure exercised.
- The NIA Act creates a special procedure for investigation and prosecution.
- The regulation or modulation of such a procedure has not been alienated to the Union Parliament and thus the Legislature of the State of J&K has been conferred exclusive authority for exercising legislative control over the creation or calibration of a special procedure by way of an enactment.
- He said the act of taking control of something without having the right to, of the legislative powers by the Central government is prohibited by the Constitution of J&K and also by Article 246, as applicable to the State of J&K. And that the Central government cannot employ any enabling legislative entry to dilute the exclusive legislative domain of the State of J&K.

National Investigation Agency:

- The NIA is an agency under the central government in India established to fight terrorism in the country.
- It is the central counter-terrorism law enforcement agency.
- The NIA has powers to tackle crimes associated with terrorism across all states without any prior authorization from the states.
- The NIA investigates and prosecutes those offences which are listed in the NIA Act which was passed by the Parliament in December 2008.
- The government has notified Special Courts to conduct trials of the cases that have been registered in the NIA police stations.
- The NIA functions under the Home Ministry. It is headquartered in New Delhi.

3. Single tribunal to hear water disputes**Context:**

- The Union Cabinet has approved the Inter-State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2019 that will help adjudicate disputes relating to waters of inter-State rivers and river valleys.
- A version of this bill was first introduced in the Lok Sabha in 2017 but had subsequently lapsed.

Details:

- The Bill seeks to amend the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956 to streamline the adjudication of inter-state river water disputes.
- A key feature of the bill is the constitution of a single tribunal with different Benches, and the setting of strict timelines for adjudication.
- Central Government has constituted the Water Disputes Tribunal for the adjudication of the water dispute, as it is often opined by the Central government that the water dispute cannot be settled by negotiations when any request under the Act is received from any State Government in respect of any water dispute on the inter-State rivers.
- The single tribunal so envisaged will have a permanent establishment and permanent office space and infrastructure so as to obviate with the need to set up a separate Tribunal for each water dispute making it a time consuming process.
- The Bill also proposes a Dispute Resolution Committee set up by the Central Government for amicably resolving inter-State water disputes within 18 months.
- Any dispute that cannot be settled by negotiations would be referred to the tribunal for its adjudication.
- The dispute so referred to the tribunal shall be assigned by the chairperson of the tribunal to a Bench of the tribunal for adjudication.
- The Bill can also affect the composition of the members of various tribunals, and has a provision to

C. GS3 Related

Category: ECONOMY

1. CSO must rethink informal sector estimates

Context:

Chief Statistician of India has said that the Central Statistics Office (CSO) needs to rethink how it estimates the growth of the informal sector as the current method is no longer accurate.

Details:

- At present, corporate sector data is being used to estimate the activity in the non-corporate sector.
- Chief Statistician of India opined that it works only as long as the technologies being used in both sectors are reasonably similar.
- He further said further that the data for the last few years showed that there was an increasing trend of companies using technology instead of labour.
 - The data implies that there are many companies that are replacing many low-skilled workers with a few highly-skilled, highly paid workers.
- Chief Statistician suggests that one way in which the CSO could better estimate the informal sector activity is to use employment data.

2. RBI panel moots change in timings for foreign exchange market

Context:

An internal committee of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), which was set up to review timings of different financial markets, suggested a change in timings for foreign exchange market.

Background:

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), in August 2018, had decided to set up an internal group to comprehensively review the timings of various markets it regulates and the associated payment and settlement infrastructure.
- The RBI regulates money markets, Government Securities (G-Sec) market, foreign exchange (Forex) market and the markets for derivatives on interest rate, currency and credit derivatives.
 - Forex market in India is predominantly a wholesale market, dominated by banks, forex brokers and corporate clients. Customers are priced off-market by banks. Trading in forex and related derivatives takes place OTC as well as on exchanges.
- The draft report of the working group said that since RBI is in the process of reviewing and rationalising foreign exchange regulations to provide flexibility in terms of choice of products, participation, positions, extension of market hours would complement these policy measures.

