

28 Dec 2021: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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A. GS 1 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

B. GS 2 Related

Category: HEALTH

1. Kerala tops NITI Aayog Health Index; U.P. at bottom

Topic: Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

Prelims: NITI Aayog states health Index - Parameters; performance.

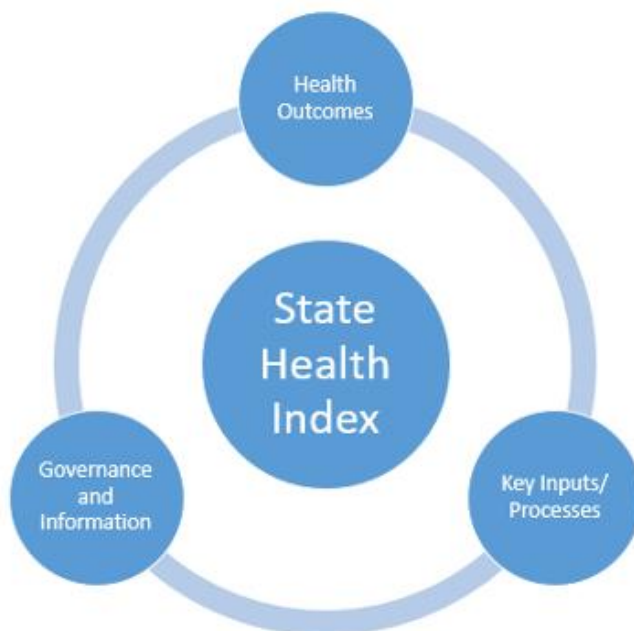
Mains: Findings of the 4th edition of the index and significance of the index.

Context:

- Government think tank [Niti Aayog](#) has released the **fourth edition of its state health index**.

Health Index:

- The Index is released as part of the **“Healthy States, Progressive India” report**.
- The index is being compiled and published since 2017.
- The Health Index ranks states and Union Territories on their year-on-year incremental performance in health outcomes as well as their overall status.
- It is a weighted composite index based on **24 indicators** grouped under the **domains of ‘Health Outcomes’, ‘Governance and Information’, and ‘Key Inputs/Processes’**, with the highest weightage given to health outcome indicators.
 - Health outcomes include parameters such as neonatal mortality rate, under-5 mortality rate, immunization cover, institutional deliveries, tuberculosis treatment success rate, etc.
 - Governance and information domain includes parameters like average occupancy of senior officers in key posts earmarked for health, data integrity, etc.
 - Key inputs and processes domain consists of parameters such as the proportion of shortfall in healthcare providers to what is recommended, functional medical facilities, health expenditure, etc.



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- The report is prepared by the NITI Aayog in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare with technical assistance from the [World Bank](#).
- The data is sourced from data sources such as the Sample Registration System (SRS), Civil Registration System (CRS), and Health Management Information Systems (HMIS).

Details:

- Round IV of the report focuses on measuring and highlighting the **overall performance and incremental improvement of states and UTs over the period 2018–19 to 2019–20**.
- Notably, the 4th Health Index Round does not capture the impact of Covid-19 on health outcomes or any of the other indicators as the Index Performance relates to Base Year (2018-19) and Reference Year (2019-20), largely the pre-Covid-19 period.
- The report was divided into **three parts - larger states, smaller states and union territories** for generating ranks and ensuring comparability among entities.
 - Among the larger states, Kerala was ranked as the best performer, while Uttar Pradesh was the worst.
 - Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana are the top three, which means for four times in a row Kerala has emerged the best in overall health performance.
 - Bihar and Madhya Pradesh were the second-and third-worst performers, respectively.
 - Notably, Uttar Pradesh has shown the highest incremental performance between 2018-19 and 2019-20.
 - Among the smaller states, Mizoram was the best performer and Nagaland was at the bottom.
 - Among the union territories, Chandigarh was on top, while Puducherry was the worst overall performer, according to the Niti Aayog report.
- The index showed that the **gap in overall performance between the best- and the worst-performing larger states and UTs narrowed** in the current round of the health index, while it **increased for the smaller states**.
- Several states are significantly better in one domain suggesting that there was **scope to improve their performance in the other domains** with specific targeted interventions. For instance, 47% of the States showed the highest performance in health outcomes and governance and information domains.

