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Classroom Study Material

SOCIAL

JUNE 2016 – FEBRUARY 2017

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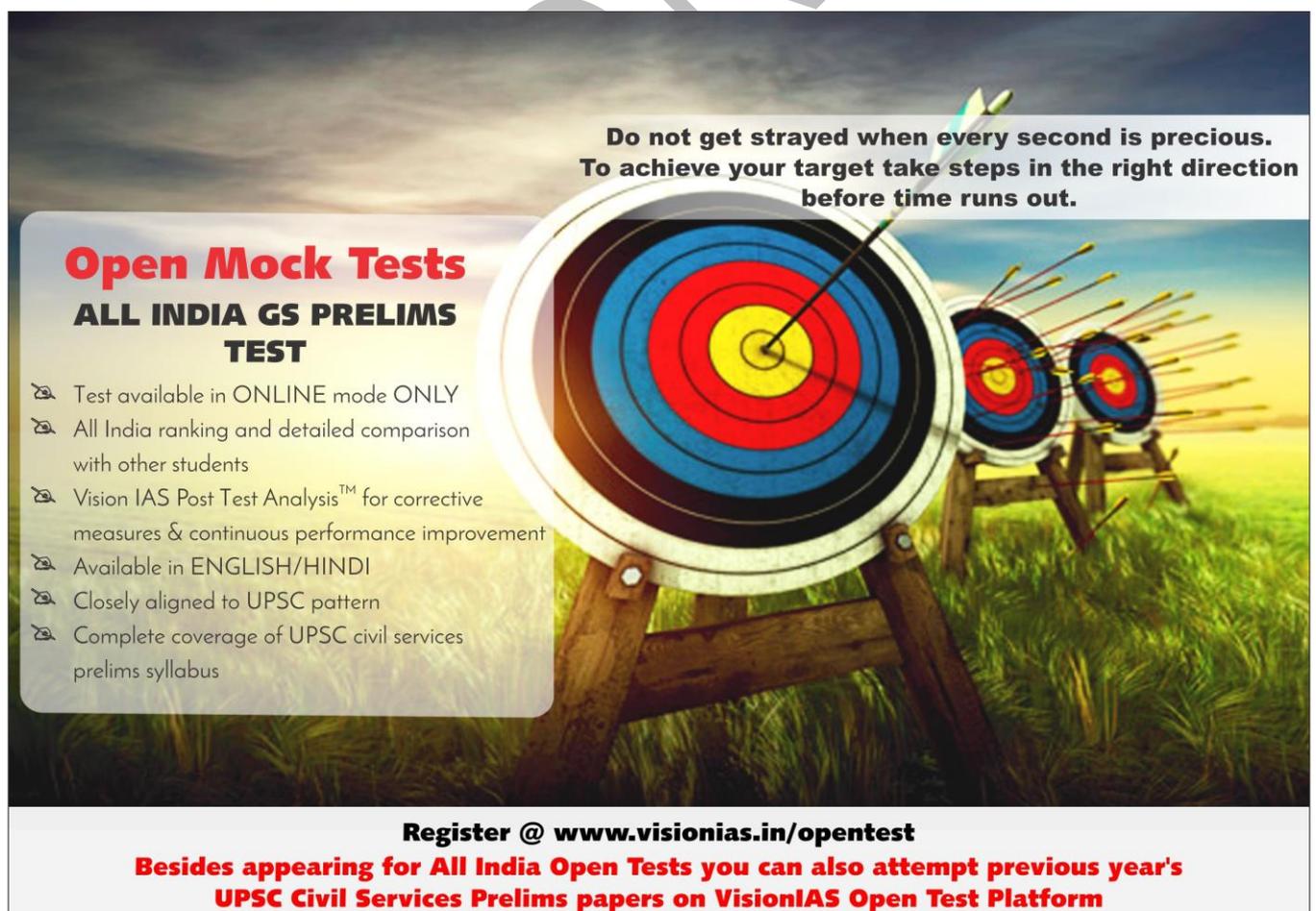
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before time runs out.**

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1. GENDER RELATED ISSUES

1.1. GENDER GAP REPORT 2016

Why in news?

- India has substantially improved its rank in the Global Gender Gap index 2016- moving from 108th to 87th position within a year.

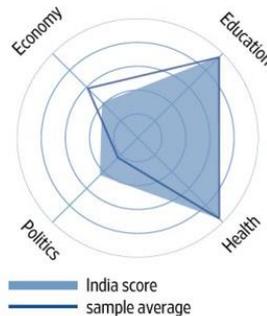
About the report

- Global Gender Gap Report is released by World Economic Forum (WEF).
- The WEF measures the gender gap index of the countries by taking four factors into account-**economy, health, education and political representation**.
- In the latest edition, the report finds that progress towards parity in the key economic pillar of gender has slowed dramatically with the gap-which stands at 59%-now larger than at any point since 2008.
- Globally, the leading four nations continue to be Scandinavian: Iceland, Finland, Norway and Sweden, in that order.

At a glance

India **87** rank
out of 144 countries

Scores at a glance



Key indicators

GDP (\$ billions)	2,073.54
GDP per capita (constant '11 intl. \$, PPP)	5,730
Total populations (thousands)	1,311,050.53
Population growth rate (%)	1.15
Population sex ratio (female/male)	0.93
Human capital optimization (%)	57.73

	2016		2006	
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
Global Gender Gap Index	87	0.683	98	0.601
Economic participation and opportunity	136	0.408	110	0.397
Educational attainment	113	0.950	102	0.819
Health and survival	142	0.942	103	0.962
Political empowerment	9	0.433	20	0.227
Rank out of	144		115	

India's performance

- It has closed its gender gap by 2% in a year: its gap now stands at 68% across the four pillars.
- The major improvement, however, has been in education, where it has managed to close its gap entirely in primary and secondary education.

1.2. TRIPLE TALAQ

Background

- The Supreme Court is presently hearing a case by Petitioner Shayara Bano who has challenged the constitutionality of Section 2 of the **Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937**, in so far as it seeks to recognise and validate polygamy, triple talaq and 'nikah halala'.
- The central government also got involved in the process as the Court had asked for its response on the matter.
- The Government, in its affidavit, supports the petition saying that these practices are not "integral to the practices of Islam or essential religious practices". Thus, they must be reformed keeping in light the rights of women.

Triple Talaq & Nikal Halala

- '**Talaq-e-bidat**' is a Muslim man divorcing his wife by pronouncing more than one talaq in a single 'tuhr' (the period between two menstruations), or in a 'tuhr' after coitus, or pronouncing an irrevocable instantaneous divorce at one go i.e. unilateral triple-talaq.
- Nikah Halala** is the temporary marriage a victim of instant talaq is forced to undergo with another man to remarry her first husband. This second marriage also needs to be consummated.
- The practice has been described as inhuman and uncivilized by social activists including many Muslim groups.
- The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), however, has lent support to the practice saying that it is a way to save marriages. It says that the mandatory nature of *Nikah halala* deters the husband from giving hasty divorces.

- Further, the activists say that the practices are not of Islamic origin and many Islamic countries have abolished them.
- The practice of instant triple talaq has already been invalidated by the SC in 2002 in *Shamim Ara case*. By that decision *Nikah Halala* is also rendered redundant.

1.3. CHANGES IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT

About

- The Supreme Court has struck down the words “adult male” from the pertinent provision in the DV Act to lay down that a woman can also file a complaint against another woman, accusing her of domestic violence.

Reasoning of Court

- Since the perpetrators and abettors of domestic violence can also be women, insulating them would frustrate the objectives of the Act. Under this immunity females and minors can continue to commit domestic violence.
- It makes DV **gender neutral** which would help in serving the purpose of the law in a better way.

The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005

- It was brought into force from 26 October 2006. The Act provides for the first time a definition of "domestic violence".
- It is a broad definition including not only physical violence, but also other forms of violence such as emotional/verbal, sexual, and economic abuse.
- It is a civil law meant primarily for protection orders and not meant to penalize criminally.
- The act does not extend to Jammu and Kashmir, which has its own laws.
- Different kinds of order issued by the Magistrate are **Protection orders, Residence orders, Monetary relief, Custody orders** and **Compensation orders**.

1.4. SEX RATIO IN HARYANA

Why in news?

- Haryana for the first time in past 2 decades has crossed 900-mark in **Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB)**. SRB in December 2016 was recorded at **914**.
- The **SRB** refers to the number of girls born per 1000 boys.

Steps taken

- **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP)** campaign launched in Panipat in January 2015 by central government provided initial flip and motivation to improve the pathetic sex ratio in the state.
- **Convergence, cooperation** and **coordination** of all departments was strictly enforced at district level
- **Special B3P cell** was created at the chief minister office for regular monitoring of the programme.
- State Government ensured strict implementation of **Pre-conception and Pre Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCNDT) Act, 1994** and **Medical Terminal of Pregnancy (MTP) Act**.
- State launched a massive drive against **sex selection, sex selective abortion** and **female foeticide**.

Haryana government scheme:

- **Aapki beti hamari beti scheme:**
 - ✓ It is launched to combat the problem of declining child sex ratio in the state.
 - ✓ As per the scheme, first girl child born on or after **January 22, 2015**, in SC family and BPL families will be eligible to receive Rs 21,000
 - ✓ Similarly, all **second girl** child born on or after January 22, 2015 of all families will get Rs 21,000.
 - ✓ Families, where **twin girls** or **multiple girls** are born, will get Rs 21,000 per girl child.
 - ✓ They will be provided fund from **Haryana Kanya Kosh**.
- **Haryana kanya kosh:**
 - ✓ It is a special fund set up for welfare and development of **girl child** and **women** in the state.
 - ✓ The girl child belonging to the families of **poor** and **Scheduled Castes** will be provided financial assistance from this fund.
 - ✓ **Anybody** could contribute in this fund for the welfare of girls.

- Regular meeting, rallies and street plays were conducted both at urban and rural areas to **sensitize** the public. Campaign like **“Selfie with daughter”** was immensely successful in achieving this.
- Haryana girls like **Deepa Malik, Sakshi Malik, Geeta Phogat, Babita Phogat** winning laurels for the country in sports significantly promoted the cause.
- Recent state government schemes like **“Aapki beti hamari beti”**, **“Haryana kanya kosh”** proved to be step in the right direction.

Haryana: As per the **Census 2011**

- It has the **lowest** sex ratio of **877** females to that of 1000 males as compared to national average of **943**.
- Even it recorded the lowest **child sex ratio** (0-6 years) of **834** among all the states compared to national average of **919**.

1.5. NODAL AGENCY TO CHECK PRE-NATAL SEX SELECTION

Why in News?

- The Supreme Court had recently directed the government to constitute a nodal agency to monitor and trigger search engines to crack down on online pre-natal sex determination advertisements.

About the step taken

- The step has been taken as part of the **Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act (1994)** which states that **no one shall be permitted to propagate sex selection in India**.
- Nodal agency would give advertisements on TV, radio and in newspapers, that if anybody comes across anything which identifies a girl or a boy [at pre-natal stage], it should be brought to the notice of the nodal agency.
- Once it is brought to the notice, the agency shall inform the search engines and they, after receiving the information, are obliged to delete it within 36 hours and inform the nodal agency.

About PCPNDT Act

- Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994 was enacted to stop female foeticides and arrest the declining sex ratio. The act banned prenatal sex determination.
- It was amended in 2003 to Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act to improve the regulation of the technology used in sex selection.

Initiatives towards checking decline in child sex ratio

- Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Yojana,
- Sukanya Samridhi Yojana,
- Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act (1994)
- The Girl Child Protection Scheme of Andhra Pradesh government
- Aapki Beti, Humari beti by Haryana government.
- Ashray scheme of Rajasthan government.
- Sivagami Ammaiyar memorial girl child protection scheme of Tamil Nadu government.
- Mukhya Mantri Kanya Suraksha Yojana of Bihar government.

1.6. WOMEN ENTRY TO RELIGIOUS PLACES: BOMBAY HC

Why in news?

- The Bombay High Court in a landmark verdict allowed entry of women up to the mazar in the Sufi dargah in Mumbai.

Background

- Four years ago the Dargah Trust barred women from entering the sanctum sanctorum of the Haji Ali dargah.
- The trust had cited verses from the Quran and Prophet Mohammed to claim that Islam does not permit women to enter dargahs/ mosques.
- The trust had claimed the fundamental right “to manage its own affairs” under Article 26 of the Constitution.

Observations of the High Court

- The Bombay High Court lifted the ban saying it contravenes the Constitution and **women should be allowed entry “at par with men”**.

THE LEGAL BATTLE

June 2012: The Haji Ali Dargah Trust bans entry of women till the mazar

Nov 7, 2014: Dr Noorjehan Safia Niaz and Zakia Soman, co-founders of Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan, file a PIL

July 21, 2015: HC suggests to the Trust to allow entry of women inside the sanctum sanctorum.

Oct 19, 2015: The Trust tells the court, “Entry of women in close vicinity of a male saint is a grievous sin.”

Nov 19, 2015: HC suggests that parties resolve the matter out of court, and observed,, “This is an era of intolerance.”

Aug 26, 2016: – HC allows entry of women till the sanctum sanctorum

- HC held that the Trust cannot enforce a ban “contrary to the fundamental rights” enshrined in the Constitution.
 - ✓ **Article 14** (equality before law),
 - ✓ **Article 15** (prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth)
 - ✓ **Article 25** (freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion) of the Constitution.

1.7. THE MATERNITY BENEFIT (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2017

Why in news?

- The act amends the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961. The Act regulates the employment of women during the period of child birth, and provides maternity benefits.
- It also amends provisions related to the duration and applicability of maternity leave, and other facilities.

Key Features of the Bill

- The act is applicable to all establishments employing 10 or more persons.
- **Duration of maternity leave:** The Act states that every woman will be entitled to maternity benefit of 12 weeks. **The Bill increases this to 26 weeks.**
- Under the Act, this maternity benefit should not be availed before six weeks from the date of expected delivery. **The Bill changes this to eight weeks.**
- In case of a woman who has two or more children, the maternity benefit will continue to be 12 weeks, which cannot be availed before six weeks from the date of the expected delivery.
- **Maternity leave for adoptive and commissioning mothers:** The Bill introduces a provision to grant 12 weeks of maternity leave to:
 - a woman who legally adopts a child below three months of age
 - a commissioning mother. A commissioning mother is defined as a biological mother who uses her egg to create an embryo implanted in another woman.
- **Option to work from home:** The Bill introduces a provision that states that an employer may permit a woman to work from home even after the leave period.
- **Crèche facilities:** The Bill introduces a provision, which requires every establishment with 50 or more employees to provide crèche facilities within a prescribed distance.

Informing women employees of the right to maternity leave: The Bill introduces a provision requiring every establishment to intimate a woman at the time of her appointment of the maternity benefits available to her.

1.8. COMMERCIAL SURROGACY BILL

Why in News?

The Union cabinet has approved the introduction of a bill that seeks to ban commercial surrogacy and allow only infertile couples to bear a child using a surrogate mother.

Provisions of Proposed Bill

- Non-resident Indians or People of Indian Origin card-holders will not be allowed to take recourse to a surrogate mother in India.
- **Out of purview:** Single men and women, heterosexual couples who choose not to opt for marriage, gay couples, transgender persons, single parent cannot have baby through surrogacy.
- Legally wedded Indian couples can have a surrogate child **only after five years of legal marriage** and will require a medical certificate as proof of infertility.
- The bill makes it **mandatory for surrogate mothers to be married** and be a close relative of the couple wanting a child. She should also have given birth to a healthy child before bearing a baby for another couple.
- A woman can only bear one surrogate child.
- Violating the law can earn 10 years in jail term or fine of 10 Lakh rupees.

STRICT NORMS

FOR PARENTS

- Married for at least 5 yrs, with no biological/ adopted children.
- Live-in partners, single parents, homosexuals, foreigners, NRIs, PIOs not allowed.

FOR SURROGATES

- A close relative, married with at least one child of her own.
- Can be surrogate mother only once in her lifetime; cannot be paid.

PUNISHMENT

- 10-year jail term, Rs 10 lakh fine

- A national surrogacy board chaired by the health minister will be created to oversee implementation.
- The rights of surrogate mother and children born out of surrogacy will be protected.

1.9. SUPREME COURT DECISION ON MTPA 1971

Why in news?

- In a rare order, the Supreme Court allowed an alleged rape victim to terminate her pregnancy after law-mandated 20 weeks.
- The court accepted the recommendations by a medical board that opined her life was in danger owing to the multiple congenital anomalies in the foetus.

Background

- The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971, came into force, following the recommendation of the Shantilal Shah Committee Report in 1966 that stated that abortion and reproductive rights need to be regulated by law.
- The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act does not allow abortion beyond stipulated 20 weeks. However the foetus can be aborted even after 24 weeks, if there is a medical threat to the life of the mother.

1.10. NATIONAL WOMEN'S PARLIAMENT

Why in News?

- A three-day National Women's Parliament (NWP), was organized by Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly and a government school in Amravati recently.

About the National Women's Parliament

- This is the first such initiative that will connect over 10,000 higher secondary girls with eminent women personalities.
- The theme of the National Women's Parliament was 'Empowering Women — Strengthening Democracy'.
- It brought people from diverse backgrounds (governments, NGOs, etc.) to share ideas and knowledge on women's Parliament. 7 plenary sessions were held with discussions on subjects like –
 - Socio-political challenges in women empowerment.
 - Women's status and decision-making.
 - Building own identity and vision for the future.

