

FWD

FORTUNE WEEKLY DIGEST



> Maratha Reservations

> Woman in Armed Forces

> Genome India Project

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EDITOR'S NOTE

As UPSC aspirants, it is essential to stay updated on current affairs to excel in the examination. This **Fortune Weekly Digest (ForWarD)** brings you the latest news and developments from around the world, carefully curated and analyzed to help you prepare for the Civil Services (Main) Examination.

We understand that time is precious, and we have made sure to present the information in a concise and easy-to-understand manner.

The magazine is divided into different sections. Mains relevant topics have been covered in detail with a UPSC previous year question perspective. The jot downs are examples and interesting facts to enrich your answer writing. Cherrypicks has some key words from the week, helpful again in answer writing and essay. We have also included essay topics and sample questions to help you gauge your preparation.

We have designed this magazine to best supplement the daily current affairs notes we have launched by the name of **FIND (Fortune IAS News Daily)** and **FINDER (Fortune IAS News Daily Explainer)** and the **Fortune Prelims Precise** monthly compilation. This magazine will be explained in detail and your queries addressed in a live class we conduct.

At a time when there is no dearth of current affairs materials, our hope is help you get a one-stop solution for all your current affairs needs.

This magazine is a work in progress and your feedback will be appreciated.

We hope that this magazine will serve as a valuable resource for your exam preparation and contribute to your success in the UPSC examination.

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HONOUR KILLINGS IN INDIA

Syllabus: GS I - Salient features of Indian Society

PYQ MAPPING

Q) Has caste lost its relevance in understanding the multi-cultural Indian Society? Elaborate your answer with illustrations. (2020)

Q) Customs and traditions suppress reason leading to obscurantism. Do you agree? (2020)

Q) What are the continued challenges for women in India against time and space? (2019)

INDIAN LAWS ON CRIMES IN INDIA

★ **Article 15:** It talks about **equal rights before law**, which means every citizen of India would be treated equally before law irrespective of without any discrimination of caste, creed, sex, race, and religion.

» A female is murdered, which forms **gender violation**.

★ **Article 19:** This Article of the Indian Constitution deals with the Right to Freedom.

» It is the right of a person to choose his/her life partner. No person has the right to take away one's freedom and life.

★ **Article 20:** Right to Life and Personal Liberty deals with a person's right over his choices and life decisions.

★ **Hindu Marriage Act, 1955:** Every citizen shall become major after attaining the age of 18 defined in Section 3.

» If a person is not accepting the marriage arranged by her family, then no one has the right to kill that person in the name of dishonour to the family.

★ **Indian Penal Code, 1860:** Section 299 and 301 of the code deals with culpable homicide amounting to murder.

» This is applied in the case of Honour killings, because the act of killing the victim is made **with the intention to kill them** to bring honour to the family.

WHY IN NEWS?

Recently, in a case of **suspected "honour" killing**, a 26-year old man (Praveen) was hacked to death in Chennai by his brother-in-law and four other accomplices.

Another case in January, a young woman from the **Kallar, a forward community** in Tamil Nadu's Thanjavur district was **allegedly killed by her family for marrying a Dalit man**.

What is meant by Honour Killings?

- 👁 Honour killing is basically an act of murder by the family members and is also referred to as **Customary killing**.
- 👁 Honour killings are murders committed primarily against women and girls who are perceived to have brought '**dishonour**' upon **their families** or communities due to their **choice of partner**, especially if they belong to a different caste, religion, or community.

Killing Menace in India

Several cases of honour killings from India's urban and rural pockets go unreported.

- 👁 As per the latest data from the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)**, the number of honour killings reported in India was 25 each in 2019 and 2020, and 33 in 2021.
- 👁 But these figures are based on those reported, and the number could be **much higher than mentioned**.

THE REASONS BEHIND THE HEINOUS CRIME:

● **Not a recent origin:** The honour Killings are not new to our society and have persisted from the time of caste divisions.

» For Instance, **Kaanichaavu**, a 16th century folk literature, describes these murders as **Theetu sadangu Kolai** (murders of untouchability ritual).

» Special meetings were held **to plan the murder** of those who married outside their caste.

- **Caste pride & Rigidity:** India has a deeply entrenched caste system and strong community ties. Marriages "dishonouring" the community or caste identity, may lead to honour killings. **For instance,** A folklore says about Vengalarasan, who is said to have chopped off his daughter's head when she was abducted by the King of Travancore, who fell in love with her.
- **Politicisation:** For the sake of caste **mobilisation for vote bank** politics, the political parties turn a blind eye towards such incidents. **For instance,** in the recent case, mainstream political parties refrain from condemning the incidents fearing vote banks.
- **Poor justice delivery:** Overburdened judiciary, police apathy, corruption and procedural issues delay verdicts.
 - » For instance, the verdict in the sensational 2003 Kannagi-Murugesan honour killing was delivered only in 2021.
- **Poor acceptance of inter-caste marriages:** In India, arranged marriages are a norm and a way to maintain the decorum of their caste or status of their family in the society.
- **Religious and Patriarchal Beliefs:** Conservative interpretations of **religious and cultural norms**, particularly those emphasising the **subordination of women** and the control of family and community honour by men, contribute to the prevalence of honour killings.
- **Economic reasons:** Families don't want **transfer of ownership** of their assets to a different caste group in the future due to interfaith marriages.
- **Personal issues dubbed as caste issue:** There may be personal issues among both the families but they may dub it as a caste issue to gain support and threaten the married couples.
- **Loss of Prestige and Status in society:** A person's ascribed status is more important than the achieved status. Any damage to the prestige is not accepted by such families and this serves as a reason for customary killings.
- **Khap Panchayats:** The absence of the formal institutions as panchayat Smiti or a grama sabha gathering leads to the brutal governance of the illegal and extra-constitutionalized panchayat.

" hundreds of young people die in the country due to honour killings merely because they love someone...."

- Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud

SC JUDGMENTS ON HONOUR CRIMES:

- ♣ **Lata Singh v State of U.P. (2006):** A Division Bench of the Supreme Court observed that **no offence has been committed by the couple marrying outside their caste** as "there is no bar to an inter-caste marriage under the Hindu Marriage Act or any other law".
 - » The Court opined that if parents do not approve the choice of partners of their children, the maximum that they can resort to is **to cut off social relations with them**.
 - » It directed the police personnel throughout the country to **ensure inter-caste couples are not subjected to any kind of violence** and in the event of such, to institute criminal proceedings against such people.
- ♣ **Arumugam Servai v State of Tamil Nadu, (2011):** The SC observed that the "**Khap Panchayats**" are akin to kangaroo courts and issuing decrees against inter-caste couples are "**wholly illegal and have to be ruthlessly stamped out**". SC held that the District Magistrate/Collector and SSP/SPs of the district as well as other officials concerned should be held accountable.
- ♣ **Bhagwan Dass v State (NCT of Delhi), (2011):** SC held that honour killing comes under the "**rarest of rare**" category so that it serves as a **deterrent** for such outrageous acts.
- ♣ **Shakti Vahini v Union of India, (2018):** The Court expanded the **definition of honour crimes** by relying upon the **Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence**, that any crime due to transgression of cultural, religious, social or traditional norms or customs of appropriate behaviour by an individual is liable to be prosecuted.
 - » It held the choice of the individual is an extricable part of dignity under Articles 19 and 21 of the Constitution to consensually choose each other as life partners.

STEPS TO BE TAKEN TO CURB THE MENACE OF SUCH KILLINGS:

- * **A strict separate law:** There is a need for a separate law to counter the rising cases of customary killings in India.
 - » The National Commission For Women had proposed a draft bill, but it has not seen light still.
 - » The Prevention of Crimes in the Name of 'Honour' & Tradition Bill, 2010, if passed can bring a renewed focus and attention to fight against these crimes.
 - » Additionally, laws should **provide protection and support for potential victims**, such as witness protection programs and shelters for those at risk.
- * **Gram Nyayalayas:** It can put an end to the illegal Khap panchayats that are ruling many rural parts of India.
- * **Role of Media:** Media should be sensitised to the issue of honour killings, promoting **responsible reporting** that avoids sensationalism. Instead, they should **highlight survivors' stories** and initiatives for prevention and justice.
- * **Literacy:** The children must be **educated regarding the ills of patriarchy and honour killings** and they must be encouraged with the practice of equality. **Awareness campaigns** emphasising the importance of individual autonomy, respect for human rights, and the criminal consequences of such acts.
- * **Political Ethos:** The political parties must make incidents like honour killings as condemnable and all political parties must always tie hands to curb such menace rather than pacifying casts for votes.
- * **Legal Aid and Assistance:** Providing legal aid and assistance to victims and their families is **crucial in ensuring access to justice**. This includes offering free legal services, facilitating the filing of complaints, etc.
- * **Community engagement:** Engaging communities prone to honour killings is vital. By **collaborating with religious and community leaders**, we can challenge harmful norms and promote inclusivity. Dialogue and outreach should foster understanding and acceptance of diverse choices.

