FWD

FORTUNE WEEKLY DIGEST

> Amir Khusrau and Persian Influence > Three Language Policies > Dollar – Rupee Swap

FWD
FORTUNE WEEKLY DIGEST

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 guage 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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DOLLAR - RUPEE SWAP

Syllabus: GS III - Indian Economy

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *How would the recent phenomena of protectionism and currency manipulations in world trade affect macroeconomic stability of India?* **(2018)**

Q) *Justify the need for FDI for the development of the Indian economy. Why there is gap between MOUs signed and actual FDIs? Suggest remedial steps to be taken for increasing actual FDIs in India.* **(2016**)

WHY IN NEWS

The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**, following a **$5 billion dollar-rupee swap last month**, has announced a **$10 billion buy-sell swap** on **February 21** to **inject long-term rupee liquidity**, **stabilize the rupee**, and **strengthen forex reserves**.

INTRODUCTION

The **RBI is conducting its largest-ever $10 billion dollar-rupee swap auction** to address the severe liquidity deficit in the banking system, counter rupee depreciation, and strengthen forex reserves. Through this swap, banks will **sell US dollars** to the RBI and **repurchase them after three years** at a premium. This move aims to **inject rupee liquidity**, **stabilize credit flow**, and **curb market volatility**.

SHORT TAKES

➢ **Variable Repo Rate (VRR):**

o It is a monetary policy tool used by the RBI to manage liquidity in the banking system. Unlike the fixed repo rate, which is predetermined by the RBI, the VRR is decided through market-based auctions. This means banks bid for funds, and the rate is determined based on demand and supply.

o The VRR is used for longer durations, usually ranging from 2 to 14 days or more It is designed to provide banks with better flexibility in borrowing funds while ensuring that interest rates align with current economic conditions. The RBI uses VRR to balance liquidity and stabilise inflation ensuring economic growth.

➢ **Open Market Operations (OMOs) – RBI's Liquidity Tool**

o OMOs refer to the RBI's purchase or sale of government securities to regulate liquidity and control inflation.

• Selling securities: Absorbs excess liquidity, raises interest rates, makes loans costlier, and slows economic activity. However, it may increase bond yields as investors demand higher returns.

• Buying securities: Injects liquidity, lowers interest rates, makes loans cheaper, and boosts economic activity.

o OMOs help the RBI maintain monetary stability by adjusting liquidity based on market conditions.

➢ **Financial Benchmarks India Pvt. Ltd. (FBIL)**

o FBIL is a key institution in **administering financial benchmarks** in India, covering **interest rates, currency rates, and commodity prices**. Established as a **joint venture** between **Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Fixed Income Money Market and Derivatives Association of India (FIMMDA)**, it ensures **transparency, integrity, and efficiency** in financial markets.

o FBIL's benchmarks are crucial for **pricing loans, bonds, and derivatives**. It operates under **SEBI's supervision**, ensuring fair and reliable benchmark-setting.

o **FBIL administers key financial benchmarks in India, including:**

• INR Overnight Interbank Borrowing Rate – Indicates short-term borrowing costs for banks.

• Treasury Bill (T-Bill) Rates – Used in the money market for government securities.

• Mumbai Interbank Offered Rate (MIBOR) – Benchmark for overnight lending rates among banks.

• Foreign Exchange Rates – Provides INR reference rates against major global currencies for trade and hedging.

HOW DOES THE SWAP MECHANISM WORK?

The **RBI's dollar-rupee swap** follows a **two-step foreign exchange buy-sell process**:

Step 1: Banks Sell Dollars, Receive Rupees

- Indian banks **sell US dollars** to the **RBI** and receive rupee liquidity in return.
- The transaction is executed at the **Financial Benchmarks India Private Ltd (FBIL) Reference Rate**.
- **RBI credits rupees** to the **banks' current accounts**, while banks **deposit dollars** into the **RBI's Nostro account**.

Step 2: Banks Repurchase Dollars, Return Rupees

- At the **end of the swap tenure (three years)**, banks **buy back the same amount of US dollars** from the RBI.
- They must **return the rupees** along with an agreed **swap premium**.

This mechanism **injects liquidity into the banking system**, **stabilizes interest rates**, and **helps manage market volatility**.

REASON BEHIND THE SWAP

➡ **Severe Liquidity Crunch:**

- o In January 2025, India's banking system faced its **deepest liquidity shortfall in over a decade**, with the deficit reaching **Rs. 3.15 lakh crore on January 23**—the lowest in nearly 15 years.
- o The shortage was fueled by **tax payments, GST outflows, and RBI's forex interventions**, which drained rupee liquidity.

➡ **Rupee Depreciation and Market Volatility:**

- o The **rupee weakened by 3.3% against the US dollar** between **October 2024 and February 2025**,

falling to **Rs. 86.86/USD on February 25, 2025**.

- o **Foreign investors pulled out $31 billion** from Indian equity markets since December 2024, intensifying capital outflows.

➡ **Strengthening Forex Reserves:**

- o By **December 31, 2024, RBI's net forward dollar sales** had climbed to **$67.93 billion** as it sought to support the rupee.
- o The **swap is intended to ease liquidity constraints while rebuilding forex reserves**, ensuring financial stability.

IMPACT

☼ **Boost to Banking Liquidity**

- o The swap **injects rupee liquidity** into the banking system, easing the severe liquidity crunch.
- o Helps banks **reduce reliance on short-term borrowing**, stabilizing interbank lending rates.

☼ **Stabilization of the Rupee**

- o By increasing rupee supply, the swap **reduces pressure on the currency** caused by foreign fund outflows.
- o Prevents excessive rupee depreciation and maintains **exchange rate stability**.

☼ **Strengthening Forex Reserves**

- o RBI **replenishes dollar reserves** while addressing

rupee liquidity needs.

- o Ensures a **stronger buffer** against external economic shocks.

☼ **Market and Interest Rate Stability**

- o **Improves credit availability**, supporting economic activity.
- o Helps **control volatility** in interest rates, preventing sudden spikes in borrowing costs.

☼ **Confidence Booster for Investors**

- o Signals RBI's **proactive approach** in managing liquidity and currency stability.
- o Enhances **market confidence**, reducing panic-driven capital outflows.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES AND CONSIDERATIONS

▼ **Impact on RBI's Forex Reserves Management**

- o Large-scale swaps involve **significant dollar outflows** from RBI's reserves when the swap matures.
- o If forex reserves are **not replenished adequately**,

it could **limit RBI's ability** to intervene in the currency market during future crises.

- o Managing reserves effectively is **crucial to maintain India's external financial stability**.

▼ **Influence of Global Market Conditions**

o The success of the swap depends on **external factors** like:

- **Capital flows**: If foreign investors continue pulling out funds, the swap may not be enough to stabilize liquidity.

- **Interest rate differentials**: If global interest rates (especially in the US) remain high, it could encourage capital flight from India, offsetting the swap's benefits.

- **Market volatility**: Global economic uncertainties could lead to fluctuations in demand for the rupee, impacting swap effectiveness.

▼ **Risk of Unintended Currency Speculation**

o If market participants **expect further rupee depreciation**, they might **use the swap window to engage in speculative trades** rather than genuine liquidity management.

o Poor execution or misjudged market sentiment could lead to **increased forex volatility instead of stabilization**.

▼ **Temporary Relief vs. Structural Reforms**

o While swaps **ease liquidity stress in the short term**, they **do not address underlying financial system weaknesses**.

o **Persistent liquidity issues** could indicate:

- **Structural banking sector inefficiencies**

- **Inadequate monetary policy transmission**

- **Heavy reliance on RBI interventions instead of market-driven solutions**

o **Long-term financial reforms**, such as **deeper bond market development, better capital allocation, and enhanced banking sector resilience**, are needed to ensure lasting liquidity stability.

MEASURES BY RBI TO IMPROVE LIQUIDITY AND STABILIZE THE EXCHANGE RATE

✳ To counter rupee depreciation and ease the ongoing liquidity crunch, the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has undertaken several key measures, including:

✳ **Forex Market Intervention**

o The **RBI has been selling dollars** to stabilize the rupee and prevent excessive depreciation.

o While this helps in the short term, continuous intervention **drains forex reserves** and raises concerns about fiscal resilience.

