

Tamil Nadu's political transition, growth story faultlines

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1
Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies - 2
Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation

1. Context

- The victory of C. Joseph Vijay-led Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) in 2026 has triggered debate on whether it marks a **break from or continuity of the Dravidian model**.
- The manifesto suggests **policy continuity rather than rupture**.
- The State faces **internal structural issues** and **external pressures** (federal tensions, global economic shifts).
- Despite past success, **new faultlines have emerged ("trouble in paradise")**.

2. Strengths of the Dravidian Model

- Built an **inclusive, broad-based economy** combining growth (infrastructure) with welfare (health, education).
- Ensured **better human development outcomes**, comparable mainly to Kerala.
- Historically balanced **capital growth with labour protection**, ensuring relatively **higher wages**.
- Achieved **democratisation of higher education**:
 - GER(Gross Enrolment Ratio): **51% vs 27.1% national average**
 - SC(Scheduled Caste) GER: **39-40%**, indicating inclusivity.

3. Emerging Structural Challenges

- Shift to **job-poor growth** with very low employment elasticity (**0.01; <1 job per crore investment**).
- Investment gap (2021–25):
 - Announced: **₹6.80 lakh crore**
 - Completed: **₹1.57 lakh crore (23.09%)**
- Despite attracting firms like Foxconn, Hyundai Motor Company, job creation remains limited.
- Rising **contractualisation, declining wage share, and capital intensity** weaken labour conditions.
- MSMEs face crisis due to shocks like Demonetisation 2016, Goods and Services Tax, and COVID-19.
- Weak **MSME-large firm linkages** and **skill gaps** further limit employment.

4. Aspirations vs Reality & Way Forward

- Expansion of education without quality has led to **declining returns and weak mobility**.
- Educated youth face **informal/gig jobs**, causing **loss of dignity and frustration**.
- Welfare by Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam provides safety nets but **does not satisfy aspirations**.
- Confusion between **rights-based welfare and electoral inducements** fuels resentment.
- Policy priorities:
 - Create quality jobs with better wages
 - Revive MSMEs and strengthen linkages
 - Improve education quality and skills
 - Reform governance to enhance participation and dignity
- Overall TVK's rise reflects **continuity with a demand for correction**, not a complete break.
- The future challenge is shifting from **welfare-led growth to dignity-led development**.

Managing coexistence in human-wildlife conflict zones

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1
Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies - 3
Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

1. Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) and its Causes

- HWC is a **socio-ecological challenge caused by habitat loss and land-use change**.
- Human activities like farming, roads, and urbanization **disturb wildlife habitats**.
- **Animals move into human settlements** searching for food and water.
- **Crop raiding and livestock attacks are survival responses** by animals.
- **Climate change** is further increasing resource competition.

2. Global Scenario

- Severe **conflicts occur in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Africa**.
- Countries like **India, Brazil, Kenya, and Indonesia face recurring HWC**.
- Elephants, big cats, monkeys, and wild boars are commonly involved.
- **Habitat fragmentation disrupts migration corridors** of wildlife.
- Conflicts are **linked to ecological imbalance**, not animal aggression.

3. Successful International Practices

- **Botswana and Namibia involve local communities** in conservation.
- **Tourism revenue-sharing reduces hostility** toward wildlife.
- **Costa Rica protects ecological corridors** for habitat connectivity.
- **Finland uses wildlife monitoring** and fast compensation systems.
- Effective models combine local participation, funding, and scientific planning.

4. Challenges and Measures in India

- **India uses compensation schemes** and early-warning systems.
- **Solar fencing** and technology show **limited region-specific success**.
- Compensation **delays affect marginalized communities**.
- Existing wildlife laws need adaptation to changing realities.
- **Habitat loss and human pressure remain major concerns**.

5. Way Forward

- **Protect and restore** wildlife habitats and corridors.
- **Strengthen compensation** and conflict mitigation systems.
- **Encourage community-based conservation** approaches.
- **Improve education and public awareness** about coexistence.
- **Aim for scientifically informed and sustainable coexistence** between humans and wildlife

Addressing India's electrical fire risks

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1
Economic and Social Development-Sustainable Development, Poverty, Inclusion, Demographics, Social Sector Initiatives, etc.

Mains: General Studies - 2
Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

1. Rising Electrical Fire Incidents in India

- A major fire in **Vivek Vihar, Delhi** killed nine people and was suspected to be caused by an **AC blast or short circuit**.
- Over **80% of fires in Delhi** and nearly **75% in Mumbai** are linked to **electrical faults**.
- The **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** recorded **7,566 fire accidents** and **7,435 deaths** in 2022.
- Many fire incidents are grouped under a broad **"other" category**, suggesting that the actual number of **electrical fire cases may be underestimated**.

2. Growing Electricity Demand and Risks from Air-Conditioners

- India's electricity demand reached **256.11 GW** during extreme summer heat.
- **Cooling demand** may rise from **50 GW to 180 GW by 2035**.
- India sold **15.4 million air-conditioners in 2025**, while the **International Energy Agency (IEA)** projects that the installed AC base in the country will rise from **93 million units in 2024 to 240 million by 2030**.
- Older houses were designed only for **fans and bulbs**, not heavy appliances like **ACs, EV chargers, geysers, and induction stoves**.
- ACs create high **start-up currents** and **harmonic distortions**, increasing overheating and fire risks.
 - ➔ **Harmonic distortion** occurs when extra unwanted frequencies are produced in an electrical system due to irregular or non-linear current flow.

