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STUDENT NOTE

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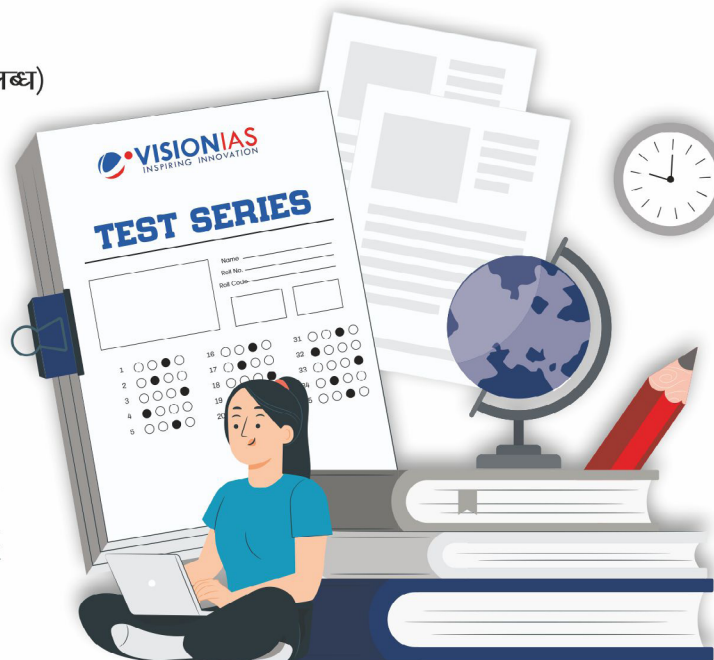
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1. INDIAN SOCIETY AND IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY

1.1. EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

Technologies such as ICT, AI, etc., are playing significant role in shaping and transforming various aspects of the contemporary society.

Positive Impact

- ◆ Enhanced communication and information access,
- ◆ Changing nature of work (remote work)
- ◆ Evolving social connections e.g. Interest-based forums, online spaces for marginalized groups (women, LGBTQIA+ etc.)

Negative Impact

- ◆ Digital divide exacerbates existing social inequalities.
- ◆ Social isolation, addiction/mental health issues (cyberbullying).
- ◆ New parenting challenges (screen time), and infidelity risks from virtual relationships.
- ◆ Job displacement (automation/AI) and loss of traditional skills.
- ◆ Polarization and algorithmic biases (filter bubbles, digital echo-chambers).

Conclusion

Ethical and mindful steering of technology is crucial for societal upliftment.

1.1.1. TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION

Technology has changed the way of learning, empowered educators to deliver immersive, personalized learning experiences, and enhanced accessibility.

Key Initiatives

- ◆ National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL)
- ◆ DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing)
- ◆ SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active –Learning for Young Aspiring Minds)

Positive Impact

- ◆ Personalized learning (e.g., VR/AR in Kerala schools)
- ◆ Improved teacher productivity.
- ◆ Enhanced accessibility (online education, distance learning, breaking caste/class barriers).

Negative Impact

- ◆ Reduced interaction with teachers and barriers in value inculcation.
- ◆ Reduced quality of education and monitoring difficulties.
- ◆ Distraction/misuse (social media, screen time).

Way Forward (by National Digital Education Architecture)

- ◆ Blended learning (online and experiential)
- ◆ Multilingual educational programs
- ◆ Affordable computing devices and infrastructure.

1.1.2. TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIALIZATION

Socialization refers to the process through which individuals **acquire social behaviors, norms, and values** from various social agents such as families, schools, peers etc.

Technology and social media's role in socialization can be referred to as "**socio-virtualization.**"

Positive Impact

- ◆ Broadening perspective due to exposure to diverse cultures/backgrounds/religions.
- ◆ Role of peers in socialization due to increased interaction.
- ◆ Gamification of social skills (e.g. opinion polls), democratized self-expression.

Negative Impact

- ◆ Lack of critical thinking and blind acceptance of norms.
- ◆ Decreased human contact (phones replacing child cuddling).
- ◆ Promotion of vested interests (technology used to propagate orthodox religious/caste norms).

Conclusion

Manage negative consequences by promoting face-to-face socialization and setting boundaries on role of technology.

1.1.3. TECHNOLOGY AND FAMILY

Discussion on topics like Sexuality and Reproduction were considered as a taboo, however, technology has provided platform for people to exchange ideas and share information.

Positive Impact

- ◆ Increased communication/connectivity (video calls)
- ◆ Improved work-life balance (hybrid work)
- ◆ Increased leisure time for women (advanced machines, IoT).

Negative Impact

- ◆ "Alone Together" Paradox: Physical presence but virtual absence leading to social isolation.
- ◆ Impact on parenting (compromised child cuddling, erosion of intergenerational authority)
- ◆ Rise of new conflicts (marital relations, privacy).

Conclusion

Promote face-to-face interaction, reduce screen time, and raise awareness for ethical technology use.

1.1.4. TECHNOLOGY AND SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

Discussion on topics like Sexuality and Reproduction were considered as a taboo, however, technology has provided platform for people to exchange ideas and share information.

Positive Impact

- ◆ Access to credible information (Sexual and Reproductive Health, family planning, telemedicine).
- ◆ Voicing concerns of women and LGBTQIA+ community (social media debates on dowry etc.)
- ◆ Medium of self-expression and providing sex education.

Negative Impact

- ◆ Unwanted exposure (pornography)
- ◆ Compulsive sexual behavior in minors and increased sexual crime. E.g. sexual assault in Metaverse
- ◆ Spread of negative/orthodox patriarchal ideas online.

Conclusion

Parenting, content filtration, and access to technology can address misconceptions.

1.1.5. FINANCIAL REVOLUTION AND SOCIETY

The **Fintech sector** is growing at pace, number of **UPI** transaction are also rising, etc. These developments have changed the way in which financial transactions were earlier conducted in the society.

Positive Impact

- ◆ Increased financial inclusion (UPI benefiting women, SCs) and credit access (micro-finance, P2P lending)
- ◆ Transparency and efficiency (Aadhaar-based DBT)
- ◆ Increased risk-taking/spending capacity.

Negative Impact

- ◆ Increased inequality (cryptocurrency access) and volatility impacting middle class.
- ◆ Rise in financial frauds (digital arrest scams), use of loopholes for money laundering (darknet).

Conclusion

Adequate regulation and international best practices are needed for capitalizing financial inclusion benefits.

1.2. TIER-2 INFLUENCERS REDEFINING CULTURAL CAPITAL IN DIGITAL INDIA

Rise of Tier-2 and Tier-3 digital influencers – content creators from smaller towns – have had profound impact on the dynamics of digital influence and cultural capital in India.

- ◆ **Cultural capital** refers to non-economic assets like education, language, and cultural knowledge that confer social mobility. (**Pierre Bourdieu**)
- ◆ **Traditional cultural capital** shaped by **western, urban and elite influences**. E.g. English language, Delhi and Mumbai influencing fashion trends.
- ◆ **Rise of Tier-2 Influencers** is due to democratized access to internet and social media platforms.

Tier-2 Influencers Redefining Cultural Capital

- ◆ **Decentralization of taste/influence**: Rural/regional symbols complement urban.
- ◆ **Vernacular as cultural power**: 50%+ urban internet users prefer regional language content. (IAMAI)
- ◆ **Revival of folk/local traditions**: E.g. Village Cooking Channel
- ◆ **Democratization of aspiration**: Preference for authenticity over sophistication.
- ◆ **Platform for subaltern voices**: Dalit/tribal/OBC creators E.g. Khabar Lahariya

Implications

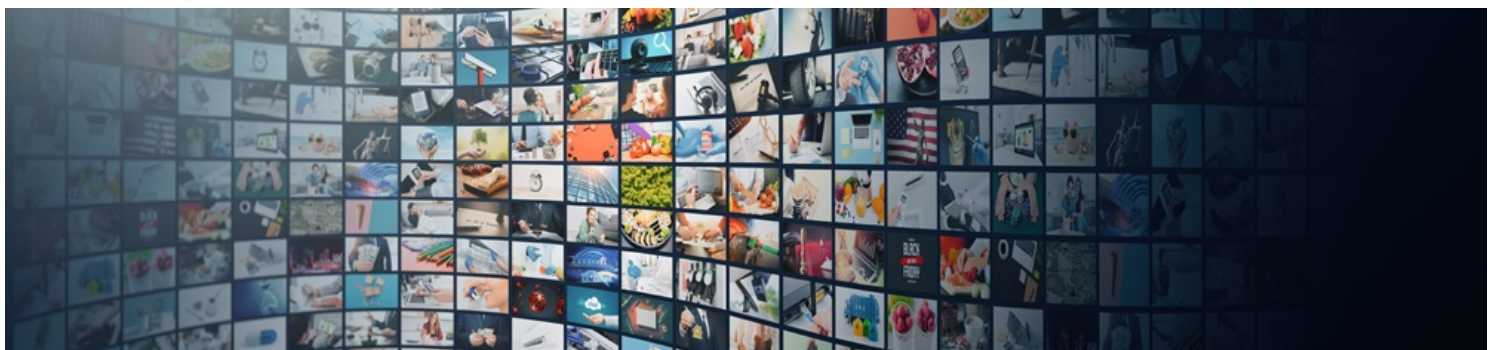
- ◆ **Cultural democratization** and bridging urban-rural divide.
- ◆ **Economic empowerment**: ~80% ShareChat/Moj creators from Tier 2/3 cities
- ◆ **Changing political landscape**: Mobilization on local issues by digital creators in elections.

