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MARCH 2018

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'It always seems impossible until it is done'

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Price: ₹ 180/-

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GENERAL STUDIES PAPER 1

TOPIC: Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

Q) Both Buddhist and Jain literature, though parted their ways from Sanskrit and created large trove of works in vernacular languages, later had to abandon their hostility to the Sanskrit language. Examine. (250 Words)

Background :-

- Many scholars, especially the Buddhist ones, discarded Sanskrit in favour of languages such as Pali for their spiritual writing. Sanskrit would make a comeback only some 500 years later, albeit when the Buddhist influences were still significant. Moreover, the resurgence was significantly evident in the texts penned by Buddhist scholars.

Why Jainism and Buddhism rejected Sanskrit?

- Experts suggest this was a **repudiation of the Vedas of Sanskrit** and of the **so-called Brahmin-dominated social structure or a mere recalibration of the system with the arrival of a new spiritual stream that Gautama Buddha symbolised** and which took the shape of religion.
- Sanskrit was the archaic language of a group of people, the Brahmins, whom the Buddhists had no particular reason to imitate or please.
- Buddhism rejected Sanskrit in the course of its **confrontation with the socio-religious practices like caste oppression for which Sanskrit was the principal vehicle.**
- They wanted to provide voice for the depressed so they had to speak in the language of the people which was not Sanskrit.**

Why Sanskrit revived?

- It could be because of the influence of the Brahmins who had converted to Buddhism but had held on to their deep-rooted Sanskrit culture.
- There is no core text attributed to the Buddha himself calling for a varna-free society.
- It is possible that the s both Jain and Buddhist scholars realised the innate strength of the language and its **unbreakable connect with the Indian cultural ethos, without which they could not effectively promote their faith.**
- It is also possible that **they did not find Sanskrit to be socially oppressive in the way they were led to believe in the early years of Buddhism.**
- When Brahmins gained for themselves influence and power they also introduced Sanskrit which in turn ended up as the language of elites as reflected in the archaeological record. **This is indeed why Indian Buddhism and Jainism came to use Sanskrit instead of other equally intelligible Middle Indic languages as it had before for several centuries.**
- The emergence of vihara systems (i.e., the vinaya-based monastic system) around the common era is what prompted Buddhist institutions to **adopt a language suitable to their benefactors.**
 - Buddhism underwent a process of gentrification via the adoption of Sanskrit and the development of sophisticated monastic systems (in contrast to the homeless mendicant lifestyle of many of their predecessors).

- **Dealing with brahmanized royal courts** is what drove Buddhists to adopt the language of a community often hostile to them
 - They did so because they needed to defend their interests at the royal courts in Sanskrit.
 - They had to use Sanskrit at the courts because Brahmins had been able to secure themselves a central place at the courts by way of their indispensable skills, not because rulers had supposedly “converted” to Brahmanism.
- Bhakti movement which was mainly related to Hindu philosophy for instance shaiva and vaishnava movements attacked the rituals of Jainism and Buddhism.

Conclusion:-

- The contribution by Buddhism and Jainism to the Indian society is enormous and has led to upliftment of many social castes and make people believe they are equal to others in the society as well.

Q) The period between the Sangam Age and the Pallavas — the second to the sixth centuries CE — were trying times for Tamil literature and the Hindu religion. What happened during this time? How did the arrival of Bhakti movement help in revival of Tamil culture and literature? Examine. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Religion has always been a big patron of art and literature in most languages, and much of the earliest literature in most languages now extant is religious or philosophical in character.
- But the Sangam poetry and other early works of Tamils refer less to religion than to social customs and traditions. **A strong secular character seems to have influenced Tamil poetry in the early period.**

The period between the Sangam age and the Pallavas is a trying period for for tamil literature and Hindu religion because:-

- The Kalabhra kings who were ruling during this period seem to have been patrons of Jains and Buddhists and were antagonistic towards the Hindu and Brahman religions of the majority population of the Tamil region during the early centuries C.E. So Pali and Prakrit seem to have flourished.
- Though the five great Tamil epics and a number of other works were composed by Jains and Buddhists in this period experts say their social ideals were contrary to the Tamil customs and traditions seen in Sangam poetry.
- There was also a declining trend in the social life of the Tamil people. Social ethics began to decline during this period. The Tamil literature of this period reflected the ethical and moral ideas with a view to reform the society.
 - The post-Sangam literature consists of the twin-epics - Silappathikaram and Manimekalai and also Pathinen Keezhkanakku. The impulse of these works was oriented towards reforming the society.

Arrival of bhakti movement led to revival of tamil culture and literature:-

- Bhakti movement was a social reaction to the town-based and mercantile society of Jains and Buddhists. It may be seen as an expression of the largely rural population with emphasis on agriculture. This is reflected in the works and contributes to the idea that they are “more rooted in Tamil culture.
- Even the religion of the Bhakti poets is sensuous, and the Azhwars and the Nayanmars alternately profess love to or chide their gods, depending on their mood, in their poetry.
- The poetry of the Bhakti movement some of the first being the Nalayira Divya Prabandham (4,000 songs) of the Azhwars (Vaishnavite) and the Twelve Thirumurai (comprising 18,426 songs) of the Saivite saints have as their main theme religion and god.
- Many historians convey Bhakti movement as one of the reasons for Tamil to be a living classical language.
- **Women such as Karaikkal Ammaiyar and Andal got public recognition, just as women poets were welcomed in the courts of kings in the Sangam Age.**
- Vivid portrayals of country life are seen in the poems, and Tamil music is celebrated.
- In music, too, the idea of Bhakti, after finding roots in different parts of the country through various people's movements, becomes a major inspiration for composers like Tyagaraja.

Conclusion:-

- In a way Bhakti movement is relevant even today not only in Tamil Nadu and indeed everywhere in India as it challenges caste hierarchy, their concerns, indeed devotion, is to the cause of economic justice and a more egalitarian world

Q) Examine the role played by the British in rediscovering India's history. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Unlike ancient Greece and Rome, India's classical past had left behind no written histories, so it had to be reconstructed from lost pavilions and buried treasure and British did a commendable job in helping India discover its past.

Role played by British in discovering India's history:-

- The English merchants of the East India Company trading out of India in the eighteenth century came into contact with several rich extant bodies of literature.
- William Jones studied and mastered Sanskrit translated its classics and used the language to **unlock the glories of Hindu and Buddhist past.**
 - The **Manu Smriti** was one of the first Sanskrit texts studied by the European philologists. It was first **translated into English** by Sir William Jones
 - In 1784, with the active patronage of British Governor-General, Warren Hastings, **Jones founded the Asiatic Society** to take on this task. It immensely generated interest in the British to learn article about Indian artefacts and preserve India's cultural past.
- Sir Charles Wilkins, one of the founding members of The Asiatic Society is notable as the first translator of **Bhagavad Gita into English.**
- **Prinsep's labours produced the biggest breakthrough in Indian historiography**, the deciphering of the long-forgotten Brahmi script and through it the discovery of the Mauryan empire that had united the subcontinent in the 3rd century BC
- **Buddhist discoveries :-**

- **The discovery of the Buddha's Indian connections was again the work of dedicated British explorers.** In the late 1790s, a British naturalist tracked down the Bodh Gaya Buddhist ruins.
- In the following decades, **the Buddha's Indian roots were confirmed** by the excavation of a series of dome-like stupas. First came the discovery in 1819 of Sanchi.
- **Cunningham discovered the Indus Valley ruins at Harappa.** His other major discovery was the Bharhut stupa, full of Mauryan Buddhist treasures.
- **Muslim architecture :-**
 - Aurangzeb's Moti Masjid in the Red Fort was restored by the British, as was Humayun's tomb and the Jama Masjid. The Taj Mahal was repaired by British from the 1780s onwards.
- **Hindu architecture:-**
 - **Cunningham's Buddhist excavations coincided with British discoveries of important Hindu temple ruins, ranging from Mahabalipuram, Elephanta and Kanheri caves and Khajuraho.**
 - **The most influential discovery was Ajanta,** with its wonderful frescoes dating back to the 1st century BC. They made the frescoes of Ajanta popular all over the world.
- **Havell emphasised the continuity from ancient Ajanta down to recent Mughal miniatures of a distinctively Indian aesthetic,** crediting the Indian artist with the ability to see with the mind, not merely with the eye, to bring out an essential quality and **to produce high art equal to anything in the West.**

Conclusion:-

- The cultural treasures the British took home with them are only a tiny fraction of what they salvaged, protected and left behind for the Indians to conserve this priceless history.

Q) What is Lingayatism? Examine its relationship with the Sharana Movement in Karnataka. Also examine how 12th century philosopher Basavanna's philosophy influence both Lingayatism and Sharana Movement. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Recently Karnataka asked India's federal government to grant the status of a separate religion to the Lingayats, a socio-religious community constituting a large part of the state's population.

Lingayatism:-

- **Lingayats are followers of Basavanna, the 12th-century social reformer** who rebelled against Hindu society and established a new dharma.
- The Lingayats evolved elaborate rituals to mark the distinctiveness of their dharma from the Brahminical, Jaina and folk faiths existing at that time.
- It rejects the authority of the Vedas, the caste system, and Hindu beliefs such as reincarnation and karma.
- **Distinct theology and ritual life:-**
 - Composed by men and women from all "castes" (or occupational backgrounds), the extensive body of vachanas are in Kannada, not Sanskrit.

- They elevate labour to a spiritual ideal and emphasise the equal worth of different kinds of work.
- They reject temple worship and forbid animal sacrifice.
- The Lingayats are strict vegetarians.
- They have their own priests to officiate over ceremonies, their own cooks.
- They don't cremate the dead, but bury them.

Relationship with Sharana movement :-

- **The Sharana-movement, which started in the 11th century, is regarded by some as the start of Veerashaivism.** It started in a time when Kalamukha Shaivism, which was supported by the ruling classes, was dominant, and in control of the monasteries.
- The main force behind the sharana movement was Basavanna similar to lingayatism.
 - **This movement not only had all the general characteristics of the bhakti movements but also managed to grow beyond them.** Everyone associated with the movement was a devotee whose aim was nothing but realization of god.
- This otherworldly outlook **however did not prevent them from addressing the issues faced by the people in the real world.** They thought and worked hard to improve the prevailing social conditions.
- The movement produced **more than two hundred people who composed vachanas (couplets)** which was present in Lingayatism as well.
- The other big achievement of the movement was the inter-marriage among Brahmins and dalits. These marriages had the complete approval of the then sharana society.
- While all Bhakti movements accepted the spiritual equality of all individuals the **vachana movement alone also gave equal importance to the social equality of the people.**
- Sharana movement never managed to regain its radical, egalitarian edge, though the Veerashaivas, **now commonly known as Lingayats, emerged politically powerful in the later centuries.**
 - **Even they denied the Hindu social order and most of the leaders of the movement were from backward classes.**
- **Women played a key role in the movement.** The Sharana movement produced 33 women Vachana poets, most of them from the lower strata of the society. Akkamahadevi, the most famous poet of this period is still the best woman poet of the Kannada language.
- After Sharana movement in the 12th century and post Basaveshwara's death, the movement went underground. **The people who survived started practising their religion lingayatism along with Hindus.**

Lingayatism and Basavanna:-

- The tradition of Lingayatism is known to have been founded by social reformer and philosopher Basavanna in 12th century Karnataka. While there exists a debate around whether Basavanna founded the sect or if he merely reformed an existing order, **there can be no doubt that under him the community acquired the form of a well-organised, structured mass movement.**
- Followers of the sect continue to revere him as the founder and prime philosopher of their religion.
- Basava's works which view the Lingayat community as a boundless entity where there is no outsider, **offers a glimpse of the radical theology of Lingayat dharma**

- **Basavanna's vision of a societal order was one based on human freedom, equality, rationality, and brotherhood.** He and his followers spread their ideas through vachanas (prose-lyrics) and their prime target was the caste hierarchy which they rejected with full force.
- **Basavanna's movement did not just uproot the Hindu cultural practices but also broke away from the other Bhakti movements by forming an institutionalised order for themselves.**

Basavanna and Sharana movement:-

- The Sharana movement he presided over attracted people from all castes, and like most strands of the Bhakti movement, produced a corpus of literature, the vachanas, that unveiled the spiritual universe of the Veerashaiva saints.
- The **egalitarianism of Basavanna's Sharana movement** was too radical for its times.
- **He set up the Anubhava Mandapa**, where the Sharanas, drawn from different castes and communities, gathered and engaged in learning and discussions.
- **Sharanas challenged the final bastion of the caste order:** they organised a wedding where the bridegroom was from a lower caste, and the bride a Brahmin.
- **Basavanna is a seminal figure in the Bhakti movement, which challenged the dominance of Brahminical Hinduism, and especially institutions like the caste system**, from the 6th century onwards.

Q) As with the Mughals, under European colonial rule, architecture became an emblem of power, designed to endorse the occupying power. Examine the salient features fo the British architecture in India. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Numerous European countries invaded India and created architectural styles reflective of their ancestral and adopted homes. The European colonizers created architecture that symbolized their mission of conquest, dedicated to the state or religion.
- Among the key British architects of this time were Robert Fellowes Chisholm, Charles Mant, Henry Irwin etc. Their aim was to house their organisations, and their people and whatever was necessary to control an empire as big as India.

Salient features of British architecture in India:-

- In the beginning of the colonial rule there were attempts at creating authority through classical prototypes. In its later phase the colonial architecture culminated into what is called the Indo-Saracenic architecture.
- 3 styles dominate the British architecture:-
 - **NEO- CLASSICAL:**
 - It was derived from a style that was originally typical of buildings in ancient Rome, and was subsequently revived, re-adapted and made popular during the European Renaissance.

- The British imagined that a style that embodied the grandeur of imperial Rome could now be made to express the glory of imperial India.
- Construction of geometrical structures fronted with lofty pillars
- The Mediterranean origins of this architecture were also thought to be suitable for tropical weather.
- **The Town Hall in Bombay was built in this style in 1833(1st picture below).**
- **Horniman circle(previously called the *Elphinstone Circle*), Mumbai completed in 1872.(2nd picture below).**

• NEO- GOTHIC:

- The Gothic style had its roots in buildings, especially churches, built in northern Europe during the medieval period.
- The neo-Gothic or new Gothic style was revived in the mid-nineteenth century in England.
- This was the time when the government in Bombay was building its infrastructure and this style was adapted for Bombay.
- Characterised by high-pitched roofs, pointed arches and detailed decoration.
- **An impressive group of buildings facing the seafront including the Secretariat, University of Bombay and High Court(2nd picture below) were all built in this style**
- **The most spectacular example of the neo-Gothic style is the Victoria Terminus(1st picture below) in Mumbai.**

• INDO-SARACENIC:

- Towards the beginning of the twentieth century a new hybrid architectural style developed which combined the Indian with the European.
- The Indo-Saracenic Revival (also known as Indo- Gothic , Mughal-Gothic, Neo-Mughal, or Hindu-Gothic) was an architectural style and movement by British architects in the late 19th century.
- It drew elements from native Indo-Islamic and Indian architecture and combined them with Gothic revival and Neo-Classical styles favoured in Britain.
- The inspiration for this style was medieval buildings in India with their domes, chhatris, jalis, and arches.
- **Public and government buildings, such as clock towers, courthouses, municipal buildings, colleges, and town halls, were often rendered on an intentionally grand scale**, reflecting and promoting a notion of an invincible British Empire.
- Infrastructure was composed of iron, steel, and poured concrete and included domes , overhanging eaves, pointed arches , vaulted roofs, pinnacles , open pavilions, and pierced open arcading.
- 'Chepauk Palace' situated in Chennai (erstwhile Madras) was the first Indo-Saracenic building.
- The Gateway of India(2nd picture below), built in the traditional Gujarati style to welcome King George V in 1911, is another example.
- Victoria Memorial in Calcutta(2nd picture below), Khalsa college, Amritsar, Mysore palace, etc.

Conclusion:-

- The significance of British architecture is visible even in post independent India where most of the important government offices are still hosted in these monuments.

Q) Some of the Islamic architectural structures in south India stand as proud reminders of not just an architectural tradition but also of cultural traditions, where Islam effortlessly adapted itself to the native customs. Examine. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Islam came to the south through maritime spice trade. The Muslims who were traders enriched the country with precious foreign exchange, and hence were accorded a special place by the southern rulers then.

Islamic architecture in South India in not just an architectural tradition but in line with the traditions as well:-

- **Architectural:-**
 - The inscription in thirupullani shows that a grant for mosque was granted by the pandya king and what is unique about these mosques is **that they were all built of stone, in the Dravidian architectural style with Islamic sensibilities.**
 - **Mosques were essentially built more like mandapams**, better suited to Islamic requirement for the congregation to assemble and stand together in prayer.
 - **Mosques were carved with floral and geometrical motifs instead of human figures as in a temple.** While the raised 'Adisthana' of the Hindu temple was retained, there were no 'Garbha Grahastha' and no figurines carved on any of the pillars.
 - **The mosques of Kerala differ greatly from Muslim structures of any other region of India. The extensive use of timber in the construction of the upper storeys and the tiered form of their roofs** represent a type of Indo-Islamic architecture, peculiar to the region.
- **Cultural :-**
 - **The mosque built in the Dravidian architectural style of the late Vijayanagara period, has elements that are specific to native traditions.**
 - Like many other kallupallis(mosques), this mosque too has the floral bud detailing on the pillar corbels(Podhigai), **which represent positivity and auspiciousness, an essential part of the cultural beliefs of the land.**
 - **Many mosques use Tamil calendar for prayers.**
 - Even after 400 odd years, **the tradition of singing Mikurasu Malai continues to this day at the Kottar mosque.** Other literary works such as Seera Puranam, a Tamil epic on the history of the Prophet, are also recited across mosques in Tamil Nadu.
 - In Kerala a visit to the Vavar mosque is an integral part of the Sabarimala pilgrimage

Conclusion:-

- The significance of these architectures shows the unique features along with cultural harmony existed among different communities of the society.

Q) Compare and contrast architectural features of temple structures of Ellora and Mahabalipuram. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Both Ellora caves and the monuments in Mahabalipuram enshrine the richness of India's historical past.

Similarities:-

- The reliefs, sculptures and architecture incorporate Shaivism, Vaishnavism and Shaktism
- Both have rock-cut and cave temples.
 - For instance in Ellora's Cave 21, also called Rameshwar Lena is cave and rock cut temple.
 - Similarly in Mahabalipuram Varaha cave is cave temple and pancharathas are rock cut.
- The influence of Dravidian style of architecture is visible in the architecture at different stages in both the places.
- With instances like Krishna lifting mountain is seen in the Pancha-Panadava cave and Ravana attempting to *lift Mount Kailasa in Ellora caves show that both have been influenced by Hindu mythology.*
- Both Ellora caves and structures at Mahabalipuram have been branded as UNESCO world heritage sites.

Differences:-

	Ellora Caves	Mahabalipuram temples
Dynasty	All of the Ellora monuments were built during Hindu dynasties such as the Rashtrakuta dynasty, which constructed part of the Hindu & Buddhist caves, and the Yadava dynasty, which constructed a number of the Jain caves.	Mamallapuram rock architectures that include shore temple, Five rathas, Arjun's penance and other isolated stone-works were sponsored by Pallava dynasty
Type of stone/rock	Ellora caves have been hewn out of the volcanic basaltic formation of Maharashtra, known as 'Deccan Trap'.	In fact, Mahendravarman Pallava who called himself a 'Vichitra Chitra' or the 'Unique Artist' introduced the art of sculpting gods and goddesses

		<p>in granite.</p> <p>Mamallapuram has three groups of monuments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The rock-cut cave-temples and independent panels 2. Rock-cut monolithic temples, popularly called Rathas, and 3. The shore temple which is a free standing temple
Architecture	Consists of mainly cave temples which are rock cut.	
		<p>The monuments are a fusion of religion, culture and legend relating to the Hindu religious pantheon.</p>
Religion focus	The range of Ellora caves house Hindu, Buddhist as well as Jain temples.	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relief carving in the Pallava caves is generally shallower than the Deccan caves.
Form and style differences	Ornately carved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main figures are slender, delicate and elegant. • The carvings of the faces of the human figures are oval shaped with high cheekbones. • The body looks slim with tapering limbs.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ellora is also world famous for the largest single monolithic excavation in the world, the great Kailasa temple.
Special features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The caves represent one of the largest rock-hewn monastic-temple complexes in the world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not consist any temple as such on such magnitude

Existence

Not sunk under water

Some of the structure sunk under water at later times because of a Tsunami but most of the major artwork are still intact.

Q) What are the features of Indian contemporary painting? Why do you think India's art industry has not flourished as it has flourished in the West and China? Examine. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Art from the Subcontinent has gained popularity in the past decade, with prices for contemporary artists reaching millions of US dollars at auction. Although the most expensive and popular artists in India are still modernist masters, such as, Souza and Mehta etc, younger generations of artists are proving to mark their work in the global arena. Such is the potential of contemporary paintings in India.

Features:-

- The essential characteristics of the modern or contemporary art are
- A certain freedom from invention
- The **acceptance of an eclectic approach which has placed artistic expression in the international perspective** as against the regional
- A positive elevation of technique which has become both proliferous and supreme
- The **emergence of the artist as a distinct individual.**
- It is **product of Indian Renaissance** through heavy influence of west on traditional Indian art.
- It used western ideas and realism to depict Indian themes and in due course, got delinked from Indian tradition and went closer to international trends and **modern abstractionism.**
- A major characteristic of contemporary Indian Painting is that **the technique and method have acquired a new significance.** Form came to be regarded as separate entity and with its increasing emphasis it **subordinated the content in a work of art**

Reasons for not flourishing:-

- **Economic reasons:-**
 - The Indian art market which was around 1500 crore **collapsed in 2008, in the wake of the great financial crisis.** A decade later, it has still not recovered.
- **Almost 90% of the Indian market is accounted for by the modern segment** dominated by a band of 10 artists namely Husain, Raza, Mehta, Souza, Gaitonde, Padamsee etc
- The **extreme narrowness of the market has resulted in spiralling of prices** of the few good available works by these artists and fatigue among buyers.
- **Most modern and contemporary Indian art is politically bland and determinedly steers clear of politics.** The artists had to face the ire of public for the art for instance karaval's divine bovine was criticised. This dampens artists choice to express freely.

- The **abysmal quality of contemporary art:-**
 - Barring a few notable exceptions Indian contemporary art is derivative, unoriginal, contrived and often technically weak. This does not incite any great interest or excitement among global collectors and buyers.
 - **There is a huge quality gap between Indian and global contemporary artists**
- **Indians are not enthusiastic art buyers.** Less than 0.02% of population has ever bought a piece of art.
- **Mistrust:-**
 - In 2007, artists, gallerists, auctioneers and art investors had come together to inflate prices of relatively new artists to high levels that many lost 70-80% of their value in the subsequent crash. So buyers are inherently suspicious of the prices of contemporary works.
- **Indian art infrastructure is pathetic.** China has 4,000 museums, India probably has 40. Art schools are crumbling.
- **Lack of political will and government interest to revive the art.**
- Arts and artisans are reeling under economic issues also. **This is partly due to buyer's lack knowledge regarding art and its quality, threats from machine-made products**. So survival of new artists becomes difficult.
- **Draw heavily from western tradition** and are de-linked from Indian tradition, are more realistic, the techniques are more important than content.

Q) The stupa is an important form of Buddhist architecture, though it predates Buddhism. Discuss the religious, architectural and philosophical significance of various Buddhist stupas. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Before Buddhism, great teachers were buried in mounds. Some were cremated, but sometimes they were buried in a seated, meditative position. The mound of earth covered them up. Thus, **the domed shape of the stupa came to represent a person seated in meditation much as the Buddha was when he achieved Enlightenment and knowledge of the Four Noble Truths.**

Buddhist stupas:-

- In Buddhism, the earliest stupas contained portions of the Buddha's ashes, and as a result, the stupa began to be associated with the body of the Buddha. Adding the Buddha's ashes to the mound activated it with the energy of the Buddha himself.

Religious significance:-

- **The ashes of the Buddha were buried in stupas built at locations associated with important events in the Buddha's life** including Lumbini, Bodh Gaya, Sarnath and Kushinara
- **Buddha gave specific directions regarding the appropriate method of honoring his remains** (the Maha-parinibbāna sutra): his ashes were to be buried in a stupa at the crossing of the mythical four great roads (the four directions of space), the unmoving hub of the wheel, the place of Enlightenment.
- They were **also a site of rituals and ceremonies**. Their presence eventually attracted other constructions including monasteries.

- **The pilgrimage activity around the stupa had an important impact on the social history of Buddhism.** Merchants, artisans, and monks alike enjoyed the benefits of the income generated by the activity resulting from the emblematic stupas.
- Along with monasteries (viharas) and prayer halls (chaityas), stupas form one of the three types of religious structures in Buddhism. Later, stupas were included in chaityas

Philosophical significance:-

- Stupas remind the Buddhist practitioner of the Buddha and his teachings almost 2,500 years after his death. **Stupas were considered the living presence of the buddha, his protective powers, and his living energy.**
- For Buddhists, building stupas also has **karmic benefits. They believe that if a practitioner builds a stupa he or she will not be reborn in a remote location and will not suffer from extreme poverty.** As a result, a vast number of stupas dot the countryside in Tibet (where they are called chorten) and in Burma (chedi).
- **Buddhists visit stupas to perform rituals that help them to achieve one of the most important goals of Buddhism: to understand the Buddha's teachings, known as the Four Noble Truths** so when they die they cease to be caught up in samsara, the endless cycle of birth and death and achieve enlightenment.

Architectural significance :-

- Stupas became a symbol not only of Buddhism itself **but also an architectural testimony to its expansion and strength.** The stupas at Sanchi and Bharhut are one of the oldest stone structures in India.
- Most stupas have a very distinctive semi-spherical shape, often surrounded by a fence. **As Buddhism was introduced in different regions, the basic architectural features of stupas were transformed into a variety of shapes** reflecting the artistic expressions of those cultures.
- **If one thinks of the stupa as a circle or wheel, the unmoving center symbolizes Enlightenment.** The torana are directional gates guiding the practitioner in the correct direction on the correct path to Enlightenment, the understanding of the Four Noble Truths.
- **The stupa makes visible something that is so large as to be unimaginable.** The axis symbolizes the center of the cosmos partitioning the world into six directions: north, south, east, west, the nadir and the zenith.
- The practitioner circumambulates (walks around) stupa as a meditational practice focusing on the Buddha's teachings. **This movement suggests the endless cycle of rebirth (samsara) and the spokes of the Eightfold Path (eight guidelines that assist the practitioner) that leads to knowledge of the Four Noble Truths and into the center of the unmoving hub of the wheel, Enlightenment.**



Conclusion:-

- The Stupa as an architecture, though religious in character and sui genere, assimilated the secular, religious folk art practices of the past and the traditions of the alien art and thus contributed to the development of art in India.

Q) The Mughal style evolved as a result of a happy synthesis of the indigenous Indian style of painting and the Safavid school of Persian painting. It is primarily aristocratic and secular. Discuss. (250 Words)

Background:-

- The origin of Mughal School is a landmark in history of Indian paintings. The school originated in the reign of Akbar. Mughal paintings were a unique blend of Indian, Persian and Islamic styles.

Synthesis of Persian and Indian styles:-

- The Mughal rulers brought Persian painters with them. At the same time they patronized Indian painters and the collaboration between these two schools of painters resulted in the synthesis.
 - Some of the finest paintings are to be found in the 'Akbarnama' which has happy blending of both Indian and Persian arts.
- Persian artists such as Mir Sayid Ali, Abdus Samad and Farrug Beg taught the Indians the techniques of Iranian miniature painting. Indian painters were able to introduce naturalistic ideas to the purely decorative art of the Persians. **This is clearly seen in the treatment of animals and landscapes.**
 - The flora of Persia, the shrubs, the slender cypresses, gradually gave way to the rich vegetation of India, painted over large surfaces, the leaves arranged so as to leave no empty gaps.
- While Mughal painting forsook older Persian art for a new Indian style it never entirely forgot its ancestry, as **it is seen in the refinement and lightness of its brushwork, its swaying lines, the multiple resources of its palette.**

Mughal style is secular:-

- Mughal paintings were secular in nature , **mostly they portray day to day activities of kings, courts and other persons.** As early Mughal rulers like Akbar were proponents of secularism and never imposed religious ideas over public hence the influence of their nature can be easily seen in various art forms.
- Tuti nama consists of the themes and stories which are derived from the 12th century **Sanskrit anthology** titled Śukasaptati or "Seventy Tales of Parrot".
- **Lord Krishna and Radha :**
 - **The paintings commissioned by the Mughal emperor Akbar were the clear witness of a great endeavor to integrate two different cultures, the majority of population of Hindus and minority of Muslims, into one and create a great and peaceful Indian state.**
 - The paintings of Lord Krishna fall under this category.

- The miniature artworks of other deities of Hindu religion were the proof of the will of the great Emperor.
- It would not be an exaggeration to say that the Mughal miniature paintings are symbol of cultural and religious tolerance that had developed in India during the medieval period.
- Painters from all over India were recruited irrespective of their religion.

Aristocratic because:-

- In the mughal court scene paintings, the court scenes are depicted in grandeur and they were rich in variety which included portraits, events and court scenes from the court life. They depict the emperor sitting on a high throne and subjects offering him their valuable things.
- The paintings were aristocratic, individualistic and strong in portraiture where the plush court scenes and hunting expedition of royalty were depicted.
- The fascinating Mughal paintings portrays the scene of Mughal court, which are skillfully created by using multiple luscious colors.
- Dresses of busy emperors, courtiers, servants and architectural designs make the observers familiar with the reign of Mughal emperors.

Conclusion:-

- Rajasthan miniature paintings, mainly by the Jaipur school, largely due to Jaipur's friendly alliances with the Mughals and the patronage of Akbar in the 16th century, remained rooted in the Mughal style. But the subjects had more varieties and the artists enjoyed more freedom. Therefore Mughal paintings had influence for future art forms as well.

Q) It is said that the Pala period witnessed the last great phase of Buddhism and of the Buddhist art in India. Examine the main features of Pala art and the reasons why it ended suddenly in the 13th century. (250 Words)

Background:-

- The Pala dynasty ruled from 8th century to 12th century CE in the regions comprising Bihar and Bengal. The development of art which had been in a full fledged manner during the Mauryas and Guptas was further carried out by Palas.
- Distinctive achievements of Palas are seen in the arts of architecture, sculpture, terracotta, painting and wall painting.

Main features of Pala art:-

- **Architecture:-**
 - Various mahaviharas, Stupas, chaityas, temples and forts were constructed. Most of the architecture was religious with the first two hundred years dominated by Buddhist art and the last two hundred years by Hindu art.
 - Among the various mahaviharas, Nalanda, Vikramashila, Somapura, Traikutaka, Devikota, Pandita, Jagaddala vihara are notable. Planned residential buildings for monks were made.
 - **A large number of manuscripts on palm-leaf relating to the Buddhist themes were written and illustrated with the images of Buddhist deities at these centres** which also had workshops for the casting of bronze images.

- Somapura mahavihara at Paharpur ,a creation of Dharmapala is one of the largest Buddhist vihara in Indian sub continent ,its architectural plan had influenced the architecture of countries like Myanmar and Indonesia.
- **Temples:-**
 - The temples are known to express the local vanga style. The ninth century siddheshvara mahadeva temple in Baraker shows a tall curving shikara crowned by a large amalaka and is an example of the early pala style.
 - The rock cave temple at Kahalgaon (9th century)shows the gabled vault roof characteristic of the South Indian architecture.
- **Terracotta:-**
 - Artistic and beautiful forms of terracotta were developed during the pala period. This art was developed for the purpose of decoration. Under this form of art such statues are made on walls which depict scenes from the religious and general life styles.
 - The terracotta plaques recovered from paharpur amply demonstrate the excellence of the art in the pala period.
- **Painting:-**
 - The earliest examples of miniature painting in India exist in the form of illustrations to the religious texts on Buddhism executed under the Palas of the eastern India .
 - There are two forms of painting manuscripts and wall painting
 - Manuscripts were written on palm leaves .In these paintings scenes of life of Buddha and several god and goddess of Mahayana sects are depicted.
 - The impact of tantricism on these paintings are easily visible.
 - Red,blue,black and white colours are used a primary colours
 - Pala painting is characterized by sinuous line, delicate and nervous lines ,sensuous elegance, linear and decorative accent and subdued tones of colour.
 - It is naturalistic style which resembles the ideal forms of contemporary bronze and stone sculpture and reflects some feeling of classical art of Ajanta with sensuous bias of art of Eastern India.
 - Wall painting has been found in Saradh and Sarai sthal in Nalanda district. At the bottom of the platform made of granite stone flowers of geometric shapes, images of animals and humans are found.
- **Pala sculpture:-**
 - The Gupta tradition of sculptural art attained a new height under the patronage of Pala rulers .The art incorporated lot of local characteristics in Bengal under the Palas and it continued right up to the end of 12th
 - The **sculptures of stones and bronze were constructed in large** numbers mostly in monastic sites of nalanda,Bodh Gaya etc
 - **Most of the sculptures drew their inspiration from Buddhism. Apart from Buddha sculptures of gods and goddess of Hindu Dharma** like surya, Vishnu, Ganesh etc were constructed.
 - The finest sculptures include a female bust ,two standing Avalokiteshwara images from Nalanda
 - Buddhist sculptures is characterized by a prominent and elaborately carved black slab and lotus seat frequently supported by lions.
 - **Generally only frontal parts of the body have been shown in the sculptures. The front as highly detailed and decorated.**
 - Due to influence of tantrism the sculptures of god were given different touches like that of female ,animal etc.
 - **Bronze casting was an important feature of pala sculptures.**

- **Also present examples of artistic beauty carved out of stone sculptures.** These are made of black basalt stones .
- The pala style is marked by slim and graceful figures, elaborate jewellery and conventional decoration
- The main features of pala sculptures is **their free flowing movement. Almost all figures are of similar sizes** and were carved out of grayish or white spotted sandstone.



Somapura Mahavihara, a World Heritage Site, was built by Dharmapala

Reasons for sudden ending :-

- The Pala art came to a sudden end after the destruction of the Buddhist monasteries at the hands of Muslim invaders in the first half of the 13th century.
- Some of the monks and artists escaped and fled to Nepal, which helped in reinforcing the existing art traditions there.
- Ramapala was the last strong Pala ruler. After his death, a rebellion broke out in Kamarupa during his son Kumarapala's reign. So due to rebellions art was not focussed much.

TOPIC: *Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present- significant events, personalities, issues.*

Q) Discuss the significance of the Vaikom Satyagraha of 1924 and the Self Respect Movement in the modern Indian history. (250 Words)

Background:-

- The contribution of Ramaswamy Naicker (Periyar) in introducing social reforms in has been enormous and his legacy is still alive today in India.

Vaikom satyagraha:-

- It is a mass movement to **demand that lower caste persons be given the right to use a public path in front of the famous Vaikom temple.**
- **Significance :-**
 - Though this struggle did not succeed in lifting the bar to avarnas, or lower castes, entering the Mahadeva Temple in the town, it managed to open the roads around the temple for their use. **The temple entry movement gained momentum after this.**
 - **It is the first agitation for the cause of human rights in the country,**

- **Communal harmony:-**
 - Progressive minded Savarnas and Avarnas came together with Christians, Muslims and even Sikhs.
- **Above all, the Vaikom Satyagraha was a testing ground for the Gandhian principles of Satyagraha.** It was tested and proved as the most effective means for the first time.
- **It was a great opportunity for the Indian National Congress party to grow in Kerala.**
 - Before this agitation, the Congress in Kerala was only a limited number of Upper Caste and Upper class people of Malabar(which was under British Rule).
 - But when the party undertook to lead the agitation at Vaikom the Congress swelled from being a class party to a mass party

Self respect movement :-

- The Self-Respect Movement was **dedicated to the goal of giving non-Brahmins a sense of pride based on their Dravidian past which also meant denial of the superiority of the Brahmins** whom he described as representative of the Aryans.
- Its aim as to achieve a society where backward castes have equal human rights, and encouraging backward castes to have self-respect in the context of a caste-based society that considered them to be a lower end of the hierarchy.
- **Significance:-**
 - Unlike the Justice Party, **the Self-Respect Movement was popular in its appeal.** Though it began as a social reform movement its effects were felt in the political field also
 - **Anti-Brahminism and Self-respect Marriages** were two important aspects of Self-respect Movement.
 - The movement encouraged inter-caste and inter-religious marriages, along with that it also encouraged marriage ceremonies without Brahmin priest.
 - Post independence, Tamilnadu passed a law and become the first state to legalize Hindu marriage without Brahmin priest.
 - **The monopoly of power and influence enjoyed by the Brahmins was slowly lost due to E.V.R.'s unceasing propaganda against orthodoxy. It filled with the sense of self-respect and above all selfconfidence, to fight against social injustice** perpetrated by the Brahmins of the day.
 - The practice of having separate dining places for Brahmins in every hotel or earmarking separate eating places in public feasts was slowly given up owing to the agitation of the volunteers of the movement.
 - **Owing to its influence, several people gave up their titles** and took pride in publishing their names in Kudi Arasu.
 - **It was largely responsible for making an effective change in the social life of the vast majority of people through its ceaseless propaganda against superstitious beliefs,** based upon religious traditions.
 - It was **instrumental in non-Brahmin communities of Tamil Nadu to create awareness amongst themselves, as one community.** The Self-Respect movement brought the message of the **Tamil Nationalism to the masses.**
 - **Gender relationships were actively divorced from Brahminical patriarchy** and women's rights over their physical, sexual and reproductive choices were celebrated.
 - **Self-Respect Movement was not a mere social reformist movement. It aimed at destroying the existing Hindu social order in its totality** and creating a new, rational society without caste, religion and God.

- **The movement was extremely influential not just in Tamil Nadu, but also overseas** in countries with large Tamil populations, such as Malaysia and Singapore.

Q) In the 1971 Bangladesh War, India's intervention achieved strategic objectives while maintaining a humanitarian veneer. Analyse. (250 Words)

Background:-

- The event of Bangladesh independence has been considered India's most successful neighbourhood intervention.

Achieved strategic objectives:-

- The Bengali uprising **provided India an opportunity to eliminate the threat of a two-front war by Pakistan** in any future confrontation.
- **If Bangladesh became independent without Indian help, it would affect the relations between India and Bangladesh in future.** India had strongly encouraged the Bengali movement for autonomy through its propaganda and clandestine financial support.
- **A drawn-out civil war would radicalise the Bengali population. Guerrilla warfare would then become a likely prospect** especially in the context of the Naxalite movement which was raging in eastern India.
- **This could lead to the side-lining of the pro-India Awami League** and shift the leadership of the movement to left-wing pro-China parties.
- **To expand and pursue its geopolitical interests in South Asia**, which included rising as a regional power in the North Eastern South Asia region.
- The influx of Bengali war refugees from East Pakistan **placed a burden on India's economy**

Humanitarian interests :-

- The plight of the ten million refugees did have an impact on the Indian government.
- Moreover, by July-August 1971, **90% of the refugees were Hindus concentrated in the border districts of West Bengal with large Muslim populations.** Consequently, there was danger of **serious communal strife.**
- **Human rights:-**
 - The issue of human rights of 75 million people in a state whose total population is 130 million can hardly be considered as an internal affair of that country. Again, rules of international law have never prohibited absolutely intervention of a humanitarian character
- **Genocides:-**
 - India had to intervene because there was a systematic ethnic slaughter which qualified as genocide. There was clear ethnic or religious targeting of the Hindu minority among the Bengalis.
- **Self determination :-**
 - Pakistan Army's brutal attack on East Bengal and the genocide launched in the area convinced the people of East Bengal that they would continue to be treated as a colony if they remained as part of Pakistan. So the issue was that of self-determination.
- **India observed international refugee law and allowed refugees regardless of religion or language.** It internationalised their tragedy. It offered space to the government in exile.

Conclusion :-

- India's intervention in Bangladesh has shaped South Asia ,made it a responsible power in the region .

Q) It is said that Winston Churchill was a war criminal and a blinkered imperialist untroubled by the oppression of non-white peoples. Do you agree? Critically comment, especially considering his role in India's struggle for Independence. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Winston Churchill, a journalist, a soldier, and a war-time leader, was a maverick who divided opinion throughout his lengthy political career.
- As the 50th anniversary of his death approaches, historians and journalists appear no closer to agreeing on his legacy.
- He is regarded by many as the greatest Briton ever, but for some he remains an intensely controversial figure.

Criticisms:-

- Churchill **believed in racial hierarchies and eugenics** something he had in common with the leaders of Nazi Germany
- He criticised non white people in a very bad way. Churchill has been criticised for advocating the use of chemical weapons primarily against Kurds and Afghans.
- The **Israeli-Palestinian conflict** can also be traced back to Churchill's decision to hand over the "Over Promised Land" to both Arabs and Jews
- Churchill had strong views on Gandhi now widely respected for his work in advocating self-determination for India.
- Churchill's role in Ireland is most associated with deploying the controversial "Black and Tans" to fight the Irish Republican Army (IRA). These temporary constables soon developed a reputation for excessive violence.
- Bengal famine :-**
 - Some 4 million Bengalis starved to death in a 1943 famine. Churchill ordered the diversion of food from starving Indian civilians to well-supplied British soldiers and even to top up European stockpiles in Greece and elsewhere.

Churchill, like many great historical figures, had his share of flaws and failings. Yet the fact remains, **they are all overshadowed by his achievements in the war.**

- Churchill is widely regarded as one of the greatest war-time leaders Europe has ever seen, inspiring the Allies to victory in the Second World War.

- Significant achievements include **reforming the prison system, introducing a minimum wage and bringing in legislation which taxed the wealthy** to pay for social welfare reforms.
- He was also **responsible for fostering the "special relationship" between the UK and the US**, which continues today.
- It was his inspiration that prevented Britain from joining the rest of Europe in surrendering to the might of Nazi Germany
 - Churchill was absolutely instrumental in literally saving Britain and European civilisation from the tyranny of Nazism
- He went on to fearlessly take on the evils of the Soviet Union with his famous "Iron Curtain" speech, which helped galvanise democratic countries against Stalinism.

Conclusion:-

- Great men can commit great mistakes, and Churchill's are on the same gargantuan scale as his achievements.

Q) Post 1857, for peasants the fight was not much against colonialism. Analyse. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Peasant protest after 1857 often represented an instinctive and spontaneous response of the peasantry to its social condition
- Colonial economic policies, the new land revenue system, the colonial administrative and judicial systems, and the ruin of handicrafts leading to the over-crowding of land, transformed the agrarian structure and impoverished the peasantry. So peasants emerged as the main force in agrarian movements.

Peasants fight was not against colonialism :-

- They now fought directly for their own demands, **centered almost wholly on economic issues**, and against their immediate enemies, foreign planters and indigenous zamindars and moneylenders.
- **Their struggles were directed towards specific and limited objectives and redressal of particular grievances.**
- They were moved **by strong notions of legitimacy**, of what was justifiable and what was not.
 - That is why they did not fight for land ownership or against landlordism but against eviction and undue enhancement of rent.
 - They did not deny the state's right to collect a tax on land but objected when the level of taxation overstepped all traditional bounds.
- **They did not make colonialism their target.** Nor was their objective the ending of the system of their subordination and exploitation.
- **Even the territorial reach of these movements was also limited.** They were confined to particular localities with no mutual communication or linkages.

- **They also lacked continuity of struggle or long-term organization.** Once the specific objectives of a movement were achieved, its organization, as also peasant solidarity built around it, dissolved and disappeared. Thus, the Indigo strike, the Pabna agrarian leagues and the social-boycott movement of the Deccan ryots left behind no successors.
- **Consequently, at no stage did these movements threaten British supremacy or even undermine it.**
 - They were also able to wring considerable concessions from the colonial state. The latter, too, not being directly challenged, was willing to compromise and mitigate the harshness of the agrarian system though within the broad limits of the colonial economic and political structure

Conclusion:-

- Most of these weaknesses were overcome in the 20th century when peasant discontent was merged with the general anti-imperialist discontent, and their political activity became a part of the wider anti-imperialist movement. .

Q) During 1930s and 1940s, the growth and development of the peasant movement was indissolubly linked with the national struggle for freedom. Examine. (250 Words)

Background :-

- The peasant movements of the 20th century were deeply influenced by and had a marked impact on the national freedom struggle.
- The 1930's and 1940's bore witness to a new and nation wide awakening of Indian peasants to their own strength and capacity to organize for the betterment of their living conditions. This awakening was largely a result of the combination of particular economic and political developments: the great Depression that began to hit India from 1929-30 and the new phase of mass struggle launched by the Indian National Congress in 1930.

How the peasant movements were linked with the national struggle :-

- The relationship of the peasant movement with the national movement continued to be one of a vital and integral nature.
- Areas where the peasant movement was active were usually the ones that had been drawn into the earlier national struggles. This was true at least of Punjab, Kerala, Andhra, U.P. and Bihar
- Since it was the spread of the national movement that had created the initial conditions required for the emergence of peasant struggles
 - The Civil Disobedience Movement soon took on the form of a no-tax and no-rent campaign. Peasants, emboldened by the recent success of the Bardoli Satyagraha (1928), joined the protest in large numbers.
- With the decline of the Civil Disobedience Movement, these men and women began to search for an outlet of their political energies and many of them **found the answer in organizing the peasants.**

- The formation of Congress Ministries in a majority of the provinces in early 1937 marked the beginning of a **new phase in the growth of the peasant movement**. The political atmosphere in the country underwent a marked change a new sense of freedom born of the feeling that 'our own people are in power' and pro-people measures will be brought in make the years 1937-39 the high-water mark of the peasant movement.
- The **end of the World War II**, followed by the negotiations for the transfer of power and the anticipation of freedom, marked a qualitatively new stage in the development of the peasant movement
 - **A new spirit was evident and the certainty of approaching freedom with the promise of a new social order encouraged peasants, among other social groups, to assert their rights and claims with a new vigour.**
 - Many struggles that had been left off in 1939 were renewed.
- **In its ideology as well, the kisan movement accepted and based itself on the ideology of nationalism.** Its cadres and leaders carried the message not only of organization of the peasantry on class lines but also of national freedom.
 - Kisan manifesto launched by all India Kisan committee influenced agrarian programmes of congress as well.
- With the experience of the split of 1942, the kisan movement found that if it diverged too far and too clearly from the path of the national movement, it tended to lose its mass base, as well as create a split within the ranks of its leadership. **The growth and development of the peasant movement was thus indissolubly linked with the national struggle for freedom.**
- The demand for zamindari abolition was pressed with a greater sense of urgency by the popularization of the demand by the kisan sabha certainly contributed to its achievement.
- They eroded the power of the landed class, **thus adding to the transformation of the agrarian structure.**

Conclusion:-

- Thus peasant movements played a significance role in helping India attain independence and even in post independence period the process is continuing to make the live better for farmers and agriculture.

TOPIC: *The Freedom Struggle – its various stages and important contributors /contributions from different parts of the country.*

Q) *The transformation of tribals' relationship with their forests under the influence of colonialism was the root cause for their uprisings against the British in colonial India. Analyse. (250 Words)*

How tribals relationship with forests transformed and became the root cause:-

- Before British influence, tribals had depended on the forest for food, fuel and cattlefeed. They practiced shifting cultivation (jhum, podu, etc.), taking recourse to fresh forest lands when their existing lands showed signs of exhaustion. **The colonial government changed all this.**
- **Changes made:-**
 - **British usurped the forest lands** and placed restrictions on access to forest products, forest lands and village common lands.
 - **It refused to let cultivation shift to new areas.**

- **Oppression and extortion by policemen, zamindars** and other petty officials have exercised a combined system of extortions, oppressive exactions, forcible dispossession of property, abuse and personal violence which further aggravated distress among the tribals.
- **The revenue farmers and government agents also intensified and expanded the system of begar** making the tribals perform unpaid labour.
- **It introduced a large number of outsider middleman (money-lenders, traders and revenue farmers) among the tribal.**
 - They increasingly took possession of tribal lands and trapped the tribal in debt-web and this brought the tribal people within the fold on the colonial economy and exploitation
- The colonial intrusion and the triumvirate of trader, moneylender and revenue farmer in sum **disrupted the tribal identity**
- **The British government had introduced certain legislations permitting merchants and contractors to cut the forests.** These rules not only deprived the tribals of several forest products but also made them victims of harassment by the forest officials. This led tribes in Andhra Pradesh under Alluri sita Rama Raju and some other areas to launch movements.
 - **It tightened the control (restriction on shifting cultivation and attempts to curb the use timber and grazing facilities) of forest zones for revenue purpose (from 1867 onwards) and this shattered the very basis of tribal economy.**
- All this differed in intensity from region to region, but the complete disruption of the old agrarian order of the tribal communities provided the common factor for all the tribal uprisings.
- The rebellions normally began at the point where the tribals felt so oppressed that they felt they had no alternative but to fight. When this happened, the tribals began to move towards armed resistance and elementary organization.

Conclusion:-

- Tribal uprisings played an important role in the national movement with some leaders like Rani Gaidinilu, Birsa Munda , Santhal rebellion with some experts terming it as the *First War of*

Q) The socio-cultural regeneration in nineteenth century India was occasioned by the colonial presence, but not created by it. Analyse. (250 Words)

Background:-

- The social and cultural regeneration of the 19th century was, however, qualitatively of a different order than the pre-colonial manifestations of reform like Bhakti movements which did not play a socially transformative role but confined their activities to a number of self-contained sects without much communication or interaction with one another.

How colonial presence helped the socio cultural regeneration in the nineteenth century:-

- While the pre-colonial movements were trapped in feudal ethics, **the 19th century regeneration occurred in the context of an emerging middle class which mainly developed its social vision, political beliefs and cultural ethos from the history of Western societies**, received through the medium of the ideological apparatuses of the colonial state.
- **They were drawn towards a new cultural situation through their association with the colonial rulers**
- All socio-religious reformers whether Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs or Parsis aimed at the **spread of modern education**. They believed that education was the most effective tool to awaken and modernize
- **The British conquest and the consequent dissemination of colonial culture and ideology had led to an inevitable introspection about the strengths and weaknesses of indigenous culture and institutions**. The response, indeed, was varied but the need to reform social and religious life was a commonly shared conviction.
- **Because of the indefatigable efforts of the reformers, a number of administrative measures were adopted by the Government** to improve the condition of women like Abolition of Sati , against female infanticide, widow's remarriage ,against child marriage etc.
- Along with enlightenment and rational thought of the reformers of the 19th century ,the circumstances created by British triggered the reform movements like for instance British used the position of social conditions like the status of Indian women, illiteracy, superstitions etc which were practised then to justify the enslavement of India. So it became imperative for the Indian intelligentsia to contest the tag of backwardness. Along with that the Orientalism brought forth archaeological excavations of India's rich cultural heritage like the discovery of Indus valley civilisation.

