

CURRENT ISSUES WRITING PRACTICE

POST-TEST MATERIAL FOR CIWP – D

1. With preserving our heritage, we preserve the legacy of artefacts and intangible attributes. In the light of the statement, discuss various initiatives by the union government for the development of heritage sites in India. Describe the challenges in preserving/managing the heritages in India. (200 words, 10 marks)

Introduction

Cultural heritage is the legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations. Cultural heritage includes tangible culture such as monuments, artefacts, etc. and intangible culture such as performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, etc.

The importance of preserving cultural heritage

- It is an identity of a nation that can be introduced to the world.
- It helps to promote national integrity.
- It helps in transmission of knowledge and skills across generations.
- It helps economy through tourism.

Recent Government Initiatives to preserve heritage sites:

- **Adopt a Heritage:** This scheme is an initiative of the Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and the Archaeological Survey of India. Under it, the government invites entities, including public sector companies, private sector firms as well as individuals, to develop selected monuments and heritage and tourist sites across India
- **Swadesh Darshan:** Ministry of Tourism launched the Swadesh Darshan Scheme for integrated development of theme based tourist circuits.
- **HRIDAY:** National Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY) was launched with the aim of bringing together urban planning, economic growth and heritage conservation in an inclusive manner to preserve the heritage character of each Heritage City.
- **Seva Bhoj Yojana:** Seva Bhoj Yojna aims to lessens the financial burden of such charitable religious institutions that provide food/prasad/langar/bhandara free of cost without any discrimination to public/devotees. It envisages to reimburse the Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) and Integrated Goods and Service Tax (IGST) so as to lessen the financial burden of such Charitable Religious Institutions

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- **Scheme for Safeguarding the Intangible Heritage and Diverse Cultural Traditions of India:** It is a scheme for revitalizing various institutions, groups, individuals, NGOs, researchers and scholars to engage in activities for preserving and promoting the rich Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of India. The scheme is being implemented through Sangeet Natak Akademi.
- **PRASHAD Scheme** aims to enhance tourism attractiveness in a sustainable manner and to harness pilgrimage tourism so that it directly affects and multiplies the employment generation and economic development.

Challenges in preservation:

- Theft, war, civil disorder, terrorism, neglect and vandalism are human factors in the accidental or wilful destruction of our heritage.
- Cultural heritage is under attack – from environmental degradation and climate change, from socioeconomic pressures and the accelerating pace of urbanisation, from the strains of global tourism.
- Pollution from nearby industries have deleterious effects on the beauty of several monuments like The Taj Mahal.
- Excavation of several ancient sites pose challenge as they are buried below populated areas.
- At all key positions in the ASI (Archaeological Survey of India), there are acute shortages of staff which adversely affects the security and maintenance of monuments.

Way forward

- Private companies should be incentivised and encouraged to take up restoration and preservation works of monuments as part of their CSR.
- General public should be made aware about India's heritage and inculcate civic sense among tourists to restrict any form of vandalism.
- Strategies for factoring in the involvement of Monument Mitras to address not just sites but entire cultural geographies of sites/monuments need to be evolved.
- The government must invest in the creation of a heritage police so that visitors can view all parts of heritage site (today, three-fourths of the Red Fort and Agra Fort are closed to common visitors for security reasons).
- Digital storage has played a large role in the preservation of cultural heritage. It has enabled the sharing of cultural and historical heritage

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around the world. Digital storage is not only the most popular method of preservation, but it is the trend for the future.

- To be kept alive, intangible cultural heritage must remain relevant to a culture and be regularly practised and learned within communities and between generations.

Conclusion

The government by its initiatives has underscored that preservation of countries heritage is a priority . However government's efforts can only bear fruits when citizenry is made aware and actively participate in the process.

2. The need of hour is proactive prevention, mitigation and preparedness rather than reactive relief centric approach to address the menace of floods in India. Elaborate with suitable illustrations.

Introduction

India is highly vulnerable to floods and out of the total geographical area of 329 million hectares (mha), more than 40 mha is flood prone. Floods are recurrent phenomenon, which cause huge loss of lives and damage to livelihood system, property, infrastructure and public utilities. Floods are becoming a common phenomenon in India as evident in Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Assam , Bihar, UP, and other states.

Cause of floods:

- Eighty per cent of the precipitation takes place in the monsoon months from June to September. The rivers bring heavy sediment load from the catchments. These, coupled with inadequate carrying capacity of the rivers are responsible for causing floods.
- Cyclones, cyclonic circulations and cloud bursts cause flash floods and lead to huge losses.
- The problem of flooding becomes further complicated as the courses of rivers do not follow the political boundaries of the nations and hence their origination from another country adds another complex dimension to the problem.
- The drainage systems of most Indian cities are ill-equipped to withstand the change in precipitation patterns.
- Dwellings, factories and infrastructure facilities have been constructed in areas that are potentially vulnerable to natural hazards like floods.

The reactive approach

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Despite the emphasis on a paradigm shift to a preparedness approach by the government, most parts of the country continue to follow a relief-centric approach in disaster management, rather than a proactive prevention, mitigation and preparedness path.

After every disaster, its aftermath and adverse impacts raise a lot of questions about the status of preparedness. It is important to acknowledge that we are still not completely ready. This is because disaster management agencies continue to be reactive in their actions.