CONCLUSION

We must always keep in mind that **"there is no honour in honour killings"** and as responsible citizens, we must pressurise the government to bring in strict legislations to curb occurrences like customary murders. The society must value individual honour over narrow concepts of family or community honour.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Honour killing has taken more life in India than the Covid-19 pandemic. Suggest ways to overcome the menace and state reasons why still it is prevalent in India. **(15 M)(250 W)**



WOMEN IN FORCES

Syllabus: GS I & III - Empowerment of Women & Various Security Forces and their mandates

PYQ MAPPING

Q) Though women in post-Independent India have excelled in various fields, the social attitude towards women and the feminist movement has been patriarchal." Apart from women education and women empowerment schemes, what interventions can help change this milieu? (2021)

SHORT TAKES

Permanent Commission (PC): means continuing a career in the armed forces **until retirement**.

Short Service Commission (SSC): The officers are enrolled for 10 years and they have three choices at the end of ten years. Officers can choose a **permanent commission**, decline it, or **extend it for an additional four years**.



WHY IN NEWS?

The Supreme Court recently directed the Ministry of Defence to pay Rs 60 lakh in compensation to a former permanent commissioned officer in the **Military Nursing Service (MNS)**, ruling she was "wrongly" released from service in 1988 on grounds of her marriage. The court has called the termination of a woman's employment on the grounds of marriage a **"coarse case of gender discrimination"**

INTRODUCTION

The **Military Nursing Service (MNS)** is an integral part of the Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS), which includes the Army Medical Corps (AMC) and Army Dental Corps (ADC).

- » AFMS personnel serve in India's medical establishments and its officers have played a role in United Nations peacekeeping missions abroad.

IMPORTANT VERDICTS THAT STOOD BY WOMEN

PIL in Delhi HC, 2003: A case was filed in the Delhi HC by women officers in 2003 and in 2010, the **HC awarded Permanent Commissions to women** officers in all branches.

The order was not implemented and was challenged by the Centre in the SC. This led to the 2020 SC Judgement.

Secretary, Ministry of Defence vs. Babita Puniya, 2020: A bench headed by Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice Ajay Rastogi upheld the demands of women in the SSC.

The court said that **seeking a Permanent Commission** or a full-length career was "justified".

The SC brought women officers in 10 streams of the Army on par with their male counterparts.

Number 5 Selection Board was constituted by the Army to induct all eligible female officers as permanent commission officers.

HISTORY OF WOMEN IN INDIAN ARMY

- ★ **The Indian Military Nursing Services (MNS), 1888:** Women were given an opportunity to serve in the Armed Forces.
 - » The nurses of the Indian Army served in World War I with distinction.
- ★ **Women's Auxiliary Corps, 1942:** The Corps allowed women to serve in primarily **non-combatant roles** like communications, accounting, administration etc.
 - » The Women's Auxiliary Corps (India) was disbanded in 1947 after India got independence.
- ★ **Women Special Entry Scheme (WSES), 1992:** The Indian Army first allowed women officers to be inducted in Independent India.
 - » They were commissioned for **five-year periods** in certain streams, like the **Army Education Corps and the Corps of Engineers**.

- ★ **Short Service Commission scheme (SSC) for women, 2006:** The WSES scheme was replaced by the SSC scheme for women.
 - » However, they had limited options.
- ★ **Permanent Commission, 2020:** This was accepted after the 2020 SC judgement.
- ★ **Combat Role:** Women are allowed in combat roles in the Indian Airforce but not in other services.

CENTRE'S STAND

- ♣ **Physical capability:** The centre is of the view that the physical capability of women for combat exercise is less compared to men.
- ♣ **Male Environment:** An all-male environment would have to moderate itself in the presence of women. This may be difficult for the male officers and may face many challenges.
- ♣ **Women Roles:** Women have to deal with pregnancy, motherhood, domestic obligation towards children and family etc. and hence they may find it difficult to stay focussed in the Forces.

WHY MUST WOMEN OFFICERS BE INDUCTED INTO PERMANENT COMMISSION?

- ➔ **Removes discrimination:** Permanent Commission is central to removing structural gender discrimination in the armed forces.
- ➔ **Upholds Constitutional Values:** Articles 14, 15, 16, 19 of the Indian constitution upholds the values of equality & allows equal, non-discriminatory opportunities at work.
 - » Granting equal opportunity to eligible women will uphold these values.
 - » For instance, women officers in the Indian army (excluding the medical corps) numbered just about 3% in 2020.
- ➔ **Fills the shortage:** Recruiting women officers will help to fill the gaps in service needs for the country.
 - » There is a shortage of over 8,000 officers in the Army.
 - » This includes the Army Medical Corps and Army Dental Corps.
- ➔ **Secure Employment:** It provides increased job security and extended tenure for women officers.
 - » It can also grant equal entitlements as men, including **pension benefits** after 20 years of service.
- ➔ **Behavioural change:** It can encourage more women to join the Armed Forces, expanding the talent pool and countering the narrow mindedness of the society in women taking up combat roles.
- ➔ **Re-engineering of the institutions:** It can help re-engineer the institutions of the armed forces, which are by default conceived of as default male spaces.
- ➔ **Changing mode of Combat:** warfare has moved to newer dimension that are far away from mere physical prowess, like the cyberwar fare, unmanned aerial vehicles etc. With requisite training women can thrive in these positions also.

CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN IN ARMED FORCES

- **Gender Ratio:** The Armed Forces have just 3% of women in it and this acts as a deterrent for many aspiring women to join the forces.
- **Work-Life Balance:** A career in the armed forces is very challenging and demanding with odd work-locations and work hours. Women have dual responsibility of professional duties as well as domestic care work.
 - » The responsibility of childcare disproportionately falls on women.
 - » It is difficult to balance professional obligations with domestic responsibilities.
- **Limited Roles:** The roles offered to women officers are still limited. Women are not still not allowed for combat roles in the Mechanised Infantry, Artillery or in the Ships and Submarines.
- **Gender Stereotypes:** In the Babita Puniya case, 2020, the SC had criticised the Government for portraying women as **physiologically unfit for answering the “beyond the call of duty”** of the Army.
 - » The SC had criticised this patriarchal notion that domestic obligations rested only with women.

- **Discrimination:** After the 2020 SC Judgment, the Army established additional conditions for female officers to be eligible for permanent commission.
 - » Most of them related to physical fitness, which many officers contended that the new criteria would inevitably keep women from gaining permanent tenures.
- **Biological limitations:** According to studies carried out by the Centre for Military Readiness in the United States, female soldiers, on an average, are shorter and smaller than men, with 45-50% less upper body strength and 25-30% less aerobic capacity, which is essential for endurance.
 - » Hence for fighting arms and Special Forces, these should be at par with males to withstand the rigours of combat.
 - » Thus, on physical standards alone, the employment of women in armed forces gets restricted to specific roles.

Countries that allow women in armed forces

● **The United States:**

- » Women constitute nearly 20% of its strength in services.
- » In 2013, the U.S lifted the ban on women serving in combat roles, opening up all military occupational specialties to women which was made effective from 2016.

● **Israel:** Israel has compulsory military service (conscription) for most citizens who turn 18. Men are expected to serve a minimum of 32 months and women a minimum of 24 months. Women since 1985 have been allowed in combat roles in many units.

● **UN:** The United Nations (UN) allows women in combat roles. Female soldiers can perform in the same roles as men. In 2007, India became a pioneer in UN peacekeeping by deploying an all-women Formed Police Unit to Liberia.

● **Others:** Germany, New Zealand and Canada allowed women in combat roles since 2001 across all units.

● **Pakistan:** Pakistan allows women in combat roles in the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) and in the Pakistan Army and not in the Navy.

● **Australian & Russia:** Women are still not allowed in the battle. Women generally serve in nursing, communications and logistic support functions.

