V | VISHNU
★ I A S ★

JUNE
07.06.2021

CURRENT AFFAIRS

A MAGAZINEFOR CIVILSERVICESPREPARATION

JOIN OUR TELEGRAM: https://t.me/vishnuiasmentor

Articles of the day
THE HINDU & INDIAN EXPRESS

Online & Offline classes

Test Series

One-Stop Solution

Free daily materials

UPSC

General Studies

THE HINDU

GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

1. Recognising sex work as work

The article talks about the need to grant **basic labour rights to adults who earn by providing sexual services and consider the decriminalisation of sex work.**

Context:

- Sex workers are among those communities that have been badly affected during the pandemic.
- As sex work is not recognised as **"legitimate work"**, sex workers have not been able to yield benefits from the government's relief programmes.

Details:

- In India, sex work is governed by the **Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act.**
- The **Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Children Act was enacted in 1956**.
- After having made a few amendments to the act, it was changed to the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act.
- The legislation penalises acts such as **keeping a brothel, soliciting in a public place, living off the earnings of sex work** and **living with or habitually being in the company of a sex worker**.

Issue:

- This Act **represents the old-fashioned and regressive view that sex work is morally wrong** and that the people involved in it, especially **women, never consent to it voluntarily**.
- In the popular depiction, entry into sex work is involuntary and through deception. It is believed that these **women need to be rescued and rehabilitated**, sometimes even **without their consent.**
  - o While in certain cases involving minor girls the argument is true, **for many consenting adult sex workers, it has been a problem.**
  - o It carries **prejudice** that **women who practise sex work are morally devious.**

- Besides criminalising sex work, the act has **pushed sex work underground** thereby leaving sex workers **more prone to violence, discrimination and harassment.**
- It deprives the sex workers of the powers to fight against the traffickers and has made them more **susceptible to be harassed by state officials.**
- A major argument is that the **Act denies an individual their right over their bodies** and **imposes the will of the state over adults articulating their life choices.**

Way Forward:

- Evidence shows that **many women choose to remain in sex work** despite opportunities to leave after rehabilitation by the government or non-governmental organisations.
- The **Justice Verma Commission** had also acknowledged the distinction between **women who are trafficked** for commercial sexual exploitation and adult, **consenting women who are in sex work** of their own will.
- The judiciary is moving in the direction of recognising sex workers' right to livelihood.
    - The **Supreme Court**, in Budhadev Karmaskar v. State of West Bengal (2011), opined that **sex workers have a right to dignity.**
- Sex work must be recognised as work.
- Adult men, women and transgender persons in sex work have the right to earn by providing sexual services.
- They must be allowed to live with dignity; and remain free from violence, exploitation, stigma and discrimination.
- The government must take a re-look at the existing legislation and do away with the 'victim-rescue-rehabilitation' narrative.
- COVID-19 has provided more reasons to consider the **decriminalisation of sex work** and a **guaranteed set of labour rights** which are among the long-pending demands of sex workers in India.

2.Chemical Weapons Convention

Why in News

Recently, the **Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)** informed the **United Nations (UN)** that in **17 cases chemical weapons were likely or definitely used by Syria.**

- **OPCW** was formed under the **Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)** 1997.