1.11. GOVT SCHEMES

1.11.1. INDIRA GANDHI MATRITVA SAHYOG YOJANA

Why in News?

- On New Year's Eve, PM Narendra Modi announced that every pregnant woman would get Rs. 6000 for hospital stay, vaccination and nutrition.

What is it?

- This benefit advanced to pregnant woman falls under **Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY)** which was started by the previous government in **2010**. The scheme was started on a pilot basis in 53 districts.
- However, the **National Food Security Act of 2013** made its universal coverage compulsory. Section 4(b) of the National Food Security Act states that every pregnant and lactating women is entitled to maternity benefits of not less than Rs. 6000
- IGMSY originally provided a benefit of Rs. 4000 which was increased to Rs. 6000 with National Food Security Act, 2013. This cash transfer scheme is applicable to pregnant and lactating women of age 19 and above for up to 2 living children.
- All pregnant women are eligible unless they have already received paid leave or maternity benefits from their employers in the private or government sector.

Recent update

- The **Women and Child Development Ministry** has formulated a plan and will be distributing the Rs. 6000 benefits in 3 installments for the first two live births.
- States will bear 40% of the cost while the Centre will provide the rest.
- The centre has allocated Rs. 2700 crore for the implementation of this scheme in budget 2017-18.

1.11.2. THE JANANI SURAKSHA YOJANA

Why in News?

- As per a study the Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) achieved a successful feat of **22% increase in women delivering in government hospitals** between 2004 and 2014.

About Janani Suraksha Yojana

- The scheme was launched in **2005**.
- It is the **world's biggest conditional cash-transfer scheme, aimed to promote institutional delivery instead of delivering babies at home.**
- It **aims to** improve India's infant and maternal mortality rates.
- Under the scheme **pregnant women choosing to deliver at the hospital and Accredited Social Health Activist who motivated her to take the decision get cash incentives** — Rs.1,400 for the woman and Rs.600 for the ASHA in rural areas and Rs.1,000 and Rs.200 respectively in urban areas.
- **The cash incentive** was intended to reduce financial barriers to accessing institutional delivery.

About NCAER

- National Council of Applied Economic Research is a New Delhi based non-profit think tank of economics.
- It was established in 1956 with financial support from the Ford Foundation, Finance Ministry and Tata Sons.

1.11.3. "PINK" INITIATIVES IN KERALA

Why in news?

- Inspired by Pink taxis driven by women in Kerala's cities, **Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC)** will roll out **Pink-Coloured Buses** exclusively for women in Thiruvananthapuram.
- Both the Bus drivers and Conductors of these buses will be women.
- Aim is to provide safe and comfortable public transportation to women especially during peak hours when buses are overcrowded.
- Earlier, state government had launched the **"She Taxi"** service in 2013 under the **Gender Park initiative** to provide safe journey to women through cabs driven by women.

Gender Park Initiative

- Located in Kozhikhode, it is an innovative initiative of the Department of Social Justice, Government of Kerala.
- Being first of its kind in the world it aims to become the premier convergence point for gender related activities in the region.
- Apart from **She taxi service** other initiative taken under **Gender Park** are:
 - ✓ **The International Institute for Gender and Development (IIGD):** It is dedicated to carry out high quality research, design effective capacity development program and provide innovative, practical recommendation to policymakers and public to foster gender equality.
 - ✓ **International Conference on Gender Equality (ICGE):** Park hosts a biennial conference bringing scholars, practitioners, policy makers and professionals from around the world to a common platform to explore obstacles to gender-just development.

Additional Information

- Last year Kerala introduced **Pink Police Patrol** (also known as **Pink Beat Patrol**) team for enhancing the safety for women and children in public places. It includes specially trained women police personnel only.

- Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has introduced unique and modern electronic toilets (e-toilets) for women called “**She toilets**”. These have smart and eco-friendly lighting and flushing systems.

1.11.4. PRADHAN MANTRI SURAKSHIT MATRITVA ABHIYAN (PMSMA)

About the PMSMA

- It has been launched by the **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW)**.
- It **aims** provide assured, comprehensive and quality antenatal care, free of cost, universally to all pregnant women on the 9th of every month.
- It envisages to improve the quality and coverage of Antenatal Care (ANC) including diagnostics and counseling services as part of the Reproductive Maternal Neonatal Child and Adolescent Health (**RMNCH+A**) Strategy.

The Highlight of PMSMA

- **Participation of the Private Practitioners:** The programme follows a **systematic approach for engagement** with private sector which includes motivating private practitioners to volunteer for the campaign developing strategies for generating awareness and appealing to the private sector to participate in the Abhiyan at government health facilities.
- **Identification and follow up** of high risk pregnancies. A sticker indicating the condition and risk factor of the pregnant women would be added onto MCP card for each visit:
 - ✓ **Green Sticker**- for women with no risk factor detected
 - ✓ **Red Sticker** – for women with high risk pregnancy
- A National Portal for PMSMA and a Mobile application have been developed to facilitate the engagement of private/ voluntary sector.

1.11.5. MAHILA SHAKTI KENDRA

Why in news?

- Budget 2017-18 speech mentioned that Mahila Shakti Kendra will be set-up at village level in 14 lakh ICDS Anganwadi Centres.

About Mahila Shakti Kendra

- It will provide one stop convergent support services for empowering rural women with opportunities for skill development, employment, digital literacy, health and nutrition.
- It will increase access of essential services for women.

1.11.6. MAHILA POLICE VOLUNTEER

Why in News?

- Haryana became the first state to adopt the Mahila Police Volunteer Initiative by launching the scheme in Karnal and Mahendragarh districts.
- The state has inducted the first batch of 1000 Mahila Police volunteers.

More About the Scheme

- Mahila Police Volunteer Initiative is a joint initiative between **Ministry of Women & Child Development and Union Ministry of Home Affairs**.
- This initiative undertaken by the Ministry of Women & Child Development is to create a **safe and enabling environment for women**.
- The primary job of these women volunteers is to keep an eye on situations where women in the village are harassed or their rights and entitlements are denied or their development is prevented.
- One Mahila Police Volunteer per Gram Panchayat is to be assigned under this scheme.
- MPV will be chosen through a laid out procedure from among the empowered, responsible, socially aware women who will facilitate police outreach in cases of gender concerns.

1.11.7. SAKHI – ONE STOP CENTRE SCHEME

- It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, formulated by Ministry of women and child development, a sub - scheme of Umbrella Scheme for National Mission for Empowerment of women
- It aims to provide integrated support (Rescue Services, Medical/Legal assistance, Psycho - social support etc.) to women affected by violence (in private or public space) under one roof
- These one stop centres will be established across the country to support all women including girls below 18 years of age irrespective of caste, class, religion, region, sexual orientation or marital status.
- Sakhi centre will provide temporary shelter facility with admissibility at discretion of centre administrator
- For long term shelter, they will be sent to Swadhar Greh/Short Stay Homes managed or affiliated by wither government of NGO.
- State Government/ UT Administration will implement this scheme with 100% central assistance including funding through Nirbhaya Fund.

1.11.8. PRERNA SCHEME

- It is a Responsible Parenthood Strategy under which financial incentives are given to parents of girl child to help push up the age of marriage of girls and space the birth of children in the interest of health of young mothers and infants.
- It is provided by 'Jansankhya Sthirtha Kosh', an autonomous body under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- It has been launched in all districts of seven focus states namely Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Rajasthan.
- The scheme is meant only for BPL families and the strategy recognizes and awards couples who have broken the stereotype
 - Marrying the girl after 19 years of age
 - giving birth to the first child after at least 2 years of marriage
 - giving birth of the second child after at least 3 years of the first child
 - Either parent voluntarily accepting permanent method of family planning within one year of the birth of the second child etc.
- The amount of award is given in the form of National Saving Certificate (NSC).

1.11.9. TREAD SCHEME

Why in News?

Recently the **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)** started operating the scheme titled "Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development (TREAD)" **to promote women entrepreneurs.**

About the scheme

- **The scheme envisages economic empowerment** of women through trade related training, information and counseling activities related to trades, products, and services.
- Under the scheme, there is a provision for Government of India grant up to 30% of the loan/ credit maximum up to Rs. 30.00 lakh as appraised by lending institutions/ banks.
- The lending institutions/ banks would finance loan assistance for a group of women through NGOs for undertaking non- farm activities.

1.12. TRANSGENDER ISSUES

1.12.1. TRANSGENDER RIGHTS

Why in News?

- Delhi government has decided to introduce "transgender category" in forms for registration of birth and death certificates.
- In another development Christian transgenders may get equal property rights soon.

- Also, Government of Odisha conferred the Below Poverty Line status to transgenders in Odisha.

Birth and Death Certificates

- The Delhi government has issued notices to all registrar offices to duly make the changes in birth and death certificate forms.
- Registration of birth and death from transgender community is very less and even those who do, register as females.
- After the SC order in 2014 recognizing transgender as third gender this is one of the first changes on ground.

Christian Transgenders

- The Law Commission of India had asked the Delhi Minorities Commission (DMC) for recommendation on the India Succession Act.
- The DMC consulted with the Advisory Committee of Christians.
- They suggested that Section 44 of the India Succession Act be amended to include transgenders, giving them equal rights as men and women on ancestral property.
- Once cleared the bill will be tabled in the parliament.
- **Significance:** Transgenders can now take recourse to legal measures if discriminated against in property rights, with the inclusion of term 'transgender' in the Succession Act.

BPL Status to Transgenders in Odisha

- This move will benefit around twenty two thousand transgenders in Odisha.
- This makes Odisha the first state in India to grant the BPL status to transgenders.
- The state government has also decided to cover the transgenders under the National Food Security Act.

1.12.2. THE TRANSGENDER PERSONS (PROTECTION OF RIGHTS) BILL, 2016

Why in News?

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2016 was introduced in Lok Sabha in August, 2016

Provisions of the Bill

- **Definition of a transgender person:** The Bill defines a transgender person as one who is (i) neither wholly female or male; (ii) a combination of female and male; or (iii) neither female nor male.
- **Prohibition against discrimination:** It protects transgenders from discrimination or denial of service in essential areas such as education, employment, healthcare, access to public places, goods and services, right to movement, settlement and ownership among others.
 - ✓ **Right of residence in the household:** This is important to prevent discrimination right at the beginning. The person may be placed in a rehabilitation center on the orders of a competent court if the family is unable to care for the transgender person.
 - ✓ **Health care:** The government would take steps to provide health facilities to transgender persons including separate HIV surveillance centres, sex reassignment surgeries, etc. .
- **Certificate of identity for a transgender person:** This will be issued by the District Magistrate on request. This certificate will be used as the basis for recording gender in all official documents and will be the basis for conferral of rights as a transgender person.
- **Welfare measures by the government:** The government will take measures to ensure the full inclusion and participation of transgenders in mainstream society via rehabilitation, vocational training, employment schemes etc.
- **Offences and Penalties:** The Bill recognizes the following offences:
 - ✓ **begging, forced or bonded labour;**
 - ✓ denial of use of a public place;
 - ✓ denial of residence in household, village, etc.;

National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India is a landmark decision by the Supreme Court of India, which declared transgender people to be a 'third gender', affirmed that the fundamental rights granted under the Constitution of India will be equally applicable to transgender people, and gave them the right to self-identification of their gender as male, female or third-gender. Moreover, the court also held that because transgender people were treated as socially and economically backward classes, they will be granted reservations in admissions to educational institutions and jobs.

- ✓ physical, sexual, verbal, emotional and economic abuse.
- ✓ These offences will attract imprisonment between six months and two years, and a fine.
- **National Council for Transgender persons (NCT)** will be set up to advise the central government on the formulation and monitoring of policies, legislation and projects with respect to transgender persons.

1.12.3. LGBT COMMUNITY: ENSURING SOCIAL JUSTICE

Why in news?

December 11 was the third anniversary of the Supreme Court judgment in **Koushal vs Naz Foundation** case, in which it overturned Delhi High Court ruling, recriminalizing homosexuality.

Developments Since Koushal Judgement

- The Gujarat High Court held Gujarat Government failure to grant a tax concession to a film depicting homosexuality as unconstitutional.
- In NALSA case (2014), the Supreme Court held that transgenders should be treated as a 'third gender' for accessing public services.
- The Allahabad High Court decided that transgenders would be entitled to be treated as the "head of a household" under food security legislation.
- A 'third gender' option is now available in railway reservation forms, ration card applications, passport applications among other services.

SECTION 377 SAYS

► "Whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against order of nature with any man, woman or animal" can be punished with up to life term

WHAT DELHI HC HAD SAID

- 377 counter to Constitutional values and notion of human dignity
- Almost unanimous medical and psychiatric opinion that homosexuality not a disease or disorder
- Moral indignation not a valid basis for over-riding fundamental rights. Constitutional morality outweighs public morality

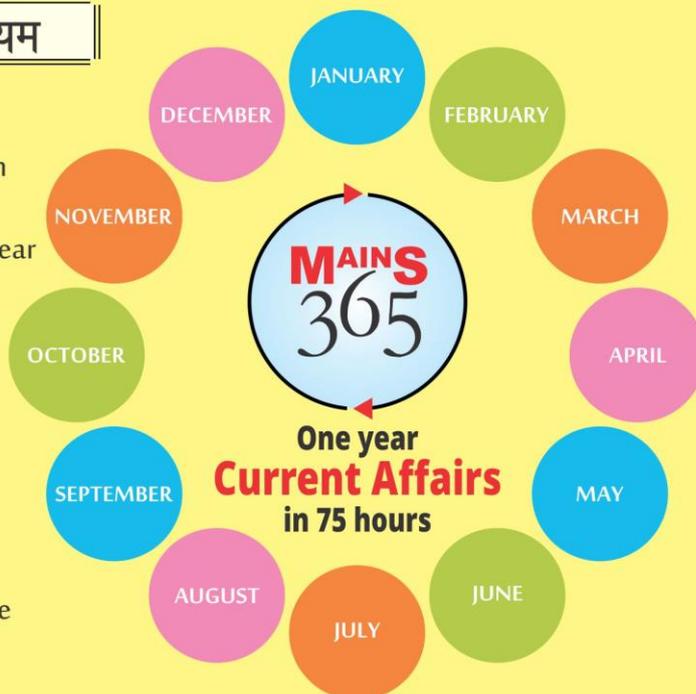
WHAT THE SC HAS SAID

- Delhi HC extensively relied upon the judgments of other jurisdictions (foreign countries), which "cannot be applied blindfolded for deciding constitutionality of Indian law"
- HC "overlooked that a minuscule fraction" of country's popn is LGBT
- "Concerned legislature free to consider desirability and propriety of deleting Section 377 IPC from the statute book or amend the same"

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2. CHILD RELATED ISSUES

2.1. ADOPTION REGULATIONS 2017

Why in News?

- Government recently notified **Adoption regulations 2017** framed by Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) to replace the 2015 adoption guidelines.

Background

- Earlier legal adoption was available only to the Hindu community under Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act 1956.
- Other communities could only act as legal guardians under the Guardians and Wards Act 1890.
- Juvenile Justice Act (JJ Act) promoted uniform code for adoption for all communities.

What does the regulation say?

- Intercountry and intra-country adoption procedures have been defined clearly.
- CARA will report and facilitate all adoptions under the JJ Act, 2015 through **CARINGS**.
- For safeguards, CARA would maintain adoption records and ensure post-adoption follow up.
- Currently **only biological parents or adoptive parents are recognized** leaving out the step parent of any legal responsibility. The regulation –
 - ✓ **Defines the step parent legally**
 - ✓ Allows birth certificate of the adopted child to have their name in it.
- **District Child protection Unit (DCPU)** will maintain a panel of professionally qualified or trained social workers.
- Couples with more than three children shall not be eligible for adoption except in special needs.

Significance of the regulation

- It is a part of reforms towards a **Uniform Civil Code as per the Constitutional Article 44**.
- It would **remove the challenges faced by CARA and adoption agencies** to streamline adoption process.
- It makes the **adopted children legal heirs in matters of inheritance of property**.

CARA

- It is a statutory body of Ministry of Women & Child Development under Juvenile Justice Act, 2015.
- It is a nodal body for adoption of Indian children.
- It deals in orphan, abandoned or surrendered children.
- It deals with **inter-country adoptions** according to the Hague Convention on Inter-country Adoption, 1993.

Section 68 of the Juvenile Justice Act 2015 makes CARA responsible to

- Promote in-country and interstate adoptions.
- Frame regulations on adoptions.
- Promote intercountry adoptions as per **Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption**.

Central Adoption Resource Information Guidance System (CARINGS)

- It is an e-governance measure to facilitate child adoption.
- It will be a centralized data bank of adoptable children and PAPs.
- All DCPU's will be connected online to CARINGS

2.2. CHILD LABOUR (PROHIBITION AND REGULATION) AMENDMENT BILL, 2016

Why in news?

The Lok Sabha passed the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2016. Earlier it was passed by Rajya Sabha.