Significance:

- Given that it has become an annual tool to assess the performance of states and Union Territories, this report is an example of both **competitive and cooperative federalism**. The report is playing a major role in **prompting States towards improvements in health outcomes**.

The importance of this annual tool was re-emphasised by the ministry's decision to **link the index to incentives under the [National Health Mission](#)**.

- States are beginning to take cognizance of indices such as the State Health Index and use them **in their performance evaluation, policymaking and resource allocation**.
- The index has been instrumental in shifting the focus from budget spending and inputs to outputs and outcomes.
- The index will thus help India in the achievement of **Sustainable Development Goal-3**, related to ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages.

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Is the freedom of speech absolute?

Topic: Indian Constitution—Historical Underpinnings, Evolution, Features, Amendments, Significant Provisions and Basic Structure

Prelims: Constitutional provisions relating to free speech and reasonable restrictions

Mains: The adverse impact of hate speech; Related judicial observations and recommendations

Context:

- The **recent speeches at Haridwar targeting minorities** have brought back the focus on the need to tackle the menace of hate speech.

Hate Speech:

- The **267th report of the Law Commission of India** defines [hate speech](#) as an incitement to hatred primarily against a group of persons defined in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief and the like.

Constitutional provisions:

- **Article 19 of the Indian Constitution** provides the [right to freedom](#). Article 19 of the Indian Constitution mentions six freedoms that are available to the citizens of India including the [freedom of speech and expression](#), which is the right to express one's opinion freely without any fear through oral/written/electronic/broadcasting/press.
- Notably, however, these rights are not absolute. There are **restrictions to free speech**. Article 19(2) of the Constitution lists restrictions.

- **Article 19(2) permits the government to impose reasonable restrictions** upon the freedom of speech and expression in the interests of the **sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality** or in relation to **contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence**
 - The original text of Article 19(2) did not contain the term ‘public order’. It was added through The Constitution(First Amendment) Act, 1951.
- The laws enacted under the ‘public order’ restriction included Section 153A, Section 153B, Section 295A and Section 502(2) of the Indian Penal code.

Judiciary observations:

- In **Pravasi Bhalai Sangathan vs Union of India & Ors. (2014)** the Supreme Court noted the **adverse impact of hate speech**.
 - It exposes the targeted groups to hatred and delegitimizes such group members and reduces their social standing and acceptance within society. Thus hate speech marginalizes individuals based on their membership in a group and it can also lead to discrimination, ostracism, segregation, violence and, in the most extreme cases, to genocide.
- On the proliferation of hate speech, the [Supreme Court](#) noted that the **root of the problem is not the absence of laws but rather a lack of their effective execution** or by weak as well as selective enforcement.

Recommendations:

- Effective regulation of “hate speeches” at all levels is required.
- People indulging in hate speeches should be booked under the existing penal law. The executive, as well as civil society, has to perform its role in enforcing the already existing legal regime.
- It would also be prudent to have **new provisions in [IPC](#) to address the issue**, as suggested by the 267th report of the Law Commission.
 - The 267th Law Commission suggested the insertion of new Sections 153C (prohibiting incitement to hatred) and section 505A (causing fear, alarm, or provocation of violence in certain cases) to curb the menace of hate speech.

