

### Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025



**For Prelims:** Online Gaming, Real Money gaming (RMG) Industry, Digital Payment System, Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA).

**For Mains:** Factors leading to the rise of the gaming industry in India, Need of code of ethics and deregulating India's online gaming sector.

Source: ET

### Why in News?

The Act, passed by Parliament, encourages **e-sports and online social games** while **prohibiting harmful online money gaming services**, advertisements, and financial transactions related to them.

- The act was introduced in Parliament as a **Finance Bill under Articles 117(1) and 117(3) of the Constitution**, with the President's recommendation.

### What is Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025?

- **About:** The Act seeks to create a **comprehensive legal framework to regulate, promote, and support the online gaming sector**, fostering a responsible digital environment for citizens.
- **Ban on Online Money Games:** The act completely prohibits offering, advertising, or facilitating financial transactions for real money games .
  - Banks and financial institutions are barred from processing payments for such platforms.
  - Authorities empowered under the **IT Act, 2000** to block unlawful platforms.
- **Key Provisions of the Act: Online games are classified in the following manner:**
  - **E-Sports** : Recognized as a legitimate sport, competitive digital sports played through organized tournaments, requiring skill.
  - **Online Social Games** : Primarily skill-based games designed for entertainment, or social interaction.  
**Examples : Wordle.**
  - **Online Money Games** : Games involving financial stakes, whether based on chance, skill, or both.

Players pay fees or deposit money with the expectation of monetary or other gains. *Examples :*  
**Dream11, Poker, Rummy.**

- **Applicability of the Act: Across India and includes online money gaming services offered within India or operated from outside but accessible in India.**
- **Promotion of Positive Gaming:**
  - **E-Sports :** Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports to frame guidelines, establish training academies, and research centres.
  - **Social/Educational Games :** Union Government can recognize, register, and promote safe, age-appropriate platforms for learning and recreation.
- **Regulatory Body: A national-level regulator to:**
  - Categorize and register games.
  - Determine if a game qualifies as a **money game**.
  - Handle complaints and grievances.
  - The Central Government is authorized to appoint officers with powers of investigation, search, seizure, and arrest (in certain cases even without a warrant).
- **Offences and Penalties:**
  - Offering online money games: **Up to 3 years imprisonment and ₹1 crore fine .**
  - Advertising banned games: **Up to 2 years imprisonment and ₹50 lakh fine .**
  - Offences are **cognisable and non-bailable .**
- **Liability Clause: The Act makes companies and their officers accountable, while independent and non-executive directors are exempt if they can demonstrate due diligence.**

## Online Gambling

- **About:** Online games are defined as those played on **electronic or digital devices and operated through software using the internet** or other electronic communication technologies.
  - It facilitates real-time interaction and competition between players, regardless of their location.
- **Classification:**
  - **Skill-Based Games:** They prioritize skill over chance and are legal in India. E.g., **Game 24X7, Dream11, and Mobile Premier League (MPL) .**
  - **Games of Chance:** Their outcome depends mainly on luck rather than skill and are Illegal in India. **E.g., Roulette, which attracts players primarily for monetary rewards.**
- **Market Size: In 2023,** India became the **world's largest gaming market with 568 million gamers and 9.5 billion app downloads.**
  - The market, valued at USD 2.2 billion in 2023, **is projected to reach USD 8.6 billion by 2028.**

## What are the Key Growth Drivers of India's Gaming Industry ?

- **Economic Drivers:** India's vibrant start-up ecosystem, supported by Start-up India and Atmanirbhar Bharat framework, has fostered the growth of numerous gaming companies and platforms.
  - These startups are driving innovation and catering to the diverse gaming preferences of Indian consumers, contributing to the expansion and evolution of the gaming industry in the country.
  - India has produced numerous gaming unicorns, including **Games24X7, Dream11 and Mobile Premier League**.
  - In the last few years, gaming companies raised **USD 2.8 billion from domestic and global investors**, amounting to 3% of total startup funding in India.
  - **NVIDIA** has announced the launch of its cloud gaming service in India in November 2025.
- **Technological Enablers;**
  - Initiatives such as **BharatNet and the National Broadband Mission (NBM)** are focused on providing **high-speed internet to rural and remote regions**.
  - The 5G rollout has further boosted internet speeds and lowered latency, crucial for a smooth gaming experience.
  - A recent survey by MoSPI reveals that over 85% of Indian households now own smartphones, with internet access available within the premises for 86.3%.
  - Mobile phones contribute to 90% of the gaming market in India as compared to about 37% and 62% in the US and China, respectively.
- **Policy & Cultural Shifts:**
  - IT Rules 2021, self-regulatory bodies, and the **AVGC Task Force** created a framework for safe growth.
  - Gamers honored in the **Content Creators Award ; Create in India Campaign** promotes content creators.
  - Covid-19 lockdown drove **50% industry growth** , with average gaming time rising from **2.5 to 4.1 hrs/day** , turning gaming into a **legitimate career path** .