✳ **Liquidity Injection Measures**

o **Variable Rate Repo (VRR) Auctions**: Conducted multiple times to provide short-term liquidity to banks.

o **Dollar-Rupee Swap ($5 billion earlier, now $10 billion)**: These swaps inject rupee liquidity while strengthening forex reserves.

o **Open Market Operations (OMO)**: RBI purchased **Rs. 60,000 crore** worth of government securities to infuse liquidity.

o **56-day VRR Auction**: Announced to address liquidity constraints over a longer duration.

CONCLUSION

While the **RBI's interventions**—including forex sales, repo auctions, and open market operations—have provided some relief, the **liquidity crunch persists**. In this context, the **new $10 billion dollar-rupee swap** emerges as a **critical step** to **stabilize financial markets, support the rupee, and restore liquidity**, reinforcing economic stability in the short term. However, **structural reforms** may be needed for a more **sustainable solution** to liquidity challenges.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recently conducted its largest-ever $10 billion dollar-rupee swap to address liquidity shortages and stabilize the exchange rate. Discuss the rationale behind such interventions, their effectiveness in managing economic stability, and the potential risks associated with them.**(15 marks) (250 words)**

THREE LANGUAGE POLICIES

> *Syllabus: GS II - Polity*

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *The concept of cooperative federalism has been increasingly emphasized in recent years. Highlight the drawbacks in the existing structure and the extent to which cooperative federalism would answer the shortcomings.* **(2015)**

Q) *How far do you think cooperation, competition and confrontation have shaped the nature of federation in India? Cite some recent examples to validate your answer.* **(2020)**

Q) *National Education Policy 2020 is in conformity with the Sustainable Development Goal-4 (2030). It intends to restructure and reorient the education system in India. Critically examine the statement.* **(2020)**

INTRODUCTION

The three-language formula is an education framework that was first introduced in the National Education Policy (NEP) of 1968. It mandated the teaching of Hindi in non-Hindi speaking states, alongside English and a regional language.

WHY IN NEWS

- The **Centre has withheld funds** to Tamil Nadu under the **Samagra Shiksha scheme** due to the state's **refusal to implement the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020) and its three-language formula**.

- Tamil Nadu follows a **two-language policy (Tamil and English)** and has consistently opposed the **introduction of Hindi**, considering it a **threat to its linguistic identity**.

SHORT TAKES

- ➢ **Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM-SHRI) scheme**
  - o **Objective:**
    - The scheme aims to upgrade existing government schools into model institutions of excellence.
  - o **Scope:**
    - It applies to elementary, secondary, and senior secondary schools operated by the central, state, and local governments across India.
  - o **Funding:**
    - A centrally sponsored initiative running from 2022-23 to 2026-27, aimed at transforming approximately 14,500 schools nationwide.

- ➢ **Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)**
  - o This scheme encompasses education from preschool to Class XII, ensuring inclusive and high-quality learning at all levels.
  - o **Integration:**
  - o It consolidates three previous centrally sponsored schemes:
    - **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)**
    - **Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)**
    - **Teacher Education (TE)**
  - o **Key Objectives:**
    - Assist States and UTs in implementing the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**.

- Support the execution of the **Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009**.
- Prioritize **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy**.
- Enhance and upgrade **SCERTs, State Institutes of Education, and DIETs** as teacher training hubs.
- Promote **vocational education** to improve skill development.
  - o **Financial Assistance:** The scheme provides funding to all States and UTs for implementing these objectives.

- ➢ **Key Highlights of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**
  - o **Objective**:
    - NEP 2020 envisions a comprehensive transformation of the education system by promoting **flexibility, holistic development, skill-oriented learning, and multilingualism** in schools.
  - o **Revised School Structure (5+3+3+4):**
    - **Foundational Stage** – 5 years (Preschool to Grade 2)
    - **Preparatory Stage** – 3 years (Grades 3 to 5)
    - **Middle Stage** – 3 years (Grades 6 to 8)
    - **Secondary Stage** – 4 years (Grades 9 to 12)
  - o **Core Principles of NEP:**
    - **Access** – Ensuring inclusive education for all.
    - **Equity** – Reducing disparities in learning

opportunities.

- **Quality** – Enhancing teaching standards and learning outcomes.
- **Affordability** – Making education financially accessible and inclusive.

o **Three-Language Policy:**

- Students will be taught three languages, with at least **two being Indian languages**.
- States have the autonomy to choose the languages as per regional needs.
- **Mother Tongue-Based Learning:**
  ◦ Emphasizes **early education in home languages** to strengthen comprehension, critical thinking, and cognitive skills in young learners.

THREE LANGUAGE FORMULA AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

➡ **Origin of the Three-Language Formula**

o The idea of a three-language system was first proposed by the **Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-49)** to promote national integration and linguistic harmony.

o The **Kothari Commission (1964-66)** formalized this concept, recommending a structured three-language formula for secondary education. **Three-Language Formula as per Kothari Commission (1964-66)**

- **First Language:**
  » **Mother tongue** or **regional language**.
- **Second Language:**
  » **In Hindi-speaking states** → Another modern Indian language or English.
  » **In non-Hindi-speaking states** → Hindi or English.
- **Third Language:**
  » **In Hindi-speaking states** → English or a modern Indian language.
  » **In non-Hindi-speaking states** → English or a modern Indian language (other than the second language).

o This was **implemented in the National Education Policy (NEP) of 1968** under **Indira Gandhi** to ensure linguistic diversity and inter-state communication.

➡ The **National Policy on Education (1986)** under **Rajiv Gandhi** retained the three-language formula while emphasizing the importance of English and regional languages.

➡ The **NEP 2020** under the **Modi government** continues with the three-language formula but provides **greater flexibility** in its implementation.

➡ **NEP 2020 and the Revised Three-Language Formula**

o **Retains the three-language formula** but with more flexibility.

o **States, regions, and students have the freedom** to choose the three languages.

o **At least two of the three languages must be native to India** (without mandating Hindi).

o **No language is imposed** on any state.

o Encourages the **learning of Sanskrit** and other classical languages.

Background of the conflict

♣ Tamil Nadu has a long history of **anti-Hindi agitations**, dating back nearly a century.

♣ Unlike most states, **Tamil Nadu follows a two-language policy** (Tamil and English), while the Centre's **New Education Policy (NEP) 2020** promotes a **three-language formula**.

♣ The **BJP-led Centre** argues that the policy **enhances employment opportunities** by promoting multilingual skills, while **Tamil Nadu sees it as an attempt to impose Hindi**.

Centre's Changing Stance

♣ Historically, the Centre has treated the three-language formula as **recommendatory**, leaving implementation to **state governments**.

♣ In 2004, **HRD Minister Arjun Singh (Congress)** stated that the formula's implementation was the **state's responsibility**.

♣ In 2014, **Smriti Irani (BJP)** reaffirmed this stance.

♣ However, in **2025**, the **Ministry of Education** linked **Samagra Shiksha funds** to NEP compliance, effectively **pressuring states** like Tamil Nadu to adopt the policy.

Government's Reaction

- ♣ The Centre has **withheld Rs. 2,152 crore under the Samagra Shiksha scheme**, a centrally sponsored initiative supporting **RTE Act provisions**.

- ♣ Tamil Nadu CM **M.K. Stalin** has protested this, arguing that it **violates federal principles** and unfairly penalizes the state.

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF THE THREE LANGUAGE FORMULA

✓ **Promoting National Unity:**

- o Encourages interaction among different linguistic communities, fostering social cohesion.

- o Helps students communicate across states, strengthening national integration.

✓ **Preserving India's Linguistic Heritage:**

- o Ensures regional languages remain a key part of the education system.

- o Protects indigenous languages from fading out due to dominance of a single language.

✓ **Cognitive and Educational Benefits:**

- o Learning multiple languages enhances memory, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

- o Gives students greater academic flexibility and adaptability.

✓ **Career and Economic Opportunities:**

- o Proficiency in multiple languages increases employability in both domestic and international job markets.