Key Points

- **Chemical Weapons:**
  - A Chemical Weapon is **a chemical used to cause intentional death** or harm through its toxic properties.
  - **Munitions, devices and other equipment** specifically designed to weaponize toxic chemicals also fall under the definition of chemical weapons.
- **Chemical Weapons Convention:**
  - **About:**
    - It is a **multilateral treaty banning chemical weapons** and requiring their destruction within the stipulated time.
    - Negotiations for the CWC began in 1980 at the **United Nations Conference on Disarmament.**
    - The convention was **drafted in September 1992** and **opened for signature in January 1993.** It became **effective from April 1997.**
    - It makes it **mandatory to destroy old and abandoned chemical weapons.**
    - Members should also declare the **riot-control agents** (sometimes referred to as 'tear gas') **in possession** of them.
  - **Members:**
    - It has **192 state parties and 165 signatories.**
    - **India** signed the treaty in **January 1993.**
  - **Convention Prohibits:**
    - The development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, or retention of chemical weapons.
    - Transferring of chemical weapons.
    - Using chemical weapons.
    - Assisting other States to indulge in activities that are prohibited by the CWC.
    - Using riot-control devices as 'warfare methods'.
- **Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons:**
  - **About:**
    - It is an **international organization** established by the CWC in 1997 to implement and enforce the terms of the CWC.
    - By the **2001 Relationship Agreement** between the **OPCW and the UN**, the OPCW reports on its inspections and other activities to the UN through the office of the Secretary General.
    - The OPCW was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize** in 2013.
  - **Headquarters:**
    - **Hague, Netherlands.**
  - **Functions:**

- It is **authorized to perform inspections** to verify that signatory states are complying with the convention.
    - This **includes a commitment to grant inspectors** full access to chemical weapons sites.
- It also **performs testing of sites and victims** of suspected chemical weapons attacks.
- It also **provides for assistance to and protection of States attacked or threatened with chemical weapons**, cooperation in the peaceful use of chemicals.

- **Indian Initiative:**
    - The **Chemical Weapons Convention Act, 2000** was passed to implement the CWC.
    - It provided for the establishment of a **National Authority for Chemical Weapons Convention or NACWC.** This institution, formed in 2005, is the **chief liaison between the government of India and the OPCW.** It is an office in the Cabinet Secretariat of the GoI.

Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (Hazardous Chemicals and Wastes)

- The Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions are **multilateral environmental agreements**, which share the common objective of **protecting human health and the environment from hazardous chemicals and wastes.**
- **The Basel Convention:**
    - It came into force in **1992, intended to reduce transboundary movements of hazardous waste** from developed to less developed countries (LDCs), and ensure their safe disposal as closely as possible to the source of generation.
        - **India is a member.**
- **Rotterdam Convention:**
    - It was adopted in **September 1998** by a Conference of Plenipotentiaries in Rotterdam, Netherlands and entered into force **in February 2004.**
        - **India is a member.**
    - It **covers pesticides and industrial chemicals that have been banned or severely restricted** for health or environmental reasons by Parties and which have been notified by Parties for inclusion in the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure.
    - The Convention **creates legally binding obligations** for the implementation of the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure.
- **The Stockholm Convention:**
    - It is a global treaty **to protect human health and the environment from Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). India is a member.** The Convention entered into force in **May, 2004.**

- **POPs** are chemicals that remain intact in the environment for long periods, become widely distributed geographically, accumulate in the fatty tissue of living organisms and are toxic to humans and wildlife.

3. Odisha's forest produce gatherers hit hard

What's in News?

The forest dwellers across Odisha have been **deprived of the right price for the non-timber forest produce (NTFP)** gathered by them.

- The tribals collect sal leaves, siali leaves, mohua flowers, mango kernel, karanja seeds, char seeds and tamarind.
- The hard cash earned by forest dwellers and tribals in the summer helps them survive the critical four monsoon months and use the money in agricultural activities.
- The NTFP market in Odisha has suffered due to the absence of adequate buyers in the backdrop of the pandemic.
- The **Van Dhan Vikash Kendras** promoted by the **Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED)** were introduced to **create a market for minor forest produce while ensuring a minimum support price**. However, they have not been able to perform well.