WAY FORWARD

- ✦ **Gender-specific Rights:** The government and Forces must acknowledge the gender-specific rights like maternity and child care leave into the policies of the armed forces.
- ✦ **Role-based Standards:** Physical fitness standards should be role-based and not gender-based. This will ensure equal rights and opportunities for all officers.
- ✦ **Pragmatic Policies:** The government must promote gradual inclusion of women in all ranks and disciplines, shedding patriarchal attitudes and creating necessary infrastructure.
- ✦ **Rules and Regulations:** Government must codify military laws to address gender crimes, and ensure that only volunteer women meeting psychological and physical fitness standards join combat roles.

CONCLUSION

Providing equal rights in Forces is not just providing equal status or employment guarantee, but it is the idea to give an opportunity at nation building and defending it. The government must flex its policies to help aspiring women with proper capabilities to serve the nation through the Armed Forces.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Acceptance of women in the military has not been smooth in any country. Comment on the stand of India in inducting women in forces. **(10 M)(150 W)**

LEGALISING CANNABIS

Syllabus: GS II - Government Intervention & Health

PYQ MAPPING

Q) India's proximity to the two of the world's biggest illicit opium-growing states has enhanced her internal security concerns. Explain the linkages between drug trafficking and other illicit activities such as gunrunning, money laundering and human trafficking. What counter-measures should be taken to prevent the same? (2018)

SHORT TAKES

- **Cannabis (hemp):** Also called as Marijuana, it refers to the dried leaves, flowers, stems, and seeds from the *Cannabis sativa* or *Cannabis indica* plant.
 - » The plant contains the **mind-altering chemical called Delta-9 Tetra-Hydro-Cannabinol (THC)** and other similar compounds.
 - » It also has **CBD (cannabidiol)** which does **not cause intoxication** or psychoactive side effects and it is proven as an effective chronic pain relief drug.
- **9 countries that have legalised recreational use of cannabis:** Canada, Georgia, Germany, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, South Africa, Thailand, and Uruguay.

WHY IN NEWS?

Germany has recently **legalised cannabis** when the **Bundestag (German federal parliament)** passed a law allowing individuals and voluntary associations to grow and hold limited quantities of the drug.

At the same time, **Thailand** which previously allowed recreational use of cannabis is planning to ban the same by year-end.

INTRODUCTION

According to the WHO, cannabis is by far the most widely cultivated, trafficked and abused illicit drug in the world. Globally, the legal cannabis market is expected to reach an estimated valuation of **\$146.4 billion by 2025-end**.

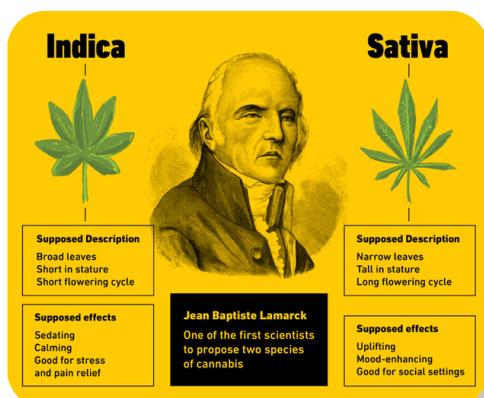
Germany becomes the **9th country to legalise recreational use** of the drug, which is also legal in some sub-national jurisdictions in the United States and Australia. Some 4.5 million Germans are estimated to use cannabis.

HOW IS GERMANY PLANNING TO IMPLEMENT THE PLAN?

- ➔ **Aims:** Germany wants to **undermine the black market, protect smokers from contaminated cannabis** and **cut revenue streams for organised crime gangs**. Medical cannabis patients will be able to access their medicine easier.
- ➔ **Age for consumption:** Under the law, **over-18s** in Germany will be allowed to possess **cannabis**.
- ➔ **Quantity allowed for possession:** **Possession of up to 25g** is to be allowed in public spaces with exceptions like schools.
 - ➔ **In private homes** the legal limit will be **50g and can grow upto 3 plants**.
 - ➔ **Smoking cannabis** in many public spaces will become legal from 1 April.
- ➔ **Authorised sales:** Due to concerns that sale of the drug through **licensed shops and pharmacies** could lead to a surge in drug exports all over the EU, this plan was scrapped.
 - ➔ Instead, **non-commercial members clubs**, called **"cannabis social clubs"**, will grow and distribute a limited amount of the drug.

CANNABIS REGULATION IN INDIA

In India, while **trade and consumption** of cannabis is **banned under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act of 1985**, calls for legalising its use for medicinal purposes have grown stronger over the years.





- » **Section 10 (a)(iii) of the Act empowers the States** to make rules.
- » **The seeds and leaves of the cannabis plant are left out of the ambit** of the NDPS Act.
- 🇮🇳 The Act established **the Narcotics Control Bureau** as the apex drug law enforcement agency and empowers them to oversee the implementation of NDPS Act.
- 🇮🇳 The **CBD (cannabidiol) oil** manufacturing is licenced under the **Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940** and can be legally used and sold.
- 🇮🇳 **Bhang, ganja and charas** are enlisted in the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 for use in Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani.
- 🇮🇳 In 2018, **Uttarakhand** had become the first state in the country to allow commercial cultivation of hemp crops. **Controlled cultivation** has also been allowed in parts of other States including **Gujarat, UP and Madhya Pradesh**.
- » Recently in 2023, **Himachal Pradesh** government decided to legalise cannabis (hemp) cultivation in the State.

PROS OF LEGALISING CANNABIS

- ➔ **Historic significance for India:** The Atharva Veda mentions Bhang plant as one of the 5 sacred plants and usage of Bhang since ancient times is common during the Hindu festivals of Holi and Mahashivaratri.
- ➔ **Dries out the black market:** Legalising cuts revenue streams for organised crime gangs and drug mafias.
- ➔ **Protect smokers from contaminated cannabis:** This will help drug addicts **to shift from the use of more harmful drugs to less harmful** drugs and may also end up in life-long addiction.
- ➔ **Health Benefits:** This includes Pain Management, Positive Impact on Central Nervous System (CNS) and helps treat childhood epilepsy syndromes, anxiety and insomnia.
- ➔ **Additional Revenues:** As the sale will be under the control of States, there is a high chance for the States to get an additional revenue to the exchequer which can be diverted towards welfare objectives.
- ➔ **Better income for people:** Hemp cultivation can play a significant role in generating revenues for hilly States where income sources are minimal.
- ➔ **Plant's Multiple Uses:** Apart from medicinal uses, Hemp is a plant that has multiple uses ranging from **phytoremediation, fibre-cloth manufacturing** and use in the pulp and paper industry.
- » However, due to the recreational use of its products as '**charas**' and '**ganja**' the positives of this sturdy plant has been overlooked.

CONS OF LEGALISING CANNABIS

- **Abuse of cannabis:** Legalising encourages adolescents and youth towards the use and abuse of cannabis rather than using it for medical purposes.
- **Affects Health:** Cannabis is known to cause **psychiatric symptoms** in the users which may be temporary and with prolonged use these may become permanent. **Amotivational syndrome** is known to occur with cannabis use, in which **the person loses interest as well as the strength to do any chores**.
- **Burden on Executive and Judiciary:** Legalising requires huge man power and state funds to control drug usage.
- **Corruption:** Legalising may lead to wide scope of corruption at lower levels of the executive which harass people even for petty crimes.
- **Against DPSP:** Article 47 of the Indian Constitution prohibits intoxicating drinks and drugs that are injurious to health.

ALCOHOL	VS	CANNABIS
 <p>The CDC reports more than 30,000 deaths attributed to the health effects of alcohol.</p>		 <p>The CDC reports 0 deaths attributed to the health effects of cannabis.</p>
<p>1. Contributes to aggressive and violent behavior.</p>		<p>1. Does not cause aggressive or violent behavior.</p>
<p>2. Health related costs are 8x greater than those for cannabis.</p>		<p>2. Cannabis poses significantly fewer health costs than alcohol.</p>

A Case Study on Thailand

Thailand was the first country in Asia to legalise cannabis. The government introduced regulations that **made cannabis a “controlled herb”** that requires a licence for planting or selling. **The regulations banned** online sales, sales to pregnant women and people under 20, and public smoking.

Legal cannabis has fuelled Thailand's tourism and farming trades and spawned thousands of neon green shops, but it is facing public backlash over perceptions that under-regulation has made the drug available to kids and caused crime. This is why the country is planning to ban recreational cannabis use while allowing medical usage.