Challenges

- ◆ **Digital divide** and algorithmic bias (favouring sensational content).
- ◆ **Stereotyping/tokenism** of rural culture, commodification of culture for virality.

Conclusion

Tier-2 influencers foster inclusive, democratic cultural discourse valuing authenticity and diversity.



1.3. CINEMA AND SOCIETY

Cinema is the “seventh art” reflecting individual and societal narratives. Kerala High Court emphasized upholding free speech alongside managing social impact of violent content.

Positive Impact of Cinema on Indian Society

- ◆ **Global recognition of cultural diversity:** Reflect regional cultures E.g. The Elephant Whisperers winning Oscars
- ◆ **Reflect social reality and address taboos:** E.g. evolving family values, women empowerment (Durga Sohay)
- ◆ **Tool for societal change:** Raising awareness, attitude shaping, educational awareness. E.g. Nil Battey Sannata

Negative Impact of Cinema on Indian Society

- ◆ **Gender issues:** Objectification, glorification of toxic masculinity E.g. Animal
- ◆ **Challenges traditional values:** Depicting inter-caste marriages, live-in relationships etc. may result in popular discontent.
- ◆ **Poor representation:** Stereotyped depiction of LGBTQ, disabled; substance glorification (Dev D); political division (propaganda).

Regulation

- ◆ Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (criminalizes obscenity)
- ◆ Indecent Representation of Women Act (1986)
- ◆ Cinematograph Act (1952)
- ◆ Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI - self-regulation).

Conclusion

Cinema shapes society and should evolve to promote inclusivity, diversity, and empathy while respecting public sensibilities and constitutional/social morality.

Art is not a mirror held up to reality but a hammer with which to shape it.



— Bertolt Brecht

1.4. SOCIAL IDENTITIES

Social identity refers to people's **self-categorization** in relation to their **group memberships** (the “we”). These categorizations are generally assigned to us or something we are born into. E.g. **caste, race, gender, sexual orientation**

- ◆ Social identities have undergone significant changes owing to **structural transformations**. E.g. **rise of non-agricultural activities, rural-to-urban migration**, etc.

Relationship between Social Identities and Structural transformations

- ◆ **Inequality and Marginalization:** Disparities in wealth and access to socio-economic opportunities hinders social mobility. E.g. tribals
- ◆ **Political power:** Reinforce power imbalances or provide platform for marginalized. E.g. rise of caste-based political parties
- ◆ **Labour market:** Automation, AI impacts labour depending on factors like skill levels, education.

Contemporary changes in Social identities

	Positives	Negatives
Caste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Increase in upward mobility. ◆ Social identity used for political mobilization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Over-representation of marginalized in low-paying jobs ◆ In-group ideology and antagonism towards out-group. E.g. caste-based violence, honour killings
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Reduced gender earning gaps, recognition and acceptance of Third Gender. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Decline in rural female labour force participation, feminization of agriculture, etc.

Way Forward

- ◆ **Policy and Monitoring** E.g. **1/3rd reservation for women in Legislatures**
- ◆ **Equitable access to opportunities** for education, employment and social safety.

1.5. CHANGING INSTITUTION OF FAMILY

Recently, Supreme Court remarked that family values are eroding pushing the country toward a “One Person, One Family” model, in contrast to the ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’.

Changing Institution of Family in India

Aspect	Traditional Family	New Trends
Structure	Joint family system sharing common household	Predominantly nuclear families
Decision Making	Patriarchal hierarchy; decisions by elders	More egalitarian approach; shared decision-making
Marriage Practices	Arranged marriages; emphasis on lineage and family unity	Increased acceptance of love marriages, live-in relationships
Values	Collectivism and interdependence	Growing individualism and independence

Factors behind the changes in Indian family institution

Economic: expanding labour market demand, higher cost of living

Changing gender roles challenged the traditional patriarchal norms in households.

Westernization and Globalization: Importance to western values like individualism and nuclear families.

Technology increases communication but reduces face-to-face interaction and emotional bonding.

Impact of Changing Family Institution

Positive Impact

- ◆ Promotes active parenting, strong parent-child bond
- ◆ Reduced conflict and greater autonomy

Negative Impact

- ◆ May promote inter-generational conflicts; loss of traditional values
- ◆ Loneliness developed especially among children and elderly; increased pressure on social infrastructure.

Way Forward

- ◆ Strengthen **community-based support systems**. E.g. Kerala's Kudumbashree
- ◆ **Education** and social awareness; **Policy** and legal initiatives for social security.

Conclusion

As the Indian family structure evolves, it is essential to strike a **balance** between **modern aspirations** and **traditional values**.

1.5.1. FAMILY – BASED CHILDCARE

Recently, a shift from Institutional Childcare towards Kinship Childcare or Family Based Childcare is being witnessed in India.

Family-Based Childcare or Kinship Care

It is a form of alternative care, defined as “Care of the child under extended family or with close friends of the family known to the child, whether formal or informal in nature” (UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children).

Initiatives taken for Childcare

- ◆ United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children (UNCRC)
- ◆ Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (UNGAC)
- ◆ Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015
- ◆ Mission Vatsalaya (promote family based non-institutional care of children in difficult circumstances)

Challenges with the Family-Based Childcare

- ◆ Lack of Legal Framework
- ◆ Absence of Support to Caregivers and Lack of Documentation
- ◆ Restricted Mindset and Poor Awareness

Way Forward on Strengthening Family-Based Childcare

- ◆ Capacity building and financial assistance to caregivers
- ◆ Strengthening Local communities E.g. Village Child Welfare Committees
- ◆ Strengthening legal, financial, and institutional support



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2. WOMEN

2.1. WOMEN-LED DEVELOPMENT

30th anniversary of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) reaffirmed women-led development by adopting a declaration on the empowerment of women and girls

- ◆ **Women-led development:** Women are leaders, decision-makers, and innovators in development, shifting from **passive recipients to active agents**.

Significance

- ◆ **Women Empowerment and Gender Equality** to break gender stereotypes.
- ◆ **Economic Empowerment** E.g. Potential 30% increase in GDP if gender gap is bridged
- ◆ **Rural Development & Poverty Alleviation** E.g. NRLM mobilized 8.01 Cr poor women in SHGs

Obstacles

- ◆ **Patriarchal social norms** E.g. only 3% women make independent decisions (NFHS-5)
- ◆ **Lower female literacy** (62.3% vs. global average 79.9%)
- ◆ **Workplace discrimination and gender digital divide** E.g. 1 in 3 women use internet vs. 57% men (NFHS)
- ◆ **Subtle gender discrimination** E.g. reinforcing stereotypes, subconscious bias in hiring/ promotion, motherhood penalty.

Initiatives

- ◆ **Political Empowerment** E.g. Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam 2023
- ◆ **Entrepreneurship** E.g. Startup India, Women ITIs
- ◆ **Economic Empowerment and Gender Budgeting** E.g. PM MUDRA, Lakhpati Didi
- ◆ **Global** E.g. CEDAW 1979, International Women's Day

Conclusion

Empowering women through political, economic, and social reforms ensures sustainable progress and women-led development.

2.2. WOMEN-LED SELF-HELP GROUPS (SHGS): LAKHPATI DIDI

PM felicitated 11 lakh new 'Lakhpati Didis'.

About Lakhpati Didi initiative

- ◆ It aims for **3 crore Lakhpati Didis** under **DAY-NRLM**. A Lakhpati Didi is a **SHG member** who earns an annual household income of **₹1 Lakh or more**.
- ◆ It is under the **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)** scheme of the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD).

Challenges

- ◆ **Socio-cultural rigidities** E.g. patriarchy, caste, illiteracy
- ◆ **Lack of quality training/skilling**
- ◆ **Regional disparities** E.g. 68.56% SHGs in South India (NABARD)

Initiatives for Promotion

- ◆ Capitalization Support (Revolving Fund, CIF)
- ◆ Aajeevika Grameen Express Yojana (AGEY)
- ◆ Startup Village Entrepreneurship Program.

Significance

- ◆ **Women Entrepreneurship, Social Capital, and Economic development** E.g. Women SHG members as Banking Correspondent Sakhis resulted in lowering gross NPAs to 1.6%)

- ◆ **Public service delivery and Poverty alleviation** E.g. Gumla SHGs for Mission Ragi; 65% rural SHG members improved incomes, SBI report

Way Forward

Quality training/skilling, technological advancement (e.g., Project EShakti), regional focus, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) system, coordination with stakeholders.

Conclusion

Lakhpati Didi empowers women, fostering economic independence and inclusive growth in rural India.

2.3. Rising Manosphere Threatening Gender Equality

UN Women warned about “manosphere” as a serious threat to gender equality.

What is Manosphere?

It encompasses online communities promoting narrow, aggressive definitions of masculinity and the false narrative that feminism has harmed men’s rights. Rooted in misogyny and anti-feminist rhetoric, it weaponizes digital platforms.