Salient features

- The Bill amends the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, which prohibits the employment of children younger than 14 in 83 hazardous occupations and processes.
- The amendment:
 - ✓ Extends this ban on employment of children under 14 across all sectors,
 - ✓ Prohibits the employment of adolescents aged 14-18 years in hazardous occupations and

- ✓ Introduces more stringent jail term and fines for offenders: a jail term of six months to two years and a fine upto Rs 50,000
- The bill brings down the list of hazardous occupations from the earlier 83 to just three: mining, inflammable substances, and hazardous processes under the Factories Act, and the centre will decide which processes are hazardous.
- The Bill has a provision of creating Rehabilitation Fund has also been made for the rehabilitation of children.

2.3. 100 MILLION FOR 100 MILLION CAMPAIGN

Why in news?

- President launched a '100 Million for 100 Million' Campaign organized by the Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation.
- The theme of Universal Children's Day 2016 on 20th November was - "Stop Violence Against Children"

Aims and Objectives of the campaign

- The Campaign aims to mobilise 100 million youth for 100 million underprivileged children across the world, to end child labour, child slavery, violence against children and promote the right of every child to be safe, free, and educated, over the next 5 years.

Provisions of the campaign

- The campaign would use social media for the purpose of sensitising people, building awareness, petitioning, creating demands on governments and international community and asking corporates to ensure no child labour, child slave or trafficked youth is involved in their supply and production chains.

Related info

- Along with the 100 million for 100 million campaign, "**The Laureates and Leaders**" would be a new initiative and platform of moral power for the betterment of children.
- While the "100 million for 100 million campaign" would be a partnership initiative that will engage universities, youth student organisations and teachers associations to build global citizenship, "Laureates and Leaders" will be initiated by Satyarthi's foundation with support from other individuals and institutions,

2.4. CHILD RIGHTS

The world celebrated International Child Rights Week (ICRW) from November 14 to 20. Child Rights Day is celebrated on 20th November in India. It is also celebrated as the Universal Children Day (International Child Rights Day) across the world to make people aware about the rights of their children.

Background

- In 1954, the United Nations General Assembly recommended that all countries should introduce Universal Children's Day to encourage fraternity and understanding between children all over the world and promote welfare of children.
- In 1959, the UN General assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and in 1989 it adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Government initiatives for child protection and development

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) - The commission's Mandate is to ensure that all Laws, Policies, Programmes, and Administrative Mechanisms are in consonance with the Child Rights perspective as enshrined in the Constitution of India and also the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Laws to safeguard child rights:

- The Protection of Children from sexual offences (POCSO) Act 2012 is in place to address the heinous crimes of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children.
- Child labour (Prohibition and protection) Act 1986.
- Factories Act 1948
- The Immoral Traffic (prevention) Act, 1956
- Juvenile Justice(Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2010
- National Food Security Act, 2013
- Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006
- Right to Free and Compulsory education Act 2009 etc.

- **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme**
 - ✓ To improve the nutritional and health status of children in the age-group 0-6 years.
 - ✓ To lay the foundation for proper psychological, physical and social development of the child.
 - ✓ To reduce the incidence of mortality, morbidity, malnutrition and school dropout.
- **General grant in aid scheme in the field of women and child development**
- **Integrated Child Protection Scheme(ICPS)**
 - ✓ It aims at building a protective environment for children in difficult circumstances.
 - ✓ The scheme will set up a child protection data management system to formulate and implement effective strategies and monitor their outcomes.
- **Kishori Shakti Yojana**
- **Early Childhood Children Education Policy**
- **Beti Bacho, Beti Padhao initiative etc.**

2.5. INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S PEACE PRIZE

Why in News?

- UAE based teenage activist Kehkashan Basu has been awarded The International Children's Peace Prize 2016 for campaigning to protect the environment
- In 2013, Kehkashan Basu (at the age of 12) founded her organisation **Green Hope**.
- This organisation runs waste collection, beach cleaning and awareness campaigns in 10 countries.

International Children's Peace Prize

- The International Children's Peace Prize was launched by Kids Rights Foundation in 2005.
- The prize is awarded annually to a child, anywhere in the world for his/her work promoting child's rights.

2.6. THE CIVIL ASPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL CHILD ABDUCTION BILL, 2016

Why in news?

- Union ministry of women and child development (WCD) has drafted the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction Bill, 2016, that once approved will facilitate prompt return of any **child under 16 who has been "wrongfully removed to or retained in other state which is not his/her habitual residence."**
- The bill will provide an enabling legislation to implement the provision of the **Hague convention**.

About Hague convention

- The Hague Convention seeks "to protect to protect children internationally from the harmful effects of their wrongful removal or retention and to establish procedures to ensure their prompt return to the State of their habitual residence, as well as to secure protection for the rights of access."
- Ninety-four states are party to the Hague Convention on Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction.
- India is not a signatory to the Hague Convention. A country has to have a domestic law in place before it can become a signatory.

SDGs related to Children

- **Target 2: Zero Hunger**
 - ✓ End hunger and ensure access by infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round
 - ✓ End all forms of malnutrition, stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age
 - ✓ Address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls
- **Target 3: Good Health and Well being**
 - ✓ End preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age,
 - ✓ Reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births.
- **Target 4: Quality Education**
 - ✓ Complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

- ✓ Access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education
- ✓ Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive
- ✓ Provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all
- ✓ Equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the children in vulnerable situations
- **Target 5: Gender Equality**
 - ✓ Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation
- **Target 8: Decent work and Economic growth**
 - ✓ Prohibit and eliminate of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers,
 - ✓ End child labour in all its forms by 2025
- **Target 11: Sustainable cities and Communities:**
 - ✓ Special attention to the needs children in building sustainable transport systems
 - ✓ Universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces
- **Target 16: Peace Justice and Strong institutions**
 - ✓ Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere
 - ✓ End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children

2.7. UNICEF: STATE OF CHILDREN'S REPORT

Why in news?

- Each year, UNICEF's flagship publication, THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S CHILDREN, closely examines a key issue affecting children.

About UNICEF

- The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund was created by the United Nations General Assembly on 11 December 1946.
- It is headquartered in New York City.
- It provides humanitarian and developmental assistance to children and mothers in developing countries.
- It is a member of the United Nations Development Group.

2.8. GOVERNEMENT SCHEMES/INITIATIVES

2.8.1. NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR CHILDREN, 2016

Why in News?

- National Action Plan for Children, 2016 (NAPC) was launched by Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) to celebrate the National Girl Child Day.

Background

India brought the National Policy of Children in 2013 for emerging issues and also proposed a National Action Plan to implement it.

Provisions of the Action Plan

Some of the provisions of the National Child Action Plan of 2016 are as follows-

- **On Child Survival, Health and Nutrition**
 - ✓ It will help in the improving child health by universalizing the maternal and child healthcare.
 - ✓ It will also give emphasis on new born care by initiatives like universal immunization.

National Policy of Children 2013

- It recognizes a child to be a person below the age of 18 yrs.
- It recognizes that **children are not a homogenous group** and require different responses.
- It aims to give a social safety net to family to help nurture child.
- It says that every child has universal, inalienable and indivisible human rights.
- It has four priority areas:
 - **Survival, health and nutrition**
 - **Education and development**
 - **Child Protection**
 - **Child Participation**

Article 23 of the constitution gives the right to people (especially children) against exploitation and the State's duty to protect it.

- ✓ It will prevent mental and physical disabilities through timely measures for pre-natal, peri-natal and post-natal care of mother and child.
- **On Education and Development**
 - ✓ It will provide universal and equitable access to quality Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for all children below six years of age.
 - ✓ It will promote affordable and accessible quality education up to the Secondary level for all children.
- **On Child Protection**
 - ✓ It will help strengthen legislative, administrative, and institutional redressal mechanisms for Child Protection at all level.
- **On Child Participation**
 - ✓ It will ensure that children actively participate in planning and implementation of programmes concerning them.

2.8.2. TEJASWINI PROJECT

Why in news?

- Recently World Bank has signed an agreement with India to provide **\$63 million loan** for **Project Tejaswini** to empower adolescent girls and young women in state of Jharkhand.

About Tejaswini

- It aims to empower adolescent girls and young women (between 14-24 years) with basic **life skills** and further provide opportunity to complete their secondary education and acquire market driven skills. This program was approved by World Bank in 2016.
- Project will be implemented in **17 districts of Jharkhand** and estimated 6.8 lakh adolescent girls and young women are expected to benefit from this programme.
- This is the **first World Bank project** in India that is solely focused on the welfare of **adolescent girls and young women**.

More about Tejaswini Project

Highlights of the Project

- It has **3 main components** namely:
 - ✓ Expanding social, educational and economic opportunities.
 - ✓ Intensive Service Delivery.
 - ✓ State capacity-building and implementation support.
- The project will operate at **two levels**:
 - ✓ **Community level:** In this community based platforms like **clubs/centers** will hold regular counseling sessions, educate in **life skills**, provide livelihood support services and disperse information about training and courses for adolescent girls and young women.
 - ✓ **Institutional level:** Partnered institutions will provide vocational training, business skill training and non-formal education will be provided to target groups.
- **Life skills education** has **four core** modules:
 - ✓ **Resilience and soft skills:** It includes communication and problem-solving skills, goal-setting, and techniques to maintain psychological wellbeing through during difficult times.
 - ✓ **Rights and protections:** It is related to early marriage, child labor, safe migration, gender-based violence, and accessing services and entitlements.
 - ✓ **Health and nutrition:** It includes sanitation and hygiene, nutritional habits for self and children, and sexual and reproductive health.
 - ✓ **Financial literacy:** This module would help teach numeracy, saving, budgeting, and accessing credit and financial institutions.
- Non-Governmental Organizations will play an important role in conducting meetings/sessions and sensitizing common people in general and adolescent girls and young women in particular about the scheme and resulting benefits.

2.8.3. NATIONAL CHILD LABOUR PROJECT (NCLP)

Why in news?

Kailash Satyarthi expressed disappointment over an increment of just 8% for the **National Child Labour Project** in the Budget.

National Child Labour Project (NCLP)

A project of Ministry of Labour, its basic objective is to suitably rehabilitate the children withdrawn from employment thereby reducing the incidence of child labour in areas of known concentration of child labour.

The NCLP Scheme seeks

- To eliminate **all forms of child labour through**
 - ✓ Identification and withdrawal of all children in the Project Area from child labour,
 - ✓ Preparing children withdrawn from work for mainstream education along with vocational training
 - ✓ Ensuring convergence of services provided by different government departments/agencies for the benefit of child and their family
- To contribute to the **withdrawal of all adolescent workers** from Hazardous Occupations and their **Skilling and integration** in appropriate occupations through facilitating vocational training opportunities through existing scheme of skill developments
- **Raising awareness** amongst stakeholders and target communities, and orientation of NCLP and other functionaries on the issues of 'Child Labour' and 'employment of adolescent workers in hazardous occupations/processes'
- Creation of a **Child Labour Monitoring, Tracking and Reporting System**.

Target Group

- All child workers below the age of 14 years in the identified target area.
- Adolescent workers below the age of 18 years in the target area engaged in hazardous occupations.
- Families of Child workers in the identified target area.

2.8.4. RASHTRIYA KISHORE SWASTHYA KARYAKRAM

Why in news?

- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has recently launched "**Saathiya Resource Kit**" and "**Saathiya Salah**" mobile app for adolescents as part of **Rashtriya Kishore Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK)**.

About the Apps

- The kit has been launched to help Peer Educators, the most important component of RKSK, to communicate with adolescents and answer all their questions concerned with health at the grass root/village level.
- Peer Educators (1.6 lakhs) will be recognized as "**Saathiya**" (a good friend of adolescents) and will be trained in phase manner.
- The Resource Kit comprises of Activity book, Bhranti-Kranti game, Question-Answer book and education diary.
- Any adolescent who is unable to interact with Peer Educators out of any reasons like shyness, family members can access useful information through **Saathiya- Salah mobile app** or toll free **Saathiya helpline**.

About Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (National Adolescent Health Programme)

- It was launched in 2014 by **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** to comprehensively address the health needs of adolescents under the **National Rural Health mission**.

2.8.5. AARAMBH INITIATIVE

Why in news?

It is the country's first-ever hotline to curb sexual abuse of children through the Internet and to remove child pornographic content online unveiled.

About initiative

- **Aim:** To eliminate the scourge of online child pornography and further the cause of child protection in online spaces.
- It is a network of organizations and individuals working on child protection in the country, has collaborated with the U.K.-based Internet Watch Foundation (IWF).
- The hotline in India will be hosted on aarambhindia.org and will enable users to report child sexual abuse images and videos in a safe and anonymous environment.
- It is a simple, accessible form (available in Hindi & English) that any informed user who stumbles across sexually explicit imagery of a child on the public internet can use to report the content. Latter it will be started in other languages.

2.8.6. INDIA NEWBORN ACTION PLAN (INAP)

- It is a vision and a plan for India to end preventable newborn deaths and stillbirths and attain Single Digit Neonatal Mortality and Stillbirth Rates by 2030.
- For the first time, INAP also articulates government's specific attention on preventing stillbirths.
- INAP is to be implemented within the existing Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent health (RMNCH+A) framework of the National Health Mission (NHM).
- It will serve as a framework for the States to develop state-specific action plans
- Birth Defect surveillance has also been started recently in 37 Medical Colleges across the country to expand the availability of standard data on congenital anomalies.
- It is India's committed response to the Global Every Newborn Action Plan (ENAP), launched in June 2014 at the 67th World Health Assembly

2.8.7. RASHTRIYA YUVA SASHAKTIKARAN KARYAKARAM

Why in News?

- The **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports** has integrated 8 of its schemes under one umbrella scheme known as **Rashtriya Yuva Sashaktikaran Karyakaram (RYSK)**.

About the Scheme

- This scheme will act as the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- The scheme will benefit youth in the age group of 15-29 years as per the definition of "youth" in National Youth Policy, 2014.
- Two schemes under the ministry have been kept out of this umbrella scheme. They are National Service Scheme (NSS) and Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD).
- The integration of the schemes will help achieve better implementation and improve the effectiveness of the various schemes by utilizing the existing field-administrative setup.
- The schemes that have been integrated under RYSK are as follows:
 - ✓ Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS)
 - ✓ National Youth Corps (NYC)
 - ✓ National Programme for Youth and Adolescent Development (NPYAD)
 - ✓ Youth Hostels (YH)
 - ✓ Assistance to Scoring and Guiding Organisations
 - ✓ National Discipline Scheme (NDS)
 - ✓ National Young Leaders Programme

2.8.8. RAJASTHAN DRIVE TO END CHILD MARRIAGES

- Under the banner of “Sajha Abhiyan” of the Rajasthan government, UNFPA and UNICEF, a district-level Abhiyan Yatra was started for complete elimination of child marriages in the State.
- As part of ‘Sajha Abhiyan multiple stakeholders, interventions and sectors are converging to address child marriage in the State as a unified force.
- The yatra will bring the community on a united platform to work towards making the State child marriage-free.

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3. OLD AGE/DISABLED/VULNERABLE SECTIONS

3.1. ELDERLY IN INDIA

3.1.1. NATIONAL NEWSPAPER FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

Why in news?

- Ministry for Social Justice and Empowerment released the first issue of a National Newspaper dedicated to Senior Citizen called 'Saanjhi Saanjh'.

About the newspaper

- It will be a bilingual newspaper - Hindi and English
- It will be published by Harikrit which is an NGO for the elderly.
- It will carry important and useful news pertaining to elderly persons besides inspirational stories.
- It will also promote the objectives of the National Programme for health care of elderly (**NPHCE**) by creating avenues for grievance redressal of the elderly population, both for men and women

National programme for Health care of Elderly (NPHCE) 2010

- It was started in XI plan.
- It is an articulation of the National Policy on Older Persons 1999
- It aims for providing promotional, preventive, curative and rehabilitative services. For this the programme aims to set up Department of geriatric care at regional medical centres.

3.1.2. VAYOSHRESHTHA SAMMAN

Why in news?

Union Government Presented 'Vayoshreshtha Samman' to Older Persons & Institutions on International Day of Older Persons

About the award

- Vayoshreshtha Samman is a Scheme of National Awards instituted by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (D/o Social Justice & Empowerment) initially in 2005.
- It was upgraded to the status of National Awards in 2013
- Among other awards KA was awarded best state in implementing the maintenance and welfare of parents and senior citizens act, 2007 and providing services and facilities to senior citizens.

About International day of older persons

- International Day of Older Persons is observed on 1st of October every year pursuant to the adoption of a resolution by the UN General Assembly to observe the year 1999 as the International Year of Older Persons with the theme, "a society for all ages".

3.1.3. NATIONAL CENTRE FOR AGEING

- The Union Health Ministry recently approved two National Centre for Ageing to come up in India.

What are the National Centres for Ageing?

- Highly specialized centers of excellence for geriatric care or care of the elderly.
- They will develop manuals for home care and provide training to the specialists and formulate protocols in areas of elderly care.
- The Centres will be set up under the National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly.
- They will be set up during the twelfth five year plan period at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi and the other at the Madras Medical College in Chennai.

What is Geriatric Care?

Also known as Ageing Life Care, is the process of planning and coordinating care of the elderly and others with physical or mental impairments to meet their long term care needs, improve their quality of life and maintain their independence for as long as possible.