CONCLUSION

Even as the debate continues on cultivation and regulation, concerns related to its abuse and diversion of cannabis for illicit purposes, besides negotiating a balance between access for medical purposes and its preventing misuse, **call for an all-inclusive regulatory framework.**

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Recently, Germany drafted a law legalising the purchase and possession of cannabis for recreational use. In this context, discuss the possibilities of India coming with such a legislation and the pros and cons of the same. **(10 M)(150 W)**



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MARATHA RESERVATION

Syllabus: GS II - Constitutional provisions related to the Socially and Educationally Backward Classes.

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *Whether the National Commission for Scheduled Castes can enforce the implementation of constitutional reservation for the Scheduled Castes in the religious minority institutions? Examine. (2018)*

Q) *"The reservation of seats for women in the institutions of local self-government has a limited impact on the patriarchal character of the Indian Political Process." (2019)*

WHY IN NEWS?

Recently, the Maharashtra State Assembly unanimously passed the Maratha reservation bill granting Marathas **10% reservation** in education and government jobs.

INTRODUCTION

Marathas are a group of castes comprising peasants, landowners and warrior castes. For the third time in a decade, the State has passed legislation for a Maratha quota.

Maharashtra had seen reservation protests from Maratha groups for the last 32 years with the recent one spearheaded by **Manoj Jarange Patil**, who added more demands like including Marathas under the Kunbi OBC community and to include Marathas in free education policy.

OVERVIEW

- ➔ Since the formation of the state in 1960, the Marathas have been a politically dominant community in the state with **12 of its 20 chief ministers**, including the incumbent, coming from the community.
- ➔ Currently, Maharashtra has **62 per cent reservation** – SC (13%); ST (7%), OBC (19%), Other Tribes (11%); and Special Backward Classes (2%), EWS (10%). With the addition of 10 per cent for Marathas, total reservation in the state will **reach 72%**.
- ➔ Marathas form **33% of the state's population**. (2011 census)

Background of Maratha Reservation:

- ➔ **Narayan Rane Committee (2014):** It was the first such committee that undertook a quantitative analysis of the issue. Based on its recommendation, the Congress government took the ordinance route to provide 16% reservation for Marathas outside the OBC quota. This was struck down by the Bombay High Court.
- ➔ **Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission - Gaikwad Commission Report (2018):** It stated that nearly 77% of Marathas are agrarian. Agricultural distress, extreme poverty, agricultural income decline, and land holding partitions are reasons for the Maratha Communities' plight.
- ➔ The Maharashtra government then enacted the **Socially and Educationally Backward Classes Act, 2018**, that granted 16% reservation with Marathas specified as SEBC. The Bombay High Court stayed the implementation, reducing the reservation quota. Finally, **SC in 2021, struck down** the Act since it breached the Indra Sawhney verdict cap of 50%.
- ➔ **Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission - Sunil Sukhre Report (2024):** Protests gathered more steam with hunger strikes by activists forcing the hand of the government. The new commission found that:
 - ➔ Maratha population in the state is 28%, of which 21.22% is BPL (state average is 17.4%) and 84% of them are backward.
 - ➔ A whopping 94% of farmer suicides in the state are from the Maratha community.
 - ➔ The backwardness of the community can be attributed to the inadequate representation in public services.
 - ➔ Such a large backward community cannot be added into the OBC list and the state must use the powers under Article 342A (3) to designate Marathas as SEBC and reservation provided under Article 15 and 16 of the Indian Constitution.

Indira Sawhney Judgment

- ✧ The Supreme Court in the **Indira Sawhney case/Mandal Commission Case (1992)** stated that:
- ✧ Backward classes of the citizens can be **identified on the basis of caste and not only on the economic basis**. Social and educational backwardness is required for a group to qualify for reservation.
- ✧ The Supreme Court upheld the **Mandal commission's 27% quota** for backward classes.
- ✧ The verdict stated that the reservation including that of SC, ST, and backward class beneficiaries **should not exceed 50%**. The cap should only be exceeded in exceptional circumstances when an extraordinary or special case is made out, and only with extreme caution.
- ✧ Reservation for backward classes should be **confined to initial appointments only and not extended to promotions**. This was altered and reservation in promotions was made a **fundamental right** through **77th and 81st Constitutional Amendments**.

BENEFITS OF RESERVATION FOR MARATHAS

- ➔ **Socio economic progress:** Multiple reports from commissions and committees highlight the array of socio-economic challenges faced by the backward communities, suggesting that the reservation bill serves to elevate them from poverty and marginalisation.
 - » For instance, the Maratha community's government job representation dwindled by 4% in 5 years since 2018.
 - » Also, 84% Marathas earn **less than ₹8 lakh a year** and **21.22%** of these earn less than **₹15,000 per year**.
- ➔ **Inclusive development:** Helps to increase the representation and participation of Maratha community in various sectors thus contributing to inclusive development.
 - » For instance, **inadequacy of representation** of Maratha community in public employment in the state have led to the majority of the community **stuck in the rural sector**.
- ➔ **State-specific situation:** Many states due to their backwardness have provided reservation beyond the 50% cap. In the Assembly, CM Shinde said there are 22 states that have over 50 per cent reservation. These include Tamil Nadu (69%), Haryana (67%), Bihar (75%). If and when the laws are challenged in court, the government of Maharashtra will have to prove that their case falls within the exception carved out in the Mandal Commission case.
- ➔ **Ensure equality:** Reservation acts as the basis of meritocracy, that is all people must be brought to the same level before judging them on the basis of merit.
 - » **According to the Indian Human Development Survey (2012), only 8.1%** of people from the community had an undergraduate degree as of 2010-11.

ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH RESERVATION FOR MARATHAS

- **Advantage to dominant and elite class:** Marathas have been a dominant caste in Maharashtra. The Supreme Court Constitutional Bench in 2021 **did not find any extraordinary circumstance** to provide them additional benefits. Marathas include warrior castes that are considered socially superior. The reservation could help them get reserved seats in the local body elections too.
- **Vote bank politics:** It is possible that politicians are using it as a tool for vote bank politics.
 - » In 2016, of the 366 total members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) (the Legislative Assembly has 288 MLAs and the Legislative Council has 78), 169 (46%) were Marathas.
- **Division and enmity:** The OBC groups, invoked by Chagan Bhujabal, have now called for agitation against the Backward class demand of the Marathas.
 - » A majority of sugar and milk cooperatives and educational institutions are controlled by this community, thus making it the **backbone of the state's rural economy**.
 - » Hence, the reservation in services saying they are economically backward **does not hold ground**.



- **Dilute the OBC quota:** OBC communities are concerned that incorporating Marathas into the OBC category or introducing a dedicated reservation for them could potentially reduce the opportunities accessible to existing OBC beneficiaries.
- **Double reservation:** Marathas are now under two quotas after a reservation Act and a draft OBC notification by the Government. Kunbi Marathas can avail of OBC reservation under the notification and non-Kunbi Marathas will be covered under the 10% quota newly created for the community in Maharashtra.

WAY FORWARD

- ✦ That the Act providing for reservation has been passed unanimously shows that **the political struggle is over.**
- ✦ The state has to now **prove with substance in the courts** regarding the reservation. A PIL has already been filed in the Bombay High Court saying that there is no compelling reason to provide such a reservation.
- ✦ The state will also have to **balance the demands of other communities.**
- ✦ The reservation must apply the **sub-categorisation** method of deprivation. The quota must be altered to meet the reality of representation.
- ✦ The issue of **double reservation** also needs to be addressed effectively.

CONCLUSION

Although reservation is essential for the backward section of the society, the reservations must be implemented in a way that considers other sections of the society. hence providing equal access to resources and equality for all citizens.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Reservations in India was introduced to rectify the past and historical injustice against the backward classes in India. With recent examples, discuss the pros and cons of reservation in India. **(15 M)(250 W)**




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POVERTY ESTIMATIONS

Syllabus: GS I - Poverty and Development issues.

PYQ MAPPING

Q) "Performance of welfare schemes that are implemented for vulnerable sections is not so effective due to absence of their awareness and active involvement at all stages of policy process – Discuss." (2019)

Q) "Despite implementation of various programmes for eradication of poverty by the government in India, poverty is still existing." Explain by giving reasons. (2018)

WHY IN NEWS?

NITI AAYOG CEO recently announced that **poverty** in India has come **down to 5%** in the country. This is based on the **latest Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES)** conducted by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO)

INTRODUCTION

The information obtained from the **Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES)** will be used for understanding Consumption and expenditure pattern, standard of living, well-being of households, to update consumer price inflation basket and for enhanced policy decisions based on expenditure and consumer behaviour.