However British has not created it:-

- The Indians took the role played by Christian missionaries propagating Christianity as an onslaught on their religion and social customs and questioned many of their own social and religious practices. **They wanted to reform it so that evil social practices could be removed from society**
- **Reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Jyotiba Phule, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Pandita Ramabai understood that ignorance and backwardness in the society was responsible for hindering its progress and development.**
- **They studied the religious scriptures and criticized the prevalent religious and social practices.** According to them, society should be based on the concepts of liberty and equality both for men and women and this was possible only by the spread of modern and scientific education especially among the women.
- **They considered the caste system as irrational and unscientific. They felt it was against the basic rules of humanity.** The untiring and relentless efforts of the social reformers helped people to become more tolerant towards each other.
- **They cited the scriptures to show that the practices prevalent during nineteenth century like Sati find no sanction in them.**

- Two important intellectual criteria which informed the reform movements were **rationalism and religious universalism**. In the Brahmo Samaj, it led to the repudiation of the infallibility of the Vedas, and in the Aligarh Movement, to the reconciliation of the teachings of Islam with the needs of the modern age.

TOPIC: Political philosophies like communism, Capitalism, socialism etc, their forms and effect on the society.

Q) If democracy is supposed to deliver stability, progress, good governance, improved standards of living for all, then all these can be ticked in China's one-party system. Is one party system better than traditional multi party democracies? Analyse. (250 Words)

Background :-

- China's one-party system has proven over time to be remarkably adaptable to changing times and a move to end presidential term limits, enabling Xi to remain in office indefinitely brought to light the discussion about one party system and multi party systems.

Analysis :-

- Narrow agendas:-**
 - In multi party democracies competing parties confine themselves to their narrow agendas pursuing the interests of certain groups, regions or classes, and thus tearing society apart which is not the case in the one party systems.
- Politically stable government**
 - In a one-party system, there is no change of government and one individual can lead the government for a long .Therefore the country remains politically stable.
- Ensures national integration**
 - In a one party system the entire nation is able to rally round the only party regardless of their ethnic, religious and cultural differences. In other words, one-party system promotes unity and national integration.
- Freedom to people :-**
 - Democracy is fundamentally about the independence and forbearance of institutions (such as the judiciary and the press and other constitutional bodies), freedom of speech, decentralization of power, giving voice to the minorities, about checks and balances against the reign of brute majorities.
 - This is what a multi party system does and one-party system is far from it.
- The rotation of political power gives government the flexibility to make needed policy changes.**
 - In the one party system there is** absence of the checks and balances provided by democratic government. These dangers are corruption and the possible return to personalised dictatorship.
 - In the absence of the checks and balances provided by democratic government, local Party officials exercise enormous power over ordinary people's lives. **One of the most pervasive ways this has occurred has been through the illegal seizure of land for development.**

- According to the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, forty million peasants have had their land forcibly taken from them for development.
- **Better representation:-**
 - In the multi-party system, constituencies have a greater probability that their interests will be represented than in any other party system.
 - Multi-party system has a positive impact on the level of democracy in terms of party competition for gaining the support of voters.
- **Ensures continuous economic development**
 - In a one-party state, since the government stays in power for a very long time, it is able to draw economic programmes for the state and implement them without any interference. For instance Chinese economic reforms have lifted hundreds of millions of people out of severe poverty, the greatest reduction in poverty ever.
 - China as a developmental state has successfully pursued the most ambitious strategy for economic modernisation in modern times, which has contained corruption as well
- **Quick decision making:-**
 - China's largely meritocratic one party system allows the Chinese government to make decisions with a much longer term horizon than democracies, which typically focus on the short term and the next election.
- **Useful in times of emergencies**
 - In a one-party system the government of the day can act swiftly to save the situation. For example, if there is an outbreak of war, the Commander-in-Chief can be held down by unnecessary delays as would have been the case in a two-party or multi-party system

Conclusion:-

- It could be argued that the existence of a multi-party system alone does not necessarily lead to "more" democracy. **Many factors along with multipartism shape the level of democracy in a country.**
- In order for the multi-party system to lead for "more" democracy, **there should be a strong political culture in the country, good coalition potential** with parties having common interests and goals.
- The type of the electoral system, accountability, and party competition within the multi-party system affects the "level" of democracy as well. **Thus, only the successful combination of all these factors within the multipartism may lead to the enhancement of democracy**

Q) How did Vladimir Lenin influence Indian revolutionaries? Also briefly discuss differences between Marxism and Leninism. (250 Words)

Background:-

- The recent development regarding demolition of Russian revolutionary leader and Communist icon Vladimir Lenin's statue by newly elected government workers and supporters in Tripura has raised quite a few questions regarding India's polity.

How did Lenin influence Indian revolutionaries:-

- Lenin lent to **both the rise of a communist movement in India and to the anti-colonial struggle that gave birth to a free India.**

- Lenin championed for India's independence and was instrumental in meeting some of the Left leaders before India becoming sovereign.
- It was Lenin who personally received the founder of the CPI, MN Roy, in Moscow where he was invited to attend the second world congress of the Communist International, and it was he who led Roy to formulate his ideas as a supplement to Roy's thesis on the national and colonial questions.
- In the decades to come, the CPI would not just become the face of the Communist movement in India, but would also shape much of the nationalist movement and the political landscape of independent India.
- It is well known that leaders of the freedom movement, cutting across the political spectrum, were influenced by the legacy of Lenin and used his ideas for the cause of independence. Lenin, in that sense, was there in the core ideals of our remarkable liberation movement
 - Lokmanya Tilak, who electrified the nation by his slogan "Swaraj is my birthright", **commanded admiration from Lenin for his role in standing against British imperialism and colonial rule which devastated India.**
 - Tilak particularly flagged Lenin's contributions in distributing the land of the nobility to the peasantry and hailed it as a landmark step for the cause of the uplift of the exploited and suffering people.
 - Bhagat Singh read Lenin's works extensively and it shaped his outlook and action not only for India's independence but also for nation-building and social reconstruction.
- **Indian poets lauded Lenin:**
 - Lenin occupied a prominent place in the poems and prose of literary geniuses of country. One such fine representative of litterateurs was Subramanya Bharathi who wrote a poem "New Russia" in Tamil, extolling the role played by Lenin in spearheading the landmark Russian revolution.
 - Bengal revolutionaries of 'Yugantar' and 'Anushilan' quoted Lenin freely
- The 1917 Bolshevik revolution under Lenin fired the Indian political imagination and affected profoundly, its course. **Russian developments inspired the Ghadar movement, Khilafat impulse, and the Reshmi Roomal Tehrik.**

Differences between Marxism and leninism:

- **Marxism was more of an ideology that Karl Marx created to point out what will happen when the social classes struggle with each other. Leninism was how Lenin changed Marxism to fit Russia.**
- **Economic Views**
 - Lenin was forced to look at economic matters in much more detail than Marx.
 - Marx had envisioned communist revolutions taking place in more developed and advanced capitalist states.
 - But Lenin's communism was implemented in Russia, an economically stagnant country mainly inhabited by peasant farmers.
- **Imperialism**
 - Marxist theory held that proletarian revolution was inevitable in capitalist states, as ruling states would suppress moves toward socialism, thus incurring the revolutionary wrath of the working classes.
 - Lenin argued that the expansion of imperialism meant that the working classes never developed this revolutionary consciousness. The expanding powers and wealth of the industrialized nations meant they could provide their working classes with just enough capital and benefits to dampen any revolutionary feelings.

- **Party Politics**

- Marx believed that the working classes would spontaneously develop class consciousness and push for proletarian revolution.
- Lenin did not believe this, and he supported the formation of a political party to inform the working classes and direct their efforts against the capitalist system.
- Lenin believed that it would take an organized and professional political party to break the workers from the capitalist trade-union mindset into a truly revolutionary state of mind.

- **Instead of Marx's ideals of a "dictatorship of the proletariat," Lenin's Russia was led by a dictatorship of the Communist Party,** whose leaders simply assumed they knew what was best for the working classes.

TOPIC: *Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India.*

Q) Adivasis cannot be equal citizens until they are considered holistically as a part of cultural and ecospheres with unique customs and practices, and not just as welfare recipients receiving doles. Critically comment why discrimination and atrocities against Adivasis in India continues unabated, even in states that are educationally advanced. (250 Words)

Background:-

- The word adivasi carries the specific meaning of being the original inhabitants of a given region and was specifically coined for that purpose in the 1930s. But they are one of the most discriminated communities in India and are being forced to adapt to modernity even in the most developed states

Why discrimination and atrocities against Adivasis in India continues unabated ?

- **Number of development-induced internally displaced people** in India over 50 years between 20 and 50 million. Dispossessed, they become a part of the army of cheap, daily wage labour.
- In Kerala too, **there has been a systematic expropriation of indigenous lands** since the 1940s by settlers from the plains.
- The contact with mainstream society is absolutely damaging for the cultural self of the Adivasis. Their **children are often traumatised because of persistent discrimination in schools.**
- There **cannot be a mere developmental/economic solution to the Adivasi 'problem'**. But that has been the dominant approach to mitigating their condition. For instance 5000 Crores is allotted in Kerala Government Budget along with 95000 Crores in 2018 Budget of Union Government.
- Movements have forced the Indian state to finally make radical legislations which accept the cultural and forest rights of the Adivasis, and grant self-governance to them. But **these have either been poorly implemented or completely diluted in practice.**
- **Most tribal villages and settlements have no access to schools and medical care. Very few are connected with all-weather roads.** Their forests have been pillaged and plantations and industries have come up.

- Caste system in India recognised them as second grade citizens leading to further discrimination.

Way forward:-

- There cannot be the liberation of the Adivasi until the fundamental material issue of land alienation is addressed.
- The discourse around Adivasis must shift more towards substantive measures like reparations and restitution.
- Lessons that India can learn from New Zealand's Maori experience of reconciliation is for indigenous people and governments to have a genuine and robust discussion at the outset of any attempt to resolve grievances.

Conclusion:-

- These communities are full of traditional wisdom on farming, forest conservation, and multiple varieties of uncultivated food that can help them reduce the persistent threats of food security.
- There's a big opportunity for civil society, social agencies and policy makers to come together and create opportunities and initiatives respecting this unique relationship between the tribes and forests.
- Initiatives supporting community led farming, sustainable forest conservation, can not only help us protect the bio-diversity of the planet, but also provide sustainable means of forest-led occupations, reduction of absolute poverty and arrest food security and malnutrition in these communities.

TOPIC: Role of women and women's organization.

Q) How does trade impact women? Examine how international trade can be made gender-fair. (250 Words)

Background:-

- The World Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial conference in late 2017 had a declaration on gender and trade. India's gender balance in entrepreneurship and jobs remains among the lowest in the world.
- Gender-related provisions in bilateral FTAs as well as multilateral declarations therefore merit closer examination.

Trade impact on women :-

- Trade liberalisation has no doubt led to an increase in employment opportunities for women particularly in export-oriented sectors such as textiles.

- **However, trade liberalisation can also lead to unemployment and the restructuring of labour markets** a situation that tends to affect poor and marginalised groups of women more than men.
- The need for flexible workers to respond to market fluctuations has led to a rise in the **numbers of informal sector workers, of which a high percentage are women.**
- **Jobs created for women by trade liberalization are concentrated in lowest-paid and most insecure segments of global value chains**, where women work as temporary or seasonal workers.
- **Gender wage gaps** and the proportion of the gap attributable to discrimination have persisted or widened on account of trade liberalization.
- Women seem to lose their initial advantages as industries upgrade, leading to a **defeminization of employment in manufacturing.**
- Women entrepreneurs are more dominant in industries that pay lower average wages.
- Women benefit from formal employment created by transnational companies (TNCs), especially in manufacturing, as they gain bargaining power and influence in the household. **This change can have positive, long-term developmental effects.**
- Increased competition often has more adverse effects on poor and marginalised groups of women more than men, in particular in developing countries, where women are relatively behind men to confront challenges or grasp the opportunities of market integration.
- Feminisation of employment may be temporary and reversed as an economy moves up the technological ladder. This is particularly obvious in the textile sector, where women tend to be overrepresented.
- **Agriculture:-**
 - In developing countries, women constitute the vast majority of small-scale farmers – a group that is particularly exposed to increased competition from other countries.
 - The competition puts pressure on the farmers to modernise and move away from food crops to cash crops, and women who have difficulties accessing credit and new technology stand to lose more from this.
- India's economic liberalization and increased market competition has not eliminated gender segmentation. However, improved physical and human infrastructure, and domestic pro-competitive reforms have reduced gender segmentation.

How to make international trade gender fair :-

- Incorporating **pre-ratification conditions into the trade agreement negotiation process to remove legal barriers against women's equal participation in the economy** as well as instituting follow-up enforcement mechanisms, can help to ensure trade benefits women and men more equally going forward.
- **Increasing women's participation in global trade, as both business owners and wage workers**, can improve outcomes for women, their families, and their countries.
- **Improving the legal environment facing women workers as part of bilateral trade negotiations**, using sanctions to discipline countries that legally discriminate against women's participation in particular sectors and supporting local women's rights groups to use protections under trade agreements to further the equality agenda.
- **Countries should consider the possibility of imposing sanctions on trade partners that fail to conform to international norms on the equal treatment of women in the workplace** as specified under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

- **It is necessary to empower local institutions** (e.g., human rights and women's rights groups, trade unions) that can act as "watch dogs" to ensure proper enforcement of gender-equal provisions in trade agreements.
- **International lessons:-**
 - Canada and the EU have advocated gender inclusivity in trade, by including gender chapters in their FTAs. India can emulate it too.
- Research on gender and trade **could indicate the removal of barriers in trade.**
 - For instance, surveys by the International Trade Centre have shown that as women-owned business tend to be smaller, they are disproportionately affected by non-tariff measures (NTMs) such as sanitary and phytosanitary measures. **The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) recommended the removal of NTMs on this account.**
- **Make trade policies gender-responsive by sharing information regarding women's participation through voluntary reporting, collecting gender-disaggregated data,** sharing best practices for conducting gender analysis of trade policies and monitoring their effect.
- **Gender-sensitive institutions, enabling legal systems and strong market-support systems are required** to remove the structural barriers to improved women's participation in markets and to ensure their rights are upheld as workers, producers and consumers.
- **WTO recommendations:-**
 - Establish a Task Force on gender and trade in the WTO
 - Engage in capacity-building on gender and trade within its relevant divisions and training programmes for its staff as well as the governments of member countries, including the national gender and women machineries
 - Strengthen interaction with more international agencies concerned with gender and development (UNIFEM, ILO, the World Health Organization (WHO), and UNCTAD).

Conclusion:-

- Empowering half of the potential workforce has significant economic benefits beyond promoting gender equality. This will come in many forms: increased female labour force participation, improvements in productivity, elimination of gender discrimination in access to bank loans, and increased voice and political representation.

TOPIC: *Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism.*

Q) According to a recent UN report, the average age of death for Dalit women in India is 39.5. Critically analyse the economic and social stresses experienced by Dalit women in India and solutions needed to empower them. (250 Words)

Background :-

- In the 2011 census, the Dalit population was estimated at 200 million. Assuming the female Dalit population at 130 million, as a group, they would form the 10th largest country. Thus the imperative to focus on the need to empower these women.

Economic stresses faced by Dalit women are :-

- Because of the current structure of labour laws, dis-incentivizing formal labour markets and hiring, India has an extremely asymmetric and disproportionately informal labour market. So **Dalit women are also more likely to be trapped at the lowest levels in the informal labour market.**
- **Lacking the social networks that enable upward mobility in the labour market**, they are often relegated to the lowest paying, hard physical labour under exploitative conditions by middlemen.
- The **informal sector leaves Dalit women in a poor position** to access the economic growth resulting from market liberalization.
- Dalit women record higher work Participation Rate than that of their non-Dalit counterparts but high wage gap between SC and non-SC/ST women, concentration of Dalit women workers in agricultural sector and elementary occupations show that most of the Dalit women are deprived of high-salaried positions. So they stay poor.
- Unemployment rate is higher among the Dalit women with graduate and above degrees and this condition is acute in the rural areas.
- Dalit women earn for their families, but they have no control over their earnings.

Social stresses:-

- Dalit women are often among the poorest sections of society and tend to **have lower access to sanitation, drinking water, or basic healthcare services.**
- **Caste discrimination:-**
 - Dalit women and their children are routinely denied medical care as upper castes refuse to treat them.
 - Caste system declares Dalit women as impure and untouchables. Most of them work as manual scavengers, landless agricultural labourers, domestic helpers and casual labourers.
 - Dalit women in South Asia (India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh) face systematic and structural discrimination thrice over as Dalit, as women and as poor.
- **Violence:-**
 - Dalit women are more likely to experience physical and sexual violence at home, in their immediate neighbourhoods, and at the workplace.
 - According to the National Crime Records Bureau, four Dalit women are raped every day in India.
- **Health issues:-**
 - Low age at marriage and high fertility has a direct impact on the health outcomes. Dalit women record low Body Mass Index (BMI), higher prevalence of anaemia and low access to maternal health care facilities.
 - Hardly 35 percent SC women get the facility of institutional delivery during the child birth and a large number of them rely on indigenous methods and stay at homes during the delivery.
 - Mainly husbands and in-laws take decisions regarding their health.
- Despite legislative prohibition of manual scavenging, the state has institutionalised the practice with local governments and municipalities **employing manual scavengers.**
- **The reality of Dalit women and girls is one of exclusion and marginalization**, which perpetuates their subordinate position in society and increases their vulnerability, throughout generations.

Measures taken :-

- India has various affirmative policies for the socially marginalised groups and women and also ensures the right to education for all, Stand up India, Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY) etc.

Solutions needed are:-

- Sensible labour laws reforms to give exit options to Dalit women trapped in a system.
- Integrating social and cultural transformation with an economic alternative is critical.
- Huge investments will be needed in upskilling and educating women** and government needs to create an abundance of new jobs within the formal sector and lowering barriers to job creation
- Increased availability of stable-wage jobs for women is critical to preventing their socio-economic exploitation
- With bridging the deep-rooted biases through sustained reconditioning:-**
 - It is only possible by promoting the idea of gender equality and uprooting social ideology of male child preferability.
- They should be given decision-making powers and due position in governance.** Thus, the Women Reservation Bill should be passed as soon as possible to increase the effective participation of women in the politics of India.
- Bridging implementation gaps:**
 - Government or community-based bodies must be set up to monitor the programs devised for the welfare of the society.
- Dalit women need group and gender specific policies and programmes to address the issue of multiple deprivations.
 - Dalit women require comprehensive policies on health, especially on the maternal and child health
- Make credit available by pooling the women to form self help groups. The example of Kudumbashree model of Kerala can be emulated.

TOPIC: Salient features of world's physical geography.

Q) Why does Kosi river cause devastating floods so often? Also examine the consequences of these frequent floods and measures taken to mitigate these floods. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Kosi, often referred to as Bihar's "river of sorrow", is notorious for the devastating floods it causes in the vast tracts of northern Bihar, not to forget the devastating 2008 one.

Why does Kosi river cause floods so often:-

- The cause behind the woes for those living along the banks of Kosi could be **1,082 million tonnes of silt that has been deposited in it in the last 54 years.**
- The silt causes the level of riverbed to rise. As a result, the natural longitudinal (straight) course of the river is disturbed.** Therefore the river searches for a lateral

path (left or right). As a result it changes its course and breaches the embankments on the new path it has created. **The breach of embankments causes floods.**

- **The river would have slowed down on its normal course after 2008, but the government built fresh embankments, which once again prevented the river from flowing on its normal course.** As a result, the river keeps moving abruptly, leading to floods.
- **Excessive sediment discharge into the river is the main cause.** Embankments are constructed to prevent flow of water but with it, the flow of sediments is obstructed. This raises the riverbed, leading to steady rise in water-level.
- **Kosi has been displaying an oscillating movement trend for centuries.** Studies have proven that over the past 200 years, the Kosi has shifted its course by 112.6km from east to west in its flow in Indian territory. This shift went on from 1736 till 1960, when construction of the Birpur barrage began in Supaul district.
- Approximately 80 per cent of the Kosi's catchment area falls in Nepal, which is mostly hilly and mountainous. **Over the past few decades, excessive deforestation in Kosi's stretch has reduced the soil's capacity to hold water.** This has, in turn, led to excessive siltation on the river.
- **The 2008 deluge in the Kosi was the result of a tectonic shift (movement of plates below earth's surface) in the Kosi region,** which led to pressure on the river's eastern embankment.
- Considering the vulnerability of the river Kosi's basin, **the melting glaciers will exacerbate the problem a hundredfold.** The melting glaciers will release much more water than normal in a short time thus creating a flood situation.
- **Unconsolidated sedimentary nature of rocks** which are easily eroded.

Consequences:-

- The Kosi floods have caused unprecedented loss to lives, livelihoods, infrastructure and property in Bihar.
- **Kosi floods caused extensive damage at both village and household levels.**
 - At the village level, losses were reported in terms of roads, embankments, bridges, culverts, public infrastructure, irrigation and electricity systems.
 - Since roads were severely damaged or destroyed, poor communications became a hindrance to efficient relief work and provision of basic necessities. Electricity and telecommunications were very badly affected, and about three-fourths of tubewells, a major source of irrigation, were severely damaged.
 - With the embankments all along the river course, the villagers inside the embankments and around them will be highly vulnerable to the flood waters and frequent breaches in the embankment walls.
- At the household level, losses were to lives, livestock, agricultural operations and employment
The floods destroyed or damaged homes for the overwhelming majority of the people reduced their access to safe water and destroyed or damaged toilet facilities.

- **Vulnerable groups** such as Muslims, OBC and Scheduled Castes reported more damage to their houses than others.
- **Damage to Kharif-season crops**, including Aghani paddy (the major crop), maize, jute and other vegetables, was extensive, and massive livestock losses occurred.
- **Shortage/unavailability of food and firewood**
- Among occupational groups, daily wage labourers will be the most severely affected, with both employment and monthly earnings falling sharply, after the flood.
- **The increased sedimentation will directly affected the agricultural lands** and the irrigation canals and streams. This will lead to an over deterioration in cropping patterns in the region.

Measures taken :-

- In affected states like Bihar structural measures like construction of embankments, flood retention walls, flood levees and channel improvements, etc were constructed . However, it is felt that structural measures itself is not sufficient to reduce the adverse impacts of floods in the state. **Hence non-structural measures like flood plain management policy, building bye-laws, flow and silt management policy are also required.**
- **Dredging** carried out is unloaded beside the river by the engineers and slowing this gets accumulated with the river .
- **Construction of dam on Kosi with Nepal's assistance** to control its water.

Conclusion:-

- The government needs to rethink its strategies to protect the people permanently from the scourge of floods, through scientific management of river water and effective protection of embankments from erosion.

TOPIC: *Distribution of key natural resources across the world (including South Asia and the Indian subcontinent);*

Q) The way water is used, or wasted, is as good a test as any to judge the extent to which a society is socially just and environmentally sustainable. Discuss critically water usage pattern in Indian cities and India's readiness to combat water crises in near future. (250 Words)

Background:-

- **With seven major rivers and their numerous tributaries coupled with the might of Himalayas providing eternal water to these rivers, it is ironical that India is water-stressed.**
- The recent Cape Town crisis is a wake-up call to India about the existing and future water emergency that many parts of the country are already facing and the way a public resource is consumed exposes the essential inequity in the societies.

Water usage pattern and concerns with readiness in Indian cities :-

- **Not much attention is being paid to the availability of a resource like water, or to its distribution.**
- **For instance in Bengaluru's case,** population is 1.35 crore today spread over almost 800 sq km. City's growth has not been accompanied by measures to conserve water, to ensure that wasteful consumption is penalised and minimised, and that existing water sources, like the once abundant tanks, are preserved.
- **The rapid growth of population and its growing needs has meant that per capita availability of fresh water has declined sharply from 3,000 cubic metres to 1,123 cubic metres over the past 50 years. The global average is 6,000 cubic metres.**
 - Delhi and Chennai are fed with supply lines stretching hundreds of kilometres.
- **By 2050, energy generation is set to assume a much larger proportion of water usage. This should further nudge India towards renewable resources since thermal power plants are highly water-intensive** and currently account for maximum water usage among all industrial applications.
- The **absence of rational water policies** have led to the relentless exploitation of groundwater resources.
 - The States that now have groundwater legislation based on the model Bill conceptualised in 1970 have on the whole failed to manage to address the problem of falling water tables due to increasing use.
 - In addition, there is no provision in the existing legal regime to protect and conserve groundwater at the aquifer level.
 - **Since the legal regime fails to give gram sabhas, panchayats and urban governing bodies a prevailing say in the regulation of water,** the present framework remains mostly top-down and is incapable of addressing local situations adequately.
- **Concerns with coordination and central water commission:-**
 - The responsibilities and activities of the commission are restricted to surface water resources resulting in a total disregard of other components of water resources in the hydrological cycle, especially the groundwater.
 - The CWC does not have an expertise on issues concerning the environment and the socio-economic aspects of water
- The **quality of the water pumped** is increasingly becoming cause for **concern due to pollution** in ground water in many areas.
 - A recent study by the Karnataka State's department of mines and geology showed the groundwater in about 12 of the 30 districts in Karnataka to be highly polluted with excess concentration of fluoride, arsenic, iron, nitrate and salinity due to both anthropogenic and geogenic factors.
 - Lack of effective sewage management is leading to drinking water mixed with drainage in cities.
- Scientific evidence also points to **over-exploitation.**
 - There are specific geographical areas where the water crisis is particularly acute. For instance, in the Ganges basin, fresh water (surface water and aquifers) is being consumed in a countercyclical fashion, with water consumption being highest when water availability is lowest.
 - According to a report by McKinsey, the national supply is predicted to fall 50 per cent below demand by 2030, with nearly 100 million people going to be directly affected by a severe lack of potable water resources in the country.
- With increasing demands of water, **conflicts are arising between States** and communities are claiming their rightful share of water.

- **Agriculture** is the most important sector in water use not domestic consumption. Due to this the groundwater depletion is taking place at a random pace.
 - Since the 1960s, with the advent of the green revolution, water demand has grown but surface irrigation has not kept pace.
 - As a result, groundwater sources are critically depleted in many parts of the country without adequate steps being taken to replenish underground aquifers.
 - In the hard-rock aquifers of peninsular India, drilling 800 ft or deeper is becoming the norm. Groundwater-dependent towns and villages spend an increasing fraction of their budgets chasing the water table.
 - **Electricity is supplied to farmers free of cost. This policy made sense when groundwater was abundant in the 1980s.** But today, where groundwater levels have fallen hundreds of feet below the ground, the subsidy is actually only utilised by the richest farmers who can afford to drill deep.

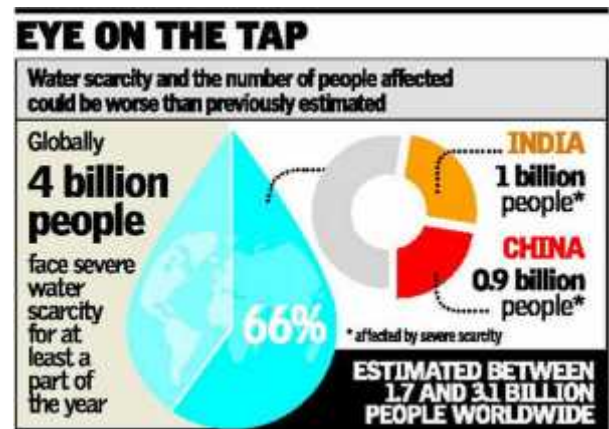
However some measures have been taken in the recent years:-

- **Solid waste management rules 2016 for effective management of waste in urban areas.**
- **Mihir shah committee** was appointed and the following main recommendation was made.
 - In the new water resource governance scenario facing the country, there is a need to envisage a high-level central organisation like National water commission that is forward looking, strategic, agile and transdisciplinary in its skill set.
 - It can look in the multiple areas like **River rejuvenation, Aquifer mapping and participatory groundwater management, Urban and industrial water management, knowledge management and capacity building etc .**
 - **Rain water harvesting was made mandatory in Tamilnadu** so the precedent can be followed in other states as well.
 - **With Pradhan mantra krishi sinchayi yojana** government is focussing on irrigation reforms as well.
 - The **National Water Policy (2012)**, with an emphasis on the need for appropriate ground water planning, development and management was formulated. Additionally, a '**Master Plan for Artificial Recharge to Ground Water in India**' was introduced and circulated to State Governments in 2013, envisaging construction of artificial recharge and rainwater harvesting structures

Way forward :-

- A **new regulatory regime for the source of water** that provides domestic water to around four-fifths of the population and the overwhelming majority of irrigation is urgently needed
 - The **proposed new regime under Ground Water bill 2017** will benefit the resource, for instance through the introduction of groundwater security plans, and will benefit the overwhelming majority of people through local decision-making.
- **Technological solutions :-**
 - Boosting recharge through rainwater harvesting structures such as small check dams is a popular measure.
 - Improve efficiency through subsidised drip irrigation or energy-saving pumps

- The Government must firstly engage **advanced GPS technology** to gather accurate and scientific data that provides details on groundwater depletion, availability, quality, rainfall and so on.
 - This data-based approach can help understand threats to surface and groundwater water security, and therefore support long-term development and water conservation planning.
- **Comprehensive water budgeting :-**
 - Water budgets at the watershed level will inform communities about how much water they have, so it can be equitably shared within communities. This needs a strong water governance system based on awareness building, science and a commitment to fairness and sustainability.
- **Need to make changes to meet the escalating crisis through** water conservation, reforestation, recycling of water through treatment plants and better infrastructure to ensure that pipes do not leak and that multiple sources are tapped for water supply rather than depending only on one resource until it is totally exhausted.
- The Government must also focus on preserving the availability of sufficient groundwater that is devoid of any pollution and which can conform to the minimum standards of water quality that have been prescribed by the World Health Organisation (WHO).
- **Groundwater recharge :-**
 - The administration must allow usage of the groundwater subject to conditions that enable sufficient recharge of the groundwater table. For instance, **desalination and recharging the aquifer with surplus water can also partly provide assistance and boost the availability of quality groundwater.**
- **Agriculture:-**
 - The Government must tweak its policies especially towards water intensive crops so that the quantum of water consumption can be brought down
- **Due to the interconnectedness of water with other sectors, there is a need for coordination among different agencies.** For example, the river water quality monitoring function overlaps and to some extent duplicates the work of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).



Conclusion:-

- Participatory approach to water management that has been successfully tried all over the world, as also in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh, needs to be adopted.
- Groundwater and surface water must also be viewed in an integrated, holistic manner. An integrated approach and the awareness by the people that if water is saved today then there will be more available tomorrow is very necessary.

Q) The 2018 edition of the World Water Development Report (WWDR 2018) seeks to inform policy and decision-makers, inside and outside the water community, about the potential of nature-based solutions (NBS) to address contemporary water management challenges. What are these nature-based solutions (NBS)? What is their potential? Examine. (250 Words)

Background:

- The water-related challenges countries face today are immense. The world's population is expected to increase to around 10 billion people (2050), with two-thirds of them living in cities.
- India faces major threats to its water security, with most water bodies near urban centres heavily polluted. Inter-State disputes over river resources are also becoming more intense and widespread. Hence there is a need for effective water management solutions.

Nature based solutions (NbS):-

- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) defines NbS as “**actions to protect, sustainably manage and restore natural or modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, thereby providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits**”.
- Nature-based solutions (NBS) are inspired and supported by nature and use, or mimic, natural processes to contribute to the improved management of water.

Potential:-

- The **NbS are fundamental to actualisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**, especially number two (zero hunger), six (water), 13 (climate action), 14 (oceans) and 15 (ecosystems).
- **They can simultaneously increase the resilience of the territories to climate risks** such as hurricanes, droughts, floods and erosions.
- They **play a role in biodiversity and soil protection and ecological rehabilitation**
- Nature-based solutions hold great promise in areas which also **include sustainable food production, improved human settlements, access to drinking water supplies and sanitation, water-related disaster risk reduction**, and helping to respond to the impact of climate change on water resources
- **Agriculture:-**
 - Nature-based solutions can address overall water scarcity through supply-side management and are recognised as the main solution to achieving sustainable water for agriculture.
 - The environmental co-benefits of nature-based solutions to increasing sustainable agricultural production are substantial as there are **decreased pressures on land conversion and reduced pollution, erosion and water requirements**.
- **Land degradation:-**
 - NBS central to, for example, sustaining livelihoods in dryland areas and combating desertification through rehabilitating land productivity

- **Constructed wetlands for wastewater treatment can also be a cost-effective, nature-based solution** that provides effluent of adequate quality for several non-potable uses (irrigation) and additional benefits that include energy production.
- **Watershed management is another nature-based solution** that is seen not only as a complement to built infrastructure but also one that could also spur local economic development, job creation, biodiversity protection **and climate resilience**.
- **Nature-based solutions are closely aligned with traditional and local knowledge including those held by indigenous and tribal peoples** in the context of water variability and change
- NBS that involve eco-sanitation approaches, such as dry toilets, also offer promise to practically **eliminate water use requirements in many situations**.
- **NBS contribute to improved and more sustainable jobs through creating overall direct benefits of improved water resources management, thus generating employment** opportunities across a large array of sectors and unlocking the potential for indirect employment creation through its multiplier effect

Conclusion:-

- These solutions should be part of a global, participative and integrated approach of water management; especially, in the context of climate change. They can be combined to institutional and technical solutions, to respond to the specific needs and constraints of various ecosystems. **Adopting them will not only improve water management but also achieve water security.**

TOPIC: *Factors responsible for the location of primary, secondary, and tertiary sector industries in various parts of the world (including India)*

Q) Why is diamond industry in India mainly located in Gujarat and Mumbai? In the light of recent events, examine why this industry is facing crisis and what are its consequences. (250 Words)

Background:-

- India is the world's largest cutting and polishing centre of rough diamonds, and it is said that 14 out of every 15 rough diamonds in the world are polished here. **Surat is the hub for cutting, polishing and processing rough diamonds and 85% of the diamonds are exported.**

Location factors:-

- **Community :-**
 - In 18th century, the diamond cutters migrated from Africa and settled in Surat
 - It is not just cheap labour that allowed India to find a niche for itself in the diamond-polishing business, **but the main edge comes from the enterprising Palanpuri Jains of**

Gujarat who turned the very scattered cottage industry to a robust Rs.80,000 crore industry of today.

- **Cheap labour:-**
 - **Back in the 1970s, India began cutting low-quality gemstones and exporting them to the U.S. This paved the way for a robust cutting centre to thrive as labour was cheap and easily available.**
 - With a booming trade in diamond cutting and textile manufacturing, **Surat is a melting pot for migrants from across the country seeking work and business opportunities.**
- **Craft:-**
 - Nine-tenths of the world's natural diamonds pass through Indian state of Gujarat, where they are cut and polished before being sold on through the trading houses.
 - Mumbai and Surat are not just known for these specialised skills but are among the largest hubs for trading in the precious stone.
 - Surat is the heart of India's thriving diamond-polishing industry besides other cutting centres in surrounding areas; as well as Mumbai. India dominates the polishing business.
- **Technology:-**
 - With 1991 reforms the capital and technology necessary for the diamond industry to boom were brought to India
 - Surat's diamond cutting and polishing sector has consolidated into large professionally managed facilities using the most sophisticated and latest technology.
- **Facility for trade:-**
 - Mumbai is the financial hub of India and also provided the port facilities. Similarly Gujarat has ports from where the polished diamonds can be traded easily.
- **Government support:-**
 - **Diamond Research and Mercantile City**, also known as **DREAM City**, is a upcoming business district in Surat, India. The district is projected to have office space, residential areas, and facilities for these residential areas. It will be established and run by a special purpose vehicle formed by the Government of Gujarat. **India's second diamond trading centre, the Surat Diamond Bourse, will operate from DREAM City.**
 - The state is aiming to develop the labourers as jewellery makers in the true sense with an overall development.
- **Private sector support:-**
 - De Beers Group that runs IIDGR has announced the launch its first ever education service to cover the entire diamond pipeline and support further growth in the Indian sector.
 - De Beers Group is investing in innovations to ensure India maintains its position as a global diamond hub, as well as ensuring that the sector has the skills and tools to meet the challenges of tomorrow
- **Demand:-**
 - Diamond jewellery demand from Indian consumers represents 8% of global demand and has enjoyed almost uninterrupted growth in the last 20 years.
 - India is the third largest national consumer market for diamond jewellery sales globally, only behind the US and China in the global league table.

Facing crisis:-

- Raw materials are not produced in India with much of diamond supply coming from Africa - and that makes **the industry highly vulnerable to outside shocks.**
- **Banking issues:-**

- The Punjab National Bank (PNB)-Nirav Modi scam has unfortunately cast a shadow on this flourishing sector, with **questions being raised about financial backing, exports and quality checks.**
- **Banks often find themselves compelled to keep lending because they have very little collateral to begin with** and know that stopping credit would mean risking the entire loan as a non-performing asset (NPA).
- **Trade is unique in that the nature of the product cannot be valued accurately.** Rather it is difficult to give a precise value to the stones unless each and every piece is verified carefully.
 - **Besides, the volumes are so high that both banks and traders would find it a chore to examine each stone and keep a check on the massive inventory.**
 - Traders benefit from the loophole in the system as they can pass off low-quality stones as high-quality ones.
- **Securing bank loans for small diamond businesses may become very tough.** The banks have not been very keen to give loans to small diamond units
- **Risky lending:-**
 - **Quality of collateral is the problem with the diamond industry.** In most cases, the collateral is not hard assets but the inventory, and that is what makes lending a high-risk venture.
 - Lending to diamond businesses is **risky as most of them are unlisted companies.** Their business model, in the absence of a corporate structure, is questionable. Most often, lending is based on trust and old associations.
- **The polishers buy on credit, so even when demand is low they must sell, however sharp the loss.** Exports in September 2017 were down by 28% year-on-year, driven partly by slowing Chinese demand for luxury goods. The lowering of the Yuan's value will make diamonds which are all imported more expensive.
- The **new competition from China** is undoubtedly a huge threat to India's diamond industry.
- **Indian manufacturers sometimes misjudge the potential of the market.** Projecting artificial demand, they kept buying more and more rough diamonds and increasing production. **This encouraged diamond mining companies to mine more and increase the price of roughs. There was oversupply in the market, which led to the prices of polished diamonds falling and manufacturers bleeding.**
- **In India too, the drive against black money could be one of the reasons for the drop in demand.** When people reduce buying and high value goods get stuck in inventory, the cost of production and holding goes up dramatically.

Consequences:-

- Expected to have an impact on the approximately Rs.80,000-crore diamond industry. **Bankers believe that there will definitely be a reduction in exposure now, and credit will certainly be tightened in the short term.**
- **Diamond traders say the pullback on credit will, in all probability, have a ripple effect on the industry.**
- Diamonds are a huge foreign exchange earner. Therefore, **if the company is legitimate, banks will give loans as they do in the case of any other industry.**
- Doubts that polishing business will shift to Israel and Belgium.

Conclusion:-

- Stringent measures to monitor and evaluate inventory should be put in place in the long term to avoid future banking crisis linked with this sector. Also to resolve raw material issue India can frame bilateral agreements with countries with diamond resources like Russia.

GENERAL STUDIES PAPER 2

TOPIC: *Indian Constitution- historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.*

Q) Is it time for India to review the first-past-the post system (FPTP) and move towards proportional representation(PR) model? It is also said that the German model will be more suitable for India. Critically examine. (250 Words)

Background:-

- The best electoral system is the one that straightforwardly and most accurately reflects the preferences of voters, But there is no definite answer as to which system fits that bill. India follows the FPTP.

First past the post system and proportional representation:-

- In the proportional representation system MPs and MLAs would be selected from a list provided by political parties, based on the proportion of votes received by each party.
- Under the existing "first-past-the-post" (FPTP) system, they are elected based on the number of votes received by each candidate. The person passing other candidates in votes wins, regardless of party.

India needs to review FPTP and move towards proportional representation due to the following reasons:-

- With PR system parties will hope to have their presence in the legislatures according to their vote share instead of being wiped out completely even after getting a sizeable vote share**
 - In 2014 elections even with the third largest vote share of 20%, one party got zero seats.
- Under the existing system, representatives may be elected by a minority of votes, but their party grabs the majority of seats in the legislature.**
 - The party with highest number of votes obtained 31% of the vote but a thumping majority in Parliament. **This was the lowest vote share in history for a party to win majority seats.**
- Also the existing system also encourages parties to target vote-banks, enter divisive electoral strategies and field tainted candidates.**
- PR systems would allow for representation of minorities and smaller parties in the legislatures which are not represented adequately now.**
- PR would also bring the nation closer and will complete the total integration of India.** It will put an end to extreme regionalism and divisive caste and communal politics.
 - PR would also put a stop to the exaggeration of regional differences** as it allows all of the parties with significant levels of support to gain seats across the country.
- It would also put a stop to the inflated seat count of the Blocs controlled by smaller parties** who generally receive even less than 10% the total votes polled across India, **but a much greater percentage of the seats and a disproportionate bargaining power at the Centre**

Proportional representation system has its disadvantages like:-

- It is also argued that the **FPTP system has not discouraged the growth of smaller parties** as seen in the gradual regionalisation and federalisation of India's polity.
- **Affirmative action in the form of reservation of seats** for marginalised groups such as the scheduled castes and tribes as also the need to obtain support from diverse sections of the population has ensured desirable outcomes in terms of representation, without sacrificing too much on inherent stability as compared to PR systems.
- **Geographically and culturally distinct smaller areas** like North East, Goa, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand etc because of their smaller number of votes, **may not get any representation in the Parliament in PR system.**
 - Under PR, an MP or MLA may not represent a specific constituency, or the one to which he or she belongs. Candidates would be chosen in the order of a list provided by parties.
- **It can also lead to a majoritarian rule with disregard for regional concerns.**
- If India adopts the PR system it would **seriously threaten the legitimacy of democracy**
 - **PR system carries the threat of further dividing society on caste, religious and other lines.** When parties are promised seats in proportion to their votes, politicians will find innovative ways means of forming newer parties.
 - It would make our MPs and MLAs even less responsive to people's needs.
 - PR would place India's democracy squarely in the hands of party bosses. When candidates win by being on the party's list, they must woo their bosses and represent their parties, not the people. This can only intensify partisanship in India's Parliament and state legislatures.
- **Poor governance :-**
 - PR would revive India's problem with unstable governments. When parties are guaranteed representation on the basis of percentage of votes received, **they would have little interest in forming or sustaining coalitions. Their ideological or other vote-bank would be present even if a government falls.**
 - **The constant politicking caused by PR would make it impossible for governments to take bold or transformative decisions.** Corruption would grow, for people wouldn't be able to oust a dishonest representative individually.
- **PR is a recipe for instability as exemplified by the current political deadlock in Nepal,** which has adopted the PR system.

German model :-

- Owing to the underlying problems with both the FPTP and the PR system of voting, a mixed model that combines the advantages of both systems is worth consideration
- German model has a mixed system half PR and half FPTP. Its parliament has 299 constituencies and 598 seats.
- On the polling day, every voter casts two votes one for a candidate in the constituency and the other for a party.
- **The result for the first votes is determined by the FPTP system** 299 seats are thus filled by the voters directly electing a candidate who wins the most number of votes in the constituency.
 - The aim of the first vote is to enable voters to personally know their representative.
- **The second vote allows the elector to vote for a party.** It is this vote that determines the power of parties in the parliament. Based on this, the remaining 299 seats in the parliament are filled by parties in such a way that the proportion of votes polled in the second round of votes are reflected in the total 598 representatives of Bundestag the lower house of the German parliament.

This model is suitable to India:-

- Accommodates both directly electing candidates to constituencies and allotting representation to political parties based on their vote share.
- People are truly represented by the elected representatives in the Parliament
- At the same time parties are also accountable.

However some concerns are present:-

- The chief among these is that any party that does not win either a five-percent vote-share or three of 299 FPTP seats does not enter the parliament. **As a result, the choice of voters who voted for such candidates or parties is completely ignored.**
- **Adopting this system in India would require either halving the number of constituencies or doubling the size of the Lok Sabha.**
 - **The former is not feasible in India's political context given that the ratio of constituencies to voters in India is already vastly disproportionate** to that of other countries.
 - **Halving the constituencies would imply that one elected candidate would represent three million electors**, which would further limit the access and accountability between an MP and her constituency.

Conclusion:-

- With some reforms like increasing the strength of the Lok Sabha by 181 seats, or one-third of its current strength, to introduce reservation for women in the house German model might be very suitable to India

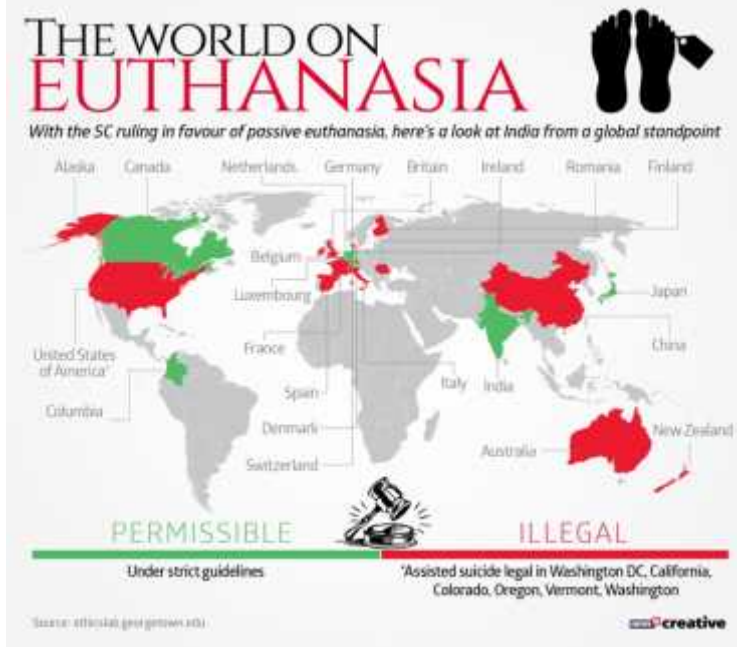
Q) The right to a dignified life extends up to the point of having a dignified death. Analyse in the light of guidelines given by the Supreme Court in a recent judgement. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Historically, India is no stranger to the right to die as in most Oriental cultures, opting to die is often an act of honour, of salvation like the Santhara in Jainism, Hindu saints are known to take sanyas and even opt for Samadhi etc
- In the recent judgment made by Supreme court it upheld the right to die with dignity and gave legal sanction to passive euthanasia and execution of a living will of persons suffering from chronic terminal diseases and likely to go into a permanent vegetative state.

Supreme court judgment:-

- Passive euthanasia was recognised by Supreme court in Aruna Shanbaug in 2011.
- Now it has expanded the jurisprudence on the subject by **adding to it the principle of a 'living will'**, or an advance directive, a practice whereby a person, while in a competent state of mind,



SECURE SYNOPSIS

leaves written instructions on the sort of medical treatment that may or may not be administered in the event of her reaching a stage of terminal illness.

- The court has invoked its inherent power under Article 142 of the Constitution to grant legal status to advance directives, and its directives will hold good until Parliament enacts legislation on the matter.

Passive and active Euthanasia:-

- Passive euthanasia essentially involves withdrawal of life support or discontinuation of

life-preserving medical treatment so that a person with a terminal illness is allowed to die in the natural course.

- While active euthanasia entails the use of lethal substances to end a life.
- While the Supreme Court has legalised passive euthanasia, it has not passed any judgment on active euthanasia.

Analysis:-

- In the fundamental rights enlisted in the Constitution there is already mention of right to life with dignity (Article 21).** The outcome of the judgment lays down a broad legal framework for **protecting the dignity of a terminally ill patient or one in a persistent vegetative state (PVS) with no hope of cure or recovery.** In such circumstances accelerating the process of death for reducing the period of suffering constitutes a right to live with dignity.
- Self determination and autonomy:-**
 - The core message is that all adults with the capacity to give consent have the right of self determination and autonomy and the **right to refuse medical treatment is also encompassed in it.**
- Burdening a dying patient with life-prolonging treatment and equipment merely because medical technology has advanced would be **destructive of the patient's dignity.**
- Gives **importance to consent** as now patients can write living will.
- The Supreme Court accorded **primacy to the constitutional values of liberty, dignity, autonomy and privacy** as it laid down procedural guidelines governing the advance directive of a living will.
- Neither the law nor the constitution can compel an individual who is competent and able to take decisions to disclose reasons for refusing medical treatment** and such a refusal is not subject to the supervisory control of an outside entity.

Implications:-

- Living will from the patient to stop medical treatment at a certain stage helps remove regret or guilt for relatives and criminal action against doctors.
- This will help many families. It will stop a lot of pain and also lessen expenses.

- Supreme Court judgment on passive euthanasia is a big relief to family members of terminally-ill patients, emotionally, financially and legally
- **Concerns:-**
 - The government had pointed out that the living will was a concept which contradicts a person's instinctive urge to survive
 - It must be decided by a team of domain experts otherwise in India there are chances of it being misused much more than it being used.
 - The very idea of "living will" can be misused and more importantly not taking into account future growth of Science and medicine

Way forward:-

- Law Commission in 2006 suggested a draft bill on passive euthanasia and says such pleas be made to high courts which should decide after taking experts views. Supreme court stated that High courts should constitute medical board which will decide if passive euthanasia is needed. The government need to make a act on these lines.
- While the decision to passively Euthanise oneself can be left to the patient, the conditions on when this right may be invoked can be left to a medical board. **A living will makes sense if coupled with a medical power of attorney and independent third party monitoring. This will allow for a middle way between all the interests that are at play here.** The Right of the patient, the State's interest in human life and the interest of the family of the patient.

TOPIC: Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

Q) Why is Andhra Pradesh demanding special status from the union government? Discuss the constitutional provisions and fiscal implications of this demand. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Special status was earmarked for States on the basis of laid-down criteria such as difficult terrain, low population, strategic location, economic backwardness and non-viable finances. It is debatable whether A.P. qualifies for however the demand for special status has been very prolific.