3.1.4. MAINTENANCE AND WELFARE OF PARENTS AND SENIOR CITIZENS ACT, 2007

- The Act defines senior citizen 'any person being a citizen of India, who has attained the age of sixty years or above'.
- It makes maintenance of parents and senior citizens by children/ relatives obligatory and enforceable through tribunals.
- It also permits state governments to establish old age homes in every district.

3.1.5. IPOP

- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is implementing a Central Sector Scheme of Integrated programme for Older Persons (IPOP) since 1992
- It aims for improving the quality of life of senior citizens by providing basic amenities like shelter, food, medical care and entertainment opportunities and by encouraging productive and active ageing.
- Under this Scheme, financial assistance is provided to Non-Governmental/Voluntary Organisations, Panchayati Raj Institutions etc. for maintenance of Old Age Homes, Respite Care Homes and Continuous Care Homes, Multi-service centres, mobile medicare units, Day care centres for Alzheimer's disease /Dementia patients, physiotherapy clinics for older persons etc.

3.1.6. IGNOAPS

- Old age pension is provided under the Indira Gandhi Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS) which is a component of National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), implemented by Ministry of Rural Development.
- Under IGNOAPS, central assistance of Rs. 200/- per month is provided to persons in the age group of 60-79 years and Rs. 500/- per month to persons of 80 years and above and belonging to below poverty line (BPL) household as per the criteria by Government of India.
- State/UTs have been requested to contribute at least the same amount under the scheme.

3.2. DISABLED

3.2.1. NEW DISABILITY ACT

Why in news?

- The Parliament passed **The Rights of Persons with Disability Bill, 2016** which will replace Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995.
- India is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). The Bill makes Disability Law of 1995 compliant with the UNCRPD provisions.

Key Provisions

- The types of disabilities have been increased from existing 7 to 21 and the Central Government will have the power to add more types of disabilities.
- Reservation in vacancies in government establishments has been increased from 3% to 4% for certain persons or class of persons with benchmark disability.
- It makes a special mention of the needs of women and children with disabilities, and lays down specific provisions on the guardianship of mentally ill persons.

About UNCRPD

- The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is an **International Human Rights Treaty of the United Nations** intended to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities.
- Parties to the Convention are required to promote, protect, and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by persons with disabilities and ensure that they enjoy full equality under the law.
- It is also the only UN human rights instrument with an explicit sustainable development dimension.
- It was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2006, following ratification, it came into force on 3 May 2008.

- As of December 2016, it has 160 signatories and 172 parties, which includes 171 states and the European Union.
- The Convention is monitored by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

3.2.2. ACCESSIBLE INDIA CAMPAIGN (SUGAMYA BHARAT ABHIYAAN)

Why in news?

- On International day of persons with disability (3rd December), government launched Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan) as a nation-wide flagship campaign for achieving universal accessibility for persons with disabilities.
- The campaign targets three separate verticals for achieving universal accessibility namely the built up environment, transportation eco-system and information & communication eco-system.
- Theme of the international day of Persons with disabilities 2015 was – Inclusion matters: access and empowerment for people of all abilities.

Facts & Figures

- Over 1 billion people in the world have some form of disability, that's 1 in 7.
- More than 100 million disabled persons are children.
- Children with disabilities are almost four times more likely to experience violence than non-disabled children.
- 80% of people with disabilities live in a developing country.
- 50% of disabled persons cannot afford health care.
- 153 countries signed the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.**

Aims and Objectives of the program

- It is aimed at making transport, government buildings, tourist spots, airports, railway stations and internet technology friendly for differently-abled people.
- The campaign has ambitious targets with defined timelines and will use IT and social media for spreading awareness about the campaign and seeking commitment of various stakeholders.
- At least 50% of all the government buildings of National Capital and all the State capitals, all international airports and railway stations of A1, A and B category, at least 10% of government transport carriers and 50% of public documents will be made fully accessible for persons with disabilities soon.

National laws and International conventions

- India is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).
- Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995, as per the act the States are required to provide for:
 - Ramps in public buildings
 - Provision of toilets for wheelchair users
 - Braille symbols and auditory signals in elevators or lifts
 - Ramps in hospitals, primary health centres and other rehabilitation centres.

3.2.3. MARRAKESH TREATY COMES INTO FORCE

Why in News?

- On Sep 29th, Marrakesh Treaty came into force, after 22 countries ratified the treaty adopted in 2013 by members of World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

What is Marrakesh Treaty?

- Marrakesh Treaty or Marrakesh VIP Treaty is formally known as Marrakesh treaty to facilitate Access to Published works by Visually Impaired Persons and Persons with Print Disabilities.
- It is also called “Books for Blind” treaty.

Highlights of the treaty

- The treaty allows for copyright exceptions to help for the creation, export and import, sharing, translation of the books in any format for accessible versions of copyrighted books and other works for the people with impaired visibility.
- The treaty is expected to alleviate the “book famine” experienced by 300 million people suffering from such disability, according to WHO.

Implementation of Treaty

- World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), a United Nations Organisation based in Geneva, administers the Marrakesh Treaty and leads an alliance of private and public partners known as the Accessible Books Consortium (ABC).
- The ABC has established a free centralized electronic database of accessible books produced by libraries for the blind around the world. It is a library-to-library service.

India and Marrakesh Treaty

- India was the first country to ratify the Marrakesh Treaty back in July 2014 and has set an example for other countries to follow.
- India has begun implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty through a multi-stakeholder approach, which includes collaboration among key players such as government ministries, local champions like the DAISY Forum of India, and the private sector.
- In line with Marrakesh treaty, India launched Accessible India Campaign (Sugama Bharat Abhiyan) and has set up Sugamya Pustakalaya, which has 2,00,000 volumes.

(Note: It is not to be confused with Marrakesh Agreement signed at the end of Uruguay round of discussions for establishing WTO.)

Sugamya Pustakalaya

- "Sugamya Pustakalaya" launched by department of empowerment of persons with disabilities, (DEPwD), is an online library for Persons with print disabilities as part of the Accessible India (Sugamya Bharat) Campaign.
- The online library has been created in collaboration with National Institute of Visually Handicapped (NIVH), member organization of Daisy Forum of India (DFI), Bookshare and powered by TCS Access.
- The library will focus on collection of all accessible materials from all over the country in single online library system.
- The e-library platform will work in collaboration with international agencies such as 'Bookshare' and 'Accessible Books Consortium' to make accessible books from all over the world available to users in India.
- Person with Print Disability, School/College/Library, Publisher/Government House/Textbook Production House, NGO, and Corporate can be the end user of this online library.

3.2.4. UNIVERSAL IDENTITY CARDS FOR PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED

- Universal Identity Cards for the Persons with Disabilities to be released soon
- State Governments is identifying the persons in their respective states, so that within one and half year all the disabled persons can have universal identity cards.
- It is being implemented under minister for social justice and empowerment
- These cards will be linked with the Aadhar card and data will be available online to ensure transparency in availing Government schemes and reservation.

3.2.5. BRAILLE ATLAS

- **Ministry of Science and Technology** has recently launched first-of-its-kind **Braille Atlas** to let visually impaired people especially students study maps.
- The atlas has been developed both in Hindi and English by the **National Atlas and Thematic Mapping Organisation** by using indigenously developed **silk-screen painting technology**.
- Atlas consists of **20 maps** on different themes of physical, socio-economic and cultural aspects like river system, crops pattern, natural vegetation, crops, roads and railways, etc.
- It consists of raised maps embossed with simple lines and point symbols to facilitate its users to find out any location and area coverage, easily distinguishable in terms of shapes and textures.
- Each Map has a legend and reference in **Braille script** to help in navigating the map.
- In India first Braille map was made in 1997.

National Atlas and Thematic Mapping Organisation (NATMO), Kolkata

- It was founded in **1954** as **National Atlas Organisation** to compile national atlas of India.
- It is a premier agency under the Ministry of Science and Technology and is primarily engaged in preparing different thematic maps and atlases and other documents on national, state, district, block level and many other monograms

3.3. MINORITIES

3.3.1. HAMARI DHAROHAR SCHEME

Why in News?

- The first sitting of the **Committee on Cultural Harmony Conclave** under the “**Hamari Dharohar**” scheme took place recently.
- This Committee has been formulated to organise events that will help spread awareness about minority culture and heritage in India.

Hamari Dharohar

- It is a **central sector scheme launched in 2014 by the Ministry of Minority Affairs** in order to preserve the rich heritage of minority communities under the overall concept of Indian culture.
- Implementation of the scheme is expected to improve general awareness about the culture and heritage of the minority communities and also strengthen the social fabric of the country.
- **Exhibitions, preservation of literature/documents, promotion of calligraphy and R&D** are some of the activities to be carried out.
- The six minority communities notified under the **National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992** are to be covered. They are: **Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Parsis and Jains.**
- Two other schemes formulated for the benefit of minorities are: **Padho Pradesh and Nayi Roshni.**

3.3.2. WAQF PROPERTIES

Why in news

The Union Minority Affairs Ministry has been planning for the commercial and institutional utilisation of Wakf Board land across the country, including building malls, schools, hostels and offices.

Recommendations of Justice GR Bhattacharya Commission

- Decentralize Waqf properties management and form district Waqf boards in view of the mess over listed and unlisted properties throughout the state.
- Prevent concentration of power and plug the routes to escape responsibilities by the Waqf Board members and Waqf Commissioner.
- Fix collective and individual responsibility and bar anybody from holding office for more than one term. A member or his close relatives should not be involved in transfer and transaction of Waqf property.
- Laws and rules regarding lease and tenancy should be changed.
- Complete survey and enrollment of Waqf properties in the quickest possible time.
- Empower trustees of Waqf properties to move court against unauthorized sale.
- No sale of Waqf properties to be registered without the board's permission.

3.3.3. UDAAN SCHEME

There are two schemes with name UDAAN

UDAAN for minorities

- It is an initiative implemented by National Skill Development Corporation (in partnership with corporates and MoHA) for J&K to provide skills and enhance employability of youth.
- The Scheme will cover graduates, post graduates and three year engineering diploma holders.
- It aims to cover 40,000 youth of J&K over a period of five years.

UDAAN for girls

- It is a project launched by CBSE under guidance of Ministry of Human Resource Development to address low enrolment of girl students in engineering institutions.
- It will address these issues at three levels - curriculum design, transaction and assessments.
- Under this program, students will be provided free offline / online resources through virtual weekend contact classes and study material for Class XI and Class XII.
- There is a provision for financial assistance based on the number of reward points collected by student during the course.

3.3.4. NAYI MANZIL SCHEME

Why in News?

- Recently, the **Union government and the World Bank signed a \$50-million credit agreement for Nai Manzil project.**
- Recently, this scheme has been launched for the first time in Jammu and Kashmir by the Minister of Minority Affairs.

Features of the scheme

- This scheme is launched by the **Ministry of Minority Affairs in August 2015.**
- The **aim of the scheme is employment generation of the youths and also extending loans for opening enterprises.**
- The **scheme will address educational and livelihood needs of minority communities** in general and Muslims in particular as it lags behind other minority communities in terms of educational attainments.
- The scheme is intended to **cover people in between 17 to 35 age group** from all minority communities as well as Madrasa students.
- The scheme would provide 'bridge courses' to the trainees and get them Certificates for Class XII and X through 'distance medium educational system' and at the same time also provides them **trade basis skill training in 4 courses – Manufacturing, Engineering, Services, Soft skills.**
- Minimum 30% seats are earmarked for minority girls.
- It includes a **Non-residential programme of 9-12 months** duration involving a Basic Bridge Programme (For Class VIII or Class X) for their education, along with training in trade based skills for sustained livelihood/gainful employment.
- The scheme covers the entire country.

3.3.5. NAYI ROSHNI SCHEME

Why in News?

- NITI Aayog conducted an evaluation study on **Nai Roshni Scheme** in 2015-16 and the report was presented in June 2016.

About the Scheme

- The Nai Roshni scheme is a **leadership development programme** launched by the **Ministry of Minority Affairs in 2012-13.**
- The scheme has been implemented through **NGOs, civil societies and government institutions.**
- The scheme also includes Educational Programmes, Health and Hygiene, Swacch Bharat, Financial Literacy, Life Skills, Legal Rights of Women, Digital Literacy, Advocacy for social and behavioural change.
- Minority women can apply for training online as well.
- Data on training modules is available for public domain.
- The scheme helps in fighting different social stigmas such as poverty.
- It empowers the minority women to stand up for their rights.

About the Study

- The main objective of the study was to evaluate the impact of the scheme on minority and to identify the setbacks faced in the implementation of the scheme.
- The study covered 15 districts, 30 blocks, 87 villages, 27 NGOs spread over 8 states namely Assam, West Bengal, Punjab, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh.
- As per study the scheme has been successful in instilling confidence and leadership skills in minority women.
- Trained women are utilizing their knowledge to help their families and neighbours in raising their essential demands and claims from various government authorities.

3.3.6. JEWS GET MINORITY STATUS IN MAHARASHTRA

- The state cabinet in Maharashtra decided to grant Jews minority status in the state.
- Maharashtra State Minority Commissions Act, 2004, empowers the government to declare a community as minority.
- The Jews will now be counted independently as a community and can avail all schemes meant for minorities.
- This made Maharashtra the second state, after West Bengal, to declare Jews as minority.

3.4. OTHER VULNERABLE SECTIONS

3.4.1. SECC

Why in News?

- Government has decided to use **SECC 2011** instead of **Poverty line method** for implementing **socio-economic welfare programmes** to effectively tackle poverty by removing undeserving beneficiaries.
- SECC will now be used in schemes like **MGNREGA, Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin, National Rural Livelihood Mission, etc** to identify beneficiaries and expand the **direct benefit scheme** as a part of its plan to build upon the **JAM (Jan Dhan-Adhaar-Mobile) trinity**.
- An Expert group headed by Sumit Bose on Socio Economic and Caste census (SECC) recently presented its report to Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) earlier.
- Sumit Bose panel was set up to -
 - ✓ Study the criteria for allocation of resources to states as per SECC.
 - ✓ Identification of beneficiaries under various pro-poor programmes using SECC data.

Socio Economic and Caste Census (2011)

- SECC was conducted **both in urban and rural areas** in the country, to collect socio-economic and caste data of households.
- It was conducted by MoRD, Ministry of Urban Development, Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, The Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner and the State Governments.
- It used different committee methodologies in urban and rural areas –
 - ✓ **NC Saxena committee (for rural areas)** – It was established to suggest design of new BPL census. It recommended a **three-fold classification of households (HHs)** -
 - **Excluded** - These HHs would be **identified by assets and income** and would be excluded from welfare benefits of the Government.
 - **Automatically included** – It would include HHs with extreme social destitution and would be automatically included for government benefits.
 - **Others** – They would be ranked on the basis of multiple deprivation indicators and would be eligible for graded benefits. Eg. Presence of an able and literate adult etc.
 - ✓ **SR Hashim committee (for urban areas)** –
 - It also followed a three step approach like NC Saxena.
 - Only difference is that **both committees used different parameters for classification**.
E.g. In urban areas pucca houses with greater than 4 rooms **was excluded** whereas in rural areas it was three rooms or more.
- **Major findings of SECC are** – Only rural SECC has been publicly released till now.
 - ✓ About 19% of India's rural population was having **at least one of seven socio-economic parameters** of deprivation.

- ✓ 30% of rural HHs are landless and derive income from manual, casual labour.
- ✓ The second most common form of deprivation was literacy with 23.5% rural HHs having no literate adults above the age of 25.

Why SECC is better than Poverty line method

- While poverty line method identifies number of poors, SECC identifies who actually are the poor. Hence it is more **targeted** and **precise**.
- It will even help in fine tuning the beneficiaries list by excluding undeserving candidates' especially affluent people and thus tackle fraud and duplication issue.
- The BPL approach was narrow as it focused on **income** and **consumption expenditure** on the other hand SECC gave a **holistic** and **complete picture**.
- Binary approach of BPL method either include the households in all schemes or exclude them from all however if SECC will be used each household will be mapped on different deprivation factors and if found deprived they will be eligible for that specific scheme. For example some households may be eligible for food subsidy while other may be eligible for LPG subsidy. So SECC will help in eradicating not only poverty but also **various deprivations**.

3.4.2. DENOTIFIED, NOMADIC AND SEMI-NOMADIC TRIBES

Why in News?

- The **National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes** has given its report in 2016.
- While some of these communities want recognition as SCs/STs and OBCs, others want recognition as DNTs/NTs.

Background

- During the British colonial rule, if the local government had reason to believe that a gang or a tribe had "addicted to systemic commission of non-bailable offences" then it was registered as **criminal tribe** under the **Criminal Tribes Act, 1871**.
- Next came the **Criminal Tribes Act, 1924**. Under this act, the local government may establish reformatory schools and separate criminal tribe children from their parents and guardians and place them in such schools.
- The CTA was repealed in 1949 and was replaced by the **Habitual Offenders Act, 1951**.
- In 2002, Justice Venkatchaliah Commission recommended for strengthening the programmes for economic and educational development of DNTs. It also recommended constituting a special commission to look into the needs and grievances of the DNTs.
- Consequently, a **National Commission for Denotified Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes** was constituted in 2005.

Difference between Scheduled, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes

- The term "**Scheduled Tribe**" appeared first in the Constitution of India. Article 366 (25) defined them as "such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purpose of this Constitution."
- They are called Scheduled because they are included in one of the Schedule of the Constitution.
- Nomadic Tribes and Denotified Tribes both are the ones that were regarded as criminal tribes under CTA.
- According to its literally meaning, nomadic tribes are those who wander from place to place.