- o Facilitates ease of mobility for work across different regions in India.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE THREE LANGUAGE FORMULA

✗ **Concerns Over Learning Outcomes:**

- o Reports like ASER 2022 highlight that many students struggle with basic literacy in their native language.

- o Adding a third language may overburden students without ensuring proficiency in the first two.

✗ **Lack of Resources and Infrastructure:**

- o Many government schools face shortages of trained language teachers and learning materials.

- o Even private schools that offer a third language often report that students fail to attain fluency.

✗ **Financial Burden on States:**

- o States cover **85% of elementary education expenses**, while the Centre funds only **15%**, making implementation financially challenging.

- o India's total education expenditure is **4-4.5% of GDP**, falling short of the **6% target** set by NEP 2020.

✗ **Resistance in Non-Hindi-Speaking States:**

- o Many states, especially in South India, see the formula as a backdoor attempt to impose Hindi.

- o Tamil Nadu, which follows a **two-language policy (Tamil & English)**, has historically opposed any move perceived as linguistic imposition.

✗ **Federalism and State Autonomy Concerns:**

- o Education falls under the **Concurrent List**, but states argue that language policy should remain their prerogative.

- o Tamil Nadu and other states assert their right to determine educational policies that align with their cultural identity.

✗ **Cultural Identity and Linguistic Balance:**

- o Standardizing language education across India may weaken regional cultures and languages.

- o States fear that prioritizing a third language could reduce focus on their native tongue.

WAY FORWARD

* **Strengthening Foundational Education:**
  o Prioritize improving literacy and numeracy skills in **mother tongue and English** before adding another language.

* **Flexibility in Language Policy:**
  o Instead of a uniform mandate, states should have the autonomy to adopt language policies **based on local needs**.

* **Encouraging Federal Cooperation:**
  o The Centre and states like Tamil Nadu should engage in meaningful dialogue to **resolve funding disputes and policy disagreements**.

* **Natural Growth of Multilingualism:**
  o According to Census 2011, **26% of Indians are bilingual**, and **7% are trilingual**, with urbanization driving linguistic diversity.
  o Instead of enforcing an additional language, policies should **support natural multilingual development** through societal interactions.

* **Balancing Global and Regional Language Priorities:**
  o English proficiency has played a key role in India's success in **global industries**.
  o While learning more Indian languages is valuable, it should not come at the **cost of English or regional language proficiency**.

CONCLUSION

The three-language formula aims to foster national integration, linguistic diversity, and cognitive development. However, challenges such as resistance to perceived linguistic imposition, inadequate resources, and concerns over state autonomy hinder its implementation. A pragmatic approach that prioritizes **flexibility for states, investment in foundational literacy, and organic multilingualism** can ensure linguistic harmony while preserving regional identities.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q)The Three-Language Formula has been a contentious issue in India's education policy, balancing national integration with linguistic diversity. Discuss the advantages and challenges of its implementation, particularly in non-Hindi-speaking states. Suggest a way forward to ensure linguistic harmony while respecting federal principles. **(15 marks) (250 words)**

TIME USE SURVEY 2024

Syllabus: GS III - Indian Economy

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *While we found India's demographic dividend, we ignore the dropping rates of employability. What are we missing while doing so? Where will the jobs that India desperately needs come from? Explain.* **(2014)**

Q) *"Economic growth in the recent past has been led by an increase in labour productivity." Explain this statement. Suggest the growth pattern that will lead to creation of more jobs without compromising labour productivity.* **(2022)**

SHORT TAKES

➤ **Time poverty:**
- o Refers to the lack of sufficient discretionary time due to excessive engagement in paid or unpaid work, leaving little or no time for rest, self-care, or personal development.
- o The interlinkage between time poverty and income poverty limits women's financial independence and results in significant economic losses for both individuals and developing economies, estimated at $9 trillion in 2015.

WHY IN NEWS

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) recently released the Time Use Survey (TUS) for January–December 2024, marking India's second comprehensive assessment of how individuals allocate their time across various daily activities.

INTRODUCTION

The Time Use Survey (TUS) 2024 reveals how individuals distribute their time across various activities, highlighting gender disparities in paid work, unpaid domestic duties, and caregiving. A 2018 UNDP-ILO report underscored the importance of such surveys in addressing development challenges and informing policies on gender-based inequalities.

ABOUT TIME USE SURVEY (TUS)

- ➡ **Scope and Purpose:** TUS measures time allocation across paid, unpaid, and other activities, providing detailed insights not captured in other household surveys.

- ➡ **International Context:** India is among the few countries, including Australia, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, the USA, and China, that conduct National Time Use Surveys.

- ➡ **Key Data Points:** It tracks participation in paid and unpaid activities, including caregiving, volunteer work, domestic services, learning, socialising, leisure, and self-care.

- ➡ **Historical Context:**
  - o A century ago, the **USSR conducted the first systematic time use survey** for industrial workers in 76 families, tracking work, sleep, and rest.
    - • Using diary entries, the government aimed to identify time spent on housework, which it viewed as "archaic," to reallocate it to collective services.
  - o **Beijing Declaration (1995)** called for gender-disaggregated data collection to assess economic participation, leading to wider adoption of time use surveys globally.
  - o The **first all-India TUS** was conducted by NSO, MoSPI in 2019, and the second survey was carried out in 2024.

FEATURES OF THE SURVEY

- 👁 **Time Slot Recording:** Respondents reported activities in 30-minute slots, with up to three activities recorded per slot if each lasted at least 10 minutes.

- 👁 **Coverage:** The survey covered **1,39,487 households** (83,247 rural and 56,240 urban), collecting data from **4,54,192 individuals** aged 6 years and above (2,85,389 rural and 1,68,803 urban).

- 👁 **Data Collection Method:** Information was gathered using CAPI (Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews) with a 24-hour reference period from 4:00 AM on the previous day to 4:00 AM on the interview day.

- 👁 **Presentation of Estimates:** National-level estimates for individuals aged 6 years and above were compiled and presented in the Time Use Survey, 2024 Fact Sheet.

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What constitutes Paid and Unpaid Activities ?

♣ **Unpaid Activities:**

o **Caregiving**: Taking care of children, the sick, elderly, and differently-abled persons within the household.

o **Household Production:** Producing goods and services for own consumption, such as cooking, cleaning, and maintenance.

o **Voluntary Work**: Engaging in unpaid work for households, market/non-market units, or community services.

o **Unpaid Trainee Work**: Training or apprenticeship

without monetary compensation.

o **Other Unpaid Work**: Any unpaid activity contributing to the production of goods and services.

♣ **Paid Work**:

o **Self-Employment**: Engaging in entrepreneurial or business activities for income generation.

o **Wage/Salary Work:** Regular or casual employment for the production of goods and services.

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KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF TIME USE SURVEY, 2024

☼ **Employment Participation:**

o 75% of males and 25% of females (15-59 years) participated in employment-related activities in 2024, up from 70.9% and 21.8%, respectively, in 2019.

o On average, people spent **440 minutes per day** on employment and related activities in 2024, with men spending **473 minutes** and women **341 minutes**.

☼ **Unpaid Domestic Work:**

o Time spent by females (15-59 years) on unpaid domestic services **reduced from 315 minutes in 2019 to 305 minutes in 2024**, indicating a shift towards paid work.

☼ **Caregiving Responsibilities:**

o 41% of females and 21.4% of males (15-59 years) participated in caregiving, with **females spending 140 minutes daily** compared to **74 minutes for males.**

☼ **Own-use Production:** 24.6% of the rural population (15-59 years) engaged in producing goods for personal use, spending 121 minutes daily.

☼ **Learning Activities:**

o Males: **415 minutes** in 2024, down from **426 minutes** in 2019.

o Females: **413 minutes** in 2024, down from **423 minutes** in 2019.