Why Andhra Pradesh is demanding Special status ?

- When Andhra Pradesh was bifurcated in 2014, it sought special category status on the grounds that it was at a disadvantage, especially because of the loss of capital Hyderabad to Telangana.
- **Andhra not only lost a capital but also an important industry hub, which was in and around Hyderabad.**

- The contribution of agriculture to state GDP is higher for Andhra than its neighbouring states. This is also a reflection of a lower level of industrialization and along with it a lower per capita income and again, the lowest in South.
- **Promise was made:-**
 - One of the promises was that at that time (of bifurcation), that special category status would be extended to Andhra Pradesh for five years, to help put the state on a firmer footing
- **Andhra Pradesh is facing a situation of continued massive revenue deficit** - Rs 14,682 in 2017-18. The state government says that the deficit has occurred due to bifurcation of the state .So special status will ease the burden on the state government.
- **Some of the districts in the state are very backward especially the districts in the rayalaseema region.**
- **How will a special status help:-**
 - **Typically, the big attraction is all the industrial incentives such as tax exemptions for 10 years** .For instance Baddi in Himachal Pradesh emerged as an important pharmaceutical hub. It was largely on account of such incentives.
 - All the borrowings from other countries for the externally aided projects in a state, about 90 per cent is repaid by the government of India for special status states.
 - Under special category status, a state gets Centre's assistance in the ratio of 90:10 (Union : State) for all externally aided and centrally sponsored projects much above the Finance Commission mandated 60:40 ratio.
- Now with **huge people support special status has become an emotional and political movement.**

Constitutional provisions:-

- Constitution never categorised some states as special and treated all of them on an equal footing.
- The 14th Finance Commission did away with distinction between general and special category states, as it had taken into account the level of backwardness of states in the proposed transfer of funds to states.
- The recommendations were accepted in 2015, a year after the Andhra was bifurcated

Fiscal implications:-

- Centre perhaps does not want to earn the displeasure of Andhra's neighbouring states including Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and even Maharashtra by granting that special status.
- **This is primarily because it will lead to potential migration of industrial investments from one region to another.**

WHAT TDP WANTED, WHAT IT GOT	
 Jaitley attitude hurt: Naidu	POLAVARAM STATE: Centre must bear total expense, including cost of land acquisition, relief, rehabilitation (₹33,000 cr). CENTRE: Paid ₹5,000 cr, assure more funds later.
	AMARAVATI STATE: Wants ₹33,000 cr to build new capital. CENTRE: Given ₹2,500 cr, including ₹500 cr each for Guntur, Vijayawada
REVENUE DEFICIT STATE: Total revenue deficit ₹16,000 cr. CENTRE: Actual deficit less; ₹4,000 cr paid, only ₹138 cr pending.	NEW RAILWAY ZONE TDP says Centre delaying project as Odisha opposing it.
	FUNDING STATE: Want funds from local agencies like Hudco, Nabard. CENTRE: Propose funding in form of loans from external agencies like World Bank.
SPECIAL STATUS STATE: Assured special category status. CENTRE: Special status scrapped; offer 90:10 funding for all centrally sponsored schemes.	

Q) What are the structural problems that the Indian federalism faces today? What are the consequences of these problems? Has time come to allow each state to have its own model of governance, bureaucracy and local governments? Comment. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Indian framers of the Constitution chose federalism because they were looking for a system that seemed to allow their people to have a say in local government while simultaneously stopping the potentially fractious provinces from pulling apart

Federalism in India:-

- The Constitution of **India** gives a federal structure to the Republic of **India**, declaring it to be a "Union of States". Part XI of the **Indian** constitution specifies the distribution of legislative, administrative and executive powers between the Union or Federal or Central government, and the States of **India**.
- Federalism features in Indian scenario are:-
 - Two governments i.e. Union Government and State governments
 - Division of powers between the union and its constituents (Seventh Schedule of the Constitution contains three lists such as the Union List, State List, and Concurrent List)
 - Supremacy of the Constitution (Basic structure of the Constitution is made indestructible by the Judiciary)
 - Independent Judiciary
 - Bicameralism

Structural problems in Indian federalism are:-

- Some of the major contentious issues include
 - Article 200 (reservation of State Bills by the Governor for consideration of the President)**
 - Emergency provisions under Article 352, 356 and 360
 - Compulsory compliance by the States with the executive power of the Centre under Article 256 and 257 etc.
 - An appointed governor as head of state with discretionary powers
 - The all-India services
 - Planning Commission
 - The introduction of license permit-quota-raj all these eroded the states powers significantly.
 - Habitual abuse of Union's powers for partisan political gain
 - Frequent dismissal of elected state governments
 - Union's near complete control of public and private investments, excessive discretion of the Union in resource transfers
 - Mass dismissals of state governments in 1977 and 1980 led to serious friction.

- **These provisions amount to centralisation of power which has been the major concern among the states and they consider it threat to federalism.**
- In the first five decades after independence, federalism was eroded by the Union's arbitrary and partisan exercise of power. States exercise real power now and **yet are severely constrained in delivering outcomes.**
- **Role of governors:-**
 - The abuse of the power under Article 356 by the Central Government is replete in the political history of the country. This has resulted in cementing of centralized forces and disaffection of constituent states towards the federal character of the Indian Polity.
 - The imposition of President's Rule in Arunachal Pradesh in 2016, while there was an elected government in the State, created a bizarre incidence in the constitutional history of India.
- **Absence of fiscal federalism:-**
 - Asymmetrical sharing of revenue and resource crunch at the periphery results in uneven development across the country. The current Goods and Services Tax measure was criticised by many states to be against fiscal federalism in India.
- **Unequal representation:-**
 - In India, there is no such provision of an equal representation of states in the Rajya Sabha, the Second Chamber and nor the states have any substantial say over the amendments done to the Constitution from time to time
- In certain cases, **states concerned are often being ignored by the Union Government in a matter of division of their geographical territory.** The recent formation of the State of Telangana is a case in point.
- **Planning:-**
 - Considerable preponderance in legislative power for the Union, the financial dependence of the states on the Centre, the administrative inferiority of the states make the states weak.
- **A rigid, uniform political model imposed on all states** and local governments disregarding local needs.
 - Poorly drafted Part IX of the Constitution that created over-structured, under-powered local governments that failed to take root as the third tier of federalism
- **A dysfunctional bureaucracy protected by Article 311**
 - The generalist, all-purpose all-India services that do not bring specialized skills required to manage various services and enjoy a monopoly of all key public offices
- **Rigidity in Union legislation on subjects** like education with resultant failure to improve outcomes despite vast expenditure.

Consequences of these problems:-

- **Regionalism**
 - It is considered one of the significant consequences to structural problems in federalism in India.
 - Incidents like Karnataka unveiling a separate state flag take place.
- Out of the 49 relatively large nations with gross domestic product (GDP) exceeding \$200 billion, **India ranks at near bottom on most indicators of basic amenities, infrastructure, education and healthcare.**

- The relevant recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission on the restructuring of Centre-State relations have not been accepted and implemented in true spirit as a result of **which there has been a persistent trend of centralisation of economic and political powers in the country.**

Yes, more autonomy to state governments is necessary:-

- A more nuanced third phase of federalism while preserving and strengthening the nation's unity and integrity, constitutional freedoms, checks and balances and democratic accountability is necessary.
- **The one-size-fits-all model cannot deliver the desired outcomes of prosperity, elimination of poverty**
- **Need more flexible federalism**, strengthening India's unity and integrity, and allowing it to fulfil its potential.
 - In no other democracy does the federal constitution impose a uniform structure, electoral system, and bureaucratic apparatus on states and local governments.
 - Even in small unitary Britain, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and London city have their own electoral systems different from the Westminster model.
 - In Canada, the provinces have the right to decide on the electoral system, form of government and local governance structure.
- Only the spirit of "co-operative federalism" and not an attitude of dominance or superiority can preserve the balance between the Union and the States and promote the good of the people.
- There have been excellent initiatives taken by some states to make development inclusive like Aarogyasree in AP, Bhagyalakshmi in Karnataka etc.

Conclusion:-

- Need to allow each state to have its own model of governance, bureaucracy and local governments, **but with firm safeguards to preserve national unity, separation of powers, fundamental rights and democratic accountability.**

Q) The momentous changes in Indian fiscal federalism have implications for the functioning of the Fifteenth Finance Commission. Analyse. (250 Words)

Fiscal federalism :-

- Fiscal Federalism refers to the division of responsibilities with regards to public expenditure and taxation between the different levels of the government.
- Having a Fiscal Federalism mechanism allows the government to optimize their costs on economies of scale, because in this manner, people will get public service which they prefer, and there will be no unnecessary expenditure
- From the economic point of view also, having a federalized structure helps as it creates a unified market.

How does finance commission ensures the fiscal federalism in the country?

- Under the federal structure envisaged in the Constitution, most of the taxation powers are with the Centre but the bulk of spending is done by the states. Such a federal structure requires transfer of resources from the Centre, which levies and collects the big taxes such as income tax and indirect taxes like excise and customs, to the states.
- So with the help of proper allocation of resources among the different states on the basis of population of the state, fiscal condition of the state, forest cover of the states, income distance and area of the states. **So by this proper bifurcation the finance commission avoids the confrontation between the states and centre**

Momentous changes in the Indian fiscal federalism:-

- The **replacement of the Planning Commission** by the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog in 2015
- **The removal of the distinction between plan and non-plan expenditure** in the budgets of the union and the states from 2017–18
- The 101st constitutional amendment resulting in the **introduction of the long-awaited goods and services tax (GST) from 2017 across the country**
- Besides these major changes, **there is a slowdown in the growth of the economy since last year and pressures building up** on both the union and state finances.
- **There are incipient signs of states, which so far, by and large, adhered to the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) limits, slipping on them.**
- **There is an upward trend in the fiscal deficits of states.**
- The inter-governmental transfer system has become **overly complex** with different sharing arrangements for different taxes
- The spending autonomy of the states, combined with their ability to borrow, **has obstructed efforts at consolidating public finances**
- **There is little incentive for states to improve revenue performances** and revenue-sharing arrangements have led to pro-cyclical policies at the state level.

Implications:-

- The replacement of the Planning Commission, with the removal of the practice of classifying expenditure into plan and non-plan, **has conferred full freedom to the XV-FC to look at the entire revenue expenditure in totality, instead of a fragmented view of resource allocations.**
- **As the revenue impact of the GST across the states is not yet known, the XV-FC will have the challenging task of addressing this issue** as its recommendations are applicable till 2024–25.
 - For the 15th Finance Commission, GST will usher in higher tax buoyancy by bringing in a large number of new tax payers into the net
- **The 15th Finance Commission has the responsibility of qualizing the widening gap between richer states and the low-income states.** These inequalities have resulted in widely differing social and capital expenditure between the states.
- **The deteriorating public debt dynamics caused by the requirements of the power sector's restructuring would be a major area of concern** for the 15th Finance Commission
- **XV-FC has a major task on hand in putting in place a transfer system consistent with the recent changes in fiscal federalism,** promoting cooperative fiscal federalism and ensuring fiscal stability.
- The 15th Finance Commission will review the current status of the finance, deficit, debt levels, cash balances and fiscal discipline efforts of the Union and the states and **recommend a fiscal**

consolidation roadmap for sound fiscal management, taking into account the responsibilities of the central and state governments.

- The Commission may also examine whether revenue deficit grants be provided at all.

Q) Examine the impact of the recommendations of the Fourteenth Finance Commission. (250 Words)

Background:-

- The overall increase in the amount of financial resources will make state financially strong. Financial stability lends to a strong federation. This is what is the result of the recommendations of the fourteenth finance commission

Positive Impact :-

- **The 14th Finance Commission's recommendations ushered in a new era of fiscal federalism in India.** Devolution to the states significantly went up from 32 per cent to 42 per cent. While most countries have found it difficult to finance federal transfers of about 30 per cent to the provinces, **India** has taken it to 42 per cent.
- The composition of money share has changed. Now **states have the autonomy to manage a significant share of the central tax pool and they will now** have greater autonomy both on the revenue and expenditure fronts.
 - This is different from the earlier practice where the Centre plans the schemes and the states merely implement them. This has not been effective because India is a diverse country and every state has different needs.
 - **will move the country toward greater fiscal federalism**, conferring more fiscal autonomy on the states
- **States will now spend more on capacity building** and concentrate on sectors that are lacking.
- States like Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, which spend a lot on infrastructure, will continue with the trend. **Also Bihar, which has in the recent past increased its spending on infrastructure, will have more funds because of the devolution.**
- Based on analysing recent state finances, **additional transfers toward the states as a result of the FFC will improve the overall fiscal deficit of the combined central and state government.**
- Moving from CAS to FFC transfers **will increase the overall progressivity of resource transfers to the states.**

Criticism:-

- There is an **upward trend in the fiscal deficits of states.**
- The **inter-governmental transfer system has become overly complex** with different sharing arrangements for different taxes
- The spending autonomy of the states, combined with their ability to borrow, **has obstructed efforts at consolidating public finances**
- There is **little incentive for states to improve revenue performances** and revenue-sharing arrangements have led to pro-cyclical policies at the state level.

- Although grants from the union government for social sectors have fallen in most states, a number of states have compensated for this fall and increased social sector expenditures. **However, expenditures on social services have received a lower priority over expenditures on economic services** in the first year of the FFC award period.
 - The NITI Aayog has pointed out that social sector expenditure has increased only marginally since the 14th Finance Commission despite an increase in total central transfers to the states by 21.9 per cent.
- **The reduction in grants, however, has been an issue of concern as much of the grants relate to centrally sponsored schemes (CSS)**, initiated to support expenditures in the social sector and the development of infrastructure.
- **Many states have raised objections over the inadequate financial transfer under the move.** Civil society groups have also raised concerns over the fear that states **might reduce the spending on crucial social sectors such as health and rural development.**
 - Central-tied grants, which qualiz-ted for 46 per cent of the total transfers to states in 2010-11, came down to just 25 per cent of the total fund transfer in 2015-16.
- Many states have gained money-wise, but have **failed to qualizing the funds in the right direction.**
- **There is also confusion over the amount of money that will be transferred and over the fate of the ongoing Centrally sponsored schemes.**
- **Many states, particularly the ones with large poor population and heavy social spending, have complained that the sharing of Central pool of taxes will not be adequate.**
 - Data shows that BIMARU states like Bihar and Rajasthan have not benefited from fiscal decentralisation. **Though their share in tax pool has increased, the slash in Central grant-in-aid to states meant the actual funds available with poor states like Bihar and Rajasthan remains largely unchanged.**
- **States are also unhappy with the formula that the commission has used to divide the additional money among states.** The commission has used five factors population, demographic changes, income distance, geographical area and forest cover to decide the share of states in Central pool.
 - As per the information received from Sikkim's finance department, the 14th Finance Commission has overestimated the state's revenue receipt and underestimated its expenditure. As a result, the state will incur an estimated shortfall of over Rs 5,800 crore between 2015-16 and 2019-20 in respect to state's own revenue.
- **Fiscal decentralisation is a new framework and the states might take time to develop a mechanism** or a structure to qualizing the money in a better way.
- **The finance commission removed the special category status altogether .This led to the ongoing protests and confusion that whether this status be granted to Andhra Pradesh as the government has promised earlier.**
- **The resource requirements of the power sector remain very high.** In some states, the fiscal deficit with power sector allocations have climbed to around 9 per cent.
 - The deteriorating **public debt** dynamics caused by the requirements of the power sector's restructuring would be a major area of concern for the 15th Finance Commission.

Conclusion:-

- In sum, it is clear that the far-reaching recommendations of the FFC, along with the creation of the NITI Aayog, will radically alter Centre-state fiscal relations, and further the government's vision of cooperative and competitive federalism.

Q) What were the objectives of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006? Recently, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) released an audit report on the 'Implementation of Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006'. Examine its findings and recommendations. (250 Words)

Background:-

- The great majority of people will experience a food borne disease at some point in their lives. This highlights the importance of making sure the food people eat is not contaminated with potentially harmful bacteria, parasites, viruses, toxins and chemicals. Hence food safety regulations are necessary.
- According to WHO more than 200 diseases are spread through food. One in ten people fall ill every year from eating contaminated food and 4,20,000 die each year as a result. So even Sustainable development goals focus on food safety .

Objectives of Food safety and standards act 2006:-

- The Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 was enacted to
 - Consolidate multiple laws in the country relating to food safety
 - Establish a single point reference system
 - Establish the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). FSSAI formulates standards for food and regulates their manufacture, storage, and distribution, among others.

Key findings of the CAG report:-

- Even after more than a decade of the enactment of the Act, **the Ministry and FSSAI are yet to frame regulations** governing various procedures and mechanisms as stated in the Act.
- **FSSAI has been unable to identify areas for which standards are yet to be formulated** or revised.
- There is **no clarity on the reasons underlying the identification of food products** that were standardised ahead of others. Multiple cases of high levels of lead and MSG in Maggi noodles were found many years later it has been in the market .This showed the complacency of the food authorities.
 - In some cases FSSAI entrusted the task of suggesting revision of standards to representatives of the food business operators, whose opinions may be biased
- **Licensing to food businesses** were issued on the basis of incomplete documents in more than 50% of cases checked .
 - **In cities street food culture is taking precedence but the quality of food served is not checked.**

- FSSAI has failed to ensure that the customs authorities do not let unsafe foods enter the country.
- **Food laboratories:-**
 - The food laboratories used for testing by FSSAI are of low quality and 65 out of the 72 state food laboratories do not possess proper accreditation .
 - There is no data maintained regarding the quality of food analysts .
 - The shortage of functional food testing equipment in state food laboratories resulted in deficient testing of food samples.
- **Recruitment:-**
 - Recruitment process was ineffective even after the passing of the act. This has resulted in acute shortage of staff at various levels which affects food safety measures across the states
- **Contractual employees were performing routine functions**, defeating the intention of appointing contractual employees only for specific tasks of defined duration.

Recommendations:-

- **Regulatory and administrative framework:-**
 - The CAG recommended that the FSSAI must expedite the notification of regulations on all the areas that have been specified in the Act. Further, **it must frame standard operating procedures on the formulation and review of standards**, and ensure that these are adhered to.
- **Licensing:-**
 - FSSAI ensure all licenses issued under the earlier system of product approvals are reviewed, and licenses cancelled and reissued as required under the present procedure of product approvals.
- **Food business:-**
 - FSSAI also does not have any database on food businesses. In this context, the CAG recommended FSSAI and state food authorities must conduct surveys of food business activity under their jurisdiction.
- To increase the staff, the CAG recommended that the Ministry and FSSAI must take steps to notify the **recruitment regulations and fill up the vacancies**.

Conclusion:-

- Different governmental departments, agencies ,encompassing public health, agriculture ,education and trade, need to collaborate and communicate with each other and engage with civil society including consumer groups.

TOPIC: Separation of powers between various organs dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions.

Q) In the light of recent events, analyse how the relationship between Parliament and the Judiciary has evolved over the years. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Under the Constitution, the primary function of the **legislature** is to make law, that of the executive is to execute law and that of the **judiciary** is to enforce the law. However the relationship evolved over the years.

Relationship between Parliament and judiciary:-

- The Constitution** provides for a separation of powers between Parliament and the Judiciary by demarcating their roles and responsibilities. It also lays down various ways by which
- The Judiciary may guard against the unconstitutional exercise of power by Parliament**
 - Judiciary's Responsibilities and Powers :-**
 - The higher judiciary also has the power to strike down laws of Parliament and actions of the Executive as invalid, if they violate the Constitution. This is called the power of judicial review.**
 - For example, a law may be declared as invalid if it violates the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution. **The Supreme Court exercised its power of judicial review and struck down this provision as unconstitutional. It held that Section 66A violates Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution that protects freedom of speech and expression.**
 - Judicial independence:-**
 - The Constitution creates a structure to protect judges from being influenced by Parliament and the Executive.
 - For example, **the conduct of a Supreme Court or High Court judge cannot be discussed in Parliament** unless it is for the purpose of presenting a motion for his removal.
- Parliament may legislate on or act as a check in matters related to the Judiciary.**
 - Powers:**
 - Parliament enacts laws, exercises oversight over the Executive, sanctions government expenditure and represents citizens. It also has the power to amend the Constitution**
 - Immunity from court proceedings:**
 - To grant Parliament autonomy in its functioning, the Constitution guarantees certain protections to parliamentary proceedings and those participating in them.
 - For example, Members of Parliament (MPs) enjoy immunity from court proceedings for anything that they say or any vote that they make in Parliament.
- However over the years the relationship transformed :-**
 - Limitations on Parliament's power to amend the Constitution**

- The Supreme Court has held that Parliament cannot amend the 'basic structure' of the Constitution in the Keshavananda Bharti case. This 'basic structure' principle is not expressly mentioned in the Constitution.
- Experts uphold this interpretation as it is a protection against excessive use by a government with a large majority; for example, this limitation prevents a government holding substantial majority from extending the term of Parliament indefinitely.
- **Law making by judiciary:-**
 - The Judiciary has on occasion laid down the law or directed that laws be made. For example, in Vishaka vs State of Rajasthan, the Supreme Court framed guidelines on how sexual harassment at the workplace needs to be addressed by employers.
 - The Judiciary has generally issued such directions under Articles 32 and 142 of the Constitution. These provisions empower the Judiciary to protect fundamental rights and issue any order to do complete justice.
 - One of the important instances of application by the Supreme Court of Article 142 was in the Union Carbide case relating to the victims of the Bhopal gas tragedy where the Court felt a need to deviate from existing law to bring relief to the thousands of persons affected by the gas leak.
- **Judicial Review of Parliamentary Privileges and Proceedings**
 - In several decisions, the courts have asserted their power to exercise judicial review over parliamentary privileges and proceedings .
 - For example, the Supreme Court has held that the Speaker's decision to disqualify an MP for defection is subject to judicial review as the Speaker is discharging an adjudicatory function.
- **Power to appoint judges**
 - According to the Constitution the President must appoint judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts after consultation with the Chief Justice of India (CJI) and other judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts
 - **The term 'consultation' has been interpreted by the Supreme Court to mean that judicial appointments recommended by a collegium of judges will be binding on the President (i.e. Executive).**
 - In 2014, Parliament enacted National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Act, 2014 to replace the collegium with an independent commission. Subsequently the Supreme Court struck down the two laws as unconstitutional, and re-instated the collegium process.
- Experts criticise judiciary that it is on legislative space based on the judgements like 2G judgment on auctions, mining bans, setting up of SIT on black money, The ban on the sale of alcohol along national and State highways etc) but counter argument also states that judiciary had to intervene as legislature has been complacent.

Conclusion :-

- The balance between the two organs need to be maintained and the doctrine of separation of powers, which is part of the basic structure of the Constitution need to be strongly adhered to.

TOPIC: *Parliament and State Legislatures - structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.*

Q) A recent study has found that the functioning of state legislatures is far from satisfactory. Examine why their proper functioning is crucial and the ways in which they can be strengthened. (250 Words)

Background :-

- In a democracy which focuses on good governance and inclusive decision making the role of state legislatures is important. In the recent years there are reports which highlight that this role has not been upto the mark.

Reasons why state legislatures are not functioning well:-

- **Most state legislatures do not have such permanent standing committees.** Occasionally, some state legislatures refer Bills to ad hoc Select Committees for examination. However, it is not obligatory to refer a Bill to a Committee, before its consideration and passing.
- **At present, the technical support available to parliamentary committees and state legislature committees is very limited** and only includes a secretariat that enables scheduling of meetings, note-taking etc.
- **The mandate of the article 174(1) of the constitution seems to have been misused by many states, which legally allows them to meet for as few as two sessions in a year.**
 - Presently state legislatures convene for an average of 30 days in a year. This does not give them adequate time to transact business in the Assembly, including scrutiny of the budget and a thorough consideration of Bills before they are passed.
 - The Haryana Vidhan Sabha sat for a total of four days during its August 2016 session.
 - During this period, 14 Bills were introduced and passed within 90 minutes without much debate.
- **Lack of accountability:-**
 - **Legislative debates in the state assemblies are difficult to access, unlike at the Centre.** This results in lesser engagement of citizens with general policy-making at the state level.
 - With such opacity, a citizen can't hold government departments, ministers or MLAs accountable for their work and promises made on the floor of the assembly.
 - States such as Gujarat and West Bengal don't have legislative debates on their assembly websites
- **During the 2016 budget session, several state legislatures passed their budgets without extensive debate or scrutiny.**
 - Most state legislatures do not have permanent committees to examine budgetary proposals, before they are approved by the Assembly through permanent committees, before the budget is approved by the Assembly.

Why functioning of state legislatures is crucial:-

- Seventh Schedule of the Indian constitution lists **66 subjects under the State List, where only the state assemblies can exercise their legislative power**
- **Economic prerogatives:-**

- Over the last few years, states have been receiving a **greater devolution of central taxes**. This is expected to result in greater autonomy in decision making at the state level which implies that states can spend them according to their priorities.
- Further, **with the introduction of GST, the** taxation powers of states in relation to indirect taxes on goods and services have been enhanced. This reinforces the need for state legislatures to conduct greater scrutiny of financial allocations and expenditures.
- State legislatures are also tasked with approving the budget. Expenditure of states is focused on providing essential services such as, infrastructure like roads and schools, public safety, and subsidies.
- In 2015-16, all states together budgeted to spend approximately Rs 23.4 lakh crore. This was 30% more than that of the central government, which budgeted to spend Rs 17.6 lakh crore.
- In the last few years, **significant legislative reforms in some concurrent areas such as land acquisition, labour and taxation are being carried out at the state level.**
 - For example, in 2014, Rajasthan passed amendments to three central labour laws, including the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 and Factories Act, 1948.

How to strengthen the state legislatures:-

- **Increasing the number of sitting days**
 - The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC) had **recommended setting a minimum period of sitting days for state legislatures.**
 - State legislatures with less than 70 members should meet for at least 50 days in a year
 - While the rest should meet for at least 90 days in a year.
 - **Enabling scrutiny of the budget by state legislature committees**
 - Referring every Bill to a Standing Committee would provide for more in depth discussion and debate on it, than is possible on the floor of the Assembly. It would also enable legislators to build consensus across party lines and allow for inputs from independent experts and stakeholders.
 - **Research support for Members of Legislative Assemblies:-**
 - In order to perform their role on the committee more effectively, members require dedicated full time, high quality, and broad based research support.
 - For example, the Scrutiny Unit, in the UK Committee Office, provides specialist expertise to Select Committees on financial matters and draft Bills.
 - **Live telecast all proceedings of all state assemblies:-**
 - Live telecast of proceedings will ensure their performance is monitored by citizens in real time, thereby improving the quality of legislation and debates on matters of public importance.
 - **Bilingual websites and documents:**
 - All government resolutions at the state-level, including assembly websites, should be translated into English and be available along with the vernacular language of the state, to ensure more readability and hence more civic and media engagement with state policies and actions.
 - **Involvement of various stakeholders and beneficiaries during the drafting of state laws:**
 - Unlike the Centre, where draft bills are often shared by ministries for public comments, the process of conceiving, deliberating and passing of state laws is rather obscure. All states must practice inclusive policy-making.

- **Citizens should collectively demand mandatory disclosure of the text of legislative debates** and questions on assembly websites by all states under the RTI Act, 2005.

Conclusion:-

- India's citizens need a more robust legislative system that offers public representatives MLA's, Ministers and the chief ministers a greater sense of authority. state legislatures should be a space for policy and not for politics.

Q) In legislative parlance, what does "guillotine" mean? Why and when is it used in the Indian context? Do you consider its frequent use goes against the spirit of the constitution? Comment. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Discourse and debate on issues of national importance were an attribute and highlight of Parliament during the first two decades of the republic, until around 1970. But this has eroded and diminished with the passage of time due to reduced number of sittings, time lost due to disruptions etc.

Guillotine and when is it used :-

- **Guillotine" means to bunch together and fast-track the passage of financial business. It is a common procedural exercise in Lok Sabha during the Budget Session.**
- Demands which have not been voted on by the last day fixed for the purpose are 'guillotined', i.e. they are voted upon together, without discussion. Increasingly most of the Demands for Grants are passed through guillotining. In 2013-14, the entire Demand for Grants was passed through guillotining.
- **Nearly 90% of the Demands are not discussed every year.**
- **Parliament, has very limited time for scrutinising the expenditure demands of all the ministries.** In the schedule drawn up by the Business advisory committee there is a fixed period of discussion for each ministry.
- Often the time allotted for these ministries is taken up by other pressing political issues of the day that dominate the **Budget**. So, once the prescribed period for the discussion on demands for grants is over, the speaker applies the 'guillotine', and all the outstanding demands for grants, whether discussed or not, are put to vote at once.
- Guillotine to be applied is not preceded by any motion. On the last of the allotted days at the appointed time, the Speaker puts every question necessary to dispose of all the outstanding matters in connection with the demands for grants. The guillotine concludes the discussion on demands for grants.

Guillotine's frequent use goes against the spirit of constitution because :-

- Legally, there may be nothing wrong. But it is unfortunate and inappropriate as the procedure is to give an opportunity for discussion.
- The Finance Bill is a very important bill which contains all the financial provisions which the government has made in this year's Budget and the discussion on it is very necessary as opposition also gets the chance to speak and to move their amendments.
- Such a stalemate makes it very convenient and easy for the government as they do not have to go through a debate and do not have to answer the opposition on various elements of the provisions of the Bill
- Experts criticize that this is stifling the voice of democracy and unfairly bypassing convention.
- Tax payer money is allotted without any proper discussion.
- It does not give the civil society and the public to be involved in the budget making effectively.

However there have been many instances of Budget being passed without discussion earlier as well:-

- Also the government alone cannot be blamed as half the Budget Session this year has witnessed continuous protests by the opposition without any softening of stance.

Way forward:-

- It depends much on whether the opposition and the ruling party act in the national interest and try to observe the traditions and conventions of Parliament

Topic: Functioning of judiciary

Q) Special courts, fast-track courts and tribunals are panacea for for judicial efficiency. Critically analyse. (250 Words)

Background:-

- There are over 2.8 crore cases in the subordinate judiciary, which is the most out of the three tiers of the judiciary subordinate, high courts and the Supreme Court. So there are alternate mechanisms like fast track courts, tribunals, special courts created to dispose off this arrears.

Merits of Special courts, fast track courts and tribunals:-

- India has several specialised Courts and Tribunals to reduce the burden of pending cases. These special Courts and Tribunals specialise in certain area/laws and ensure that the citizens are not overly inconvenienced in the resolution of minor disputes
- In order to reduce the Non-Performing Assets of the Banks and Financial Institutions in the public and private sector, the Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT) was established for expeditious adjudication and recovery of debts due to banks and financial institutions. Prior to the introduction of Debt Recovery Tribunal, petitions had to be filed separately for adjudication of cases and execution proceedings in different courts depending upon their jurisdiction.
- **Make the dispute redressal process quick and less expensive.**
- **Fast track courts were created** to deal with this problem of arrears in judiciary.
- Increases the quality of judicial process as judges with expertise related to respective fields are appointed.

Demerits:-

- Supreme court still being the highest court of appeal defeats the purpose of these courts as people can appeal there.
- **Special courts:-**
 - While there is sufficient discussion around fast track courts and tribunals, the same cannot be said about special courts. **This vacuum in research and analysis with respect to special courts has led to inconsistencies in legislation and operation.**
 - What the legislature intends to accomplish by creating special courts is not clear.
 - **For instance, there seem to be more special courts under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 as compared to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 despite data showing the former having a tenth of the number of registered cases as the latter (2015)**
- **Tribunals :-**
 - But a tribunal which is biased, incompetent and unfair, cause more harm than serve such intended purposes
 - Problematic because in majority of the cases government is the
 - Tribunals bypass the constitutional mandate of high courts and SC.
- **Fast track courts:-**
 - The central government and state governments have decided to disband the fast-track courts because they are **too expensive**
 - Experts were concerned with the **declining standards of these courts** and have defined it as 'fast-track injustice.'
 - **These courts are given unrealistic targets of cases to finish.**
 - **Judges (were) cutting down on evidence, not allowing full cross-examinations, proceeding in the absence of lawyers in many cases** has been common in fast track courts.
- **These deal with specific cases like rape, IPR etc so judicial pendency of cases is not resolved**

Conclusion :-

- Parameters such as the frequency and number of effective hearings and calculating the number of pending cases need to be developed to study the workings of special courts. Along with this the alternative redressal mechanisms like arbitration, mediation, negotiation etc need to be encouraged.

TOPIC: *Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies*

Q) A well-informed public can serve as a watchdog more effectively than existing banking regulatory bodies. In the light of recent banking crisis and resultant issues, comment on the statement. (250 Words)

Background:-

- The Nirav Modi case, Rotomac case of bank fraud has once again brought into focus the deficiencies in procedures and supervisory and regulatory controls in the banking sector. This calls for reforms and including public in the watchdog process.
- The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) June 2017 Financial Stability Report says losses from financial sector frauds rose 72 per cent in the five years to fiscal 2017 to Rs 16,770 crore.

Why public need to be involved:-

- **The Indian banking system is already reeling under the pressure of growing NPAs, or non-performing assets** which will touch nearly Rs. 10 lakh crore by March 2018. This has already caused a slowdown in disbursement of bank credit, in turn affecting productive investment and then affecting the economy.
- **The failure of banking system is occurring at many levels.**
 - At the level of the bank, some rogue bank employees are involved in the frauds.
 - Senior management and auditors are not tracking the problematic transactions effectively.
 - The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) did not monitor banks properly and created opacity with new financial instruments.
 - The Finance Ministry failed in its oversight and regulation.
- **Crony capitalism:-**
 - Some favoured companies are not declared wilful defaulters even when the investigating agencies find that they are diverting funds.
 - Those declared as wilful defaulters are neither punished nor prevented from leaving the country.
 - In fact their names are not even made public, so they can continue to access loans from other banks.
- **Opacity around the functioning of banks** that keeps the public in the dark about the extent and details of wrongdoing.
- Supreme Court in its landmark judgment in Reserve Bank of India v. Jayantilal N. Mistry ruled that the regulatory bodies were not in a fiduciary relationship with the banks that had provided the information to them and people, who are sovereign, need to be made aware of the irregularities being committed by the banks.
- Even Central information commission noted that the information can be disclosed if public interest in disclosure outweighs the harm to the protected interest based on Section 8(2) of the RTI Act

Public will be effective because:-

- If banking crisis takes place common man is the first to suffer and bear the brunt of the crisis.
- Even when government injects recapitalisation in the public sector banking system it is the tax payer's money so again public is the most affected.
- Since public money is involved they would be more cautious about the manner in which their money is put to use and disclosure of information will increase the transparency in the banking sector and make the regulators take informed decisions in public interest.

Conclusion:-

- Recovering from this will require stricter adherence to sound banking rules and more transparency and accountability from both public and private players

- The PNB fraud is a call to action for the government to do the right thing and ensure that the scope for such frauds is minimised forever
- This is also about the government having to resolve the conflicts between its role as a owner versus the entity responsible for financial stability.

Q) For RBI, the framework for the exercise of powers in private sector banks is different from the one for public sector banks. Critically examine what issues this dual control over banks gives rise to? Does this make RBI toothless? Comment. (250 Words)

Background:-

- In the light of the crisis taking place in the banking sector in the form of mounting non performing assets , scams unearthed recently the role of RBI as regulator is being questioned

RBI powers are different for public sector banks and private sector banks :-

- Being the central bank, it is RBI's role to supervise all commercial banks. While RBI has absolute authority over the supervision of private sector banks, it does not have the same power over PSBs like PNB.

Issues this dual control is giving raise to and constraining RBI powers :-

- **Government control :-**
 - In addition to ownership and governance-level control, there is also significant operational control that the Union finance ministry exercises.
 - This control bypasses the boards. That is why one cannot hold the board residually responsible for the performance of the bank.
 - A programme like the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) is operationally guided by the ministry and bypasses the board-directed strategy. This is control on the public sector banks which doesn't affect private banks.
- **RBI cannot remove directors and management**
 - All commercial banks are regulated by the RBI under the Banking Regulation (BR) Act of 1949. However, **the section of this act which vests the power to remove directors and management does not apply to public sector banks.** This means the management of public sector banks pays heed to instructions from the government than from the RBI.
- **Supersession of a bank board**
 - RBI has authority to supersede the board of a bank if it finds any misconduct. **However, another section in the Banking regulation Act says that this does not apply to PSBs.**
- **Cannot remove chairman or MD**
 - RBI has no authority to remove the chairman and managing director of a bank, unlike a private sector bank.
- **Cannot force merger**

- In an event of a financial crisis, RBI cannot force a merger in case of PSBs to save the financial system. While it can do that for private sector banks, any such action has to be initiated by the government.
- **No license needed for banking activity**
 - PSBs do not need a license from RBI under Section 21 of the BR Act. So RBI cannot revoke such a license and maintain order in the financial system. The section applies to private sector banks.
 - RBI can take appropriate action against private banks if investigations reveal any violations but cannot do anything in case of PSBs.
- **Liquidation**
 - RBI also does not have the power to trigger a liquidation of PSBs under the BR Act.
 - This action is taken when banks go bankrupt or collapse. In case of private sector banks, RBI can initiate it but has no authority to do so for PSBs.
- **No authority to separate powers**
 - While RBI insists that all banks should have two people for posts of chairman and MD, it cannot enforce this rule for PSBs. The RBI governor said that duality implies that the MD is primarily answerable only to himself or herself.
 - Government's ownership of PSBs is creating difficulties for enforcing corporate governance in public sector banks

RBI is still not tooth less because:-

- Very much like the government exercising control through the board and through circulars, even the **RBI has a board position in each public sector bank.**
- Further, the RBI representative is on the management committee the audit committee, the committee of directors and the remuneration committee of each of these banks. So, **not only does the RBI have regulatory oversight, it has board and sub-committee presence in each public sector bank.**
- RBI is **party to the selection of the whole-time directors of the bank through the selection committee and through its membership on the Banks Board Bureau.**
- **RBI has powers to remove the non-official directors appointed by the Union government** as well as the shareholder directors if they do not fulfil the fit-and-proper criteria section 3AB and 3B of the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act.
- Moreover, the RBI has powers to appoint an additional director as per section 9A of the above Act. Theoretically, the RBI has a significant say in the constitution of the board of a public sector bank.

Way forward:-

- Deep reforms, as recommended by the P.J. Nayak committee, need to be implemented
- Legal reforms are needed to empower RBI to fully exercise the same responsibilities over state-owned banks as those that apply to private banks and to ensure a level playing field in supervisory enforcement.
- WorldBank has suggested revising incentive structure of PSBs to align more closely with their commercial performance.
 - World Bank has also called for a level playing field and opening up of the sector for greater competition.

TOPIC: *Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.*

Q) Discuss the features of the Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018. Why is human trafficking is on the rise in India in recent years? Critically examine. (250 Words)

Background :-

- Trafficking in human beings is the third largest organized crime violating basic human rights. There is no specific law so far to deal with this crime. Accordingly, the Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018 has been prepared.
- The Bill addresses one of the most **pervasive** yet **invisible** crimes affecting the **most vulnerable** persons especially women and children. The new law will make India a leader among South Asian countries to combat trafficking.

Features of the bill:

- Addresses the **issue of trafficking from the point of view of prevention, rescue and rehabilitation.**
- **Aggravated forms of trafficking**, which includes trafficking for the purpose of forced labour, begging, trafficking by administering chemical substance or hormones on a person for the purpose of early sexual maturity, trafficking of a woman or child for the purpose of marriage or under the pretext of marriage or after marriage etc.
- **Punishment for promoting or facilitating trafficking of person:-**
 - Which includes producing, printing, issuing or distributing unissued, tampered or fake certificates, registration or stickers as proof of compliance with Government requirements; or commits fraud for procuring or facilitating the acquisition of clearances and necessary documents from Government agencies.
 - The new law also seeks to make way for punishment of three years for a person found to be promoting or facilitating trafficking.
 - **Punishment** ranges from rigorous minimum 10 years to life and fine not less than Rs. 1 lakh in cases of "aggravated" crimes
 - In order to break the organized nexus, both at the national and international level, the Bill **provides for the attachment & forfeiture of property and also the proceeds for crime.**
- The **confidentiality of victims/ witnesses and complainants** by not disclosing their identity. Further the confidentiality of the victims is maintained by recording their statement through video conferencing (this also helps in trans-border and inter-State crimes).
- **Time bound trial and repatriation of the victims** - within a period of one year from taking into cognizance.
- **Rehabilitation:-**
 - **Immediate protection of rescued victims and their rehabilitation.** The Victims are entitled to interim relief immediately within 30 days to address their physical, mental trauma etc. and further appropriate relief within 60 days from the date of filing of charge sheet.

- **Rehabilitation of the victim** which is not contingent upon criminal proceedings being initiated against the accused or the outcome thereof.
- **Rehabilitation Fund created for the first time.** To be used for the physical, psychological and social well-being of the victim including education, skill development, health care/psychological support, legal aid, safe accommodation, etc.
- As per the Bill, the rescued adults would be given an opportunity before the Magistrate if they want to stay in protection homes or go to their native places.
- **Institutional mechanism:**
 - **Designated courts in each district for the speedy trial of the cases.**
 - The Bill creates **dedicated institutional mechanisms at District, State and Central Level.** These will be responsible for prevention, protection, investigation and rehabilitation work related to trafficking. National Investigation Agency (NIA) will perform the tasks of Anti-Trafficking Bureau at the national level present under the MHA.
- The **Bill comprehensively addresses the transnational nature of the crime.** The National Anti-Trafficking Bureau under national investigation agency will perform the functions of international coordination with authorities in foreign countries and international organizations;

Human trafficking on rise in recent years because:-

- **False pretext:-**
 - Traffickers **abduct or lure women and children, mostly from remote villages, with false promises of jobs** before selling them off to brothels, factories or gangs which force them into begging.
 - Under the garb of supplying cheap domestic help, placement agencies traffic people, making this a large organised crime, especially in metropolitan cities.
- **Governance and institutional failure:-**
 - **Delayed action by government agencies against trafficking** has resulted in its widespread incidence across the country, which spans from trafficking into forced labour in hazardous work and factories to the seemingly innocuous trafficking into domestic labour.
 - Trafficking is profitable and corruption is widespread. It is all too easy for traffickers to buy off police and other law-enforcement agents.
 - India passed a bill amending laws concerning sexual violence and making sex trafficking a criminal offense earlier . **But the gap between enactment and enforcement remains unacceptably wide**
 - As per official estimates, 15 children go missing every hour in India and 8 are never found. The real number of trafficked children is never known.
- **Other disturbing forms of trafficking are also emerging.** Children in armed conflicts, illegal adoptions, the sale of organs, and trafficking for marriage are some of the other ugly heads of trafficking that have emerged in the past few years.
- **Urbanisation:-**
 - Thousands of children are going missing from some of India's remote tribal areas as human traffickers respond to a surge in demand for domestic child labour in booming urban districts. This is due to rising demand for domestic maids due to rising income in urban areas and wide scale poverty in rural areas.
 - Rapid urbanization and the migration of large numbers of men into India's growing cities creates a market for commercial sex.
- **Nepal:-**

- Following the 2015 Nepal earthquake, the Ministry of Home Affairs said that human trafficking from Nepal to India witnessed a three-fold jump.
- **Persistent poverty is a major factor.** Many vulnerable women and girls are lured by promises of employment, and some parents are desperate enough to sell their daughters to traffickers.
- **Sex-selective abortion practices** led to gender imbalance that has created a generation of young men who have little hope of finding female partners.
- **India's affluence is also a factor**, luring European women into India's sex trade.
- **The caste system compounds the problem.** Victims of sex trafficking disproportionately come from disadvantaged segments of Indian society.

Measures needed :-

- The trafficking bill 2018 need to be passed as it would plug the loopholes in earlier anti-trafficking laws and help tackle the menace of human trafficking as also the festering issue of illegal brothels by equipping the law enforcement agencies with more ammunition.
- **Instead for a multi-faceted legal and economic strategy**
 - Robust implementation of labour laws
 - A universal social protection floor
 - Self-organisation of workers
 - Improved labour inspection, including in the informal economy
 - Corporate accountability for decent work conditions are needed.
- **Need for systemic reforms**
 - To counter distress migration
 - End caste-based discrimination
 - Enforce the rural employment guarantee legislation
 - Avoid the indiscriminate rescue of voluntary sex workers
 - Protect migrants mobility and rights.
- **Victims of trafficking, especially children, need safe social and economic rehabilitation.**
 - Higher budgetary allocations are needed for their immediate help and counselling, besides making arrangements for their vocational training, housing and repatriation.
 - The reintroduction to education is also a must. **Also, changes in the education system to include rights-based information, if given to each child, can lay the foundations of an aware and secure generation.**
 - Schools and parents must make children aware of the dangers of trafficking and prepare them to recognise and tackle it.

Conclusion:-

- Trafficking bill is the first step in the measures which are bold and holistic response to a socioeconomic problem of labour exploitation and this can help India realise SDG 8.7.

Q) Plugging gaps in justice system, not death penalty, can curb child sexual abuse.. In the light of recent move by Haryana and Rajasthan in introducing the death penalty for rape of a child below the age of 12 years, analyse the statement. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is endemic, and devastates a victim for lifetime.
- According to Ministry of Women and Child Development estimate, 53% of children have faced Child Sexual Abuse in their lives.
- **There are** increasing incidences of sexual assault against young children. Crime in India, 2016 revealed that 19,920 children were allegedly victims of child rape in 2016 alone. However, the conviction in 2016 for such crimes stood at an abysmal 28.2 per cent

Recent move:-

- Haryana and Rajasthan joined Madhya Pradesh in introducing the death penalty for rape of a child below the age of 12 years. Maharashtra and Karnataka too are considering it.
- These amendments provide a judge with the option of imposing the death penalty, and also increase the mandatory minimum sentence from 10 to 14 years.

How plugging gaps in justice system will reduce child sexual abuse and how death penalty is not the solution :-

- **Systemic gaps:-**
 - One of the reasons for low conviction rates is the vast majority of victims turning hostile.
 - Where children do testify against the accused, **several systemic gaps such as lapses in investigation, lack of child-friendly procedures, challenges related to age-determination, poor appreciation of the testimony of the child** adversely affect the conviction rate.
- **Effective implementation of POCSO act:-**
 - **Without effective implementation of the law**, a death penalty will not work in reducing crime.
 - **The mandatory minimum sentences for sexual offences was already increased by the POCSO Act and the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2013 specifically to address growing sexual crimes.** These penalties are rendered meaningless in the face of thousands of crimes that go acquitted, or worse, undetected.
 - **Acquittals are the norm as Section 42A of the POCSO Act is not aligned with the social reality of normal sexual exploration among teenagers** and the belief about the sanctity of marriage held by most judges, prosecutors, and the police.
 - **The POCSO's approach fails to recognise the autonomy and evolving capacity of children, particularly adolescents.**
- **This alone will not help:-**
 - **It is unlikely that the alarming rates of child sexual abuse will decrease without the implementation of child protection units at the district level**, along with Life skills based education in school curricula and willingness at home to openly talk about the issue.
- **Effects of imposing the death penalty will be short term:-**
 - There are several countries where the death penalty is executed but still the child abuse rate has not seen a significant decrease.
 - Awarding the death penalty requires the highest level of proof, hence trials are far more rigorous and painstaking than those for other punishments such as life imprisonment. **Hence, child and minor victims would be required to testify and re-testify for years to come, and this would only add to the trauma that they have already suffered**

More needs to be done:-

- **Low rates of conviction do not even have the effect of creating a fear of accountability in the first place.** There is a **need to urgently devise ways to bolster the existing criminal justice and child protection systems and ensure higher convictions**, higher reporting of offences etc.
- Children in slums with working-class parents also badly need crèches or child-care centres to ensure that there are safe spaces available for them while their parents are away.
- Sexual abuse of children cannot be addressed in isolation from domestic violence faced by women inside their homes. **Survivors of such violence need structured support to enable and empower them to approach the police and courts.**
 - Public campaigns **are also needed to educate the wider public about consent, autonomy** and bodily integrity of children
- Also parents and teachers need to make children aware about the right and wrong touch etc.
- **Parliament and the Supreme Court need to consider the South African Constitutional Court's conclusions in *Teddy Bear Clinic for Abused Children v. Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development (2013)*, in which provisions that criminalised consensual sexual conduct of adolescents between 12 and 16 years were held unconstitutional.** At the same time, the government and courts cannot be oblivious to sexual violence within personal relationships.

Conclusion:-

- It's high time that India prioritises the protection of children in all legal and policy agendas, while implementing the already existing child safeguarding mechanisms.

Q) Discuss the salient features and significance of the Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill of 2018 . (250 Words)

Background:-

- Trafficking in human beings is the third largest organized crime violating basic human rights. There are 27 million adults and 13 million children who are victims of trafficking. There is no specific law so far to deal with this crime. Accordingly, the Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018 has been prepared.

Features of the bill:

- Addresses the **issue of trafficking from the point of view of prevention, rescue and rehabilitation.**
- **Aggravated forms of trafficking**, which includes trafficking for the purpose of forced labour, begging, trafficking by administering chemical substance or hormones on a person for the purpose of early sexual maturity, trafficking of a woman or child for the purpose of marriage or under the pretext of marriage or after marriage etc.
- **Punishment for promoting or facilitating trafficking of person:-**
 - Which includes producing, printing, issuing or distributing unissued, tampered or fake certificates, registration or stickers as proof of compliance with Government requirements; or commits fraud for procuring or facilitating the acquisition of clearances and necessary documents from Government agencies.