Causes for rise of Manosphere

- ◆ **Increased manosphere influencers** and algorithmic influence E.g. “AWALT: All women are like that” ideology.
- ◆ **Insecurities**, growing **conservatism** and validation needs E.g. social isolation, individualism
- ◆ **Social changes** challenging traditional gender roles, digital anonymity.

Negative Impacts

- ◆ Increased **misogyny**, **normalized violence** against women including online violence E.g. 16-58% women/girls face online violence.
- ◆ **Societal harm**: Risky behaviors, depression in men, reversing gender equality

Existing Mechanisms

- ◆ **World**: Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), UNFPA “Making All Spaces Safe”, EU’s Digital Services Act (Prohibits misogynistic & gender-based hate content)
- ◆ **India**: Indecent Representation of Women Act (1986), Digital Shakti (NCW), IT Act (2008), Section 75, 78, 79, of the BNS (Online Harassment and Cyber Bullying against women)

Way Forward:

- ◆ **Legal measures** E.g. UK’s Online Safety Act, adopting a **rights-based response** like supporting survivors, youth programs.
- ◆ **Education** as prevention E.g. media literacy
- ◆ Promoting anti-manosphere content creators E.g. HeForShe.

Conclusion

Manosphere threatens gender equality; requires multi-stakeholder approach: legal safeguards, media literacy, positive male role models to foster inclusive digital spaces.

2.4. SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF WOMEN AT WORKPLACE

Justice Hema Committee report revealed exploitation and sexual harassment in Malayalam film industry.

Sexual Harassment at Workplace

- ◆ **Definition**: It refers to any unwelcome sexual advance, demand for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that occurs at workplace. (POSH Act)
 - ▶ ~419 cases were reported in the country in 2022. (NCRB)
- ◆ **Forms**: Quid Pro Quo (favors for benefits), Hostile Work Environment (offensive, intimidating).
- ◆ **Challenges**: Under-reporting, non-formation of ICCs, limited recourse for informal sector, lack of awareness.

Initiatives

- ◆ Vishaka Guidelines (1997)
- ◆ POSH Act (2013) (ICC, LCCs)

- ◆ SHe-Box (online complaint system)
- ◆ CEDAW (universal human right)

Impact

- ◆ **On Individuals:** Career disruption, health impact (stress, anxiety, low self-worth), violation of Fundamental rights of women (Articles 14, 15, 21).
- ◆ **Workplace:** Toxic work culture, decline in productivity.
- ◆ **Society:** Perpetuates gender inequality, lower women workforce participation, gender pay gap.

Way Forward

- ◆ **Strengthen POSH Act implementation:** audits, stricter penalties, accessible LCCs
- ◆ Promote gender equality at workplace
- ◆ **Hema Committee recommendations:** characterization of women in cinema, gender awareness training, redefining masculinity/femininity, welfare fund.

Conclusion

Safe workplace for women is crucial for rights, career growth, and societal progress; requires POSH Act enforcement, gender equality promotion, and inclusive work cultures.



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3. CHILDREN

3.1. TECHNOLOGY AND CHILDREN

Key Data

- ◆ 71% youth are online whereas, 2/3rds school-age children lack home internet access (UNICEF-ITU)
- ◆ 82% 14-16 yr olds use smartphones. However, 57% rural children use smartphones for education and 76% use for social media. (ASER 2024)

Positive Impacts

- ◆ Digital literacy and enhanced learning
- ◆ Improved communication and social connection
- ◆ Fostering creativity/self-expression.

Negative Impacts

- ◆ Physical/mental health issues E.g. impact on vision, sleep, addiction
- ◆ Social/developmental challenges due to reduced face-to-face interaction
- ◆ Reduced attention span and "Brain Rot"
- ◆ Exposure to inappropriate content E.g. cyberbullying

Way Forward

Policy interventions (parental consent, age-appropriate content, e.g., EU's BIK+), prioritizing real-life connections, education/awareness (digital skills).

3.2. SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION IN CHILDREN

Australia banned social media for under-16s.

Reasons

- ◆ Peer influence (FOMO, validation)
- ◆ Instant gratification (dopamine) and algorithm-driven engagement
- ◆ Parental neglect ("iPad kid")
- ◆ Escapism (loneliness, stress)

Arguments For Ban

- ◆ Cyberbullying (depression, anxiety, suicide)
- ◆ Excessive screen time (reduced physical activity, poor sleep)
- ◆ Attention problems and Impaired social skills
- ◆ Dangerous viral trends (e.g., "Blackout Challenge").

Arguments Against Ban

- ◆ Socialization/learning benefits and ban prevents learning digital skills
- ◆ Ineffectiveness as teens may move to Dark Web
- ◆ Impractical age limits due to varying maturity
- ◆ Focus on platform improvement

Way Forward

- ◆ **Safety-by-Design** E.g. default privacy, AI for detecting harmful content
- ◆ **Improving digital skills** through education, literacy, self-regulation E.g. Kerala's D-DAD
- ◆ **Parental involvement/control, technological** interventions E.g. screen time limits, activity reports.

Conclusion

Ban has benefits, but comprehensive solutions need platform reforms, digital literacy, parental involvement, and safeguards.

3.3. CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATIVE AND ABUSE MATERIAL (CSEAM)

Supreme Court penalized possession/storage of CSEAM under POCSO Act, 2012, overturning Madras HC ruling that mere possession was not violation.

Highlights of SC Judgment

- ◆ Criminalized CSEAM possession (physical or constructive)
- ◆ Common malevolent intent with child sexual abuse and violation of fundamental rights of children
- ◆ Change terminology from “child pornography” to “CSEAM” and suggested amendment to POCSO Act.

SC Suggestions

- ◆ Adolescent Education Program E.g., Jharkhand's Udaan; Expert Committee for POCSO awareness
- ◆ Support and rehabilitation (counseling, therapeutic interventions),
- ◆ Government's role E.g. awareness via media
- ◆ Promote behavioral change to make a compassionate society.

Impact

- ◆ Psychological trauma, dehumanization due to victimization cycle (stigma, shame, guilt)
- ◆ Economic impact E.g. academics, employment.

POCSO Act 2012

- ◆ Comprehensive legislation protecting children from sexual abuse/exploitation
- ◆ Defines “child” as someone below 18 years of age.
- ◆ Covers sexual assault, harassment, pornography
- ◆ 2019 Amendment introduced stringent punishments (death penalty); special courts.

Other Measures

- ◆ **Legal**
 - ▶ IT Act (2000): Penalties for online obscene/pornographic content
 - ▶ Juvenile Justice Act (2015)
 - ▶ Digital Personal Data Protection Act (2023)
 - ▶ Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021
- ◆ **Policy/Schemes:**
 - ▶ National Action Plan for Children (2016)
 - ▶ Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) Scheme (2019) (94% disposal rate in 2023)
 - ▶ Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children (CCPWC)
- ◆ **Global:** SDG 16.2, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN-CRC), 1990; Social Media Platforms E.g. YouTube's Child Sexual Abuse Imagery (CSAI) Match

Conclusion

SC's decision criminalizing CSEAM possession strengthens child protection, setting stage for stronger enforcement.

3.4. CHILD LABOUR

25th anniversary of **ILO Convention No. 182** (worst forms of child labour) in 2024.

Child Labour: It is the work that children are too young to perform or work harmful to their health, safety, or morals.

Current Status

- ◆ ~138 million children globally (ILO-UNICEF)
- ◆ 10.1 million in India (Census 2011)
- ◆ agriculture is largest sector
- ◆ SDG 8.7 target of eliminating child labour by 2025 not achieved.

Provisions to Eliminate Child Labour

- ◆ **Constitutional:** Article 23 (forced labor), 24 (prohibition in factories), 39(e) (tender age not abused).
- ◆ **Policy, Legal and Schemes:**
 - ▶ Child and Adolescent Labour Act (1986)
 - ▶ Commission for Protection of Child Rights Act (2005)
 - ▶ National Policy on Child Labour (1987)
 - ▶ NCLP Scheme (1988), PENCIL portal.
- ◆ **Global Initiatives:** UN Declaration on Rights of Child (1959), ILO Conventions (No. 138, 182)

Reasons for Persistence

- ◆ Vicious cycle of Poverty
- ◆ Weak law enforcement E.g. family enterprise loophole
- ◆ Cultural acceptance and high demand due to low wages
- ◆ Vulnerabilities in distress E.g. migration, trafficking

Way Forward

- ◆ Enforcement of laws and inter-ministerial coordination
- ◆ Socio-economic empowerment through education, skilling, employment
- ◆ International cooperation in cross-border trafficking E.g. South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children

3.5. CHILD MARRIAGE

Supreme Court issued guidelines for prohibition of child marriage.

Current Status (NFHS-5)

- ◆ 23.3% women (20-24) married before 18; 17.7% men (25-29) married before 21.
- ◆ Prevalence reduced by half since 2006.
- ◆ Cases registered under Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 increased from 395 (2017) to 1050 (2021). (NCRB)

Reasons

- ◆ Poverty: Girls as economic liabilities, dowry, lack of education
- ◆ Cultural and traditional beliefs E.g. family honor, virginity taboo
- ◆ Fear of safety and security and legal/enforcement gaps seen in low conviction and reporting.

Consequences

- ◆ **Physical:** reproductive health issues, forced sexual activity, domestic violence E.g. 6.8% women aged 15-19 were already mothers or pregnant (NFHS-5)
- ◆ **Developmental:** low education and life skills, low Labour force participation
- ◆ Human rights violations, marital rape vulnerability, psychological impact, global impact (SDG 5).