C. GS 3 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

Category: ECONOMY

1. The cold truth about India's income inequality

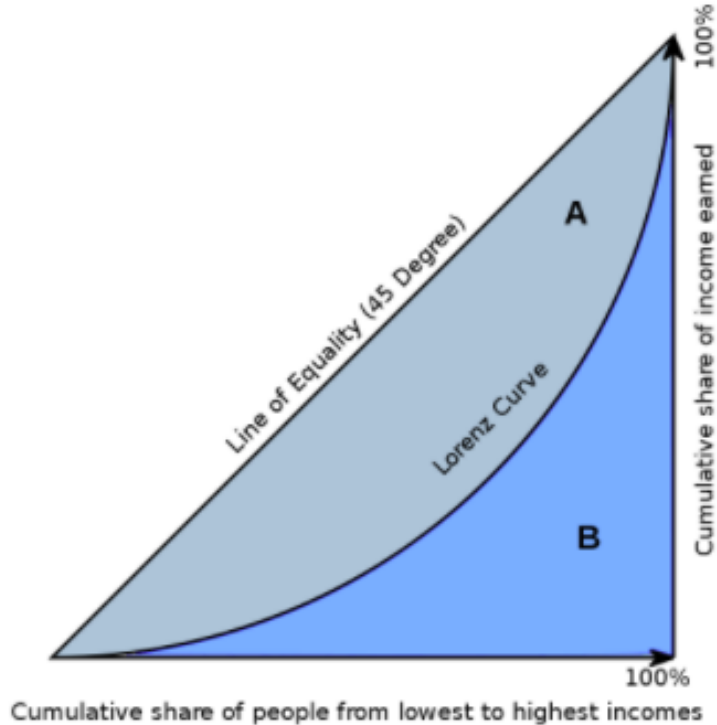
Topic: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Mains: Income inequality in India: Challenges and Opportunities.

Context: This article discusses the concerns associated with Inequality in India.

Details:

- What is Income Inequality?
 - The fact that various people earn varying amounts of money is referred to as income disparity.
 - The more unevenly distributed those incomes are, the higher is the income inequality.
- What is the Gini Coefficient?
 - The Gini Coefficient is calculated by comparing the cumulative proportions of the population to the cumulative proportions of income they get.
 - It runs from 0 to 1 between perfect equality and perfect inequality.
- Lorenz Curve: The Lorenz curve is a graphical depiction of income or wealth distribution.



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- *Image source: Wikipedia*
- World Inequality Report 2022:
 - The World Inequality Report 2022 was released by the Paris-based World Inequality Lab (WIL).

Global Scenario:

- The richest ten percent of the world's population today gets 52 percent of global income, while the lowest half earns only 8.5 percent.
- Since the mid-1990s, the richest 1% of global multimillionaires have taken home 38% of all increased wealth, while the poorest 50% have only gotten 2%.

India's Case:

- India has the biggest difference between the top 1% and the poorest 50% of the population of any of the world's major economies.
- In India, the disparity is greater than in the United States, the United Kingdom, China, Russia, and France.

Concerns with Income Inequality in India:

- Poverty has persisted:

- Deregulation and liberalization policies have resulted in "one of the most dramatic rises in income and wealth disparity witnessed in the world" since the mid-1980s.
- While the top 1% has reaped the benefits of economic reforms, development has been modest for low- and middle-income groups, and poverty has remained.
- Static growth rate:
 - Between 1951 and 1981, the income of India's poorest 50% increased at a pace of 2.2 percent each year.
 - Regardless of the economic strategies implemented, inequality in terms of the immobility of the poor remained an undeniable truth.
- Social conditions and constraints in India:
 - The very social framework that supported India aided and abetted this inequity.
 - Many attempts were made to combat India's fundamental lack of social democracy, but it remained restricted to states and regions.
 - It's time to confront the connections between our social institutions, income disparity, and poverty.
- Secularization and Economic Development:
 - Secularization is defined as the separation of religion from public life. It leads to respect for all citizens, regardless of their religious beliefs, as well as for science and rationality.
 - "Secularization precedes economic progress," according to the World Values Survey.
- 'One size nation' is flawed
 - The quick descent into a 'One size nation', does not fit India's many diversities.
 - India's social fabric seems to be getting ripped apart by the government's new goals and policies, limiting the opportunities available to all sorts of individuals to make a living.
 - Far from pushing for social and economic equality, the government is currently promoting systems and concepts in order to advance them.