- The new law also seeks to make way for punishment of three years for a person found to be promoting or facilitating trafficking.
- **Punishment** ranges from rigorous minimum 10 years to life and fine not less than Rs. 1 lakh in cases of “aggravated” crimes
- In order to break the organized nexus, both at the national and international level, the Bill **provides for the attachment & forfeiture of property and also the proceeds for crime.**
- The **confidentiality of victims/ witnesses and complainants** by not disclosing their identity. Further the confidentiality of the victims is maintained by recording their statement through video conferencing (this also helps in trans-border and inter-State crimes).
- **Time bound trial and repatriation of the victims** - within a period of one year from taking into cognizance.
- **Rehabilitation:-**
 - **Immediate protection of rescued victims and their rehabilitation.** The Victims are entitled to interim relief immediately within 30 days to address their physical, mental trauma etc. and further appropriate relief within 60 days from the date of filing of charge sheet.
 - **Rehabilitation of the victim** which is not contingent upon criminal proceedings being initiated against the accused or the outcome thereof.
 - **Rehabilitation Fund created for the first time.** To be used for the physical, psychological and social well-being of the victim including education, skill development, health care/psychological support, legal aid, safe accommodation, etc.
 - As per the Bill, the rescued adults would be given an opportunity before the Magistrate if they want to stay in protection homes or go to their native places.
- **Institutional mechanism:**
 - **Designated courts in each district for the speedy trial of the cases.**
 - The Bill creates **dedicated institutional mechanisms at District, State and Central Level.** These will be responsible for prevention, protection, investigation and rehabilitation work related to trafficking. National Investigation Agency (NIA) will perform the tasks of Anti-Trafficking Bureau at the national level present under the MHA.
 - The NIA will receive financial aid under Nirbhaya fund for safety of women in order to set up a cell for investigating human trafficking
- The **Bill comprehensively addresses the transnational nature of the crime.** The National Anti-Trafficking Bureau under national investigation agency will perform the functions of international coordination with authorities in foreign countries and international organizations

Significance:-

- The Bill addresses one of the most **pervasive** yet **invisible** crimes affecting the **most vulnerable** persons especially women and children. The new law will make India a leader among South Asian countries to combat trafficking.
- The **bill addresses the issue of trafficking from the point of view of prevention, rescue and rehabilitation**(first to address the issue of victim rehabilitation).
 - **Setting up of one or more special homes in each district for the purpose of providing long-term institutional support** for the rehabilitation of victims is another feature of the Bill.
- Unlike the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (ITPA), 1956, Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, and Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code, the new Bill takes a **holistic view and aims to prevent trafficking** for forced labour, beggary and organ transplant, among many others.

- The **Bill also provides for designated courts in each district** for time-bound trial and repatriation of victims within a period of one year from taking into cognizance. This is welcome move.
- The **Bill also provides for seizing of property located in foreign lands** which is a good effort to deal with such crimes.
- **It is gender-neutral and covers transgender persons.**
- **It doesn't criminalise the victims**, but instead provides them with shelter, compensation, and counselling.
- The **Bill also relies on Article 21 of the Constitution**, guaranteeing that no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to the procedure established by law.
- **The Bill takes note of the fact that India has ratified the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organised Crime** and its three Optional Protocols, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

Concerns:-

- **National investigation agency is an understaffed organisation**, that is already tackling the gigantic footprint of terrorism across the subcontinent and there are doubts whether it might be in a position to take on and investigate cases of human trafficking.
 - According to experts most of the trafficking is taking place in small towns so focus should be on policing and not NIA
- **Assertion that the bill covers 'new' forms of trafficking that are not addressed under existing laws is not completely true.**
 - For instance while the new law focuses on removing and evicting sex workers from their occupation, the Bonded Labour Act protects the worker who was held in bondage from being evicted from the place where the individual has been working.
- **It does not harmonise different approaches and integrate existing laws into one.**
- The Anti-Trafficking Bill has not been preceded by any substantial research or analysis.

Measures needed :-

- The trafficking bill 2018 need to be passed as it would plug the loopholes in earlier anti-trafficking laws and help tackle the menace of human trafficking as also the festering issue of illegal brothels by equipping the law enforcement agencies with more ammunition.
- **Instead for a multi-faceted legal and economic strategy**
 - Robust implementation of labour laws
 - A universal social protection floor
 - Self-organisation of workers
 - Improved labour inspection, including in the informal economy
 - Corporate accountability for decent work conditions are needed.
- **Need for systemic reforms**
 - To counter distress migration
 - End caste-based discrimination
 - Enforce the rural employment guarantee legislation
 - Avoid the indiscriminate rescue of voluntary sex workers
 - Protect migrants mobility and rights.
- **Victims of trafficking, especially children, need safe social and economic rehabilitation.**

- Higher budgetary allocations are needed for their immediate help and counselling, besides making arrangements for their vocational training, housing and repatriation.
- The reintroduction to education is also a must. **Also, changes in the education system to include rights-based information, if given to each child, can lay the foundations of an aware and secure generation.**
- Schools and parents must make children aware of the dangers of trafficking and prepare them to recognise and tackle it.

Conclusion:-

- Trafficking bill is the first step in the measures which are bold and holistic response to a socioeconomic problem of labour exploitation and this can help India realise SDG 8.7.

TOPIC: *Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.*

Q) What is genetic discrimination? It's said that India needs a law against genetic discrimination. Examine why India needs such a law and in what form. (250 Words)

Background:-

- There are many examples of employers and insurers using genetic information to engage in discriminatory policies. This shows the need for a law against genetic discrimination

Genetic discrimination:-

- Genetic discrimination occurs when people are treated differently by their employer or insurance company because they have a gene mutation that causes or increases the risk of an inherited disorder. Fear of discrimination is a common concern among people considering genetic testing.
- Genetic discrimination (GD) is understood to be differential treatment of those not showing symptoms but who are nevertheless treated differently on the basis of any real or assumed genetic characteristics.

India needs a law:-

- **Discrimination in health insurance against individuals based on their genetic disposition or genetic heritage**, in the absence of appropriate genetic testing and laying down of intelligible differentia, **is unconstitutional.**
 - **As advances have been made in genetic testing, however, employers and insurance companies have used it to penalize people.** There have been reports of people being denied jobs or being fired because a parent had Huntington's disease, or the worker had a BRCA1 gene that predisposed her to breast and ovarian cancer. **People with family histories of certain diseases have had difficulty in buying health insurance.**
- **International examples :-**

- In the U.S., the Genetic Information Non discrimination Act (GINA) was signed into law in 2008. **GINA provides strong protection against access to genetic information and genetic discrimination in the context of health insurance and employment.**
- It prohibits insurers from requesting or requiring genetic tests from an individual or members of the person's family, or using genetic information to determine eligibility or establish premiums.
- An added benefit is that the **law helps advance genetic science, which cannot conduct research without people willing to undergo testing. With the promise that their genes cannot be used against them,** more people are likely to participate.
- **Indian case:-**
 - In a country where health insurance is still at a nascent stage and out of pocket expenditure is high with genetic discrimination clauses the people would lose trust in the insurance sector.
 - India too needs a law that prevents genetic discrimination. In this era of rampant genetic testing. The situation is likely to get worse as people become more accepting of predictive genetic tests and insurance companies insist on them. **India need to prevent discrimination and uphold "equal treatment under the law".**
- **Geneticists:-**
 - **Geneticists are not in agreement on the usefulness of genetic tests or even on their veracity.** Most importantly, very few single-gene health problems exist and the vast array of common diseases is related to the functioning of networks of genes in the milieu of other central cellular components.
 - Moreover, **the popular notion of deoxyribonucleic acid (otherwise known as DNA) being the central and only player in cellular and** genetic information and disease with a mere unfolding of characteristics is **deeply flawed.**
 - Everyone has genes for some predisposition or the other, this being the human condition. **There should therefore be no discrimination based on genetic information.**

Nature of the law:-

- In a time of unprecedented demand for personal data, the Indian law is a critically important development for privacy protection similar to Canada's anti genetic discrimination law.
- The law needs to ensure fundamental rights of equality are not violated.
- Also strict provisions are needed against making genetic testing mandatory for health insurance and employment

Q) A more robust and transparent admission system would not only lend credibility to the selection process, but it would also ensure quality. In the light of the fact that there exists multiple exams and application processes for higher education, discuss the statement. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Each year, 36 million students apply for admission across various disciplines among varied fields of study. So there is a need to have a transparent admission process to avoid complications for the student enrollment process in the universities.

Problems with current higher education admission and application processes :-

- **Lengthy and tiring process of having to appear for multiple entrance examinations** followed by interviews, which lend the system **more opacity**
- **Lack of standardisation of the admission process:-**
 - **Not all examinations happen at once.**
 - Usually, the academic calendar is dispersed, so one ends up appearing for one entrance in December and the other in June, which means six months of repeating the same course over and over.
- **High cut off marks does not mean quality has improved:-**
 - India's colleges have obsession with cut-off marks for admission.
 - For instance some of the Delhi university colleges required a stratospheric cut-off mark of 100 per cent for non-commerce stream students to secure a seat in the college.
- **This model is dated and unfair to both students and to society at large.** With educational system continuing to emphasise performance as measured by examinations, memorisation and marks will persist as poor proxies for measuring “educational” outcomes.
- **The criteria for the final selection is too cumbersome .** For instance people who cleared individual university tests are rejected if they don't clear JRF test even though both are totally different tests.
- The Indian educational system appears to be based more on systems and mechanisms of exclusion rather than inclusion

Robust and transparent admission system is needed:-

- Government can help define standards for universities via its ranking frameworks and accreditation surveys, or students can decide based on cut-offs, as is done in the case of Common Admission Test (CAT) for management courses.
- A more robust and transparent admission system would not only lend credibility to the selection process, but it would also ensure quality.
- **This would address the issue of bias in the university admission process and would quell perception of universities leaning more towards favouritism than merit.**
- **Follow US model where parameters such as standardised tests, communication skills , essay writing etc** capture the effects and outcomes that education ought to seek to attain.
 - These parameters offer a credible way of assessing the overall gestalt of the individual student as a human being captured by a range of measures over time.
- Focus has to be to make student successful as a human first so selection procedure has to cover wide aspects as is done in top universities like NGO activities, Social service history, past achievements etc

Conclusion:

- Talent has never been a problem in India but honing it has been a vital issue. A right way to start would be to streamline the admission process along with other educational reforms with respect to improving quality, teacher training etc

Q) Regulating school fees is one of the most significant legal and political challenges policymakers in India face. Examine why. Also comment why it's important to regulate fees. (250 Words)

Background:-

- India has taken significant strides in making education inclusive through the implementation of right to education act. However the issue of regulation of fees has largely been neglected due to multiple challenges.

Why regulating school fees is difficult?

- The issue of fee regulation finds itself at the **intersection of constitutionally protected freedoms enjoyed by private schools and the need for making quality education** affordable and accessible.
- Article 30** of the Indian Constitution upholds the right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions. So fee structure is part of its internal affairs
- Based on Supreme court judgements there is not much clarity** on what the terms “surplus”, “reasonable surplus” or “commercialisation of education” entail.
- The models adopted by the states to regulate fees are **affected by**
 - The challenges of weak implementation**
 - A lack of capacity**
 - Constant legal challenges posed by private school associations.**
 - Recently, the Maharashtra government’s decision to cap proposed fee hikes at 15% was widely criticised by schools.
- The political representatives themselves have the ownership of educational institutions and also the nexus between leaders and educational institutions leads to this issue not being dealt effectively.
- Existing legislative efforts have made an **incomplete assessment of the deeper problems with financial management** and accounting practices adopted by private schools

Why it's important to regulate fees?

- Over the years, the issue of **skyrocketing tuition fees** has confronted parents.
- Adding to their burden is **the annual and steep hike in tuition fees along with additional costs** such as fees for transport, extra-curricular activities and sports.
- Regulating fees is important as the vulnerable sections of the community are left out of quality education due to this.
- In 2010, **the Comptroller and Auditor General slammed 25 well-known private schools in Delhi for arbitrary fee hikes.** According to the report, money was being collected from parents under false heads, while at the same time, teachers were being underpaid, and accounts misrepresented

Way ahead:-

- In order to make laws more effective, **the solution would be to address the disease of financial mismanagement and misreporting, and not the symptoms.**
 - In *Modern School v. Union of India* (2004), **the Supreme Court recommended accounting standards for private schools.**
- **Measures such as**
 - Regular government supervised audits
 - Generating capacity in State-level Departments of Education
 - Regular inspections
 - Stricter sanctions for fraudulent reporting could be considered.
- The government would be better advised to focus on improving the quality of education in government schools

Q) India is rightly acclaimed to be the pharmacy of the world, with its huge private sector capacity for producing branded and unbranded generic drugs. However, India has seen the decline and near disappearance of public sector capacity for manufacture of drugs and vaccines. Why is healthy and robust public sector drug manufacturing important for India? How can India boost this sector? Examine. (250 Words)

Background :-

- India has been an active player in the pharmaceutical industry and has contributed globally towards making life saving drugs and low cost pharmaceutical products accessible and affordable for those in need.
- Despite, advances Indian biopharmaceutical industry is still 10-15 years behind their counterparts in the developed countries and faces stiff competition from China, Korea and others.
- The lacuna primarily exists due to disconnected centers of excellence, less focus on translational research and staggered funding.

Why is healthy and robust public sector drug manufacturing important :-

- To ensure that Indian population is not denied access to drugs that the Indian private sector is unable to produce or supply at **affordable cost.**
 - **These include drugs where compulsory licences may need to be issued by the government** for patent protected drugs or even off-patent drugs which are commercially unattractive to private manufacturers.
- With the acquisition of Indian drug companies by foreign manufacturers, or 'strategic alliances' which place shackles on the Indian partners, **public sector capacity for manufacturing life saving drugs under a CL is the much needed fall-back option.**
- **Drugs for neglected tropical diseases are of little interest to the commercially driven private drug industry.**
- Active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), which are needed for drug manufacture (formulation), are now mostly imported from China. **This makes India highly vulnerable to disruptions in supply and cost escalations in import.**

How to boost public sector drug manufacturing :-

- India needs to **develop both public and private sector capacity within the country**, with suitable government support and incentives, to ensure uninterrupted and inexpensive availability of APIs.
- The High Level Expert Group Report on Universal Health Coverage for India (2011) clearly articulated the need for strengthening public sector units (PSUs) because:-
 - **The use of PSUs will offer an opportunity to produce drug volumes for use in primary and secondary care facilities** as well as help in 'benchmarking' drug costs.
- **Effective implementation of the Ayushman Bharat initiative calls for investment in expanding public sector capacity for producing essential drugs and APIs.**
- **The UN report also urges member states of WTO to adopt a permanent revision of Paragraph 6 of the TRIPS agreement** to enable swift and expeditious export of pharmaceutical products produced under compulsory license. **India should take the lead in ensuring universal access** to affordable drugs through such measures.
- **National Biopharma mission needs effective implementation:-**
 - *Innovate in India*(i3) will witness an investment of USD 250 million with USD 125 million as a loan from world Bank and is anticipated to be a game changer for the Indian Biopharmaceutical industry. It aspires to create an enabling ecosystem to promote entrepreneurship and indigenous manufacturing in the sector.

Conclusion:-

- **Investment in public sector capacity is essential to ensure that the country can exercise that leadership** even on occasions when the private pharmaceutical sector does not fully align with that objective.
- There was an immediate need felt to focus on consolidated efforts to promote product discovery, translational research and early stage manufacturing in the country to ensure inclusive innovation.

Q)Discuss the potential of mobile health (mHealth) services in improving rural health scenario. Also discuss issues associated with using mHealth services. (250 Words)

Background:-

- In India, access to mobile phones by way of over a billion mobile phone users (TRAI 2016) is far greater than traditional desktops, laptops and broadband, thus making mHealth all the more relevant when compared to conventional eHealth.
- With an urban teledensity of 154% and a rural teledensity of 51% (TRAI 2016), India should be poised to incorporate mHealth into the very fabric of our healthcare delivery system.

Potential of mobile health services :-

- According to data gathered from Google Trends, a tool which helps understand the relative interest in a particular search term, India ranks among the top five countries for search terms like 'mobile health', 'health apps', 'medical apps' and 'mHealth'. **This confirms that the Indian population is interested in mHealth.**

- **A recent joint report by PwC and the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) states that mHealth is expected to be crucial in making healthcare accessible in India.** Also, it has the potential to save the country \$0.8-1 billion annually.
- **It goes a long way in helping people be more in control of their health, be more aware and better educated about symptoms for various diseases which shouldn't go unchecked, their health risks as well as, precautionary measures one can take to protect oneself.**
 - For instance air quality related health apps that could give you an alert when the air quality in your home or locality goes above safe limits.
- From maintaining a report to getting an expert opinion is always a tough task because it not only involves medical expenses but travelling and accommodation expenses also come along with it. **Mobile healthcare brings experts to small cities and give the excess to the general population for the care they deserve.**
- **Telemedicine, emergency services, text messaging services, supervision and support services to the healthcare service staff, and data collection are among the functions that mobile telephony has brought in as new opportunities to develop services** that would cater also to the underprivileged, rural, and less educated part of the population, and attempt to cover the last mile.
- **mHealth offers a great promise to help cater to the needs of people with limited healthcare and family planning services** and information in their everyday environment.

Issues:-

- **Huge volume and fragmented market:**
 - More than 1,65,000 mHealth applications are available across the iTunes and Android app stores.
 - Many mHealth apps are of dubious origin and abandoned by the developer after an initial release or one update
 - There is no way for a prospective user to know which apps can be trusted.
- **Lack of awareness :-**
 - The Government of India has launched a few mHealth initiatives. However, lack of awareness is a huge deterrent.
- **Poor infrastructure and security concerns :-**
 - The rural population has very poor network connectivity.
 - Most of the poor population cannot afford to buy a decent smartphone which will give them access to mHealth.
 - In addition, if the infrastructure is present, then security and privacy are major concerns.
 - In the case of mHealth apps, there is no way to know if the app developer has taken appropriate measures to ensure security and protect his/her app against malicious attacks.
 - when the same phone is shared by several persons, it is difficult to maintain privacy and direct the message to the relevant person only

- Issues related to language (various scripts and languages, potential misinterpretation of written information, level of literacy), timing of messages, mobile network fluctuations and incomplete coverage of mobile networks are present.
- **Low expectations**
 - The key stakeholders in the healthcare community are unable to appreciate the potential of mHealth as there is no large-scale successful precedent in the Indian context. So, the resistance to change and adopt new technology is huge
- **Manual intervention:-**
 - Be it the use of SMS, apps or audio/video consultations, a lot of manual intervention is necessary in the case of mHealth, which makes it unattractive.
- Patients find cost, lack of relevant applications and provider's unwillingness to use mHealth to be the top barriers to adoption.
- Lack of regulatory issues, logistics and availability of appropriate, need-based, customised solutions are some of the major challenges in the way of widespread utilisation of mHealth.
- Text-based services do not work in remote rural areas because a considerable proportion of **people are still illiterate**.

Way forward:-

- Instead of focusing on apps for smartphones, **the main interest should be directed to the establishing of non-profit call centres and service centres that are able to cater to people's information and personal support** needs in health issues.
- **It is essential to listen to the client experience:** what the people's needs are, and what kind of services would correspond to their everyday predicaments.
- **Mobile integration with external devices, sensors and systems can play a big role here.** mHealth app developers need to develop APIs/interfaces to extract and capture data automatically wherever possible.
- **Providers can play the role of influencers and promote mHealth adoption** by helping patients to identify the right apps.
- The website of the National Health Portal, set up by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, **lists a number of mHealth apps that the population can benefit from.**

Conclusion:-

- India can rise to the track of social development not by forgetting the most underprivileged, but by providing them the bounty of mobile technology in the form that is acceptable and accessible for their health-seeking.

TOPIC: *Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance- applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures.*

Q) Discuss critically features and shortcomings of the Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill 2018. (250 Words)

Background:-

- The Government's move to enact fugitive economic offenders bill 2018 comes in the wake of several high profile industrialists like Vijay Mallya, and diamondaires Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi duping the banking system and evading the process of law in India by staying outside the jurisdiction of Indian courts.

Fugitive economic offenders bill :-

- It is a bill to **empower the authorities to confiscate and sell assets of economic offenders, especially bank fraudsters and scamsters who have fled the country**
- The Bill paves the way for confiscation of all assets, **including benami assets, both within and outside the country, of declared economic offenders.**
- The proposed law **will apply for economic offences with monetary value in excess of ₹100 crore.**
- All cases under the proposed law will be tried under the PMLA Act and the administrator will sell the fugitive's properties to pay off the lenders.
- **The proposed law will have an overriding effect over all other pieces of legislation.** The offender will not be able to pursue any civil cases in India.
- A fugitive economic offender is a person who has an arrest warrant issued in respect of a scheduled offence and who leaves or has left India so as to avoid criminal prosecution, or refuses to return to India to face criminal prosecution

Merits :-

- **Strong deterrent to people fleeing the country after committing a crime.**
- The **bill is expected to plug gaps and provide a higher deterrent effect** on economic offenders.
- The larger objective of the proposed legislation is **to preserve the sanctity of the rule of law**
- **Cases of economic offences involving non-repayment of bank loans impact the financial health of the banking sector** and erode the government's declared fight against corruption. This can be checked now.

Demerits:-

- The blanket ban on offenders **contesting the confiscation of their properties through civil suits, sale of property without trial, and deterioration in value of seized assets and finding suitable buyers** are some of the concerns around the new law.
- An **absolute ban is contrary to the basic tenets of justice and fair play**, besides being in violation of the Indian Constitution.

- **Sale of property of a fugitive economic offender without adjudicating after a proper trial** whether or not the said person is actually liable for the offence, **would amount to violation of the settled principle under the Constitution** that one is considered innocent unless proven guilty. Anyone can be prosecuted or property can be acquired without the person being found guilty. **These provisions are against the fundamental rights.**
- Assets confiscated by enforcement agencies and courts are termed as distressed properties, and **seldom find buyers.**
 - A case in point is Sahara's Amby Valley, which despite efforts by Bombay high court's official liquidator has been unable to find suitable buyers for almost a year.
- Experts say that flaws **in the proposed legislation could be used to challenge the law in courts.**
 - The provision that empowers any court to disentitle any person from putting forward or defending any civil action if that he/she is declared as a fugitive economic offender is seen as draconian. **A challenge may be made against such provision on the ground that it is disproportionate and arbitrary.**
- Legal experts say the draft Bill that is in public domain **does not provide for a situation where the confiscated property is in excess of the claims** against the fugitive offender

Way ahead:-

- To avoid failed attempts at sale the bill should provide for time limits for disposal and encashment of property, separate limits for movable-immovable property and running business, and any property which would be subject to valuation loss over a period of time must be disposed of quickly.
- Even key managerial persons can be declared fugitives, if a court has issued warrant against them. To further strengthen it, the bill should separately provide for dealing with siphoning off of funds, round-tripping, and employing any scheme or edifice to cause loss.

Q) Critically examine how much the MGNREGA and its website have gained after the introduction of Digital India. (250 Words)

Background:-

- At the root of the local empowerment is the fact that the MGNREGA has been a pioneer in implementing the idea of 'Digital India'
- Lists of job card, recording the demand for work, every muster roll (work attendance sheets), the payment process every aspect is digitised and is online in real time
- Almost all the 2.6 lakh gram panchayats in India are generating employment, and payments have to be made into bank accounts of workers within 15 days.

How NREGA and its website benefitted because of digital India :-

- Each bit of data related to every rupee spent on every work project can be examined via the website, **opening up the entire programme to strict public vigilance and monitoring.**

- To ensure that NREGA workers receive their wages on time, National Electronic Fund Management System (NeFMS) has been put in place. **Almost 96 percent of wages are being credited directly to the beneficiaries' bank accounts.**
- The shifts from cash payments to bank (or post office) accounts, then to electronic payments, and now to Aadhaar-based payments **were supposed to enhance transparency and reduce leakages.**
- **There has been a digitisation of all the processes in MGNREGA right from a worker registering demand for work,** to work allotment, to finally getting wages for completed works.
- **Availability of information through online reports at various levels of disaggregation.** This has enabled any citizen to monitor the implementation of the programme and has consequently charted a new paradigm of transparency
- **Individual worker details from around 2.5 lakh gram panchayats** are available in the MGNREGA MIS.

Concerns:-

- The government had introduced a 'workers' tab on the MGNREGA website. **since the Digital India campaign began, this section, used extensively in the past, has been dysfunctional.**
- **Decreased transparency:-**
 - Only the details of whether a payment has been made or not is displayed, and crucial information to trace the account where the money has gone remains a mystery even to the beneficiary
 - This is a major problem, as people have been forced to open multiple accounts for various schemes and are unclear of where they have been "seeded" and where their wages have been deposited.
 - Any unscrupulous person with access to the data entry system can seed the account details and siphon off the money.
- Worker-centric links in the data structure are missing. As such it becomes difficult to follow the trail of each job card holder from the time of work demanded to getting the wages.
- **Uncomfortable aspects** such as the "reasons" for arbitrarily rejecting payment of legal compensation for delays in wages were **randomly taken off the website for a while.**
- **Data on unemployment allowances have not been compiled.** Currently the data is only available gram panchayat wise.
- The website is very rich in content, but because of **being poorly organised and presented**, it is actually very difficult for an ordinary person to negotiate, and extract the information they want.
- **Workers are facing arbitrary checks and limits on the work allocated.** Many find it difficult to get their names on the muster roll after completing 80 days of work, or an inability to find out where their wages went because of the MIS and its digital fiats.
- **Error in recording the number of days they have worked:-**
 - For instance, if a worker works for six days in a given week, but only four days appear in the MIS, she will not get paid for the remaining two days.
- **The inability of local functionaries and infrastructure to cope with the requirements of these complex technologies** (along with the absence of an effective grievance redressal system) is leaving lakhs of workers unpaid every year.
- **Complicated process:**
 - Earlier, it was possible to fix problems such as missing attendance details and wrong account numbers at the local level, but **now corrections require the intervention of block-level functionaries** (sometimes even district- or state-level functionaries) who are difficult to access for most workers.

Way forward:-

- The scheme needs to be accompanied by many other measures such as
 - Government- run information and facilitation centres where one can go ask for help to look up or fill required documents.
- There is also **a need for the digitisation platforms to be constantly reviewed in a transparent and consultative manner**, along the lines of disclosure mandated under the Right to Information Act.
- The Ministry of Rural Development and the government should be much **more consultative in the design of its digital architecture**
 - They should hold regular consultations and take suggestions for turning the MIS into a "Janata Information System" in order to improve it in every way possible.
- A governance framework for the MIS needs to be put in place that lays out the minimum standards and accountability of the Ministry managing the system. Such a framework must be built in consultation with all concerned parties and should follow the provisions of the law (both MGNREGA and RTI).
- **Digital India needs to be redesigned from the perspective of the working class and the ordinary citizen**, not just in the MGNREGA, but also in every other scheme that the government runs in the name of the people of this country.

Q) Personal data cannot be the new oil. Comment. (250 Words)**Background:-**

- There was a time that oil companies ruled the globe, but "black gold" is no longer the world's most valuable resource it's been surpassed by data.
- In 2019, there would be around 258.27 million social network users in India, up from 168.1 million in 2016. Also the recent issue with Cambridge analytica where data of 50 million users stored on Facebook is misused shows that personal and user data is important to protect.

Why Personal data is considered as the new oil:-

- By giving away data so easily, people have handed the five biggest tech firms Google, Amazon, Apple, Facebook and Microsoft the kind of monopoly that Standard Oil, enjoyed in the early 20th century
 - For instance, Google holds an 81 per cent share of search, according to data metrics site Net Market Share.
- **Just as global powers have historically battled for the control of oil resources and oil trading routes, so latter-day nation states are conspiring to control the data and cyber networks** upon which governments and their citizens depend.
- As people use their platforms, **the corporate giants are collecting information about every aspect of people's lives, their behaviour and their decision-making**. All of that data gives them tremendous power. And that power begets more power, and more profit.
- Based on the price of data and the amount of money that's being made by big companies by reselling that data, **it's certainly comparable to oil in that manner**

- **Big data threatens the old order .It is fast replacing finance as the driver of business and market behaviour.**
 - Uber is now more valuable than many traditional carmakers, even though it does not make cars.
 - Amazon knows so much about people that it now challenges every retailer, including supermarkets, the one sector that has, so far, resisted its advance.
- **What makes the data that people generate more valuable than black gold is that it is unique, personal, live, accurate, infinite and can be traded cheaply.**
- **The more advanced data services become, the greater the risk of hacks.** Data-driven automated cars that rely on car-to-car data sharing have been hacked .
- Individual users are increasingly viewed as legitimate targets for mining personal and metadata.

However there are strong arguments that personal data is not the new oil:-

- Data isn't a finite resource. More data can be created which is not the case with oil.
- **Data can also be re-used**, and the same data can be used by different people for different reasons.
- Through the email address, a data company were able to access information about people or their friends so **the social network and the search engine might all benefit from that one email address and all that is connected to it. This is different from oil as only the oil company get to alone will have control of the oil exploration**
- **Who controls the commodity:-**
 - **There are very legitimate fears about the use and abuse of personal data online - for instance, by foreign powers trying to influence elections.**
 - And very few people have a really clear idea about the digital footprint they have left online.
 - **Data is something which in theory if not in practice the user can control and** it is largely as a result of people's choices that these firms have so much of my personal data.
 - But in case of oil company, it's largely up to them how they deploy the oil in the ground .
- Data industry is much faster to evolve than the oil industry was. Innovation is in the very DNA of big data companies, some of whose life spans are pitifully short. **As a result, regulation is much harder.**

Way forward:-

- **Data collectors and users should be held more accountable for how they store and manage data**, rather than simply obtaining people's consent to do pretty much as they please.
- **Online firms should be prohibited from using certain data or using it in such a way that harms users** . There should also be stiffer penalties for hacks.
- **People** should have the right to anonymity, as long as they acknowledge that this means no longer enjoying access to free services or tailored commercial offers.
- Users need to be cautious about the data they put in these social media forums and strengthen their privacy by choosing robust passwords and enabling two step verification on all important services, such as email and banking.
- **The Justice Shah group had emphasised on taking the informed and individual consent of users before the collection of their personal data.**
 - It had proposed giving users prior notice of information practices, providing them with choices, and collection of only limited data necessary for the purpose for which it is collected.

- India needs a strong data protection law and some international convention on the lines of Budapest convention will be a welcome step.

Q) Recently, a firm known as Cambridge Analytica, harvested the data of 50 million Facebook users and used that information to manipulate outcome of elections in the US. What are the issues involved in this episode of harvesting user data? What lessons does this offer to regulators and governments, especially for India? Analyse. (250 Words)

Background:-

- In the technological world the combination of using personal data without consent and tailoring slander campaigns, fake news and propaganda to discover preferences of voters is a potent and dangerous precedence.
- The recent data breach involving alleged misuse of information of Facebook users by data mining and analytics firm Cambridge Analytica has once again highlighted the need for users to treat their digital lives as their physical ones.
- Statista, an online data portal, estimates that India had 281.81 million mobile phone Internet users in 2016. So effective mechanisms are necessary against the misuse of user data.

Issues involved:-

- **Individual users are increasingly viewed as legitimate targets for mining personal and metadata.** Such data can provide an intimate psychological profile including ideological preferences that **together help campaign managers target communications and forecast voter behaviour.**
- **Data theft and identity crisis:-**
 - Data of millions are taken and used when only 270,000 people knowingly or unknowingly gave consent.
- **Individuals often share their data without being aware** of it or understanding the implications of privacy terms and conditions.
- **Individuals do not have much rights over the data** they shared and personal data is considered as the new oil.
- The real threat of Cambridge Analytica working in Indian elections would come from **psychological warfare, psychographics and micro-targeting.** This allows them to target ads and messages at voters based on key "triggers" identified by their algorithms.
- **There are no institutional checks on fake news** and it can irrevocably damage the fabric of consensual democracy.
- **The scope for external or foreign influence in democratic processes:-**
 - Major players are not only based abroad but also send data to overseas and thus beyond India's jurisdiction because of **lack of infrastructure of data localization.**
- The Cambridge Analytica episode highlights the **invisible yet pervasive ways in which public opinion can be shaped** in a digital age and transform political destinies.

- **India seems to be further relaxing existing checks and balances.**
 - The Finance Bill 2016 amended the FCRA to make it easier for parties to accept foreign funding;

Lessons to be learned by regulators, governments:-

- **India needs to have a legal framework for data protection.** It will create a vital and necessary framework against which rights and responsibilities can be articulated, and digressions thereof evaluated.
 - - A proper data protection law with an effective enforcement mechanism would ensure recognition for India as a trustworthy global destination for **data-based businesses and privacy-conscious consumers while also protecting the Right to Privacy of the people in India.**
- The lesson to take away is the need for more stringent regulations around election campaigning.
 - India needs to formulate and implement rigorous data protection laws that **would make individualised tracking of voter behaviour illegal.**
- In the right to privacy judgment, the judges provided one conclusion. **The privacy protections that limit state intrusion and data protection laws should shield individuals rather than commercial interests or technological innovation.**
- Concept of social engineering is needed to make private developers more accountable.
- India must learn from the US and the UK and what they are experiencing with Cambridge Analytica and its role in Brexit and Trump's victory.
- **It is very important that governments and private players give the due importance to the data it has of citizens.**
 - They should **repeat audits every year**, if not every six months, as only full transparency will restore trust back in this system.
- **Cyber law provisions need to be revised** as the current approach of the Indian law is very narrow.
- **International agreements** form an important node in a web of solutions needed to address security and the rule of law in cyberspace. Given India's vision of a Digital India and considering the surge in cybercrime, it would be beneficial for India to join Budapest Convention
- Experts have pointed to the importance of aspects such as following basic **cyber hygiene and a periodic review of the security facets of one's profile on various web platforms**, especially on social media, where users tend to share personal information.
 - When there are no legitimate security or public interest reasons, users should have the right to have their data destroyed.

TOPIC: *Role of civil services in a democracy.*

Q) The primary role of police forces is to uphold and enforce laws, investigate crimes and ensure security for people in the country. Analyse key issues that affect functioning of police in India and reforms needed to address these issues. (250 Words)

Background :-

- There has been a rise of public demand for an efficient, accountable and people-centric police that steadfastly upholds the Rule of Law in all situations. However, in effect the country has failed to use this historic opportunity for serious modernization and reform of the police.

Issues affecting the functioning of police:-

- **An overburdened police force :-**
 - Police force is overburdened especially at lower levels where constabulary is forced to work continuously 14-16 hrs and also for 7 days a week. It adversely impacts their performance.
 - While the sanctioned police strength was 181 police per lakh persons in 2016 when the United Nations recommended standard is 222 police per lakh persons.
 - 86% of the state police comprises of constabulary. Constables are typically promoted once during their service. This could weaken their incentive to perform well.
- **Improving police infrastructure**
 - Failure of police infrastructure like vehicles, weaponry. Also audits have found that the POLNET network is non-functional in various states.
 - For example, an audit of the Gujarat police force reported that the network had not been operationalised till October 2015 due to non-installation of essential infrastructure, such as remote subscriber units and generator sets.
 - Funds dedicated for modernisation of infrastructure are typically not utilised fully. For example, in 2015-16, only 14% of such funds were used by the states.
- **Political influence :-**
 - Second Administrative Reforms Commission has noted that ministers have used police forces for personal and political reasons.
- **Police accountability :-**
 - Police forces have the authority to exercise force to enforce laws and maintain law and order in a state. **However, this power may be misused in several ways. For example, in India, various kinds of complaints are made** against the police including complaints of unwarranted arrests, unlawful searches, torture and custodial rapes.
- **Poor quality of investigation:-**
 - Crime per lakh population has increased by 28% over the last decade (2005-2015). However, convictions have been low. So it shows the poor quality of investigation.
 - The Law Commission and the Second Administrative Reforms Commission have noted that state police officers often neglect investigation because they are understaffed and overburdened with various kinds of tasks.
 - Further, they lack the training and the expertise required to conduct professional investigations.

- They also have insufficient legal knowledge and the forensic and cyber infrastructure available to them is both inadequate and outdated. In light of this, police forces may use force and torture to secure evidence.
- Crime investigations may be influenced by political or other extraneous considerations
- These units should not ordinarily be diverted for other duties.
- **Forensic labs:-**
 - Expert bodies have however said that these laboratories are short of funds and qualified staff. Further, there is indiscriminate referencing of cases to these labs resulting in high pendency.
- **Lack of co-ordination** between centre and states is matter related to maintenance of law & order results in ineffective functioning of police force.
- **Police force is not in the position to tackle present problems** of cyber crime, global terrorism, naxalism because of structural weaknesses.
- **Prevalence of Rank system within the police force results in abuse of power** by top level executive over lower level personnel.

Reforms needed:-

- **Directions of the Supreme Court in Prakash Singh vs Union of India :-**
 - The Supreme Court ordered the centre and states to set up authorities to lay down guidelines for police functioning, evaluate police performance, decide postings and transfers, and receive complaints of police misconduct.
 - The court also required that minimum tenure of service be guaranteed to key police officers to protect them from arbitrary transfers and postings.
- Experts have recommended that **the scope of the political executive's power must be limited under law.**
- **Investigation :-**
 - Experts have recommended that states must have their own specialized investigation units within the police force that are responsible for crime investigation.
- **Independent Complaints Authority :-**
 - The Second Administrative Reforms Commission and the Supreme Court have observed that **there is a need to have an independent complaints authority to inquire into cases of police misconduct.**
 - Example is that of the New York City Police which has a Civilian Complaint Review Board comprising of civilians appointed by local government bodies and the police commissioner to investigate into cases of police misconduct.
- The Second Administrative Reforms Commission has recommended that **one way to reduce the burden of the police forces could be to outsource or redistribute some non-core police functions** (such as traffic management, disaster rescue and relief, and issuing of court summons) to government departments or private agencies.
- **Padmanabhaiah commission :-**
 - It has also been recommended that constables, and the police force in general, should receive greater training in soft skills given they need to deal with the public regularly.
- **Housing:**
 - Importance of providing housing to the constabulary (and generally to the police force) to improve their efficiency and incentive to accept remote postings has also been emphasised by expert bodies, such as the National Police Commission.
- **Community policing:-**
 - **Janamaithri Suraksha in Kerala**

- This project is an initiative of the Kerala Police to facilitate greater accessibility, close interaction and better understanding between the police and local communities. For example, Beat Constables are required to know at least one family member of every family living in his beat area.

TOPIC: *India and its neighborhood- relations.*

Q) In the light of inactive SAARC and strained relationship between India and Pakistan, can China become a part of the solution, rather than being perceived as a part of the India-Pakistan problem? Analyse. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Despite being neighbours India and Pakistan are among the least integrated nations in the world.
- Because of these countries unending mutual hostility, South Asia too has become the least integrated region in the world with questions raised on the effectiveness of SAARC.

Yes, China can play a optimistic role:-

- A three-way India-China-Pakistan cooperation is possible as **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) provides a practical framework for such partnership.**
- **CPEC:-**
 - CPEC does not recognise PoK to be Pakistan's sovereign territory.
 - Both China and Pakistan have stated that they are open to India joining CPEC. China has also expressed its readiness to rename CPEC suitably to both address India's concerns and to reflect the project's expanded regional scope.
 - **India can gain land access**, through Pakistan, to Afghanistan, Iran, Central Asia and western China. In future, the CPEC-plus-India can be linked to the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Corridor, thus creating a grand garland of connectivity and integration for the whole of South Asia.
 - **CPEC is also indispensable for the success of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) and Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipelines** that are critical for India's energy security and accelerated economic growth.
- With involvement of China strong new bonds of regional cooperation and interdependence will be created and this could also **help resolve long-standing geopolitical problems like terrorism, Afghanistan issues in the region.**
- **Connectivity, cooperation and economic integration** are the only realistic bases for any future India-Pakistan settlement of the Kashmir dispute.

Involving China leads to further complications in the already strained relationship:-

- **China has become a new factor influencing India's negative attitude towards Pakistan**, both among policy-makers and the common people. Experts suggest that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project under the BRI, violates India's sovereignty since it passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).
- **There are issues with China itself like**

- China blocked the listing of Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar with a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) sanctions panel
- China blocking India's bid to NSG group.
- The recent Doklam standoff between the two countries
- China trying to gain naval bases encircling India in the Indian ocean etc.
- Chinese aggressive approach in the south China sea is eroding the trust of Indian people and showing is the perpetrator

Conclusion:-

- India needs to manage relations with China with prudence but firmness and continue to develop capabilities for the benefit of the countries and the region as a whole.

TOPIC: *Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests*

Q) For India, Jordan is more than a transit point and can be considered as its natural ally. Comment. (250 Words)

Introduction:-

- Benefitting from its strategic location in the Middle East, Jordan is a model of tranquility and security . However it is a resource-poor country and the Hashemite Kingdom has long relied on foreign assistance, especially from Western and Arab Gulf states.
- It is perfect transit point for India to the middle east as the Palestinian territories cannot be visited without transiting through a third country like Egypt and Jordan as possible transit points for the Gaza Strip and West Bank, respectively.
 - India cannot help the Palestinians constructively without coordinating with Jordan .A greater Jordanian role is a pre-condition for Palestinian statehood, both for logistical as well as developmental considerations.

However Indian Jordan relations are more of natural allies than just a transit point because:-

- **Security issues:-**
 - Both India and Jordan face the common threat of terrorism and extremism.
 - Both countries share the view that nations must coordinate their positions to fight against the misuse of religion by groups and countries for inciting hatred and justifying terrorism.
 - Terrorism, lack of employment opportunity, weak governance, conflicts and civil war are depriving the region and its people of their right to live in peace and prosperity. **India and Jordan can collaborate effectively to mitigate the adverse impact of these negative developments.**
 - India and Jordan can be termed as natural allies as both countries are peaceful, stable and are witnessing rapid economic growth and have similar positions on regional and global affairs.
- **Economic:-**

- India is Jordan's fourth largest trade partner after Iraq, Saudi Arabia and China. Bilateral trade totalled USD 2.2 billion in 2014-15.
- **Jordan also plays an important role in India's food security through provision of fertilisers and phosphates**
- Indian investors have taken advantage of Jordan's free trade agreements with the US and are trying to make it a hub of textile exports. The famous Abdoun bridge in Amman by Larsen & Toubro, the rock phosphate terminal by Afcons Infrastructure Limited in Aqaba, and more than 20 textile units owned by Indians in special economic zones stand testimony to India's continued interest in Jordanian opportunities.
- **Strategic and geopolitical:-**
 - When India wants more partners in West Asia Jordan can be an asset to India's think west policy.
 - India can deepen security ties with Jordan to leverage its unique strategic location in the Levant, with access to the Red Sea and the eastern Mediterranean.
- **Cultural:-**
 - Jordanians of all backgrounds have built the Hashemite Kingdom, and this fabric enhances the unity of the people and their respect for fellow citizens regardless of religion or roots. India is also known for its unity in diversity
 - Jordan has historical importance in India's religious texts.
 - Jordan is keen on attracting Indian tourists as well as Bollywood to its historic and religious sites, where yoga is already very popular. Jordan grants Indians an entry-upon-arrival visa, while India also offers Jordanians an e-visa.
- The recent visit of King Abdullah II's visit to India represents an opportunity to catapult the relationship to the next higher level in strategic, security, political, energy, trade, investment and economic cooperation.

Conclusion:-

- Jordan respects the India's civilisation, vision for development and progress, as well as a principled foreign policy stand, especially on the Palestine issue. The two sides are on the same page on most international issues that impact our region.

Q) BIMSTEC is a desirable alternative to SAARC and an extra feather to India's Act East Policy. Analyse. (250 Words)

Background:-

- The European and ASEAN experience is testimony to the contribution of regional cooperation in the economic growth of the countries.
- BIMSTEC is a bridge between South Asia and South East Asia. It includes all the major countries of South Asia, except Maldives, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Given this composition, BIMSTEC has emerged as a natural platform to test regional cooperation in the South Asian region.
- Recently, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) has gained more favour as the preferred platform for regional cooperation in South Asia

How is it a desirable alternative to SAARC ?

- BIMSTEC serves two purposes for India - **it makes it easier for India to share a common regional platform with its neighbours in South Asia (sans Pakistan) and secondly, BIMSTEC also establishes a linkage between South and Southeast Asia.**
- **Regional cooperation under the ambit of SAARC has become difficult made BIMSTEC more viable:**
 - Despite India's keen interest in cooperating and strengthening intra-regional connectivity by backing the SAARC–Motor vehicle agreement, the agreement was stalled following Pakistan's reluctance.
 - Similarly, the SAARC satellite project that India proposed was abandoned following objection from Pakistan in 2016
 - **SAARC has also faced obstacles in the area of security cooperation. A major hindrance in this regard has been the lack of consensus on threat perceptions,** since member countries disagree on the idea of threats
 - For instance, while cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan is a major concern for India, Pakistan has failed to address these concerns.
 - **One of the reasons for BIMSTEC's popularity is that the member countries have generally cordial relationships,** something patently missing among the SAARC countries.
 - **As a trade bloc, BIMSTEC provides many opportunities:-**
 - The region has countries with the fastest-growing economies in the world. The combined GDP in the region is around US\$2 trillion and will likely grow further.
 - Trade among the BIMSTEC member countries reached six percent in just a decade, while in SAARC, it has remained around five percent since its inception.
 - Compared to SAARC, BIMSTEC has greater trade potential as well. Among the member countries, India's intra-BIMSTEC trade is around 3 percent of its total trade.
 - BIMSTEC regional grouping happens to have five nations that are also part of SAARC. The fact that this region is growing at 6.5% per annum, collectively comprises of 1.5 billion people, is the drive behind India's focus being part of BIMSTEC.

It is an extra feather to India's act east policy :-

- India was motivated to join BIMSTEC as it wanted to enhance its connectivity with ASEAN countries: a major component of its Look East Policy, now rechristened 'Act East' policy.
 - India saw BIST-EC, later renamed as BIMST-EC in 1997 itself when joined by Myanmar, as **another opportunity to increase connectivity with ASEAN**
 - **In terms of connectivity, BIMSTEC has at last three major projects** that, when finished, could transform the movement of goods and vehicles through the countries in the grouping.
 - One is the Kaladan Multimodal project that seeks to link India and Myanmar.
 - Another is the Asian Trilateral Highway connecting India and Thailand through Myanmar. It represents a significant step in establishing connectivity between India and Southeast Asian countries.
 - Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) have signed a pact for the movement of goods and vehicles among them.

- **The agenda of BIMSTEC is in sync with other regional/sub-regional organisations like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus), the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF), etc. Simultaneously, BIMSTEC fits in the agenda of a greater role for India in the Indo-Pacific too.**
- **The political rivalry between India and Pakistan never allowed SAARC to be the driving factor in an augmenting regional cooperation within South Asia. Hence, it would be pragmatic for India to work closely with BIMSTEC and ASEAN to expand regional cooperation in areas of mutual concerns including terrorism, violent extremism, transnational organised crime and insurgency; food security, energy; trade and investment, connectivity and infrastructure, poverty alleviation to name a few.**
- **India's stimulating outlook towards Southeast Asia vis-à-vis Asia-Pacific as expressed through Act east policy and the other way round, i.e, the Asia-Pacific's desire to have India as a strong stakeholder in the region.**
- **BIMSTEC offers many opportunities to its member countries.** For India, it aids in its Look East Policy and South-South cooperation efforts. **The development of the Northeastern region, by opening up to Bangladesh and Myanmar, is another incentive.**

Concerns remain:-

- **Infrequency of the BIMSTEC summits**, the highest decision-making body of the organisation. In its 20 years of existence, the BIMSTEC summit has taken place only thrice.
- **The delay in the adoption of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**, a framework that was agreed upon in 2004, fuels doubts about BIMSTEC's efficacy.
- A landmark achievement for BIMSTEC was the establishment of a permanent secretariat in Dhaka. **However, the secretariat faces a severe resource crunch, both in terms of money and manpower, which has adversely affected its performance**

Way forward:-

- Early ratifications of the BIMSTEC FTA, the counter-terrorism convention and finalisation and conclusion of the BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, BIMSTEC Framework Agreement on Transit, Trans-shipment and Movement of Vehicular Traffic as well as BIMSTEC Coastal Shipping Agreement etc **should be prioritised without much delay.**
- It has to **adopt people-centric and output-oriented approaches** to win the confidence of the common people across the sub-region. That would help it to become a facilitator of regional cooperation in a true sense.
- **Consistency in the frequency of the summits** to ensure regularity in decision-making;
- **Improving the capacity of the secretariat**, both in terms of manpower and funding;
- **Ensuring tangible results/benefits**, which will add to the motivation of the countries to concentrate on BIMSTEC (projects in the areas of tourism, digital connectivity, energy connectivity and humanitarian assistance in disaster relief should be considered); and
- **Empowering BIMSTEC to be a platform for dispute resolution among member countries** This will require debates and discussions among the BIMSTEC countries to reach consensus.

Conclusion:-

- Insofar as their regions of interest overlap, SAARC and BIMSTEC complement each other in terms of functions and goals. BIMSTEC provides SAARC countries a unique opportunity to connect with ASEAN.

Q) Both India and France are eager to forge a deeper nautical partnership between them. Discuss the mutual benefits of such a partnership for India and France. (250 Words)

Background:-

- France and India enjoy an exceptionally warm relationship, which is the fruit of deep affinities and the unwavering trust between the two countries since India's independence.

Mutual benefits:-

- Indo-French naval cooperation is aimed at **securing the critical sea lanes**, the need to effectively combat security threats **piracy, trans-national crime and terrorism** and also to build security capacities in the Indian Ocean.
- The more substantive pay-off of a nautical pact with France for India is **a potential expansion of the Indian Navy's operational footprint across the Indo-Pacific region**.
 - France is the only European power with a strong military presence in both the Indian Ocean (Réunion and Mayotte) and the Pacific (French Polynesia and New Caledonia). **Its utility as a catalyst for India's cross-theatre maritime outreach is immense.**
- **Future discussions might result in the signing of a reciprocal agreement granting French naval vessels access to Indian ports for repair and resupply, and Indian vessels the right to routinely use France's Indian Ocean military bases** like Djibouti where china has a base.
- **French facilities are likely to add to India's network of nautical outposts in the IOR**, including in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Seychelles, where India plans to build and operate a military base.
- French companies, such as Dassault Aviation etc are extremely competitive and the country's **defence industry has a reliable record of production and supply** with firms having particular expertise in navigating India's defence market for instance the contracts for the Rafale aircraft and Scorpene submarines (Project-75).
- A nautical pact with France sends a strong message to India's geopolitical antagonists in maritime Asia. **India will be hoping for a closer engagement in the Western Indian Ocean, where France has one of the most forward-deployed armed forces in the world.**
- India's naval leadership would be keen to expand the scope and complexity of the Indo-French bilateral naval exercise VARUNA
- A partnership with the French navy in littoral South-East Asia would allow the Indian Navy to **influence the security-dynamic of the Pacific, even extending operations to the Southern Pacific Islands.**

However some concerns remain:-

- While the governments share a robust relationship, the **business relationships are weak**. Bilateral trade **languishes at about €7 billion, less than half of India's trade with Germany**. The target of €12 billion set in 2008 remains elusive.
- French FDI has picked up in recent years, but hardly does justice to the fact that there are more than 800 French enterprises in India.