Details:

- At present, the currency market works from 9 am to 5 pm. It was suggested that the foreign exchange market could function from 9 am to 9 pm.
- The draft report of the committee said adjusted extension of market hours, and to begin with, revised market timings of 9 am — 9 pm, may be considered to gauge demand and potential benefits.

- The report noted that there are mixed views on the benefits of extension of market timing.
- The panel suggested call money market timings could be extended till 6 pm instead of the 5 pm now, to facilitate liquidity management by banks.
- The current market timings for government security markets may be retained, the draft said, on account of lack of demand from participants.
- There are no restrictions on timings for transactions in cross currencies. Banks are allowed to decide the trade timings based on their internal policies.

Issues:

- While the extension of market timings is expected to provide benefits such as better pricing of post-market hours information/data, improved onshore price discovery and a possible shift of offshore volumes to onshore, there is a view that it may entail higher costs to stakeholders.
- The report further notes that it is operationally easier to extend timings on exchanges as they are already offering extended market hours for commodity and derivative segment.
- However, the foreign exchange market in India is predominantly over-the-counter (OTC) and hence prices in thinly traded exchanges could be more volatile in the absence of OTC market.
- Extension of exchange timings without corresponding extension in the OTC market could pose risk management issues (valuation and open position) for banks operating in both markets. Therefore, it is considered desirable to extend trading hours for both OTC and Exchanges.

Category: SECURITY

1. IAF to adopt ASRAAM missile for fighter fleet

Context:

The Indian Air Force (IAF) is looking to adopt a new European visual range air to air missile across its fighter fleet.

Details:

- The Advanced Short Range Air-to-Air Missile (ASRAAM) of European missile-maker MBDA has been approved for fitting on Jaguar jets and the IAF was looking to integrating it on the Su-30MKIs and the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) as well.
- The ASRAAM has been chosen for the Jaguar and is currently undergoing integration. The first firing is expected by year-end.
- It would be the first over the wing launched missile in the IAF inventory.
 - All missiles are now fired from under the wing.
- ASRAAM is widely used as a Within Visual Range (WVR) air dominance missile with a range of over 25km.
- HAL had built about 145 Jaguars for the IAF, of which around 120 are in service, and 80 jets will continue till 2025-30.
- A plan to get a new more powerful engine has been long delayed.

Issue:

- Russia has Issued Formal Concern over IAF's Integration of British ASRAAM on Su-30 MKI.
- This comes at a time when IAF chief Air Chief Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa is going to Moscow for a week-long official visit which will include discussion on S-400 air defense missile system that India purchased.

D. GS4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. Turning down the heat

Editorial Analysis:

- It is important to note that during the run-up to the Paris climate change meeting in 2015 (COP-21) under the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**, each country decided the level and kind of effort it would undertake to solve the global problem of climate change.
- These actions were later referred to as nationally determined contributions (NDCs).

Promises made by India:

- India made a number of promises that would lead to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, or mitigation, and actions to adapt to living in a warmer world, or adaptation.
- As a matter of fact, many of its described programmes and plans were intended to enable India to move to a climate-friendly sustainable development pathway.
- Primarily, by 2030, there will be reductions in the emissions intensity of the GDP by about a third and a total of 40% of the installed capacity for electricity will be from non-fossil fuel sources.
- **India also promised an additional carbon sink** (a carbon sink is a means to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere) of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent through additional forest and tree cover by the year 2030.
- It is important to note that trees and other vegetation fix carbon as part of photosynthesis and soil too holds organic carbon from plants and animals.
- The amount of soil carbon varies with land management practices, farming methods, soil nutrition and temperature.