3.4.3. NATIONAL TRIBAL CARNIVAL

Why in news?

- Prime Minister inaugurated First National Tribal Carnival on October 25, 2016

About carnival

- It aims to promote a sense of inclusiveness amongst the tribals by showcasing and promoting various facets of tribal culture on a large scale.
- It will promote the ideals of tribal people like - community living, living cheerfully despite troubles etc.
- The deliberations will also be held on important subjects affecting tribal development.
- It will also give an exposure of marketability to tribal products like textiles, paintings etc. to promote income-generating activities and tribal livelihood.

3.4.4. NBCFDC

Why in news?

- Recently Silver Jubilee celebrations of **National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporation** (NBCFDC) were held.

About NBCFDC

- It is a Govt. of India Undertaking under the aegis of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
- It aims at promoting economic and developmental activities for the benefit of Backward Classes and assists the poorer section within them in skill development and self-employment ventures.
- It provides financial assistance through State Channelising Agencies (SCAs) nominated by the State Governments/ UTs
- The corporation assist for income generating venture in various sectors such as
 - Agriculture and Allied Activities
 - Small Business
 - Artisan and Traditional Occupation
 - Technical and Professional Trades/Courses
 - Transport and Service Sector etc.

3.4.5. REVAMPED BONDED LABOUR SCHEME, 2016

Why in news?

- Government has revamped the **Central Sponsored Scheme** for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers known as “**Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers, 2016**”.

BONDED LABOUR definition as per ILO convention, 1954 (Article 2): All work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily.

Background

- As per **Article 23** of Indian Constitution specific provision declaring traffic in human beings, **begar** and similar forms of **forced labour** is made a punishable offence.
- To pursue above objective law named Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 was enacted.
 - The act contains provisions for economic and social rehabilitation of freed bonded labourers and protection under forced eviction.
 - It is the State government responsibility to identify, release and Rehabilitate bonded labour.

- As per Global slavery Index 2016 by Walk free foundation of Australia, India has the highest number of modern slavery in the world in absolute numbers totaling 18.35 million.
- Most of the Bonded Labour comprises of socially and economically weaker sections of society like SC's, ST's, Poor etc.

Key Features of the Scheme

- The revised scheme is a **Central Sector Scheme** (earlier it was **central sponsored scheme**). So the State Government is not required to pay any matching contribution for the purpose of cash rehabilitation assistance.
- **Survey:** Rs 4.50 lakh will be provided per district for survey of bonded labourers.
- **Financial assistance:**
 - One lakh per adult male beneficiary.
 - 2 lakh for special category beneficiaries such as orphan children, women, etc.
 - 3 lakh in cases of bonded or forced labour involving extreme cases of deprivation or marginalization such as trans-genders or women or children rescued from brothels etc.
- Release of rehabilitation assistance is linked to conviction of accused.
- **Bonded Labour Rehabilitation Fund:** it will be created at District level by each State with a permanent corpus of at least Rs. 10 lakh at the disposal of the District Magistrate for extending immediate help to the released bonded labourers.
- **Funding source:** Labour and employment ministry will release the fund to District National Child Labour Project Society which in turn will release the fund to implementing agencies including the district administration.
- The benefits prescribed above shall be, in addition to, other benefits for which the beneficiary is entitled to under other such schemes.

3.4.6. TRIBAL ISSUES

Why in news?

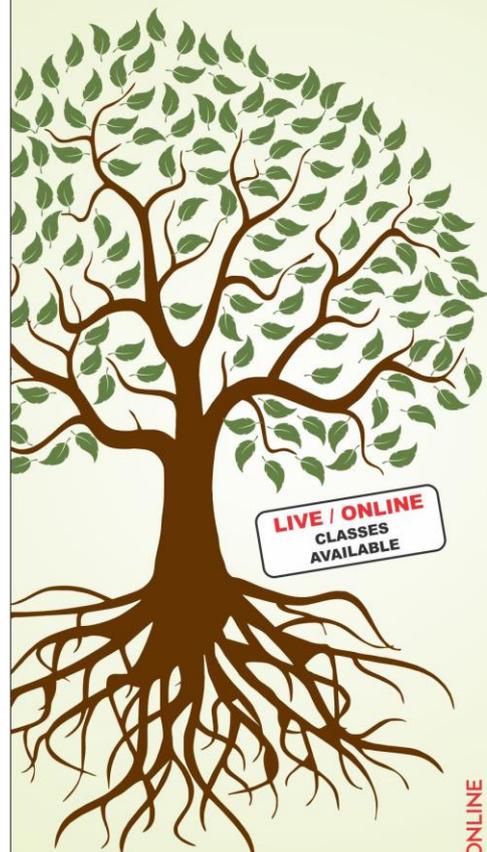
- Recently some reports alleged violation of the Forest Rights Act by the Odisha Mining Corporation in tribal areas of Odisha.

Violation of Forest Rights Act

- Under the Constitutional scheme, non-tribals are not entitled to property ownership in the tribal areas but **mining in the tribal areas is exploitative** in nature as benefits do not reach to tribal people of the region. The Forest Rights Act, thus, was enacted to take care of the issue.
- However, there are allegations that 60 per cent of the claims of tribals under the Forest Rights Act (FRA) have been rejected by the government.
- Diversion of forest land for industrial purpose by displacing tribals.
- Bypassing of the consent of gram sabha clause to expedite development projects.
- Alienation of tribals from forestland is one of the major reasons for fuelling **Left Wing Extremism** in the country.

What is the Forest Right Act?

- Schedule Tribes and Other Forest Dwellers Act or Recognition of Forest Rights Act came into force in 2006. The Nodal Ministry for the Act is Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- The Acts seeks to recognize the rights and occupation of traditional forest dwellers and Schedule Tribes in such forests.
- It provides for diversion of forest land only with the recommendation of the gram sabhas.
- Also includes right of self-cultivation for livelihood, rights over minor forest produce, community rights such as nistar etc.



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4. EDUCATION

4.1. HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE AGENCY (HEFA)

Why in news?

- The Union Cabinet has approved the creation of the Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) to give a major push for creation of high quality infrastructure in premier educational institutions.

About HEFA

- It will be jointly promoted by the **identified Promoter** and the **Ministry of Human Resource Development**.
- It would be formed as a SPV within a PSU Bank/ Government-owned-NBFC (Promoter). It would leverage the equity to raise up to Rs. 20,000 crore for funding projects for infrastructure and development of world class Labs in IITs/IIMs/NITs and such other institutions.
- It would also mobilise CSR funds from PSUs/Corporates, which would in turn be released for **promoting research and innovation** in these institutions on grant basis.
- It would finance the civil and lab infrastructure projects through a 10-year loan.
- The principal portion of the loan will be repaid through the 'internal accruals' (earned through the fee receipts, research earnings etc) of the institutions. The Government would service the interest portion through the regular Plan assistance.
- For joining as members, the Institution should agree to escrow a specific amount from their internal accruals to HEFA for a period of 10 years. This secured future flows would be securitised by the HEFA for mobilising the funds from the market.
- All the Centrally Funded Higher Educational Institutions would be eligible for joining as members of the HEFA.

Significance

- HEFA marks the beginning of a market-linked education financing structure in India and a departure from the traditional grant-based system of funding higher educational institutions.
- The agency is expected to ease pressure on the government, which currently is the sole funder of such institutions.

4.2. SUBRAMANIAN COMMITTEE REPORT ON EDUCATION

Why in news?

- Recently a committee headed by T.S.R. Subramanian has submitted its report for evolution of a National Education Policy.
- Two previous education policies had come one in 1968 and another in 1986, under Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi govts respectively. The National Education Policy (NEP) of 1986 was revised in 1992.

About UGC

- The University Grants Commission (UGC) of India is a statutory body set up by the Union government in accordance to the UGC Act 1956 under HRD Ministry.
- It has been mandated to initiate important decisions and dialogues which have an important bearing on the entire student population of the country
- The three primary functions of UGC include
 - ✓ Overseeing distribution of grants to universities and colleges in India.
 - ✓ Providing scholarships/fellowships to beneficiaries, and
 - ✓ Monitoring conformity to its regulations by universities and colleges.

4.3. RTE

4.3.1. HARMONISING RTE WITH MINORITY SCHOOLS

- The Kerala High Court has ruled that Section 16 of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act), that mandates schools to not detain any child before she completes elementary education, is applicable to minority educational institutions as well.
- The Court located this obligation not in the Act but under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution, which guarantees right to life and liberty.
- It ruled that no-detention policy (NDP) is in the “best interest” of the child and could independently be considered a fundamental right.

About RTE Act

- It was enacted on 4 August 2009, which provide right to free and compulsory education for children between 6 and 14 in India under Article 21A of the Indian Constitution.
- India became one of 135 countries to make education a fundamental right of every child when the act came into force on 1 April 2010.

4.3.2. REVIEW OF NO DETENTION POLICY UNDER RTE

Why in news?

- In reply to HRD ministry, at least 18 state governments want this section to be repealed.
- Recently, T S R Subramanian panel appointed to suggest Education policy also recommended that the government should bring back the pass-fail system from Class VI.

What is No Detention Policy?

- As per Section 16 of RTE Act, the students up to class VIII are automatically promoted to the next class without being held back even if they do not get a passing grade.
- This has been implemented as part of the **Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE)** under the RTE Act to ensure all-round development of students.

4.4. PISA

Why in News?

- The **HRD Ministry** has decided to take part in **PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment)** again from 2021. India boycotted the test after 2009.

What is PISA?

- It is a global evaluation system launched by **OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation Development)** in 2000.
- It tests the learning levels of teenage students (15 year olds) in **reading, mathematics and science**.
- The test is carried out every three years.
- PISA's data can be used to improve India's school system and bring them at par with the global standards.

4.5. KADIYAM SRIHARI COMMITTEE

Why in news?

- Recently sub-committee of **Central Board of Advisory Education (CABE)** under the chairmanship of **Kadiyan Srihari** has been constituted by Union Human Resource Development Ministry to look into the matter of girls' education.

Central Board of Advisory Education

- It is highest advisory body to advise the Central and State Governments in the field of education.
- It is headed by **Union HRD minister** and consists of nominated members representing various interests in addition to elected members from **Lok Sabha** and **Rajya Sabha**
- Major **functions** of CABE are to review the progress of education from time to time, to assess the extent and manner in which education policy has been implemented by central and state governments and other concerned agencies and to give appropriate advice in the matter.

4.6. SUBRAMANIAN COMMITTEE REPORT ON EDUCATION

Why in news?

- Recently a committee headed by T.S.R. Subramanian has submitted its report for evolution of a National Education Policy.
- Two previous education policies had come one in 1968 and another in 1986, under Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi govts respectively. The National Education Policy (NEP) of 1986 was revised in 1992.

About UGC

- The University Grants Commission (UGC) of India is a statutory body set up by the Union government in accordance to the UGC Act 1956 under HRD Ministry.
- It has been mandated to initiate important decisions and dialogues which have an important bearing on the entire student population of the country
- The three primary functions of UGC include
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 - ✓ Providing scholarships/fellowships to beneficiaries, and
 - ✓ Monitoring conformity to its regulations by universities and colleges.

About National Education Policy

4.7. ASHOK KUMAR ROOPANWAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Why in News?

- The one-man commission constituted by the HRD ministry was set up to look into the Rohith Vemula's death at the Hyderabad Central University and suggest measures to prevent such.

Recommendations of the report

- **Counselling Centers** with professionally counselors should be set up.
- The university should evolve an **appellate mechanism** for students to appeal of excesses in the university.
- **Monitoring Committee needs to be** constituted to provide guidance on the matters related to the subjects studied by the students. Immediately report to Vice Chancellor on serious issues.
- **Equal opportunity cell** headed by the **Anti-discrimination Officer** as per the **UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations 2012** should be made functional.
- **Grievance Redressal Committee headed by the Ombudsman** as per the UGC (Grievance Redressal) Regulations 2012 should be made effective and should dispense grievances weekly.
- **A strong induction programme, a local guardian system** for outstation students and suitable student volunteers to act as mentors and help freshers are needed for better acclimatization.
- Remedial teaching for academically weak students.
- **Strict compliance of Hostel Admission Rules** and Regulations in allotting hostel accommodation and supervision.

4.8. UNIVERSAL EDUCATION GOALS OF INDIA

Why in News?

- In its **Global Monitoring Report, 2016, UNESCO** claimed that India will achieve
 - ✓ Universal primary education by 2050.
 - ✓ Universal lower secondary education (grades 6-8 in case of India) by 2060
 - ✓ Universal upper secondary education (grades 9-12 in case of India) by 2085.
- UNESCO also informed that these projections have been **made on past trends in education** in India and that it has not involved the HRD ministry in this exercise.

About UNESCO

- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) based in Paris.
- Its declared purpose is to contribute to peace and security by promoting international collaboration through educational, scientific, and cultural reforms in order to increase universal respect for justice, the rule of law, and human rights along with fundamental freedom proclaimed in the United Nations Charter.
- It has 195 member states and nine associate members.
- It pursues its objectives through five major programs: education, natural sciences, social/human sciences, culture and communication/information.

4.9. MOTHER LANGUAGE AS MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN SCHOOL

- Recently, Karnataka government wants union government to make amendment in constitution empowering states to make mother language compulsory in primary school.
- **Article 350A:** it deals with interest of Linguistic Minorities says that every state and local authority must provide adequate facilities for instructions in local language at primary stage and President is empowered to issue direction for the same.

4.10. NEW DELHI DECLARATION ON EDUCATION

Why in news

BRICS nations adopted the 'New Delhi Declaration on Education at 4th meeting of BRICS Ministers of Education.

Key points

- **The main aim is** to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all.
- Develop an enabling framework to promote research cooperation and knowledge transfer among BRICS countries.
- Use information and communication technologies (ICTs) for improving access to education, enhancing the quality of teaching-learning process, teacher development, and strengthening educational planning and management
- Initiate actions to formulate country-specific targets within the broader scope of the **SDG4** and corresponding targets.
- Share the best practices available in BRICS countries on collaboration in education, research and innovation through the BRICS Network University.

SDG Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning

4.11. NATIONAL ELIGIBILITY CUM ENTRANCE TEST (NEET)

- The Lok Sabha passed the landmark bill awarding statutory status to the controversial National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) from the next academic session.
- Main objectives behind the move are to end the multiplicity of examinations, Have fair and transparent examinations and Adopt non-exploitative process.

- The Bill seeks to amend the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956 and the Dentists Act, 1948 and replace the Ordinances that were promulgated by the government to circumvent the Supreme Court order for implementation of NEET examination this session itself.

4.12. SCHOOL EDUCATION QUALITY INDEX (SEQI)

- **Niti Aayog** has organised the first regional workshop on School Education Quality Index (SEQI) to improve the learning outcomes among school children.

About SEQI

- **The SEQI is a composite index that** will report annual improvements of States on key domains of education quality, conceptualized and designed by NITI Aayog and the MHRD.
- The larger vision of the index is to shift the focus of States from inputs towards outcomes, provide objective benchmarks for continuous annual improvements, encourage state-led innovations to improve quality and facilitate sharing of best practices.
- In order to precisely report the quality of education imparted across India, the **SEQI is divided into two categories: 1.Outcomes and 2.Governance Management.**
- These are further divided into **three domains of Outcomes (Learning, Access and Equity)** and **two domains of Governance & Management (Governance Processes and Structural Reforms)**. Currently the index has 34 indicators and 1000 points, with the highest weightage given to learning outcomes (600 out of 1000 points).

4.13. INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT BILL, 2017

Why in news?

- Recently Cabinet has approved Indian Institute of Management Bill, 2017

Salient features of bill

- IIMs would be declared as Institutions of National Importance (statutory status) to enable them to grant degrees to their students.
- At present, they are separate autonomous bodies registered under the Societies Act. Thus, not authorized to award degrees rather diploma or fellow program only.
- They would be given complete autonomy with adequate accountability. Thus, the board will select the Chairperson and Director of an Institution.
- **Coordination Forum** of IIMs (with 33 members) as an advisory body - facilitate the sharing of experiences, ideas and concerns with a view to enhancing the performance of all institutes. HRD minister will not be the convener of this forum

4.14. GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES/SCHEMES

4.14.1. VIDYANJALI SCHEME

- The Ministry of HRD recently launched the Vidyanjali scheme aimed at boosting the education system by delivering volunteer teachers to government schools.
- Volunteers who fulfill the criteria can apply through the government portal www.mygov.in
- It will not replace the regular and professionally qualified teachers in the government schools
- The volunteer's responsibility is towards overall development of the child, not academics.
- The volunteer service will be used in developing skills like public speaking, creative writing, counseling, music and dance.
- The project is being started in 2200 schools across 21 states in its first phase, it will be gradually expanded to the all the government run schools of the country.

Eligibility and Selection

- No qualification is required to volunteer for this scheme.
- Foreign nationals can also apply if they have an OCI Card in their charge.

- Block Development Officer has been given the responsibility for scrutinizing the applications of the volunteers.

4.14.2. 'SHAGUN' – A WEB-PORTAL FOR SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

- 'ShaGun' is a web-portal for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan launched by Minister of Human Resource Development.
- It aims at continuous monitoring of the flagship scheme - Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and assess performance of States and UTs on key parameters through codifying learning outcomes.
- State government will choose, upload and manage their own content.