Conclusion:-

- French social security laws, long-term student visas, and the facility to work for two-three years to pay off student loans are some of the areas that need to be worked out so that more effective cooperation can take place between the two countries.

Q) A unique initiative by the governments of India, Bangladesh and Myanmar, "border haats" have been introduced to facilitate cross-border trade. Analyse the impact of this initiative. (250 Words)

Background:-

- In order to improve the livelihoods of the villagers across the international border of the north eastern states, the governments of the border-sharing countries of India, Myanmar and Bangladesh have introduced the concept of "border haats."

Border haats:-

- Haat means market.
- Border haats are specially designed marketplaces along the border of two countries which aim at promoting the well-being of the people dwelling in remote areas across the borders of the two countries **by establishing traditional systems of marketing the local produce through local markets.**
- Currently, four border haats are operational along the India–Bangladesh border.
- The commodities sold in the designated border haats are exempted from custom duties and other duties/taxes levied by the concerned authorities of both countries.

Impact:-

- **Positive :-**
 - Border areas are almost always also remote areas, and residents do not have easy access to commercial centres in the heartlands. **Hence, border haats are seen as a good alternative.**
 - **The economic condition of the vendors has also increased overtime and, consequently, there is pressure on the competent authorities to issue fresh licenses to new vendors, or to give new vendors the opportunity to sell products by rotation.**
 - **The border haat has been successful in improving the economic and social condition of the villagers involved as well.**
 - Border haats are proven to have **great potential to reduce informal trade.**
 - As per data furnished by the concerned State Governments, **cash trade equivalent to Indian Rupees 1686.62 lakhs was carried out at the said four border haats in the five year period ending 2015-16.**
 - **The socio-cultural ties of cross-border residents also provide an impetus for greater economic engagement.**
 - Border trade encourages familiarity and trust between communities. Much of the border trade happens through the barter system shows the mutual understanding and good faith.
 - Also, it has been noticed that as border trade improves, border smuggling usually diminishes as well.

- **These haats are also used by people for meeting with relatives** as no passport is required to enter the haats.
- Bangladesh and India have agreed in **principle to set up more border haats (markets) along the common borders of the two countries in future considering the local demand**
- **Negatives/concerns:-**
 - There are no border haats in operation along the Bhutan and Myanmar borders.
 - Border trade happens on a much smaller scale and contributes only a fraction to the overall bilateral trade.
 - Of course, border haats alone will not be enough. Political stability and infrastructure development are still a concern.
 - The trade is in favour of India with respect to Bangladesh so trade deficit is yet to be reduced in such pace due to various barriers, including insufficient infrastructures and various non-tariff barriers.

Conclusion:-

- Overall, while there has been significant progress, there is still a whole lot more than needs to be done before the full potential of border trade can be leveraged in a manner that benefits not only border residents but also neighbouring countries and the region at large.

Q) It is in India's best interests to have a strong World Trade Organisation. Analyse. (250 Words)

Background:-

- The rhetoric against free-trade and economic liberalisation in the West has become stronger especially Post Brexit and US advocating protectionist tendencies
- The recent announcement of US to impose higher tariff rates of 25% and 10% on steel and aluminium respectively has seriously questioned the authority of WTO especially when the multilateral trading regime, is severely crippled to take forward the trade qualizingion programme because of disagreements between its member states.

Why strong WTO is in India's best interests ?

- A rule based multilateral trading regime based on principles of non-discrimination, uniformly applied through an effective dispute resolution mechanism is critical for developing countries like India.
- The WTO system needs to be strengthened and not scorned especially in the view of rising protectionism, unilateralism and mercantilist tendencies around the globe today.
- **India has taken full advantage of the WTO flexibilities to enact a patent law that does not allow evergreening of patents on drugs** (i.e. pharmaceutical companies extending their patent protection through minor incremental improvements that scientifically do not qualify as an invention). This has been judicially attested in the case Novartis vs Union of India.

- An integral part of the same WTO agreement, is the Doha declaration on TRIPS and public health that clearly underlines the importance of accessibility of medicines. Further, the recent amendment of the TRIPS agreement has secured developing countries a legal pathway to access affordable medicines.
- **Developing countries like India have used the same Dispute settlement body to hold countries like the US accountable under the same WTO rules.** India has used the dispute settlement body 23 times to safeguard its interest and its complaints have often been upheld against powerful developed countries like the US.
- **India had to make certain changes in its policy as a result of losing certain WTO disputes.**
 - India-Autos case is a good example, where due to an adverse WTO ruling and India emerged as a major player in the global automobile market.
 - Similarly, in the India-US Solar panel case, the DSB fully respected India's goal to move towards clean energy.
- **WTO rules become critical for such international trade to ensure that everyone holds up to their end of the bargain.**
- **Food security:-**
 - **India needs to look for alternative solutions within the existing WTO rules.**
 - For example, WTO rules do not prohibit countries from giving direct income support to farmers provided it is not linked to production. Thus, the money that India spends on procuring food directly from farmers can be given to them as cash-transfers de-linked to production.
- **Due to economic globalisation and trade liberalisation as enshrined in WTO the focus has moved towards and global economy is getting more democratised.** India's share in the global GDP has doubled to an estimated 7.3% in 2016 from 3.6% in 1990.
- Also **trade liberalisation has had a positive impact on poverty reduction** in India.
- There have been other advantages to India through special safeguard mechanisms as well. So WTO needs reforms but that does not mean the organisation need to be dismantled all together.

Q) Examine the key objectives of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the challenges it faces today. (250 Words)

Background:-

- The key idea of the ISA is to harmonize and aggregate demand for solar finance, solar technologies, innovation, research and development, and capacity building. The ISA aims to mobilise \$1 trillion low-cost financing for massive deployment of solar energy by 2030 and bring together 121 countries that lie between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn that receive plenty of sunshine and are mostly developing nations.

Objectives:-

- **Mobilising more than \$1 trillion of investments by 2030** for massive deployment of solar energy
- **Global deployment of over 1,000GW of solar generation capacity**

- **Making solar energy available at affordable rates**, create solar grids and establish solar credit mechanism
- **Reducing the cost of finance** and cost of technology
- **Enhancing energy security** and sustainable development
- Addressing common as well as specific obstacles that lie in the way of rapid and massive scaling up of solar energy in these countries
- Act as a broader platform for deep diplomatic engagement on crucial developmental issues.

Challenges :-

- **Attracting investments to fund the projects:-**
 - Though funding is expected to come from individual countries, international organisations, non-governmental organisations and multilateral development banks, securing adequate financing will continue to remain a challenge.
- One of the foremost objectives of the ISA has been to undertake joint efforts to reduce the cost of finance and technology, besides mobilising more than \$ 1 trillion worth of investments needed by 2030 for the deployment of solar energy. **While the cost of solar installations has been decreasing worldwide, it still remains high in many of the ISA countries.**
- **Increase risks for developers and investors :-**
 - **Developing countries, especially in Africa, are still left out or stuck with low-tech options, despite their significantly larger solar potential.** These nascent markets are seen as too disaggregated and high risk for investors.
- Factors continue to block the rapid scale-up of solar energy
 - **Financing is still too costly for developers**
 - **Solar-related plans and policies are often incoherent**
 - India can neither supply technology nor provide the financing needed for the massive capacity addition envisaged by the ISA.
 - Under pressure from local manufacturers, **India plans to slap a safeguard duty on solar equipment imports, but it lacks domestic manufacturing capacity to meet the equipment requirements** of the envisaged capacity addition in solar.
 - **There is insufficient research and development (R&D) investment in solar.**
- There is also a perception that the alliance has not transcended into becoming a truly global institution.
 - There is a sense that the alliance is more a platform for some countries to showcase their technologies and programmes. Many countries are still trying to figure out how to use the alliance. **Many of these countries have poor technical capabilities so they do not know how best to leverage this new platform.**
 - **The more proximate danger is that 121 potential member countries get caught up in a battle over legal form, membership rights, and giving precedence to procedure over pragmatism.**
- It is unlikely to give any big push to solar energy itself. **This is because mobilising financial resources for additions to global solar capacity has become tougher after the United States backed out from the Paris climate agreement.**
- There are concerns about **whether the ISA can metamorphose from an idea to a truly international, collaborative, cooperative body** that delivers real action and change.
- Despite its rather rapid transition from idea to reality and a roster of programmes, **there is a sense that the ISA is not moving fast enough on action.**
- The longer-term issue is **whether it devolves into a bloated bureaucracy.**

Way forward:-

- A multi-country foreign exchange hedging facility could remove one of the biggest contributors to higher costs of finance for countries whose currencies are not pegged to internationally traded currencies.
- **Investors could also reduce their exposure to risk by investing in bankable but coordinated portfolios of projects across several markets**
- **There needs to be collaborative, cross-country Research and development**, which ISA hopes to facilitate.

Conclusion:-

- There is great optimism that the solar alliance would help in pushing 'power for all' into a more realistic realm. Furthermore, the ISA could be greatly beneficial in boosting technology transfer and emphasising the need for greater storage technologies.
- India too would benefit immensely from the Alliance. Not only would it facilitate it in its endeavor to meet its commitments under the Paris Agreement, but would also allow it to take a leadership role in the developing world.

Q) As two pluralistic democracies with a firm belief in a multipolar world order and in the future of Eurasia, India and France have numerous strategic convergences. Discuss. (250 Words)

Background:-

- India and France are celebrating 20 years of partnership. The accord signed in 1998 between the two countries is one of the oldest "strategic partnerships" that India has.
- Both countries share a perspective that the new world order has to be a genuine multipolar world order and bilateral relationship is poised to grow in a multi-faceted manner.

Multiple strategic convergences:-

Though in recent years the term "strategic partnership" has been devalued by the multiplication of such accords, in the Indo-French case, **the 1998 momentum has been regularly sustained by new initiatives.**

1.Geopolitical:-

- **The Joint Vision Statement on the Indian Ocean Region is clearly aimed at countering China's growing presence in the region.**
- India knows it needs to diversify its diplomatic relations if it wants to play a major role in the world. An example: **for India's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region, France could also be a crucial partner.**
 - Faced with a growing geopolitical turbulence and more aggressive maritime manoeuvring, India and France are eager to expand their strategic engagement in the Indo-Pacific

2.Environment and climate change:-

- Environment and climate change are another arena of cooperation, where both India and France have shown a preference for result-oriented action.
- The International Solar Alliance is the result of such a partnership. The success of the solar alliance could provide the blueprint for future partnerships in other spheres as well.
- Joint ventures on climate change cooperation are reactions to the U.S. abdicating its role by announcing its pullout from the Paris accord.

3. Defence:

- The strategic depth and maturity of the ties between the two countries is evident from the expansion of the defence cooperation between the two countries.
- The reciprocal logistics support agreement in defence cooperation, is a signal to Russia and to the U.S.-led alliance that both **India and France feel the need to diversify strategic postures beyond their current choices.**
- French companies, such as Dassault Aviation etc are extremely competitive and the country's **defence industry has a reliable record of production and supply** with firms having particular expertise in navigating India's defence market for instance the contracts for the Rafale aircraft and Scorpene submarines (Project-75).
- The **Rafale fighter deal will soon prove to be a game-changer**, partly due to the offset clauses forcing France to reinvest in India 50 per cent of the total deal's amount, but also for India's western and northern fronts.
- Both sides also announced a **new phase of cooperation in space security focussed on the maritime domain**
- Strategic ties have been given further boost by the agreement on **intelligence-sharing** and cooperation on investigations and judicial processes.
- It would make economic and strategic sense for India to partner with France in more futuristic research projects such as a fifth-generation combat aircraft or an armed drone

4. Maritime security:-

- The cooperation between India and France is crucial to maintain the safety of international sea lanes for unimpeded commerce and communications in accordance with international law, for countering maritime terrorism and piracy, for building maritime domain awareness, for capacity building and for greater coordination in regional/international fora in the region.
- The more substantive pay-off of a nautical pact with France for India is **a potential expansion of the Indian Navy's operational footprint across the Indo-Pacific region.**
 - France is the only European power with a strong military presence in both the Indian Ocean (Réunion and Mayotte) and the Pacific (French Polynesia and New Caledonia). **Its utility as a catalyst for India's cross-theatre maritime outreach is immense**
- **Shared maritime vision:-**
 - seeks to uphold the law of the sea in the Indian Ocean
 - Prevent the kind of military unilateralism that has come to grip the Western Pacific
 - Secure the sea lines of communication
 - Respond to humanitarian disasters and
 - Promote sustainable **blue economy**

5. Political and international :-

- By bringing 61 countries into the ISA, India and France are proposing an alternative leadership model for the less developed world.
- As France emerges as the driving force of a rejuvenated Europe and India increases its global engagement, a partnership between the two makes sense.
- No major political differences exist between the two countries. France has been constantly supportive of India, particularly so for a permanent seat for India in the UN Security Council,
- As a leading Western power with shared political values, France is a more credible partner for India in **constructing a more equitable world order** through a new concert of global powers.

6.Economic:-

- Both the countries declared they would ensure cheaper solar energy and increase avenues for financing.
- \$1 trillion is needed to reach the ISA goals by 2030 and India and France have so far committed \$1.4 billion and \$1.3 billion, respectively
- France shown comprehension for India's nuclear policy.
- It supported India's nuclear programme, helped mitigate the effects of post-Pokhran 2 sanctions as well as negotiated the civil nuclear deal with the US.

7.Military:-

- France in contrast to US, Britain, Russia has made *a clear choice in favour of India over the alliance with Pakistan military.*

Concerns in the relations:-

- India's solar power tariffs stand at about Rs. 2.40 a unit and there is little scope to make the domestic industry profitable unless the cost of solar panels and other components are brought down drastically.
- More thermal power, for which tariffs are higher is being produced than the demand.
- Negotiations between India and France for the Jaitapur plant have made very slow progress. While the two countries have committed to start construction by end-2018, they have missed deadlines multiple times.
- Bilateral cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region too is more symbolic than substantive today, and much will depend on how closely the Indian and French navies and intelligence work together in the future.
- The presumed joint message to Beijing may also be blurred by France's parallel commitment to the Belt and Road Initiative with China.
- India-France trade hovers around \$8 billion, which amounts to half of India's trade with the U.K. or Germany.

Way ahead:-

- India's naval leadership would be keen to expand the scope and complexity of the Indo-French bilateral naval exercise VARUNA.
- A partnership with the French navy in littoral South-East Asia would allow the Indian Navy to **influence the security-dynamic of the Pacific, even extending operations to the Southern Pacific Islands.**

- Arianespace of France has been the major provider of launch services to Indian geo-Stationary satellites. Further space cooperation need to be explored.

Conclusion:-

- French social security laws, long-term student visas, and the facility to work for two-three years to pay off student loans are some of the areas that need to be worked out so that more effective cooperation can take place between the two countries.

Q) In the light of China's model of a new order and the U.S.'s commitment to the existing order, do you think India can and should strive to establish its own new order? If yes, what should be its nature and priorities? Analyse. (250 Words)

Background:-

- The world is in transition stage where the influence of US is slowly fading down and rise of China is taking place. At the same time other countries like India, Japan, Germany are also playing a significant role. So it is necessary to analyse India's role in this new order.

Why India should strive to have a new order:-

- In the recently concluded ASEAN-India Summit countries in the region **questioned the benefits of China's model of a new order and the U.S.'s commitment to the existing order and considered India as a balancing factor.**
- **China's aggressive approach** with respect to South China sea and rejection of the international tribunal award, Belt and road initiative slowly involving in the economic domains of multiple countries is leading to countries feeling insecure.
- **Similarly US approach in the recent years** welcoming protectionism, pulling out of important agreements like Paris accord, TPP, planning to build Mexican wall and hard approach towards immigrants is raising concerns amongst the countries.
- **India has already had experience in leadership by playing a significant role in multiple forums like SAARC, BRICS, ASEAN etc.**
- **India is one of the fastest economies in the world with huge demographic dividend.**
- **Global equitable sustainable development, which is the basis of the ISA, suggests a 'third' way to the inequality and environmental damage** characterising the current U.S. and China-led models. This vision follows from India's call for climate justice, which reframes climate change as a social and not a physical problem.
- **India with its non alignment policy, nuclear policy has gained enormous trust from countries all over the world**

Nature and priorities of this new order :-

- India needs to push for infrastructure, e-commerce, human capital and technology development to position itself in the emerging global economic structure which must operate within global ecological limits, and as a cyber global power.
- India needs to focus on having good relations with both China and US rather than a confronting approach
- **Balance relations with China :-**
 - **India and China have together been questioning the injustice of current global rules.** They, along with other BRICS members, set up the BRICS Development Bank and established the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement. **In 2015, China launched the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank of which India is the second largest shareholder.**
 - **The RCEP, dominated by China and India, avoids rules on labour, environment and intellectual property rights espoused by the U.S., the European Union, and Japan.**
 - **Developing countries are playing greater role:-**
 - There is an emerging clash in the United Nations, World Trade Organisation, and the climate treaty with the U.S. weakening multilateral rules by redefining what is 'fair'.
 - India still lags behind in social indicators like health with one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world, malnutrition and poor. So India needs to strengthen the development indices as well.
 - India need to limit itself to its own naval conclaves of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean and organise platforms which include China and Japan and allow for the development of Indian Ocean-centric rules of engagement.
 - It will need to strike a balance between being a part of the Quad and partnering with Russia and China
 - India needs to be very proactive in International forums like UN and WTO.
 - India should strengthen the relations with diverse groupings and strengthen regional cooperation.

TOPIC: *Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian Diaspora.*

Q) What is digital protectionism? Is digital protectionism good for India as it has been good for China so far? Analyse. (250 Words)

Background:-

- The future of globalisation is overwhelmingly digital with emails and 3D printing threatening to replace container ships, and services increasingly delivered online and across borders.
- In that context, online barriers such as the "Great Firewall" of China erected to keep out content China objects to, looks like impediments to free trade as much as to free speech.

Digital protectionism:-

- Digital protectionism is not just about data protection. It is also about localization requirements of computer installations, disclosure of computer source codes (computer operating systems) or the discriminatory treatment of digital products (music, video, software, e-books) transmitted electronically.

Chinese model:-

- In 2000, China laid the foundations of this protectionist regime with the Golden Shield Project for blocking politically sensitive information.
- It has evolved considerably since then:
 - Web censorship
 - Keeping companies like Facebook and Twitter out of the country entirely
 - Forcing foreign firms to form joint ventures with Chinese partners and transfer IP
 - Government support for Chinese firms making strategic acquisitions abroad.
- China's tech giants, Tencent, Alibaba and Baidu, have grown large enough to now compete internationally. The cumulative effect is that China now has a fair shot at taking the lead in critical future technologies, from Artificial Intelligence to electric vehicles.
- Protectionism has meant Chinese payment services like Tenpay and Alipay having over 800 million users and a combined market share of nearly 90%. The microblogging site Sina Weibo has 500 million Chinese users more than Twitter's global user base.

Digital protectionism is not very feasible for India because:-

- China's unique political and economic models make its policies inimitable which is not feasible in India.
- Any such attempt to throw up barriers would run the risk of being dangerously counterproductive. **India will be considered less attractive as an investment destination** if regulatory barriers and uncertainty are introduced
- **India's information technology companies have been successful** over the past few decades because of their openness to international trade and investment.
- **The digital economy has yet to mature.** The medium- to long-term effects of protectionist policies on innovation and growth may far outstrip any short-term benefits.
- **Multiple studies have shown the importance of innovation clusters.** Foreign competition that brings innovation capital helps build those clusters.
- **It slows innovation and productivity growth:-**
 - With advanced technologies like Artificial intelligence, Internet of things, big data etc **occupying greater role protectionism would hamper India's innovative abilities.**
- **It leads to inefficient capital allocation**
- **It limits consumers options**
- **It also promotes crony capitalism.**
- **Concerns such as user privacy are present.** Instead of digital protectionism India is looking to bring the data protection law which resolves the concerns.

Way forward:-

- The need of the hour is to look into privacy concerns and create the appropriate ecosystems for innovation which will have a far larger pay-off

Q) It is often argued that brain drain is loss to the origin country. However, new research shows that migration and resultant diaspora connections can be very important sources of brain gain. Examine how the Indian diaspora helps India in brain gain. (250 Words)

Background:-

- More than half of the high-skilled technology workers and entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley are foreign-born. Most high-skilled migrants have come from China and India. Global labour mobility particularly in high skilled jobs is escalated.
- Over 30 million Indians are living in various countries across the world, who remit over \$ 69 billion annually to the country. It is also estimated that 80,000 non-resident Indians have moved back to country over the past two years

How Indian diaspora helps India in brain gain:-

- Amount of knowledge disseminated due to immigration could go far beyond formal scientific knowledge.
 - NRIs helps to transfer advanced technology, knowledge and the best practices of education from the country they are staying.
- When researchers immigrate to the US, **more patents from the US get cited by patents from the countries of immigrants' origin and more scientific papers published in the US cite papers from the immigrants' origin country.** Sending countries gain access to technical information from their overseas community.
- In addition, **immigrants arriving from their origin countries might be better at expressing knowledge in a way that is more easily absorbed in their former homeland.**
- Skilled migrants serve as effective conduits for many forms of global exchange in a networked world: **trade, foreign direct investment, finance, knowledge, technology, entrepreneurship, cultural norms and political views.**
- Migration has promoted global diaspora networks, human capital investment, circular migration, and the transfer of technology. **This can enable policymakers to better integrate immigration in both origin and destination countries.** Global integration is generating ever greater returns for matching talent with the right job or opportunity.
- **Economic Impacts**
 - Along with benefits from remittances migrants upon return bring new skills to the country such as the ability to speak foreign languages. These new skills can help to improve the economy in the country of origin.
- A part of India's success can be attributed to the Indian Diaspora, which contributed in terms of knowledge and financial investment to India.
- The development of IT sector in India has the contribution of Indians returned from abroad as well.

- Approx 80,000 NRIs returned to India in the past two years. Some of them established their own firms and created lots of jobs.
- Difficulty in obtaining long-term work visas and slow economic growth of developed countries are also helping India in terms of brain gain.

Some concerns still remain:-

- Still there is **large pay gap**. India is offering less salaries to highly skilled professionals when compared to developed countries.
- **Push factors** like corruption, reservations, lack of infrastructure, lack of investment and lots of legal hurdles are still highly prevalent in India making it difficult to reap the benefits of brain gain to full extent.
- **Still emigration of trained professionals is high in India.**
- **Favorable policies in developed countries** are attracting talented Indians. India is not giving enough competition to attract them.

Efforts being made by India to increase brain gain:-

- **India is looking to tap Non Resident Indians to work on short term research projects in technology and science to solve local problems**, while giving soft skills training to its blue collar labour force seeking employment overseas.
- The Department of Science and Technology (DST) is all set to roll out a scheme to attract scientists from abroad on a longer term basis. **The program, called Visiting Advanced Joint Research (VAJRA) Faculty Scheme, will offer accomplished NRI scientists the opportunity to undertake research in India for a maximum period of three months every year**, while granting them the status of adjunct faculty in an Indian institution round the year.
- To connect to young overseas citizens of India, Indian government launched 'Know India' program.

Conclusion :-

- India is indeed able to turn 'Brain Drain' into 'Brain Gain'. But we have a long way to go. India should be able to attract the best talent all over the world by eliminating defects such as corruption, nepotism, red tapism etc.

TOPIC: Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

Q) The creation of the AIIB was expected to plug Asia's monumental infrastructural deficit. Critically examine if the AIIB has succeeded in becoming a credible institution that promises to make an important contribution in providing regional and global public goods. (250 Words)

[Livemint](#)

Background:-

- The AIIB is a multilateral development bank that will finance infrastructure needs in the Asia Pacific region. It is part of a broader agenda being pursued by Beijing to create new regional and global economic institutions, including the New Silk Road infrastructure fund and the BRICS led New Development Bank.

Why is AIIB necessary and its success:-

- The ADB estimates that the gap between available funding and needed funding is approximately \$800 billion annually. Asia's infrastructure demand is projected to reach \$26 trillion from 2016 to 2030. This easily outstrips the combined lending capacity of the World Bank, ADB and the AIIB, **so clearly there is a great need for the AIIB.**
- AIIB has 16 of the 20 richest countries as shareholders. **Received AAA credit rating from three major international rating agencies.**
- **AIIB's current portfolio** includes solar power plants in Egypt, flood-control projects in the Philippines, hydropower plants in Pakistan and Tajikistan, power lines in Bangladesh, a dam in Indonesia, a gas turbine plant in Myanmar, infrastructure projects in India, rail and port facilities in Oman, and gas pipelines in Azerbaijan.
- **Co-investing with other multilateral institutions has also helped remove any tinge of ill dealings in more controversial locations.**
 - For example, were the AIIB operating alone to extend development loans in Pakistan or Azerbaijan, this could be viewed as Chinese favouritism of regimes holding poor track records on human rights and other issues. Cooperation with the Asian Development Bank in Pakistan and the World Bank in Azerbaijan takes the potential stink off of these deals.
- After nearly two years, the AIIB has approved US\$3 billion (Bt98.1 billion) in loans and funded close to 20 projects.
- **India:-**
 - **India is the first country where the Bank has committed more than \$1 billion of financing.**
 - It has approved \$1.5 billion in loans to India for infrastructure-related projects in 2018. The funds will be used for investment in India's energy, roads and urban development projects.
 - It also includes \$200 million commitment to India's National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) to spend on roads, housing and urban development. AIIB will let the Indian government decide how to use that money.
- **The AIIB is a culmination of China's incessant articulation of the concerns of the emerging economies,** which felt they were not being given an adequate say in institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.
- **AIIB is the consequence of the inability of the institutions** like World Bank or ADB to undergo change to suit changing times
- **AIIB complements the existing avenues of multilateral project finance** by creating a corpus of funds specifically for infrastructure development.
- The second major implication of the **AIIB is a re-ordering of the global balance of power** around itself.
- **The mostly non-regional commitment of these major economies to the AIIB is indicative of the bank's positive appeal** to the global community as a financial institution.
- **Its commitment to infrastructure building is expected to be a trigger for generating fresh economic momentum** at a time when many countries face slower or zero economic growth because of the rising trend of anti-globalization and protectionism. Indeed, in this context, the AIIB can be seen as a forum and initiative for taking forward globalization.

Concerns remain:-

- **AIIB is China led.** It is the major share holder. Policies of AIIB will be heavily influenced by China. It might not represent everyone's interest.
- **The AIIB as a body is helping China to bolster its One Belt One Road (OBOR) policy,** which seeks to create a Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road by increasing connectivity among countries.
 - For example, the AIIB-financed Pakistan motorway project is part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
- Under the auspices of the AIIB, **China has therefore been able to advance its soft power,** expanding its economic interests while gaining acceptance on the world stage.

Conclusion:-

- If the bank maintains its commitment to exemplary governance and to financing only projects that meet its high environmental standards, experts expect it to make a major contribution to Asia's future.

Q) In the World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index 2017-18 report, which measures the extent to which 113 countries have adhered to the rule of law in that period, the survey found that 71 out of the 113 countries have dropped in score. Does this indicate failure of international bodies, laws and conventions in protecting human rights across the world? Examine. (250 Words)

Background:-

- World Justice Project along with others such as the Amnesty International Annual Report 2017-18, indicates the serious erosion of international human rights law in recent times.

International institutions and human rights:-

- The ideals of justice, equality, and human rights for all, enshrined in the Universal declaration of human rights and other international treaties, are the building blocks of international human rights law.
- There are **concerted efforts to advocate the inclusion of international human rights provisions in the local laws of countries** and more effective implementation and monitoring.
- **Treaty bodies assess states obligations** to incorporate these norms into national laws, review compliance, and provide recommendations.
- **Regional and supranational courts such as the Inter-American, African and European courts of human rights oversee the fulfilment of obligations of regional treaties.**
- International and mixed judicial tribunals have been established to provide justice in mass atrocities, culminating in the establishment of the International Criminal Court.

However international institutions have failed to protect human rights :-

- **Protecting human rights focuses on the short-term rather than long term.** States are far less willing to engage with protection activities because they impact upon the immediate situation within a country.
- **Weakness of UN human rights bodies :-**
 - While they are set up for dialogue and engagement, **they lack the teeth to effectively protect rights where a state is not willing to cooperate.**
 - Unlike the Security Council, human rights bodies do not have enforcement powers.
 - Unlike international financial institutions, the UN human rights machinery does not have any leverage over states that fail to comply with their obligations.
 - The multiple institutions lack a common hierarchical superior unlike national courts and thus provide conflicting interpretations of human rights, and cannot compel nations to pay attention to them.
 - **Failure of UN:-**
 - The United Nations has often failed to live up to its responsibility to promote human rights, with past incidents of killing and displacement of civilians in Darfur and latest crisis in Syria
 - There is little evidence that human rights treaties, on the whole, have improved the wellbeing of people
- **Politicisation is the other main failing within the international human rights system**
- **Failure of conventions and laws:-**
 - The universal declaration was not a treaty in the formal sense: no one at the time believed that it created legally binding obligations.
 - The rights were described in vague, aspirational terms, which could be interpreted in multiple ways, and national governments even the liberal democracies were wary of binding legal obligations.
 - **The US did not commit itself to eliminating racial segregation, and Britain and France did not commit themselves to liberating the subject populations in their colonies.**
 - The failure of the international human rights legal regime **is rooted in the difficulty of reducing the ideal of “good governance”** to a set of clearly defined rules that can be interpreted and applied by trusted institutions.
 - Multilateral protections such as the U.N. Refugee Convention and the U.N. Convention Against Torture, and specialized mechanisms such as those protecting people in peril at sea, **did not succeed in preventing or containing humanitarian crises, nor in protecting civilians against gross human rights violations, much less in fostering accountability for atrocities.**
- **Failure of countries to uphold international conventions :-**
 - **Each of the six major human rights treaties has been ratified by more than 150 countries, yet many of them remain hostile to human rights.** This raises the question of how much human rights law has actually influenced the behaviour of governments.
 - Child labour exists in countries that have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Uzbekistan, Tanzania
 - Saudi Arabia ratified the treaty banning discrimination against women in 2007, and yet by law subordinates women to men in all areas of life.
 - Philippines, for instance, imposed conditions on the UN Special Rapporteur who was to investigate the alleged extrajudicial killings of suspected drug dealers since President Duterte took office.

- In Myanmar, the UN Special Rapporteur who was to investigate the claims of persecution against the Rohingya was denied all access to the country.
- **National governments failure:-**
 - In much of the Islamic world, women lack equality, religious dissenters are persecuted and political freedoms are curtailed.
 - The Chinese model of development, which combines political repression and assault on civil liberties and economic liberalism, has attracted numerous admirers in the developing world.
 - Political authoritarianism has gained ground in Russia, Turkey, Hungary and Venezuela.
 - Backlashes against LGBT rights have taken place in countries as diverse as Russia and Nigeria.
 - The traditional champions of human rights Europe and the United States have floundered.
 - Europe has turned inward as it has struggled with a sovereign debt crisis, xenophobia towards its Muslim communities and disillusionment with Brussels.
 - The United States, which used torture in the years after 9/11 and continues to kill civilians with drone strikes, has lost much of its moral authority. Even age-old scourges such as slavery continue to exist.
 - There is increasing hostility towards civil society organisations and hardening of attitudes towards minorities in Poland and Hungary.
 - The rise of majoritarian attitudes, hate speech and hate crimes is a growing concern, including in India.
 - Mass atrocities (genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity) are or have been committed in Iraq, Myanmar, Central African Republic, and Burundi. It is not just the erosion of human rights but the normalisation of it that is of concern.
 - Amnesty reported that in 2015 more than 98 states tortured or ill-treated people, and at least 30 countries “illegally forced refugees to return to countries where they would be in danger.” Governments or armed groups in at least 18 countries committed war crimes or other violations of war.

Conclusion:-

- Effective engagement with international human rights law is necessary in an era where rights are increasingly being stifled in many countries.

GENERAL STUDIES PAPER 3

TOPIC: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment.

Q) In August 2017, the draft Code on Wages Bill 2017 was introduced in the Lok Sabha. Analyse its features and significance. (250 Words)

Background:-

- To bring a wave of labour reforms this year, the government seeks to push its first labour code Wage Code Bill that would enable it to set benchmark minimum wage for different regions.

Draft code on wages bill 2017:-

Features:-

- The bill seeks to combine Payment of Wages Act, 1936, the Minimum Wages Act, 1949, the Payment of Bonus Act, 1965, and the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, into one code.
- **Concept of statutory national minimum wage:-**
 - The bill proposes a **concept of statutory National Minimum Wage for different geographical areas**. It will ensure that no State fixes the minimum wage below the benchmark decided by the Centre for that particular area.
 - Further, the central government may set separate national minimum wages for different states or regions of the country.
 - Minimum wages must be revised by the central or state governments at an interval of five years.
- - The overtime rate will be at least twice the normal rate of wages of the employee.
- **Penalties:-**
 - The Code specifies penalties for offences committed by an employer, such as
 - (i) paying less than the due wages, or
 - (ii) for contravening any provision of the Code.
 - **Advisory Board:**
 - The central and state governments will constitute their respective advisory boards having representation from employees, employers and independent persons.
 - Further, one-third of the total members will be women.
 - **The boards will advise the respective governments on aspects including: (i) fixation of minimum wages, and (ii) increasing employment opportunities for women.** The code provides for the consultative mechanism for determining the national minimum wage.
 - **Working hours:**
 - The central or state governments will fix the number of hours that will constitute a working day. Further a day of rest for employees every week. The amount of overtime will be at least twice the normal wage of the employee
 - **Authority of centre and states**
 - The Code on Wages Act will be applicable to all industry, trade, business, and manufacturing or occupation establishments – including government as well as private ones.
 - The central government will make wage related decisions / rules for central government bodies, railways, mines, oil fields etc. For other establishments, state governments will make rules.

Significance:-

- Codification of labour laws **will remove the multiplicity of definitions and authorities**, leading to **ease of compliance** without compromising wage security and **social security to workers**.

- **Uniformity of coverage:-**
 - The new Code on Wages will **ensure minimum wages to all and timely payment to employees** irrespective of the sector without any wage ceiling.
 - This bill is expected to treat contract labour on par with regular employee to have dignified life.
- It also **provides for an appellate authority between the claim authority and the judicial forum which will lead to speedy, cheaper and efficient redressal of grievances** and settlement of claims.
- **Reduction of unemployment:-**
 - For instance, "Seattle's Minimum Wage Experience 2015-16", a 2017 study by researchers at the University of California Berkeley, found that since the city raised its minimum wage in 2015, unemployment dropped from 4.3% to 3.3%
- The bill is expected to benefit over 4 crore employees across the country.
- The bill has chosen digital mode/cheques as the mode of payment of wages. **This would promote digitization and extend wage and social security to the worker.**
- **It also provides for rationalisation of penalties for different types of violations**
- **Will ensure decent Minimum wage** for all which will result into increase in disposable incomes in turn help in eradicating Poverty, hunger to achieve SDGs.
- Multiplicity of definitions will be removed through this change.
- The wage conditions of unskilled workers will improve.
- It Will ensure humane working conditions through minimum working hours, overtime etc. and prevent exploitation of labour.
- Can lead to formalisation of economy.
- The Code prohibits gender discrimination on wage-related matters.
- Also help in reduce regionalism by reducing wage disparity across different regions.

Conclusion:-

- Some of the issues like what would the states which already provide higher minimum wage than the proposed national minimum wage do , Time period for revising minimum wage is fixed at 5 years so there is no flexibility. If these are resolved the code would change the face of Indian economy.

Q) What are Letters of Undertaking (LoUs) and letters of comforts (LoCs) that are issued by banks? Recently the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) banned both LoUs and LoCs. Examine the causes and consequences. (250 Words)

Background:-

- With use of Letters of Undertaking (LoUs), illegally used by companies of Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi to defraud the Punjab national bank recently RBI decided to discontinue the practice of issuance of LoUs and letters of comforts (LoCs) .

LoU's:-

- An LoU is a document whereby the issuing bank guarantees its customer's payment obligation to an overseas supplier.
- A letter of comfort is typically provided by a bank to assure the financial soundness of its customer to repay its debt.
- **Difference between LOU and LOC**

Particular	Letter Of Comfort	Letter Of Undertaking
Definition	LoC in the banking parlance is referred to a document which is provided by a person, typically an affiliate (such as the holding / parent company) of the borrower ("LoC Provider") assuring the financial soundness of the borrower to repay its debt(s).	A contract to perform the promise, or discharge the liability, of a third person in case of his default
Use	Between Branches or Partner Subsidiary	Inter-Bank
Basel III	Low Provisioning	High Provisioning
Charges to Customer	Low	High

-

Why RBI banned these?

- These LoUs are cheap loans that firms get on the banks credit (worthiness), and not their own. It So banning LoUs has been a long-pending reform.
- The multiple banking frauds unearthed since the Modi-Choksi case have revealed several loopholes in India's banking, which the RBI is now looking to plug.
- In recent years, **loans taken abroad have been cheaper than those taken in India**. As was alleged in the Rotomac case, promoter of the company used these cheap foreign loans for **purposes other than what they were meant for, i.e., importing goods**.
- **Global banks prefer letters of credit (LC) to LoUs**. The RBI, too, has kept the LC option open.
- **As Non performing assets are piling up in banks this move was much needed**.

What are the consequences of this move?

- **Demerits:-**
 - **It is likely to affect trade finance and the rupee.**
 - **Importers will have to buy a lot more dollars to pay to overseas suppliers.** This, in turn, may weaken the rupee significantly and put further pressure on importers. A weaker rupee will make imports costlier.

- **Importers**, especially in the gem and jewellery sector, will have a tough time to finance their import business
- As importers can't delay payments, they are forced to buy dollars from the spot and forward market.
- **The RBI's move could be especially disastrous at a time when Indian exporters are still limping back to growth.** This is because many Indian exporters also import their inputs
- Banks had tightened the rules for issuing LoUs and other guarantees. They were also asking for more documents.
- Cost of credit could be on its way up
- Stocks of public sector banks fell over 2 percent in early trade.
- **The cost pressure will rise on such companies.** The gems and jewellery sector, in particular, is already suffering due to the drying up of credit in wake of the PNB fraud. It alone accounts for 13% of India's exports.
- **Merits:-**
 - Bankers say the scrapping of LoU/LoC is unlikely to impact trade credit as banks can issue Letters of Credit (LC) and Bank Guarantees for trade credits for imports.
 - **The public trust on banking sector will not be lost**

Conclusion:-

- This move by RBI is the first step and need to be followed by various banking reforms to resolve the woes of the present banking sector

Q) What's the difference between blue economy and blue-water economy with respect to maritime diplomacy? Examine why both blue economy and blue-water economy are important for India. (250 Words)

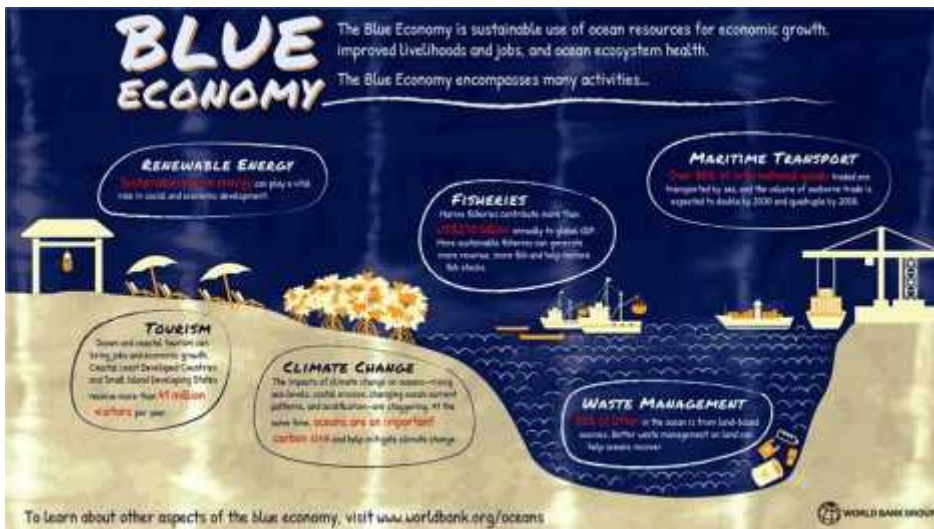
Background:-

- India has the seventh longest coastline in Asia at 7,516.6 km, covering nine states and two union territories. These states are not only highly vulnerable to natural disasters, lacking in resilience and adaptive capacity, but are also faced with development deficits, to begin with.
- This can change when India focuses on being blue economy, blue water economy and begins to take a more proactive role in global discussions on ocean resources.

Blue economy:-

- The 'Blue Economy' or the 'Oceans Economy' is defined by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) as
- A subset of, and complement to, the evolving development paradigm emphasising greener and more sustainable and inclusive economic paths.
- It seeks to expand the economic frontiers of coastal countries beyond their land territories.
- The Oceans Economy encompasses a sustainable economy for the ocean-based marine environment, related biodiversity, ecosystems, species and genetic resources including marine

living organisms and natural resources in the seabed while ensuring their sustainable use and hence, conservation.



- ‘Blue economy’ is the integration of ocean economy development with values of social inclusion and environmental sustainability, along with dynamic and innovative business models.

Blue water economy:-

- There is no agreed definition of ‘Blue-Water Economy’. It largely denotes economic activities conducted on high seas which include marine transportation, deep sea fishing and deep sea mineral explorations.

Differences:-

- The blue economy, as distinct from the blue-water economy, encompasses in it the “**green economy**”, with focus on the environment, and the “**ocean economy**” or “**coastal economy**”, with its emphasis on complementarities among coastal and island states for sustenance and sustainable development.

Why both are important?

- In the development of oceans, **blue economy adopts the principles of green economy, including low carbon emissions, resource efficiency, and social inclusion. It also features in Goal 14 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**
- For India, blue economy extends beyond being merely an economic and environmental proposition. **It presents India with an unprecedented opportunity to meet its national objectives, strengthen connectivity with neighbours, and exert influence in the surrounding regions.**
- For a country struggling to meet its development objectives, **blue economy offers another path in the pursuit of growth and development, and ecological sustainability**
- Blue economic development, **focused on livelihood generation, achieving energy security, building ecological resilience, and improving health and living standards of coastal**

communities, would reinforce and strengthen the efforts of the Indian government as it strives to achieve the SDGs by 2030, effective disaster management, coastal conservation etc.

- If India is to further its blue economy strategy, it must pay particular attention to strengthening connectivity. For one, **sea routes in the Indian Ocean carry up to 90 percent of India's trade. This is only one of the reasons why sea-route and inland water connectivity assumes importance for India in its push to nurture its blue economy.**
- Other significant benefits include employment generation, and a boost to the country's industrial development through the provision of a more fuel-efficient, cheaper and reliable mode of transportation.
- **Regional and Global Influence:-**
 - The geopolitical dynamics in the Indian Ocean Region, from which the development of blue economy cannot be detached.
 - India has been growing uneasy about Beijing's perceived 'String of Pearls' strategy in the Indian Ocean. India aims to not only secure its own territory but also be able to project power farther than its shores.
 - India is expected to import 90 percent of its crude oil by 2030, and its coal imports are expected to more than double to 300 million tonnes by 2040. **India needs to be able to protect the energy routes to bring these resources to its shores.**
- Mineral exploration would boost Indian economy further and also help in the nutrition aspect
- **Coastal shipping:-**
 - The Indian government has initiated several measures to promote coastal shipping and modernize India's ports so that ports become drivers of economic growth.
 - Globally countries such as China and Netherlands have achieved a modal share of 24 percent for coastal shipping and inland water navigation. **India's Sagarmala Project envisages doubling the current share of coastal shipping in India's overall modal mix from six percent to 12 percent by 2025.**

Way forward:-

- For India, the marine services sector could be the backbone of its blue economy. In line with the 'Digital India' and 'Make in India' initiatives **India must focus on marine ICTs, and transport (shipping) and communication services, and the creation of a knowledge hub for marine research and development, alongside the more traditional sectors like fisheries and coastal tourism.**
- The creation of the Coastal Economic Zones (CEZs) and the 'Sagarmala Project' are welcome moves in this direction. **However, further efforts will be required to avoid fragmentation and overlapping of policies, while also creating a sustainable framework for the development of connectivity infrastructure.**

Conclusion:-

- Principles of blue economy, therefore, will be important in creating complementarity between discrete plans and policies, which have a common broad objective of sustainable ocean development.

Q) Why India's banking sector is among the most vulnerable in G-20 economies today? Analyse. (250 Words)

Background:-

- With growing size of the **Indian economy**, the size of the banks and other financial institutions have also become large enough to leave a huge contagion, in case things go wrong.
- Alleged fraudulent transactions worth Rs 11,300 crore from a single branch of the Punjab National Bank with the connivance of the junior official shows how vulnerable the Indian banks, especially those in the public sector have become, with a dangerous potential contagion in the country's financial system.

Reasons for banking sector to be vulnerable are:-

- India's banking sector lags those of most other large economies **in terms of capital adequacy**. India fares poorly in this regard despite a relatively conservative loan-to-deposit ratio.
- If pile of bad loans grows even bigger, India's capital adequacy ratio could slip to dangerously low levels despite a generous bank recapitalization announced late last year by the Union government.
- Stress tests by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) show that **faced with adverse financial shocks, Indian banks may find themselves to be much more vulnerable** than their counterparts in other large emerging markets.
- The Nayak committee had flagged the **issue of inadequate compensation for top management in state-owned banks compared to peers in private banks**. This affects the ability of state-owned banks to attract and retain talent.
- While **overall employee costs of state-owned banks remain bloated**, top executive compensation continues to suffer, pointing towards inefficient functioning.
- The **newly constituted Banks Board Bureau too has been unable to make much of an impact**.
- **Lack of effective risk management system** and a chain of command system was not there or was not followed
- The recent Nirav Modi and Rotomac scams were **a result of a failure of the procedure and technology systems**.
 - Many experts have stated that a **lack of accountability and standards in the public banking system of the country** were reasons for the occurrence of a scam of such proportions.
 - The bank's technology system was misused. The bank's internal software system was not linked with SWIFT.
- A mounting poor accounting standards and growing evidence of lax supervision

Way forward:-

- The **Nayak committee had recommended**
 - **Diluting the stake of the government in PSBs below 50%, so that banks could be freed from external vigilance** emanating from the Central Vigilance Commission, the Right to Information Act, and from government constraints on employee compensation.
 - It also proposed creation of a Bank Investment Company to act as the holding company for various PSBs.
- **IMF recommendations:-**
- Greater participation of the private sector in bank capital

- A cautious reduction in statutory liquidity requirements **and assessing the effectiveness of directed lending, would boost the system's capacity to support credit to the economy**, while reducing moral hazard and contingent fiscal liabilities.

Conclusion:-

- Unless the government undertakes structural reforms to overhaul the way in which state-owned banks are managed, they will continue to be the Achilles heel of the Indian financial system, dragging down growth and investments over the long term.

Q) Government procurement can be used to improve the nature and quality of production in the economy, and improve business culture. Analyse. (250 Words)

Background :-

- Government procurement in India is around 30% of GDP, which currently is around \$2.1 trillion.
- Public/government procurement broadly refers to the process by which government (at the Central, State and local levels), its agencies/departments and State-owned enterprises procure goods and/or services only for their own use, and not for sale/resale commercially

How can government procurement be used to improve the nature and quality of production in economy, business culture :-

- Public procurement has a significant impact as it plays a key role in the creation of both social and economic infrastructure like roads, schools, hospitals, provisions for drinking water and sanitation etc.
- If public procurements are competitive, they would result in the selection of the most efficient/competitive seller to the buyer (the Government) ensuring maximum savings for the latter and, consequently, the tax payer.
- An efficient procurement system appears as a strong element of the public expenditure management systems by helping an entity in **taking appropriate budgetary decisions and identifying the required investment opportunities**
- **China has used procurement by its state-owned enterprises (SOEs) as an effective tool for benefitting local enterprises.** Given that SOEs are major players in the Chinese economy both from production and consumption perspectives, **many producer SOEs have benefitted from procurement policies favouring local enterprises.**
- The latest Indian policy aims to encourage procurement from local suppliers with substantive local content set at a minimum of 50% of value addition.
 - The policy hopes to incentivise firms to shift to greater sourcing of inputs raw materials, intermediates and components domestically for satisfying the local content criteria necessary to qualify for preferences in public procurement.
 - This was to push the 'Make In India' initiative
 - Ensure greater flow of capital and technology into domestic services and manufacturing
 - Boost job creation locally as well as promote small enterprises.
- Privatisation per se will not lead to greater competition and **references to the case of Russia and China show that privatisation there has led to oligarchy.**
- The government of India has emphasized information technology (e-procurement) as a tool for **enhancing transparency, efficiency, and accountability in the public procurement.**

- **An effective procurement management information system (PMIS) is important for a sound and sustained procurement system.**
 - PMIS not only helps in tracking the ongoing as well as completed procurements but also provides information to any procuring entity in executing different procurement activities primarily in bid preparation and evaluation.
 - It, thus, serves as a data centre to assess and track the past tenders to identify and weed out the anticompetitive elements as well as narrow down the procurement cycle

Despite its emergence as a crucial element of good governance, the public procurement system in India continues to suffer from several weaknesses:-

- The ways in which these goods and services are purchased the procurement process can sometimes be **inefficient and opaque to citizens**. The procurement data is not easy to find or easy to understand; the policies are not always clear.
- One of the biggest challenges for the observatories in India has been **access to data**. Many states still use manual procurement, and even when they use e-procurement systems, it is not possible to get back-end data.
- **Rules are unable to counter corruption**. They do not reflect many imperatives which public procurement regimes need to satisfy to meet the complex needs of a modernising economy, especially in their tendering modes and transparency rules, which are not helpful in promoting the small scale sector.
- Besides, what is **lacking are provisions to encourage sustainable public procurement**, mechanisms to redress grievances of bidders and market access norms.
- Unlike many countries, India **does not have a comprehensive procurement legislation**, and the procurement regime in the country appears to be fragmented and inconsistent in terms of rules, regulations, and procedures
- **In addition, the system in India is aimed at achieving socio-economic developmental objectives including promotion of MSEs through price and purchase preferences and reservation of sector-specific products**. These lead to complexities due to multiple interpretations of rules and regulations at the discretion of the procuring entities.
- **Presence of anti-competitive elements**
 - The existence of anti-competitive practices by the bidders' community tends to hamper the procurement process by negating the best value of money. Competition issues in India mainly concern with collusive bidding, bid rigging, cartelization, and abuse of dominance
- **Low participation of the domestic MSEs**
 - Despite the MSEs provisions, the participation of domestic MSEs in the public procurement activities remains low in India. A

Way forward:-

- World Bank initiative centers around a set of small, civil society organizations called "procurement observatories" that have started collecting government procurement data and presenting it to the public in an understandable way. This needs to be promoted.
- Formulating a contemporary, scientific and consolidated 'public procurement policy' would be better.