AVERAGE TIME SPENT IN A DAY PER PERSON

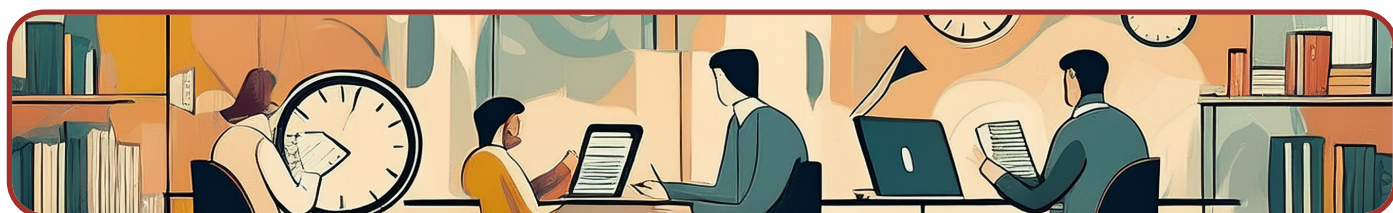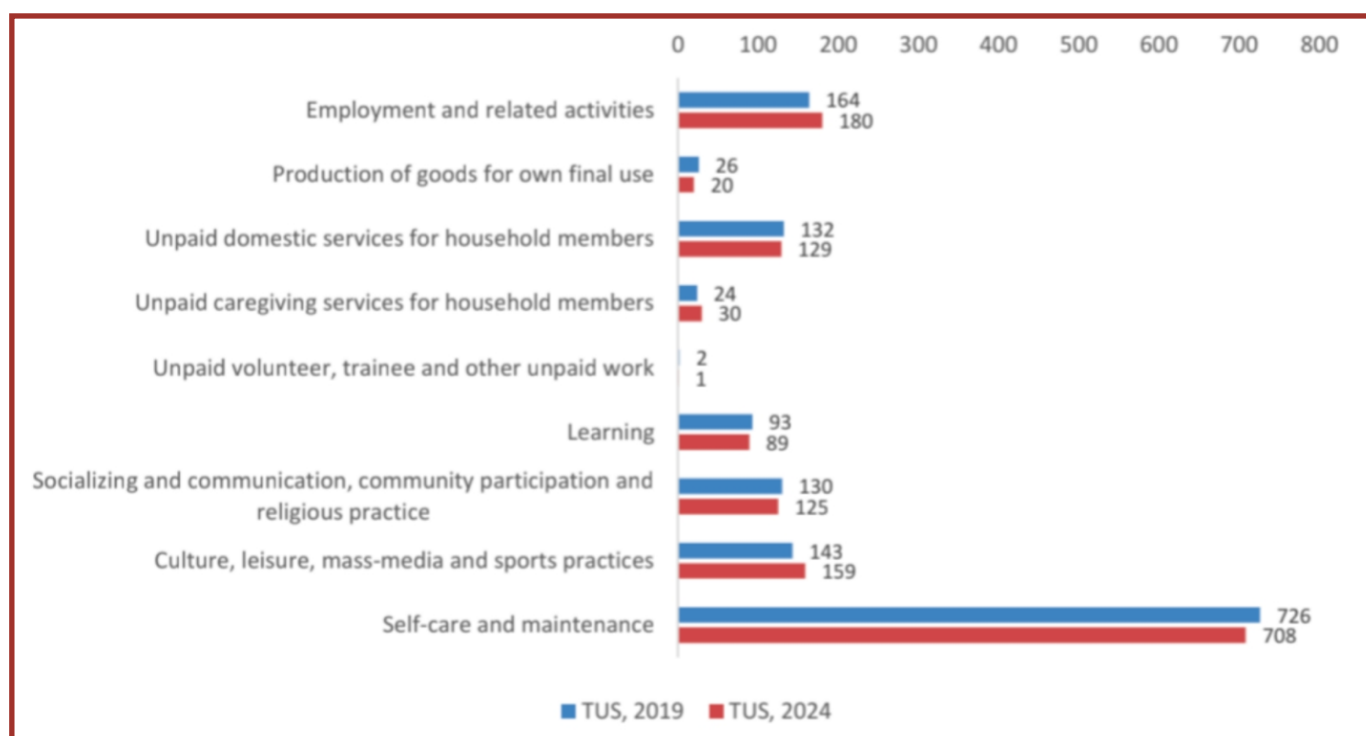|	2019		2024	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Self-care and maintenance	729	723	710	706
Employment and related activities	459	333	473	341
Learning	426	423	415	413
Unpaid domestic services for household members	97	299	88	289
Culture, leisure, mass media, sports	164	165	177	164
Socialising and communication, community participation and religious practice	147	139	138	139
Unpaid volunteer, trainee and other unpaid work	102	99	139	108
Unpaid caregiving services for household members	76	134	75	137
Production of goods for own final use	198	116	137	104

All units in minutes   *Source: MoSPI*

o 89.3% of children (6-14 years) participated in learning activities, spending around 413 minutes per day.

☼ **Leisure and Culture:** People (6 years and above) spent 11% of their daily time on cultural, leisure, mass media, and sports activities in 2024, up from 9.9% in 2019.

☼ **Self-care and Maintenance:** Individuals (6 years and above) spent 708 minutes daily on self-care, with **females spending 706 minutes and males 710 minutes**.

ANALYSIS OF THE TIME USE SURVEY (TUS) 2024

WAY FORWARD

* **Enhancing Female Labour Force Participation:**

  o Implement policies to promote women's entry into paid employment, including flexible work hours and gender-inclusive workplaces.

  o Research by the **International Monetary Fund estimates** that closing the gender gap in labour force participation could increase India's GDP by 27%

* **Investing in Care Infrastructure:**

  o Increase public and private investment in affordable childcare and eldercare facilities to reduce women's caregiving burden and boost

employment in the care economy.

* **Recognition and Redistribution of Unpaid Work:**

  o Strengthen social policies that recognise unpaid domestic and caregiving work, such as care economy investments, paid family leave, and shared parental responsibilities.

* **Skill Development and Empowerment:**

  o Expand **vocational training and digital literacy programmes** to facilitate women's transition from unpaid to paid work, especially in rural areas.

  o Develop rural industrial clusters, promote **self-**

help groups (SHGs), and expand service-sector jobs to enhance employment opportunities for women.

o   Encourage financial inclusion, provide **direct cash transfer**s, and support women-led cooperatives to increase their control over household expenditure decisions.

✳ **Promoting Gender Equality:**

o   Implement **paid parental leave for both parents**, tax incentives for shared caregiving, and **awareness campaigns** to challenge gender norms.

✳ **Improving Learning Outcomes and Educational Access:**

o   Address the decline in time spent on learning activities by improving school infrastructure,

digital learning access, and reducing dropout rates.

✳ **Promoting Work-Life Balance and Well-Being:**

o   Develop policies that ensure adequate leisure, self-care, and mental health support to improve overall well-being.

✳ **Strengthening Social Protection Measures:**

o   Introduce social security benefits for informal sector workers, particularly for women engaged in unpaid household work and caregiving.

✳ **Expanding Data Collection and Policy Monitoring:**

o   Conduct **frequent and granular** time-use surveys to track trends, assess policy impact, and refine interventions to promote gender equality and economic inclusion.

CONCLUSION

The survey underscores the urgent need for gender-sensitive policies that promote women's participation in paid employment while recognising and redistributing unpaid work. Targeted interventions in skill development, social protection, and work-life balance can foster a more equitable and productive society.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q)The Time Use Survey 2024 highlights persistent gender disparities in caregiving and domestic work. Discuss how social norms and policy interventions can help in redistributing unpaid labour in Indian households **(10 marks) (150 words)**

AMIR KHUSRAU AND PERSIAN INFLUENCE IN INDIAN CULTURE

Syllabus: GS I - Indian Art and Culture

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *Sufis and medieval mystic saints failed to modify either the religious ideas and practices or the outward structure of Hindu / Muslim societies to any appreciable extent. Comment.* **(2014)**

Q) *Persian literary sources of medieval India reflect the spirit of the age. Comment.* **(2020)**

SHORT TAKES

➤ **Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb:**

o Refers to the syncretic **cultural fusion of Hindu and Muslim traditions** in North India, particularly in the Gangetic plains, symbolising **communal harmony.**

o *Ganga-Jamuni* (from Hindi) refers to the merging of the Ganga and Yamuna rivers, reflecting **distinct yet harmonious identities**, while *Tehzeeb* (from Urdu) signifies civilization and cultural refinement.

o It is reflected in shared festivals, language (Urdu-Hindi), music, architecture, and social customs that evolved over centuries.