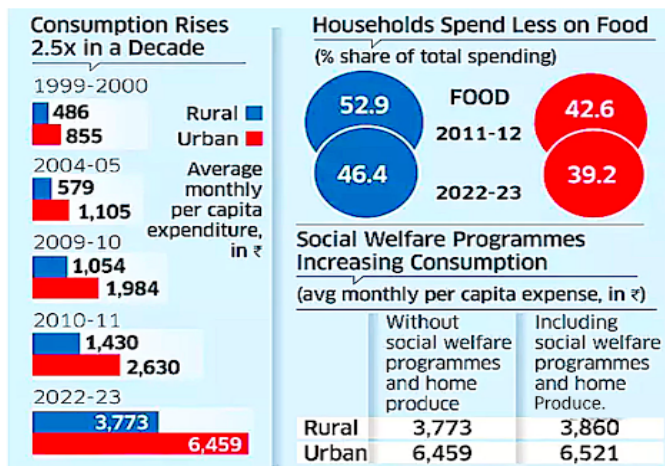
OVERVIEW

Household consumption expenditure survey:

- ➔ The survey is conducted by the **National Sample Survey Office (NSSO)**, under the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation** every **five years** since 1972-73
- ➔ It aims at generating estimates of household **Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure (MPCE)** and its distribution separately for
 - ➔ **the rural and urban sectors** of the country
 - ➔ for **States and Union Territories**
 - ➔ for **different socio-economic groups**.
- ➔ The survey collects some auxiliary information on household characteristics and demographic particulars of the households.
- ➔ The MPCE figures are based on data collected from 2,61,746 households, of which 1,55,014 were in rural areas, spread over all States and Union Territories.
- ➔ However, the last released survey on household consumption expenditure was in 2011-12.
 - ➔ The results of the last survey carried out in 2017-18 have been withheld by the government, citing "data quality issues".

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY

- **Increase in average MPCE:** The survey shows that the average monthly consumption expenditure has risen by 2.5 times in urban and 2.7 times in rural India in 2022-23 compared to 2011-12.
 - o The **average MPCE in rural India** in 2022-23 is ₹3,773, up from ₹1,430 in 2011-12.
 - o The **average MPCE in urban India** in 2022-23 is ₹6,459, up from ₹2,630 in 2011-12.



Urban - Rural MPCE analysis:

- The bottom 5% of the rural population had an average MPCE of Rs 1,373, while the top 5% had a significantly higher average of Rs 10,501.
- In urban areas, the bottom 5% and top 5% had MPCEs of Rs 2,001 and Rs 20,824, respectively
- This means that the spending gap between the richest and the poorest households is about ten times.

- Shift in Consumer Expenditure:** For the first time, expenditure on food has fallen to less than 50 per cent of the total consumption expenditure in rural India, and to less than 40 per cent in urban India. (see chart)

Statement 1: Average MPCE (Rs.) and share of food and non-food items: All-India				
Item Group	Rural India		Urban India	
	Average MPCE (Rs.)	Share in total MPCE (%)	Average MPCE (Rs.)	Share in total MPCE (%)
Food	1,750	46	2,530	39
Non-food	2,023	54	3,929	61

State Wise MPCE variation:

- Among the states, MPCE is the highest in Sikkim for both rural and urban areas (Rural – Rs. 7,731 and Urban – Rs. 12,105). It is the lowest in Chhattisgarh (Rural – Rs. 2,466 and Urban – Rs. 4,483).
- In **Northeast India**, a family spends on average Rs 7,579 per month in urban areas and Rs 4,942 in rural areas. In the five **Southern states**, on average, the MPCE is Rs 7,551 in urban and Rs 5,190 in rural areas. In the north, the MPCE is Rs 6,686 and Rs 4,700 in urban and rural areas, respectively. The East sits at the bottom, with an average MPCE of Rs 4,994 and Rs 3,046 in urban and rural areas.

Imputed values and adjustments:

- Adjusting for imputed values of items received free through social welfare programs and other sources, the average estimated MPCE in 2022-23 was Rs 3,860 in rural and Rs 6,521 in urban India
- These were calculated separately, while including a few non-food items received through such schemes, including computers, mobile phones, bicycles, and clothing.

Intra-state comparison:

- The rural-urban divide in spending is lowest in Manipur (11.92%), Goa (18.55%), Kerala (19.8%).
- It is highest in Meghalaya (83.9%), Chhattisgarh (81.79%), Assam (78.78%)
- Urban-rural expenditure All-India averages at 71.19%

NITI AAYOG'S STANCE

♣ Poverty is down to 5%:

Suresh Tendulkar committee estimation of Rs. 32 per day as poverty line inflated to today's prices would come to nearly Rs. 60 per person per day. It would translate to nearly MPCE 1750. This is above the MPCE for the lowest fractile (0-5%) of Indians, but is lower than the next fractile (5-10%) of Indians. Thus the poverty has fallen below 5%.

Poverty Estimates by Different Committees

Year	Lakdawala Committee Estimates			Tendulkar Committee Estimates			Rangarajan Committee Estimates		
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
1993-94	37.3	32.4	36.0	50.1	31.8	45.3	-	-	-
2004-05	28.3	25.7	27.5	41.8	25.7	37.2	-	-	-
2009-10	-	-	-	33.8	20.9	29.8	39.6	35.1	38.2
2011-12	-	-	-	25.7	13.7	21.9	30.9	26.4	29.5

- ♣ Declining inequality:** The urban-rural consumption gap has decreased from 91% in 2004-05 to 84% in 2011-12 to 71% in 2022-23, indicating diminishing inequality. Consumption in rural areas is growing faster than in urban areas, thereby narrowing the gap,

- ♣ Broad based growth:** The survey highlights that India's growth is "broad-based," with rural incomes and expenditures outpacing those in urban areas.

- ♣ **Change in food spending:** Expenditure on cereals was almost **22% of the total consumption expenditure** in rural households in 1999-2000; it is now down to 4.91%. In urban households, it was 12%; it is now down to 3.64%. The spending on high-value/ nutritional items such as eggs, fish and meat, and fruits and vegetables has gone up more in rural households than in urban households over the last two decades.
- ♣ **Increased Income:** The relative spending on food declining while consumption of products like TVs, fridges, mobile phones, and cars increasing shows increase in income and change in lifestyles.
- ♣ **Government intervention:** Broad based and effective Government schemes like Garib Kalyan Yojana, Cylinder connection etc has reduced the household expenditure and brought millions out of poverty.

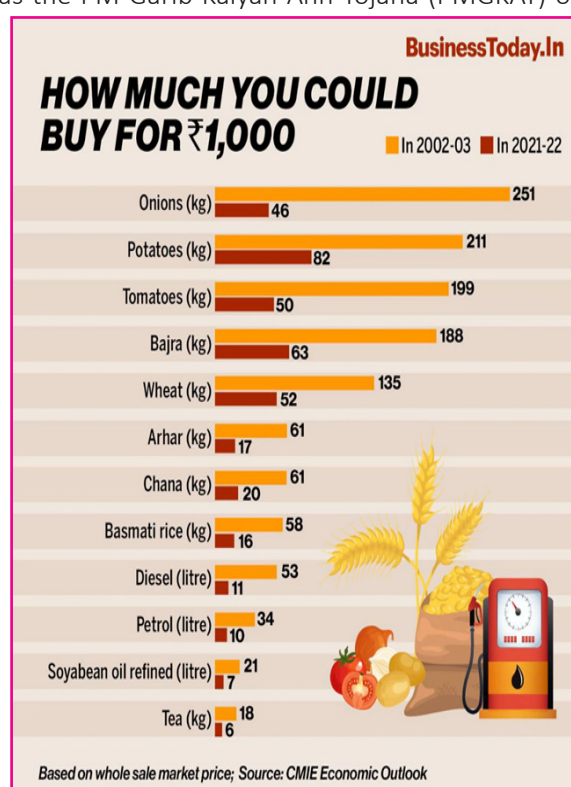
ISSUES

- **Poverty estimation solely based on expenditure:** It failed to go beyond the expenditure-based poverty rates and examine the possibility of a wider multi-dimensional view of deprivation.
 - » Despite rapid growth and development, **11.28% (as per NITI Aayog)** of our population continues to suffer from severe and **multidimensional deprivation**.
- **Fall in job growth and real wages:** The claim on decrease in poverty level is debatable considering the stagnation in wages and increased unemployment.
 - » The wages have stagnated between 2013 and 2017, and joblessness grew from 10 million in 2011-12 to nearly 38 million in 2022.
- **Unaccounted expenses:** Although food grains are offered at subsidised rates, it isn't free of cost. This cost isn't accounted for during the estimation of MPEC.
 - » The enactment of National Food Security Act 2013, which provided subsidised food to almost 75% of rural and 50% of urban population has caused a reduction in food expenditure.
 - » The MPCE numbers cited above do not take into account the imputed values of items received free of cost by individuals through various social welfare programmes such as the PM Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PMGKAY) or State-run schemes, which were calculated separately,
- **Massive increase in number of poor workers:** There has been a massive surge in the number of poor workers in recent times.
 - » There are 144.0 million workers (2021-22) that are earning between Rs 100 and Rs 200 per day which can be categorised as poor and vulnerable.
- **High cost of food:** Food expenditure still remains high compared to other countries:
 - » The current level of food expenditure in India is 46.38% (rural) and 39.17% (urban) compared to 6.4% for USA and 6.9% for Singapore.
- **No comparisons with real amounts:**
 - » India hasn't had official consumer expenditure data post-2011-12, making direct comparisons challenging.
 - » The 2017-18 survey data hasn't been officially released, leading to indirect methods and diverse conclusions on poverty trends.
- **Inflation:** The jump is more due to steep inflationary trends than any real rise in incomes