## How is the Gaming Industry Regulated in India?

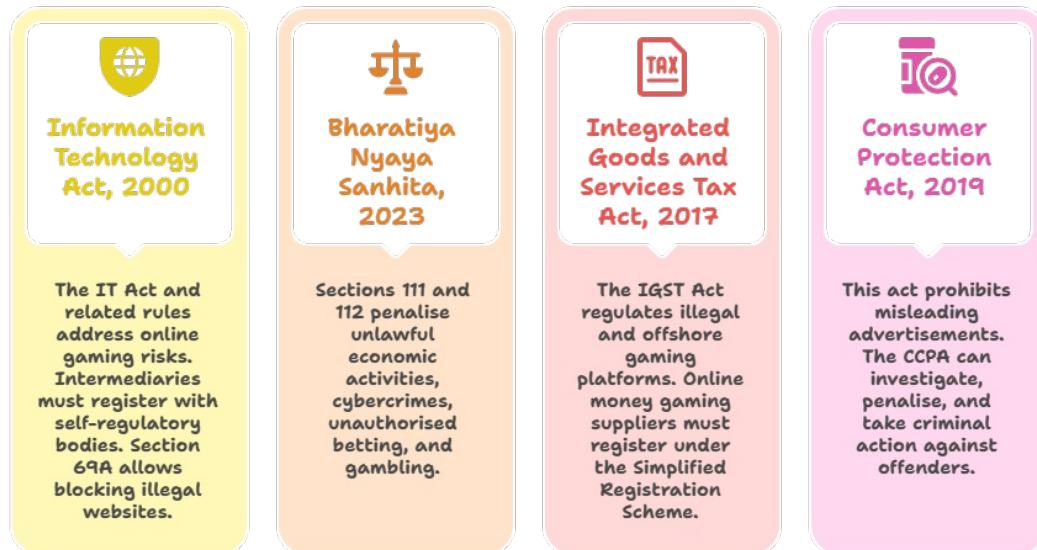
- **Information Technology Act, 2000 & Rules**
  - The **IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021** , amended in April 2023, set standards for online gaming platforms.
  - Intermediaries must prevent the circulation of unlawful/illegal content.
  - Platforms offering money games must register with **Self-Regulatory Bodies (SRBs)** , which determine if a game is permissible.
  - **Section 69A** empowers the government to block illegal sites/apps — **1,524 betting and gambling platforms blocked (2022-June 2025)** .
- **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023:**
  - **Section 111** : Penalises unlawful economic activities and cybercrimes.
  - **Section 112** : Punishes unauthorised betting/gambling with **1-7 years imprisonment and fines** .
- **Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) Act, 2017:**
  - Extends to illegal/offshore gaming platforms.
  - Online money gaming suppliers must register under the **Simplified Registration Scheme** .
  - The **DG of GST Intelligence** can direct blocking of unregistered/non-compliant platforms.

- Ensures digital gaming entities follow the same taxation norms as physical businesses.

- **Consumer Protection Act, 2019**

- Prohibits **misleading/surrogate advertisements** .
- The **CCPA** can investigate, penalise, and initiate criminal proceedings.
- Advisories issued to restrict **celebrities/influencers from endorsing betting platforms** .