WHY IN NEWS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at the **25th edition of Jahan-e-Khusrau** held at New Delhi's Sunder Nursery, described the annual Sufi music festival honouring Amir Khusrau as reflecting the "fragrance of the soil of Hindustan."

INTRODUCTION

Persian influence in India began through **cultural and political interactions with Iran** and was introduced by **Mahmud of Ghazni's invasion and the arrival of Arab traders via the Malabar Coast.** It was later solidified under the **Delhi Sultanate and Mughal rule**, shaping Indian language, literature, art, architecture, administration, and music into a distinct Indo-Persian cultural synthesis.

KEY AREAS OF PERSIAN INFLUENCE IN INDIA

Language and Literature

➡ **Persian as the Court Language**:

o Under the **Delhi Sultans** (13th-16th century) and **Mughals** (16th-18th century), Persian replaced Sanskrit and Prakrit as the **official language** of administration, diplomacy, and scholarship.

o Persian continued to be widely used in Indian courts even after Mughal decline **until the British era in 1837**, influencing legal and historical records.

➡ **Development of Urdu**:

o A fusion of **Persian, Arabic, and local Indian languages** led to the emergence of **Urdu**, which became the lingua franca of North India.

o Persian literary traditions deeply influenced **Urdu poetry**, with poets like **Mirza Ghalib** using Persian metres and themes.

o Common Hindi-Urdu words like *asman* (sky), *bazaar* (market), and *zameen* (earth) have Persian origins.

➡ **Persian Literature in India**:

o Prominent Persian writers in India included:

• **Amir Khusrau (1253-1325)** : A court poet under the Delhi Sultanate, who blended Persian and Indian literary styles.

• **Abul Fazl (1551-1602)**: Chronicler of Akbar's court, author of **Ain-i-Akbari and Akbarnama**.

Persian Influence on Art and Architecture

➡ **Mughal Architecture**:

o Persian architectural techniques merged with Indian styles, giving rise to **Indo-Islamic architecture**.

o Hallmarks of Persian architecture in India include:

• **Use of the Charbagh (Persian garden layout)**: Seen in Humayun's Tomb and Taj Mahal.

• **Iwan-style arches, bulbous domes, and calligraphy**: Common in mosques like Jama Masjid and tombs.

• **Extensive use of pietra dura (stone inlay work)**: Inspired by Persian artisans.

- **Bahmani Dynasty's Persian Influence**:

  o Feroz Shah Bahmani (14th century) imported **skilled Iranian artisans**, leading to distinct architectural styles, particularly in domes and monuments.

- **Miniature Painting**:

  o The **Persian Safavid style** influenced Mughal painting, especially under **Akbar, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan**.

  o Persian painters trained Indian artists, leading to the evolution of a distinctive **Mughal miniature** style.

Music and Performing Arts

- **Persian Influence on Hindustani Classical Music**:

  o Persian and Central Asian musical traditions merged with Indian styles, leading to:

    - **The refinement of Qawwali**: A devotional music form pioneered by **Amir Khusrau**.
    - **Development of Khayal and Tarana**: New classical music forms inspired by Persian musical structures.
    - Persian ghazals and rubaiyat (quatrains) deeply influenced Indian poetic compositions.

Administrative and Political Influence

- **Persian Bureaucratic Traditions**:

  o Mughal bureaucracy and revenue systems were based on Persian models, with Persian terminology like *jagir* and *mansab*.

  o Legal codes, farmans (royal decrees), and official records were written in Persian.

- **Historiography and Court Records**:

  o Prominent historical chronicles written in Persian

include:

- **Tabaqat-i-Nasiri (by Minhaj-us-Siraj)**: A history of the Delhi Sultanate.
- **Baburnama (by Babur)**: Memoirs of Mughal founder translated to Persian by Abdul Rahman Khan-i- khanan.
- **Shah Jahan Nama (by Inayat Khan)**: A detailed account of Shah Jahan's reign.

Persian Influence on Religion and Sufism

- **Spread of Sufism**:

  o Persian Sufi traditions profoundly influenced Indian spirituality.

  o Persian was the **language of Sufi poetry** and mystical discourses.

  o Notable Sufi saints who integrated Persian elements into Indian religious thought include:

    - **Nizamuddin Auliya**: A Chishti Sufi master deeply associated with Persian literary traditions.
    - **Shaikh Ali Hujwiri (Data Ganj Bakhsh)**: His work **Kashf al-Mahjub** is a seminal Persian text on Sufi philosophy.

- **Cultural Syncretism (Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb)**:

  o The fusion of Persian and Indian traditions gave rise to a **unique composite culture** that promoted harmony between Hindu and Muslim traditions.

  o Amir Khusrau's **Hindavi poetry and Sufi qawwalis** celebrated this synthesis.

Culinary Influence

- Persian cuisine influenced Mughal dishes such as **biryani, kebabs, and nihari**.

- Persian-style **confectionery and dry fruit** usage became common in Indian sweets.

AMIR KHUSRAU: A MULTIFACETED LEGACY

Title and Cultural Influence

  o Known as *Tuti-yi-Hind* ("Parrot of India"), Khusrau is considered a father figure of North India's *Ganga-Jamuni* culture.

  o He contributed significantly to Indian classical music, Sufi qawwali, and Persian literature.

  o Credited with developing *Hindavi*, a precursor to modern Hindi and Urdu.

Early Life and Lineage

  o Born in 1253, likely in Patiyali (present-day Etah district, Uttar Pradesh), though his birthplace remains uncertain.

  o His father, a Central Asian immigrant, entered Sultan Iltutmish's (1211-36) service and married an Indian Muslim woman.

  o Khusrau referred to himself as an *"Indian Turk"*, symbolising his mixed heritage.

Career as a Court Poet

  o Became a professional poet at 20 and served five Delhi Sultans:

    - Muiz ud din Qaiqabad
    - Jalaluddin Khalji
    - Alauddin Khalji
    - Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah

- Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq
  o Wrote in Persian (the court's language) and Hindavi.
  o Jalaluddin Khalji bestowed upon him the title of **Amir**.
  o Historian Ziauddin Barani wrote that Jalaluddin highly valued Khusrau and appointed him *keeper of the Qur'ān*.

👁 Spiritual Connection with Nizamuddin Auliya

  o Khusrau was the most beloved disciple of Sufi saint *Nizamuddin Auliya*.
  o Auliya wished Khusrau to be buried with him, stating:
    - *"He is the keeper of my secrets, and I shall not set foot in Paradise without him."*
  o Both master and disciple died in 1325, within months of each other.
  o Upon hearing of Auliya's passing, Khusrau reportedly said:
    - *"Beauty sleeps on the bed, her hair across her face. Come Khusrau, let's go home, night has set over this place."*

👁 Contributions to Literature and Culture

  o Wrote eulogies for rulers, as well as riddles, word games, and folk songs.
  o Promoted a fusion of Persian, Turkic, and Indian traditions, strengthening Hindu-Muslim syncretism.
  o Praised Hindu philosophy in his **Masnavi Nuh Siphir,** stating that Hindu Brahmans possessed knowledge greater than Rumi.

👁 Influence on Music

  o His *ghazals* and *qawwalis* remain popular in both religious and secular contexts.
  o Famous compositions include *Chhaap Tilak*, *Zehal-e-Maskeen*, and *Sakal Ban Phool Rahi Sarson*.
  o Credited with shaping Indian classical music by:
    - Developing several *ragas*.
    - Crafting *khayal* music.
    - Allegedly inventing the *sitar* and *tabla* (though historical evidence is inconclusive).

👁 Enduring Legacy

  o Even after 700 years, Khusrau's lyrical style, wordplay, and diverse themes continue to captivate audiences.
  o His influence remains evident in both Sufi traditions and modern Bollywood music.

INITIATIVES TO PRESERVE AND PROMOTE PERSIAN CULTURE

☼ **Noor International Microfilm Center:** Established in 1985 in the **Culture House of the Islamic Republic of Iran in New Delhi**, this center focuses on repairing, restoring, and publishing manuscripts. It has prepared microfilms and photographs of over 60,000 Persian, Arabic, and Urdu manuscripts from various Indian libraries.

  o **Example**: The Department of Heritage Telangana has announced a tie-up with Noor International Microfilm Centre to restore, conserve and digitise documents and other paper artefacts in its custody.