Enhancing green cover

- Some experts point out that **India has yet to determine how its carbon sink objectives can be met**. In a recent study, the **Forest Survey of India (FSI)** had estimated, along with the costs involved, the opportunities and potential actions for additional forest and tree cover to meet the NDC target.
- Given that forest and green cover already show a gradual increase in recent years, one might use this increase as part of the contribution towards the NDC. Or one might think of the additional 2.5-3 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent sink as having to be above the background or business-as-usual increase.
- The additional increase in carbon sinks, as recommended in this report, is to be achieved by the following ways. These include:
 1. restoring impaired and open forests;
 2. afforesting wastelands;
 3. agro-forestry;
 4. through green corridors, plantations along railways, canals, other roads, on railway sidings and rivers; and

5. via urban green spaces.

It is also important to note that close to three quarters of the increase (72.3 %) will be by restoring forests and afforestation on wastelands, with a modest rise in total green cover.

- The FSI study has three scenarios, representing different levels of increase in forest and tree cover.
- For example, 50%, 60% or 70% of impaired forests could be restored.
- The total increase in the carbon sink in these scenarios could be 1.63, 2.51 or 3.39 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent by 2030, at costs varying from about ₹1.14 to ₹2.46 lakh crore.
- These figures show that the policy has to be at least at a medium level of increase to attain the stated NDC targets.

Natural forests:

- A recent study published in '**Nature**' (which is one of the world's leading multidisciplinary science journals) shows that locking up the carbon from the atmosphere in trees, ground vegetation and soils is one of the safest ways with which to remove carbon.
- If done correctly, the green cover increase will provide many other benefits. These benefits include the following:
 1. it will improve water quality,
 2. store water in wetlands,
 3. prevent soil erosion,
 4. protect biodiversity, and
 5. potentially provide new jobs.

The authors of this study estimate that allowing land to be converted into forests naturally will sequester 42 times the carbon compared to land converted to plantation, or six times for land converted to agroforestry.

- Another study in '**Science**' estimates that it is possible to add 0.9 billion hectares of canopy cover worldwide, potentially mitigating up to two-thirds of historical greenhouse gas emissions.
- This would then prevent or delay the worst impacts from climate change.

Restoration type is key:

- Taken together, experts opine that these studies indicate that while there is enormous potential in mitigating climate change through forest restoration, the amount of carbon stored depends on the type of forest restoration carried out.
- The most effective way is through natural forest regeneration with appropriate institutions to facilitate the process.
- As a matter of fact, vast monocultures of plantations are being proposed in some countries, including in India, but these hold very little carbon; when they are harvested, carbon is released as the wood is burned.
- Besides, some of the trees selected for the plantations may rely on aquifers whose water becomes more and more precious with greater warming.
- Such forms of green cover, therefore, do not mitigate climate change and also do not improve biodiversity or provide related benefits.
- India, therefore, needs first to ensure that deforestation is curtailed to the maximum extent.
- Secondly, the area allocated to the restoration of impaired and open forests and wastelands in the FSI report should be focussed entirely on natural forests and agroforestry.

Concluding Remarks:

- While using a carbon lens to view forests has potential dangers, involving local people and planting indigenous tree varieties would also reduce likely difficulties.
- Instead of plantations, growing food forests managed by local communities would have additional co-benefits.
- Once natural forests are established, they need to be protected. Protecting and nurturing public lands while preventing their private enclosure is therefore paramount.
- Lastly, active forest management by local people has a long history in India and needs to expand to meet climate, environment and social justice goals.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Caution needed

Background:

Who are the Rohingyas?

- Rohingyas are an ethnic group, largely comprising Muslims, who predominantly live in the Western Myanmar province of Rakhine.
- They speak a dialect of Bengali, as opposed to the commonly spoken Burmese language.
- Though they have been living in the South East Asian country for generations, Myanmar considers them as persons who migrated to their land during the Colonial rule.
- So, it has not granted Rohingyas full citizenship.
- According to the **1982 Burmese citizenship law**, a Rohingya (or any ethnic minority) is eligible for citizenship only if he/she provides proof that his/her ancestors have lived in the country prior to 1823. Else, they are classified as “**resident foreigners**” or as “**associate citizens**” (even if one of the parent is a Myanmar citizen).
- Since they are not citizens, they are not entitled to be part of civil service. Their movements are also restricted within the Rakhine state.