4. Punjab, T.N. and Kerala top education index ranking

Context:

Education Ministry has released the **Performance Grading Index (PGI) for 2019-20.**

Performance Grading Index

- The index monitors the progress that the States and Union Territories have made in **school education** with regard to **learning outcomes, access & equity, infrastructure & facilities, and governance & management processes.**
- 2019-20 PGI index is the **third edition of the index** and uses **70 indicators to measure progress.**
- **16 indicators related to learning outcomes remain unchanged through all three editions.**
  - They are based on data from the **2017 National Achievement Survey**, which **tested students in Classes 3, 5, 8 and 10.**

- **The remaining 54 parameters use Central databases**, collating information from the school and district level, and have been updated for 2019-20.
- The **total weightage** under PGI is a **thousand points**. Each indicator has been given either twenty or ten points.

Key Highlights:

- For the first time, 5 States and UTs have crossed the threshold of 90% PGI score.
- **Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Kerala** have all scored higher than **90% in the index.**
- Among UTs, **Chandigarh and Andaman and Nicobar Islands** have **scored higher than 90%.**
- Punjab recorded the highest score of almost 929 out of a possible 1,000.
  - It topped the charts in terms of **equity, infrastructure and governance**, and shared the top spot in the **domain of access** with Kerala.
  - Punjab overtook the Union Territory of Chandigarh, which topped both previous editions of the index.
- Gujarat, which had the second-highest score in the previous edition (2018-19), dropped to eighth place.
- The new **Union Territory of Ladakh was included separately for the first time** in this edition, and had the **lowest score of just 545.**

5. Embedded in Ambedkar's historiography

The article talks about the embrace of Buddhism by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

The Light of Asia:

- **The Light of Asia** by **Sir Edwin Arnold** is a poem on the **life and teachings of the Buddha** and was published in London in 1879.
- This book **contributed greatly to the international community's knowledge of Buddhism**.
- It is also known to have played an important role in **India's cultural awakening and social transformation.**
- It has had an influence on many of India's leaders such as Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar among others.

Details:

- Amongst the **biggest ever events** in twentieth-century Indian history was the **conversion of Dr Ambedkar to Buddhism.**
- Dr Ambedkar had had a long engagement with Buddha and Buddhism.

- **Sir Arnold awoke Kosambi and Kosambi had a huge impact on Ambedkar.**
  - o Dharmanand Kosambi had discovered Buddhism after reading 'The Light of Asia' in 1899 and become a Buddhist monk and the first modern Indian scholar of Pali.
- After publishing a series of books and articles arguing that Buddhism was the only way for the Untouchables to gain equality, Ambedkar publicly converted on **14 October 1956**, at Deekshabhoomi in Nagpur, over **20 years after he declared his intent to convert.**
- Around 380,000 of his **followers converted to Buddhism** at the same ceremony.
- Ambedkar asked Dalits **not to get entangled in the existing branches of Buddhism** (Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana).
- He called his version **Navayana or 'Neo-Buddhism'.**
- On converting to Buddhism, Ambedkar made 22 vows and asked his supporters to do the same. The vows demonstrate the social movement aspect of Navayana Buddhism, and its core deviation from earlier sects of Buddhism.
- Unfortunately, Ambedkar did not live long after his conversion, to practise Buddhism. He passed away just two months after his official conversion.
- Dr Ambedkar is recognised as the **"modern Buddha of his age"**. The title was given by Mahant Veer Chandramani, the great Buddhist monk who initiated Babasaheb to Buddhism.

6. US Suspends Retaliatory Tariffs on India

Why in News

Recently, the US **suspended imposition of retaliatory tariffs** against six countries, including India, that had begun imposing **digital services tax** on companies such as Google and Facebook.