☼ **Jahan-e-Khusrau Festival**: An annual music festival in New Delhi that commemorates the Sufi poet-musician Amir Khusrau, celebrating Persian and Sufi music traditions.

☼ **Restoration of Persian Monuments**: Conservation efforts are ongoing for Persian-influenced architectural sites like the Taj Mahal, ensuring their preservation for future generations.

☼ **Persian Language Programs**: Several Indian universities, such as **Jawaharlal Nehru University and Aligarh Muslim University,** offer Persian language courses and conduct research on Persian literature and culture.

☼ **Academic Publications**: Scholars and institutions publish journals and books focusing on Persian studies.

  o **Example**: The book *Enduring Civilisational Encounter: A Study of Indo-Iranian Relations* edited by Mohammad Nazrul Bari explores Indo-Iranian ties.

CONCLUSION

Persian influence left an indelible mark on Indian culture, creating a rich Indo-Persian heritage that continues to shape India's linguistic, artistic, and administrative traditions. The fusion of Persian and indigenous elements resulted in a unique cultural identity that defined medieval India and continues to influence contemporary art, music, and governance.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Analyse the impact of Persian literary and artistic traditions on medieval Indian culture, with special reference to Amir Khusrau **(10 marks) (150 words)**

WEEKLY DOSSIERS

THE VULNERABLE RIVER DOLPHINS OF INDIA

India's river dolphins, particularly the Ganges and Indus river dolphins, are among the most vulnerable freshwater species. A recent study by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change estimated their total population at **6,327**, highlighting their critical status.

TYPES OF RIVER DOLPHINS

There are two kinds of river dolphins:

- ◆ **Facultative River Dolphins** – Found in both marine and freshwater environments.
  - o **Irrawaddy dolphins** are seen in Chilika Lake (**155 individuals**) and off the Sundarbans.
  - o The **tucuxi** inhabits the Amazon and Orinoco rivers.
  - o The **Yangtze finless porpoise** is a small species found in China's rivers.
- ◆ **Obligate River Dolphins** – Restricted to freshwater bodies.
  - o The **Yangtze river dolphin** is presumed extinct since 2007.
  - o The **Amazon river dolphin** is a large, pink-colored species.
  - o The **Ganges river dolphin** is widespread in the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers.
  - o The **Indus river dolphin**, closely related to the Ganges dolphin, is found in Punjab's Beas River and Harike wetlands, with only **three spotted in India**.

ADAPTATIONS OF RIVER DOLPHINS

- ◆ **Navigation and Echolocation:**
  - o Due to muddy waters, Ganges and Indus river dolphins have **poor eyesight** and rely on **echolocation** for navigation and hunting.
  - o They emit distinctive **ultrasonic clicks** from their vocal cords and use a fatty mass called the **melon** on their forehead to detect echoes from objects.
  - o These dolphins also show a unique behavior of **swimming on their sides**, using their fins to feel along riverbeds while searching for food.
- ◆ **Eye Structure & Sensory Perception:**
  - o Their **eyes are extremely small** (about **1 cm across**) with a **thick cornea and no lens**.
  - o Their **retina lacks cells for detailed vision**, and their **optic nerve is thin**, limiting their ability to detect anything beyond light direction.
  - o **Brain studies** show that their **hearing areas are highly developed**, while their **visual processing regions are much smaller**, reinforcing their reliance on biosonar.
  - o **Experiments show** that Indus river dolphins can detect a **4 mm ball bearing** suspended on a nylon thread, demonstrating their advanced echolocation abilities.

THREATS TO RIVER DOLPHINS

- ◆ **Poaching and Traditional Medicine:**
  - o Dolphin **oil is used** for treating muscle strains and arthritis, leading to illegal hunting.
- ◆ **Overfishing & Bycatch:**
  - o Dolphins compete with humans for fish.
  - o They often get caught in **fishing nets as bycatch**.
- ◆ **Pollution:**
  - o **Chemical pollutants** in rivers degrade their habitat and threaten their survival.

CONSERVATION CHALLENGES

- Despite **refined counting methods**, it is unclear whether the dolphin population is **rising or falling**.

- Given their **critically low numbers**, even slight declines could be devastating.

- The **Indus river dolphin population in India is alarmingly low**, with only **three individuals recorded** in the study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Public Awareness & Community Involvement:**
  - Conservation programs must engage local communities to reduce poaching and promote sustainable fishing.

- **Stronger Protection Measures:**
  - Stricter enforcement of wildlife protection laws.

  - Expansion of protected habitats, especially for the Indus dolphin.

- **Pollution Control & Sustainable River Management:**
  - Reduction of industrial and agricultural pollutants.

  - Sustainable river management to maintain natural water flow.

CONCLUSION

River dolphins play a crucial role in maintaining the ecological balance of freshwater systems. Their declining numbers indicate **severe environmental stress**. Conservation efforts must focus on **raising awareness, protecting habitats, reducing pollution, and enforcing stricter wildlife laws** to ensure their survival.

STRENGTHENING ONE HEALTH IN INDIA - A MULTIDISCIPLINARY IMPERATIVE

The One Health approach, which integrates human, animal, and environmental health, has gained significant attention in India due to the increasing threats posed by zoonotic diseases. However, despite policy-level recognition, the approach remains fragmented, lacking multidisciplinary collaboration and integrated data systems.

CASE IN POINT: KARNATAKA AND TAMIL NADU ONE HEALTH PANELS

State governments, such as those in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, have established One Health panels. However, these panels are predominantly led by public health and veterinary professionals, with minimal participation from ecologists, climate scientists, and social scientists. This limited representation restricts a holistic understanding of disease dynamics.

For instance, an outbreak of leptospirosis in livestock could serve as an early warning for human infections, but weak data-sharing mechanisms between animal and human health departments hinder timely interventions.

KEY CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

- **Lack of Multidisciplinary Involvement**
  - Experts in ecology, climate science, and social sciences are often missing in One Health initiatives.

  - A narrow focus on disease treatment rather than understanding systemic interactions.

- **Weak Surveillance and Data Integration**
  - Reactive surveillance dominates over proactive monitoring of emerging diseases.

  - No robust national system integrates human, animal, and environmental health data.

- **Limited Intersectoral Collaboration**
  - Public health policies often overlook environmental and climate factors that influence disease emergence.

  - Communication gaps exist between different sectors (health, agriculture, environment).

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- **Expand One Health Panels**
  - o Ensure the inclusion of ecologists, climate scientists, and social scientists.
  - o Implement systems-thinking approaches to study disease transmission holistically.

- **Develop Integrated Surveillance Systems**
  - o Strengthen national disease reporting databases (e.g., IDSP) by incorporating animal health and environmental data.
  - o Use spatial analytics and platforms like Health Heat Maps for real-time disease monitoring.

- **Enhance Data Sharing Mechanisms**
  - o Establish a national integrated database for zoonotic and environmental health surveillance.
  - o Improve coordination between human and veterinary health departments.

- **Incorporate Climate Science into One Health**
  - o Expand research into how climate change influences disease patterns.
  - o Strengthen collaboration between forestry, environmental, and health agencies.

CONCLUSION

A truly effective One Health approach in India requires moving beyond a public health and veterinary-centric model. Strengthened collaborations, integrated surveillance, and climate-focused strategies are essential to tackling the growing threat of zoonotic diseases and other interconnected health challenges.

IMPACT OF ENDOGAMY ON GENETIC HEALTH DISPARITIES IN INDIA

India's diverse population is shaped by centuries of endogamy—marriage within small, often geographically or caste-restricted communities. A recent study led by CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) scientists has highlighted the significant impact of this practice on genetic health. The study identified population-specific genetic variants contributing to hereditary diseases and variations in drug metabolism, emphasizing the need for targeted healthcare interventions.