Initiatives

- ◆ **India:**
 - ▶ Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA) (2006)
 - ▶ Schemes: Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, CHILDLINE
 - ▶ National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), Civil Society role E.g. UNICEF Bihar
- ◆ **Global:** United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (India signatory), Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage (UNICEF/UNFPA).

Way Forward (SC guidelines)

- ◆ Legal Enforcement: Special Police Unit, Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPO)
- ◆ Judicial Measures: Magistrates' Suo moto action, Special Fast-Track Courts
- ◆ Community Involvement E.g. "Child Marriage Free Village" Initiative for certification like ODF.
- ◆ Awareness and Capacity Building about Sexuality/Rights Education, training for workers

- ◆ Technology E.g. Centralized Reporting Portal, 'Bal Vivah Mukh Bharat' portal
- ◆ Funding: Dedicated Budget Allocation, JJ Fund

Conclusion

Efficient law enforcement, community/civil society involvement, and parental sensitization are key to eradication. E.g. Assam's Nijut Moina scheme.



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4. OTHER VULNERABLE SECTIONS

4.1. TRIBAL POPULATION IN INDIA

Tribal people are distinct social and cultural groups that share collective ancestral ties to the lands and natural resources where they live. e.g., Maori, Bhils

Current Status

- ◆ 10.45 crore (8.6%) population (2011 Census)
- ◆ 40.6% below poverty line (Tribal Health Report)
- ◆ Criteria for PVTGs (75 notified): Pre-agricultural tech, low literacy, economic backwardness, stagnant/declining population.

Issues

- ◆ Erosion of identity E.g. dialect extinction
- ◆ Forced displacement and climate vulnerability
- ◆ Low literacy: 59% vs. general 73% (Census 2011)
- ◆ Health: Genetic disorders (SCD), triple health burden (malnutrition, communicable/non-communicable diseases, mental illness/addiction)

Constitutional Provisions

- ◆ Article 342 (Scheduled Tribe notification)
- ◆ Schedule V and VI (Article 244)
- ◆ Article 275 (special funds)
- ◆ Article 338A (National Commission for STs)

Welfare Measures

- ◆ **Legislative:** The Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act, 1996, Forest Rights Act (FRA) (2006), SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act (1989).
- ◆ **Government Schemes:** Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS), PM Vanbandhu Vikas Yojana, PM Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAAGY), PM Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana.

Way Forward (Panchsheel Principles)

- ◆ Identify and assess PVTG Vulnerabilities
- ◆ Rights-based development (free, prior, informed consent)
- ◆ Participatory governance by strengthening traditional institutions
- ◆ Culturally sensitive services (healthcare)
- ◆ Relevant education (curricula in tribal languages)

4.1.1. DHARTI AABA JANJATIYA GRAM UTKARSH ABHIYAN (PM-JUGA)

PM launched PM-JUGA to improve socio-economic conditions of tribal communities.

Key Features

- ◆ Objective: Saturation coverage of schemes in tribal-majority villages/aspirational districts
- ◆ Time period: 5 years (2024-29)
- ◆ Whole-of-government approach; Mapping/Monitoring on PM Gati Shakti Portal.

Goals

- ◆ Developing Enabling Infrastructure (pucca house, water, electricity, roads, mobile/ internet)
- ◆ Economic Empowerment (Skill Development, Entrepreneurship, livelihoods, TMMC)
- ◆ Access to Good Education (GER increase, tribal hostels)
- ◆ Healthy Lives & Dignified Ageing (quality health, immunization, SCD diagnosis).

Innovative Schemes: 1000 Tribal Home Stays, Sustainable Livelihood for FRA holders, improving residential schools/hostels (PM-SHRI lines), CoC for SCD, 100 Tribal Multipurpose Marketing Centers (TMMC).

Conclusion

PM-JUGA provides a comprehensive approach (infrastructure, economic, education, healthcare) to bridge gaps and achieve inclusive growth among tribes.

4.2. ATROCITIES AGAINST SCHEDULED CASTES

Standing Committee on Social Justice raised concerns over states' failure to address atrocities against SCs.

◆ **Definition:** SCs are notified by President (Article 341), Parliament can amend list.

Current Status of SCs

- ◆ Article 342 (Scheduled Tribe notification)
- ◆ Schedule V and VI (Article 244)
- ◆ Article 275 (special funds)
- ◆ Article 338A (National Commission for STs)

Mechanisms to tackle caste-based Atrocities

- ◆ **Legislative:** The Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act, 1996, Forest Rights Act (FRA) (2006), SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act (1989).
- ◆ **Government Schemes:** Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS), PM Vanbandhu Vikas Yojana, PM Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAAGY), PM Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana.

Reasons for Continued Atrocities

- ◆ Complacency/apathy of state/police, lack of relief/rehab, absence of Protection Cells
- ◆ Poor economic status (34% SCs are BPL), land alienation, bonded labor,
- ◆ Rising political awareness/rivalry, social prejudices,
- ◆ Failure to enforce legal mechanisms (only 194 special courts in 498 districts).

Empowerment Initiatives

- ◆ **Education:** SHREYAS, NOS Scheme for SCs, SHRESHTA
- ◆ **Economic/Entrepreneurship:** Credit Enhancement Guarantee Scheme, PM-AJAY, NSFDC, Ambedkar Social Innovation and Incubation Mission (ASIIM)
- ◆ **Eliminate Manual Scavenging:** NAMASTE scheme

Way Forward

- ◆ Utilize funds efficiently with quantifiable targets for welfare schemes
- ◆ Identify poorest SC households (SHREYAS) and promote skill training (PM-DAKSH)
- ◆ Caste-sensitivity training to public officials, police, judiciary

Conclusion

Despite protections, SCs face discrimination; requires stronger state accountability, targeted fund utilization, and expanded skill development.

4.3. PERSONS WITH DISABILITY (PwDs)

Definition of PwDs: Person with long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment interacting with barriers hindering full participation.

Current Status

- ◆ 2.21% of population
- ◆ 44% women, 69% live in rural areas, 55% illiterate.

Challenges

- ◆ Stereotype and social stigma create social barriers to accessing rights and opportunities
- ◆ Policy barriers and lack of awareness
- ◆ Accessibility hindered in public places
- ◆ Communication challenges for blind/deaf etc.
- ◆ Poverty reinforces disability and vice versa

Initiatives

- ◆ **Legal:** Free education up to 18, RPD Act (2016) (4% govt employment, 5% education reservation).
- ◆ **Policies:** NEP (2020), National Policy for PwDs (2006).
- ◆ **Addressing as 'Divyangjan':** Removes stigma.
- ◆ **Schemes:** ADIP, DDRS, NDFDC, Accessible India Campaign.
- ◆ **Global:** UNCRPD, Biwako Millennium Framework, Incheon Strategy.

Way Forward

- ◆ Early diagnosis and intervention
- ◆ Improve data collection, social protection, assistive care
- ◆ Participatory approach "Nothing about us, without us".

4.3.1. RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (RPWD) ACT, 2016

Supreme Court directed Centre to frame mandatory rules under RPwD Act for accessibility.

Judgment Highlights

- ◆ **Rights-based approach** to accessibility as a human or fundamental right.
- ◆ **Social model of disability** upheld: Focuses on removing social barriers to enable social change.
- ◆ **Need to fill legislative gap:** Rule 15(1) of 2017 Rules declared ultra vires (lacked mandatory prescription)
- ◆ Section 40 requires mandatory accessibility standards E.g. Universal Design, comprehensive inclusion, assistive technologies.

Key Provisions

- ◆ Defines PwD, recognizes 21 disabilities (acid attack victims, intellectual disability, mental illness)
- ◆ Mandates social security (based on adequate standard of living)
- ◆ Institutions: National/State Funds, Chief Commissioner/Commissioners, Central/State Advisory Boards, Special Courts/Public Prosecutors.

Conclusion

SC's directive ensures mandatory accessibility, upholding disability rights through a social model approach.

4.4. SENIOR-CARE

Current Status

- ◆ ~10% (104 million) of population (60+), to exceed 20% by 2050 (UNFPA 2023).
- ◆ Global population 60+ was 1 billion in 2020, to reach 2.1 billion by 2050.
- ◆ 2/3rds elderly live in low/middle-income countries by 2050.

Challenges

- ◆ Health (lack of geriatric care)
- ◆ Social (rural-urban disparities, gender inequalities, inadequate elder-friendly infra)
- ◆ Economic dependency (70% elderly depend on family), digital illiteracy
- ◆ Underdeveloped care economy (undervalued/underpaid care jobs)

Provisions

- ◆ **Constitutional:** Article 41 (right to public assistance in old age), 7th Schedule (old age pension, social security).
- ◆ **Legislative/Policy:** Maintenance & Welfare of Parents & Senior Citizens Act (2007), NALSA Scheme (2016), NPOP (1999), National Social Assistance Plan (IGNOAPS, IGNDPS)

Initiatives

- ◆ **Indian:** PM Vaya Vandana Yojana (2015), Atal Vayo Abhyudaya Yojana (AVYAY), Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (2017), SACRED portal, SAGE initiative, Accessible India Campaign.
- ◆ **Global:** UN Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2002), WHO Global Strategy (2016-20), UN Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-30), Japan's "Healthy Japan 21 Program"

Way Forward

- ◆ Promote Healthy Ageing and Silver economy
- ◆ Health empowerment (geriatric care, preventive healthcare)
- ◆ Social empowerment (elder for elderly, community sensitization)
- ◆ Economic empowerment (re-skilling, pensions)

4.4.1. INTER-GENERATIONAL COMMUNICATION GAP

HelpAge India report 'Understanding Intergenerational Dynamics & Perceptions on Ageing' highlights demographic shifts transforming intergenerational dynamics.