TOPIC: *Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.*

Q) An inclusive financial ecosystem is quintessential to the social contract. Critically evaluate the success of recent government initiatives in strengthening and deepening financial inclusion in India. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Lack of financial inclusion is costly to society and the individual. As far as the individual is concerned, lack of financial inclusion forces the unbanked into informal banking sectors where interest rates are higher and the amount of available funds much smaller.
- **As far as the social benefits are concerned, financial inclusion increases the amount of available savings, increases efficiency of financial intermediation, and allows for tapping new business opportunities.**

Success of recent government initiatives:-

- **Jan Dhan Yojna:-**
 - With a view to increase the penetration of banking services and to ensure that all households have at least one bank account, a National Mission on Financial Inclusion named as **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojna** was formally launched 2014.
 - Within a fortnight of its launch, the scheme entered into the Guinness Book of records for opening a record number of bank accounts.
 - Large scale achievement was made by opening 29.48 crores accounts by Mid-August, 2017 out of which 17.61 crores accounts were in rural/semi-urban areas and the rest 11.87 crores in urban areas.
 - More than 44 lakh accounts have been sanctioned overdraft facility of which more than 23 lakh account holders have availed the facility involving an amount around 300 crores.
- **Insurance & Pension schemes:-**
 - Pro-poor initiatives include Atal Pension Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana and Jan Suraksha Yojana benefiting 16 crore people.
- **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojna** provides formal access of financial facilities to Non Corporate Small Business Sector. The basic objective of the scheme is to promote & ensure bank finance to unfunded segment of the Indian economy.
- **CRISIL Inclusix**
 - India's first financial inclusion index measures progress on financial inclusion down to the level of each of the 666 districts in the country. The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, and the RBI's steadfast focus on unbanked regions, have really made a difference
 - Financial inclusion has improved significantly in India. As many as 600 million deposit accounts were opened between fiscals 2013 and 2016, or twice the number between 2010 and 2013. Nearly a third of this was on account of Jan Dhan
 - On the credit side, there was a sharp 31.7 million increase in new credit or loan (banks and microfinance) accounts in the two years up to fiscal 2016, which is the most since fiscal 2013
- **The Digital India initiative, payments banks and small finance banks** have all helped improve the reach of formal financial services to economically disadvantaged sections
 - Digital platforms are likely to deliver financial services to both the unbanked and the underbanked population, especially in rural/remote regions, at a low cost, and

subsequently increase digital financial access to the vast swathes of the country's population. The use of digital channels can bring down the transaction costs in a great way

- RBI has **created a Financial Inclusion Fund (FIF) with a corpus of Rs 2,000 crore to support developmental and promotional activities for expanding the reach of banking services towards securing greater financial inclusion.** Special financial literacy campaigns have been designed for the 'new' adults (those who have recently turned 18); financial literacy training is being imparted through mass media and by financial education programmes in school curriculum.

Concerns :-

- **Jan Dhan Yojana:-**
 - Disquieting feature is that public banks, regional rural banks and 13 private lenders reported that as march 2017 around 90 lakh accounts were frozen under the PMJDY owing to inactivity.
 - Only 33 per cent of all beneficiaries were ready to use their Rupay cards.
 - Merely opening physical accounts as flag posts of financial identity won't help unless they are actively used by people for managing their money.
- **Financial literacy:-**
 - India is home to 17.5 per cent of the world's population but nearly 76 per cent of its adult population does not understand basic financial concepts.
- **Insurance policy issues:-**
 - On account of lack of awareness and failure of institutions to guide them, people buy insurance policies without planning and give up midway because they don't have money to pay premium.
 - Aggressive selling prevents agents from assessing the consistency of income streams of the buyers for servicing their policies.
 - Customers end up losing heavily as penalties are harsh. According to insurance regulator, IRDAI, in 2016, **Five years after being bought, two-thirds of the life insurance policies are no more.**
 - This shows customers are **losing huge money on account of bad financial planning.**
- **Access to Credit**
 - But despite the strong growth, only 200 million borrowers have had access to credit from formal channels This is the reason why the credit penetration index of CRISIL Inclusix remained low
- **Digital Connectivity issues :-**
 - When most of the rural areas still not having even a reliable internet facility it is difficult to push for cashless economy.

Way forward:-

- Financial inclusion can spread faster **if there is sharper focus on enhancing branch and credit penetration beyond south India. Policy makers need to continue incentivizing branch and credit penetration in districts with low CRISIL Inclusix scores.**
- **Cascade training model :-**
- **A bank undertook a project to deliver financial education training to young women in rural communities through a cascade training model** where core trainers trained peer educators, who in turn trained community members. These examples provide evidence that using a model that involves experiential learning and use of products has greater chances of success.

- To use financial services to their full potential, **low income people need products well suited to their needs and appropriate training and education for adapting to these financial services..**
- **To increase cashless transactions:-**
- To venture into the vastly untapped domestic smartphone network which is estimated to cover around 500 million users in the next five years.
- UPI has the potential to lift service delivery paradigms to the next level.

Conclusion:-

- The government is committed to its target of increasing the inclusion of every household in the financial system thus strengthening the social contract so that the masses can get all the legitimate benefits arising out of the growth of the country and also provide an extra thrust to lead the path of growth.

TOPIC: Storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints.

Q) The government has been making efforts to integrate farmers with agro-industries to ensure that they get better prices for their produce. Is contract farming a better solution in this regard? Examine the problems involved in contract farming and analyse if the draft model contract farming Act, 2018 would address these problems. (250 Words)

Introduction:-

- Government has been making efforts to integrate farmers with agro-industries to ensure that they get better prices for their produce. This is why contract farming has come to be seen as a panacea.

Contract farming is the solution :-

- Contract farming refers to an agreement between farmers and marketing firms for the production and supply of agricultural products under forward agreements, frequently at predetermined prices.
- **Famers advantage:-**
 - The contract between farmers and buyers insulates farmers from price risk, helps them develop new skills, and opens new markets.
 - Inputs and production services are often supplied by the sponsor. This is usually done on credit through advances from the sponsor.
 - Contract farming often introduces new technology and also enables farmers to learn new skills.
 - Farmers' price risk is often reduced as many contracts specify prices in advance.
 - Contract farming can open up new markets which would otherwise be unavailable to small farmers.
- **Advantages for sponsors**

- Contract farming with small farmers is more politically acceptable than, for example, production on estates.
- Working with small farmers overcomes land constraints.
- Production is more reliable than open-market purchases and the sponsoring company faces less risk by not being responsible for production.
- More consistent quality can be obtained than if purchases were made on the open market.

Problems with contact farming :-

- **Problems faced by farmers**
 - Particularly when growing new crops, **farmers face the risks of both market failure and production problems.**
 - Delay in payment of produce
 - Inefficient management or marketing problems can mean that quotas are manipulated so that not all contracted production is purchased
 - Sponsoring companies may be unreliable or **exploit a monopoly position.**
 - Typically, contract firms enter into an agreement with farmers to grow differentiated crops. This turns the firm into a sole buyer and farmers into price-takers. Contracting firms can exploit this situation to their advantage by offering lower prices to farmers.
 - The staff of sponsoring organizations may be corrupt, particularly in the allocation of quotas
 - Farmers may become indebted because of production problems and excessive advances
 - Farmers sometimes do not understand contract specifications like the quantity and quality to be produced, or the effect of price change. These market failures lead to suboptimal outcomes. Buyers may penalize farmers.
- **Problems faced by sponsors**
 - Contracted farmers may face **land constraints** due to a lack of security of tenure, thus jeopardizing sustainable long-term operations
 - Social and cultural constraints may affect farmers ability to produce to managers specifications
 - Poor management and lack of consultation with farmers may lead to farmer discontent
 - Farmers may sell outside the contract (extra-contractual marketing) thereby reducing processing factory throughput
 - Farmers may divert inputs supplied on credit to other purposes, thereby reducing yields
 - Contracting firms do not have complete information on productivity and land quality. This can lead to a situation where farmers produce below-quality crops.

Draft model contract farming act will address these issues:-

- The model Act makes a good move in the direction of promoting contract farming. Many private companies have said that they face a lot of difficulties when they approach the State for contract farming license. This Act attempts to smoothen this process.
- **Role of Agricultural Produce Marketing Committees/Marketing Boards**
 - As per the draft Model Act, contract farming will be outside the ambit of the state APMCs. **This implies that buyers need not pay market fee and commission charges to these APMCs to undertake contract farming.**
 - Further, the draft Model Act provides for establishing a state-level Contract Farming (Promotion and Facilitation) Authority to ensure implementation of the draft Model Act.

- Further, the sale and purchase of contracted produce is out of the ambit of regulation of the respective state/UT Agricultural Marketing Act.
- Under the draft Model Act, **in case of disputes between a producer and a buyer, they can:**
 - **(i) reach a mutually acceptable solution through negotiation or conciliation**
 - **(ii) refer the dispute to a dispute settlement officer designated by the state government**
 - **(iii) appeal to the Contract Farming (Promotion and Facilitation) Authority** (to be established in each state) in case they are not satisfied by the decision of the dispute settlement officer
- **Under the draft Model Act, limits of stockholding of agricultural produce will not be applicable on produce purchased under contract farming.**

Concerns about the act:-

- **The model Act requires the sponsor and the farmers to register the contracts with a registering and agreement recording committee. Registration imposes additional procedures and costs on the parties, and small and medium farmers cannot easily afford these costs.**
- **The Act also proposes price protection for farmers by determining a pre-agreed price. This will be counterproductive.**
- **The entire premise of the model contract Act seems to be aimed at creating a legal infrastructure to ensure that both parties honour the contract. This approach is flawed.**
- **Separate legal structure is not required** for contract farming as the provisions of the Indian Contract Act are sufficient to cover the necessary requirements.
- **The Act is aimed at helping agribusinesses to rake in profits.** It promotes an unequal arrangement where farmers' products would be available cheaply to these companies.
- **It also has a provision to allow companies to buy produce at lower than contracted prices citing inferior quality.**

Measures needed further:-

- **Foster more competition:**
 - The government needs to create market-based incentives for both farmers and buyers.
 - It should improve farmers connectivity to spot markets and mandis across the country. E-NAM (National Agricultural Market) is a great initiative in that direction. This would encourage contracting sponsors to raise their bids and compete to enroll farmers to secure input supplies.
 - The competition amongst sponsors would also incentivise them to offer better terms and services to farmers
- **Provide public goods:**
 - The government should maintain an information repository of farmers and contracting firms. The repository can provide details about farmers or farmer producer organizations with regard to land availability, default rate, and performance standards.
 - Similarly, details of sponsors can include services provided, requirements of crops, and the default rate. This will help farmers and sponsors to evaluate each other prior to engaging in contracts.
 - Also, the government can facilitate the establishment and enforcement of standards for crops. This will set clearer expectations regarding the contracted crop
- **Encourage softer means for enforcement:**

- Incorporating risk-sharing mechanisms in contracts, incentive schemes, repeated contracting and renegotiation options, and simplified and transparent contract terms would help in contract enforcement. **The government can educate farmers and make them more aware about contract farming and model contracts.**
- **Other recommendations**
 - These include:
 - (i) allowing direct sale of produce by farmers
 - (ii) removing fruits and vegetables out of the ambit of APMCs
 - (iii) setting-up of farmer-consumer markets

Q) Analyse the key features and issues involved in the draft Pesticides Management Bill, 2017. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Inhalation or overuse of deadly pesticides led to hospitalisation and deaths of more than thousands of farmers across the country last year. In the light of this government has **drafted Pesticides Management Bill, 2017.**

Features:-

- The Pesticides Management Bill, 2017, seeks to replace the Insecticides Act of 1968
- The bill's stated objectives are
 - Ensuring availability of quality pesticides
 - Minimizing the contamination of agricultural commodities by pesticide residue
 - Creating awareness among users regarding safe and judicious use of pesticides.
- **It puts in place detailed clauses for registration of new molecules:-**
 - The bill has tightened the guidelines for registration and licensing of new molecules.
 - It allows provisional registration of new pesticides in India in case of "national exigency" for a period of two years.
- **Includes a broader category of offences :-**
 - It also says that anyone who "uses" a pesticide contravening provisions under the Act can face punishment
 - The bill raised penalties on the sale of prohibited or spurious pesticides to Rs50 lakh and up to five years imprisonment, from the current Rs2,000 and up to three years' imprisonment.
- **Provision for paying compensation to farmers:-**
 - The proposed bill provides for paying compensation to the affected farmers or users under the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986.
- **State governments role:-**
 - According to the draft, state governments have to report all cases of poisoning to the centre on a quarterly basis and states can also ban chemical pesticides for up to six months. Currently, states can ban a chemical for up to two months.

Issues:

- **Manufactures vs farmers:-**
 - In case of any incidents, the liability will not be on manufacturers but dealers and farmers.
 - Farmers and farm workers are actually the victims of an aggressive promotion of pesticides industry and making any provisions to penalise them would not be justifiable.
 - Farmers pointed out the bill is not clear on liability and how will they be compensated at times when production fall due to use of spurious pesticide.
 - It does not address the core issues of applying penal provisions on companies marketing pesticides and not just manufacturing them and somewhat absolves the pesticide inspector from guilt
- **Adverse effect of pesticides neglected:-**
 - The draft also encourages pesticides use to increase productivity instead of promoting organic farming
 - Bill failed to recognize pesticides have contributed significantly to the current economic and ecological crisis in agriculture.
- **Dealers issues:-**
 - It also states that the dealer's license will be suspended or cancelled. Dealers complain that they do not have infrastructures to test products.
- **State governments:-**
 - Does not **ease the powers of regulation and registration to the state governments** which has been a long pending demand of many governments.
 - Not much powers for state governments to regulate and control the use of agrochemicals.
- **Bill does not provide for automatic review of cleared pesticides after several years of usage,** and farmers and labourers will not be able to seek compensation from the consumer forum as envisaged in the bill.
- It does not keep safety as a central provision; instead it places efficacy and pest control as its primary goals

Way ahead:-

- The objective of the bill should be to minimise pesticide usage and not about producing safer pesticides. The bill should also include sustainability as its aim
- **Strengthen state governments role:-**
 - State governments must have a greater role in case of decision making on pesticide management. The existing draft provides inadequate representation to states in both pesticide board and the registration committee.
 - The states should have the say on final decision making on pesticide, as they have the best understanding on the agro ecological climate, environment and soil conditions.
- Pesticides are hazardous chemicals, and should be sold only by prescription. Any one selling **without a prescription should be legally punished.**
- There is a **need for a ban on advertisement of pesticides** as they are by design suited to the commercial interest of the advertiser and aimed at influencing buying behaviour of farmers, who are often uneducated and unaware.
- The bill in 2008 was referred to a standing committee of Parliament which had suggested some changes that need to be incorporated in the new bill:-
 - Pesticide inspectors should also be held responsible for growth and approval of spurious pesticide

Conclusion:-

- The intent of the bill is in broad interest of the farmers however there is a need to involve all the stakeholders to make the bill a holistic one and not degrade the environment further.

TOPIC: *Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices.*

Q) Examine the key findings, recommendations and relevance of the National Commission on Farmers. (250 Words)

Background:-

- As farmers stage agitations in several states, the importance of implementation of the Swaminathan Commission report has been highlighted.

Key findings and recommendations:-

- **Causes for farmers distress**
 - **Agrarian distress has led farmers to commit suicide in recent years.** The major causes of the agrarian crisis are: lack of effective land reform, quantity and quality of water, technology constraints, inadequate institutional credit, and opportunities for assured and remunerative marketing.
 - **Recommendation:-**
 - The commission recommends that "Agriculture" be inserted in the Concurrent List of the Constitution.
 - **Land Reforms**
 - Land reforms are necessary to address the basic issue of access to land for both crops and livestock. Land holdings inequality is reflected in land ownership.
 - **Recommendations include:**
 - Distribute ceiling-surplus and waste lands, Prevent diversion of prime agricultural land and forest to corporate sector for non-agricultural purposes.
 - Access to common property resources.
 - Establish a National Land Use Advisory Service, which would have the capacity to link land use decisions with ecological meteorological and marketing factors on a location and season specific basis.
 - **Irrigation**
 - Out of the gross sown area of 192 million ha, rainfed agriculture contributes to 60 per cent of the gross cropped area and 45 per cent of the total agricultural output.
 - **The report recommends:**
 - Increase water supply through rainwater harvesting and recharge of the aquifer should become mandatory.
 - "Million Wells Recharge" programme, specifically targeted at private wells should be launched.

- **Productivity of Agriculture**

- The per unit area productivity of Indian agriculture is much lower than other major crop producing countries.
- **Recommendations:**
 - Substantial increase in public investment in agriculture related infrastructure particularly in irrigation, drainage, land development, water conservation, research development and road connectivity etc.
 - A national network of advanced soil testing laboratories with facilities for detection of micronutrient deficiencies.
 - Promotion of conservation farming, which will help farm families to conserve and improve soil health, water quantity and quality and biodiversity.

- **Credit and Insurance**

- Timely and adequate supply of credit is a basic requirement of small farm families.
- **Recommendations :-**
 - Expand the outreach of the formal credit system to reach the really poor and needy.
 - Moratorium on debt recovery, including loans from non-institutional sources, and waiver of interest on loans in distress hotspots and during calamities, till capability is restored
 - Establish an Agriculture Risk Fund to provide relief to farmers in the aftermath of successive natural calamities
 - Issue Kisan Credit Cards to women farmers, with joint *pattas* as collateral
 - Develop an integrated credit-cum-crop-livestock-human health insurance package.
 - Expand crop insurance cover to cover the entire country and all crops, with reduced premiums

- **Food Security**

- The decline in per capita foodgrain availability and its unequal distribution have serious implications for food security in both rural and urban areas.
- **Recommendations:-**
 - Implement a universal public distribution system.
 - Reorganise the delivery of nutrition support programmes on a life-cycle basis with the participation of Panchayats and local bodies.
 - Integrated food cum fortification approach is needed.
 - Promote the establishment of Community Food and Water Banks operated by Women Self-help Groups (SHG)
 - **Help small and marginal farmers to improve the productivity, quality and profitability of**

farm enterprises and organize a Rural Non-Farm Livelihood Initiative.

- **Prevention of Farmers' Suicides**

- In the last few years, a large number of farmers have committed suicide.
- **Some of measures suggested include:**
 - The National Rural Health Mission should be extended to suicide hotspot locations on priority basis.
 - Set up State level Farmers Commission with representation of farmers
 - Restructure microfinance policies to serve as Livelihood Finance.
 - Promote aquifer recharge and rain water conservation.
 - Decentralise water use planning
 - Have a Price Stabilisation Fund in place to protect the farmers from price fluctuations.
 - Set up Village Knowledge Centres (VKCs) or Gyan Chaupals in the farmers' distress hotspots.

- **Competitiveness of Farmers**

- It is imperative to raise the agricultural competitiveness of farmers with small land holdings.
- **The measures suggested include:**
 - Improvement in implementation of Minimum Support Price (MSP). MSP should be at least 50% more than the weighted average cost of production.
 - Availability of data about spot and future prices of commodities
 - State Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee Acts [APMC Acts] need to shift to one that promotes grading, branding, packaging and development of domestic and international markets for local produce, and move towards a Single Indian Market.

- **Employment**

- Structural change in the workforce is taking place in India albeit

slowly. But agriculture still provides the bulk of employment in the rural areas

- **The measures to do so include:**
 - Encourage non-farm employment opportunities by developing particular sectors and sub-sectors where demand for the product or services is growing
- **Bioresources**
 - Rural people in India depend on a wide range of bioresources for their nutrition and livelihood security.
 - **The report recommends:**
 - Preserving traditional rights of access to biodiversity
 - Conserving, enhancing and improving crops and farm animals as well as fish stocks through breeding
 - Encouraging community-based breed conservation
 - Allowing export of indigenous breeds and import of suitable breeds to increase productivity of nondescript animals.

Relevance:-

- **Crisis in the agriculture sector:**
 - The sector has recorded alarmingly slow growth in the last few years. According to recent estimates of the Central Statistics Office, the growth of Gross Value Added in agriculture declined from 4.1 per cent in 2016-17 to barely 2.1 per cent in 2017-18 leading to instability in farm incomes and risks relating to production, markets and prices faced by farmers.
 - There is a steady decline in the size of landholdings, caused by mounting pressure on land assets.
 - Almost 47 per cent of the workforce in India is engaged in agriculture
- **Irreversible degradation of agricultural land caused by depletion of water bodies and climate change**, rendering it progressively unfit for cultivation
 - Crops have been destroyed on a large scale due to unpredictable weather and poor rainfall.
- Droughts, inadequate pricing policies and poor water management have hit agriculture in the states

- **Rural India seems to suggest conditions have become perilous for farmers.** Real wage growth has dropped, agricultural credit has slowed down tremendously, and even official government allocations to schemes meant for farmers have been reduced.
- **The comprehensive set of issues the commission covered be it farmer suicides, ensuring the competitiveness of agriculture along with proper farm incomes etc**

Conclusion:-

- It is time to nurture impoverished farmers and ensure that even as they keep feeding people they should themselves never go hungry.

TOPIC: *Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security; Technology missions.*

Q) Discuss why biodiversity is important for food security. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Addressing food security is a top global priority as illustrated in Goal 2 of achieving “Zero Hunger” of the Sustainable Development Goals. In seeking to achieve this goal, UN countries recognise the unique role of role of biodiversity in delivering food security, which is a prerequisite for ending hunger.
- According to UN data, more than 790 million people worldwide still lack regular access to adequate amounts of dietary energy. This is in addition to the fact that by 2050, world population is expected to reach 9 billion which in terms of food availability means that global food production would need to rise by about 60%.
- Biodiversity is essential for food security and nutrition. Thousands of interconnected species make up a vital web of biodiversity within the ecosystems upon which global food production depends

Biodiversity:-

- Biodiversity is the variation of life forms in a particular ecosystem. All levels of biodiversity are interconnected, but there are three levels at which biodiversity is broken down and studied: genetic diversity, species diversity and ecosystem diversity.
- Food security refers to the availability of food and one’s access to it. For example, the World Bank defines food security as “**access by all people at all times to sufficient food for an active, healthy life**”

Importance of biodiversity for food security:-

- **Food production relies on biodiversity and on the multiple services provided by ecosystems.** It would be impossible to cultivate thousands and thousands of different crop varieties and animal breeds without the **rich genetic pool of the species they originated from.**
 - It is estimated that about 100,000 species of insects, as well as birds and mammals, pollinate more than two-thirds of food plants and are responsible for 35% of the world’s crop production.

- **It would not be possible to keep livestock, fish or grow trees and plants without the often unseen contribution of microorganisms and invertebrates on our land and waters.**
 - The variability and availability of living organisms ranging from micro-organisms (e.g. bacteria, fungi, protozoa) to larger meso-fauna (e.g. acari and springtails) are essential to agriculture as they ensure **natural processes can take place contributing to important functions, such as soil fertility.**
- **Fish provides about 3 billion people with almost 20% of their intake of animal protein.**
 - Marine, coastal and inland areas support a rich assortment of aquatic biological diversity, which contributes to the economic, cultural, nutritional, social, recreational and spiritual betterment of human populations.
- **Animals :-**
 - The biodiversity of approximately 35 animal species domesticated for use in agriculture and food production is the **primary biological capital for livestock development and is vital to food security and sustainable rural development.**
- **Plants :-**
 - In human history, about 7 000 species of plants have been cultivated for consumption.
- Supporting the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including **through local knowledge and the traditional management practices associated with them**, is necessary to enable farming systems to continue to evolve and meet future needs.
- **Soils:-**
 - Degradation of soils can be reversed to deliver multiple benefits, including improved nutrient and water management, soil organic carbon content, natural pest and disease regulation and reduced soil erosion.
- By providing a **diverse range of foods, biodiversity underpins nutritious and sustainable diets**, which are those diets with low environmental impacts which contribute to food and nutrition security.
- **Diversity of foods and farming systems is also known to support economic diversity and increase resilience to local or global economic shocks**, thereby supporting livelihoods and food security.
- Biodiversity is integral to maintaining food security. **It is very important to protect indigenous wild plants and crops which form an integral part of biodiversity**

Issues:-

- Unfortunately, today India is concentrating on cultivating select crops which have high demand.
- Natural renewable resource degradation, including the loss of biodiversity and the erosion of genetic diversity, is one of the major challenges in food production today
- The development of contemporary production systems has resulted in extensive land conversion and concomitant biodiversity loss. In order to feed an ever growing population, innovative and acceptable ways of integrating biodiversity conservation and food production need to be identified
- At the same time, about 30% of major marine stocks are overexploited, producing lower yields than their biological and ecological potential and are in need of strict management plans to restore them to their full and sustainable productivity.

Way forward:-

- India had signed Biodiversity Finance Initiative in 2015. The first phase of the programme's implementation (from 2015-2018) had been successfully completed and India had started moving towards the next which is the step in the right direction
- **Increasing the diversity of the diet using species and varieties and methods appropriate to local cultures can make a huge contribution** to nutrition and, as a result, to health and productivity,
- With the erosion of biodiversity, humankind loses the potential to adapt ecosystems to new challenges such as population growth and climate change. **Achieving food security for all is intrinsically linked to the maintenance of biodiversity.**

Conclusion:-

- India and the world needs to recognise that land, healthy soils, water and plant genetic resources are key inputs into food production, and their growing scarcity in many parts of the world makes it imperative to use and manage them sustainably. **In other words, biodiversity is inextricably linked to our ability of produce and grow food. It is actually vital to our survival**

Q) Bioenergy is the largest used renewable energy source in the world. Discuss the progress made in the use of bioenergy and challenges presented by bioenergy to food security. (250 Words)

Background:-

- The global demand for modern bioenergy, and especially liquid biofuels, is rapidly growing, driven mainly by climate change mitigation policies and increasing oil prices. This creates both opportunities and risks for developing countries.
- It accounts for 14 per cent of the 18 per cent renewables used in the global energy mix. Bioenergy includes both traditional and modern biomass and biofuels.

Progress made so far:-

- Transport biofuels like bioethanol and biodiesel that are blended with petrol and diesel are the fastest growing bioenergy in the world.
- There are four generations of biofuels.
 - First generation biofuels are manufactured using food crops like sugarcane, maize and oilseed.
 - Second generation biofuels are produced from non-food produce like organic waste, wood and food crop waste.
 - Third generation biofuels are based on improvements in the production of biomass by taking advantage of specially engineered energy crops such as algae.
 - Fourth generation biofuels are based on more advanced technology which aims to capture and store carbon dioxide (CO₂) at every production stage.
- **Currently, first generation biofuels are the most common type of biofuels used, and second, third and fourth generation biofuel technology are still being developed.**
- **Indian initiatives:-**
 - **India has** started with some encouraging pilots for biofuel-driven buses in cities like Nagpur.

- **India also has the national biofuel policy 2015 :-**
- The Policy endeavors to facilitate and bring about optimal development and utilization of **indigenous biomass feedstocks** for production of bio-fuels.
- 3 per cent blending of bioethanol with petrol was achieved in 2016
- Countries like Sweden and a developing country like Brazil have used ethanol in a big way to achieve their environmental and economic objectives

Challenges to food security:-

- It is alleged that **biofuel production from first generation sources are in competition with food production over land and other resources like water and increases food prices.**
- The differences in economic efficiency of resource uses in bioenergy and food production mean that resources will be allocated to the activity with a higher return. **This results in higher food prices** and the change in prices of natural resources, such as land and water, with significant economic, social and livelihood implications.
 - Different researchers have calculated the **impact of biofuels on food prices** to be as little as a three per cent increase to as much as a 75 per cent increase.
 - During the 2007-08 food price crisis the increase in demand for maize for biofuel production was found to contribute to 70 per cent of the total increase in maize prices.
 - According to a 2008 World Bank report , biofuels production was responsible for a 70 to 75 per cent increase in the prices of food commodities.
- Second generation biofuels could compete with food crops if plantations are set up for the sole purpose of growing crops for second generation use.
- At the currently prevailing ('first generation') conversion **technology, a further rise in the use of agricultural feedstock for the production of biofuels would be a real risk for food.**
- **Drastic biofuel expansion could increase the number of malnourished pre-school children by 9.6 million.** Adverse effects could be especially high in Africa, with 8% reduction in calorie
- **Groundwater will be exploited** due to focus on water intensive crops like sugarcane for biofuels.
- **There would be strong incentives to grow bioenergy crops on more fertile lands, ultimately leading to accelerated deforestation.**
- **Negative effects on the four dimensions of food security: availability; access; utilization, and stability**

Way ahead:-

- Removal of import tariffs in the US and EU would facilitate the sale of more economically viable biofuels from Brazil and other developing countries .
- The effects of bioenergy policies on food security could be strongly positive, if designed in the right way, and could help attract the kind of investments in agriculture that are sorely lacking in many of the developing countries that currently experience high-levels of hunger and poverty.
- Infrastructure and marketing improvements can make agricultural markets work better, and simultaneously enhance the viability of bioenergy projects.

TOPIC: Economics of animal-rearing.

Q) A recent study has raised serious concerns over the use of antibiotics for growth promotion in farm animals. Examine why rampant usage of antibiotics continues unabated in farm industry and what are its health and other risks to humans. (250 Words)

Background :-

- India has been called the epicentre of the global drug resistance crisis. A combination of factors have come together to hasten the spread of superbugs.

Why rampant usage of antibiotics continues in farm industry :-

- Unregulated sale of the drugs for human or animal use accessed without prescription** or diagnosis has led to unchecked consumption and misuse.
 - Of tested birds destined for meat consumption, 87% had the super germs based on a study published in the journal Environmental Health Perspectives.
- Farms supplying India's biggest poultry-meat companies **routinely use medicines classified by the World Health Organization (WHO) as "critically important"** as a way of staving off disease or to make them gain weight faster, so that more can be grown each year for greater profit.
 - One drug typically given this way is Colistin which is used to treat patients critically ill with infections that have become resistant to nearly all other drugs.
- In India, the poultry industry is booming.** The amount of chicken produced doubled between 2003 and 2013. **Chicken is popular because it can be eaten by people of all religions** and affordable. Experts predict the **rising demand for protein will cause a surge in antibiotic use in livestock.** India's consumption of antibiotics in chickens is predicted to rise fivefold by 2030 compared to 2010.
- Lax regulation:-**
 - India does not have an effective integrated policy to control the use of antibiotics in livestock and poultry with a viewpoint of containing antibiotic resistance**
 - 2007: The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) recommends not using systemic antibiotics in poultry feed. The recommendation is voluntary and does not extend to gut-acting antibiotics, which BIS planned to cover by 2012
 - 2011: The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) sets maximum residue limits for four antibiotics in sea food and prohibits the use of certain others in seafood processing units. **It does not prescribe standards for domestic poultry industry. The national policy on containment of antimicrobial resistance is finalised but does not focus on antibiotic resistance emanating from the large-scale use of antibiotics in animals**
 - 2013:-** The Directorate General of Health Services issues a circular, asking state drug controllers to ensure that the withdrawal period of drugs meant for poultry and livestock are mentioned on packet. **While it talks about regulating drugs, antibiotics as feed supplement remain out of its purview.**
 - In 2014 the Agriculture Ministry sent an advisory letter to all State governments asking them to review the use of antibiotic growth promoters. **However, the directive was non-binding, and none have introduced legislation to date.**
 - Even the **guidelines of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** on poultry waste management do not adequately address ABR.

- In India, at least **five animal pharmaceutical companies are openly advertising products containing Colistin as growth promoters.**
 - **Chickens are fed antibiotics so that they gain weight and grow fast.**
 - Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) has found residues of antibiotics in 40 per cent of the chicken samples it tested.
 - In Europe, Colistin is available to farmers only if prescribed by a vet for the treatment of sick animals. In India there is **no such thing.**
- **India, level of awareness regarding antibiotic resistance is very low.**
- **Antibiotics are also coming from China as the imports are not regulated**
- **Poultry farmers also ignore the mandatory withdrawal period,** time gap between the use of antibiotics and when it is slaughtered that helps ensure that high levels of antibiotic residues do not pass on to humans.
- While many poultry farmers are aware of other options or antibiotic-free growth promoter feed supplements, their **high cost is prohibitive for smaller players.** Bigger farmers are less keen because there is no incentive to make antibiotic-free chickens.

Health and other risks :-

- Public health experts have suspected that such **rampant use of antibiotics could be a reason for increasing antibiotic resistance in India.**
 - These mutated robust strains bypass toxic effects of antibiotics, making them ineffective. They can easily spread among the flock and **contaminate the food chain.**
 - They can also alter the genetic material of other bacteria, often pathogenic ones, making them resistant to several drugs and resulting in a global pandemic.
- Antibiotic residues present in the meat **can directly unleash an assault on microbes in humans.**
- **The mutated robust microbe strain can invade the body and cause diseases that are difficult to treat.** Even mild infections require stronger dosage.
- These drug-resistant bacteria could nullify the gains of modern medicine by compromising the success of organ transplants, high-end surgeries and cancer chemotherapy.
- **With drugs losing their effectiveness, the world would need newer antibiotics.** Unfortunately, no new class of antibiotic has hit the market since late 1980s.
- **Annual healthcare cost due to antibiotic resistance** is estimated to be as high as \$20 billion, with an additional productivity loss of up to \$35 billion in the US.
- **Treating fatal diseases like sepsis,** pneumonia and tuberculosis (TB) are becoming tough because microbes that cause these diseases are **increasingly becoming resistant** to fluoroquinolones.
- **Farmhands** who handle the birds often wear open-toe shoes, providing a conduit of entry for resistant bacteria and resistance genes into the community and hospitals, where further person-to-person transmission is possible.

Way ahead:-

- **Ban the use of antibiotics for growth promotion and mass disease prevention.** It should only be used to cure the sick animals based on prescription of veterinarians
- **Antibiotics should not be allowed in feed and feed** The government should set standards for animal feed and regulate the business
- Encourage development, production and use of alternative antibiotic-free growth promoters, **such as herbal supplements**

- All animal antibiotics should be traceable from manufacturing site to user. **Implement stringent control on import of antibiotics and feed supplements**
- **Good farm management practices should be followed to control infection and stress among the flock.**
- **Veterinarians should be trained and educated on judicious use of antibiotics and infection prevention.** The government should ensure that veterinarians do not get incentives for prescribing more antibiotics
- **There is a need to introduce a labelling system wherein poultry raised without use of antibiotics should be labelled through reliable certified schemes to facilitate consumer choice.**
- **It is necessary to create an integrated surveillance system to monitor antibiotics use and antibiotics resistance trends in humans, animals and food chain.** A national-level database should be developed and kept in the public domain.
- Citizens should be educated about what they are eating, what does their food contain, and what are the consequences.

Q) What are the objectives of the National Action Plan for Dairy Development: Vision-2022? In the light of government's sustained efforts towards conservation of native breeds through Rashtriya Gokul Mission and lobbying by certain groups against crossbred cows, examine critically if it's feasible to achieve objectives of National Action Plan for Dairy Development: Vision-2022. (250 Words)

Background:-

- For about 15 years, **India** continues to be the largest producer of milk in the world and likely to retain its prime position with annual growth rate of 5.53% for last three years as against global milk production, which is growing at 2.09%.
- **So India is working on creating additional milk processing infrastructure to double the dairy farmers' income by 2022 and meet the future challenges.**

Objectives of National action plan for dairy development :-

- The National Action Plan **Vision-2022** is **being prepared to fill the gaps in the infrastructure required to handle the increased coverage and milk production** not only to meet the demand of milk and milk products but also to fulfil the objective of doubling the farmers income.
- Enhancing the outreach of dairy cooperatives to additional villages and milk producers
- Suitable provisions are being made to build **additional milk processing infrastructure for processing additional volume of milk** expected on account of higher production and meeting the increased demand for value-added products.

India may not achieve the objectives of the action plan:-

- **Rashtriya Gokul Mission** that aims to raise the productivity of indigenous and nondescript cattle by creating a “super elite” population of indigenous. There are questions raised whether the milk production would be increased due to this step alone.
- Cattle numbers have grown by just 3.74 per cent between 1992 and 2012. So the projected one-third expansion in the country's in-milk bovine population between 2015-16 and 2023-24 is not feasible.
- Also there are constraints with respect to fodder, feed and water resources to support animals significantly beyond the current population levels.
- State governments have enacted stringent laws against cattle slaughter making it virtually impossible to dispose of unproductive animals.
- The Action Plan, moreover, talks of enhancing artificial insemination (AI) coverage but there is no clarity on how this is to be achieved.
- India is already facing a surplus situation in milk powder and have been priced out of the world market. There is no market. If output were really to touch 300 mt.
- The annual growth required to reach the target is 9% but the current growth is less than that.
- Problems with cross breeds by communities, lobbying groups raises concerns about the targets to be achieved.

Way forward:-

- In order to make dairy business more profitable “**National Bovine Productivity Mission**” has been initiated with creation of e Pashuhaat portal. This is playing an important role in linking milk producers and breeders for indigenous breeds
- Also there is need to focus on high yielding breeds for milk production

Conclusion:-

- The government's intention is good in spirit but the targets need to be more practical and effective coordination among multiple stakeholders can help India successful in milk production.

TOPIC: Land reforms in India.

Q) Discuss the main features of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (LARR Act) and also examine how LARR Act has altered the traditional relationship between the state and the citizen. (250 Words)

Background:-

- The **Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (LARR Act)** brings transparency to the process of acquisition of land, assures rehabilitation of those affected, goes beyond compensation and mandates guaranteed

series of entitlements to rural households affected. So it has a more inclusive people oriented approach which has not been the case with earlier acts.

- It replaced the Land Acquisition Act, 1894.

Main features of act :-

- Clearly defines various types of “public purpose” projects for which, Government can acquire private land.
- **Acquiring land:-**
 - For private project, 80% affected families must agree.
 - For PPP project, 70% affected families must agree. Only then land can be acquired.
- **Social impact assessment:-**
 - Under Social impact assessment (SIA) even need to obtain consent of the affected artisans, labourers, share-croppers, tenant farmers etc whose (sustainable) livelihood will be affected because of the given project.
- **Compensation:**
 - Compensation proportion to market rates.
 - 4 times the market rate in rural area.
 - 2 times in urban area.
 - Affected artisans, small traders, fishermen etc. will be given one-time payment, even if they don't own any land.
- **To ensure food security:**
 - Fertile, irrigated, multi-cropped farmland can be acquired only in last resort.
 - If such fertile land is acquired, then Government will have to develop equal size of wasteland for agriculture purpose.
- **Private entities:-**
 - If Government acquires the lands for private company- the said private company will be responsible for relief and rehabilitation of the affected people.
 - Additional rehabilitation package for SC/ST owners.
- **Safeguards:-**
 - State Governments have to setup **dispute settlement** Chairman must be a district judge or lawyer for 7 years.
- **Accountability:-**
 - Head of the department will be made responsible, for any offense from Government's side.
- If project doesn't start in 5 years, land has to be returned to the original owner or the land bank.
- Establishment of Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Authority for speedy disposal of disputes.

Paradigm shifts from the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 to the LARR Act, 2013

Shift	1894 Act	2013 LARR Act
Return of land to land owner	No provision	Acquired land if not used within 5 years, it will be returned to Land Bank or land owners.
Sharing of profit /appreciation	No provision.	If the acquired land is unused and is transferred, 20% of the profits shall be shared with the original land owners.
R&R	No provision for R&R	R&R necessary for all affected families. Minimum R&R entitlements to be provided to each affected family specified.

photo:insightsias.com

Land Acquisition Act

	1894	2013	2014
Social Impact Assessment (SIA)	No provision	SIA is a must for every acquisition	Not required if for security, defense, rural infra, industrial corridors and social infra
Consent from affected people	No provision	Consent of 80 % of displaced people required in case of acquisition for private companies and public-private partnerships.	Not required if for security, defense, rural infra, industrial corridors and social infra
Multi crop land	No provision	Only in extreme circumstances, where multi-cropped land has to be acquired at any cost, only 5% of the total multi-cropped land in the district can be acquired and not more. Otherwise, multi-cropped land should not be acquired.	multi-crop irrigated land can also be acquired if for security, defense, rural infra, industrial corridors and social infra

Concerns:-

- The requirement of a Social Impact Assessment for every acquisition without a minimum threshold may delay the implementation of certain government programmes.
- Some criticize the Act **citing that it is heavily loaded in favour of land owners and ignores the needs of poor Indians who need affordable housing**, impoverished families who need affordable hospitals, schools, employment opportunities and infrastructure and industries.
- Projects involving land acquisition and undertaken by private companies or public private partnerships require the consent of 80 per cent of the people affected. However, no such consent is required in case of PSUs.
- As head of the departments are made responsible they might delay the processing of files to avoid persecution in future .This defeats the purpose of the act.

How it altered the traditional relationship between the state and citizen :-

- Land grabbing has been used to describe land acquisition post the 1990s as the appetite for land speculation among investors grew and acquisitions acquired a more brutal character .So **the LARR is a means of generating some degree of consensus among landholders to part with their land.**
- Through Social impact assessment people will gain trust of government as they are made important stakeholders in the acquisition process.
- Also by making people's consent more inclusive it perpetuates land to its tillers concept.
- Land Records in most parts of the country are fragmented and disorganised. In most cases they haven't been updated for decades. The new law overcomes that by ensuring the Collector updates the land records and also pays up to four times the value to correct any inaccuracies.
- Land not used can now be returned to the original owners if the state so decides which was not the case before.
- The government to issue a notification in the Official Gazette informing the public of its intent and the area to be acquired. This increases the information available to the public and increases the transparency in the acquisition process.
- **Act will mandate higher payments for land as well as guaranteed entitlements from India's non-agriculture-derived GDP to the people supported by agriculture-derived GDP. It is expected that the Act will directly affect 13.2 crore hectares (32.6 crore acres) of rural land in India, over 10 crore land owners, with an average land holding of about 3 acres per land owner.**

Conclusion:-

- LARR Act-2013 though inclusive and revolutionary in its own right but while implementation it made land acquisition very complicated leading to stalling of projects and further leading to higher project cost. So further amendments had to be made to make the process more feasible.

Q) Examine the significance of the Section 24 of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act and reasons why it has become an issue nowadays. (250 Words)

Background:-

- The LARR act provided for greatly enhanced compensation, consent of those whose land was sought to be acquired, and detailed rehabilitation and resettlement provisions. In other words, it changed the relationship between the state and the individual by empowering the latter against the former.

Section 24 of LARR act :-

- It also included a retrospective clause. **Section 24 of the new Act provided that under certain circumstances, acquired land could be returned to affected families.**
- Section 24 under LARR, provides that the land acquired five (or more) year prior to LARR coming into force, shall be returned its owner if the government has either not paid the compensation or not taken physical possession of the land.
- It will be applicable to all cases of land acquisition before the date of commencement of the Act if the award under the 1894 Act has not been made.
- It will also be applicable if the possession of the land has not been taken regardless of whether the award has been made or not.

Significance :-

- It would be correct to say that **thousands of families who had previously given up all hope had their acquisition proceedings set aside and their land returned under Section 24.**
- This Section was upheld and imbued with substance by several judges of the Supreme Court and various High Courts.
- It has **positively impacted the lives of several farmers/ land owners**

Why it has become an issue :-

- In 2015 an ordinance was passed to render this Section inoperative however protests led to PM announcing the withdrawal of the amendments proposed by his government.
- Now, **the Supreme Court, in Indore Development Authority v. Shailendra (February 2018), has effectively implemented the provisions of the lapsed ordinance with regard to the retrospective clause.**
- In earlier judgments, the Section was interpreted in favour of securing the land owners interests over those of the state. This was in sync with the foundational premise of the 2013 Act
- The section meant the new compensatory and acquisition norms would escalate the cost manifolds

Conclusion:-

- LARR act is hailed as a landmark law in the interest of the all stakeholders so for implementation of this act government needs to consult all stakeholders.

TOPIC: Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

Q) Is the Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana (UDAY) an all-encompassing solution for power sector woes? Critically evaluate its performance. (250 Words)

Background:-

- UDAY was launched in 2015 and is aimed at reviving electricity distribution companies (discoms), improving demand and, in the process, resolving the woes in the sector. Scheme aims at financial turnaround and revival of Power Distribution companies (DISCOMs) and ensures a sustainable permanent solution
- It allows power DISCOMs in selected states to convert their debt into state bonds as well as roll out number of measures to improve efficiency at power plants
- It Improves operational efficiencies of DISCOMs, Reduce of cost of power, Reduce interest cost of DISCOMs, Enforce financial discipline on DISCOMs.
- **Improve operational efficiency** by swapping of coal linkages, monitoring technical and commercial (AT&C) losses, smart metering and feeder separation in states

Performance of the scheme:-

- It took off well, **with a large number of states joining the scheme**. Several states took over the debt of their utilities, **improving their liquidity situation**. Anecdotal evidence also suggests an improvement in the power supply situation.
- **Power transmission**
- Government's UDAY scheme has helped debt-laden discoms of 24 states to reduce losses to Rs 369 billion in 2016-17 from Rs 515.9 billion in the previous financial year.
 - The participating states have achieved an **improvement of one per cent in Aggregate Technical & Commercial (AT&C or distribution) losses** and Rs 0.17 a Unit in the gap between Average Cost of Supply and Average Revenue realised in 2016- 17
- UDAY can smoothen the power off take distribution process.
- **It talks about cost-side efficiency such as immediate reduction of interest service burden**, reduction in fuel cost through coal swapping, time-bound loss reduction, etc.
 - **Reduction in interest cost has benefitted discoms finances**
- On the revenue side, **it talks about a strict discipline of quarterly fuel cost adjustment**, annual tariff increase, taking regulators on board and finally including discom losses in the FRBM limits for the states.

- **UDAY has potential to unclog the entire power chain as operational efficiency improvements to reduce the distribution losses from around 22 per cent to 15 per cent and eliminate the gap between average revenue and average cost by FY19.**

Concerns:-

- **With the stuck projects remaining sizeable and the threat of bad loans looming large,** questions are now being raised about the efficacy of the UDAY scheme.
 - It cannot drive demand beyond a certain point. Much of the NPA (non-performing asset) or bad loan resolution in the power sector is beyond UDAY
- With the benefit of hindsight and more data, analysts are realizing that UDAY's ability to resolve the sector's woes may well have been overestimated
- Like the previous two bailout packages in 2001 and 2012, UDAY too insisted on reducing AT&C losses to a respectable 15 per cent. **But the figures show discoms utilised funds to clear the balance-sheet without much attempt to improve efficiency low.**
- Over and above the prevailing maladies in the distribution system **rising share of renewable energy (RE) is increasing the average cost of supply, as it is displacing consumption of low-cost coal.**
- By allowing the fiscal deficit number to be breached the entire FRBM (Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act) paradigm is being officially violated.
- The bonds issued are essentially held by the same entities that had lent funds to the State electricity boards (SEBs).
- The interest received is lower by at least 4-6 per cent; this means that there is a loss of income. Intuitively, it can be seen that every ₹1 lakh crore of UDAY bonds issued involves a loss of up to ₹6,000 crore for banks and FIs that have lent money to them.
- There is no guarantee that there will not be future losses as there is no retribution if the State electricity boards choose not to reform. In fact, this has been kept out of the purview of the scheme.
- By also mandating that State governments have to progressively take over the losses of their SEBs, **the Centre has put the onus on the States to deal with the problem.**

Way forward:-

- Reduction in project costs through dedicated PPAs (power purchase agreement) and supply of low-cost fuel can help salvage them.
- To address the NPA issue, the discoms need to sign more of medium- and long-term Power purchasing agreements, with a differentiated procurement strategy for base load and peak load.
- With the improvements on the coal side already imminent, firm offtake agreements will significantly help bring large parts of this ailing capacity back on track.

Q) What is grid parity? What are the merits and demerits of central grid? Do you think micro-microgrid is the way forward for rural and remote communities in India? Discuss. (250 Words)

Background:-

- India has about 240 million people without access to electricity that's about one fourth of the total global population who don't have energy security thus the need to have efficient energy security .

Grid parity:-

- Technically speaking, grid parity is when an alternative form of energy generates power at a *levelized cost of electricity* that's equal to or less than the price of buying power from the electric grid.
- Grid parity is the point when the cost of the alternative energy becomes equal to or less than electricity from conventional energy forms like fossil fuels. It's one of the most important things energy analysts look at when determining how economically viable an alternative energy form is for widespread development and adoption.

Central Grid:-

- Central grid is an interconnected system of local and regional grids to provide continuous supply of electricity in the whole country. It is one seamless network for delivering power to consumers.
- **Merits:-**
 - It provides relief to power deficit regions.
 - It will also improve transmission and facilitate better management of demand, ensuring the stability of the electricity grid.
 - Easier availability of power could also lead to lower tariffs
- **Demerits:-**
 - The reliability of the central grid cannot be assured.
 - Despite central grid, problems of load shedding and power outages are still common with some parts of India having access to power for less than eight hours a day.
 - Distribution - the link between power generation plants and the end users is a complex challenge that India's power sector is tackling with.
 - Close to one fourth of India's population still lacks access to the grid, those who do have an intermittent supply of power.
 - Does not offer fault isolation capability so whole grid have to be shut down to rectify faults.
 - Transmission losses increase over long distances.
 - Price differences might arise.
 - Transmission to rural areas would be costly.

Micro grid:-

- People typically associate micro grids with small, rural, renewable-powered and standalone systems that provide electricity to homes across the area.
- A microgrid is a small-scale localized power generation and distribution network, capable of operating independently or in conjunction with the main grid.