HIGH INCIDENCE OF ANKYLOSING SPONDYLITIS IN THE REDDY COMMUNITY

The study found a high prevalence of **ankylosing spondylitis**, a severe arthritis affecting the spine, among the **Reddy** community in Andhra Pradesh. Researchers linked this to the **HLA-B27:04 risk allele**, a genetic variant that increases disease susceptibility. This discovery suggests that genetic screening programs tailored for specific communities could help in early diagnosis and better disease management.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Genetic Mutations and Population-Specific Diseases**
  - o Researchers found novel **disease-causing genetic variants** unique to certain communities.
  - o Many of these mutations were a result of prolonged **endogamous practices**, leading to inherited disorders.

- **Drug Metabolism Variations**
  - o The study identified genetic variations affecting how different populations respond to common drugs like:
    - **Tacrolimus (immunosuppressant)**

- **Warfarin (anticoagulant)**
  - o This has major implications for **personalized medicine**, as the same drug might have different efficacy and side effects in different genetic groups.

- **Role of Inbreeding in Health Risks**
  - o Higher levels of **inbreeding** were found to correlate with **increased genetic disorders** in certain communities.
  - o These findings reinforce the importance of **genetic counselling** to reduce the risk of hereditary diseases.

CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

- **Lack of Awareness and Genetic Screening**
  - Many at-risk communities remain unaware of their predisposition to genetic disorders.
  - Limited access to **genetic counselling and diagnostic facilities** in rural areas.
- **One-Size-Fits-All Drug Prescriptions**

- Healthcare systems do not currently account for **genetic diversity in drug responses**, leading to ineffective or harmful treatments.
- **Cultural Barriers to Change**
  - Deep-rooted **social and cultural norms** make it challenging to address endogamy-related health risks.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- **Community-Specific Genetic Screening and Counselling**
  - Develop genetic screening programs in high-risk populations.
  - Raise awareness through **public health campaigns** on genetic diseases and the importance of counselling.
- **Incorporating Pharmacogenomics in Medical Practice**

- Introduce **personalized medicine** based on genetic profiling to optimize drug efficacy.
- Train healthcare professionals in **population-specific drug responses**.
- **Policy Interventions for Genetic Health**
  - The government should integrate **genetic research** into national healthcare policies.
  - Provide subsidies for genetic testing in vulnerable populations.

CONCLUSION

The CSIR-CCMB study marks a significant step in understanding how **India's genetic diversity influences health disparities**. Addressing the consequences of endogamy through **targeted genetic screening, personalized medicine, and public awareness** can significantly improve healthcare outcomes and reduce the burden of inherited diseases in India.

ETHICS - CASE STUDY

Q) You are an IPS officer recently posted as the Superintendent of Police (SP) in a metropolitan city. Over the past few months, there has been a **rise in drug peddling** targeting school children. Reports indicate that drug networks are operating near schools, luring children into substance abuse. Your preliminary investigation reveals that some school staff, local vendors, and even a few law enforcement officers might be complicit.

Local activists and parents are demanding immediate action, while some influential figures with political connections are trying to **shield the culprits**. Media is aggressively reporting on the issue, increasing public pressure on you.

a. What **steps** will you take to curb drug peddling while ensuring **fairness and accountability**?

b. How will you handle **pressure from influential figures** while maintaining integrity?

c. Suggest **long-term policy measures** to prevent drug abuse among school children.

ETHICS - EXAMPLES

1. **Public Service Values and Ethics in Governance:** Delhi Police's 'Mission Reconnect' campaign aims to track and recover stolen phones, ensuring their hassle-free return through a streamlined legal process, including virtual court appearances and a Court Facilitation Unit. The initiative has recovered hundreds of stolen phones, addressing the complexity of the legal system that often deters victims from pursuing their cases.

2. **Crisis Management**: Paramedic Lalit Parmar used quick thinking and a PPE suit from the ambulance to protect himself while spraying a soap-sanitiser mixture on a man attacked by bees, successfully driving them away. Shravan, the victim, was given first aid and transported to the hospital.

3. **Ethics in Science and Technology:** AIIMS surgeons in Delhi performed a rare surgery on a 17-year-old boy from Unnao, removing the extra limbs of his parasitic twin. The procedure involved intricate separation of shared blood vessels, nerves, and tissues near the chest wall, bowels, and liver, restoring his physical appearance and enabling him to lead a normal life.

4. **Lack of Integrity and Professional Ethics**: The Le Scouarnec case, France's largest child sexual abuse trial, involves a former surgeon accused of abusing 299 victims, mostly young children, over 25 years, despite a prior conviction. His crimes, often disguised as medical procedures, were uncovered after a six-year-old's report led to a seven-year investigation, revealing detailed diaries cataloguing the assaults.

5. **Corruption**: NAAC has removed 900 peer assessors from evaluation duty due to irregularities, following an 18-month review and the recent NAAC-KLEF bribery case investigated by the CBI. To ensure transparency, NAAC has on boarded 1,000 new assessors and introduced online and hybrid evaluations to minimise integrity issues.

6. **AI Ethics**: Donald Trump shared an AI-generated video on Truth Social depicting Gaza as a glamorous city called *Trump Gaza*, featuring skyscrapers, bright lights, and a golden statue of himself, alongside Elon Musk and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The video sparked widespread backlash, with critics calling it tone-deaf and exploitative amid the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

7. **Environmental Ethics:** IFS officer L. Krishnamoorthy's conservation efforts at Satpura Tiger Reserve have led to a remarkable increase in the tiger population from 40 to 80, along with habitat restoration and community engagement. His initiatives, including voluntary village relocations, ecotourism development, and technological advancements, have earned him accolades like the Sanctuary Asia Award 2025.

8. **Gender Equality:** Rajat Mittal's book *ZardoZi* (2024) challenges rigid gender norms through the story of Zi, a boy pressured to conform to societal expectations. Through initiatives like *Boyish* and *Menstrupedia*, he advocates for redefining masculinity, encouraging emotional expression, and fostering gender equality.

9. **Social Responsibility:** Despite extreme winters and deep snow in Hirpora, 55-year-old postwoman Ulfata Bano has tirelessly delivered mail for over 30 years, ensuring her village remains connected. Braving freezing temperatures, treacherous terrain, and wildlife risks, she finds purpose in her duty, bringing study materials to students and messages to families.

MODEL ESSAY

"Justice is the sum of all moral duty"

Introduction

- Quote by English journalist and political philosopher William Godwin
- Define justice as a moral and ethical concept ensuring fairness and righteousness.
- Mention how justice integrates moral, legal, and social duties.

Understanding Justice and Moral Duty

- **Justice as a Moral Concept**: Encompasses fairness, impartiality, and ethical responsibility.
- **Types of Justice**: Distributive (fair allocation of resources), Procedural (fair legal processes), Retributive (punishment for wrongdoing), and Restorative (reconciliation and rehabilitation).

Justice in Different Spheres of Society

- **Legal Justice**: Laws ensure rights and prevent exploitation, but legal justice must align with morality.
- **Social Justice**: Addresses discrimination, casteism, and gender inequality to create an inclusive society.
- **Economic Justice**: Focuses on reducing wealth gaps, fair wages, and equal access to opportunities.
- **Political Justice**: Ensures democratic participation and protects fundamental rights.

Challenges in Achieving Justice

- **Subjectivity of Morality:** Different cultures and societies have varying moral standards - conflicting interpretations of justice.
- **Legal vs. Moral Justice:** Laws may not always align with ethical principles **Eg**: historical injustices like apartheid or caste discrimination.
- **Power and Inequality:** Economic and social disparities allow the powerful to manipulate justice in their favour,- disadvantaging marginalised groups.
- **Corruption and Bias:** Judicial and law enforcement systems can be influenced by personal, political, or economic interests, compromising fairness.
- **Slow Judicial Processes:** Backlogged courts and procedural complexities, weakens the effectiveness of legal justice.
- **Conflicting Rights and Interests:** Challenges in balancing individual rights with collective societal interests **Eg**: debates on free speech vs. public order

Way Forward

- **Align Laws with Ethics**:Regular legal reforms to reflect evolving moral values. **Eg**: abolishing Section 377 to uphold LGBTQ+ rights.
- **Judicial Reforms**:Speed up case resolution and enhance accountability. **Eg**: fast-track courts for rape cases.
- **Inclusive Justice**: Improve legal access and representation for the marginalised.**Eg**: Legal Aid Services for underprivileged groups.
- **Ethical Governance**: Promote integrity in government, business, and society. **Eg**: CSR mandates for companies
- **Individuals**: Everyday ethical choices contribute to justice. **Eg**: Refusing to pay bribes or reporting corruption, whistleblowers exposing scam
- **Civil Society and Media**: Act as watchdogs to prevent injustice **Eg**: #MeToo movement exposing workplace harassment

Conclusion

- Reiterate that justice is a reflection of moral duty at personal, social, and institutional levels.
- End with a call for continuous moral introspection to ensure justice in society.