What's in the news?

- Recently, the Honourable Supreme Court decided to examine the question whether illegal immigrants are entitled to refugee status.

Editorial Analysis:

- Experts opine that the Supreme Court's decision to examine the question whether illegal immigrants are entitled to refugee status needs to be welcomed, but with caution.
- It is debatable whether the Centre is right in claiming that this has emerged as a substantial question of law in the context of the Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar.
- For, it is fairly obvious that those escaping persecution in their home country are invariably undocumented. As a matter of fact, **it logically follows that those fleeing conditions of war or conflict will have to be treated as refugees first before their cases can be examined in detail**, and deemed fit for deportation as illegal entrants.
- It will be strange if any court holds that no illegal immigrant is entitled to refugee status. Experts point out that such a development would amount to a perverse denial of the very existence of ‘refugees’ as a class.

What the Government of India is perhaps looking for:

- What the government is perhaps looking for is a decision holding that it can choose the class of

illegal immigrants it wishes to treat as refugees; and that it can deny that status to any section it deems a threat to national security or is likely to strain local resources.

- The court's decision to go into the issue, therefore, offers an opportunity to clarify India's approach to the refugee question, which has generally been favourable to vulnerable entrants, but is stridently hostile to the Rohingya.

Perspective on India:

- India is not a signatory to the UN Convention on the Status of Refugees, 1951, and a Protocol adopted in 1967 on the subject.
- However, **since Independence, India has by and large adhered to the larger humanitarian principles underlying these instruments.**
- In this backdrop, critics point out that it is astonishing that the present regime is determined to deport the Rohingya. This position, they allege does not take into account the danger to their lives in Myanmar.
- Critics also point out that this is in violation of the principle of 'non-refoulement', which is **the norm that prohibits states from forcibly returning refugees to conditions that caused them to flee their homes in the first place.**
- Next, critics point out that **it will be amoral and unjust if this most vulnerable group from Myanmar's Rakhine state, numbering about 40,000 in India now, is denied refugee status.**

Concluding Remarks:

- It is important to note that with the Centre taking a stand against treating them as refugees, a positive ruling is needed from the apex court to prevent their forcible deportation.
- The Government of India's position on deporting the Rohingyas are rooted in the technicalities of its citizenship law.
- The citizenship law defines "illegal immigrant" as any foreigner entering India without valid travel documents, or overstays a permitted period of stay.
- It rules out giving citizenship by registration to such illegal immigrants.
- It is also important to note that the amendments it proposes to the Citizenship Act do not cover Muslim immigrants and are limited to persecuted Afghan, Bangladeshi and Pakistani minorities.
- In conclusion, India should work with the world community on the voluntary repatriation of the Rohingya and not damage its fine record of humane treatment of refugees by pursuing the deportation option without relent.

Category: ECONOMY

1. A demographic window of opportunity

Background:

- The **2019 Revision of World Population Prospects** is the twenty-sixth round of official United Nations population estimates and projections that have been prepared by the **Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat.**
- With each successive revision of the World Population Prospects, the Population Division of the United Nations estimates historical demographic trends for the period from 1950 to the present and projects future population trends out to 2100.
- The estimates are based on all available sources of data on population size and levels of fertility, mortality and international migration for 235 distinct countries or areas comprising the total population of the world.

What's in the news?

- Recently, the United Nations released the 26th revision of **World Population Prospects** and forecast that India will overtake China as the most populous country by 2027.

Editorial Analysis:

- Experts opine that the only surprise associated with this forecast is the way it was covered by the media. Questions arise: Is this good news or bad news? Is it news at all?
- As a matter of fact, we have known for a long time that India is destined to be the most populous country in the world.