### Initiatives to Counter Online Gaming Risks



## What are the Key Concerns of India's Online Gaming Industry and Suggest Measures to Strengthen It?

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Concerns	Measures
<b>Regulatory Ambiguity</b> – Fragmented state laws; no clear distinction between skill-based gaming and gambling.	<b>Establishment of a national regulatory body</b> ; strengthen self-regulatory bodies (SRBs) for clarity.
<b>Illegal Gambling &amp; Money Laundering</b> – Offshore sites thriving; risks of terror financing, misuse of remittance routes.	<b>Collaborate with banks</b> & payment gateways to block illegal transactions; real-time monitoring; global anti-money laundering cooperation.
<b>Addictive Behaviour</b> – Excessive play leads to stress, financial ruin, suicidal tendencies (23% youth affected).	<b>Introduce age-gating</b> , spending limits, self-exclusion tools; integrate mental health support; run public awareness campaigns.
<b>Cyberattacks</b> – Data breaches (11 mn accounts in 2024); risks from VPN/geo-blocker bypass.	<b>Strengthen cybersecurity</b> with audits, encryption, intrusion detection; comply with data protection norms.
<b>Financial Risks</b> – Vulnerable users overspend (₹17 lakh PUBG case); Indians lose ₹20,000 cr annually.	<b>Promote responsible gaming practices</b> ; enforce parental controls; ensure consumer protection mechanisms.
<b>Lack of Innovation Support</b> – Limited infrastructure and mentorship for developers.	<b>Develop dedicated gaming hubs</b> & incubators (models: Montreal, Singapore, South Korea) for innovation and talent growth.

### Drishti Mains Question

Q. Discuss the challenges and regulatory measures needed for the growth of the online gaming industry in India.

[Watch Video on YouTube: [▶ https://www.youtube.com/embed/a8EOnQunSvs](https://www.youtube.com/embed/a8EOnQunSvs) ]

# UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

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## *Prelims*

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Q. Which of the following is/are the aim/aims of “Digital India” Plan of the Government of India? (2018)

1. Formation of India’s own Internet companies like China did.
2. Establish a policy framework to encourage overseas multinational corporations that collect Big Data to build their large data centres within our national geographical boundaries.
3. Connect many of our villages to the Internet and bring Wi-Fi to many of our schools, public places and major tourist centres.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (b)

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## *Mains*

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Q. Discuss how emerging technologies and globalisation contribute to money laundering. Elaborate measures to tackle the problem of money laundering both at national and international levels. (2021)

## Exemptions for Mineral Exploration in Forests



Source: IE

## Why in News ?

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The **Forest Advisory Committee (FAC)** has approved enhanced **exemptions** for **mineral exploration drilling** in forest areas, following requests from the **Ministries of Coal and Mines**.

- These exemptions for exploratory drilling were introduced through the **2023 amendment to the Forest Conservation Act, 1980** .

## Why Have Exemptions Been Provided for Mineral Exploration Drilling in Forest Regions?

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- **Borehole Limit and Push for Critical Minerals:** The Environment Ministry now **permits 62 to 80 boreholes per 10 sq km**, each up to 6 inches in diameter, for mineral exploration.
  - Earlier rules allowed only **25 boreholes per 10 sq km** , along with **80 shot holes and felling of up to 100 trees** , without requiring forest clearance.
  - This expansion aims to tap **critical minerals** like **lithium, cobalt, and nickel** , vital for clean energy and defence.
- **Ease of Doing Business:** Reduces delays from repeated central clearances for temporary exploration.
- **Private Sector Participation:** Encourages greater investment and involvement in mineral exploration.
- **Economic Growth Support:** Minerals are crucial for infrastructure, manufacturing, defence, and green technologies.
  - Enables quicker project development, cost efficiency, and higher investment inflows.

## What Concerns are Associated with Increased Mineral Exploration Drilling in Forest Regions?

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- **Environmental and Ecological Concerns :**
  - Increased drilling activities may cause cumulative environmental impact.
  - It can have potential effects on forest flora and fauna despite safeguards.
  - Local and regional precipitation patterns may be impacted by forest loss.
- **Local Communities and Tribal Rights :**
  - Potential conflicts with traditional forest dwellers' rights under FRA 2006.
  - Safeguarding of religiously and culturally significant forest areas.
  - Effects on forest-dependent communities and their traditional occupations.
- **Bypass Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 Scrutiny:**
  - In the past, the FCA mandated central government certification for any activity on forest land that wasn't directly connected to conservation of forests.
  - There are several issues with mineral exploration being reclassified as a "forest activity."