Sample Quotes

- *To read without reflecting is like eating without digesting - Edmund Burke*
- *Weakness of attitude becomes weakness of character - Albert Einstein*
- *Before anything else, preparation is the key to success - Alexander Graham Bell*

MAINS JOT DOWN

GS- I - *MINERALS*

- India has recently imposed **import restrictions on platinum alloys** to prevent the misuse of trade agreements.
- **Platinum (Pt)** is a rare, shiny, and highly stable metal, resistant to corrosion even at high temperatures.
  - » It is mainly found in **alluvial deposits**, with most commercial production coming from **South Africa's cooperite (platinum sulfide)**, and some as a by-product of **copper and nickel refining**.
  - » Platinum is widely used as a **catalyst in the chemical industry**, in **electronics** for hard disks and thermocouples, and in **medicine** as a chemotherapy drug for cancer treatment.

GS- II - *POLITY; FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS*

- The Supreme Court has upheld Ranveer Allahbadia's right to air programs, recognizing it as his only source of livelihood. The Court has previously ruled that Article 21 encompasses both the right to life and the right to livelihood.
- Key SC Judgments on Right to Livelihood:
  - » *Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation (Pavement Dwellers Case):* Declared that the right to livelihood is integral to the right to life, as survival is impossible without means of sustenance.
  - » *M.J. Sivani v. State of Karnataka:* Affirmed that Article 21 protects livelihood, reinforcing its essential role in ensuring the dignity of life.

GS- I - *INDIAN SOCIETY; WOMEN*

- The **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship**, in collaboration with **NITI Aayog**, has launched **Swavalambini – Women Entrepreneurship Programme** to promote **gender-inclusive entrepreneurship**.
- It aims to empower **female students in Higher Education Institutions** with entrepreneurial skills, resources, and mentorship.
- The program includes **awareness sessions, entrepreneurship development, mentorship, and faculty training**, implemented by the **National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD)**.
- It targets **10% of trained participants** to establish enterprises, fostering **women-led economic growth** in India.

GS- III - *CYBER SECURITY*

- **Advanced Cybersecurity Operations Centre (SOC)** has been launched for **Kerala Police** to enhance digital security.
- It is built on **C-DOT's TRINETRA platform**, an AI-powered, indigenous cybersecurity system designed to protect enterprises and critical sectors.
- TRINETRA enables real-time monitoring of **endpoints, network traffic, and user behavior**, proactively identifying vulnerabilities, detecting anomalies, and mitigating cyber risks.
- **C-DOT**, an autonomous **Telecom R&D center** under the **Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Ministry of Communications**, developed this platform to strengthen cybersecurity defenses.

GS- III - *INDIAN ECONOMY*

- The **Finance Minister** launched a **digital footprint-based credit assessment model** for **MSMEs**, enabling **Public Sector Banks (PSBs)** to conduct in-house credit evaluations instead of relying on external agencies, as announced in the **Union Budget 2024-25**.

- This model utilizes **digital verification** methods such as **PAN authentication, mobile and email OTP verification, GST data retrieval, and bank statement analysis**. It aims to streamline and automate the **MSME loan appraisal process**, enhancing efficiency and accessibility.

GS- III - *ENERGY*

- Under the **National Green Hydrogen Mission**, pilot projects for **hydrogen-fueled buses and trucks** have been launched to develop commercially viable hydrogen technologies for the transport sector.

- These projects aim to **validate technical feasibility, assess economic viability, and evaluate the effectiveness of hydrogen refueling stations**, paving the way for sustainable hydrogen-based mobility solutions.

GS- III - *ENVIRONMENT CONSERVATION*

- A recent **Nature Reviews Earth & Environment** article highlights the role of **seagrass beds** in supporting biodiversity, ecosystem services, and the threats they face.

- **Seagrasses** are marine flowering plants found in shallow coastal waters, often in **estuaries and oceanic habitats**.

- Known as the **"lungs of the sea,"** they contribute to oxygen production through photosynthesis, playing a vital role in marine ecosystems.

- Seagrasses are distributed across all continents except **Antarctica**. In **India**, they are found in the **Gulf of Mannar, Palk Bay, Gulf of Kachchh, Lakshadweep lagoons, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands**.

GS- III - *INFRASTRUCTURE*

- The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs** has approved a **ropeway project in Uttarakhand** under the **Parvatmala Pariyojana (2023)** to enhance connectivity in hilly regions.

- Led by the **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH)** and implemented by National Highway Logistics Management Limited (NHLML) (a special-purpose vehicle of NHAI), the project follows a **Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model**, with **60% funding from the Government of India**.

- Ropeways offer **last-mile connectivity**, are **environmentally friendly**, and are well-suited for **difficult terrains**.

GS- III - *DEFENCE*

- DRDO has officially designated its advanced air-to-air missile technology as **"Gandiva"** (Astra MK-3).

- It follows the Astra MK-1 and MK-2, featuring a **Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet** propulsion system that uses atmospheric oxygen as an oxidizer.

- Capable of sustaining **supersonic speeds up to Mach 4.5**, it offers an extended range of **300–350 km**, enhancing India's air combat capabilities.

- **Exercise Desert Hunt 2025**, conducted by the **Indian Air Force** at **Air Force Station Jodhpur**, was a **Tri-Service Special Forces exercise** involving elite units from all three services—**Para (SF) of the Army, MARCOS of the Navy, and Garud Commandos of the Air Force**.

- The exercise focused on **interoperability, synergy, and rapid response** in simulated combat scenarios, enhancing joint operational capabilities.

CHERRYPICKS OF THE WEEK

WALLACE LINE

- It is a faunal boundary line drawn in 1859 by the British naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace and named by the English biologist Thomas Henry Huxley.

- It separates the biogeographic realms of Asia and 'Wallacea', a transitional zone between Asia and Australia formerly also called the Malay Archipelago and the Indo-Australian Archipelago (Present day Indonesia).

- To the west of the line are found organisms related to Asiatic species; to the east, a mixture of species of Asian and Australian origins is present.

CARBON INTENSITY

- It is a measure of how clean our electricity is. It refers to how many grams of carbon dioxide (CO_2) are released to produce a kilowatt hour (kWh) of electricity.

- Electricity that's generated using fossil fuels is more carbon intensive, as the process by which it's generated creates CO_2 emissions.

- Renewable energy sources, such as wind, hydro or solar power, produce next to no CO_2 emissions, so their carbon intensity value is much lower and often zero.

ENDOMETRIOSIS

- It is a disease in which tissue similar to the lining of the uterus grows outside the uterus.

- It can cause severe pain in the pelvis and make it harder to get pregnant.

- Endometriosis can start at a person's first menstrual period and last until menopause.

PLANET PARADE

- It occurs when multiple planets in our solar system are visible in the night sky simultaneously.

- This apparent alignment, known as a **conjunction**, is an optical illusion rather than a perfect planetary line-up in space.

- Since planets move at different speeds, such events are rare. According to NASA, alignments involving four or more planets are significant and do not happen every year.

GOLDEN DOME

- It is a U.S. missile defense program designed to safeguard against threats from ballistic, hypersonic, and cruise missiles, as well as other advanced aerial attacks.

- It is inspired by Israel's **Iron Dome**, a multi-layered missile defense system developed to counter short-range threats.

CORRIGENDUM

In FWD Magazine (issue dated 27th January to 2nd February), on page 9, under the heading Chapter 12: Employment and Skill Development, the term Female Labour Force Participation Rate was incorrectly mentioned. It should be read as **Labour Force Participation Rate**. We regret the error.