Key Findings

- ◆ Negative perceptions of ageing E.g. old age related to loneliness
- ◆ Youth underestimate elder emotional distress, emotional disconnect
- ◆ Digital divide: only 41% elders own smartphones, 13% use social media
- ◆ Digital teaching challenges: Youth perceive elders as disinterested/forgetful; elders cite youth impatience/rushed explanations
- ◆ Shared old age fears (E.g. loneliness, poor health, financial insecurity), preference for family care, stronger bonds in non-metro cities.

Disruptive Reasons

- ◆ Generational Gap Perception Index: Distance influenced by education, dependence, emotional distance than by age alone.
- ◆ Communication barriers (busy youth schedules)
- ◆ Comfort levels vary by topic and relationships.

Initiatives

- ◆ Ageing sensitization in curricula, youth-led training initiatives E.g. "Digital Buddy" programs
- ◆ Community-based elder support centers, intergenerational programs E.g. "Wisdom Exchange"

Conclusion

Gaps persist due to busy schedules/digital divides; bridge through empathy education and community-based exchange.

4.5. MANUAL SCAVENGING

Supreme Court (SC) sought action taken report on its directions in **Dr Balram Singh V. Union of India & Ors. (2023)** on **Manual Scavenging**

SC Directions

- ◆ Centre to frame **policies** for phased eradication of manual scavenging (E.g. Railways)
- ◆ Full rehabilitation (E.g. employment, education, skill training) for workers/deceased

- ◆ Enhanced compensation (₹30 lakh for sewer deaths, ₹20 lakh for disabilities)
- ◆ National Survey within one year to identify manual scavengers
- ◆ NCSK, NCSC, NCST, Union govt to coordinate in setting up committees, training modules, portal/dashboard.

About Manual Scavenging

- ◆ **Definition** as per **Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation (PEMSR) Act, 2013**:
 - ▶ The practice of manually cleaning, carrying, or handling human excreta from insanitary latrines, open drains, or pits.
- ◆ Banned since 1993, it is a Cognizable/non-bailable offense
- ◆ 456 of 775 districts no longer have manual scavenging (January 2025)

Factors Sustaining the practice

- ◆ Underreported data
- ◆ Cultural resistance (97% SCs)
- ◆ Lack of regulation/ enforcement
- ◆ Poor sewer design

Initiatives

- ◆ **Schemes: National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE scheme)** (2023), Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban 2.0)
- ◆ **Institutions:** National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK), National Safai Karamchari Financial Development Corporation (1997)

Way Forward (NHRC Recommendations)

- ◆ Distinguish sanitation workers/manual scavengers
- ◆ Empanel/regulate de-sledging market, provide safety gear/awareness workshops
- ◆ Financial assistance for tech innovations, technological intervention (automated machines, robots, e.g., Kerala's Bandicoot)
- ◆ Upgrade sanitation infrastructure and ensure periodic survey/identification

Conclusion

SC's directives and tech interventions are crucial for eliminating manual scavenging and ensuring worker dignity.

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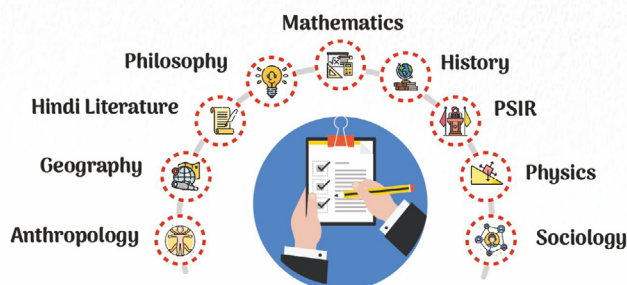
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5. EDUCATION

5.1. SCHOOL EDUCATION

Current Status

- ◆ Gross Enrolment Ratio (GERP): Elementary: 93%, Secondary: 77.4%, Higher secondary: 56.2%
- ◆ Dropout rate (Primary: 1.9%, Secondary: 14.1%)
- ◆ Mean years of schooling: 13 years (UNDP 2025)
- ◆ Poor learning outcomes: More than half Std V cannot read basic text 2 grades below (ASER 2024).

Issues

- ◆ Poor pedagogy (rote-based)
- ◆ Teaching issues (teacher shortage, non-teaching tasks)
- ◆ Infrastructure deficit

Way Forward

- ◆ Exchange programs (students/teachers)
- ◆ Adoption of schools by private sector (CSR)
- ◆ Reshaping pedagogy (experiential, arts-integrated)
- ◆ Teacher training (face-to-face mode, Justice Verma Committee 2012)
- ◆ Continuous assessment approach E.g. CBSE's Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation system

5.2. THREE-LANGUAGE FORMULA

Some states are opposing National Education Policy (NEP) 2020's three-language formula.

Evolution of three-language formula

- ◆ Constitutional provisions: Article 350A (instruction in mother-tongue at primary stage), 351 (development of Hindi language)
- ◆ NEP 1968 adopted the 3-language formula based on Kothari Commission recommendations
- ◆ 1992 Programme of Action, RTE Act 2009: Promote mother tongue as medium of instruction
- ◆ NEP 2020: Home/mother tongue for medium of instruction till Grade 5 and 2 of 3 languages to be Indian.

Arguments For 3-language Formula

- ◆ Fulfills Constitutional Mandate
- ◆ Promotes Multilingualism: widens access, improves cognitive abilities, UNESCO Report
- ◆ Cultural significance (multiculturalism, national unity).

Arguments Against 3-language Formula

- ◆ Politicisation (Son-of-the-soils protests)
- ◆ Choice vs. imposition
- ◆ Overburdening primary students
- ◆ Implementation challenges (qualified teachers, infrastructure, diverse languages)
- ◆ AI translation reduces necessity.

Initiatives Promoting Multilingualism: ASMITA, Bahubhasha Shabdkosh, Real-time Translation Architecture (NEFT), Bharatiya Bhasha Pustak Scheme, Bhashini.

Way Forward

- ◆ Prioritize Quality Education (avoid politicization, improve teaching/learning)
- ◆ Strengthen Cooperative Federalism
- ◆ Align with UNESCO guidance: data-driven policy, develop learning materials/assessments, qualified teachers, community engagement.

Conclusion

Promotes multilingualism but faces challenges; requires depoliticization, teacher training, and flexible state-specific approaches.

5.3. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2024 and Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) 2023-24 reports on school education highlight learning outcomes in school education.

Current Status (ASER 2024)

- ◆ Reversal of post-pandemic learning gap (improved reading/arithmetic)
- ◆ Gender Gap in Smartphone Ownership (36.2% boys vs. 26.9% girls)
- ◆ Smartphone Usage more for social media (76%) than education (57%).

Reasons for Improvements

- ◆ Policy Reforms E.g. NEP 2020, Delhi's Happiness Curriculum
- ◆ Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) Initiatives E.g. NIPUN Bharat, ULLAS
- ◆ Digitization E.g. PM e-Vidya, Diksha, Swayam Prabha; increased computer/internet access in schools (UDISE+)
- ◆ Others: parental involvement, vernacular medium, community involvement, investment in government schools.

Challenges

- ◆ Persistent Socio-Economic Disparities: unequal access, gender prioritization
- ◆ Inadequate infrastructure/resource allocation (3.1% GDP on education, target 6%)
- ◆ Lack of quality education E.g. teaching inefficiencies, pedagogy, curriculum
- ◆ Rote learning and exam-centric focus
- ◆ Issues with government schools E.g. teacher shortage/absenteeism

Way Forward

- ◆ Sustain improvements and share best practices E.g. Goa's AI systems, online teacher training
- ◆ Improve "Hardware" (physical/digital infra, knowledge access)
- ◆ Improve "software" (teaching methodology, teacher training, curriculum, interaction quality).

Conclusion

Focus on learning outcomes reflects NEP 2020 and NCF 2023, aiming for holistic, experiential, value-based learning.

5.4. QUALITY HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

NITI Aayog launched report on 'Expanding Quality Higher Education through States and State Public Universities'.

Scenario (AISHE 2021-22)

- ◆ GER increased to 28.4% (NEP 2020 aims 50% by 2035), Gender Parity Index (GPI) improved to 1.01,
- ◆ Funding: 0.62% of GDP for University HE, 1.57% for overall Tertiary Education.

Challenges

- ◆ Inefficient Accreditation (only 39% accredited),
- ◆ Financing Gap (35x lower per capita spending than US),
- ◆ Suboptimal Research (low R&D, lack of incentives),
- ◆ Policy & Governance Issues (weak MERU, tax burden on CSR, limited autonomy),
- ◆ Regional Disparities (Sikkim high density, Bihar low; Southern states lead GER).