3. Main Causes of Electrical Fires

- Common causes include:
 - ➔ **Short circuits**
 - ➔ **Overloaded circuits**
 - ➔ **Loose or oxidised connections**
 - ➔ **Arc faults**
 - ➔ **Ground faults**
 - ➔ **Ageing equipment**
- Poor-quality or **counterfeit wires and breakers** increase danger.
- **Loose electrical connections** can slowly heat up and ignite insulation.
- Major hospital fires like **AMRI Hospital (2011)** and **SUM Hospital (2016)** began from electrical faults.

4. International Safety Practices and India's Gaps

- **Japan** and **South Korea** made periodic electrical inspections mandatory, reducing fire incidents by nearly **90%**.
- India has safety standards like **National Electrical Code 2023** and **National Building Code (NBC) 2016**, but enforcement is weak.

- Devices like **Arc-Fault Circuit Interrupters (AFCI)**, mandatory in U.S. homes since 1999, are **mostly absent in India**.
 - ➔ **Arc-Fault Circuit Interrupters (AFCIs)** are safety devices designed to identify dangerous **electrical arcs** and automatically cut off power before they can trigger residential fires.
- India also faces a **severe shortage of fire-forensic experts** and proper **investigation systems**

5. Solutions and Preventive Measures

Consumers should:

- Use **ISI-marked wiring and breakers**
- Avoid running ACs on **shared circuits**
- Conduct **thermography scans** every 2-3 years
- **Service ACs** regularly
- Treat burning smells or flickering as **warning signs**

Suggested policy measures:

- Mandatory **harmonic compliance monitoring**
- **Regular electrical inspections** for buildings
- Better **forensic investigations** after fires
- A **unified national fire data system**

The toll of structural adjustments on the global South and a case for accountability

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1
Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies - 2
Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate

1. Economic Growth Before SAPs

- During the 1960s-70s, **the Global South saw steady economic growth**.
- Countries **invested in healthcare, education, and welfare**.
- Governments protected domestic industries through state policies.
- **Newly independent nations aimed for self-reliant development**.

- Real per capita income increased across Asia, Africa, and Latin America.
- Public investment helped **reduce colonial economic dependence**.

2. Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs)

- Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) were **economic reform conditions imposed by the IMF and World Bank on developing countries in exchange for loans**.
- SAPs **emerged during the debt crises of the 1980s**.
- Countries **had borrowed heavily in foreign currencies**.
- U.S. interest rate hikes **increased debt repayment burdens**.
- SAPs **promoted austerity, privatisation, and deregulation**.
- Developing countries had limited ability to reject these conditions.

3. Regional and Economic Impacts

- **Economic growth in the Global South fell** sharply after SAPs.
- In **Latin America, real incomes fell by nearly 15%** after 1980 and recovered only by 2006.
- In **Sub-Saharan Africa, incomes declined by almost 20%** before gradual recovery decades later.
- In **Jamaica, currency trade liberalisation sharply increased food prices**.
- In **China, poverty increased during market-oriented reforms** linked to adjustment policies.
- Poverty, unemployment, and economic instability increased across many developing countries

4. Health and Financial Consequences

- Researchers argue IMF and World Bank **should provide reparations**.

Reparation means **compensation or payment made to repair harm, loss, or injustice** caused to individuals, communities, or countries.

- Compensation **could cover lost income, welfare, and public services**.
- Sovereign immunity protects these institutions from lawsuits.
- **Global North countries dominate voting power** in both institutions.
- Alternatives like the **BRICS New Development Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank are emerging without SAP-style conditions**.

KEYWORDS

New Development Bank

- The **New Development Bank, formerly known as the BRICS Development Bank, was established by Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa** to finance infrastructure and sustainable development projects in emerging economies.
- The idea for the bank **was proposed during the 2012 BRICS Summit in New Delhi, and the agreement establishing it was signed at the 2014 Fortaleza Summit in Brazil**.
- It **officially began operations in 2015 and is headquartered in Shanghai**, with regional offices in countries including South Africa and Brazil.
- The bank focuses on sectors such as clean energy, transport, water and sanitation, environmental protection, and digital infrastructure, with an authorized capital of USD 100 billion.
- Unlike institutions such as the World Bank, **the NDB follows an equal voting system where each founding BRICS member has the same voting power**.

Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)

- The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is a **multilateral development bank established in 2016 to improve economic and social development in Asia**.
- It is **headquartered in Beijing, China**.

- The **Board of Governors is the highest decision-making body** of the AIIB under its Articles of Agreement.
- AIIB currently **has 111 member countries, with China as the largest shareholder holding 26.5% voting power, followed by India and Russia.**
- **India is a founding member of AIIB.**

Immune Checkpoints and Immune Checkpoint Inhibitors (ICIs)

- **Immune checkpoints** are a normal part of the **immune system.**
- Their main function is to prevent the immune response from becoming too strong and damaging **healthy body cells.**
- **Immune Checkpoint Inhibitors (ICIs)** are a form of **immunotherapy** that block signals which stop the immune system from attacking cancer cells.
- This **enables the body's natural immune defences** to attack **tumour cells** more effectively.
- ICIs have been found to reduce **tumour burden in the brain.**
- However, patients with **brain metastases** show different levels of response to the treatment.
- The exact reasons for these varying responses are still **not clearly understood.**

Brain metastases

- **Brain metastases** occur when cancer spreads to the **brain** from another part of the body.
- They are also known as **brain mets** or **secondary brain tumours** because the cancer originates elsewhere before spreading to the brain.
- Treatment depends on factors such as the **type of cancer**, the **number and location** of brain metastases, and the patient's **overall health.**

- Common treatment options include **surgery, radiation therapy, immunotherapy, targeted therapy, and chemotherapy.**