- Other than India, the countries slapped with this tariff proposal are **Austria, Italy, Spain, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.**

Digital Services Taxes

- **DSTs** are the **adopted taxes on revenues that certain companies generate from providing certain digital services.** E.g. digital multinationals like Google, Amazon and Apple etc.
- The **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)** is currently hosting **negotiations with over 130 countries that aim to adapt the international tax system.** One goal is to address the tax challenges of the digitalization of the economy.

o Some experts argue that a **tax policy designed to target a single sector or activity is likely to be unfair** and have complex consequences.
o Further, the **digital economy cannot be easily separated out from the rest of the global economy.**

Key Points

- **Background:**
  o Tariffs were imposed after the office of the **United States Trade Representative (USTR)** noted that the **Digital services taxes adopted by India, Italy and Turkey discriminate against US companies** and are inconsistent with international tax principles.
    - **Under Section 301** of the **Trade Act of 1974,** the **USTR enjoys a range of responsibilities and authority to investigate and take action** to enforce US national interests under trade agreements and respond to certain foreign trade practices.
- **Reason for Suspension:**
  o **Multilateral Solution:**
    - To **allow time for ongoing international tax negotiations** to continue. The US is **seeking a multilateral solution** while maintaining the option of imposing tariffs under **Section 301** if warranted in the future.
  o **Damage to Global Economy:**
    - The six countries potentially impacted are passing through a weak post **Covid-19** recovery and **opening a new trade war front could be damaging** not only to them, but also to the broader global economy.
    - The **combination of depressed economic activity** owing to the effects of the **pandemic** and tectonic **shifts in global supply chains** engendered by the **US' trade war with China** has **already left many economies in a weakened condition.**
  o **Change in Administration:**
    - Under the previous US government (Trump) USTR **was used to promote what his administration considered to be free, fair and reciprocal trade,** specifically to close the gap or **balance of trade** between the US and foreign governments.
    - However, the new administration (Biden) appears to be **seeking a middle path of waving the stick of the USTR** while **allowing some space for continued tax negotiations with the nations concerned.**
- **Impact on India:**
  o **Loss of Revenue:**

- The **tax levied by the Finance Bill, 2021, could yield approximately USD 55 million annually.**
- Negotiations with the US that may result in the scaling back of this tax would **imply that a part of this revenue would be lost to the exchequer,** depending on the final rate agreed.

  o **Impact on Exports:**
  - Close to **USD 118 million of India's exports** to the US would be subject to the **tariff proposed by the USTR, impacting 26 categories of goods such as:**
    - Basmati rice, cigarette paper, cultured pearls, semi-precious stones, certain gold and silver jewellery items and specific types of furniture products.

  o **Growth Prospects:**
  - Any escalation matrix of retaliatory taxation with the US **would damage its growth prospects at a crucial point in its laborious recovery.**
  - However, India will also not be able to **simply abandon its articulated intent to tax global tech firms,** which have generally enjoyed lowtax operations across numerous jurisdictions.

India's Tax on Digital Companies

- The government had moved an **amendment in the Finance Bill 2020-21 imposing a 2% digital service tax (DST)** on trade and services by non-resident e-commerce **operators with a turnover of over Rs. 2 crore.**
  o This effectively expanded the scope of equalisation levy that, till last year, only applied to digital advertising services.
  o Earlier, the **equalisation levy (at 6%) was introduced in 2016 and imposed on the revenues generated on business-to-business** digital advertisements and allied services of the resident service provider.
- The new levy **came into effect from 1st April 2020.** E-commerce operators are obligated to pay the tax at the end of each quarter.
- The idea is to **tax payments made to offshore entities which do not have a physical presence** here and therefore the income tax department cannot subject such income earned from India to tax.

Way Forward

- As India is racing towards becoming a digital giant, the 2% DST should be negotiated to avoid any hurdles in its implementation. **India should consider its options carefully at this juncture.**
- Further, there needs to be **international consensus on taxation on a digital economy.**

GS 3 : Economy, Science and Technology,Environment

7. Govt. keen on implementing labour codes

Context:

The Union government is keen on going ahead with the **implementation of** the four **labour codes.**

Details:

- These four labour codes will rationalise 44 Central labour laws.
- Once the wages code comes into force, there will be **significant changes in the way basic pay and the provident fund of employees are calculated.**
- It would result in a **reduction in the take-home pay** of employees and a **higher provident fund liability for the companies**.
  - This is because, under the new wages code, allowances are capped at 50%.
  - This means half of the gross pay of an employee would be basic wages.
  - Provident fund contribution is calculated as a percentage of the basic wage.
- The Ministry had finalised the rules under the four codes. But these could not be implemented because many States were not in a position to notify rules under these codes in their jurisdiction.
- **Labour is on the Concurrent List** of the Constitution and, therefore, **both the Centre and the States have to notify rules under these four codes** to make them the laws of the land in their respective jurisdictions.