TOO MANY COOKS?		
Three expert committees have been set up in 8 years on how to define and combat poverty		
	Tendulkar Committee	Rangarajan Committee
Set Up In	2005	2012
Submitted Report	2009	2014
Minimum spending threshold - urban*	₹33	₹47
Minimum spending ability - rural*	₹27	₹32
Population below poverty line	270mn	363 mn

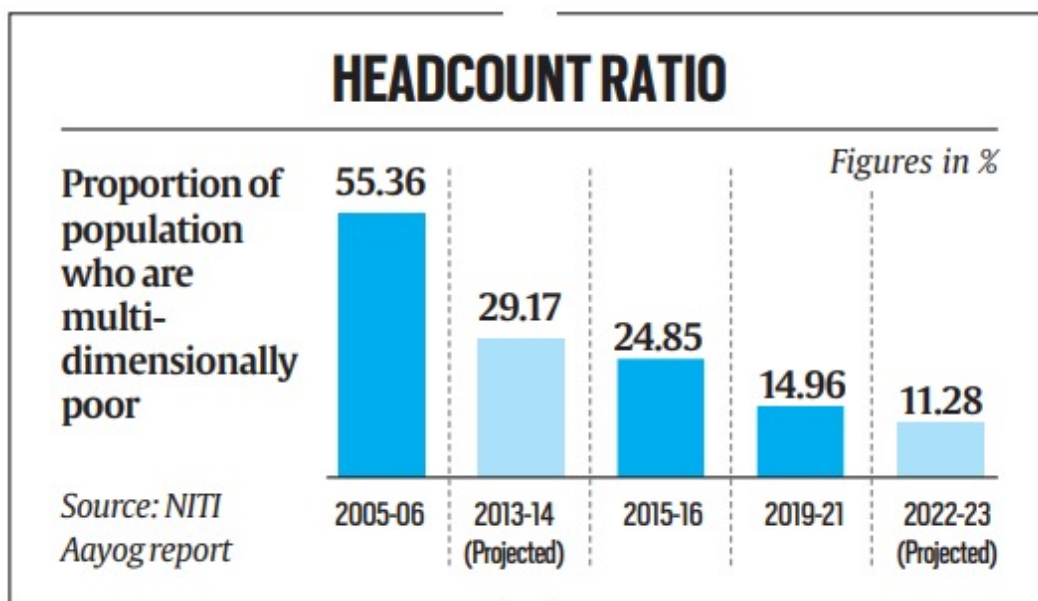
*per person/day. A person living on less is below poverty line

PANAGARIYA PANEL:
 In 2015, another committee was set up under Niti Aayog vice-chairman Arvind Panagariya. While in a draft it backed the Tendulkar methodology, the final report says its members failed to reach a consensus and, "...the Task Force recommends an expert group consisting of country's leading specialists on poverty consider the issue in-depth and recommend the poverty line..."



WAY FORWARD

- * **Redefine poverty line:** Poverty line should be increased accounting the changes in income, consumption patterns and prices.
 - » According to many economists, the poverty line of \$3.20 (that is ₹75 a day PPP,) that is recommended by the World Bank for middle income countries like India, or 68% higher than the Tendulkar poverty line should be taken.
- * **Addressing the multidimensional deprivation:** Better health, sanitation, education, nutrition, etc. will help raise the productivity of millions, and thereby reduce poverty
 - » Proper implementation of various government initiatives like Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) can help achieve this.
- * **Linking the poverty line with global level:** Linking India's poverty line estimation with the World Bank's estimation of \$2.15 a day can help provide a more comprehensive understanding of poverty levels.
- * **Regular updation of Inflation index weightage**
 - » The current retail inflation i.e., the Consumer Price index (CPI) is based on 2011 prices. The CPI (Rural) basket assigns a weightage of 12.35 per cent to 'cereals and products'. But the HCE Survey shows rural households spend just 4.91 per cent on cereals (and cereal substitutes). Again, the share of expenditure on food in rural households is 46.38 per cent, according to the Survey. But food in the CPI (Rural) basket has a weightage of 54.18 percent — much higher than what a rural consumer now spends. This calls for realignment in inflation weightages.



CONCLUSION

The Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES) in India is a crucial source of data that provides insights into the spending patterns of Indian households as well as the poverty level. But the poverty estimation must use multidimensional factors along with expenditure patterns to provide more holistic and comprehensive data. Such an estimation will enable the country to track its progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), **particularly SDG target 1.2**, that aims to reduce poverty in all its dimensions

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) "Poverty in India has fallen to just 5%". In the light of the recently released Household Consumption Expenditure Survey, critically analyse the statement. **(15 M)(250 W)**

THE GENOME INDIA PROJECT

Syllabus: GS III - S&T developments and everyday applications & effects

PYQ MAPPING

Q) What are the research and developmental achievements in applied biotechnology/? How will these achievements help to uplift the poorer sections of society? **(2021)**

Q) What is the basic principle behind vaccine development? How do vaccines work? What approaches were adopted by the Indian vaccine manufacturers to produce COVID-19 vaccines? **(2022)**

WHY IN NEWS?

The government recently announced the **successful sequencing of 10,000 whole genomes** of healthy persons from across the country creating a genetic map of the population, as a part of the Genome India initiative.

INTRODUCTION

Approved by the government in 2020, and led by the Bangalore-based Indian Institute of Science's Centre for Brain Research, the **Genome India Project (GIP)** aims to create a comprehensive catalogue of genetic variations found in the Indian population. It is funded and coordinated by the **Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology**.

OVERVIEW

- ➔ India first sequenced a human genome in **2006**.
- ➔ It involved researchers from **20 science institutes** across the country who helped in collecting the blood samples, developing a methodology, and storing the data.
- ➔ Each sequence requires **80 GB storage space**, the entire dataset reaching 8 petabytes (one million GB).
- ➔ The dataset will be stored at the **Indian Biological Data Centre in Faridabad** and will be made available to researchers as **"digital public good."**
- ➔ The **data can be utilised** to develop new diagnostics, targeted therapies, identify new rare diseases, and cure existing ones.

GENOME & ITS SEQUENCING

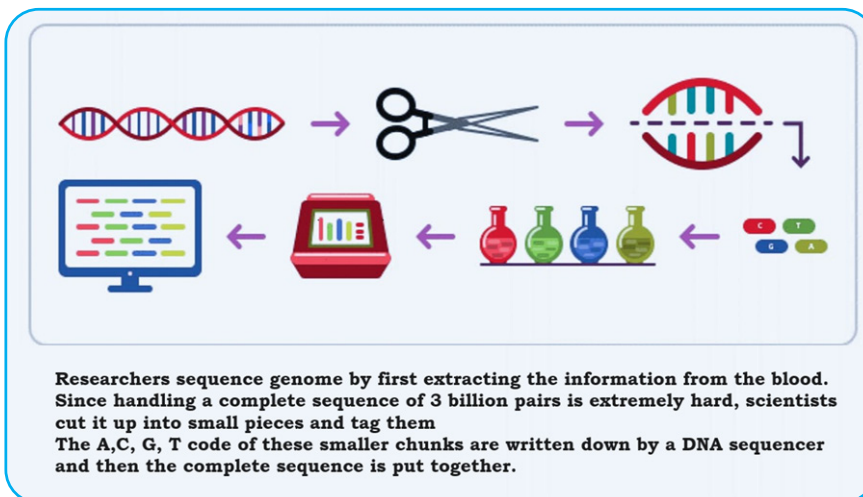
Genome:

- ★ A genome is the complete set of genetic material (DNA) in an organism. It contains all the information needed for an organism to develop, function, and pass life on to the next generation
- ★ The human genome is essentially a biological instruction manual that one inherits from their parents.
- ★ It contains just four letters, A, C, G, and T, the four nucleotide (basic

building blocks of DNA and RNA) bases that come together to create everyone's unique genetic makeup.