Key Initiatives

- ◆ Budget 2025-26 (PMRF, IIT seats, Bharatiya Bhasha textbooks),
- ◆ Assessment & Ranking (NIRF 2015),
- ◆ Infrastructure (HEFA, NDEAR 2021, PM-USHA),

- ◆ R&D (ANRF, SPARC, ONOS, PAIR Programme),
- ◆ Employability (NCRF, PM Internship Scheme).

Way Forward

- ◆ Funding (Telangana's TASK),
- ◆ Governance (regulatory-facilitator model, autonomy),
- ◆ Infrastructure (Odisha's OHEPEE),
- ◆ Digitalization (Kerala's 'Let's Go Digital'),
- ◆ Improve Research Quality (National Research Policy, faculty capacity, internationalization via GIFT City, industry collaboration, incubation centers).

Conclusion

Progress in GER/gender parity, but needs concerted efforts for funding, research, infrastructure, autonomy, and industry collaboration.

5.4.1. Performance of Indian Universities in QS World University Rankings

Indian institutions showed significant improvement in QS World University Rankings 2026.

About QS Rankings

Annually by Quacquarelli Symonds, based on Research/Discovery, Employability/Outcomes, Global Engagement, Learning Experience, Sustainability.

Key Findings

- ◆ Five-fold increase (11 universities in 2015 to 54 in 2026),
- ◆ India is 4th most represented (after US, UK, China),
- ◆ IIT dominance (IIT Delhi 123rd).

Reasons for Improvement

- ◆ Academic reputation (high Citations per Faculty),
- ◆ Good performance in Engineering/Technology, Infrastructure Development (PM-USHA),
- ◆ Enhanced employability (PM Internship Scheme, NATS),
- ◆ Higher education sustainability performance, policy reform (NEP 2020).

Indian Ranking Mechanisms

- ◆ NIRF (2015) for inter-institutional competition,
- ◆ AISHE (2010-11) (Teachers, enrollment, programs, results, finance, infrastructure).

Conclusion

Rise reflects sustained reforms; addressing structural challenges essential for long-term excellence.

5.5. Foreign University Campus in India

University of Southampton, UK, opened campus under UGC Regulations, 2023.

UGC Regulations (2023)

- ◆ **Aim:** Facilitate entry of top-ranked foreign universities (NEP 2020) to internationalize HE.
- ◆ **Provisions:** Criteria (top 500 global/subject-wise),
- ◆ **UGC approval** (in-principle, within 2 years of establishment),
- ◆ **Faculty Autonomy** to FHEIs with regard to qualifications, salary, conditions, etc.
- ◆ **Student Mobility:** Credit transfers between main campus-India campus and between Indian institutions-FHEI campuses)

Arguments in Favor

- ☐ Global Exposure, Improved Access (affordable locally),
- ☐ Innovation/Knowledge Transfer,
- ☐ Competition for local institutions,
- ☐ Positioning India as Global Study Hub.

Arguments Against

- ☐ Disadvantage for Domestic Institutions
- ☐ Education Commercialization (high fees)
- ☐ Brain Drain,
- ☐ Unequal Access,

Challenges in Regulation

Conflict between FHEI regulations abroad & India, balancing autonomy & inclusivity, lack of clarity on IP/research, multiple regulatory bodies, faculty recruitment/visa issues.

Way Forward

- ◆ Ensure compliance with national standards,
- ◆ Balance autonomy/oversight (prevent commercialization),
- ◆ Align programs with India's needs,
- ◆ Coordination between regulatory bodies, regulatory clarity (IP, data privacy, fees),
- ◆ Collaboration (research/teaching, e.g., IITB-Monash), create incubation centers.

Conclusion

Offer global exposure but need balanced regulation to prevent commercialization, ensure equitable access, and protect domestic institutions.

5.6. Ragging in India

Kerala HC directed state government to draft rules for anti-ragging law enforcement.

Consequences:

- ◆ **Victims:** PTSD, academic decline, low self-esteem.
- ◆ **Institutions:** Loss of reputation, undermines ethical values, administrative challenges.
- ◆ **Family:** Emotional/psychological distress, financial burden.
- ◆ **Perpetrators:** Career setbacks, moral/ethical degradation.

Challenges in Eradication

Deep-rooted cultural/traditional acceptance, fear of retaliation, lack of strict enforcement (burden of proof on victims).

UGC Regulations (2009)

- ◆ Mandatory for HEIs, Joint sensitization programs,
- ◆ burden of proof on perpetrator,
- ◆ Police/local admin/institution vigil.

Way Forward

- ◆ Prioritize student safety over institution's reputation,
- ◆ Raghavan Committee (2007) recommendations (NAAC accreditation factor, "Mentoring Cells"),
- ◆ 2009 SC Directives (display contact details, annual info to parents/guardians).

Conclusion

Zero-tolerance approach, strict enforcement, and cultural shift through awareness/mentorship crucial for safe campuses.

6. Healthcare

6.1. Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY

Union Cabinet approved health cover for senior citizens (70+ regardless of income) under AB PM-JAY.

Details of Expansion

- ◆ Benefits ~6 crore senior citizens,
- ◆ Family-based cover of ₹5 lakh annually,
- ◆ Top-up of ₹5 lakhs for existing beneficiaries,
- ◆ Choice between existing public schemes/PM-JAY,
- ◆ Eligible even if privately insured/ESIC.

Need for Covering Seniors

- ◆ Rising population (70+ grown to 4.3% in 2021, expected to double by 2031),
- ◆ Inadequate security net (only 1/5th elderly covered by health insurance, 78% without pension),
- ◆ Dependency on family (~70%).

About AB PM-JAY (2018)

- ◆ Centrally Sponsored Scheme, reduces financial burden on poor/vulnerable, ensures UHC.
- ◆ Coverage: 12 crore families (~55 crore beneficiaries) via SECC-2011/RSBY.
- ◆ Funding: Centre-State 60:40 (NE/Himalayan 90:10, UTs 100%).
- ◆ Implementing Agency: NHA.

Key Components

- ◆ Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAMs) (1.5 lakh, comprehensive primary care),
- ◆ PMJAY (₹5 lakh/family/year for secondary/tertiary, pre/post-hospitalization, pre-existing conditions),
- ◆ Nationwide Portability.

Key Achievements

Improved healthcare accessibility (35.4 Cr Ayushman cards, 7.79 Cr admissions), reduction in healthcare burden (21% OOPe reduction, 8% decrease in emergency loans), gender equity (49% cards to women), promoting healthcare infrastructure (district hospitals net benefit \$26.1 million).

- ◆ **Challenges (CAG Report 2023):** Database Errors (invalid data, duplicates, incorrect family sizes), Infrastructure Issues, Financial Irregularities, Implementation Delays.

Conclusion

AB PM-JAY transformed healthcare; NHA must implement proactive measures for effective implementation.

6.2. Digital Health

WEF highlighted India's potential as global pathfinder in digital health.

Significance

- ◆ Enhanced accessibility/efficiency (telemedicine)
- ◆ Personalized care, early diagnosis/chronic disease management,
- ◆ Evidence-based healthcare (Unique Health ID).

Concern

- ◆ Privacy/Security (AIIMS cyber-attack),
- ◆ Algorithmic Bias (US example),
- ◆ Equity/Access (poor connectivity, digital literacy),
- ◆ Standardization Issues,
- ◆ Accountability Challenges,
- ◆ Quality Concerns (telehealth accuracy).

Global Initiative on Digital Health (GIDH)

- ◆ WHO managed network for global health, aims to improve global health through standardized digital solutions,
- ◆ 4 pillars (Country Needs Tracker, Country Resource Portal, Transformation Toolbox, Convening & Knowledge Exchange).
- ◆ Objectives: Align with WHO Strategy, support technical assistance, facilitate transformation tools.

Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM):

- ◆ Aims to connect digital health solutions of hospitals.
- ◆ **Principles:** Free registration, voluntary participation, opt-out, privacy protection. Implementation: NHA.
- ◆ **Components:** ABHA ID (~79 Cr accounts), Health Professional Registry (~6.57 lakh professionals), Healthcare Facility Registry (>4 lakh facilities), Unified Health Interface (UHI), Health Claim Exchange (HCX).
- ◆ **Initiatives:** QR-based OPD, DHIS, Microsites for Private Sector.

Way Forward

- ◆ Enhance Universal Reach,
- ◆ Strengthen Skills (digital literacy, upskill health professionals),
- ◆ Health Stack (National Health Stack),
- ◆ Governance/Ethics (oversight bodies, code of ethics),
- ◆ World Bank Digital-in-health approach (prioritize underserved, connect global collaboration, scale digital skills),
- ◆ Data Protection (consent, deletion rights).

Conclusion

India's digital healthcare potential is immense but needs policy support (cybersecurity), infrastructure (BharatNet, Blockchain), public-private collaborations, and tech advancements to be a global model.

6.3. Mental Healthcare

Mental health is a state of well-being.

Current Status:

- ◆ 10.6% adults suffer (NMHS 2015-16),
- ◆ 70-92% treatment gap, 25-44 years most affected.
- ◆ Globally, 1 in 8 people live with mental disorder (WHO).

Challenges

- ◆ Access to treatment (stigma, cost, duration),
- ◆ Inadequate professionals (0.75 psychologists/lakh),
- ◆ Rehabilitation issues.