# Critical minerals

- **Critical minerals** are those essential for a nation's **economic growth and national security** , whose limited availability or concentration of reserves/extraction in specific regions creates **supply chain vulnerabilities** .
- **India's Position:** Released a list of **30 critical minerals** (e.g., Bismuth, Cobalt, Copper, Rare Earth Elements, Silicon, Tin, Titanium).
  - India is **heavily import-dependent** for most critical minerals.
- **Significance of Critical Minerals:**
  - **Environment & Energy** : Key for **renewable energy technologies** (solar panels, wind turbines, semiconductors).
    - Essential in **Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)** .
  - **National Security** : Vital for **defence sector** – missile systems, aerospace, communication technologies.
  - **Economic & Electronics** : Critical for **electric vehicles (EVs)** via lithium-ion batteries.
    - Required for **semiconductors, smartphones, computers, communication devices** .

## India's Initiatives for Critical Minerals:

- **Policy and Regulatory Framework:** **National Critical Minerals Mission (NCMM)**, aims to identify **1,200 deposits by 2030 to meet rising demand for lithium, cobalt , and other critical minerals** , vital for clean energy and EVs.
  - **Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2023:** Enables exploration and mining of critical minerals.
  - **National Mineral Policy, 2019:** Focuses on sustainable mining and exploration.
  - Union Budget 2024-25: Removed customs duties on most critical minerals.
- **Exploration and Domestic Production:**
  - **Geological Survey of India (GSI):** Conducting extensive surveys for lithium, rare earths, and other critical minerals.
  - **Lithium Discovery (2023)** : Major reserves identified in Reasi, Jammu & Kashmir.
  - **Strategic Mineral Reserves:** Plans to build reserves for lithium, cobalt, and others.
- **International Collaborations & Trade Agreements:**
  - **Khanij Bidesh India Ltd (KABIL), 2019:** Joint venture under the Ministry of Mines to secure overseas mineral assets; partnerships with Argentina, Australia, etc.
  - **Minerals Security Partnership (MSP):** India joined the US-led initiative in 2023 to strengthen global supply chains for critical minerals.

## What Should be the Sustainable Roadmap for Mineral Exploration in Forests?

- **Sustainable Exploration Practices:** To Promote **non-intrusive technologies such as geophysical**



- **surveys, images from satellites**, and remote sensing and artificial intelligence based mineral forecasting systems and drone-based mapping techniques.
- Mitigate impact on the environment through decreasing usage on powered drilling.
- **Strengthen Environmental Safeguards: Establish strict Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) like No drilling in wetlands ecosystems, areas for reproduction, or critical ecosystems.**
- Implement time-specific limitations in place (No drill during the nesting or breeding periods).
- **Cluster Mining Approach:**
- To utilize resources thorough cluster mining initiatives that **include shared environmentally friendly structures for multiple divisions.**
- Eco-friendly techniques such as **conveying systems, bucket steering digging machines, and systematic landfill control.**

## UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

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### *Prelims:*

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With reference to the management of minor minerals in India, consider the following statements: (2019)

1. Sand is a 'minor mineral' according to the prevailing law in the country
2. State Governments have the power to grant mining leases of minor minerals, but the powers regarding the formation of rules related to the grant of minor minerals lie with the Central Government.
3. State Governments have the power to frame rules to prevent illegal mining of minor minerals.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (a)

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Q. What is/are the purpose/purposes of 'District Mineral Foundations' in India? (2016)

1. Promoting mineral exploration activities in mineral-rich districts
2. Protecting the interests of the persons affected by mining operations
3. Authorizing State Governments to issue licenses for mineral exploration

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (b)

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## ***Mains***

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Q. Despite India being one of the countries of Gondwanaland, its mining industry contributes much less to its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in percentage. Discuss. (2021)

Q. "In spite of adverse environmental impact, coal mining is still inevitable for development". Discuss. (2017)

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## India Explores Rare-Earth Deal with Myanmar



### Source:IE

India is collaborating with the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) in Myanmar to secure rare-earth mineral samples, aiming to diversify its supply chain away from China.

- The KIA, founded in 1961, is one of Myanmar's most influential armed groups. They captured the Chipwe-Pangwa mining belt in Kachin state, which supplies most of the world's heavy rare earths, including dysprosium and terbium.