- ★ There are around 3 billion pairs of bases in the complete human genome.

- ★ A person's height, colour of the eyes, the genetic diseases inherited or are at a higher risk for, etc is determined by the genetic makeup.



BENEFITS OF GENOME INDIA PROJECT

- ➔ **Better understanding:** A map of genetic diversity provides insights into the history of our evolution.
- ➔ **Targeted treatments:** Tailor made treatments, especially for rare diseases that usually arise from genetic anomalies, can be developed through new therapies that can cure these diseases.
- ➔ **Identify genetic basis:** The genetic basis or genetic risk factors, such as mutations, for various diseases can be effectively pinpointed.
 - » An aberration in a protein, MYBPC3 (cardiac myosin binding protein C), which leads to cardiac arrest at a young age is found in 4.5% of the Indian population but is rare globally.
 - » The mutation called LAMB3 which causes a lethal skin condition is found in nearly 4% of the population near Madurai, but it is not seen in global databases.
- ➔ **India centric database:** It creates database on Indian genetic variants as the the data available in existing international databases are likely to be different from that of Indian populations
 - » Researchers who analysed 5,750 of the genome sequences have already identified 135 million genetic variants found in India.
- ➔ **Bio-economy:** The GIP data can help drive the biology sector in the country.
 - » India's bio-economy has grown 13 folds in the last 10 years from \$10 billion in 2014 to over \$130 billion in 2024.
- ➔ **Identifying resistance-indicating variants:** It helps in finding genes that might make certain medicines or anaesthetics ineffective in certain populations.
 - » A set of a Vaishya community from South India lacks the gene for properly processing common anaesthetics such that the use of such anaesthetics on this group can result in death.
- ➔ **Agriculture and food security:** Genome sequencing holds immense potential to transform food security and sustainable agriculture by mitigating risks from disease outbreaks and enhancing agricultural practices through more precise plant and animal breeding, as well as the detection of various pathogens.

CHALLENGES

- **Incomprehensive sample space:** The current dataset developed from 10,000 individuals is not representative of the country of over a billion.
- **Data Privacy:** The absence of a strong and dedicated data privacy law in India raises concerns about how securely the genetic information will be stored and used.
- **Restricted access:** The findings of GIP are locked up in the ivory towers of academia, inaccessible to students, ethicists and social scientists, etc.
- **Unaffordable medicines:** Despite advances in knowledge of how rare, inherited genes causes debilitating disease, the necessary medicines, if discovered, are usually very expensive for those in need
- **Public Awareness:** Lack of public awareness about genomics and genetic testing raises concerns for people about participating in the project.

WAY FORWARD

- * **Sampling:** Phased expansion of sample space and an inclusive sampling strategy that considers factors like ethnicity, geography, and disease prevalence will ensure that the data accurately reflects India's diverse population.
- * **Public collaboration:** The findings of GIP should involve imaginative collaborations with scientists, students, technology companies, ethicists and social scientists to push forward India's understanding of itself.
- * **Robust legal framework:** A comprehensive data privacy law that clearly defines how genetic information is collected, stored, and used is the need of the hour.
- * **Strong anonymisation protocols:** The GIP should implement best practices for anonymising genetic data while still allowing for meaningful research.

- » Data anonymization is a data processing technique that **removes or modifies personally identifiable information** (PII)
 - » Iceland has a unique national biobank with a large portion of the population's genetic data. While the data is protected by a robust consent system and anonymization protocols, the researchers are allowed to access through a central data access committee.
- * **Awareness generation:** Collaboration with public health agencies and local communities through campaigns that explain the project's goals, benefits, and data privacy measures will help address the concerns of people.

GenomeINDIA

‘Cataloguing the Genetic Variation in Indians’

Reference Genome for India

A national genome sequencing project to sequence 10,000 Indians

Disease gene identification

Catalogue all the genetic variations in Indians to help identify disease causing genes

Capacity building & networking

Training manpower to handle large genetic data sets and other resources across institutions in India

Genetic basis for adverse affects and response to drugs

This study will help pave the way to understand why some people respond to some drugs & why some develop adverse reaction depending upon their genetic background.

Resources for larger & cheaper genetic studies

Resources generated, will help build arrays and technologies for large scale cheaper genetic studies in India.

An initiative of Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India

@Partners

CONCLUSION

The Genome India Project (GIP) unlocks the immense potential of genomics to improve healthcare for all Indians. The GIP not only makes India the largest genetic lab in the world, but also will spearhead India’s future growth.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) The Genome India Project (GIP) holds promise for revolutionising healthcare in India. Critically analyse.
(10 M)(150 W)

MODEL ESSAY

"It is not power that corrupts but that it is magnetic to the corruptible"

Introduction

- Quote by Leo Tolstoy
- Define Power and what it means to be Corruptible.
- Power is regarded as a double-edged sword, capable of fostering both positive change and corruption.

Why does power corrupt?

- The Lucifer effect: Situational factors can lead seemingly ordinary individuals to commit acts of corruption when placed in positions of authority.
 - » **E.g.** Macbeth, allured by power, murders his way to the throne, only to find it a hollow victory
- Power can amplify pre-existing tendencies towards corruption within individuals, rather than instigating corruption itself.
 - » **E.g.** President Richard Nixon entered office with a reputation for integrity but the Watergate scandal exposed a web of lies and cover-ups orchestrated by the President himself. The need to protect his reputation and political legacy seems to have overridden his initial commitment to ethical leadership.

Is everyone corrupted by power?

- People with strong morals and values. **E.g.** Gandhi
- People who were at the receiving end of corruption and injustice. **E.g.** Nelson Mandela

Why is power magnetic to the corruptible?

- **Socio-political structures:** The concentration of power within hierarchical structures can create opportunities for exploitation and abuse.
- Corruptible individuals are drawn to positions of power within **systems that lack transparency and accountability.**
- In political systems plagued by corruption, such as authoritarian regimes or oligarchies, power becomes synonymous with privilege and impunity, attracting those who seek to exploit it for personal gain.
- From ancient empires to modern democracies, tales of corruption pervade human civilization. E.g. Colonial government's officer in India was involved in rampant corruption.
- The fall of great civilizations, such as Rome or the Ming Dynasty, often correlates with the erosion of moral integrity within governing elites.

What can be done?

- Developing strong values and morals
- Pillars of Good governance.
- Checks and balance.
- Effective deterrence.

Conclusion

- Similar quotes: "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely"

SAMPLE ESSAY TOPICS

- If women are expected to do the same work as men, we must teach them the same things
- A fellow who is ashamed merely of shabby clothing or modest meals is not even worth conversing with.
- There cannot be daily democracy without daily citizenship.

ETHICS - CASE STUDY

Q) Recently, a new Transport Commissioner assumed office in the district. Shortly after taking charge, several NGOs approached him concerning a recent accident that occurred a month prior. They urged immediate action and reforms to prevent similar accidents in the future.

The district has witnessed a rise in accidents, largely attributed to illegal stunting by bikers aiming to create content for social media platforms like Instagram. This surge in accidents is exacerbated by a newly constructed road on the outskirts of the city, lacking adequate safety measures such as speed breakers and speed cameras.

In one particular incident, a speeding bike collided with a cyclist, resulting in the cyclist losing a leg on the spot. This unfortunate outcome was compounded by a delay in medical attention and ambulance arrival. The victim's family, reliant on him as the sole breadwinner, now faces uncertainty about their future livelihood.

- a. Why do such stunts happen in our society? (Answer in 250 Words)
- b. What actions can the Transport Commissioner take to mitigate future accidents of this nature?
- c. Additionally, how can the system address the post-accident trauma experienced by victims and their families?