About SSA

- It is a centrally sponsored scheme providing universal access to education to children in the age group of 6 to 14 years of age.
- Its overall goals include
 - universal access and retention
 - bridging of gender and social category gaps
 - enhancement of learning levels of children
- The interventions under SSA include
 - building of school infrastructure
 - provisioning for teachers and their training
 - residential schools for girls known as the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas
 - identification of children with special needs
 - Local level accountability by engaging with community based organisations etc.

4.14.3. NATIONAL ACADEMIC DEPOSITORY

- HRD minister inaugurated the National Academic Depository (NAD) , a digital depository of academic awards
- It aims to replicate digitization and dematerialization of financial security depositories for the educational awards,
- The awards will be verified, authenticated, accessed and retrieved in a digital depository
- It is a move to enhance transparency and authenticity
- NAD will develop an online portfolio of all education certificates across Academic Institutes, which can be submitted easily for employment, higher education, and loans
- NAD will also integrate directly with Boards / Universities which issue Certificates and hence, will ensure authenticity of certificate records

4.14.4. SWAYAM PRABHA

- It is a project for providing high quality educational contents, developed by experts, through 32 DTH (direct to home) Television Channels with aim of uniformity in standards of education
- It will be available to all and there will be new content of 4 hours to be telecasted 6 times a day. This will allow students to choose the timings of their convenience
- It will cover diverse disciplines of all levels of education in various languages (initially only in English to be expanded later)
- Students can clear their doubts through a toll-free helpline number that to be uplinked by the Bhaskaracharya Institute of Space Applications and Geo Informatics (BISAG).

4.14.5. PADHE BHARAT BADHE BHARAT

- It is a sub-programme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan with special focus on improving language development and to create interest in mathematics through - Early reading and writing with comprehension (ERWC) and Early mathematics (EM)
- As a follow up to this foundational programme, the National Reading Initiative was also launched to develop and promote the habit of reading among students in elementary schools.

4.14.6. PRADHAN MANTRI GRAMIN DIGITAL SAKSHARTA ABHIYAN

Why in news?

- Cabinet recently approved 'Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan' for covering 6 crore rural households covering people from age group 14 to 60 years

About PMGDISHA

- It is expected to be one of the largest digital literacy programmes in the world implemented under the overall supervision of Ministry of Electronics and IT in active collaboration with States/UTs through their designated State Implementing Agencies, District e-Governance Society (DeGS), etc.
- This year's target is to train 275 lakh taking an average of 200-300 candidates from each of the 250,000 Gram Panchayats to ensure equitable geographical reach
- The Scheme aims to bridge the digital divide, specifically targeting the rural population including the marginalised sections of society like SC, ST, Minorities, BPL, women, differently-abled and minorities.

PHILOSOPHY/ दर्शनशास्त्र

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- ✓ Copies will be evaluated within one week

Classes at Jaipur & Pune

5. HEALTH

5.1. NATIONAL INDEX FOR PERFORMANCE OF HEALTH OUTCOMES

Why in news?

- NITI Aayog launched the index on “Performance of Health Outcomes”.
- Index is developed with technical assistance from World Bank.
- It will help rank the states on the basis of their performance on measurable health parameters.

Salient features of the index

- It comprises of a set of indicators grouped into relevant domains and sub-domains such as **Health outcomes, Governance & Information** and **Key inputs/processes**.
- The maximum weightage is awarded to measurable **Health outcomes**.
- Indicators have been selected based on their continuous availability of the data.
- Composite index would be calculated and any change in index from base year to reference year will show incremental improvement in that state.
- It will rank various States on the basis of their performance on measurable health indicators like infant mortality rate, sex ratio at birth and functional 24x7 public health centres.
- Indicators have been selected based on their periodic availability through existing data sources like SRS etc.
- This index aims to bring improvements in the social sector outcomes, which have not kept pace with the economic growth in India.
- Monitorable indicators that form a part of Sustainable Development Goal in Health have been included in order to align these initiatives.
- Data will be entered and results published on a dynamic web portal hosted by NITI Aayog.
- The index is meant to capture the annual incremental improvements by States, rather than focus on historical achievements.

5.2. NEW HEALTH INDEX

Why in news?

- The first global analysis that assesses countries on sustainable development goal (SDG) health performance was launched at a special event at the UN General Assembly recently and published online in The Lancet.
- The scores ranked countries which nations are closest to achieving the targets.

How the ranking was done?

- The study was carried out by an international collaboration on the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) which analyzed each country’s progress towards achieving health-related SDG targets by creating an overall SDG Index score.
- By using data from the Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries and Risk Factors (GBD) study between 1990 and 2015, the current status of 33 of the 47 health-related indicators were estimated.
- To enable easier comparison, a health-related SDG index was created with a rating of 0-100 that combines these 33 health-related indicators to measure progress for 188 countries between 1990 and 2015.
- **India’s performance:** It has ranked India at 143 in a list of 188 countries with a score of 42/100. India is six places ahead of Pakistan and way behind countries like Sri Lanka (79), China (92), even war-torn Syria (117) and Iraq (128).

5.3. KERALA IMPOSES FAT TAX

Kerala has introduced a ‘fat tax’ of 14.5% on the consumption of junk food items like pizzas and burgers sold through branded restaurants.

Why fat tax?

The tax is aimed at making people more conscious about food choices and curbing obesity. Kerala has most people suffering from obesity after Punjab, according to a National family health survey.

5.4. GLOBAL NUTRITION REPORT

India Rankings

- On stunting, India ranks 114 out of 132 countries, with the incidence of stunting at 38.7%.
- On wasting, India ranks 120 out of 130 countries, at 15.1 %.
- On the prevalence of anaemia in women of reproductive age, India ranks 170 out of 185 countries at 48.1%.

Salient points

- India almost doubled the rate of stunting reduction in the past 10 years compared with the previous decade. This is highly significant as India is home to more than one-third of the world's stunted children.
- India must pay attention to its growing rate of overweight and, in particular, high rate of diabetes.
- Out of six Indian states that have an independent state nutrition mission only two states have clear, measurable time-bound targets for improvements in nutrition outcomes.
- One reason the nutrition missions are not backed up by targets is likely that they are typically housed in the state health department or department of Women and Child Development. Issues that fall in the domain of other departments do not get articulated in plans or missions.
- Hence there is need for multi-sectoral missions or agencies, with clearly defined and measurable targets and monitorable action points for all sectors.

About Global Nutrition Report

- The Global Nutrition Report is an independent and comprehensive annual review of the state of the world's nutrition.
- It is a multi-partner initiative that holds a mirror up to our successes and failures at meeting intergovernmental nutrition targets. The World Health Organization is a Global Nutrition Report Partner.
- It documents progress on commitments made on the global stage, and it recommends actions to accelerate that progress.
- This year's report focuses on the theme of making—and measuring— SMART commitments to nutrition and identifying what it will take to end malnutrition in all its forms by 2030.

5.5. POTASSIUM BROMATE

- The government banned the use of potassium bromate as a food additive following a Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) study that found its presence in bread caused cancer.
- Potassium iodate is also used as a food additive and it too is said to be carcinogenic, it has been also referred to a scientific panel.
- A CSE study had found that 84 per cent of 38 commonly available brands of pre-packaged breads, including pav and buns, tested positive for potassium bromate and potassium iodate.
- The two food additives are banned in many countries and are listed as "hazardous" to public health.
- According to the CSE, potassium bromate typically increases dough strength, leads to higher rising and gives uniform finish to baked products. Potassium iodate is a flour treatment agent.

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5.6. DETECTING MELAMINE IN MILK

Why in news?

- A handheld device has been developed by IISc, Bangalore to detect melamine in milk. It makes the process extremely easy, quick and inexpensive.

About device

- Leaf extract of a commonly seen weed parthenium along with silver nitrate is used for detecting the presence.
- The sensor can detect melamine even at a low concentration of 0.5 ppm in raw milk.
- Melamine content of more than 1 ppm in infant formula and more than 2.5 ppm in other foods is viewed as adulteration according to FSSAI.
- Prior to melamine detection, the milk is processed to remove fat and proteins as they tend to interfere with detection.
- The silver nanoparticles are reddish yellow in the absence of melamine, while it becomes nearly colourless when melamine is present.

5.7. DIGITAL INDIA AWARDS 2016

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare won gold in the Web Ratna category in Digital India awards, 2016
- These awards are given by the Ministry of Electronics & IT to promote more innovative e-governance initiatives
- It is given on the basis of parameters like comprehensive web presence, accountability in terms of quantity, quality, innovation ascertaining user satisfaction etc.
- Digital India awards were earlier known as the **Web Ratna Awards** which were instituted under the Ambit of National Portal of India.
- The website of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare conforms to the UUU trilogy, is totally bilingual, visually challenged users friendly, compliant to Guidelines for Indian Government Websites (GIGW), regular updation through Content Management System (CMS) and secure.

5.8. REGULATING ONLINE SALE OF MEDICINES

Why in News?

- A sub-committee constituted by Drugs Consultative Committee to examine online drugs sale has recently submitted its report.

Drugs Consultative Committee

- It is a statutory body under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940 constituted by the Central government.
- It advises central, state governments on uniformity of this act throughout India.
- It has representatives from central and state governments.

5.9. DRAFT PUBLIC HEALTH BILL 2017

Why in news?

The draft **Public Health (Prevention, Control and Management of Epidemics, Bio-Terrorism and Disasters) Bill, 2017** has been released by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Objectives: The Bill aims to provide for the prevention, control and management of:

- epidemics
- public health consequences of disasters
- Acts of bio terrorism or threats.

5.10. AUTISM TOOLS INCLIN AND ISAA

- Recently workshop was held on Autism tools - International Clinical Epidemiology Network (INCLIN) and Indian Scale of Assessment of Autism (ISAA) by National Trust.
- IT was organized by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment
- Its aim is to train and empower health care professionals like paediatricians, psychologists & psychiatrists to be trained as Master Trainers.

- Autism is a neuro-developmental disorder spanning entire life with no definitive cure, thus, increasing the importance of early identification and intervention to minimize effect.

About National Trust

- It is a statutory body under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) in Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment
- It is working for the welfare of persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities.

5.11. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

5.11.1. GLOBAL TB REPORT

Why in news?

The Global TB Report 2016, recently released, has revised the estimates for the tuberculosis (TB) burden in India upwards.

About Report

- WHO has been publishing a global TB report every year since 1997.
- The main aim of the report is to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date assessment of the TB epidemic, and of progress in prevention, diagnosis and treatment of the disease at global, regional and country levels.

Associated facts

- The Mycobacterium tuberculosis bacterium causes TB.
- It is spread through the air when a person with TB (whose lungs are affected) coughs, sneezes, spits, laughs or talks.
- Since antibiotics began to be used to fight TB, some strains have become resistant to drugs.
- Multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) arises when an antibiotic fails to kill all of the bacteria that it targets, with the surviving bacteria developing resistance to that antibiotic and often others at the same time.

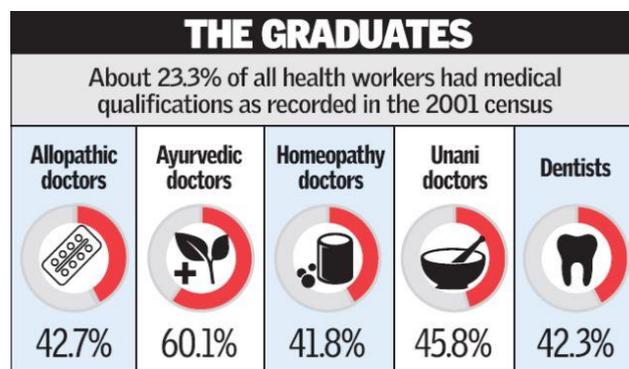
5.11.2. WHO REPORT ON THE HEALTH WORKFORCE IN INDIA

Why in News?

Recently, WHO has published a study titled 'The Health Workforce in India', on India's healthcare workforce on the basis of census 2001 data.

Findings of the report

- For a population of 1.02 billion in 2001, there were just 20 lakh health workers in India.
- Of all doctors, 77.2% were allopathic and 22.8% were Ayurvedic, Homeopathic or Unani (AYUSH).
- 57% of the practitioners did not have any medical qualification.
- Nearly one-third of allopathic doctors were educated only up to Class 12.
- Among nurses and midwives, 67.1% received education only up to secondary school level.
- It was found that only 18.8% of healthcare workers had a medical qualification.
- Of all health workers, 59.2% were based in urban areas (home to just 27.8% of the population) and only 40.8% were based in rural areas (home to 72.2% of India's population.)



5.11.3. MNTE & YAWS-FREE STATUS TO INDIA

India is first nation to be formally acknowledged to be yaws-free through official citation from WHO and UNICEF. Its significance increases as the target was to eliminate it by 2020

What is yaws?

- Yaws is a chronic infection that affects mainly the skin, bone and cartilage.
- The disease occurs mainly in poor communities in warm, humid, tropical areas
- It affects mainly children below 15 years of age.
- It is caused by the bacterium - *Treponema pallidum* and transmitted by skin contact.
- Yaws occurs in overcrowded communities, with limited access to basic amenities, such as water and sanitation, as well as health care.

India was validated for Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus Elimination (MNTE) much ahead of the global target of December 2015. The elimination of Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus as a public health problem means that the annual rate of Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus is now less than 1 per 1000 live births.

What is MNTE?

- Unhygienic conditions during delivery and inadequate umbilical cord care are the chief causes of the disease in mother and child. It is caused by the bacterium *Clostridium Tetani*.
- Symptoms include lockjaw, muscle spasms, fever, fast heart rate, sweating and high blood pressure.
- Immunisation and enhancing quality maternal and newborn care is critical in the elimination of the disease.

5.11.4. WHO FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON TOBACCO CONTROL (FCTC)

Why in News?

The seventh session of the Conference of the Parties (COP7) to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) was held in New Delhi.

About WHO FCTC

- The WHO FCTC is an evidence-based treaty that reaffirms the right of all people to the highest standard of health.
- The WHO FCTC was developed in response to the globalization of the tobacco epidemic.

5.12. PICTORIAL WARNINGS ON TOBACCO

- **India ranks 3rd globally among 205** countries with 85 per cent implementation of pictorial warnings on tobacco products pack.
- The top two countries are Nepal and Vanuatu.
- India has demonstrated global leadership by implementing 85 per cent pictorial warnings on all tobacco packages.

5.13. UNITED NATIONS HIGH PANEL REPORT ON ACCESS TO MEDICINES

Why in News?

- The UN released its High-Level Panel report on Access to Medicines showing concerns over non-accessibility of medicines due to high prices.

Highlights of the Report

- The report has urged governments to
 - ✓ “Urgently” increase their current levels of investment in health technology innovation.
 - ✓ De-link drug prices from R&D costs.
 - ✓ To globally prioritise research on disease whose needs are unmet such as growing emergence of infectious diseases like Ebola and Zika.
- The panel has recommended making the drug prices transparent both to the consumers and governments.
- The report calls for **human rights to be placed above intellectual property rights** so that all countries are able to use flexibilities granted under TRIPS to access affordable medicines.

A CALL FOR TRANSPARENCY
Key recommendations made by the UN report

Countries that threaten generic drugmakers like India for using their entitlements under the TRIPS Agreement will face serious sanctions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Governments should negotiate the coordination, financing and development of health technologies to aid existing models	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is imperative that governments increase their current levels of investment in health technology innovation to address unmet needs
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The report calls for transparency in the pricing of drugs

- The report has also lashed out powerful nations on threatening weaker countries from overriding drug patents under TRIPS flexibilities.

5.14. INDIA DECLARED FREE FROM BIRD FLU

Why in news?

- India has declared itself free from the highly contagious avian influenza or bird flu.
- Bird flu (avian influenza) is a disease caused by strains of influenza virus that primarily affects birds.

Causes

- Bird flu is caused by strains of the influenza virus that have evolved to be specially adapted to enter avian cells. There are three main types of influenza: A, B, and C.
- The virus that causes bird flu is influenza A type with eight RNA strands that make up its genome.
- Influenza viruses are further classified by analyzing two proteins on the surface of the virus. The proteins are called hemagglutinin (H) and neuraminidase (N).
- There are many different types of hemagglutinin and neuraminidase proteins. For example, the recent pathogenic bird flu virus has type 5 hemagglutinin and type 1 neuraminidase. Thus, it is named "H5N1" influenza A virus.

5.15. INDIA'S FIGHT AGAINST GROWING HEPATITIS

Why in news?

- The Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme of the NCDC received notification of 290,000 cases of acute viral hepatitis in 2013.
- Hepatitis is the inflammation of the liver caused by viruses A, B, C, D or E. These viruses can be distinguished depending on the predominant mode of transmission — water or blood — and show significant differences in their epidemiology, presentation, prevention and control.

Important features

- **Syringe safety** to prevent new cases of hepatitis from arising.
- **Awareness drives** on the use of sterile razors in barber shops, use of new instruments for pedicure and manicure and on the use of disposable syringes for patients.
- Multiple stakeholders like the government, politicians, the media and individuals from different sectors.
- **Lower cost of Hepatitis drug.** The country was able to treat its patients, at 1/10 the global price of the drugs.
- It carried out its first **hepatitis survey** in 1996 and its latest in 2015. India is yet to conduct one.
- Egypt has now introduced a birth-dose policy to prevent new infections.