8. 'New IT rules only to tackle misuse of social media, offer redressal forum'

Context:

Information Technology and Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad's comments on Information Technology (Guidelines For Intermediaries And Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.

Background:

- Information Technology (Guidelines For Intermediaries And Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 was enacted by the government in February 2021.

New Information Technology Rules

The new Rules have been passed under Sections 69A(2), 79(2)(c) and 87 of the Information Technology Act, 2000. These new rules supersede the previously enacted Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines) Rules 2011.

- The Rules aim to provide a robust complaint mechanism for the users of social media and over-the-top (OTT) platforms to address their grievances.
- They place special emphasis on the protection of women and children from sexual offences on social media.
- The rules stress the point that online content publishers and social media intermediaries should follow the Constitution of the country and subject themselves to domestic laws.
- With these rules, India joins other international regimes that have provisions for digital media regulation and provides a comprehensive mechanism for the protection of digital media consumers.

IT Rules Background

In 2018, the Supreme Court had observed that the Indian Government may frame necessary guidelines to eradicate child pornography, rape and gangrape imageries, videos and sites in content hosting platforms and other applications.

- In 2020, an Ad-hoc committee of the Rajya Sabha submitted its report on the issue of social media pornography and its effect on children and society as a whole. The report recommended tracing the originator of such content.
- In 2020, the GOI also brought OTT platforms under the ambit of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry.

New Guidelines for Social Media Intermediaries

The new rules classify social media intermediaries into two categories:

1. Social media intermediaries
2. Significant social media intermediaries

The above classification is based on the user size and once it has been defined through the notification of the Government, it would act as the threshold between the two. This is because there are additional compliance measures for significant social media intermediaries given the large number of users and the volume of content they process.

What are internet intermediaries?

Internet intermediaries can be described as entities that facilitate access to the internet or services on the internet (Association Progressive Communications 2014).

For example, internet service providers, social media networks, search engines, etc. Generally, the intermediaries adopt a passive approach to the content they provide or host (unlike book publishers). Since they generally do not have editorial control over the content, countries are encouraged to enact safe harbour protections which offer immunity to intermediaries from criminal liability. In India, the safe harbour provisions have been defined under Section 79 of the IT Act.

- Due diligence to be followed by intermediaries under the new rules
  - According to the new rules, in case due diligence is not followed by the intermediary, the safe harbour provisions would not apply to them.
- Mandatory grievance redressal mechanism
  - Intermediaries shall appoint a Grievance Officer to deal with complaints and share the name and contact details of such officers.
  - This officer should acknowledge the complaint received within 24 hours and resolve the issue within 15 days.
- Ensuring online safety and dignity of users
  - Intermediaries should remove or disable, within 24 hours of the complaint received, content that displays partial or full nudity, sexual act, morphed images, etc.
  - Complaints of such nature can be filed either by individuals or any person on behalf of the individuals.
- Additional due diligence for significant social media intermediaries
  - They have to appoint a Chief Compliance Officer, a Nodal Contact Person and a Resident Grievance Officer, and all these officers should be Indian residents.
  - They should publish a monthly compliance report detailing the complaints received.
  - Establishing the identity of the originator of the message/content
    - Such intermediaries offering services chiefly in the nature of messaging shall enable identification of the first originator of the information.
    - The purpose of this identification is for the prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution or punishment of an offence related to sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, or public order, or in relation to rape, sexually explicit material or child sexual abuse material punishable with imprisonment for a term of not less than five years.
    - Here, the social media intermediaries offering messaging services will have the responsibility to help law enforcement agencies identify and track the first originator of any contentious or problematic information.