ETHICS - EXAMPLES

1. **Lack of Empathy, Humanity:** A 24 yr old woman undergoing treatment in ICU of private hospital in Rajasthan, was allegedly raped by a male nurse by sedating her and with the help of a female nurse. This shows the harsh reality where the very person you turn to help turns against you, the person involved was later arrested.
2. **Dedication:** Displaying extraordinary grit, an elderly couple ran for a few metres on the railway track near the **Bhagavathipuram station** to stop an approaching train, minutes after a truck fell on the track between Bhagavathipuram and Aryankavu during the early hours.
3. **Impersonation, Fraud:** Recently, a diamond trader was robbed of Rs 8 Crore, by a man posing as an “income tax officer”. The man apparently held 4 people in gun point before eventually escaping with the car.
4. **Empathy:** The Class 12 student, who has been accused of raping his 17-year-old ‘friend’ and booked under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, was granted interim bail till March 25 to allow him to write his board examination.
5. **Business without Ethics:** The **Supreme Court** issued contempt notice against **Patanjali Ayurved** and its Managing Director Acharya Balkrishna for publishing misleading advertisements of products in violation of the **Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954** and its Rules, despite an undertaking given to the court in November, 2023.
6. **Dedication, Service delivery:** A policeman in Telangana came to the rescue of a distressed farmer who had consumed pesticides in a suicide attempt and carried him on his shoulders for 2km, saving his life. Thanks to Jaypal's swift action and determination, the farmer was safely transported to the hospital, where he received timely medical attention and his life was saved.
7. **Accountability:** Tour operators and managers of an island in New Zealand where a volcanic eruption claimed 22 lives in 2019 were mandated to pay penalties and restitution of around \$13 million (US\$7.8 million), three firms that provided helicopter excursions, and a boat tour operator were all found guilty of safety violations.

MAINS JOT DOWN



GS- I - POPULATION AND ASSOCIATED ISSUES

The **Gujarat** government informed the State Assembly that more than **25,000 people**, nearly 500 of them students, ended their lives due to various reasons in the State during the past three financial years. To stop people from taking the extreme step, the state government provides counselling through '**181 Abhayam**' and '**1096 Zindagi**' helpline numbers. The government has also deployed '**SHE**' teams at different police stations to provide counselling to depressed people.



GS- II - HEALTH

As per a new study published by Lancet, **obesity rates** among children and adolescents worldwide **quadrupled from 1990 to 2022**, while obesity rates among adults have more than **doubled in the same time period**. In India, the obesity rate increased from **0.1% in 1990 to 3.1% in 2022** for girls and **0.1% to 3.9%**, for boys.



GS- II - INDIA'S INTEREST IN WORLD

31,000 Ukrainian troops have been killed in the Ukraine - Russia war, as per recent estimates presented by **Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy**. While he added that **more than 180,000 Russian soldiers** were killed during the same time, **no official confirmations** are given from the Russian side. However, **BBC Russian Service (part of BBC)** in partnership with local media group have confirmed names of **nearly 45,000 Russian soldiers from official obituary reports** since the **beginning of war February 2022**.



GS- II - JUDICIARY

- ➔ In a series of **mutual negotiations** and approved by the **National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)**, **Indian budget airline SpiceJet and Celestial Aviation**, a subsidiary of AerCap, one of the **world's largest aircraft lessors**, have amicably settled their \$29.9 million (₹250 crore) dispute, **avoiding a prolonged legal battle**.
- ➔ The Supreme Court **overruled a 1998 verdict granting immunity to lawmakers** from prosecution for taking bribes to make speeches, and cast votes in the legislature. The court added that **"Corruption and bribery by members of the legislature erode probity in public life,"**
- ➔ A five-judge **Constitution Bench** headed by **Chief Justice DY Chandrachud** overturned the **2018 judgement** on the **automatic vacation of High Court ordered stays** on proceedings in civil and criminal cases after **6 months** if the interim order was not reiterated within the time span.



GS- III - CLIMATE CHANGE

The **scorching heat in Karnataka** over the last few weeks and the spectre of hotter days ahead have raised concern over depleting water levels in the **Krishnaraja Sagar (KRS) reservoir**, which is the main source of drinking water for major cities and towns in the region. The water level at the KRS on February 28 was 90.23 feet against the maximum reservoir level of 124.80 ft. This is the **lowest since 2018** for the month of February.



GS- III - HUMAN -ANIMAL CONFLICT

As per the **Bihar Economic Survey**, the state has witnessed a **200% increase in dog bite** cases with 2.07 lakh cases in 2022-23 when compared to **just 9,809 cases in 2021-22**. As per the **Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Maharashtra** with **4.35 lakh incidents** reported the **highest no. of dog bites in India in 2023**.



GS- III - NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY

India plans to commission **18 nuclear power reactors** which will have a cumulative capacity to generate **13,800 MWe of electricity**, taking the total share of atomic power in the energy mix to **22,480 MWe by 2031-32**, it is crucial to India's declared **net zero carbon emission targets**.



GS- III - INTERNAL SECURITY

Three undersea cables connecting India to global telecom networks — **Asia-Africa-Europe-1, Europe India Gateway, and Tata Global Network** — have been damaged as a **possible result of targeted attacks**, forcing telecom operators such as **Bharti Airtel, Reliance Jio and Tata Communications** to reroute traffic to other cable systems. The damage to the cable systems in the Red Sea as a result of the ongoing conflict in the region exposes the **grave vulnerabilities of India's Internet and overseas telecom connectivity**.



GS- III - CONSERVATION

- ➔ The **Odisha government** has written to the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** to consider introducing female tigers from other landscapes to **Simlipal Tiger Reserve (Odisha)** as the number of **pseudo-melanistic tigers (tigers with thick black stripes)** are rising. Due to inbreeding the tigers are becoming more black, as per the All Odisha Tiger Estimation (AOTE-2023-24) there are **no other wild habitats that have pseudo-melanistic tigers**.
- ➔ According to a report based on the fifth cycle of the leopard population estimation, conducted in 2022, India's leopard numbers rose by **8% from 12,852 in 2018 to 13,874 in 2022**. While the highest number of leopards were reported in **Madhya Pradesh (3,907)**, **Uttarakhand reported a 22% decline** in the big cat numbers.



GS- III - CYBER SECURITY

Many motorists turned up at the **Traffic Management Centre (TMC)**, Bengaluru complaining about repeated messages for paying pending fines despite paying them online. The investigation revealed that Bengaluru motorists who used certain apps were cheated by **cyber fraudsters** that sent **Whatsapp Messages with QR codes** to pay the fines. Officials believe the data breach regarding offences has happened from the Bangalore-One official app itself.



GS- III - TECHNOLOGY

The Union Cabinet approved the setting up of **three chip-making units** taking the country a step closer to its goal of becoming an **electronics powerhouse**. The approximate investment for a plant is close to **15.2 billion dollars**.

CHERRYPICKS OF THE WEEK



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Technocracy is a model of governance wherein decision-makers are **chosen for office based on their technical expertise** and background. A technocracy differs from a traditional democracy in that individuals selected to a leadership role are chosen through a process that emphasizes their relevant skills and proven performance, as opposed to whether or not they fit the majority interests of a popular vote. The individuals that occupy such positions in a technocracy are known as "**technocrats.**" Recently, after the resignation of Palestinian government, there are talks of a possible technocratic government in Palestine.

Obelisks are situated somewhere **between viruses and viroids**, with a circular single-stranded RNA genome like viroids but containing genes that may code for proteins like viruses. Named obelisks due to their shape, they are distinct from known biological entities and have been overlooked until now. They are not rare and are present in around 7% of gut microbiome datasets and 50% of mouth datasets. Obelisks likely rely on microbial host cells, potentially bacteria or fungi, for replication. A recent discovery by a team at Stanford University has unveiled a new type of biological entity called obelisks, found in **large numbers within the human mouth and gut.**

Blanet is a **theoretical type** of planet that orbits around a black hole instead of a star or brown dwarf. Blanets would be unlike any conventional planet and could emerge an entire new class of objects in astronomical science. Blanets would be exactly same as regular planets except the fact that they are **revolving a Black Hole.**

Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPI) are instruments that facilitate the purchase of goods and services, conduct of financial services and enable remittance facilities, among others, against the money stored in them. PPIs can be issued as cards or wallets. Recently, the **Reserve Bank of India, allowed banks and non-banks to issue prepaid payment instruments for public transit services.**

Juice jacking is a form of **cyberattack** where hackers load malware with public USB charging stations to maliciously access electronic devices. It can lock a device, export personal data and passwords to the cyber criminals. These kinds of attacks are mainly **reported from public spaces** such as airports, hotels, and shopping centres. Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) warned users against charging mobile phones using public ports amidst the **rising incidents of juice jacking.**