Key Initiatives

- ◆ Mental Health Care Act (2017) (decriminalizes suicide, bans harmful treatments),
- ◆ TeleMANAS,
- ◆ National Mental Health Programme (REDS for suicide prevention),
- ◆ Manodarpan,
- ◆ KIRAN Helpline.

Way Forward

WHO's 5 key reforms (leadership, community-based services, workforce, person-centered interventions, social/structural determinants), evidence-based interventions, social sensitization, affordability, digitization.

6.4. Maternal Health and Family Planning

UNFPA recognizes India's progress in maternal health & family planning over 50-year partnership.

India's Advancements

- ◆ MMR reduced by 70% (2000-2020) to 97 (per lakh births),
- ◆ Aiming for SDG 70 by 2030;

- ◆ TFR reduced to 2.0 (NFHS-5) below replacement level;
- ◆ 89% institutional deliveries (2019-21);
- ◆ IMR declined to 28 (2020).

Significance

- ◆ Social (well-being of women/families),
- ◆ Economic (loss of productivity, increased healthcare expenditures),
- ◆ Demographic (impacts family planning, TFR as education/employment indicator).

Challenges

- ◆ Regional Disparities (Bihar, Meghalaya high TFR),
- ◆ Quality of Care/Service Delivery (inadequate infra, skilled workforce),
- ◆ Socio-cultural hurdles (patriarchal practices, unmet contraception needs, early marriages, adolescent pregnancies).

Initiatives

- ◆ Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan Yojana (SUMAN),
- ◆ Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA),
- ◆ Midwifery Services Initiative (training 90,000 midwives).

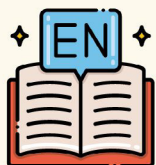
Conclusion

Significant progress, but regional disparities and socio-cultural barriers need continued intervention for equitable access.

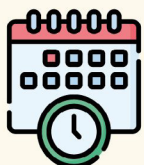
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7. Nutrition and Developmental Issues

7.1. Middle-Income Class (MIC)

New income tax structure offers relief to MIC.

Middle-Income Class in India

- ◆ **Definition:** Households with income 75–200% of median national income (OECD). ~61% in OECD countries.
- ◆ **Growth in India:** Post-LPG reforms (1990s) expanded MIC. Projected to grow from 31% (2021) to 60% by 2047 (PRICE).

Impact

- ◆ **Economy:** Consumption driver (\$2.7 trillion incremental spend by 2030–31), new markets, inclusive growth (investment in education, health, corruption intolerance).
- ◆ **Urban Infrastructure:** Rising Tier II/III cities, growth centers (malls, recreation), expanding residential societies.
- ◆ **Social:** Better outcomes (institutions, socioeconomic results), democratic values (free speech, environmental concern).

Challenges

- ◆ Economic (inflation, unemployment, stagnant wages, tax burden, debt burden – 38% GDP household debt FY23), technology threat (AI displacing jobs),
- ◆ Social constraints (patriarchal attitudes limiting women's careers),
- ◆ Policy challenges (heterogeneous composition),
- ◆ Political challenges (neglect, underrepresentation, lack of pressure groups).

Conclusion

Empowering MIC needs multifaceted approach (tax benefits, affordable housing, labor policies); comprehensive, stakeholder-driven plan essential for financial security and sustainable growth.

7.2. Social Implications of Workplace Automation

Concerns have been raised about the impact on workers due to tech firms adopting AI.

Workplace automation in India

- ◆ India's Industrial Automation Market to reach \$29.43 bn by FY2029.
- ◆ Drivers: Digitalization, tech innovation, customer expectation, competition, rising labor costs, aging population.

Benefits:

- ◆ Bridging skill-job gap/productivity (AI-driven task assignment, upskilling),
- ◆ Promoting gender equity/diversity (reducing biases),
- ◆ Enhanced work-life balance (less repetitive work),
- ◆ Improved customer service.

Challenges:

- ◆ Rising Income Inequality (wage polarization, reskilling barriers, gender disparities, gig worker insecurity),
- ◆ Mental Health (stress from monitoring),
- ◆ Reduced Human Oversight (eroding judgment).

Workplace Structure Transformation

Shift from pyramidal (hierarchy) to hourglass (AI takes middle management, wider strategic leaders, diversified bottom).

Way Forward

- ◆ Income Equity (social security for informal/gig workers, reskilling, bridge gender gap),
- ◆ Legal Frameworks (update safety laws for gig/teleworkers, robotics regulations, right to disconnect),
- ◆ Human-Centric Algorithm Management (transparent, ethical AI with human oversight),
- ◆ Awareness & Sustainability (digital rights, green automation).

Conclusion

Collaborative, worker-centric approach crucial for automation to enhance safety, equity, well-being, leading to sustainable, inclusive, humane workplaces.

7.3. Work From Home (WFH)

CII and FMS study "Work-from-Home: Benefits and Costs; An Exploratory Study in the Indian Context".

Key Findings:

- ◆ 68% companies continue WFH post-COVID-19,
- ◆ Short-term gains but long-term losses for social/emotional/human capital,
- ◆ Effectiveness concerns for collaboration.

Evolution

- ◆ COVID-19 necessitated,
- ◆ Tech development enabled,
- ◆ "Work from Anywhere" trend,
- ◆ Rolling back WFH post-pandemic (Starbucks, Google, Amazon).

Benefits

- ◆ **Employees:** Reduced costs (commutation, rent), increased productivity, work satisfaction.
- ◆ **Employers/Corporates:** Reduced costs (office rentals, compensation), flexibility in hiring, increased retention (Stanford study: 33% fall in resignations).
- ◆ **Macro Environment:** Sustainable work practices (reduced carbon footprint, ESG goals), equitable development (decentralized development, mitigates migration).
- ◆ **Family Relationships:** Work-life balance, dissipating work stress, gender equality (men contributing to chores).
- ◆ **Women:** Juggling duties, improved job opportunities/performance, narrow motherhood pay gap.

Concerns

- ◆ **Employees:** Blurring work/home boundaries (stress, low productivity, reduced physical activity), workspace constraints, lack of rest (24/7 work cycle).
- ◆ **Employers:** Intra-organizational communication issues, management difficulties, professional isolation, privacy concerns (data protection, cybersecurity).
- ◆ **Family Relationships:** Family stress (domestic violence increase), dual responsibilities (childcare/elderly care), mental health (stress, anger).
- ◆ **Women:** Career barriers (less pay, reduced visibility), double burden of traditional roles, stigmatization.

Way Forward

- ◆ Reformed arrangements (management philosophy, performance monitoring),
- ◆ Hybrid ecosystem, policy development (clear guidelines, accountability, privacy),
- ◆ Infrastructure (internet connectivity in remote areas, BharatNet).

Conclusion

Future of work is inclusive, flexible, resilient models leveraging WFH benefits while addressing its inherent challenges.

7.3.1. 'Right to Disconnect' in India

Debate on need for 'Right to Disconnect' law due to work stress.

Definition: Employees not obliged to reply to calls after hours, no disciplinary action for non-compliance.

Need

- ◆ Psycho-Social (weakens bonds, isolation, mental/cardiovascular issues),
- ◆ Impact on women (>55 hrs/week in professional jobs),
- ◆ Loss of productivity, insomnia/sleep issues.

Status in India

- ◆ No specific law, but constitutional provisions (Art 38, 39(e)),

- ◆ Judicial pronouncements (Vishakha v State of Rajasthan, Ravindra Kumar Dhariwal v UOI),
- ◆ 2018 Private Member's Bill.

Global Position

- ◆ France (employee not obliged to work from home/take files),
- ◆ Portugal (illegal for employers to contact outside work hours except emergencies),
- ◆ Spain (right to switch off devices).

Conclusion

With digitization, work nature changes, impacting family relations and work-life balance; hybridization and flexibility needed.

7.4. Population Growth and Management

Countering fear of population explosion by reasoning importance of steady population growth/management.

Evolution of Policy

- ◆ **Population Control (Post-Independence):** National Family Planning Program (1952) (lower fertility, slow growth, incentives), First Five-Year Plan (1952-57) (reduce birth rates), Fourth Five-Year Plan (1969-74) (demographic over health rationale, coercive policies, mass sterilization during Emergency).
- ◆ **Population Management (Shift):** National Health Policy of 1983 ("community needs assessment approach"), ICPD PoA (1994) (individual rights at center), NPP 2000 (holistic framework, "unmet needs"), NHM (RMNCH+A approach), JSY, JSSK, Mission Parivar Vikas.

India's Current Status

- ◆ Lower TFR (2.0) below replacement level (2.1);
- ◆ Demographic dividend (33 years to capitalize, peak 2041).

Potential Issues from Declining Population

- ◆ Demographic winter (pressure on working age),
- ◆ Reduced working age population,
- ◆ Migration challenges (regional disparities),
- ◆ Political implications (delimitation).

Global Lessons

- ◆ Japan (labor shortages, health/pension costs),
- ◆ China's shift from One-Child to Three-Child Policy,
- ◆ Hungary/Russia promoting child-bearing.

Way Forward (Population Management Approach):

- ◆ Steady benefits of demographic dividend,
- ◆ Promoting Agency approach (fertility/family planning prioritize women's agency),
- ◆ Empowering population (youth education, quality healthcare, basic amenities).