- This can only be executed through an order of a competent court or the Competent Authority under Section 69 of the Act and must only be employed as a measure of last resort.
- Unlawful information removal
  - An intermediary upon receiving actual knowledge in the form of an order by a court or being notified by the appropriate govt. or its agencies through authorized officer should not host or publish any information which is prohibited under any law in relation to the interest of the sovereignty and integrity of India, public order, friendly relations with foreign countries, etc.

New Guidelines for OTT Platforms, News Publishers & Digital Media

Over-the-top (OTT) Platforms

- The new rules call OTT platforms 'publishers of online curated content'.
- They would have to self-classify the content into five categories based on age.
  - U (Universal)
  - U/A 7+
  - U/A 13+
  - U/A 16+
  - A (Adult)
- OTT platforms would be required to provide parental lock systems for content classified U/A 13+ or higher, and have age verification mechanism for content classified as 'Adult'.
- The rating for the content should be prominently displayed before the programme starts so that users can make informed decisions based on suitability. Along with the rating, the content's description should also be provided with a viewer discretion message if applicable.

News Publishers

- Publishers of news on digital media should observe Norms of Journalistic Conduct of the Press Council of India and the Programme Code under the Cable Television Networks Regulation Act 1995 in order to provide a level playing field between the offline (Print, TV) and digital media.

Grievance redressal mechanism

- A three-level grievance redressal mechanism has been mandated with different levels of self-regulation. They are:
- **Level-I: Self-regulation by the publishers**
  - Publisher should appoint a Grievance Redressal Officer who is a resident of India.

- o This officer should take his/her decision on complaints within 15 days.
- **Level-II: Self-regulation by the self-regulating bodies of the publishers**
  - o The self-regulating bodies of the publishers should register themselves with the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting.
  - o One publisher can have more than one self-regulating bodies.
  - o Such bodies would be headed by a retired judge of the Supreme Court, a High Court, or an eminent independent person and shall not have more than six members.
  - o This body should oversee that the publisher adheres to the Code of Ethics.
  - o The body will also address grievances that are not resolved within 15 days by the publisher.
- **Level-III: Oversight mechanism**
  - o An oversight mechanism will be framed by the Information and Broadcasting Ministry.
  - o It shall publish a charter for self-regulating bodies, including Codes of Practices.
  - o It shall also establish an Inter-Departmental Committee for hearing grievances.

- Subsequently, WhatsApp has moved the Delhi High Court against the rules, citing concerns.

- Some social media firms have raised concerns over the clause related to employees being jailed under the new Rules.
- As per Rule 4(A), social media platforms need to **appoint a chief compliance officer who shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with the Act** and the rules thereunder and shall be liable in any proceeding relating to third-party information where he/she fails to make sure that due diligence was followed by the intermediary.

Details:

- The minister stressed that the rules only give a redressal mechanism to users, with **complaints to be handled between the users and the social media intermediary.** He stressed that there would be no involvement of the government.

GS 2 : Polity, Governance, International Relations

1. Performance Grading Index (PGI)

Why in News

The Union Education Minister has approved the release of **Performance Grading Index (PGI) 2019-20** for States and Union Territories.

- The PGI is a **tool to provide insights on the status of school education in States and UTs** including key levers that drive their performance and critical areas for improvement.