Micro grid is the way forward for rural communities :-

- Microgrids are **way to provide a reliable supply of power**, with the **additional benefit of reducing demands upon the conventional distribution network**.
 - Microgrids connected to the main distribution network have the potential to support the main grid by exporting surplus power.
 - **Typically microgrids use power from a combination of sources**. They can help reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) by facilitating the use of with low-carbon energy sources such as solar and wind.
- **The cost of energy storage equipment is falling**. This means that, for communities where the cost of connection to conventional power distribution networks is prohibitive, **micro grids which incorporate energy storage offer a cost competitive way of providing power**.
- **Their modular nature make them easy to install and run in remote and hard to access locations**.
- The global microgrid market is estimated to top \$35 billion by 2020. The concept of locally generated and consumed energy is evolving how global cities are planning utility systems, with resilience and reliability gaining precedence.
- A microgrid is **helpful in providing electricity for lighting, in charging mobile phones, and small livelihood applications**. Consumers connected to a community managed microgrid can meet their minimum needs.
- Microgrids designed to optimise local energy generation sources along with grid and battery backup **can be one way to solve the access to power and energy security challenge**.
- Microgrids **can be a catalyst to realise the vision of power-for-all in India**.
 - India has taken cognizance of the importance of micro and mini grids in achieving the objective of '24x7 power to all' with the proposed development of 10,000 renewable microgrids and mini-grids with a generative capacity of 500 MW announced in June this year.
- Microgrids **are built to perform in extreme environments to ensure continuity of energy supply**. In the event of a calamity, they are self-sufficient and can provide resilient power backups.
- **They could further play a role in programs** such as port development, like the Sagarmala project and other initiatives to support growth in island economies.
- In India, microgrids are increasingly being used in commercial or industrial parks that consider these an extension of captive power or at least mixed with back-up power.

Concerns:-

- India also has private entrepreneurs investing in village microgrids. They include Mera Gao Power in Uttar Pradesh and the Minda Foundation in West Bengal. But there are problems for private investors because the grid is rarely far away and grid power is heavily subsidized by the government. This **makes it hard for investors to be sure of a return**.
- Challenges exist in terms of funding and viability of such projects due to the existing price differentials with state discom supplied power municipalities

Way forward:-

- **Ongoing research in battery technologies will bring down the cost of electricity storage and improve safety of storage**, thereby paving the way for a large deployment of solar and wind.
- **The International Solar Alliance** can direct technology development towards the needs of all developing countries.

Conclusion:-

- Finding a solution to these challenges will not just help bring a major chunk of India out of the dark ages, but also power India's future through her smart cities.

Q) What is roll on, roll off ship service? How is it different from lift on-lift off shipping? Discuss potential and challenges of roll on, roll off shipping service for India. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Global warming and anthropogenic climate change due to rising environmental pollution and increased greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have forced policymakers across the world to promote a modal shift in cargo transportation from roads to waterways
- A modal shift to coastal shipping will not only bring down the costs of logistics and fuel consumption, but also have societal benefits such as decongesting roads, minimising road accidents, etc.

Roll on roll off ship service(Ro-ro) :-

- Ro-ro shipping is a popular method of transporting cargo within and between countries.
- The unique feature of this service is **that loaded trucks and cars can be driven onto the ship and be driven out at the port of destination.**
- The ro-ro service was expected to
 - Transform transportation in the coastal region by saving fuel
 - Protecting the environment by reducing the emission of carbon dioxide and other pollutants
 - Reducing traffic jams in towns and cities and decongesting highways
 - Minimising the wear and tear of vehicles
 - Reducing the risk of accidents
- It is the simplest, cheapest, and most environment-friendly method for transporting wheeled cargo

Lift on lift off shipping (Lo-lo):-

- A Lo-lo operation is when cargo is loaded and discharged over the top of the vessel using cranes or derricks

Differences between Ro-ro and Lo-lo :-

Parameter	Lo-lo	Ro-ro
Cranes	Requires cranes to load cargo.	Ro-ro does not require cranes to load the cargo. Trucks and cars are loaded and unloaded directly by driving them on and off the ship through built-in ramps. These vessels can be used for both civilian and non-civilian purposes.
Cost	Less expensive but only if it is included in a logistics chain that integrates rail transport and concerns high-volume cargo	Expensive
Economic	It is a more sustainable transport method especially as it is combined with rail transport.	---

Time

LoLo is generally much slower than
Ro-RoFaster so gives this an undeniable co
in cases where high-value added prod

Transport plans

Complex

A less sophisticated logistics chain i
operations i.e., Ro-Ro simplifies th
transport.**Potential of roll on roll off shipping:-**

- Truck owners benefit t more from the ro-ro service in terms of saving cost and time, both. A transport company is able to save more than 30% of the cost and 40% of the time in case they opt to travel by sea with given shipping prices.
- **Truck owners**
 - Minimises wear and tear of the vehicle
 - Less spending on fuel
- **Drivers**
 - More safety, less fatigue
 - Loss of extra income
- **Business houses**
 - Lower costs
 - Speedy transportation
 - Zero pilferage
- **Government**
 - Saving of costly fuel
 - Less corruption in revenue collection
- **Environment**
 - Lower carbon emissions and environmental pollution, and hence a potential earning of carbon credits
- **Society at large**
 - Less road congestion
 - Better health due to less pollution

Challenges:-

- The major reasons for the ship owners not being able to recover their cost of operations were **the steep costs and the low initial price of transportation**.
 - With the present pricing and cost structure, owners will break even only if the ship runs at almost 90% of total trucking capacity.
- **An incorrect ramp strength and size was another issue**, due to which taking the ship to other major and minor ports was not possible.
- **Vessel-related port charges at private ports is one of the major causes of concern** for coastal ro-ro ship services, due to which it becomes operationally nonviable to carry out multiple port deliveries during a single voyage.

- **Neither a professional marketing agency nor a proper business development team** was hired for the purpose of marketing ro-ro services.
- **The lack of commitment on behalf of the vessel owner** went against the interests of the business houses. With inconsistent services, the owner was not able to build confidence in the ro-ro service.

Way forward:-

- **Technical specifications of the ro-ro vessel need to be evaluated** as it requires a special ramp size, higher fuel efficiency, and lower cost of operations.
- **The pricing of the ro-ro service needs to be revisited**, as the business volume is not uniformly distributed across both the journeys to and fro.
- **Shifting to net register tonnage (NRT) would be a better proposition to attract more customers.**
- **Private ports need to rationalise vessel-related port charges** and try to make them equivalent to major ports.
- **The policy regarding incentivising transporters** to use the ro-ro service needs to be revisited.
- Since ro-ro is a new business idea, the traditional method of acquiring customers will not work. Since industry is expecting an end-to-end logistics solution, **specialised service aggregator services** in the form of mobile applications or aggregator service agencies may be developed for this new product.

Conclusion:-

- Ro-ro is a unique service initiative, and has the potential to contribute to the Sagarmala project, and to sustainable economic development in the country.

TOPIC: Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

Q) Discuss the potential applications of India's earth observation satellites in its counter-terrorism operations. (250 Words)

Background:-

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) evidently does not fight wars and is purely a civilian agency, but the capabilities it imparts to the nation are among the very best in world. In the years to come, India's space assets **will** play a much bigger role if and when hostilities break out on its borders.

Applications:-

- **Imaging purposes:-**
 - The declared use made of **earth observation satellites (Cartosat Series) for facilitating the surgical strikes** conducted across the Line of Control (LoC) in September 2016 represents a new precedent.
 - CARTOSAT was used for imaging areas where surgical strikes were carried out.

- **Attempts at infiltration could be detected by using low earth orbit surveillance satellites,** which would in turn enable the blocking of infiltrators through suitable force deployment.
 - In this regard, **the active deployment of Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) which were reportedly used in Operation Gingerin 2011,** and High Altitude Long Endurance (HALE) UAVs that are currently under consideration for procurement, will improve India's surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities.
- **The deployment of high-resolution radar based imaging sensors with all-weather day and night observation capability in the form of the Synthetic Aperture Radar system (SAR sensor platform) would also be advantageous** in both the surveillance and active reconnaissance roles.
 - RISAT 1 and 2 are the only two declared SAR systems in India's possession for all weather day and night capability with X band and C band sensor systems.
- **Better focus yet with lesser time:-**
 - Most of India's present operational remote sensing satellites with earth observation payloads, **including the RISAT and CARTOSAT series, are assumed to be capable of providing high-quality earth observation imagery** ranging from 50m to sub-meter resolution.
 - At a known velocity of 7.5 km/s, these satellites pass over the entire length of the observed Area of Interest (AoI) over the western border of India in three to four minutes or even less.
 - A shorter target region like the border in Jammu & Kashmir would mean an even lesser time for the satellite's orbital pass.
- To monitor **terrorist camps across the border**

Way forward:-

- India would need more than one satellite constellation. It would require multiple satellites that repeat their observation of a target area ideally one after the other in a contiguous form so that one satellite is always present over the Area of interest.
- Preferably smaller satellite systems at very low earth orbit to enable short revisits and repeat cycles would be ideal. **It is highly recommended that a range of nano and pico satellites be manufactured** and their employment integrated with the border management system.
- As satellites do not provide 24*7 surveillance this process along with inputs from other systems like **ground radars and aerial surveillance platforms like the Airborne Early Warning and Control Systems (AEWACS), manned posts, aerial reconnaissance that render round the clock surveillance** capabilities provide confirmation or build the overall picture of the situation.

Conclusion:-

- India is fast developing a huge capability called 'C4ISR' or 'command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance and with Indian space agency support(Rukmini satellite for Navy ,coastal security) India's national interests can be secured effectively now and in future.

Q) Today, why is it important for India to formulate an effective policy to secure its interests in space. Also analyse what components should be there in its space security policy. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Several advancements made in the field of space technology over the last few decades have significantly benefitted mankind. Today, space technology is considered critical to human survival and progress.

Why India need to formulate a policy to secure interests in space :-

- **Satellites are now being used for many purposes:** meteorology, television broadcasting, mobile telephony, navigation and internet.
- **Space systems are increasingly being used in multiple fields,** such as financial management, education, tele-medicine, scientific research and disaster management, to gather real time information and increase efficiency and connectivity.
- Satellite technology is also playing a **crucial role in measuring greenhouse gas emissions globally.**
- **Military campaigns** have demonstrated the significance of space technology for military purposes. The use of outer space for military support functions like reconnaissance, communication and navigation have received global acceptability since such usage does not directly violate any existing international legal regime.
- Owing to **growing dependence on space resources, there exists a possibility of intentional tampering with such assets** and the associated ground setup, either by state or non-state actors.
- **India's dependence on space technology and satellite derived products has been increasing.** As a leading space-faring nation, it has a major future agenda aimed at developing its own space assets for socio-economic as well as strategic purposes.
- Capabilities in space have the **potential to influence the international balance of power.**
 - From the geostrategic prism, space is increasingly being viewed as a foreign policy tool and a force multiplier, and simultaneously also as the fourth medium of warfare.

Components that need to be imbibed are:-

- **To cater for strategic requirements, a National Authority for Space Security (NASS) needs to be established under the defence ministry to oversee all aspects of space security.**
 - Under NASS, a Space Security Centre (secretariat to the Authority) could be established for coordinating the activities of the various stakeholders and to liaise with various agencies of the Space Commission
- **The Army, Navy, Air Force and other services like the Coast Guard and the Border Security Force are likely to increase their reliance on satellites** for purpose of intelligence gathering, communication, navigation and operating various weapon systems.
 - There is also a **need to develop Intelligence-Surveillance-Reconnaissance (ISR) capacities** in space to support network centric strategies.
 - A **dedicated Space Command** needs to be established for administering various military-related aspects of satellite technology
- For launching of satellites and ensuring that operational satellites do not suffer damage from space debris, **it is important to get timely warnings.**

- For this purpose, there is a need to develop a combination of an IR-microwave-radar network for gathering technical intelligence in space.
- **It is important for India's foreign policy establishment to ensure that the country has stakes in any global programme on space situational awareness.**
 - In fact, India could take the initiative to develop such a global programme. Alongside, there is also a need to put in place a Space Collision Warning System.
- **With increased activity in the space domain, satellites are being positioned in various layers of outer space.**
 - For effectively utilising such assets to their full potential, **it has become essential to study, monitor and forecast space weather continuously.**
- **The stakes for private industry in the space arena are rapidly growing.** Also, private industry should be encouraged to undertake various technology development and production projects.
 - **Further, there is a need to update existing national laws and consider legislating new space laws.**
- **Technological innovation needs to be encouraged** and agencies like the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) should be actively engaged in this regard.
- India's increasing military dependence on space would also make **space assets more vulnerable to attacks by adversaries. Hence, redundancy mechanism needs to be ensured.** For this purpose, India would have to develop effective **counter-space capabilities.**

Conclusion:-

- India so far has continued with its original space agenda of using space technology specifically for the purpose of socio-economic development. The need for the proposed measures however arises in the context of the rapidly changing global space security dynamics with ISRO remaining the centre for the formulation for space security policy.

Q) Examine critically the potential of technologies such as artificial intelligence(AI), virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (VR) and big data in transforming education in India. (250 Words)

Background:-

- The **learning** experience has evolved as we have moved to a more connected and **tech-savvy** society so much so that the global **education technology** and smart classroom market is forecasted to grow exponentially.
- According to a recent report brought out by Google and KPMG, the online education in India will possibly grow from its current \$247 million and reach \$1.96 billion by 2021.

Potential of the following technologies in education:-

- **Artificial intelligence:- Artificial intelligence(AI, also machine intelligence, MI)** is **intelligence** demonstrated by machines.
 - **Merits:-**
 - **Personalization:-**
 - AI systems easily adapt to each student's individual learning needs and can target instruction based on their strengths and weaknesses,

meaningless work for teachers and a more meaningful learning experience for students.

- **Tutoring:-**
 - **Virtual teaching assistants can be used to answer many frequently asked questions.**
 - In 2014, a professor from the US Georgia Institute of Technology created a robot teaching assistant that provided responses to students' online questions for five months without students noticing.
- **With AI teachers could analyse students' abilities, interests and potential through education profiles,** classroom interaction, social media, and find the best learning method (or even career path) for them.
- **Grading:-**
 - Machines can compile data about how students performed and even grade more abstract assessments such as essays and teachers can focus on lesson planning and professional development.
 - Experimental results have shown that, using machine learning and predictive modelling, the scores from AI match human grades as much as 85 per cent of the time.
- **Feedback on course quality:-**
 - AI can identify instruction gaps in the course content based on student performance on assessments.
- **Meaningful and immediate feedback to students**
 - With AI, students can feel comfortable to make the mistakes necessary for learning and receive the feedback they need for improvement.
- Many teachers stress on how learning also involves physical and multi-sensorial activities. Technology, at present cannot exercise a child's kinaesthetic abilities, integrate visual and tactile information, and engage global senses. **One interesting AI project in education is pushing this boundary**
- **Virtual reality and Augmented reality:-**
 - Technically speaking, AR combines the physical reality with the digital world. Virtual reality cannot show the real world, but it creates a completely virtual one, as with video games, or a virtual reality helmet.
 - Augmented Reality, on the other hand, enables users to see the real world with virtual objects, places, and contexts. Thus, AR does not replace the reality, but augment it.
 - **Merits:-**
 - VR and AR can enhance course material to a point where learning abilities grow multi-fold and students retain much more than they would with just textbooks.
 - In short blasts of 10 or 12 minutes, VR changes the way a student experiences a subject
 - **They** provide immersive experience and helps one visualize almost accurately, thereby accelerating learning and decision making
 - They enable medical students to acquire knowledge and understanding about the human body by means of interaction within a virtual environment in which no patients are at risk.
 - **Eliminates The Language Barrier:-**

- Every possible language can be implemented within the software. Therefore, language will no longer represent a barrier for student's education plans.
- By viewing augmented models, the students can gain a **better understanding of the concepts they are studying.**
- With Augment, you do not have to invest in physical materials. **Students can access models from any device at any time.**
- Students will **retain more knowledge for a longer period.**
- **Big data:-** *Big data* may involve multiple, simultaneous data sources, which may not otherwise be integrated
 - **Merits:-**
 - Intelligent tutoring systems such as Carnegie Learning or Third Space Learning are helping teachers break free from the "one size fits all" approach. **These one-to-one tutoring platforms leverage Big Data and learning analytics to provide tutors with real-time feedback about their students' performances, strengths and weaknesses.**
 - **Feedback:** Big learning data can be informative from a feedback and context perspective.
 - **Personalization:**
 - **Big Data will change the way we approach e-learning design by enabling developers to personalize courses to fit their learners' individual needs.**
 - **Efficiency:**
 - **Big Data can save us hours upon hours of time and effort when it comes to realizing goals** and the strategies to be achieved.
 - **Tracking:**
 - Big Data can help understand the real patterns of learners more effectively by allowing people to **track a learner's experience in an e-learning course.**
 - **Understanding the learning process:**
 - By tracking Big Data in e-learning, people can see which parts of an assignment or exam were too easy and which parts were so difficult that the student got stuck.

Demerits:-

- While technology has many uses, **it cannot understand and fulfil the psychological need of a child. It cannot teach empathy.**
- **High costs remain a challenge**
- No single existing AI application is **sufficiently advanced to warrant the replacement of a teacher.**
- **Lack of flexibility:-**
 - Specific software which has been programmed has to work exactly the same. This lack of flexibility can be a disadvantage for most of the students.
- There may be concerns as to whether or not virtual and augmented reality can harm **children's social development**

- **High level of reliance on digital information:**
 - Too much reliance on digital information may cause the decrease of working memory in the brain which in turn hinders the development of brain functions.
- **Addiction To The Virtual World:-**
 - The possibility of students getting addicted to their virtual world is also big.
- **Privacy concerns:**
 - As AR and VR software and applications are developing, it will become easy to gather information on AR and VR stuff from social network services (SNS)
- **Demerits of Big data:-**
 - **Privacy:**
 - As companies like Google have extended the services they offer to include email, document storage and processing, news, Web browsing etc and whatever else might be of interest to their users, **they gain access to even more personal data, which they collect, store, and cross-reference.**
 - While the quantity of publicly available information about individuals to be found online is vast, it is riddled with inaccuracies.
 - **Dehumanization:**
 - Apart from the obvious potential for error and prejudice, this use of profiling is objectionable **because it dehumanizes those being judged, as well as those making the judgments.**
 - **Deception by Numbers:**
 - Many argue that standard tests have led to a culture of constant summative testing, which has become a destructive force in education, demotivating and acting as an end-point and filter, rather than a useful mark of success.
 - Sometimes too much data can be overwhelming. Schools may have a tendency to gather more data than they need and **conflicting results can make it difficult to prioritize the information**
 - Collecting reliable and accurate data requires discipline. **Many people are not comfortable with tracking progress over time.**
 - Interpreting data can be a full-time job. **Doing it in an actionable way is time-consuming and requires advanced analytical skills**

Conclusion:-

- There is need for technological advancements to be synergized with traditional way of teaching to have quality education .

TOPIC: *Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.*

Q) Recently, the union cabinet took a decision to change the basis of classification of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Examine on what basis classification of MSMEs will be done and how would this classification impact industries such as defence. (250 Words)

Background:-

- MSME is second largest employment generating sector after agriculture sector. It provides 80% of jobs in industry with just 20% of investment.
- In the defence sector alone, as many as 6,000 MSME units have been supplying components and sub-assemblies to the public and private sector companies, out of which 800 are engaged with the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

Present classification:-

- Presently, enterprises qualify as micro, small or medium enterprises **if their investment in plant and machinery (for manufacturing units) and equipment (for service providers) is within the limits** laid down in Section 7 of the MSMED Act 2006, which are as follows:

Type of Enterprise	Investment in Plant of Machinery	Investment in Equipment
Micro	Not exceeding Rs 25 lakh	Not exceeding Rs 10 lakh
Small	More than Rs 25 lakh but not exceeding Rs 5 crore	More than Rs 10 lakh but not exceeding Rs 2 crore
Medium	More than Rs 5 crore but not exceeding Rs 10 crore	More than Rs 2 crore but not exceeding Rs 5 crore

Basis of New classification:-

- MSMED (Amendment) Bill, 2015 simply sought to increase the existing monetary limits two to three times and to **change the basis of classification from investment in plant and machinery or equipment to annual turnover without making a distinction between manufacturing enterprises and service providers**. The revised classification and eligibility thresholds will be as follows:

Type of Enterprise	Annual Turnover
--------------------	-----------------

Micro	Not exceeding Rs 5 crore
Small	More than Rs 5 crore but not exceeding Rs 75 crore
Medium	More than Rs 75 crore but not exceeding Rs 250 crore

Impact on industries such as defence:

- The **expanded MSME base also improves the prospects for projects funded from the 'Technology Development Fund (TDF)'** for development of defence and dual use technologies
- Many sectors where MSMEs role to play such as Pharmaceuticals, Auto-component, Food processing, defence etc have been **demanding a many-fold increase in the investment limit needed to be compliant of the new mandatory and industrial standards.**
- Increased capabilities will lead to more production so **cost of production of defence equipments would reduce.**
- It is transparent, as authorities could always cross check the turnover through platforms such as GSTN. **No CA certificate would be required.**
- **The new system of classifying enterprises based on annual turnover will be more reliable, transparent and objective** as the qualifying criteria will be verifiable with reference to the data available in the Goods and Services Tax network.
- This will **also reduce transaction costs** as it will no more be necessary to carry out any inspection. It will make classification system progressive and evolutionary.
- **Many enterprises in defence that presently do not qualify should come within the ambit of the MSMED Act, 2006** and benefit from a large number of schemes promulgated by the government for this sector from time to time.
- **Existing MSMEs in defence should also be able to invest more in plant and machinery and equipment** without losing out on the benefits available to them.
- **It will also help in overcoming uncertainties** associated with classification based on investment in plant & machinery and equipment and employment.
- It will also **improve ease of doing business.**
- It will **provide flexibility to Government to fine-tune classification of MSMEs in response to changing economic scenario** without resorting to amendment of MSMED Act.
- **It also levels the field for new and old enterprises as the comparison is not between historical investments and current investments** but between current turnovers.
- **This would increase capabilities and Product's Quality/Design** that would benefit defence sector.
- **Start up's in defence are likely to increase.**
- **However due to increased competition there might be**

Conclusion:-

- Overall, the new definition is a vast improvement over the earlier definition and should help MSMEs to face new challenges in a better frame. When this classification is complemented with

other reforms in acquisition of defence equipment, indigenization of defence etc it will be a game changer.

Q) Discuss the features of the draft Defence Production Policy, 2018. (250 Words)

Background:-

- With the aim of creating up to 30 lakh jobs and a total turnover Rs. 1.7 lakh crore in defence goods, the Union government has prepared its draft Defence Production Policy, 2018.
- The vision of the policy is to make India among the top five countries of the world in the aerospace and defence industries, with the active participation of the public and private sectors, fulfilling the objective of self-reliance as well as the demand of other friendly countries

Features:-

- The draft policy says the **government's aim is to achieve a turnover of Rs. 1,70,000 crore (approximately \$26 billion) in defence goods and services by 2025**, involving additional investment of nearly Rs. 70,000 crore (about \$10 billion) creating employment for nearly 2-3 million people.
- It also hopes to achieve exports of Rs. 35,000 crore in defence goods and services by 2025
- The policy aims to create an environment that **encourages a dynamic, robust and competitive defence industry as an important part of the 'Make in India' initiative**.
- The policy also hopes to **reduce current dependence on imports and to achieve self-reliance in development and manufacture** of several weapon systems/platforms.
- **The policy proposes to increase the foreign direct investment (FDI) cap** in niche technology areas to 74% under the automatic route.
- **Private sector:-**
 - **The government will list its requirements in terms of platforms and weapon systems for the next decade** to help private sector companies understand the opportunities
 - **It will also simplify procedures for private firms to enter defense production**, i.e., liberalize the regime by issuing licenses in 30 days and pruning no-go areas to a small 'negative list' for licensing
 - **The government will also do away with capacity assessment**, except for critical projects
- **Taxes:-**
 - In the area of taxation, **the government has proposed rationalization of taxes on import of capital goods for services** and inputs for defense and aims to prevent inversion of taxes
- **The policy also plans to export defence goods worth \$5 billion to other countries.** It also plans on setting up Defence Export Organisation in partnership with the industry and market domestically produced goods overseas.

Positives:-

- By giving a leg-up to defense manufacturing, **India hopes to transform itself into a global leader in cyberspace and AI (artificial intelligence) technologies.**
- It pushes for increased indigenisation of defence production **not just for purposes of self-reliance, but also to widen India's export to other nations.**
- **The policy also attempts to make it easier to do business.** It calls for increased participation of MSMEs, start-ups and other players from the private sector in the defence industry.

- **The Government also wants greater interaction between private and public sector.**
 - This policy aims at fusing together technologies from Ordnance Factory Board, Defence Public Sector Undertaking and private players.
 - It aims at advancing and boosting the existing public sector defence production units through skill development and overall program management.
 - **It creates open competition in the industry.** By opening the sector to private players, the policy is determined to create a driving force for increased productivity and innovation.
 - By inviting the private actors, India sees an opportunity to maximise returns on money.
- **The document also seeks to take advantage of the fact that India has emerged as a top destination for Research & Development (R&D) in the world.** It proposes that India utilise this opportunity and catapult itself as a hub for defence related Intellectual Property (IP).
- **The Simplified Make-II would be facilitated easily through this draft policy** and will launch itself as an initiative to make it easier for industries to enter defence sector.
- **The broad policy accelerates domestic defence production and thereby makes it feasible for India to have its own market .** Indigenous defence production will attract more investors which eventually will lead to massive market creation.

Negatives:-

- Private defence industry has welcomed the announcement of explicit targets, **but points out that close oversight would be needed to achieve them. The key to its success lies in how vigorously it is implemented.**
- **R&D incentivisation across industry is falling.** Earlier, there was tax exemption of 200 per cent of the R&D spend, which will be fallen to 100 per cent from 2020.
- **There is scepticism within industry above how exports can be scaled up** fifteen fold in just seven years, from the current level of about \$330 million.
- To boost defence exports to \$5 billion, there is a need for a body like Israel's SIBAT, in which the military and the highest levels of government together facilitate arms sales abroad. **The draft policy unfortunately limits itself to export promotion by DPSUs/Ordnance factories.**

Way forward:-

- Its success will lie in its implementation strategy, **a periodic review mechanism, and ensuring accountability for non-compliance.**
- **There must be a higher targeted incentivisation for defence R&D and product development.**
- It must contain a formal commitment that orders will not be given on "nomination" to DPSUs and ordnance factories, so **that there is a true level playing field.**
- **It should mention export promotion initiatives** such as providing low-cost capital to defence exporters from the growing foreign exchange reserves which could be detailed in separate export facilitation guidelines.

TOPIC: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

Q) To join other nations in the war on carbon, India needs to undertake a comprehensive approach, which can be done by establishing an emissions trading scheme (ETS). Discuss. (250 Words)

Emissions trading scheme(ETS) :-

- An ETS is a market-based mechanism where a cap is set on the amount of carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gases that can be emitted by covered entities. The emitters can either reduce their emissions to adhere to the cap or buy additional allowances from other entities to compensate for their deficiency. One allowance gives the right to the holder to emit one tonne of carbon.

Compressive approach through emissions trading scheme is needed because :-

- Introducing such a scheme would make **India a leader among developing economies and possibly help in better regulation of pollution.**
- A system in line with world standards would **help bring in more foreign investment and also boost the economy.**
- Other approaches do not give economic incentive to the producer. The producer can easily pass on the costs to the consumers and not worry about reducing any pollution. **So emissions trading scheme is the most cost effective way of reducing pollution.**
- **Moreover, marketable permits provide experts with more certainty about the level of pollution.**
- ETS will reduce emissions because emissions are capped, and this cap is reduced over time. However, ETSs typically allow emissions to be traded across countries.
 - Hence part of the cap can be met using international carbon credits. Credits from developing countries are currently very cheap so international trading means less local action to cut emissions.

Concerns remain :-

- Formalising emission rights **effectively gives firms a right to pollute.**
- **The location of the source of pollution:-**
- In theory, a cap on the emissions can be set up but in practice this cap might not result in the most fruitful outcome because the source of pollution might play a bigger role than expected.
- A very basic issue is what kind of caps are feasible in an economy. **Setting very stringent caps can result in the non-compliance to the norms and thereby degrading the environment further more.**
- One of the desirable aspects about marketable permits is the ability to raise income levels for participants. **This also raises the incentive for non-compliance. A weak enforcement system could result in illegal activity for higher profitability.**
- In contrast to a taxation regime, a permit trading programme does not provide any insular protection against 'shocks'.
 - **An emission cap can lead to politically unacceptable permit price increases.**
 - This was seen in the Los Angeles RECLAIM(Regional Clear Air Incentives Market) where a very large unanticipated rise in power could only be accommodated by increasing power production from the older, more polluting plants

- **Accepting an emissions trading scheme means that India would also have to agree to a emission cap for itself.** However, this might turn out to be counter-productive for India since being a rapidly developing economy with large incremental rise, **its emissions might rise above the cap for which it would have to face severe consequences**
- **The longest running ETS is in the European Union.** It has failed badly and 134 environment groups have demanded it be scrapped and replaced with policies that work. It has resulted in windfall profits for polluters, while not reducing emissions

Way forward:-

- The ability of soils to sequester carbon is a win-win strategy for farmers, people and for climate change
- Some of the approaches that could remove or absorb carbon dioxide in the atmosphere are better agricultural practices that leave carbon in the ground, use of biochar, undertaking afforestation and reforestation.
- Bioenergy for fuel in combination with carbon capture and storage (BECCS) is another method. This involves the use of plants as fuel.

Conclusion:-

- Emissions trading scheme is a temporary solution but for a permanent one policies should nudge especially the more prosperous communities towards less carbon intensive lifestyles, either through taxes or incentives or both. Otherwise, today's largely policies would merely shift current problems on to the shoulders of future generations.

Q) Does replacing existing bus transport, especially the CNG-based ones, with e-buses and encouraging citizens to move towards using e-vehicles address pollution in cities? Critically examine. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Vehicles produce a lot of carbon emissions that are ejected into natural atmosphere, leaving people vulnerable to things like pollution and greenhouse gases. In order to help positively the environment people live in, electric vehicle is a great step forward

How E-vehicles address pollution in cities: -

- Direct emissions include smog-forming **pollutants** (such as nitrogen oxides), other **pollutants** harmful to human health, and greenhouse gases (GHGs), primarily carbon dioxide. **All-electric vehicles produce zero direct emissions, which specifically helps improve air quality in urban areas.**
- Electric vehicles produce fewer emissions that contribute to climate change and smog than conventional vehicles.
- **Reduced Noise Pollution:** Electric vehicles put curb on noise pollution as they are much quieter. Electric motors are capable of providing smooth drive with higher acceleration over longer distances.

No:

- 70-95% of PM emissions caused by road transportation is not related to tailpipe emissions but to road dust re-suspension and abrasion of brakes and tyres. **E-buses will not eliminate these emissions.**
- Electric power is mainly produced by coal-powered plants. So the switch to electric would neither change the air quality in the city nor would it be an environmentally friendly initiative.
- The technology is still too expensive primarily because of the battery.
- **Recharge Points:** Electric fuelling stations are still in the development stages.
- **Not Suitable for Cities Facing Shortage of Power:** As electric cars need power to charge up, cities already facing acute power shortage are not suitable for electric vehicles
- **Newer vehicles require new Industries for manufacturing base. This might cause land pattern change and deforestation.**

Way forward:-

- The focus should be on measures which are more sustainable, paired with effective investments to improve air quality.
- With regards to the expected additional energy demand generated by India's 2030 vision of electric vehicles, **it might make sense to couple this with renewable energy: every electric vehicle sold should require a dedicated clean source of power to be installed.**
- Other ways to spur EVs, **include dedicated charging spots, and discounted or free parking.**
- **In the Indian scenario, the government should provide the initial user base and demand to help technologies cross the chasm.**
 - The government could consider making all new government and corporate vehicles electric.
 - This would force government buildings to install EV infrastructure, and hopefully create a large enough ecosystem for the maintenance market in petrol pumps and service shops to take off.

Q) What are persistent organic pollutants and what dangers they pose to health and environment? Also write a brief note on recently notified new Regulation of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POP) Rules, 2018. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Persistent organic pollutants (POPs) are among the most dangerous chemicals that humans release into the environment. While POPs have been in use for decades, the world has only recently learned about their more deadly qualities. So there is a need to effectively curb their effects.

Persistent organic pollutants:-

- POPs are organic chemical substances toxic to both humans and wildlife which once released into the environment remain intact for years on end
- They become widely distributed throughout the environment as a result of natural processes involving soil, water and air, and accumulate in the fatty tissues of living organisms including humans.
- Because of human activities, POPs are widely distributed over large regions of the world including areas where they were never used

- POPs are recognized by the International Agency for Research on Cancer as Group 1 carcinogens or cancer-causing substances.

Dangers:-

- **Effects of these pollutants on wildlife**
 - Reproductive impairment and malformations
 - Immune system is sensitive
 - Altered liver enzyme function
 - Increased risk of tumours
 - High levels of DDE (a metabolite of DDT) in certain birds of prey caused their eggshells to thin so dramatically they could not produce live offspring.
- **Effect on Humans:-**
 - Contact may cause skin rashes, swelling of eyelids, hyper-pigmentation headaches, or vomiting.
 - Specific effects of POPs can include cancer, allergies and hypersensitivity, damage to the central and peripheral nervous systems, reproductive disorders, and disruption of the immune system.
 - Extended high-level exposure has resulted in cases of chloracne. The worst incident of human exposure was the 1968 Yusho incident: 1200 people (in Japan) consumed rice oil heavily contaminated with PCBs over 20 to 190 days.
 - These people had reproductive dysfunction, visual disturbances and respiratory problems etc
 - Female victims tend to have disorders of the reproductive organs, and also an increased risk of miscarriage and stillbirth.
 - Infants born to women who had been exposed to these exhibited neurobehavioural deficits and lower overall age-adjusted developmental scores were reported among the exposed children.
- **Environment:-**
 - POPs work their way through the food chain by accumulating in the body fat of living organisms and becoming more concentrated as they move from one creature to another. This process is known as "biomagnification."
 - They persist for long periods of time in the environment and can accumulate and pass from one species to the next through the food chain.
 - DDT is practically only being sprayed in the houses of the poor. But the risk of improper use of DDT is high and can have serious consequences for the agricultural sector.

Features of the bill :-

- **Ban the manufacture, trade, use, import and export of the seven toxic chemicals listed under the Stockholm Convention**
- According to the new rules, the industrial units handling these chemicals or persons in possession of these chemicals would have to **declare the total quantity of the chemicals, which are in use and their stockpiles to the Environment ministry within six months**, by September 2018.
- It further said that these **industrial units or persons, shall not drain or discharge or dispose the chemicals directly or indirectly in effluent treatment plant**, sewage treatment plant, onto any land, in public sewers, in inland surface water or in marine coastal areas.

- It further held that the **waste containing these chemicals shall be disposed of as per the provisions of the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management and Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016**
- The rules clarified that **these chemicals may be used, sold or imported in quantities as required for research and development activities in central universities**, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research laboratories, government institutions or other research institutions or accredited laboratories in the government or private sector after the approval by the ministry.

Conclusion:-

- In the current scenario especially when the survival of the earth is on the brink efforts need to be made towards sustainable development and the new rules are step in the right direction.

Q) Does proper implementation of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 act as an obstacle to economic growth? Critically comment. (250 Words)

Background:-

- The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 or FRA was a landmark legislation that sought to restore the rights of forest dwellers over land, community forest resources and habitats, and the governance and management of forests.

No, it is not an impediment to the economic growth because :-

- In Tripura over 1.91 lakh claims were received from forest dwelling families and of these, over 1.24 lakh families have been benefitted with land ownership due to the successful implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006, in the state.
 - The Tribal Welfare Department has now taken this to the next level, and converged a multitude of economic schemes with other departments for the benefit of all patta holders. **This has been accompanied by impressive economic benefits with thousands of tribal families benefiting from fisheries, horticulture etc**
- Implementation of the Forest Rights Act **will not only help resolve these conflicts but also help uplift the economic and social status of forest dwellers**. This will lead to a inclusive economy.
- It can enhance **the livelihood of people and promote sustainable forest management** through collective action with legal sanction, scientific inputs and social process.
- **Like Pachgaon, there are hundreds of villages across the country which have been empowered under the FRA** to access their customary rights over forestland. This can lead to **reverse migration** .They have proved how the FRA can contribute to their livelihood and sustainable management of forests.
- **Minor forest produce, selling bamboo, tribal art and handicrafts** along with integration with TRIFED can contribute to economy as well.

- Effective implementation of this act will only increase the development process by permitting the **necessary private projects and lead to inclusive growth.**
- **Sikkim adopted the Integrated Organic Farming Systems (IOFS)** approach to stabilize income streams through natural resource management and livelihood diversification in tribal villages by innovation in farming for maximizing production through optimal use of local resources, effective recycling of farm waste for productive purposes, community-led local systems for water conservation, organic farming etc.

However there are challenges in the implementation of the act if corrected will help Indian economy like:-

- **Due to the project some of the private projects have been delayed .**
- **Land and forest rights are not effectively given to the targeted.**
- **Intermittent delay in coordination is one of the prominent challenges.** The verification process requires the coordination of a number of authorities from different departments. Delays happen as coordination among all these officials is sometimes difficult owing to the numerous other responsibilities the officials handle
- **Augmenting financial resources is also a challenging task.** Plans for expanding beyond the provision of economic benefits and including social benefits such as academic programmes/scholarships for forest dwellers have not materialised yet due to insufficient funds.
- **With regard to some economic benefits granted in the implementation of the FRA there may be considerable delay in actually receiving the fruits of the benefits.** For example, rubber plantations take seven years to fully mature, and to start generating a revenue.
- In some cases locals were encouraged to deforest areas, for growing food. This objective is achieved by burning trees and ground vegetation, then planting food crops on the ash-fertilised remains. **This gave rise to “marginal farming”,** which has ended up eroding India’s food security

Way forward:-

- **The government need to understand the potential of the FRA to address rural distress and not subvert its provisions.**
- **The state governments across the country should bring amendments to their forest law,** especially laws related to minor forest produce, so that millions of forest dwellers will benefit from their access to forest resources.

Q) India’s environment ministry has unveiled a draft of the new National Forest Policy. Discuss its features. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Forests are very important economically, ecologically and even for the survival of the human kind. The new draft policy seeks to replace the country's 30-year-old national forest policy.
- In the light of the contemporary challenges like climate change, human-wildlife conflict, intensifying water crisis, increasing air and water pollution and deteriorating environment a new policy is necessary.

Draft of the new national forest policy :-

- The overall objective and goal of the present policy is to safeguard the ecological and livelihood security of people, of the present and future generations, based on sustainable management of the forests for the flow of ecosystem services.
- Features:-
 - Public private participation for afforestation in degraded forest areas
 - Public-private participation models will be developed for undertaking afforestation and reforestation activities in degraded forest areas and forest areas available with forest development corporations and outside forests
 - Promoting urban greens
 - It says the management plans for urban green will be prepared and implemented in consonance with the development plan of cities.
 - Measures to safeguard ecosystems from forest fire (map the vulnerable areas; develop and strengthen early warning systems)
 - It proposes to restrict schemes and projects which interfere with forests that cover steep slopes, catchments of rivers, lakes, and reservoirs, geologically unstable terrain and such other ecologically sensitive areas
 - It also suggests setting up of two national-level bodies
 - National Community Forest Management (CFM) Mission and National Board of Forestry (NBF) for better management of the country's forests
 - The draft calls for state boards of forestry headed by state ministers in charge of forests to be established for ensuring inter-sectoral convergence, simplification of procedures, conflict resolution, among other things
 - Afforestation in catchment areas for river rejuvenation and water recycling
 - The ecologically sensitive catchment areas shall be stabilized with suitable soil and water conservation measures, and also by planting suitable trees and grass like bamboo
 - Economic valuation of forests
 - Forest certification to provide premium on forest produce
 - Integration of climate change concerns in forest management
 - Promote agro-forestry and farm forestry
 - Management of north-eastern forests
- Besides, **it had suggested launching a national forest streams revival programme in mission mode to tackle the water crisis.**

Positives:-

- **It addressed the issue of forest fires**, stating that adequate measures would be taken to safeguard ecosystems from forest fires, map the vulnerable areas and develop and strengthen

early warning systems and methods to control fire, based on remote sensing technology and community participation.”

- The latest draft of National Forest Policy **has omitted any reference to a green tax or a national stream revival programme.**
- **It emphasized on integrating climate change concerns into forest management** while noting that forests acts as a natural sink of carbon dioxide thereby assisting in climate change mitigation.
 - Contributes to the forestry-related Nationally Determined Contribution Targets and by integrating, climate change mitigation and adaptation measures in forest management through the mechanism of REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation plus) so that the impacts of the climate change is minimised.
- **To tackle rising human-wildlife conflict**, the draft outlined short-term and long-term actions.
- The draft policy document **also talks about degraded land** and how it can be improved by undertaking afforestation activities using public private partnership models.
- It seeks to sync it with the country’s forestry-related ‘Nationally Determined Contribution’ targets under the Paris Agreement where India has promised to rapidly increase its forest cover so that an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent is created by the year 2030.
- The draft policy also talks about the need to stimulate growth in the forest based industry sector. This sector being labour intensive can help in increasing green jobs. Forest corporations and industrial units need to step up growing of industrial plantations for meeting the demand of raw materials

Negatives:-

- The draft NFP 2018 mentions major forestry issues ailing the forest sector, but it doesn’t provide answers to them as to how these objectives will be achieved considering the competitive demands for forestlands.
- New draft also says efforts will be made to achieve harmonization between policies and laws like Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006 . **People may see it as an attempt to weaken role of gram sabhas (village councils)**
- While the role of forests as climate change mitigation factor has been recognised, **the draft NFP is vague on the issue of forests rights for forest dwelling communities**
- **Continues to speak about private participation in forest management, which was criticized in 2016.**

Conclusion:-

- There is a need for a comprehensive approach for successful forest management like ensuring proper funding, filling the vacancies (the necessity of which was very visible in the recent Theni forest fire incident), effective implementation of provisions etc

Q) Discuss the origin and significance of Chipko and other similar movements. Do you think development has trumped environmentalism today? Comment. (250 Words)

Background:-

- India's environment movement is a product of its democratic system. Indian environmental groups have organised numerous protest movements against deforestation, construction of high dams, mining, pollution and nuclear power plants with varying degrees of success.

Origin of Chipko movement :-

- Spearheaded by the Dasholi gram swarajya mandal a Gandhian organisation, the Chipko Movement began as a protest movement in 1973 against the policy of the government of Uttar Pradesh to auction forests.
- Chipko activists stood for people's rights in forests and have since gone on to organise women's groups for afforestation.
- The name of the movement 'chipko' comes from the word 'embrace', as the villagers hugged the trees and encircled them to prevent being hacked.
- In no time it spilled onto other states in north India.

Significance:-

- In India environmental movements arose out of the imperative of human survival. **This was an environmentalism of the poor**, which married the concern of social justice on the one hand with sustainability on the other. **It argued that present patterns of resource use disadvantaged local communities and devastated the natural environment.**
- Chipko Movement:-**
 - It is best remembered for the **collective mobilisation of women for the cause of preserving forests**, which also brought about a change in attitude regarding their own status in society.
 - Due to Chipko movement **new laws to control pollution and to protect natural forests were enacted**. There was even talk of restoring community systems of water and forest management.
 - As a sequel to the above movement **several wild life sanctuaries have been carved out and poaching in** these areas has been made a cognizable offense.
 - The movement triggered a worldwide thinking in favour of forest management. Concepts such as community forestry arose in Indonesia, Malaysia.
- Save silent valley movement:-**
 - First major campaign against a dam in India. In 1980, the M.G.K. Menon Committee set up to review the hydroelectric project against which the protests were going on and came out with a recommendation to scrap it.
- Environmental movements like Narmada Bacha andolan, Chipko movement etc attributed their success to commitment to social justice and environmental concerns linked to people.
- These movements have inspired critical and intellectual assessments of the country's ecological concerns.

Development Vs environmentalism:-

The debate of whether environment or development is favoured by the countries and has nations accorded secondary importance to environment is a question to be discussed.

Development takes precedence :-

- The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) is regarded by other ministries as a 'negative' force that impedes 'development' and most often the environment is relegated to a secondary position.

- The argument is that **the protection of the environment is important, but not at the cost of development.** In the ‘development versus environment’ debate, **the demand is always for a compromise on environmental concerns but never moderation of developmental activities.**
- **The destruction of aquifers, rivers turning into sewers, rampant deforestation ,not respecting rights of indigenous people as projects like Vedanta are sanctioned , the looming water crisis even in states with water abundance like Kerala, pollution in cities show that environment was sidelined with respect to development.**
- A NASA study in 2009 identified a third of the world’s major aquifers to be in distress, with the Indus basin which includes **Punjab and Haryana, India’s granaries ranked the second-most over-stressed.**
- **The catastrophic environmental impacts of economic growth** like climate change, deforestation, pollution and toxicity, etc are putting in place new and more urgent limits on the production and consumption of these resources.
- **The levels of air pollution were now shockingly high in all Indian cities.** Across India, the untreated waste of cities was dumped on villages.
- **All these instances confirm that environment has been neglected.**

However India is increasingly moving towards serious environment conservation like the recent initiatives like commitment towards Paris agreement, International solar alliance , investment in renewable energy etc show that India is trying to move towards sustainable growth .

Conclusion:-

- **Integrating natural capital assessment and valuation into economic system is critical to usher in a truly sustainable future for India.**

TOPIC: Disaster and disaster management.

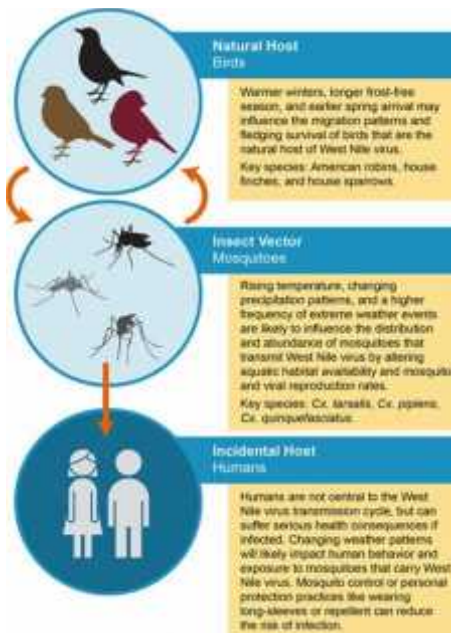
Q) The India Meteorological Department’s has forecast above-normal maximum and minimum temperatures across the country during the pre-monsoon March-May period. How does this affect public health? How should states prepare to deal with maximum heat and cold situations? (250 Words)

Background:-

- Human health has always been influenced by climate and weather. Changes in climate and climate variability, particularly changes in weather extremes, affect the environment that provides us with clean air, food, water, shelter, and security.
- Increase in temperatures in India have become deadlier and further global warming could take a relatively drastic human toll in the coming years.
- While mean temperatures from 1960 to 2009 increased by around 0.5 C degrees, both heat waves and mortality have increased substantially,

Impact on Public health:-

- Even a marginal rise above the normal will lead to enormous **heat stress for millions of people, especially when** India accounted for the largest number of people living below international poverty line in 2013, with 30 per cent of its population under the \$1.90-a- day poverty measure, according to the World Bank.
- **Young children, pregnant women, older adults, and people with certain medical conditions are less able to regulate their body temperature** and can therefore be more vulnerable to extreme heat.
- It can lead to **fatal heat stroke** in a small percentage of people, while many more could encounter exhaustion, cramps and fainting.
 - One scientific estimate of annual mortality attributable to heat waves between 2010 and 2015 ranges between 1,300 and 2,500.
- **Climate change increases the risk of illness** through increasing temperature, more frequent heavy rains and runoff, and the effects of storms.
 - Health impacts may include gastrointestinal illness like diarrhoea, effects on the body's nervous and respiratory systems, or liver and kidney damage.
 - Exposure to extreme heat can lead dehydration, as well as cardiovascular, respiratory, and cerebrovascular disease.
 - **Higher air temperatures can increase cases of *Salmonella* and other bacteria-related food poisoning** because bacteria grow more rapidly in warm environments. These diseases can cause gastrointestinal distress and, in severe cases, death
 - Higher sea surface temperatures will lead to higher mercury concentrations in seafood
- **Mental health:-**
 - Individuals with mental illness are especially vulnerable to extreme heat; studies have found that having a pre-existing mental illness tripled the risk of death during heat waves.
- **High temperatures also raise the levels of ozone and other pollutants** in the air that exacerbate cardiovascular and respiratory disease.
- **Pollen and other aeroallergen levels are also higher in extreme heat.** These can trigger asthma, which affects around 300 million people
- **Vector borne diseases:-**
 -
 - The geographic range of ticks that carry Lyme disease is limited by temperature. As air temperatures rise, ticks are likely to become active earlier in the season, and their range is likely to continue to expand northward.
- Mosquitoes are highly sensitive to temperature, humidity and rainfall. Environmental and landscape changes coupled with rise in temperature and humidity levels influence vector behaviour and disease transmission.



Measures need to be taken by states to deal with these situations:-

- **Community-level interventions** need to be taken up to help vulnerable groups.
- The **World Health Organisation recommends** that countries adopt heat-health warning systems, including daily alerts to ensure that people are in a position to deal with adverse weather, starting with reduction of exposure.
- Water stress is a common and often chronic feature in many States: **arrangements should be made to meet scarcity.**
- In long term, **India has to pursue mitigation of greenhouse gases vigorously, since there is a perceived link between increases in average temperature caused by climate change and the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events.**

Conclusion:-

- Although the impacts of climate change have the potential to affect human health in India and around the world, there is a lot India can do to prepare for and adapt to these changes such as establishing early warning systems for heat waves and other extreme events, taking steps to reduce vulnerabilities among populations of concern, raising awareness among healthcare professionals, and ensuring that infrastructure is built to accommodate anticipated future changes in climate.

TOPIC: Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security;

Q) India is one of the few countries which still does not have a dedicated cyber component in its military. Why and how should India prepare for cyber warfare? Examine. (250 Words)

Background:-

- In both war and peacetime, technological advancements play a significant role in arrangements between nations and their power sharing. As the cycle of innovation moves to the Internet and beyond and the world graduates from an era of Cold War to one of Code War, cyber skirmishes will become the new normal and a part of diplomatic parlance.

Why India need to be prepared for cyber warfare?