Conclusion:

Rather than looking at development through the reductionist prism of economic growth alone, addressing income disparity requires a far more comprehensive strategy. To build a strong human capital basis for long-term prosperity, the government should increase wealth taxes and utilize the proceeds to invest in education, health, and infrastructure. Furthermore, governments must allow

markets to produce forces in order to create employment and, in turn, human capital capable of meeting the problems of the future economy.

Category: POLITY

1. Why the Aadhaar-voter ID link must be stopped

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

Mains: Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021; Concerns Associated with Aadhaar-voter ID link

Context: This article examines the concerns associated with the Aadhaar-voter ID link

Background:

- The Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021, is a first step toward introducing online-based remote e-voting, with Aadhaar as the key identification.
- The purpose of integrating Aadhaar into one's voter ID was to create a biometric-based voting system from the start.

The Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021:

Know More About Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021: - [CNA 24 Dec 2021](#)

What are the Concerns Associated with the Aadhaar-voter ID link?

1. **Unknown Methodology:** The general public is unaware of the ECI's process for locating duplicate voters using Aadhaar. The information is also not in the public domain.
2. **Lack of Privacy:** The State Resident Data Hub (SRDH) was built by the UIDAI to provide information on inhabitants to states. The SRDH includes data on state inhabitants provided by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) or acquired further by state governments. The SRDH is now maintained by private companies.
3. **Data Ambiguity:** While the UIDAI was forced to refrain from collecting data on caste, religion, and other sensitive information for Aadhaar, it advised states to do so if necessary. Implementation becomes ambiguous as a result of this.
4. **Disenfranchisement:** While the ECI's purpose and independence are debatable, exposing crucial electoral registers to surveillance software undermines the principle of universal adult suffrage. As a result, voting suppression and disenfranchisement become a problem.

5. **Lack of Secrecy:** The use of smartphones in elections for face recognition, voter identification, Aadhaar number, and phone number authentication undermines the "secret ballot."
6. **Increase in Frauds:** Linking Aadhaar will be fruitless in a context where the involvement of money makes a mockery of the democratic process. Malware may also be used to manipulate the outcome of an election via e-voting.
7. **Against Electoral Integrity:** While the Bill does not look into large-scale e-voting, there is an issue of ensuring electoral integrity.
8. **Illegal Benefits to Political Parties:** A connection between Aadhaar and voter ID would also assist political parties in creating voter profiles and influencing the voting process. The ability for political parties in power to utilize data for elections will be made simpler by online trends on election day and micro-targeting voters using their data.
9. **Advantage to Ruling Party:** A ruling coalition will always have an advantage with the data it possesses. An example is of the Chief Ministers from certain States being asked to get the data of the beneficiaries of welfare schemes.
10. **Issues with Aadhaar:** The way Aadhaar has been pushed across the country has been undemocratic and unconstitutional since its inception. Aadhaar itself has several fake and duplicate names, which has been widely documented.

F. Prelims Facts

1. The Log4j vulnerability

- **Log4j** is a widely used **software logging library for Java software** which was recently found to have **serious security vulnerabilities**. An attacker exploiting the vulnerability could potentially execute arbitrary, malicious code on an affected system.
- A **0day (or zero-day vulnerability)** refers to a security flaw that has not been publicly disclosed and for which a software patch or remediation technique is not available.

2. The progress of evolution

- **Convergent evolution** is a phenomenon where different species evolve similar characteristics though they come from very different lineages.
 - For example, birds, bats and insects have all evolved the power of flight through very different evolutionary pathways.

- There has been the rare incidence of both behaviours (**oviparity and viviparity**) **within the same species: the Eurasian common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*)**.
 - Oviparity is a mode of reproduction in which animals lay eggs. Viviparity is the mode of reproduction in which animals directly give birth to young ones.