A Note on Population Projections:

- Population projections are developed using existing population and by adjusting for expected births, deaths and migration.
- For short-term projections, the biggest impact comes from an existing population, particularly women in childbearing ages.
- It is important to note that after having instituted a one-child policy in 1979, China's female population in peak reproductive ages (between 15 and 39 years) is estimated at 235 million (2019) compared to 253 million for India.
- Thus, even if India could institute a policy that reduces its fertility rate to the Chinese level, India will overtake China as the most populous country.

A Note on UN Population Projections:

- It is important to note that the UN revises its population projections every two years.
- As a matter of fact, in 2015, it was predicted that India would overtake China in 2022, but in the 2019 projections it is 2027.
- The UN has revised India's expected population size in 2050 downward from 1,705 million in 2015 projections to 1,639 million in 2019 projections.
- This is due to faster than expected fertility decline, which is good news by all counts.
- India will reign as the most populous country throughout most of the 21st century.
- Experts opine that whether the government adjusts to this demographic destiny in a way that contributes to the long-term welfare of the nation or not depends on how it deals with three critical issues.

Examining the three critical issues:

- **Population control**
- An important question arises: do we need to adopt stringent population control policies?
- History tells us that unless the Indian state can and chooses to act with the ruthlessness of China, the government has few weapons in its arsenal.
- Almost all weapons that can be used in a democratic nation, have already been deployed.
- These include restriction of maternity leave and other maternity benefits for the first two births only and disqualification from panchayat elections for people with more than two children in some States along with minor incentives for sterilisation.
- However, ground-level research has found that individuals who wanted larger families either circumvented the restrictions or went ahead regardless of the consequences.
- As demographer **Judith Blake** noted, **people have children, not birth rates** and few incentives or disincentives are powerful enough to overcome the desire for children.

(2) Encouraging people to have smaller families:

- Secondly, if punitive actions won't work, one must encourage people to have smaller families voluntarily.
- It is important to note that **there are sharp differences in fertility among different socio-economic groups**. For example, Total Fertility Rate (TFR) for the poorest women was 3.2 compared to only 1.5 for the richest quintile in 2015-16. To get to TFR of 1.5, a substantial proportion of the population among the top 40% must stop at one child.
- In western societies, low fertility is associated with the conflict that working women face between work and child rearing and the individual's desire to enjoy a child-free life. This is not so for Indian couples.
- In India, couples with one child do not consume more nor are women in these families more likely to work.
- Research shows that it is a desire to invest in their children's education and future prospects that seems to drive people to stop at one child.
- Richer individuals see greater potential for ensuring admission to good colleges and better jobs for their children, inspiring them to limit their family size.
- Thus, improving education and ensuring that access to good jobs is open to all may also spur even poorer households into having fewer children and investing their hopes in the success of their only daughter or son.
- Experts opine that the provision of safe and easily accessible contraceptive services will complete this virtuous cycle.
- **Population and policy:**
- Thirdly, we must change our mindset about how population is incorporated in broader development policies.
- Population growth in the north and central parts of India is far greater than that in south India.
- What should we do about the old policies aimed at not rewarding States that fail to control population growth?
- These policies include using the 1971 population to allocate seats for the Lok Sabha and for Centre-State allocation under various Finance Commissions.
- In a departure from this practice, the 15th Finance Commission is expected to use the 2011 Census for making its recommendations. This has led to vociferous protests from the southern States as the feeling is that they are being penalised for better performance in reducing fertility.
- There is reason for their concern. As a matter of fact, between the 1971 and 2011 Censuses, the population of Kerala grew by 56% compared to about 140% growth for Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. A move to use the 2011 Census for funds allocation will favour the north-central States compared to Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- Having said this, **continuing to stay with a 1971 Census-based allocation would be a mistake**. Cross-State subsidies come in many forms; Centre-State transfers is but one.
- Incomes generated by workers in one State may also provide the tax revenues that support residents in another State.
- Further, the varying pace of onset and end of demographic transition creates intricate links between workers in Haryana today and retirees in Kerala and between future workers in Uttar Pradesh and children in Tamil Nadu.
- It is important to note that the demographic dividend provided by the increasing share of working age adults is a temporary phase during which child dependency ratio is falling and old-age dependency ratio is still low. But this opportunity only lasts for 20 to 30 years. For States such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu which experienced fertility decline early, this window of opportunity is already past.
- As the **United Nations Population Fund** estimates, over the next 20 years, the window of opportunity will be open for moderate achievers such as Karnataka, Haryana and Jammu & Kashmir. As the demographic window of opportunity closes for these States, it will open for Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and other States that are the last to enter fertility transition. This suggests that workers of Bihar