## What are Rare Earth Minerals?

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- **About:** Rare earths are a group of 17 elements including 15 silvery-white metals called lanthanides, or lanthanoids, plus scandium and yttrium.
  - In their **periodic table order**, they are: scandium, yttrium, lanthanum, cerium, praseodymium, neodymium, promethium, samarium, europium, gadolinium, terbium, dysprosium, holmium, erbium, thulium, ytterbium, and lutetium.
  - They are **not rare in the sense** that they are uncommon. They tend to be spread thin around the Earth's crust in small quantities and mixed together or with other minerals, so larger deposits are difficult to find and costly to extract.
- **Environmental Impact:**
  - Processing rare earths often involves the use of solvents, which can produce toxic waste that pollutes the soil, water, and atmosphere.

- More environmentally friendly technologies are being developed, but they are not yet widely used.
- Certain types of rare earth ores also contain radioactive thorium or uranium, which is often removed using acid.
- For this reason, development of the sector faces health and environmental regulatory hurdles.
- **Use:** They are used in a wide range of products including consumer electronics, electric vehicles (EVs), aircraft engines, medical equipment, oil refining, and military applications such as missiles and radar systems.
- **Biggest Producer:** China accounts for about 60% of global mine production and 90% of processed and permanent magnet output.

Light rare earth elements	Heavy rare earth elements
Neodymium (Nd) and Praseodymium (Pr): Crucial for making powerful permanent magnets used in electric vehicles components, wind turbines, hard disk drives, and various automotive subsystems.  Neodymium is also used in steelmaking to remove impurities and create specialized alloys	Dysprosium (Dy) and Terbium (Tb): Essential additives in neodymium magnets to enhance their performance at high temperatures, crucial for electric vehicle motors and wind turbine generators
Lanthanum (La): Used in nickel-metal hydride batteries, camera lenses including those in smartphones, as a catalyst in petroleum refining, as polishing agents for glass, in steelmaking to remove impurities	Terbium (Tb) and Yttrium (Y): Used to create the red, green, and blue phosphors in screens for smartphones, computers, televisions, and LED lighting
Cerium (Ce): Used in catalytic converters in automobiles to reduce emissions, glass polishing powders, and as an additive in some alloys	Erbium (Er): Used in fiber optics as an amplifier and in some medical lasers
Samarium (Sm): Used in certain types of magnets and in nuclear reactor control rods	
Europium (Eu): Used in red phosphors for screens and energy-efficient lighting.	
Gadolinium (Gd): Used as a contrast agent in MRI scans and in nuclear reactor control rods	
Scandium (Sc): Used in lightweight, high-strength alloys for aircraft components	
Praseodymium (Pr): Used in steelmaking to remove impurities and create specialized alloys	

# What is the Status of India on Rare Earth Elements?

- India has the **world’s fifth-largest rare earth reserves** , at 6.9 million metric tons, but there is no domestic magnet production. India **relies on imported magnets, mainly from China**.
- In the fiscal year to March 2025, India imported 53,748 metric tons of rare earth magnets. These are used in automobiles, wind turbines, medical devices and other manufactured goods.
- Rare earth mining is **restricted to IREL ( a miniratna company )**, which supplies India’s Atomic Energy Department with materials for nuclear power projects and defence-related applications.
- IREL has a **rare earths extraction plant in Odisha and a refining unit in Kerala** .
- India is working to build its own processing capacity. IREL has been **seeking partnerships with Japanese and Korean companies** to manufacture rare earth magnets commercially.
  - IREL Limited has been mandated to produce REEs in the form of high pure rare earth oxides from rare earths bearing mineral Monazite in India.
- To reduce India’s import dependency in REEs, the Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD) is carrying out exploration to augment resources along the coastal, inland and riverine placer sands of the country.
- India has launched the **National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM) in 2025**.
  - Under the NCMM, Geological Survey of India (GSI) has been assigned to carry out 1,200 exploration projects from FY25 to FY31.

# UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

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## ***Prelims:***

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- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: (a)**

## Rethinking India's Strategy Against Aedes Mosquitoes



**Source: TH**

### **Why in News?**

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India faces rising **dengue , chikungunya, and Zika cases transmitted by the Aedes mosquitoes**, yet authorities still depend on less effective fumigation.

- Experts call for personal protection, community action, and innovative, cost-effective measures.