Following the Uttarakhand floods in 2013 and Kashmir floods in 2014, it was only after a lot of questions were raised and criticism directed at preparedness practices that flood forecast stations were set-up in these two states. The same should have been done for all the flood prone states, but it seems that we did not learn from our mistakes. We continue to be reactive rather than focusing on preparedness.

Approach of proactive prevention, mitigation and preparedness

- A proactive approach is where holistic integrated planning and management of disaster is envisioned, e.g. building seismically protected structures, creating legislations, frameworks and guidelines for disaster management, setting up of emergency operating centres and response forces, generating a culture of prevention capacity building etc. In other words, it aims at addressing the root causes of prospective disasters rather than addressing the stress and shocks arising after disasters. This is a significant departure from the traditional approach (where humanitarian assistance and relief is provided only after a disaster takes place to address the stress and shock) and aims to minimize disaster risk (addressing the root cause) before the disaster strikes.
- For the early warning systems to be effective, continuous and collaborative efforts are required, rather than a one-time action. For instance, high-tech warning systems on the ground will not be useful until the authorities, key stakeholders and communities are trained to act upon the information obtained from these facilities.
- Different stakeholders need to come together for mapping risks, vulnerabilities, and resources; engage in regular preparedness actions like drills and capacity building; develop and update emergency plans; check the availability of resources at the local level; and act upon early warning intimations.

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- While the government works towards strengthening systems and mechanisms for preparedness and response, civil society has a major role to play, at the community level, for disaster preparedness.
- Ensuring the incorporation of flood resistant features in the design and construction of new structures in the flood prone areas.
- An integrated approach to managing floods requires a sound understanding of the patterns that rivers such as the Ganga and its tributaries display during the monsoon.

Conclusion

There is a need for investing in disaster preparedness and mitigation across the country, irrespective of whether any state has been hit by a disaster or not. India needs to adopt a collaborative approach, where the roles of the government, corporations, academia, civil societies and communities are recognised, and all actors work hand-in-hand towards achieving disaster resilience.

3. Education needs to be equitable and inclusive as it forms the base of a society. Do you think that the New Education Policy adheres to this? Explain. Suggest measures to make Indian Education System globally competitive.

Introduction

Education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and promoting national development. Providing universal access to quality education is the key to India's continued ascent, and leadership on the global stage.

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

Recently, the Government approved a new National Education Policy after a 34-year gap. The National Education Policy, 2020 is meant to provide an overarching vision and comprehensive framework for both school and higher education across the country

The National Education Policy 2020 seems to meet the need of inclusive and equitable education which is evident from the following:

- In adopting a 5+3+3+4 model for school education starting at age 3, it recognises the primacy of the formative years from ages 3 to 8 in shaping the child's future.

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- It also recognises the importance of learning in the child's mother tongue till at least Class 5.
- Another key aspect of school education in the new policy is the breaking of the straitjackets of arts, commerce and science streams in high school, and the laudable goal of introducing vocational courses with internship.
- In keeping with the philosophy of flexibility in enabling our students to deviate from the straight and narrow, NEP 2020 proposes a multi-disciplinary higher education framework with portable credits, and multiple exits with certificates, diplomas and degrees.
- The role of our colleges in attaining the ambitious GER target is recognised by empowering them as autonomous degree-granting institutions.
- In a country still beset by huge inequality and challenges faced by the disadvantaged and disabled, the NEP lays particular emphasis on providing adequate support to ensure that no child is deprived of education, and every challenged child is provided the special support she needs.
- An ambitious target of public spending at 6% of GDP has been set.

Challenges in the implantation of NEP 2020:

- India today has around 1,000 universities across the country. Doubling the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education by 2035 which is one of the stated goals of the policy will mean that we must open one new university every week, for the next 15 years. Opening one University every week on an ongoing basis is an undoubtedly massive challenge.
- The National Education Policy 2020 intends to bring 2 crore children who are currently not in schools, back into the school system. This certainly requires a substantial amount of investment in classrooms and campuses.
- The National Education Policy 2020 envisages an increase in education spending from 4.6% to 6% of GDP, which amounts to around INR 2.5 lakh crores per year. However, this policy comes into being at a time when the economy has been battered by Covid-19 related lockdowns, government tax collections are abysmally low, and the fiscal deficit was high even pre-Covid.

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Measures to make Indian Education System globally competitive:

- The need for a skilled workforce, particularly involving mathematics, computer science, and data science, in conjunction with multidisciplinary abilities across the sciences, social sciences, and humanities, will be increasingly in greater demand.
- With the quickly changing employment landscape and global ecosystem, it is becoming increasingly critical that children not only learn, but more importantly learn how to learn Education thus, must move towards less content, and more towards learning about how to think critically and solve problems, how to be creative and multidisciplinary, and how to innovate, adapt, and absorb new material in novel and changing fields.
- Pedagogy must evolve to make education more experiential, holistic, integrated, inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centred, discussion-based, flexible, and, of course, enjoyable.
- India needs a radical reform of its school education. Mainstreaming of vocational education and skill development within the school system is the way forward
- A new set of vocational teachers for specific trades and skills would need to be trained and appointed. State-of-the-art facilities, including equipment, for such vocational education would need to be put in place.

Conclusion

National Education Policy 2020 is in many ways just what India needs, as it blossoms into the world's largest workforce in coming years. To realize the dreams it contains, we must overcome substantial execution challenges in a sustained manner for years and decades to come.