Key Points

- **About the Performance Grading Index (PGI):**
    - **Background:** The PGI for States and Union Territories was **first published in 2019** with reference year 2017-18.
        - The **PGI : States/UTs for 2019-20 is the third publication** in this series.
    - **Objectives:**
        - The PGI exercise envisages that the index would propel States and UTs towards **undertaking multi-pronged interventions** that will bring about the much-desired optimal education outcomes.
        - The PGI helps the States/UTs to **pinpoint the gaps** and accordingly prioritise areas for intervention to ensure that the school education system is robust at every level.
    - **Implementing Agency:**
        - It is initiated by the **Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL).**
    - **Source of Information:**
        - The information on the indicators are drawn from data available with the DoSEL from the **Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE)**, **National Achievement Survey (NAS) of NCERT, Mid Day Meal website, Public Financial Management System (PFMS)** and the information uploaded by the States and UTs on the **Shagun portal** of DoSEL.
    - **Methodology:**

- The PGI is structured **in two categories**, namely, **Outcomes and Governance & Management** and comprises **70 indicators** in aggregate with a total weightage of 1000.
- **Domains** under categories include: **Access, Infrastructure & Facilities, Equity, Governance process.**
  - **Important Findings of the PGI 2019-20:**
    - **State-wise Performance:**
      - Shows that 33 **States and UTs have improved their PGI scores** in 2019-20 compared to the previous year.
      - **Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Puducherry, Punjab and Tamil Nadu have improved** their overall PGI scores by 10%.
    - **Inter-state Differential:**
      - On a maximum possible of 1000 points, the range between the States and UTs with the highest and the lowest score is **more than 380 points** in the year 2019-20.
  - **Domain-wise Performance:**
    - **Access: Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep and Punjab** have shown improvement of 10% or more in the 'Access' domain.
    - **Infrastructure and Facilities:** Thirteen states and UTs have shown improvement by 10% or more in 'Infrastructure and Facilities' while **Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Odisha** have improved their scores in the domain by 20% or more.
    - **Equity:** In 'Equity', **Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Odisha** have shown an improvement of more than 10%.
    - **Governance Process:** 19 states have shown improvement by 10% or more.
      - **Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Punjab, Rajasthan and West Bengal** have shown improvement by at least 20%.

Way Forward

- A reliable, timely and participative information system coupled with a robust and efficient data analytics framework is the key to successful implementation of any Government programme.
- In the arena of School Education & Literacy, guided by the enabling legislative framework of the **Right to Education**, the **National Education Policy 2020** and visionary **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, Government Schemes like **Samagra Shiksha (SS)**, Mid-Day Meal (MDM) and similar such schemes by the States would deliver the desired result if they are monitored effectively.

- The framework of a real time data availability system (namely, UDISE+, Shagun, etc.) and an objective and holistic performance evaluation framework provided through the PGI would provide the right combination for effective implementation of policy in the School Education sector.
- A performance-based grant would provide the required incentive to the States and UTs to ensure their continuous and focused attention to this sector, which is crucial for overall growth and development of the country.

2.Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj

Why in News

On the occasion of the anniversary of **Maratha king's coronation day (6th June),** the Goa government has released a short film on Chhatrapati Shivaji.

Key Points

- **Birth:**
    - He was **born on 19th February, 1630 at Shivneri Fort in District Pune** in the present-day state of Maharashtra.
    - He was born to **Shahaji Bhonsle,** a Maratha general who held the jagirs of Pune and Supe under the Bijapur Sultanate and **Jijabai,** a pious woman whose religious qualities had a profound influence on him.
- **Early Life:**
    - He displayed his military zeal for the first time **in 1645** when as a teenager, he successfully **got control of the Torna Fort** which was under Bijapur.
    - He also acquired the **Kondana Fort.** Both these forts were under Adil Shah of Bijapur.
- **Important Battle:**

Battle of Pratapgad, 1659	- Fought at the fort of Pratapgad near the town of Satara, Maharashtra, between the forces of the **Maratha king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and the Adilshahi general Afzal Khan.**
Battle of Pavan Khind, 1660	- Fought at a mountain pass in the vicinity of fort Vishalgad, near the city of Kolhapur, Maharashtra, **between the Maratha Sardar Baji Prabhu Deshpande and Siddi Masud of Adilshahi.**
Sacking of Surat, 1664	- Fought near the city of Surat, Gujarat, **between Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Inayat Khan,** a Mughal captain.