### **Why are Current Measures Against Aedes**

# Mosquitoes Failing?

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- **Mosquito Behaviour:** Aedes mosquitoes **bite mainly indoors** during the daytime and **at night under artificial light** . Hence, outdoor fogging miss most of their activity.
  - Local authorities still conduct **large-scale fumigation**, though national health agencies do not recommend it as a routine method. It provides little long-term impact.
- **Chemical Resistance:** Mosquitoes are developing tolerance to **pyrethroid-based vaporizers** and **temephos larvicides** , reducing their effectiveness.
- **High Cost of New Technologies:** Promising innovations like **Wolbachia mosquitoes** or **spatial repellents** remain underused due to high costs and lack of institutional support.
- **Incomplete Vaccine Protection:** While dengue vaccine trials such as **DengiAll** are ongoing, there is still no approved and effective vaccine for chikungunya or Zika in India.

## What Measures can Strengthen the Fight Against Aedes Mosquitoes?




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- **Shift Focus from Fogging to Source Reduction:** Fogging kills few mosquitoes because *Aedes* rest indoors. The government should prioritise larval source management by cleaning stagnant water in homes, rooftops, tyres, and construction sites.
  - Example: Delhi's "10 Hafte, 10 Baje, 10 Minute" campaign encourages households to check water containers weekly.
- **Strengthen Community Participation:** *Camino Verde trial in Latin America* showed significant dengue reduction when communities managed breeding sites.
  - India can replicate such evidence-based community mobilisation at ward/village level.
  - Like Polio campaigns, India needs a "Dengue Free India Mission" combining school education, TV, and digital outreach.
  - Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) can be frontline educators for household-level awareness.
- **Ensure Affordable and Safe Repellents:** Widespread use of DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide)-based repellents (proven most effective) should be promoted.
  - The government can subsidise or include repellents under **Jan Aushadhi Kendras** for mass accessibility.
- **Promote Personal Protection:** Encourage use of long sleeves, treated nets for daytime sleepers, and insecticide-treated school uniforms.
  - Awareness campaigns must stress that *Aedes* bite during the daytime , unlike malaria mosquitoes.
- **Support Innovative Interventions:** Integrate **Wolbachia-infected mosquitoes** (being scaled up in Brazil, Indonesia, Australia) to reduce dengue transmission.
  - Vaccine development should be supported but used cautiously due to limited efficacy.
- **Environmental and Waste Management:** *Aedes* thrive in plastic waste and discarded containers. India needs stronger solid waste management and plastic recycling initiatives.
  - Smart cities and Swachh Bharat Mission can integrate anti-dengue waste management drives.

# Burden of Aedes Mosquitoes

- The burden of Aedes mosquitoes **stems from their role as vectors** for multiple severe and rapidly spreading **arboviruses, including Dengue, Zika, and Chikungunya.**
- Dengue is **both endemic and emerging in India**, which bears one of the world's highest burdens, with about **33 million symptomatic and 100 million asymptomatic infections annually.**
- India reported its **first Zika case from Gujarat State in 2016**. Since then, many other States namely Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Kerala, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, and Karnataka have reported cases subsequently.
- **Chikungunya, a viral disease endemic to India**, causes severe joint pain, fever, and rash, with no specific treatment.
  - Major outbreaks occurred in 1963, 1965, 1973, and later re-emerged in 2006, now affecting almost all states, especially urban and peri-urban areas.

## Most common mosquito-borne diseases

Mosquito	Type of Mosquito	Disease caused
	Aedes	Chikungunya Dengue Lymphatic filariasis Rift Valley fever Yellow Fever Zika
	Anopheles	Lymphatic filariasis Malaria
	Culex	Japanese encephalitis Lymphatic filariasis West Nile fever

### ***Drishti Mains Question:***

**Q.** Despite limited effectiveness, India continues to rely on fumigation for Aedes control? Discuss and suggest sustainable alternatives.

# UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

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## *Prelims*

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**Q.** Wolbachia method is sometimes talked about with reference to which one of the following? (2023)

- a) Controlling the viral diseases spread by mosquitoes
- b) Converting crop residues into packing material
- c) Producing biodegradable plastics
- d) Producing biochar from thermochemical conversion of biomass

**Ans: (a)**

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**Q.** Which one of the following is used in preparing a natural mosquito repellent? (2021)

- a) Congress grass
- b) Elephant grass
- c) Lemongrass
- d) Nut grass

**Ans: c**