5.16. FOOD REGULATIONS

5.16.1. DRAFT REGULATIONS ON FORTIFICATION OF FOODS

Why in News?

- Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) issued draft regulations to allow food fortification in foods for public health benefit.

Food Fortification

- It is the addition of vitamins and minerals such as iron, iodine, zinc, Vitamin A, D to staple foods such as rice, milk and salt to improve their nutritional content.
- These nutrients may or may not have been originally present in the food before processing.
- It helps overcome micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) deficiency.

FSSAI

- It is a statutory body as per Food Safety and Standards Act 2006.
- It comes under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- Its aim is to establish a single reference point for all matters relating to food safety and standards.

- It neither changes existing food patterns, habits nor individual compliance.

Bio-fortification

- Biofortification improves nutritional quality of food crops through agronomic practices, conventional plant breeding, or modern biotechnology.
- Biofortification increases nutrient levels in crops during plant growth rather than through manual means during crop processing as in conventional fortification.

Significance of the regulation

- The regulations provides for **specific role of FSSAI in promotion for food fortification**.
- It **allows mandating of food fortification** based on health severity as per scientific analysis.
- There would be a fortification logo for the first time which will **help raise consumer awareness**.
- It will **help solve the problem of hidden hunger** i.e. the absence of vital micronutrients in human body.
- It shifts focus from only food security towards **attaining a nutritional security**.

5.16.2. LAW COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION ON FOOD LAWS

Why in news?

The Law Commission of India in its 264th report has recommended life imprisonment for traders, businessmen and shopkeepers found guilty of the death of their customers by intentionally selling them adulterated or “noxious” food and drink.

The Present Legal Framework

- Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 (Food Act) was brought in to consolidate all previous existing food laws thus creating a single reference point for all matters relating to food safety and standards.
- It establishes an independent statutory authority- **Food Safety and Standards Authority** (Food Authority) which has **following functions-**
 - ✓ Laying down scientific standards for articles of food and
 - ✓ Regulating their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption.

Food Adulteration under the IPC

- Indian Penal Code, 1860 (IPC) under sections 272 and 273 also provides for penal provisions with food adulteration.
- The food act provides for a maximum punishment of life imprisonment.
- In comparison to the Food Act, the IPC prescribes punishment of maximum 6 months of imprisonment or a fine of one thousand rupees or both.
- States like Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal have brought in legislations to amend IPC to enhance the punishment to imprisonment for life and also the fine.

Recommendations of Law Commission

- **Sections 272 and 273** of the IPC should be amended to bring the penal framework in it on par with the existing punishments scheme provided in the Food Act and the State Amendments to the Code.
- **The punishment should be graded with proportion to the harm caused** to the consumer due to consumption of adulterated food and drinks.
- IPC should be amended to **provide for life imprisonment** as maximum punishment in cases where food adulteration leads to death.

5.16.3. SWACCH SWASTH SARVATRA

Why in News?

- It is a joint initiative between the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- The objective of this programme is to build on and manifest the achievements of two different schemes
 - ✓ Swacch Bharat Mission by Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation
 - ✓ Kayakalp of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- Another joint initiative **Swasth Bacche Swasth Bharat** was also launched at the same event.

Features

- The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation has declared over 700 blocks as **Open Defecation Free (ODF). Community Health Centres (CHCs)** in ODF blocks of the country will get Rs 10 lakhs to focus on sanitation and hygiene
- Under Kayakalp, one **Primary Health Centre (PHCs)** in each district is awarded for meeting quality standards including sanitation and hygiene.
- The Gram Panchayat under which PHC is awarded will be noted and special focus will be given to make it ODF under SBM.

5.16.4. CORONARY STENT PRICE CAPPED

Why in news?

- National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) capped coronary stents prices up to 40 per cent lower than their existing market rates.
- It is valid for all stents sold within India – whether domestic or imported.

Background

- In 2016, Coronary stents were included in the National List of Essential Medicines (2015).
- Later the Department of Pharmaceuticals incorporated coronary stents in Schedule I of the Drug Prices Control Order, 2013 making it a 'scheduled formulation'.

Need of price cap

- Presently nearly **two-thirds of the high out-of-pocket expenditure on health incurred by Indians went towards drugs.**
- Lancet research has shown a rise in **irrational use of medical technologies**, including cardiac stents and knee implants.
- Indian stent market is about \$500 million. It is expected to grow further due to rise in incidence of hypertension and diabetes.
- Coronary artery disease is becoming a major health problem in India. Therefore it has become the first medical device to be brought under price control.

Significance of the order

- This order would **reduce the 'unethical markups' in the prices** of the medical devices like stents making healthcare more affordable.
- NPPA report had found out that there **was a 'vulgar profiteering'** by raising the medical device prices in an irrational manner. This order would curb this practice.
- **Quality levels of the stent** may drop if the monitoring is not adequate.

What is a Stent?

- It is a tube-shaped device which is inserted into a blocked blood vessel.
- It helps clear the blockage in arteries, sometimes through physical means (Bare Metal stents) and often through the drugs it gives out at a slow rate (Drug eluting stents).
- Thinner the stent, more sophisticated and expensive it is supposed to be.

National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM)

- As per the WHO, Essential Medicines are those that **satisfy the priority health care needs of the population.**
- **NLEM 2015** contains 376 medicines.
- Criteria for inclusion into this list includes public health emergency, cost effective medicine etc.
- Core Committee formed by the Ministry of Health reviews and revises the medicines in the NLEM.

National Pharmaceutical Pricing Policy 2012

- The criteria to fix the price ceiling of any commodity is calculated as the **simple average of all brands of that particular product that have a market share of at least 1 per cent.**

National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority

- It is an independent body under Department of Pharmaceuticals under Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers.
- Its functions are:
 - To fix/ revise the controlled bulk drugs prices and formulations.
 - To enforce prices and availability of the medicines under the **Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995/2013.**
 - To **recover amounts overcharged by manufacturers** for the controlled drugs from the consumers.
 - To **monitor the prices of decontrolled drugs** in order to keep them at reasonable levels.

5.16.5. ADVERTISING STANDARDS COUNCIL OF INDIA (ASCI)

Why in news?

- ASCI and Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) have signed a MoU to check misleading advertisements in the food and beverages sector.

Important points about the MoU

- ASCI gets a suo motu monitoring mandate by FSSAI to process complaints against misleading advertisements of food and beverages along with the complaints from FSSAI.
- The review will include violation of the Food Safety Standards Act 2006 and regulations related to advertisements making misleading, unsubstantiated or false claims.
- ASCI would report to FSSAI about the non-compliance as per provisions of the FSS Act.

About ASCI

- A self-regulatory voluntary organization of the advertising industry in India, founded in 1985.
- The three main constituents of the industry viz. advertisers, advertising agencies and media came together to form this independent NGO.
- The aim of ASCI is to maintain and enhance the public's confidence in advertising. Their mandate is that all advertising material must be truthful, legal and honest, decent and not objectify women, safe for consumers esp children and fair to their competitors.
- It deliberates upon individual complaints against any advertisements for its compliance with ASCI code and other laws.

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5.17. DISEASES

5.17.1. LEPROSY

What is Leprosy?

- Leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease, is a chronic infectious disease caused by *Mycobacterium leprae*.
- The disease mainly affects the skin, the peripheral nerves, mucosal surfaces of the upper respiratory tract and the eyes.
- Leprosy is known to occur at all ages ranging from early infancy to very old age. Leprosy is curable and early treatment averts most disabilities.
- The exact mechanism of transmission of leprosy is not known. At least until recently, the most widely held belief was that the disease was transmitted by contact between cases of leprosy and healthy persons.

Recent initiatives

- **Leprosy Case Detection Campaign –**
 - The campaign, spearheaded by the National Leprosy Elimination Programme, covered 149 districts across 19 states and mobilized almost 300 000 health workers.
 - A record 320 million Indians have been screened in a door-to-door leprosy detection campaign, revealing thousands of "hidden" cases.
 - It involved volunteers from the Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) project.
- **Introduction of Made-in-India Leprosy Vaccine –**
 - A novel vaccine, developed in India, is to be launched on a pilot basis in five districts in Bihar and Gujarat.
 - If it yields positive results, the leprosy vaccine programme will be extended to other high-prevalence districts.
- **WHO's global strategy to end leprosy –**
 - The strategy aims to, by 2020, reduce to zero the number of children diagnosed with leprosy and related physical deformities; reduce the rate of newly-diagnosed leprosy patients with visible deformities to less than one per million; and ensure that all legislation that allows for discrimination on the basis of leprosy is overturned.
 - The new global strategy is guided by the principles of initiating action, ensuring accountability and promoting inclusivity.

Milestones in NLEP

- 1955 - National Leprosy Control Programme (NLCP) launched
- 1983 - National Leprosy Eradication Programme launched
- 1983 - Introduction of Multidrug therapy (MDT) in Phases
- 2005 - Elimination of Leprosy at National Level

5.17.2. RECURRENCE OF POLIO

- Telangana was under national and international attention after a polio strain was detected from a sewage sample collected near the Secunderabad Railway Station.
- The samples from the state showed the presence of **Type 2 vaccine derived polio virus (VDVP)**, which had undergone ten nucleotide changes.
- If the weakened type-2 virus used in oral polio vaccine [OPV] continues to multiply for long, mutations may arise.
- If six or more nucleotide changes happen then it is called vaccine-derived poliovirus (VDVP).
- VDVP is extremely rare and found in children with immune-deficiency and among populations with low immunity levels.

Vaccination Drive

- Although no cases of Polio was found in the state, as a precautionary measure, Telangana will soon see the largest ever mass vaccination drive with **Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV)**.
- Trivalent OPV used until now contained live but weakened type 1, 2 and 3 polio viruses.
- Subsequently, the country switched to bivalent oral polio vaccine or BOPV by dropping type 2 as this variant was responsible for vaccine-derived polio cases.

- Following this, the **injectable IPV** was introduced, containing killed viruses of all three types; viral-shedding is a non-issue with IPV.
- IPV is made from heat-killed virus that cannot cause the disease in any case, because the pathogen is not alive.

5.17.3. SCRUB TYPHUS

- Various cases and deaths are being reported in Himachal Pradesh due to Scrub Typhus
- Scrub Typhus is caused by a bacterium *Orientia Tsutsugamushi*, transmitted by the bite of infected mite larva present in the soil having scrub vegetation
- Symptoms of the disease include fever, a primary lesion, a macular rash, and lymphadenopathy.
- Himachal is an endemic region of large scrub vegetation.

5.17.4. NORMS FOR BRAIN DEATH

Why in News?

- The National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO) have begun to frame uniform guidelines on brain death certification all over the country.

National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization

- NOTTO is the **nodal agency that frames policy guidelines and protocols** involved in organ donation and transplantation.
- It has been set up under Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- It has **following two divisions**:
 - National Human Organ and Tissue Removal and Storage Network
 - National Biomaterial Centre

5.17.5. HYSTERECTOMY AMONG YOUNG WOMEN: SURVEY

Why in News?

- A Hyderabad-based NGO undertook a door-to-door survey and recorded 728 such cases of hysterectomy in the villages of Kowdipally mandal of Medak district.
- They have published the comprehensive data on the rampant practice of hysterectomy among young women.
- Also, for the first time, the National Family Health Survey-4 has included a question on hysterectomies. This data is yet to be published.

What is Hysterectomy?

A hysterectomy is **an operation to remove a woman's uterus for different reasons**, which generally includes:

- Cancer of the uterus, cervix, or ovaries
- Endometriosis
- Abnormal vaginal bleeding
- Chronic pelvic pain
- Adenomyosis, or a thickening of the uterus

Hysterectomy for noncancerous reasons is usually considered only after all other treatment approaches have been tried without success.

5.17.6. FOOT & MOUTH DISEASE (FMD)

Ministry of Agriculture has allocated 100.00 crore rupees for FMD control under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana in order to achieve the objective of 'FMD Mukt Bharat' in next few years.

Background

- Foot & Mouth Disease (FMD) is one of the **most economically devastating contagious viral animal diseases** affecting all susceptible cloven-footed animals.

- As per the estimates by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), **direct loss due to milk and meat is to the tune of RS. 20,000 crores per annum.**
- In order to prevent economic losses due to Foot and Mouth Disease, a programme named 'Foot and Mouth Disease Control Programme (FMD-CP)' is under implementation **since 10th Plan Period.**

5.18. GOVERNMENT SCHEMES/INITIATIVES

5.18.1. MY HOSPITAL/MERA ASPATAL INITIATIVE

- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has launched "Mera Aspataal /My Hospital" aimed at empowering patients by seeking their views on the quality of experience in a public healthcare.
- The ICT-based Patient Satisfaction System (PSS) "Mera Aspataal / My Hospital" will be implemented in public and empanelled private hospitals.
- A multi-channel approach will be used to collect patients' feedback through web portal, mobile app, SMS and Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS).
- 'Mera Aspataal', together with the Kayakalp awards, as part of Swacchata Abhiyaan will spur the States in a spirit of friendly competition to get highest ratings for all their facilities.

5.18.2. NATIONAL E-HEALTH AUTHORITY

Why in News?

Recently the Government has announced the setting up a National eHealth Authority for the promotion of e-Health standards by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

About NeHA

- It will be the **nodal authority** that will be responsible for development of an Integrated Health Information System (including Telemedicine and mHealth) in India.
- It will also be **responsible for enforcing the laws & regulations** relating to the privacy and security of the patients health information & records.
- NeHA will be setup through an appropriate legislation (Act of Parliament)
- The Chairman will be an eminent person in the field of Medicine, Public Health or Judiciary.

Functions of NeHA

- **To guide the adoption of e-Health solutions** at various levels and areas in a manner that meaningful aggregation of health and governance data and storage/exchange of electronic health records happens at various levels in a cost-effective manner.
- **To facilitate integration of multiple health IT systems** through health information exchanges.
- **To oversee orderly evolution of state wide** and nationwide Electronic Health Record Store/Exchange System that ensures security, confidentiality and privacy of patient data and continuity of care.
- **To engage with stakeholders** through various means so that eHealth plans are adopted and other policy, regulatory and legal provisions are implemented by both the public & private sector stakeholders
- **To promote setting up of state health records** repositories and health information exchanges.
- **To address the issues relating to privacy & confidentiality** of Patients' EHR in the legislation.

5.18.3. MISSION PARIVAR VIKAS

- Health Ministry to launch "Mission Parivar Vikas" for improved family planning services.
- It was launched in 145 high-focus districts of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Assam.
- **Objective:** To accelerate access to high quality family planning choices based on information, reliable services and supplies within a rights-based framework.

Why these districts chosen?

These 145 districts have been identified based on total fertility rate and service delivery for immediate, special and accelerated efforts to reach the replacement level fertility goals of 2.1 by 2025.

5.18.4. JEEVAN REKHA: E-HEALTH PROJECT

Why in news

- Recently Kerala government launched the **World Bank** aided **e-health project** called **JEEVAN REKHA**.

About the project

- This is first of its kind initiative in the country. It has two components –**public health component** and **hospital automation module**.
- Main aim of the project is to create **integrated healthcare cloud** that will contain the health records of all its citizens in electronic form.
- Public health component envisage the development of **Electronic health records (EHR)** of the population while hospital automation module envisage the **digitization** of all government hospitals.
- System will automatically provide a **unique identification number** for any person who will access the healthcare system and also store his health record in electronic form (**EHR**) in central server.
- It has a privacy clause to ensure that patient health records are not leaked in public domain.

5.18.5. AROGYA RAKSHA FOR ALL

Why in news

- Andhra Pradesh government has launched a new health scheme called “**Arogya Raksha scheme**”.
- It will provide medical insurance to people who are not covered under any of the existing health schemes of the state government.
- A.P. can now claim to be the **first State** in true sense to fulfill the **health for all vision** of **WHO**.

Features of the scheme

- It is a **Universal Health Coverage** scheme that will be provided to **Above Poverty Level** families.
- Every individual in the family will be able to get the medical insurance coverage for a premium as low as **1200 per year**. The health insurance cover is offered up to **2 lakh**.
- Several government and private hospitals are roped in to provide treatment for **1044** diseases under secondary and tertiary care deploying **end to end cashless system**.
- Students of medicine, psychology, nursing and home sciences will have to visit villages as part of **Swasthya Vidya Vahini scheme** and prepare a disease profile of each individual so that hospital can treat them better.

5.18.6. UNIVERSAL IMMUNISATION PROGRAMME

Why in News?

- The Gol is set to introduce two new vaccines: **measles-rubella (MR) vaccine** and **Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) in the Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP)**.
- Also, rotavirus vaccine is being included under UIP in five new states.

Measles-Rubella Vaccine

- Measles is a viral infection which mainly affects children and is responsible for child deaths worldwide. Measles vaccine has been known to be quite successful in curbing its spread world over.
- Rubella on the other hand is also a viral infection that is characterised by red rashes.
- Rubella also known as German measles is known to affect approximately 25000 children born in India every year.
- Symptoms include cataract and deafness. It can also affect the heart and brain.
- The measles-rubella vaccine would be introduced in February 2017 in five states and UTs namely Goa, Karnataka, Lakshwadeep, Puducherry and Tamil Nadu.
- Once the MR vaccine is introduced, the monovalent measles vaccine (presently part of UIP) will be discontinued.

Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP)

- It was first launched 1985 in a phased manner.
- UIP includes preventive medications that every child born in India is entitled to.
- As of now, the UIP basket includes 10 vaccines which are: **tuberculosis, diphtheria, pertussis (whopping cough), tetanus, poliomyelitis, measles, Hepatitis B, Diarrhoea, Japanese Encephalitis and Pneumonia**.

Pneumococcal Conjugate (PCV)

- PCV is a mix of several bacteria of pneumococcal family.
- Pneumonia caused by pneumococcal bacteria is one of the most common types.
- Estimates say that pneumonia is responsible for 20 percent of under-5 mortality in India.
- PCV will be introduced in Himachal Pradesh, parts of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar from March 2017.
- Three doses will be administered at one and a half months, three and a half months and nine months.

Rotavirus Vaccine

- Rotavirus vaccine was first included in UIP in April 2006.
- Rotavirus infections are the most common cause of diarrhoea.
- The vaccine is currently being administered in HP, Haryana, Odisha and AP. From February, it will be part of UIP in Assam, Tripura, Rajasthan, MP and TN

5.18.7. SWASTHYA RAKSHA PROGRAMME

Why in news?

- AYUSH ministry has launched Swasthya Raksha Yojana recently to promote health and health education in rural villages.

About the programme

- It has been launched on the lines of Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan but with a focus on traditional healthcare services.
- Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine (CCRUM), Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy (CCRH) and Central Council for Research in Siddha (CCRS) are implementing agencies.
- It will be implemented in **selected villages** in different districts.

Objectives of the programme

- To organize Swasthya Rakshan OPDs, Swasthya Parikshan Camps and Health/Hygiene awareness programme.
- Awareness about cleanliness of domestic surroundings and environment.
- Provide medical aid/incidental support in the adopted Colonies/villages.
- Documentation of demographic information, food habits, hygiene conditions, seasons, lifestyle etc., incidence/prevalence of disease and their relation to the incidence of disease.
- Assessment of health status and propagation of Ayurvedic concept of pathya-apathya and extension of health care services.

Pathya-Apathya

The aahar-vihar which is beneficial and nutritional to the body and also give the happiness to the mind is known as Pathya and opposite to that is known as Apathya. It is a curative factor in Ayurveda.

5.18.8. MISSION MADHUMEHA THROUGH AYURVEDA

Why in News?

- On the occasion of National Ayurveda Day (28 October), the Ministry of AYUSH launched "Mission Madhumeha through Ayurveda".
- The Mission will be implemented throughout the country through a specially designed National Treatment Protocol for effective management of Diabetes through Ayurveda.

Highlights

- The guidelines in the protocol will be sent to various state governments, which will further circulate them across various medical institutions.
- **The Madhumeha Assessment Tool (MAT)** based on Ayurvedic philosophy has also been developed for the self-assessment of the people with regards to possibilities of diabetes.
- The government is **set to launch a mobile app** which will suggest Ayurvedic medicines for diabetic patients.
 - The app will be **meant for use by both practitioners of Ayurveda as well patients.**
 - It will help in identifying the type of diabetes a patient is suffering from as well as recommend which Ayurvedic medicines can be administered to a patient.
 - **The app is based on a set of guidelines issued by AYUSH.**

Diabetes in India

- India ranks among top 3 countries with diabetic population (China, India and USA).
- The WHO estimates that 80% of diabetes deaths occur in low and middle-income countries and projects that such deaths will double between 2016 and 2030.

5.18.9. STERILISATION INITIATIVE

Why in News?

The government observed 'Vasectomy Fortnight' between November 21 and December 4, 2016.

Aim of the initiative

- The aim of the 'Vasectomy Fortnight' was **to create awareness about male sterilisation** and to **facilitate district administrations reach sterilisation targets** through campaigns.
- The government also **aims to achieve 'replacement level fertility'** of 2.1 through such initiatives (presently it is 2.3). It will also be a step in the direction of fulfilling objectives of the National population policy.

What is Vasectomy?

Vasectomy is a form of birth control for men where health care provider closes or blocks the tubes that carry sperm. When the tubes are closed, sperm cannot leave a man's body and prevents pregnancy. It is meant to be permanent.

National Population policy 2000, Objectives

- The immediate objective was to meet the unmet needs for contraception, health infrastructure and manpower, and integrated service delivery for basic reproductive and child health care.
- The medium-term objective was to bring TFR to replacement levels by 2010
- In the long term, it targeted a stable population by 2045, 'at a level consistent with the requirements of sustainable economic growth, social development, and environmental protection.

5.18.10. 'SOLAR FOR HEALTHCARE' INITIATIVE

- The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) has signed a MoU to launch 'Initiative on Solar for Healthcare'.
- It aims at providing effective health care delivery at the last mile by reducing uncertainty in critical infrastructure like electricity supply.
- It will bring convergence in clean energy mandate of National Solar mission and 'time to care' objective of National health mission.
- Under this collaboration, solar systems will be set up at select PHCs on pilot basis in 3 states - Tamil Nadu, Haryana and Rajasthan.

5.18.11. PRADHAN MANTRI SWASTHYA SURAKSHA YOJANA (PMSSY)

Why in news?

- In budget speech 2017-18, Phase-VI was announced under which 2 new AIIMS, one each in Gujarat and Jharkhand, will be set up.

About PMSSY

- It was announced in 2003
- It aims at correcting regional imbalances in the availability of affordable/ reliable tertiary healthcare services and also to augment facilities for quality medical education in the country.
- PMSSY has two components:
 - Setting up of AIIMS like Institutions
 - Upgradation of Government Medical College Institutions.
- The project cost for upgradation of each medical college institution is shared by Central Government and respective State Governments

5.18.12. MAA PROGRAMME

- MAA - **Mothers Absolute Affection** is a nation-wide breastfeeding promotion program, launched recently by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- It promotes breastfeeding and provision of counselling services for supporting breastfeeding.
- The chief components of the Programme are Community awareness, strengthening communication through ASHA, Skilled support for breastfeeding at Delivery points in Public health facilities, Monitoring, Awards, etc.
- Early initiation of breastfeeding within one hour of birth and thereafter exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months is essential for the wellness of the child.

- Around 20% new-born deaths and 13% under-five deaths can be prevented by early initiation of breastfeeding.

5.18.13. NATIONWIDE INTENSIFIED DIARRHOEA CONTROL FORTNIGHT (IDCF)

- Ministry of Health has launched nationwide “Intensified Diarrhoea Control Fortnight (IDCF)”.
- It will be observed from 11th to 23rd July across the country.
- It aims at reaching out to the under-five children during onset of monsoon and preventing child diarrhoea
- Various activities under this includes
 - ASHAs visiting all households with children below five years of age for pre-positioning the ORS and explaining its benefits.
 - All health facilities shall have ORS corners which shall continuously demonstrate the way to prepare the ORS mixture and also administer ORS and Zinc to children.
 - awareness campaigns on hygiene and promotion of ORS and Zinc therapy

5.18.14. NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SOWA RIGPA

Why in news?

- National Institute of Sowa Rigpa is being set up at Leh (J & K)

About Sowa Rigpa

- IT is a Tibetan Medicine system also known as Amchi.
- It is practiced in many parts of India especially in Himalayan regions, including Ladakh (Jammu & Kashmir); Sikkim; Darjeeling, Kalimpong (West Bengal); Mon Tawang and West Kameng regions of Arunachal Pradesh; Lahaul, Spiti, Kangra and Kinnaur regions of Himachal Pradesh.
- The theory and practices of “Sowa-Rigpa” are similar to Ayurveda and some Traditional Chinese Medicine.
- It is believed to have been taught by Buddha himself and is closely linked with Buddhist philosophy.



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6. MISCELLANEOUS

6.1. SC RULING ON WAGE DISPARITY

- Supreme Court has held that they **daily wagers, temporary, casual and contractual employees** should be paid at **par with regular employees** doing the same job as them. The petitioners were daily wagers working for Punjab Government.
- SC cited that India has been a **signatory** for the past 37 years to Article 7 of the **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966**.
- According to different **constitutional provisions and the law declared by the Court under Article 141 of the Constitution**, the principle of '**equal pay for equal work**' constitutes "a **clear and unambiguous right** and is vested in every employee, whether engaged on regular or temporary basis".
- The **Constitution of India 1949: Art. 39 (d)** say the state has to ensure that there is equal pay for equal work for both men and women.

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

- It is a multilateral treaty adopted by **United Nations General Assembly** in **1966**
- It commits its parties to work toward the granting of economic, social, and cultural rights (ESCR) to the Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories and individuals, including labour rights and the right to health, the right to education, and the right to an adequate standard of living.

The ICESCR is part of the **International Bill of Human Rights**, along with the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)** and the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**.

6.2. SWACHH BHARAT MISSION: 2ND ANNIVERSARY

- **Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh** are the first states to have become open defecation free (ODF) in **urban areas**.
- The State of **Himachal Pradesh** has been declared Open Defecation Free (ODF), making it the second State in the country after **Sikkim** to achieve the feat in **rural areas**.

About Swachh Bharat Mission

- It was launched on 2 October 2014 to make India clean and open defecation free by 2019, Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary.
- The programme is divided into two categories -- Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) and Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban).
- The Ministry for Drinking Water and Sanitation is looking at the rural part of the scheme.
- The Urban Development Ministry is implementing the programme in urban areas.

Swachhta Status Report in 2015, reports for more than half of the rural population (52.1 per cent) of the country still defecates in open.

Problems associated with open defecation

- **Malnutrition**- About 43 per cent of children in India suffer from some degree of malnutrition.
- **Diarrhoea and worm infection** are two major health conditions that affect school-age children impacting their learning abilities.

Kerala Declared Open Defecation Free

- Under the Swachh Bharat Mission (**Gramin/Rural**) **Kerala has become the third State** to be declared Open Defecation Free(ODF), Sikkim was first and Himachal Pradesh was second to be declared ODF.
- Kerala, with a **rural population** of approximately 3.5 crores, is also the largest State so far to have achieved the ODF Status, after Sikkim (6 lakhs) and Himachal Pradesh (70 lakhs).
- Earlier, **Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh** became the first states to be declared **ODF in Urban Areas**.

SWACHCHATA DOOT

These are Sanitation Messengers- who are village level motivators who work to strengthen communication machinery at the village level with participatory social mobilization, engagement of village level motivators (may be undertaken by the States in accordance with these guidelines).

6.3. SMART GRAM INITIATIVE

Why in News?

- President Pranab Mukherjee had inaugurated a smart model village pilot project at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- The five villages which will be developed into the smart villages under this pilot project are Dhaula, Alipur, Harichandpur and Taj Nagar from Gurgaon district and Rojka Meo from Mewat district of Haryana.
- Recently these initiatives were inaugurated in these villages by the Chief Minister of Haryana.

About Smart Gram

- A smart gram would have the required basic physical and social infrastructure with a layer of smart information and communication embedded in the infrastructure to improve governance and delivery of services, livelihood and economic opportunities.
- **The focus** of Rashtrapati Bhavan is on creating a sustainable and inclusive development model that can be easily replicated.
- This **model is based on the convergence of resources** and effort by the central government, state government, district administration, panchayati raj institutions, public sector, private sector and enlightened villagers.

6.4. GIFT MILK SCHEME

Why in News?

- Union Government has approved a proposal for setting up an Institution for promotion of nutrition through milk/milk products (especially for children) utilizing Corporate Social Responsibility funds of NDDB.
- Initiative is **known as "Gift Milk" to improve child nutrition** through consumption of milk & milk products by **providing milk free of cost.**
- The supply of milk / milk product would be facilitated through dairy cooperatives only.

The National Dairy Development Board (NDDB)

- The National Dairy Development Board is an institution of national importance set up by an Act of Parliament of India - the NDDB Act 1987. The main office is in Anand, Gujarat with regional offices throughout the country.
- Objective of NDDB is to replace exploitation with empowerment, tradition with modernity, stagnation with growth, transforming dairying into an instrument for the development of India's rural people.

6.5. NIDHI APKE NIKAT PROGRAMME

Why in News?

- The review of this programme shows a positive trend with only 268 grievances pending out of the total 17000 filed since its inception.

About The Programme

- Nidhi Aapke Nikat is a public outreach programme of the **Employee Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO).**
- The EPFO rechristened Bhavishya Nidhi Adalat as Nidhi Aapke Nikat.
- The programme was launched in July 2015.
- The programme is held on the 10th of every month in all the 122 field offices of EPFO.
- The programme aims to bring all the different stakeholders (employers/employees) on the same platform.
- The various new initiatives in the interest of the employees/employers taken up by the organisation are explained during this programme.
- Apart from dealing with grievances, the organisation invites feedback and suggestion through this programme.

6.6. KHELO INDIA SCHEME

Why in News?

- Khelo India National Level Competitions under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports took place in January.
- The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports is set to start off rural games as “**Grameen Khel Mahakumbh**” under Khelo India Scheme.

Khelo India Scheme

- It is a national programme which aims to develop grassroots level talent by providing them with a national level platform.
- Khelo India Scheme is based on Gujarat’s model of “Khel Mahakumbh” in which schools and colleges from across the country participate in 27 different disciplines.
- The GOI of India merged the **Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan** with **Khelo India in 2016**.
- Two other schemes that were brought under the umbrella of Khelo India are: **Urban Sports Infrastructure Scheme (USIS)** and **National Sports Talent Search Scheme (NSTSS)**.

6.7. TASK FORCE FOR NEXT 3 OLYMPICS

Why in news?

- India had to content itself with two medals in the Rio Olympics, although a larger number of sportspersons qualified for the 2016 Games than for the previous events.
- The medal tally came down from six in London Olympics of 2012 to just two.
- This led the PM to announce the setting up of a task force which will help to plan for the “effective participation” of Indian sportspersons in the next three Olympics, to be held in 2020, 2024 and 2028.

Functions and aims of task force

- It will prepare an overall strategy for facilities, training, selection procedures and other related matters.
- The task force will consist of Indian and foreign experts in sports administration.
- The task force in place will come up with long-term plan for three Olympics.

6.8. LIQUOR BAN

Why In news?

- Supreme Court upheld the Kerala Govt.’s decision to prohibit liquor in December 2015 , however, **in Oct., 2016 Kerela Govt (LDF) has sought for reversal in its policy of banning liquor.**
- The Bihar Excise & Prohibition Act, 2016 that had come into force from October 2, 2016 proposing total liquor ban and its stricter provisions.
- Strict state regulation is aligned with the **preservation of DPSP** (Article 47) that places a responsibility on all state governments to “at least contain, if not curtail, consumption of alcohol” (Article 47).
- **Health implications:** Alcohol, especially in large quantities, can damage people’s kidneys and livers, and can eventually lead to death.

States where total ban is imposed

- **Gujarat**, after its formation in 1960 out of Bombay State, continued the ban even after independence and still enforces it to this day.
- **Nagaland**, a complete ban has been in effect since 1989.

6.9. INDIA MOVES UP IN THE WORLD GIVING INDEX

Why in news?

Charities Aid Foundations (CAF) released 7th World Giving Index.

About the report

- It is released by Charities Aid Foundation (CAF), which is an international non-profit organization promoting effective giving and philanthropy.
- India received a 29% overall score in the world giving index.

Findings about India

- The proportion of Indians participating in helping a stranger has increased by 6 percentage points to 43% whilst those donating have increased from 20% in 2014 to 22% during 2015.
- But even with 203 million people donating money, 401 million people helping a stranger and 200 million people volunteering time, India ranks 91 in the index.
- This is because in terms of numbers India is among the highest but when taken as a percentage of the total population, India lags behind.

6.10. INDIA SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2016

Why in News?

- The Council of Social Development recently released India Social Development Report 2016.

About the report

- The **theme of the report is "Disability Rights Perspective"** addressing the fundamental elements of non-derogable rights of the differently abled people.
- The report drew on data from the Census, the NSS, India Human Development Survey, and the National Family Health Survey.
- It provides adequate data for government to prepare a databank for disabled population and prepare adequate niche schemes for men, women, children and elderly. It will also help fulfill obligations of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of which India is also a signatory.

Council of Social Development

- It is a society registered under society's act 1860.
- It is a research and advocacy institution (like a think tank) that has the objective of social development with equality and justice.
- It was established in 1962. It was founded by Durgabhai Deshmukh.

6.11. TELANGANA FIRST CHILDREN'S COURT IN HYDERABAD.

Why in news?

- Telangana has recently inaugurated south India's first children court to ensure fast disposal of cases related to children

About Hyderabad court

Telangana has become the third state, after Goa and Delhi, to have a child-friendly court and it is the sixth court in the country to be child friendly.

6.12. DEVDASI SYSTEM

Why in news?

- The apex court started hearing on the Devadasi issue when apprised of how Dalit girls were dedicated as Devadasis in Uttangi Mala Durga Temple in Davanagere district of Karnataka.
- SC directed all States and Union Territories, especially Karnataka, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, to strictly enforce the Central law to check “undesired and unhealthy” practice of forcing young girls to serve as Devadasis.

Who are Devadasis - 'Devadasis' are women dedicated to temple services for the rest of their lives and many of them are often victims of sexual abuse.

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