- The attacks can be **more tangible causing damage to physical or digital infrastructure**.
 - This includes a country's water system or electric grid.
 - Cyber tentacles can spread to political parties, universities and private businesses and Citizens.
 - Potentially worrisome cyber incidents include interference in political affairs, leaks and espionage and the compromising of critical national infrastructure.
- A 2017 study conducted by Symantec found that **India ranked fourth in online security breaches**, accounting for over 5 per cent of global threat detections. In the beginning of 2017, the newly launched Bharat Interface for Money application (BHIM app) reportedly faced spam threats.
- **The real danger to India lies in targeted cyber attacks coming from adversarial nation states.**
 - Countries like China can bring immense assets to bear in carrying out sophisticated cyber attacks. The success of Stuxnet, which damaged the Iranian centrifuge facility at Natanz is an example.
- **Cyber warfare is characterised by an absence of clarity.**
 - India can never be certain about the capability of the other side and also the chances of success if we launch a cyber counterstrike.
- There is a **push towards greater digital dependence** with demonetisation a cashless system is being propagated. Aadhaar and the wider platforms such Digital India and Smart Cities will push things further along. India is the world's second largest digital nation with more than 350 million Indians are online and millions more will be getting connected in the years to come.
- **India is not even a signatory to some of the basic international frameworks on cybersecurity** like the Convention of Cybercrime of the Council of Europe which not only European nations but Japan, US, South Africa have become signatories to, except India.
- **Indian laws are not in tandem with the ever-changing global cyberspace.**
 - The laws are old and hence need to be more dynamic in nature to deal with issues like cyber-espionage, data theft and so on.
 - The Information Technology Act, 2000 (IT Act 2000) is the sole law that deals with cyberspace in India and was passed way back in 2000.
 - Also, the Cyber Law of India has been subject to amendments on various occasions but hasn't served the changing dynamics and the growing threats and manifestations of cyberwar.

Ways India can prepare for the cyber warfare are:-

- **Critical cyber infrastructure needs to be defended** and the establishment of the **National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC)** is a good step in this direction
 - Individual ministries and private companies must also put procedures in place to honestly report breaches. It is only then that the NCIIPC can provide the requisite tools to secure these networks. This partnership must be transparent and not mired in the usual secrecy of intelligence organisations.

- The **upgrading of the Defence Cyber Agency to a Cyber Command** must be implemented at the soonest.
- A robust ecosystem must be built to secure India from acts of state and non-state actors, including **protocol for grievance redressal in international forums.**
- **Better capabilities must be built to detect and deflect attacks.**
- The **computer emergency response team (CERT)** must be strengthened and aligned with **military and foreign affairs operations.**
- **Building a joint task force between the government and key technology players** will be crucial.
- The government should push for the **creation of a global charter of digital human rights.**
- A national gold standard should be created, **which ensures that Indian hardware and software companies adhere to the highest safety protocols**
- Impart cybercrime investigation training and technological know-how to the various law enforcement agencies.

Conclusion:-

- Some of the key areas which need to be dealt with are cyberwarfare, cyberterrorism, cyberespionage and international cybersecurity cooperation that would enable developing nations to gather technical expertise from the developed ones to tackle the ever-growing threat to cybersecurity.

Topic: Security challenges and their management in border areas

Q) Border security is one of the most vital component of national security of any country and in this regard, the Indian government has been pushing for technological solutions through Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS) project. In this light, discuss the limitations, cost-effectiveness and suitability of technological solutions to manage India's borders. (250 Words)

Background:-

- Repeated acts of terror from across the border led to rigorous introspection in the Government for developing measures to avoid such tragedies.
- The use of high-tech solutions for border security was being considered by India since 2012 and the trigger for implementing the CIBMS was the Pathankot terrorist attack.
- The CIBMS is touted as a more robust and integrated system that is capable of addressing the gaps in the present system of border security by seamlessly integrating human resources, weapons, and high-tech surveillance equipment

Limitations of technological solutions :-

- The experiences of countries such as the United States that have employed high-tech devices demonstrate that not only are the costs of such devices prohibitive but that they also fail to provide a comprehensive solution to border security problems.
 - Even US is weighed down by the economic burden caused by implementation of the 'virtual fence' on the US-Mexico border.
 - **Infusion of large funds for acquiring the CIBMS** at a time when economy is struggling with slow growth, is also going to be a challenge before the government.

- The exorbitant cost of the electronic devices and the lack of easy availability of spare parts act as a deterrent against their use.
- The army is also using some imported, sophisticated technical equipments, but its optimum use is hampered by its **incompatibility with terrain and border security infrastructure**.
 - Erratic power supply and adverse climatic and terrain conditions in the border areas could potentially undermine the functioning of the sophisticated system.
- The effectiveness of the equipments is further **curtailed by the lack of training, repair and maintenance facility and smart users**.
 - **BSF does not have the required technical expertise to offer clear guidelines to the vendors so that they can provide suitable products.** This fact is further evidenced by media reports that the two attempts at testing the CIBMS system were stalled due to technical mismatch and budgetary projections.
 - **Operation and maintenance of the existing sophisticated equipment remain a problem.** At present, many of the high-tech surveillance devices deployed by the BSF are **not optimally utilised because the required technical expertise is not uniformly available among the force's personnel**.
 - Being manpower intensive, the system was not effective in providing rest and relief to BSF troops
- **Centralised decision making could hamper timely and effective response on the ground** given that detection and interception of infiltrators at the border require a quick response which is achieved only through a decentralised decision making process.

Advantages:-

- **Cost effectiveness and suitability :-**
- **Technical solutions are necessary to augment and complement the traditional methods of border guarding.**
- They not only enhance the surveillance and detection capabilities of the border guarding forces but also **improve the impact of the border guarding personnel against infiltration and trans-border crimes**.
- Smart borders will not only strengthen security infrastructure but also can go a long way in **reducing the loss of valuable lives of our soldiers**.
- Besides, **the idea has a potential to boost innovation in Indian companies** and research institutes, which could develop cost-effective technologies.

Way forward:-

- A strong initiative to utilize this existing infrastructure to their optimum capacity can go a long way in improving border security without additional cost.
- **There is a need for setting up a border security operation cum intelligence centers**, for better cooperation and coordination among various agencies involved in border security. Operations should be intelligence driven.

Conclusion:-

- Instead of high-cost and innovative technological solutions that require extensive technical expertise, a judicious mix of properly trained manpower and affordable and tested technology is likely to yield better results.

GENERAL STUDIES PAPER 4

Topic: *Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of Ethics in human actions;*

Q) Why hard-coding ethics is important in both building and using mobile apps. (150 Words)

Answer:-

Creators of business intelligence and analytics applications bear responsibility for ensuring that people can reach the right conclusions from the facts and the way they are presented. Mobile developers are leveraging third-party code to quickly build and deploy apps, but many of those developers do not understand the code they are implementing or the ramifications of using them. **It is getting very easy to build a mobile app, but it is harder than ever to build one well.**

Issues such as spamming users for reviews to forcing users to log in with social networks so additional marketing can be sent to users friends and followers are common and now, sadly expected.

It would be unethical to leave judgment about data quality to the user. For instance if a retail store publishes an incorrect price the brand has to honour it. Thus, the retailer incurs the cost of the wrong data. Similarly it is app creators responsibility to provide such assurance

People use apps to make decisions quickly, in many cases deciding instantly based on what they see. Given this, **any embellishment or design that can lead to incorrect perceptions are unethical as they divert attention from the app's core purpose of fueling better decisions.** The goal is absolute clarity and lack of ambiguity so that decisions can be made quickly.

People respect their privacy and the apps need to guarantee the trust put by the user's is not misused by collection of data without consent .If the application will do something in the background, let the user know, and let them turn it off.

The danger lies in the combination of smartphone technology aimed at reinforcing app usage, and a business model based on attracting and keeping our attention. This combination co-opts our time and freedom and directs us towards information and advertisements which often add little value to our lives.

The developer should be self-moderating i.e., they need to put care and thought into how their software interacts with a user's data. The publisher, Apple and Google, for example, also have oversight and guidelines for approvals, which have several sections overlooking privacy as well as malware. Finally the consent of the users need to be mandated. **Tech companies large and small must push for social responsibility as a necessary parallel to innovation.**

TOPIC: *Human Values – lessons from the lives and teachings of great leaders, reformers and administrators;*

Q) Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower. Illustrate with examples. (150 Words)

Answer:-

In today's world, people face financial, political and societal ambiguity and change. It is essential for companies, governments, and other organizations to find new and innovative solutions to upcoming problems and glitches.

Innovation occurs if someone improves on or makes a significant contribution to an existing product, process or service. When people talk about innovation, **Steve Jobs iPod** is cited as an example of innovation at its best. Its innovation was creating an easy-to-use ecosystem that unified music discovery, delivery and device. And, in the process, they revolutionized the music industry.

Leadership and innovation are closely-knit. In fact most, if not all, **successful innovators are successful leaders too.** Innovation leads to market leadership for instance **Facebook revolutionised the social networking**. So Great leaders come up with great ideas so that influences people to believe and follow the leaders. So leaders continue to make efforts to be experts in the area of expertise and continue to innovate and push the envelope in that area.

Learning to lead the innovation often proves to be as important as the innovation itself. Without proper leadership, many new and innovative products have died while on the road to success. So, finding the proper leader to lead an innovation is one important key factor to realize the success that an innovation deserves. The leader must know when to simply take the tested ways, and when to introduce new and innovative ideas and products.

The innovation process is essential to **increase public sector efficiency and for delivering quality and competitive public services.** Governments are increasingly making more of the innovation a key issue on the political agenda today, recognizing its potential to promote economic growth and how to

address social and environmental challenges. For instance PM's award in the category of best innovation was awarded to an IAS officer's unique solar lamp project that was turning poor and lesser educated tribal women from the most backward blocks of the district into green entrepreneurs.

The world-class innovators didn't believe in living with the results of other people's thinking. They had the grit and the courage it took, to listen to their innovative voices, and to follow their intuitions. They became true leaders, and they left behind a legacy of innovations in their wake, ones without which people would have been living in a world of darkness.

Q) You are preparing for civil services exam. Your parents, who are farmers, do not understand the nature of this exam. They have given up agriculture due to frequent losses. They are forcing you to work and earn some money so that they can sustain themselves with three meals a day. You decide to conduct tuition to rich kids in your area. On applying online, you get 3-4 homes to conduct evening tuitions. These sessions would consume 4-5 hours daily, but help you earn enough to sustain yourself and parents back home. One day you notice that few children of migrant workers are helping their parents near a construction site. You come to know that these children are not going to school. You decide to teach these children too.

How will you convince parents of these children, and also children themselves to attend your classes? In case managing classes to both rich kids and migrant kids becomes hectic and starts affecting your civil services preparation, to which kids you will continue to teach? Justify. ETHICS CASE STUDY

Answer:-

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world. However many children are denied education due to child labour. According to Census data, there are over 82 lakh child labourers (aged between 5 – 14 years) in India. Child labour and poverty are inevitably bound together and if you continue to use the labour of children as the treatment for the social disease of poverty, you will have both poverty and child labour to the end of time.

The stakeholders involved in this case study are myself, my parents, rich and poor children and their parents. The ethical issues involved are priority to my goals vs responsibility towards my parents, having empathy towards the poor children etc.

1 .I would first talk to the parents working at the construction site of the serious implications that child labour has on children, in long run. I will try to counsel them if there has to be a economically bright future for these families, their children must be provided with quality education and skill building.

I will persuade them to take the children out of work and enrol them in my tuitions instead as there will be no financial burden as well, thus helping the children move towards a different and better future.

I will try to make them understand that education makes a person self-dependent , their children wouldn't have to struggle everyday to make their ends meet or be victims of influence by anti social elements or trafficking or gangs. They will have the ability to stand on their own like Abdul Kalam, Dhirubhai Ambani etc safely. Also i will make them aware that child labour is illegal .

Once the parents are convinced children will be easily sent to my tuitions and i would assure these children that if they want to be a support to their parents they have to study well for a bright future rather than working as helpers to their parents now.

2.Even though my responsibility towards the weaker sections is necessary for a civil servant the act of competency is important too for doing things efficiently. So despite time constraints I have to find a balanced solution which works best.

In this case abandoning the poor kids is not an option as it was me who convinced them to take my tuitions in the first place so neglecting them would mean abdicating the responsibility I endorsed myself on. Similarly abandoning rich kids is not an option as they are means to my family's survival.

Instead of taking two different classes for these kids I will convince the rich parents that group study would benefit their children, children would learn importance of team effort, equality, compassion etc. Then I will conduct classes for both rich and poor kids together. So the time invested would be the same and I will have time to prepare for my civil services examination.

Therefore it is necessary that strict government measures be taken against child labour in public places especially like construction sites, restaurants etc .People need to be proactive and take responsibility of this cause and work collectively to eradicate this menace.

Q) Are moral values less important today compared to money? How does money affect morals? Comment. (150 Words)

Answer:-

The love of money is the root of all evil is increasingly evident in the modern society. In the Subprime Mortgage Crisis between 2007 and 2009, hundreds of Wall Street tycoons repeatedly sought out and

exploited loopholes within the federal banking system. The crisis represented the classic irony world suffers from, where the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer. **The financial disaster is just one of many instances in recent history where high-class individuals have utilized their wealth, power, and status to manipulate various institutions.**

Beyond the basic needs, money helps people to achieve their life's goals and supports the things they care about most deeply like the family, education, health care, charity, adventure and fun. It helps people get some of life's intangibles like freedom or independence, the opportunity to make the most of their skills and talents, the ability to choose their own course in life, financial security. With money, much good can be done and much unnecessary suffering avoided or eliminated.

Money can give people the power to make a difference in the lives of others, but not the desire to do so. It can give them the time to develop and nurture relationships, but not the love and caring necessary to do so. It can just as easily make us jaded, escapist, selfish, and lonely. There have been some instances where money power succeeded in making people vote to a person which is visible in the criminalisation of politicians in India .

By placing a premium on wealth, modern society essentially programs your brain to view money accumulation as the ultimate goal and abuse of power is rampant. The way a person earns money is not considered now a days . In many marriages it is considered if a girl gets a rich groom and a wealthy family she is very lucky but the values of the person are totally ignored which are essential for a human.

Money probably isn't the root of all evil. But it can definitely lead to some wicked behaviour, shows a new study from Harvard Business School. When people were primed to think about money, 88 percent cheated and kept funds they hadn't earned.

Several studies have shown that wealth may be at odds with empathy and compassion. Research published in the journal Psychological Science also found that people of lower economic status were better at reading others facial expressions an important marker of empathy than wealthier people

There appears to be an abundance of data supporting the lack of empathy, compassion, and general prosocial behavior exhibited by the wealthier subpopulation of individuals. The latest scams by business tycoons like Vijay mallya and Nirav Modi uphold this fact.

We always think if we just had a little bit more money, we'd be happier, but when we get there, we are not. Once you get basic human needs met, a lot more money doesn't make a lot more happiness. This needs to be remembered and it is always important to remember how you become rich rather than how much you own.

TOPIC: *Public/Civil service values and Ethics in Public administration: Status and problems; ethical concerns and dilemmas in government and private institutions; laws, rules, regulations and conscience as sources of ethical guidance; accountability and ethical governance; strengthening of ethical and moral values in governance; ethical issues in international relations and funding; corporate governance.*

Q) It is argued that the police encounters, which have become a common phenomenon, have contributed to our low rank on 'rule of law' index. Examine why encounters are considered as unethical and against rule of law. (150 Words)

Answer:-

Rule of law means that laws apply equally to everyone in a democracy, even the most powerful government officials and elected leaders. This notion is violated when encounters take place based on whims and fancies of the officials.

Encounters are Unethical because of the following reasons:-

- Article 21 of the Constitution of India guarantees “right to live with human dignity”. So taking the life of the person violates this right and the victim is not provided his chance to fight for justice.
- It is against the concepts of emotional intelligence which focus on empathy, compassion etc .
- Encounters are considered equivalent to planned murders which are unethical in a civilised ethical society. And the family left behind has to face the brunt of fear all through their lives.
- Sometimes encounters are carried out based on personal notions when there is no guarantee its true and sometimes it is even carried out to appease some powerful elements and gain personal benefits. This is violation of professional code of ethics.

Against rule of law because:-

- Rule of law is the fundamental principle of governance of any civilised liberal democracy. It is the anti-thesis of arbitrariness. Experts suggest that the recent encounters with the support of the government of Uttar Pradesh is disregarding the first principles of the criminal justice system.
- Fake encounters like Ishrat Jahan case show that rule of law cannot be neglected especially in a democracy where government works for public welfare and in public interest.
- Authoritarian regimes, such as of Hitler, too govern through “rule by law” and oppose “rule of law” as law itself negates human rights and permits deviations from due processes.
- The fundamental premise of the rule of law is that every human being, including the worst criminal, is entitled to basic human rights and due process .All accused under criminal law are considered innocent until proven guilty. This concept is violated during the encounter.
- It is judiciary which decides whether the person is guilty police cannot take law in their own hands.

In this light it is important to remember the Supreme court judgement of the Salwa Judum case (2011)i.e., The primordial value is that it is the responsibility of every organ of the State to function within the four corners of constitutional responsibility. That is the ultimate rule of law. This should never be compromised in a democracy like India.

Q) Examine the relevance of the following in the context of civil service: Spirit of enquiry Professional autonomy Objectivity Courage of integrity Political neutrality

Answer:-

Deterioration of human and professional values has become a phenomenon in many nations, including India. Recent instances like in 2017, the arrest of an IPS probationer for cheating in exam, in 2016 the arrest of Regional Provident Fund (PF) Commissioner, Chennai, prove that the canker of corruption has blighted the higher echelons of the civil service. This trend of decline in values does not only pose serious threat to the future course of development of the country but even for its survival, respect and authority itself. So there is a need for imbibing necessary values for effective functioning of public administration.

1.Spirit of enquiry:

Spirit of inquiry is a persistent sense of curiosity that informs both learning and practice. A spirit of inquiry in civil servants engenders innovative thinking and extends possibilities for discovering novel solutions in both predictable and unpredictable situations.

A circulating Whatsapp message warning against child kidnappers has caused widespread panic in Jharkhand, leading to villagers turning violent and resulting in the lynching of seven men in 2017 shows the authenticity of news is not even verified by the people. In these instances civil servants with spirit of inquiry would raise questions and seek creative approaches to problem-solving. A spirit of inquiry suggests, to some degree, a childlike sense of wonder.

2.Professional autonomy :-

Professional autonomy means having the authority to make decisions and the freedom to act in accordance with one's **professional** knowledge base.

Autonomy grants civil servants to act in public interest and free from undue pressure leading to successful initiatives like Operation Sulaimani, a decentralized participatory project to address hunger in urban areas in Kerala, idea of serving food at primary health centers in Medak district of Andhra etc.

3.Objectivity :-

Objectivity means the state or quality of being true even outside a subject's individual biases, interpretations, feelings, and imaginings. Policy based / rule based decisions are examples of objective decision because you're doing them as per the prescribed policy/rule.

When an IPS officer is doing a sensitive murder investigation, he/she should not be bound by emotions but instead work with the merits of the case and be objective.

4.Courage of integrity :-

Integrity is associated with the value of being honest and maintain strong moral principles. Courage of integrity is dare to be yourself in the face of adversity, choosing right over wrong, ethics over convenience and truth over popularity. A good example would be an officer who is under 'peer pressure' to 'overlook' some of the minute details while approving a tender for a private party in return for a bribe, largely because others also do the same but integrity won't allow him/her to do so.

In integrity, officers do not blindly follow duties. But if one's conscience permits, one will do it.

5.Political neutrality :-

Civil servant must not be associated with any political party or ideology. Officer is expected to cooperate with any political party in power. He/she must not allow his/her political values/ideology to interfere in day to day work.

Neutrality is required to keep:

- Public confidence in civil services.
- Political executives confidence in civil services after regime is changed. if there is lack of mutual trust, they can't work for larger interest
- Unfortunately, this vision of civil service neutrality no longer holds good. Changes in governments particularly at the state level often lead to wholesale transfer of civil servants.

All these values are imperative for the success of civil servants and for them to gain trust in the society and from the public.

Q) Without any doubt, atrocities against Dalits are a grim social reality, necessitating a stringent law to combat it. However, there are instances of misuse of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. In this light, suggest measures to strike a balance between protecting individual liberty and preserving the spirit of a law in favour of oppressed sections. (150 Words)

Answer:-

In India, SCs and STs have suffered social ostracisation and economic deprivation for centuries. To address this social deficit and achieve the “dignity of the individual” was set out as one of the objectives in the Preamble to the Constitution. Article 17 abolished untouchability and made it an offence punishable in accordance with law.

Dalits are frequently the victims of discriminatory treatment in the administration of justice. The justice system fails to vigorously and faithfully pursue complaints brought by Dalits, which is evidenced by the high rate of acquittals in such cases. **Despite laws, the abhorrent practice of discrimination and violence against the SCs and STs continues.**

However the use of the Atrocities Act as an instrument to blackmail or to wreak personal vengeance is uncalled for. It has also been used against public servants performing their bona fide duties. So there is a need to strike the balance with the spirit of the law and protecting liberty of an individual by introducing safeguards. Any harassment of an innocent citizen, irrespective of caste or religion, is against the guarantee of the Constitution and also against basic rights of the citizen. The recent Supreme court ruling is in line to enforce the fundamental rights of life and liberty against any executive or legislative action.

The Act should promote fraternity and integration of society as the Constitution envisages “a cohesive, unified and casteless society.” So there is a need to curb “false implication of innocent citizens on caste lines.

Public servants can be arrested with the written permission of their appointing authority. **In the case of private employees,** the senior superintendent of police (SSP) concerned can allow it. **Anticipatory bail should be allowed if the accused is able to prove that the complaint was malafide.**

Preliminary inquiry should also be conducted before the FIR is registered to check whether the case falls within the parameters of the Atrocities Act or whether it was frivolous or motivated.

Police can take cognizance of technology for collecting evidences like the Madhu case in Kerala so that victims get justice and false cases are rejected.

Affirmative action need to be taken in the society to improve social cohesion and harmony among different communities where everyone teach others with respect and equality irrespective of their caste,gender,religion etc.

Q) Should active euthanasia be made legal? In the light of recent Supreme Court directives in 'Common Cause' case, discuss the legal and ethical issues involved. (150 Words)

Background:-

- Historically, India is no stranger to the right to die as in most Oriental cultures, opting to die is often an act of honour, of salvation like the Santhara in Jainism, Hindu saints are known to take sanyas and even opt for Samadhi etc
- In the Common Cause v. Union of India Supreme court upheld the right to die with dignity and gave legal sanction to passive euthanasia and execution of a living will of persons suffering from chronic terminal diseases and likely to go into a permanent vegetative state.

Active euthanasia:-

- While active euthanasia entails the use of lethal substances to end a life.
- While the Supreme Court has legalised passive euthanasia, it has not passed any judgment on active euthanasia.

-

There is clearly a desire among a number of patients at the end of often terrible battles with debilitating, incurable diseases to end their suffering with the support of their relatives. To deny this right is to prolong the suffering for individuals and families. So active euthanasia needs to be considered.

To allow a terminally ill individual to end their life is the only humane, rational and compassionate choice. The right to life and the right to private and family life should be interpreted broadly to include decisions about quality of life, including decisions about death if the life is no longer one of quality. This will help many families. It will stop a lot of pain and also lessen expenses.

People who are proponents of active euthanasia say that our bodies are our own, and we should be allowed to do what we want with them. So it's wrong to make anyone live longer than they want. **In fact making people go on living when they don't want to violates their personal freedom and human rights**. It's immoral, they say to force people to continue living in suffering and pain.

In the fundamental rights enlisted in the Constitution there is already mention of right to life with dignity (Article 21). The outcome of the judgment lays down a broad legal framework for **protecting the**

dignity of a terminally ill patient or one in a persistent vegetative state (PVS) with no hope of cure or recovery. In such circumstances accelerating the process of death for reducing the period of suffering constitutes a right to live with dignity.

The core message is that all adults with the capacity to give consent have the right of self determination and autonomy and the **right to refuse medical treatment is also encompassed in it.** Burdening a dying patient with life-prolonging treatment and equipment merely because medical technology has advanced would be **destructive of the patient's dignity.**

Neither the law nor the constitution can compel an individual who is competent and able to take decisions to disclose reasons for refusing medical treatment and such a refusal is not subject to the supervisory control of an outside entity.

However effective safeguards need to be put in place to avoid legal and ethical issues like:-

- Section 309 of the Indian Penal Code prescribes punishment for attempting suicide'
- Even the bill government is preparing Bill deals only with terminal illness.
- Even recent supreme court judgement permits passive euthanasia but not active.
- Other opponents fear that if euthanasia was made legal, the **laws regulating it** would be abused, and **people would be killed who didn't really want to die.**
- Euthanasia raises a number of agonising moral dilemmas:
 - **If euthanasia is permitted without the necessity to abide by government regulations and laws, people will use it as a means to get out of even simpler troubles**
 - Is it ever right to end the life of a terminally ill patient who is undergoing severe pain and suffering?
 - Under what circumstances can euthanasia be justifiable, if at all?
 - Is there a moral difference between killing someone and letting them die?
 - Can state engage in actively killing someone which is the case in active euthanasia?

Even countries where active euthanasia is legal, the requisite is that the patient must have a terminally ill disease. So this issue needs to be well thought out from multiple perspectives as life of human is irreplaceable.

Q) Charity (zakat) is a bedrock of Islam. Compassion is the very core of Buddhism. In the light of issues faced in providing foreign aid to poor and least developed countries, comment on the statement. (150 Words)

Answer:-

Buddhism may be touted in the West as an inherently peaceful philosophy, but a surge in violent rhetoric from small but increasingly influential groups of hardline monks in parts of Asia like Srilanka, Myanmar(Rohingyas),Thailand etc is upending the religion's tolerant image

Similarly in Islam Zakat is a form of tithing in Islam and is considered one of the Five Pillars of the faith

Zakat is such a pious notion of donating for charity many Islamic charities and mosques have been shown to provide material support for terrorism which is visible in the violence widespread in west Asian countries. Aid from some of the countries increased the extremist tendencies in countries like Pakistan .

Foreign aid can save the lives of millions of people living in poverty around the world. It addresses issues such as health, education, infrastructure and humanitarian emergencies leading to sustainable growth and development.

Humanitarian aid in the West Asian countries like Syria, Iraq etc has been provided by various international bodies, organizations and states. The United Kingdom has allocated over £1 billion (c. \$1.6 billion) in aid since 2012 to over 30 aid organisations and partners including United Nations agencies, international non-governmental organisations and the Red Cross.

Over the past half-century, aid to developing countries has grown to be big money, financed through taxation and delivered through a plethora of government and philanthropic organizations.

However most of such aid fails to reach the poorest people who need it the most. Foreign aid manages only to improve the lives of the richest people in the poorest countries of the world reinforcing social inequities and perpetuates cycles of political abuse.

Foreign aid's biggest downside is that no clear, effective system has been put in place to hold aid recipients and their governments accountable for resources illegally taken from public sector coffers.

Aid dependence results in bad governance, stunting development and makes the recipient countries at the mercy of the developed countries as is the case in the African countries .Its volatility and unpredictability makes it difficult for countries to factor it into long term spending plans and include it in budgets

Their decisions are driven mostly by political considerations rather than noble intentions. This naturally leads to various forms of corruption.

The notion of helping others can be effective when the donors provide selfless aid rather than expecting the returns from these underdeveloped countries.

Q) You are part of a trekking expedition to a remote stretch of Western Ghat hill section that has rough terrain and dense forest. The team consists of ten women and five men. As you climb up and reach the final point, your team notices that forest fire is spreading rapidly. There is no mobile network available. No satellite phone is also available. The team leader suggests spending night on the hill.

a) What will you suggest to the team in this situation?

b) Before trekking, what are the precautions that your team should have taken?

Answer:-

Sociable sports that require teamwork rather than competition are catching on in particular among an urban population eager to escape the stresses of daily life and meet new people. As income levels rise and the urban middle class looks to spend time outdoors, interest in adventure sports like trekking is rising. The following stakeholders are involved like myself and other trekkers in the group.

1. A) The current situation needs strict presence of mind, emotional intelligence and teamwork of the group which is necessary to survive rather than panic. I would suggest taking an alternative route to safety and keep walking in the direction opposite to the direction of wind flow. Staying on the hill is not a good idea especially if it has dry patches as speed of fire spreading is unpredictable and can be very drastic as well. Also staying on the hill will mean necessity of additional food supplies, concerns to women, protection issues at night in the middle of the wild etc as well. Camping needs to be setup in an open place with no dry patches around. If any locals or forest dwellers come across ask them for suggestions as they know the area better.

B) Measures needed to take before hand are:-

- First necessary permits should have been taken by the organisers in the trekking area.
- Organisers should have been trained in fire escape manoeuvres, carrying the right equipment including wireless communication sets and satellite phones in case of emergencies
- Check the map of the trail which is to be followed before hand and know escape routes for forest fire. Keep the map in hand.
- Have a guide who knows the trekking area very well.
- Get some training on how to act in a crisis situation.

- Keep my Trekking Essentials like emergency kit ,eatables etc in handy.
- See if the area is prone to any natural calamities during the season of the trek.

Trekkers need to take safety on treks more seriously. Not doing so can result in a catastrophic disaster like the one occurred in Theni, Tamilnadu recently.

Q) Your close friend is selected as an IAS officer. His family and friends are all elated. His father is in politics. His father is forcing your friend to marry a daughter of a richest politician in the state. By making this alliance, his father believes that it would give him more political clout and status. Even the richest politicians is forcing your friend's father in this regard, especially after the civil services exam result. However, your friend is not interested in this alliance. But he doesn't have courage to admit this to his father. He is planning to marry a girl from a lower caste with whom he is in love. In case if his father comes to know about your friend's affair, things would get worse for your friend. Your friend belongs to higher caste and there will be violent opposition to his choice of bride. While his father is having big plans, your friend is worried about his future. He seeks your suggestions.

What suggestions you will give to your friend? Examine merits and demerits of all of your suggestions.

Answer:-

-

Humility is crucial to real success, many people become successful but lose their character. Success is not what you get, but who you become as a person. There are instances even in civil servants where once they have good social status they forget the promises they made and think to stay close to power.

-

The stakeholders involved are my friend, his girl friend, my friend's father and society as a whole.

The following options are available :-

1. I would ask him to listen to his father and marry the girl of his father's choice

In this case my friend's father would gain political clout by marrying his son off to a powerful and wealthy family. He is doing what is best for his son in his perspective.

However my friend will not be happy and there will be a guilt that he was not true to his conscience Also the father might not be happy with his approach in the long run when his son is not happy .Being a civil servant my friend needs to be objective and have integrity and do what is right irrespective of the pressure. But if he chooses this option there is skepticism that is susceptible to pressure tactics.

2.I will ask my friend to marry the girl of his choice and go against his parents

In this option my friend is getting what he wanted and he is doing what is right .This shows he need not adhere to the whims and fancies of the political representatives. Also intercaste marriages are very necessary for the integration of the Indian society.

However the marriage might lead to social conflicts between upper and lower castes leading to violence as is seen in Tamilnadu where vanniyar- SC conflict happened over a intercaste marriage. My friend's father would be very disappointed with the marriage and the people of upper caste may disrespect their family.

3.Will suggest my friend to convince his father and then marry the girl of his choice.

This is what I will advise as this works in the best interests of both parties included. Father is made to understood of his sons choice and also by being true to the promise he made to the girl my friend is showing his impeccable character .Social conflicts would not arise as things are resolved in a peaceful and amicable manner. In India it is said marriage is between two families so harmonious relationship between the stake holders involved is very necessary.

Conclusion:-

- These kind of incidents are very common in everyday India but with empathy, emotional intelligence, and moral of treating everyone equally there will not be honour killings, violence regarding marriages.

Q) Once selected, you are going to handle very responsible post which involves huge money and power. In this regard, how are you preparing yourself to handle such a huge responsibility in future?(150 Words)

Answer:-

Civil servants have a crucial role to play in a country like India and are the backbone of the administrative machinery of the country. They have very important responsibilities like providing continuity to the governance, being an instrument for social change and development, instrument of implementation of government policies, settling social tensions and creating social unity and harmony etc.

To be a successful civil servant I am trying to inculcate the following ethical abilities:-

Ernest Hemingway said “When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen.” The act of **compassion and empathy** are very important for being a civil servant as many people come to you for your help. Instead of getting irritated I need to put myself in their shoes and understand and solve the issue quickly. I provide food to the beggars and street kids on the road, give the domestic help off one day in a week and also some financial help for her child’s education. These measures give me a truck of satisfaction and motivation that I have to work for the needy and not power or greed.

Ability to stand for the right thing is very necessary. Recently I saw my Cousin sister telling her son and daughter that boys should not cry that only girls do, girls should not play outside etc. I told her not to treat them differently as this has repercussions in the future.

Sense of responsibility towards the society is very necessary. I try to conserve electricity by switching the lights off when I am not in the room. Also the incidents of child abuse and other instances of violence of women etc make me feel responsible that I need to take action and make society peaceful and see that children don’t face that trauma.

In the course of preparation getting to know and understand different cultures and traditions in the nation made me appreciate the differences and **have an open mind and not just criticise right away just because they are different. So I started to self introspect.**

Not getting attracted to money and power is another prerogative. I am able to understand the value of money in a better way as I am living with the basic means of living and living with my savings and not depending on others.

Even though these instances seem trivial , I am trying to put effort and make myself better and be a responsible civil servant in the future.

Note:-

The answer can be very wide ended with aspirants writing their own personal experiences and highlighting different ethical values as well.

Q) What do you understand by public service professionalism? What is the essence and values of public service professionalism? Examine. (150 Words)

Answer:-

Scandals involving public officials have captured world attention these days. Precipitated by shady privatization deals, the diversion of aid, widespread public sector patronage, crony capitalism, and campaign financing abuses, people are debating outright corruption and unprofessional behaviour in government.

With the advent of the modern state, government officials have been and are seen as stewards of public resources and guardians of a special trust that citizens have placed in them. In return for this confidence, they are expected to put public interest above self interest.

Public service professionalism:-

Public service professionalism is defined as the overall value that encompasses all other values that guide the public service. They include loyalty, neutrality, transparency, diligence, punctuality, effectiveness, impartiality, and other values

Public service professionalism embraces the notion that those people who join the public service need to be inculcated with shared values and trained in basic skills to professionally carry out their official duties.

Essence of public service professionalism:-

The effectiveness of the public service in the development process ultimately will depend on **how public servants can lift people out from extreme poverty, the scourge of conflicts, debilitating diseases, and the growing inequality among the different social strata.**

Further, public servants must improve the quality of their services and involve their clients in the process. **Their role is a shift from one of authority to one of leadership and facilitating inclusiveness.**

To promote professionalism in the public service, **the merit principle needs to provide the foundation for all human resources management actions** from recruitment and selections for promotions to fair remuneration and disciplinary procedures.

Moreover, many countries are trying to promote cultural changes among their public servants by turning from the notion of being a faceless bureaucrat, following orders, **to adopting a more entrepreneurial, proactive, service-oriented attitude and involving the users of public services. So administrative machinery becomes strengthened .**

Public service professionalism and performance become essential parts of a good governance equation. Public service is fundamental to good governance. It is an integral part of democracy because

it serves as the neutral administrative structure which carries out the decisions of elected representatives of the people.

Values of Public service professionalism:-

In reflecting upon public service professionalism, there are a number of values and principles to be considered like providing public benefits, enforcing the rule of law, ensuring public responsibility and accountability, setting an example, improving professional performance, and promoting democracy.

Being professional means more than just employing professionals or paying lip service to professional values. It requires a thorough understanding of professionalism and strict adherence to public norms of model behaviour.

In promoting ethical behaviour in the public service, **there is a need to address public perception of corruption and the view that though laws (including a Code of Ethics) are in place** if they are not enforced.

There is a need to improve performance-based assessment of individual officers, and adopt safeguards that promote accountability while protecting bureaucrats from political meddling. These actions will hopefully contribute to promoting professionalism and ethics in the public service.

Now the primary task of civil servants has shifted from nation building to to public welfare. So we need bureaucrats with a new ethos, more attuned to performances on the ground, and not just policy designs.

Q) Social networking technologies open up a new type of ethical space in which personal identities and communities, both 'real' and virtual, are constructed, presented, negotiated, managed and performed. Discuss.(150 Words)

Answer:-

Social psychologist Kenneth Gergen in 1991 has warned of an world where technology might saturate human beings to the point of multiphrenia, a fragmented version of the self that is pulled in so many directions the individual would be lost.

Now as the society sits here more than 20 years later with tablets and cell phones and electronic gadgets people have never been more linked, more connected, and **more bound to a virtual reality that many of us can no longer live without.**

Tethered to technology, people are shaken when that world 'unplugged' does not signify, does not satisfy. They build a following on Facebook or MySpace and wonder to what degree our followers are friends. They re-create themselves as online personae and give themselves new bodies, homes, jobs etc.

While social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn are powerful tools that have the potential to build communities, connect relatives in far-flung places, leverage careers etc they are also unleashing a myriad of complex psychological issues that have altered people's collective sense of reality.

Some people use this social media to create something that they are not. Virtual world can distract people so much from their real lives that they either forget who they are or become so involved in the reality they've created that they don't want to work on their own issues.

In a virtual world where it is understood that everyone exaggerates and reality is always slightly distorted, **the temptation to lie or stretch the truth is more pervasive than ever**. For instance people especially project the good things they have done on the social media increasing their market value and popularity, fake messages and news circulate in social media without checking for its authenticity.

A 2011 clinical report on The Impact of Social Media on Children, Adolescents and Families, was one of the first to raise the issue of "Facebook depression" among young people worried that they weren't accumulating enough "friends" or "likes" to their status updates. It is the danger of slipping too far into a virtual world and losing a sense of real life, real self, and real priorities.

Overreliance on this virtual world that we create online is undermining all the progress human beings have made in addressing real-life problems. People need to appreciate that the computer is not a substitute for a real human being and as a society people need to be vigilant about taking time to unplug, to disconnect, and to reconnect with themselves and their real lives.

Q) "Compassion wherever possible and cruelty only where inevitable is the art of correctional confinement." Analyse. (150 Words)

Imprisoning individuals who break the law has many goals. Imprisonment shows society's abhorrence for certain antisocial behaviours and incarceration removes individuals from the community for a period of time. Another goal of incarceration is that imprisonment will serve to deter offenders from engaging in further criminal behaviour.

Correctional confinement is a process of reforming the prisoner. Generally, confinement can happen for reasons such as retribution, deterrence, reformation, containment and of late, just rewards. Retribution, deterrence and containment include elements of inflicting harsh punishments trying to make the person feel physical and mental pain. So it has a cruel element to it. Reformation is more about reforming the person so it deals with compassion respecting the human dignity towards the person and trying to change him into a good person through empathy.

Following only cruel punishments do not reform the prisoner, human rights are violated and there are even possibilities of recidivism. So for non grave crimes as far as possible resorting to compassion and giving an opportunity for reform to prisoners is necessary for the peace and the best interests in the society. For example parole, commutation of sentence, initiatives taken in Tihar jail, Food for freedom programme in Kerala show how compassion and empathy can reform the prisoners.

However in grave crimes, terrorism, espionage, crimes against the state where harsher punishments are required the accused should not be dealt leniently.

So we should not rely on punishment by itself to change behaviour. We need to create a true system of rehabilitation. Such a system will be comprehensive, coherent and internally consistent in applying evidence-based practice at all levels.

Q) Is corporate social responsibility (CSR) ethical? Discuss the ethical issues involved in CSR. (150 Words)

Answer:-

India has a long tradition of paternalistic philanthropy. The process, though acclaimed recently, has been followed since ancient times albeit informally. Philosophers such as Kautilya from India preached and promoted ethical principles while doing business.

In India, there is a growing realization that business cannot succeed in isolation and social progress is necessary for sustainable growth. An ideal CSR practice has both ethical and philosophical dimensions, particularly in India.

Corporate social responsibility:-

Companies engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR) when they confer benefits on the communities located in or near where they are neither required by law nor an integral part of their primary, profit-oriented operations.

At one end of the spectrum, CSR can be viewed simply as a collection of good citizenship activities

being engaged by various organizations. At the other end, it is a way of doing business resulting in the **significant impact on community and long-term sustainability.**

It is also important to shape responsible and supportable relationships with the community at large.

Education, health and environment are prominently tackled by CSR initiatives in India. Project Hariyali and Project Nanhikali by Mahindra, Tata's Act for Mahseer etc are some of the important initiatives by Indian companies.

However there is the danger that CSR erodes government's responsibility to provide public services.

There is a real danger where community members think the company is acting from altruism and only later find out that wasn't the driving force at all.

Not only is using serious world problems to sell products unethical, it desensitizes people to these problems. Many will assume that since someone else is seemingly tackling these problems, nothing more needs to be done. Some will believe that purchasing products packaged with CSR imagery actually helps to solve the problems.

The fact that CSR in India is done based on laws companies otherwise are not very keen to participate in voluntary activities or they don't want to spend profit on social causes.

Another reason that shows CSR is unethical is that **it rarely is what it seems.** Most companies see CSR as public relations and marketing. As a result, social issues are used as advertising campaigns. **Companies make vague claims about 'empowering workers', 'a better world together' and 'helping local communities' without evidence or meaning.**

Developing and implementing CSR strategy helps leaders create a moral image of themselves and their firm, which ultimately provides a sense of accumulated moral credits. **These moral credits mean they feel justified in engaging in less ethical behaviour and being less vigilant in managing the needs of their stakeholders. This bank of moral credits allows leaders to think that they can behave in a socially undesirable way without fear of discrediting their image. For instance** The Volkswagen case represents above all an absolute failure in terms of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The company deliberately set out to design a means to circumvent emissions control .

So to make CSR truly benefitting the society there is a need for regulatory mechanisms ,making people more aware so that they can demand the services rather than just be a passive recipient.

CSR should be a part of the DNA of any organization because successful ventures have to also give back to society and not just always take from it. This way businesses can have an overall positive impact on the communities, cultures, societies and environments in which they operate.

TOPIC: *Probity in Governance: Concept of public service; Philosophical basis of governance and probity; Information sharing and transparency in government, Right to Information, Codes of Ethics, Codes of Conduct, Citizen's Charters, Work culture, Quality of service delivery, Utilization of public funds, challenges of corruption.*

Q) Although the Whistleblowers Protection Act, 2014 was passed by the Lok Sabha, it is not yet operationalised. Analyse the importance of having a strong Whistleblowers Protection Act. Also comment a how does strong Whistleblowers Protection Act compliment right to information act. (150 Words)

Answer :-

Albert Einstein was once credited with saying, "The world is a dangerous place to live; not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it."

As far as India is concerned, whether it is the public or corporate private sector, it is whistle-blowers and RTI activists who have contributed the most to exposing large-scale corruption. Lack of strong protection mechanisms and a loophole-free law to protect whistle-blowers harms all citizens, the economy and the environment.

Whistle blowing:-

- In defining who a whistle-blower is, the law goes beyond government officials who expose corruption they come across in the course of their work. It includes any other person or non-governmental organisation.
- The importance of such progressive expansion is underlined by the fact that in the last few years, more than 65 people have been killed for exposing corruption in the government on the basis of information they obtained under the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

Need for strong whistleblower protection act:-

- **A strong whistle-blower protection law in India would expose financial corruption in a way that reinforces ethical business practices.**
 - **Whistle-blower protection laws incentivise integrity to help detect and deter unethical business practices and fraud.** This type of law has been very successful elsewhere.
 - **These laws place pressure on companies that are engaged in unethical practices to respect the law, commit to compliance, and not retaliate against whistle-blowers.** After all, it is better to prevent violations than to penalise after the act.
- The case against Ranbaxy marked the triumph of Dinesh Thakur, who tapped into United States' whistle-blower protection **laws that incentivise and protect people who expose unethical business practices.**
 - **The False Claims Act, a federal law in the US, provides private individuals protection and incentives to expose fraud. The law has helped the US recoup billions of dollars lost to fraud and corruption** while protecting the identity of the whistleblower. India can take inspiration from this.
- The murder of several whistle-blowers in recent years makes it necessary to protect the whistleblowers In 2003, Satyendra Dubey was killed for exposing financial irregularities in the Golden Quadrilateral highway construction project in Bihar.
- The government should welcome whistleblowers, be their advocate, and use their unique status as insiders to guarantee the integrity of social programmes.

How does a strong whistleblower act compliment RTI:-

- The RTI law has empowered the common man to have access to information from public authorities which only government officials were earlier privy to **making every citizen a potential whistle-blower.**
- It helps in better governance with better transparency and accountability .
- Both the acts when complemented bring the irregularities in the government system to the public domain.

Q) A building permitted for three floors, while being extended illegally to 6 floors by a builder, collapses. As a consequence, a number of innocent labourers including women and children died. These labourers are migrants of different places. The government arrested the builder and owner of the building. Government also suspended few engineers. The dead migrants are given monetary compensation.

Can such incidences, where most of the times poor people are the victims, be prevented? How?

Discuss the ethical issues involved in such incidences.

Examine the issues faced by migrant workers in cities.

Answer :-

In the developing countries, internal migration is a survival strategy for many labourers in search of a better livelihood and opportunities. Every year, India loses an average of 2,658 people to different kinds of structural collapses; that is around 7 deaths a day. 2011 saw the highest fatalities in ten years, 3161 deaths.

The stakeholders involved in this issue are the migrants, builders, owners, government authorities and society as a whole.

Question 1:-

To avoid such incidences, there needs to be accountability placed on multiple stakeholders. The government authorities granting the permission for the building need to strictly adhere to the rules, act according to professional code of conduct and not violating them for bribes. The builders and owners need to be given strict punishment and buildings be sealed if they violate the rules and try to construct extra floors. Rights of human life and dignity should not be neglected and the nexus among powerful people who think they can get away with such instances need to be checked. Workers need to be made aware of their rights and duties so that any illegal methods of construction can be reported.

Question 2:-

Here the issue is **not that of insufficient regulatory systems or safety standards, but that of non-compliance**. Frequent regularisation of unauthorised constructions have emboldened violators and eroded the compliance culture. **Lack of transparency in approval processes, discretionary exemptions, and slack inspections have put the interests of many apartment-buyers in peril. Rights of life of the poor workers is neglected. Lack of responsibility by builders and owners**

who are not being utilitarian but selfish. It also highlights the lack of empathy on the part of society towards the migrants.

Question 3:-

- **Social, and psychological challenges** such as the stigma associated with menial labor, social exclusion, and xenophobia are **faced by migrant workers**
 - Being away from their families for prolonged periods also affects the psychosocial wellbeing of these migrant workers, **leading to stress and depression.**
- **Ensuring health as a human right**
 - **Access to health care facilities and services remains a major concern** for migrant workers
- **Female migrant labourers face several important gender-based problems**, including gender-based discrimination at work and violence. Several women are subjected to physical, verbal and sexual abuse at the workplace and their place of residence.
 - Emerging research shows that intimate partner violence is higher among migrant women than other women.
- **Equity and avoiding disparities**
 - Migrant labourers are at a significant disadvantage in the community into which they have migrated. They are in unfamiliar territory amidst strangers. In addition, they are discriminated against by the members of society, who feel that they “belong to another culture”. As a result of these factors, migrant labourers may be deprived of access to healthcare facilities and services.
- **Balance of risks and benefits**
 - Migrant labourers are employed in jobs which the local people prefer to shun .An analysis shows that migrant workers most often take up jobs in the construction industry, with its inherent risks of accidents, injuries, crushes and falls; commercial sex work, associated with a high risk of sexually transmitted diseases; and brick kilns, in which they face the risk of burn injuries.
- Lack of basic amenities like drinking water, sanitation problems etc
- Child labour might increase and also misuse of children in begging and other social crimes.

Conclusion

- With the increasing quantum of migration within the country, there is a need to provide effective healthcare and other basic services to migrant workers will assume greater proportions over the years.

Q) Do you think the public service values and the Code of Ethics should be given a statutory backing? Justify.(150 Words)

Answer:-

High ethical standards for the provision of services and the exercise of authority are a pre-

requisite if the citizenry is to trust the public service. However in the recent years there have been instances like cheating by an IPS probationer in the exam, senior IAS officers arrested in different states highlights the bureaucratic politico nexus, nepotism, corruption in the elite service.

Public service values:-

- In a democracy, an efficient civil service must have a set of values that distinguishes it from other professions. Integrity, dedication to public service, impartiality, political neutrality, anonymity etc are said to be the hallmarks of an efficient civil service.
- The Public Service and the Public Servants shall be guided by the following values in the discharge of their functions:
 - (1) patriotism and upholding national pride
 - (2) allegiance to the Constitution and the law of the nation
 - (3) objectivity, impartiality, honesty, diligence, courtesy and transparency

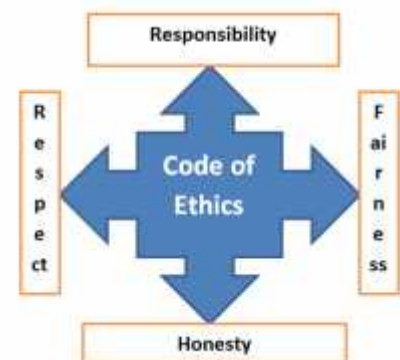
(4) Maintain absolute integrity

Code of ethics:-

- Code of ethics is a written set of rules issued by an organization to its workforces and management to help them conduct their actions in accordance with its primary values and ethical standards
- It defines the minimum requirements for conduct, and behavioural expectations instead of specific activities.

Why they should be given statutory backing :-

- There is no Code of Ethics prescribed for civil servants in India although such Codes exist in other countries like Australia, Newzealand .These codes bring clarity to the working of civil servants.
- A proper Civil Services Bill can act as a legal basis for the legislature to express the important values and culture it wants in the civil service.
- A law can effectively set out the role and powers of the heads of the agencies and departments. Law can spell out the relationship between civil services and political leadership in a clear and transparent way.
- Law can clearly let civil servants know clearly what is expected of them. In situations where they face ethical dilemma the civil servants have a legal backing to act in public interest.
- Strict provisions against corruption in the law can deter illegal activities and make the civil servants focus more on public welfare.



- Benefits of developing code of ethics are that these guidelines identify core values, encourage reflection on the meaning and application of values, enhance reputation, build trust both internally and externally and increases awareness of ethics issues.

However statutory backing alone would not be enough to instigate moral ethics in people. For instance imposing law on prohibition does not exactly lead to reduction of consumption but leads to illegal activities like bootlegging etc.

In a diverse country like India civil servants are involved in diverse work portfolio so law needs to be supported by the strong ethical principles of the person then only good governance can be guaranteed.