will be supporting the ageing population of Kerala in 20 years.

Concluding Remarks:

- In order to maximise the demographic dividend, we must invest in the education and health of the workforce, particularly in States whose demographic window of opportunity is still more than a decade away.
- It is time for India to accept the fact that being the most populous nation is its destiny. It must work towards enhancing the lives of its current and future citizens.

2. A case for nutrition counselling

Background:

A Brief Note on the ICDS:

- The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme was launched with the objectives:
- to improve the nutritional and health status of children in the age-group 0-6 years;
- to lay the foundation for proper psychological, physical and social development of the child;
- to reduce the incidence of mortality, morbidity, malnutrition and school dropout;
- to achieve effective co-ordination of policy and implementation amongst the various departments to promote child development; and
- to enhance the capability of the mother to look after the normal health and nutritional needs of the child through proper nutrition and health education.

Total Fertility Rate (TFR):

- Total fertility rate (TFR) in simple terms refers to the total number of children born or likely to be born to a woman in her life time if she were subject to the prevailing rate of age-specific fertility in the population.

Editorial Analysis:

- The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme is one of the world's largest programmes for early childhood care and development.

A Look at the findings of a recent study:

- A study was conducted by **India Consensus**, which is a partnership between Tata Trusts and Copenhagen Consensus.
- This study had undertaken a first-of-its-kind analysis of 100 government programmes. These were identified by NITI Aayog for their role in supporting India's efforts to achieve the Global Goals.
- This study suggests that nutrition and health counselling delivered under the auspices of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme is one of the best possible investments that can be made by any government.
- It is important to note that the Global Goals have a dizzying array of 169 targets, such a long list that no country on Earth can achieve all of them.
- That's why the unique India Consensus economic analysis approach is vital: it adds new knowledge about costs and benefits. This way, it can be clearer which programmes achieve the most good for every rupee spent.
- Researchers have identified twelve programmes that have phenomenal benefits for every rupee spent. Among the top programmes is nutrition and health counselling.

Case of Empowering the mother:

- As a behavioural change intervention, nutrition and health counselling is relatively low cost for every person that is reached.
- It's important to note that this programme does not provide food, but instead provides information to the mother, making it more likely that the child will receive more and better food. And that in turn leads to lifelong benefits.
- Many studies have now demonstrated that these benefits can be large.
- Improving the nutrition and health outcomes of the children of mothers reached makes this a highly cost-effective intervention.

Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan: A Case in Point

- Two analyses were undertaken in Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan, looking at a six-year campaign of nutrition counselling and hand-washing.
- The average cost of counselling sessions for each woman was estimated at ₹1,177 and ₹1,250 for Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan respectively.
- Based on previous studies, it is estimated that counselling leads to a 12% reduction in stunting. This leads to better cognitive skills.