Conclusion

India's population policy evolved with dynamics; sustainable management crucial for 'Viksit Bharat'.

7.5. Global Hunger Index (GHI)

GHI 2024 released by Concern Worldwide & Welt Hunger Hilfe.

GHI Scores:

- ◆ Tool for measuring/tracking hunger globally/regionally/nationally.
- ◆ 4 indicators: Undernourishment (1/3), Child stunting (1/6), Child wasting (1/6), Child mortality (1/3).
- ◆ Severity Scale: Extremely Alarming, Alarming, Serious, Moderate, Low.

Key Findings

- ◆ **Global:** 42 countries at alarming hunger levels, Zero Hunger by 2030 unattainable, current pace to achieve low hunger by 2160, World GHI score 18.3 (moderate). Gender-climate-hunger link (women/girls hardest hit).

- ◆ **India:** Rank 105th of 127 (improved from 111th in 2023), “Serious” category, GHI score 27.3 (improved), high child wasting/stunting. 13.7% undernourished, 35.5% stunted, 18.7% wasted, 2.9% child mortality.

Issues with GHI

- ◆ Methodological limitations/data constraints,
- ◆ Flawed methodology (3 of 4 indicators focus on child health), faulty indicators (stunting), outdated data, small sample size (PoU).

Factors behind Hunger Crisis

- ◆ Conflict (~70% acutely hungry in fragile countries) and displacement.
- ◆ Climate Crisis
- ◆ Economic Challenges

Factors behind Malnutrition in India

- ◆ Urbanization (ultra-processed foods),
- ◆ Undernourished Mothers (57% anemic women, NFHS-5),
- ◆ Low Education/Socio-economic Status,
- ◆ Vulnerable Sections (OBC, SC, ST).

Initiatives for Tackling Hunger:

- ◆ **India:** NFSA (2013), PMGKAY, PM Matru Vandana Yojna, POSHAN Abhiyan, Eat Right Movement.
- ◆ **Global:** SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), World Food Programme, Zero Hunger Challenge, FAO.

Conclusion

Policy recommendations include strengthening accountability to international law, promoting gender-transformative approaches, and integrating gender, climate, and food justice investments.

7.6. Urbanization

Definition: Increase in proportion of people in towns/cities, based on size/density, non-agricultural activity, admin structure. Melting pot of cultures, languages, traditions.

Status in India

- ◆ Urban population 36.87% (World Bank 2024),
- ◆ Projected 40% by 2036. Contribution to GDP ~60% (NITI Aayog 2022).
- ◆ Urban slums 49% of urban population (World Bank 2020).

Drivers

- ◆ Social (population growth, rural-urban migration, modernization),
- ◆ Economic (agglomeration economies),
- ◆ Government policies (urban-centric growth),
- ◆ Others (townships by industrialists, city expansion).

Challenges

- ◆ Urban sprawl (slums, environmental degradation),
- ◆ Ghettoisation (social segregation, gated communities),
- ◆ Lack of social cohesion, inadequate infrastructure,
- ◆ Other (floods, traffic, cleanliness).

Key Initiatives:

- ◆ PM Awas Yojana (Urban),
- ◆ PM SVANidhi Scheme,
- ◆ Smart Cities Mission,
- ◆ Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban),
- ◆ UN SDG 11,
- ◆ New Urban Agenda (UN Habitat III).

Way Forward

Balanced urbanization (Tier-II/III cities, rural areas), urban planning (transit-oriented development), social inclusion (social security, training for urban poor), governance (decentralize, community-driven, SHGs in slums).

7.7. Internal Displacement

83.4 million internally displaced at end of 2024 (IDMC).

◆ **Definition:** Forced migration within country of origin (UNFCCC). IDPs flee conflict, violence, human rights violations, disasters. India: 1,700 by conflict, 5.4 million by disasters.

◆ **Migration:** Spatial mobility with permanent residence change. Two types in Census: Birthplace, last residence.

Reasons for Migration (India)

◆ Employment/work, marriage (81% women), studies, natural disaster, social/political problems, development projects.

Issues Affecting IDPs:

- ◆ Lack of Basic Services (healthcare, education, water),
- ◆ Lack of Social Security (apathy of states),
- ◆ Vulnerability of Labour Market (~3/4 migrant women unemployed, PLFS),
- ◆ Political Participation (cannot vote due to electoral roll),
- ◆ Inadequate data.

Initiatives

- ◆ National Policy for rehabilitation and resettlement (2007),
- ◆ Enhancing accessibility to welfare schemes (One Nation One Ration Card, Ujjwala, Ayushman Bharat).

Way Forward

- ◆ Address research gaps (sex-disaggregated data),
- ◆ Targeted policy framework, institutional reforms (migrant labor cells, coordination committees),
- ◆ Minimize development-induced displacement (PESA, FRA),
- ◆ Raise awareness (policymakers, employers, financial institutions).

Conclusion

Coordinated policy reforms, improved data, enhanced social protection needed for IDPs.

7.8. Loneliness

WHO Commission report 'From Loneliness to Social Connection' highlights widespread loneliness and its impacts.

Scale

- ◆ ~16% globally experienced loneliness (2014-23).
- ◆ Higher in low-income countries (24% vs 11% in richer).
- ◆ Marginalized groups more vulnerable.

Drivers

- ◆ Migration, personality traits, internet addiction, extended working hours, professional failures, older adults (retirement, empty nest), social exclusion.

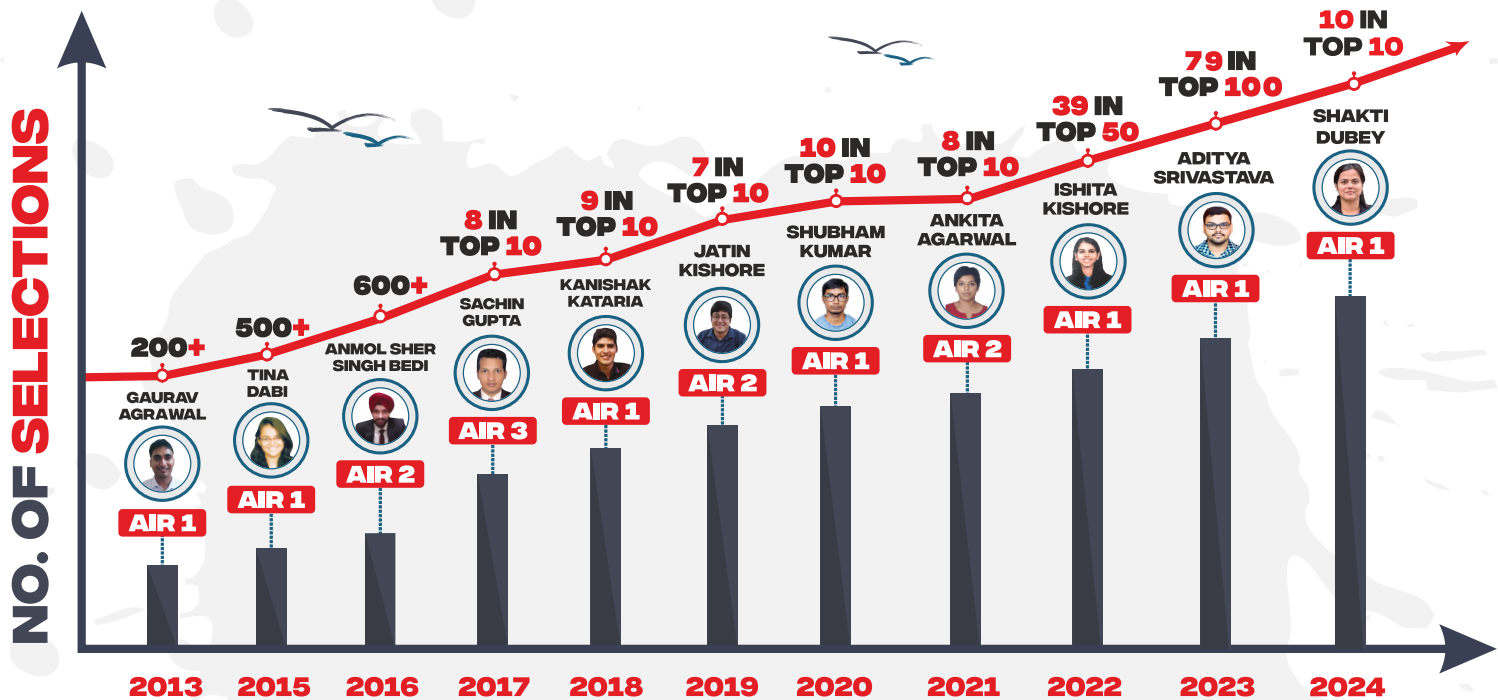
Impact

- ◆ Health Risks (50% increased dementia, 29% heart disease, 32% stroke),
- ◆ Unhealthy habits (substance abuse, sleep issues),
- ◆ Premature deaths,
- ◆ Diminished job satisfaction,
- ◆ Poor education outcome.

Way Forward

- ◆ Strengthen social infrastructure (intentional design for interaction, equitable accessibility, community programs)
- ◆ Community Level (accessible infra, social causes, intergenerational programs)
- ◆ Individual Level (mindfulness, meaningful relationships)
- ◆ Societal Level (educational campaigns, policies, funding)

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