G. Tidbits

1. Global economy

- According to a report by the Centre for Economics and Business Research, **the world economy is set to exceed 100 trillion dollars in 2022 for the first time.**
- The report predicts that **China will become the world's top economy in dollar terms by 2030.**
- The report also said that India was set to overtake France next year and then Britain in 2023 to regain its place as the world's sixth-biggest economy.

2. Climate costs

- **The world experienced 15 most destructive climate disasters in 2021.**
- The destructive climate disasters caused large economic impacts through losses. Hurricane Ida, which struck the U.S. in August, topped the list for damage at \$65 billion.
- **Four of the 10 most expensive disasters occurred in Asia, with the costs of floods and typhoons in the region adding up to \$24 billion.**

3. 'Roll out flex-fuel vehicles in six months'

- Indian Minister for Road Transport and Highways has asked automobile manufacturers to manufacture flex-fuel vehicles complying with [BS-6 norms](#) within six months.
 - **Flex-fuel vehicles are capable of running on a combination of 100% petrol or 100% bio-ethanol and their blends.**

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q.1 Which of the following statements is/are incorrect?

1. India's 'Annual Health Index' has been developed by NITI Aayog, with technical assistance from the World Bank, in consultation with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
2. Kerala has consistently topped the index.

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

Both statements are correct.

Q.2 Sabar tribe can be mainly found in

1. Madhya Pradesh
2. Odisha
3. West Bengal

Options:

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- The Sabar people (also Shabar and Saora) are one of the Adivasi of the Munda ethnic group who live mainly in Odisha and West Bengal.

Q.3 Which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), registration is mandatory for any NGO or association to receive foreign funds or donations.
2. The act is enforced by the Ministry of Finance.

Options:

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

Answer: a

Explanation:

- The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act is a consolidating act whose scope is to regulate the acceptance and utilisation of foreign contribution or foreign hospitality by certain individuals or associations or companies and to prohibit acceptance and utilisation of foreign contribution or foreign hospitality for any activities detrimental to the national interest and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
- Under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), registration is mandatory for any NGO or association to receive foreign funds or donations.
- The act is enforced by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Q.4 Which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Flex-fuel vehicles are capable of running on a combination of 100% petrol or 100% bioethanol and their blends.
2. Ministry for Road Transport and Highways is working with automobile manufacturers to manufacture flex-fuel vehicles complying with BS-6 norms.

Options:

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

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Indian Minister for Road Transport and Highways has asked automobile manufacturers to manufacture flex-fuel vehicles complying with BS-6 norms within six months.

- Flex-fuel vehicles are capable of running on a combination of 100% petrol or 100% bio-ethanol and their blends.

Q.5 The experiment will employ a trio of spacecraft flying in formation in the shape of equilateral triangle that has sides one million km long, with lasers shining between the craft.” The experiment in the question refers to? (UPSC 2020)

- a. Voyager-2
- b. New Horizons
- c. LISA Pathfinder
- d. Evolved LISA

Answer: d

Explanation:

- The Laser Interferometer Space Antenna (LISA) is a mission led by the European Space Agency to detect and accurately measure gravitational waves, tiny ripples in the fabric of space-time from astronomical sources.
- LISA would be the first dedicated space-based gravitational wave detector. It aims to measure gravitational waves directly by using laser interferometry.
- The LISA concept has a constellation of three spacecraft arranged in an equilateral triangle with sides 2.5 million km long, flying along an Earth-like heliocentric orbit. The distance between the satellites is precisely monitored to detect a passing gravitational wave.
- The LISA Pathfinder was a mission that successfully demonstrated the technologies needed to build a future space-based gravitational wave observatory.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Examine the recently published draft regulations on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) with regard to plastic waste management. (250 words; 15 marks GS Paper 3/Environment and Ecology)
2. Is the freedom of speech absolute under the Indian Constitution? Critically evaluate. (250 words; 15 marks) (GS Paper 2/Polity)