Quantifying the benefits:

- Quantifying the increase in earnings shows that the per unit benefit for Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan comes to ₹71,500 and ₹54,000.
- What these figures mean is that the investment generates returns to society worth ₹61 and ₹43, respectively, for every rupee spent.
- While the analysis will differ for other States, these results show that **nutritional counselling is a phenomenal investment**.
- It's relevant to note that these figures take into account the challenges of nutrition counselling: it's a relatively difficult intervention to implement and ensure that every person is reached.
- But even if India's implementation problems were worse than other countries studied by researchers, it is unlikely to make the investment less impressive.
- The takeaway point is that, among all the ways that the Indian government is spending money to achieve Global Goals targets, adding additional resources to nutrition counselling would be a phenomenal investment.

Concluding Remarks:

- The preliminary results of this analysis show that there are many policies that can achieve amazing outcomes.
- If India were to spend ₹50,000 crore more on achieving the Global Goals, focussing on the most phenomenal programmes identified so far by India Consensus would create extra benefits for India worth ₹20 lakh crore — more than the entire Indian public consumption.
- With returns like this at stake, there are compelling reasons to look favourably at approaches including nutrition counselling.

F. Tidbits

Nothing here for today!!!

G. Prelims Facts

Nothing here for today!!!

H. Practice Questions for UPSC Prelims Exam

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to Alfred Wegener's Continental Drift theory:

1. According to the theory, all the continents were one single continental mass called Pangaea.
2. Pangaea first split into 2 big continental masses known as Gondwanaland and Laurasia.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Continental drift theory was proposed by Alfred Wegener in 1912.
- The theory deals with the distribution of the oceans and the continents.
- According to Wegener's Continental Drift theory, all the continents were one single continental mass (called a Super Continent) – Pangaea and a Mega Ocean surrounded this supercontinent. The mega ocean is known by the name Panthalassa.
- The supercontinent was named Pangaea and the Mega-ocean was called Panthalassa.
- According to this theory, the supercontinent, Pangaea, began to split some two hundred million years back.
- Pangaea first split into 2 big continental masses known as Gondwanaland and Laurasia forming the southern and northern modules respectively.
- Later, Gondwanaland and Laurasia continued to break into several smaller continents that exist today.

Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. National Water Informatics Centre (NWIC) a repository of nation-wide water resources data.
2. It is a component of the National Hydrology Project.
3. It works under the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation.

Which of the given statement/s is/.are correct?

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

The government set up the National Water Informatics Centre (NWIC) in 2018 for maintaining a comprehensive water resources data. NWIC would function as the single window source of updated data on water resources in the country.

The NWIC would also work with prominent Indian and international research institutes for providing technical support to the state and central organizations that deal with water emergency response of hydrological extremes.

- It is a repository of nation-wide water resources data
- It works as a Subordinate Office under the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation.
- It will provide latest and reliable water data (other than classified data) through web-based India Water Resources Information System (India-WRIS) on a GIS platform in Public Domain.
- It is a component of National Hydrology Project and also in consonance with the National Water Mission which has an objective of “conservation of water, minimizing wastage and ensuring its more equitable distribution through integrated water resources development and management”

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. National Disaster Management Authority is headed by the Home Minister.
2. It is a statutory body.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

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

Answer: b

Explanation:

National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), is an agency of the Ministry of Home Affairs whose primary purpose is to coordinate response to natural or man-made disasters and for capacity-building in disaster resiliency and crisis response. It is headed by the Prime Minister, and State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs) headed by respective Chief Ministers.

Q4. Consider the following statements:

1. Project Tiger was initiated during Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's tenure in 1973.
2. The objective of the Project Tiger was to save the Royal Bengal Tigers from getting extinct.
3. Project Tiger was first launched in Kanha Tiger Reserve.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

Project Tiger was first launched in Jim Corbett National Park of Uttarakhand.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. What do you understand by Social Audit? Comment on the role played by Social Audits in bridging the gap between the policy objectives and its outcomes. (10 Marks, 150 Words)
2. What is the importance of free legal aid in India? Discuss the challenges related to free legal aid services in the country. (15 Marks, 250 Words)