Battle of Purandar, 1665	▪ Fought between the **Mughal Empire and Maratha Empire.**
Battle of Sinhagad, 1670	▪ Fought on the fort of Sinhagad near the city of Pune, Maharashtra **between Tanaji Malusare, a commander of Maratha ruler Shivaji Maharaj and Udaybhan Rathod,** fortkeeper under Jai Singh I who was a Mughal Army Chief.
Battle of Kalyan, 1682-83	▪ **Bahadur Khan of the Mughal Empire defeated the Maratha army** and took over Kalyan.
Battle of Sangamner, 1679	▪ Fought between the Mughal Empire and Maratha Empire. This was the **last battle in which the Maratha King Shivaji fought.**

- **Conflict with Mughals:**
    - He raided Mughal territory near Ahmednagar and in Junnar, 1657.
    - Aurangzeb responded to the raids by sending Nasiri Khan, who defeated the forces of Shivaji at Ahmednagar.
    - Shivaji defeated a large force of **Shaista Khan (Aurangzeb's maternal uncle)** and the Bijapur army in Pune,1659.
    - In **1664,** the wealthy Mughal trading **port of Surat was sacked by Shivaji.**
    - In June 1665, the **Treaty of Purandar** was signed between Shivaji and Raja Jai Singh I (representing Aurangzeb).
        - As per this treaty, many forts were relinquished to the Mughals and it was agreed that Shivaji would meet Aurangzeb at Agra. Shivaji also agreed to send his son Sambhaji as well.
- **Arrest of Shivaji:**
    - When Shivaji **went to meet the Mughal emperor at Agra in 1666,** the Maratha warrior felt he was insulted by Aurangzeb and stormed out of the court.
    - He was arrested and kept prisoner. The **clever escape of Shivaji and his son** from imprisonment in disguise out of Agra is legendary today.
    - After that there was peace between the Marathas and the Mughals until 1670.
    - The **jagir of Berar** which was granted to Sambhaji by the Mughals was taken back from him.
    - Shivaji in response attacked and recovered many territories from the Mughals in a short span of four months.
    - Through his military tactics, Shivaji **acquired a large part of the land in the Deccan and western India.**
- **Granted Title:**

- o He was crowned as the **king of the Marathas** on 6th June , 1674, at Raigad.
- o He took on the titles of **Chhatrapati, Shakakarta, Kshatriya Kulavantas and Haindava Dharmodhhaarak.**
- o The **Maratha Kingdom** founded by Shivaji grew larger over time and became the dominant Indian power in the early 18th century.
- **Death:**
  - o He died on 3rd April 1680.

Administration under Shivaji

- **Central Administration:**
  - o It was founded by Shivaji for the sound system of administration which was greatly inspired from the **Deccan style of administration.**
  - o Most of the administrative reforms were inspired from **Malik Amber reforms in Ahmednagar.**
  - o The **King was the supreme head of state** who was assisted by a group of eight ministers known as the **'Ashtapradhan'.**
  - o The **peshwa, also known as the mukhya pradhan,** originally headed the advisory council of the raja Shivaji.
- **Revenue Administration:**
  - o Shivaji abolished **the Jagirdari System** and replaced it with **Ryotwari System,** and changes in the position of hereditary revenue officials which was popularly known **as Deshmukhs, Deshpande, Patils and Kulkarnis.**
  - o Shivaji strictly supervised the **Mirasdars** who had hereditary rights in land.
  - o The revenue system was patterned on the **Kathi system of Malik Amber** in which every piece of land was measured by Rod or Kathi.
  - o Chauth and Sardeshmukhi were other sources of income.
    - **Chauth** amounted to **1/4th of the standard** which was paid to Marathas as a safeguard against Shivaji's forces raiding Non-Maratha territories.
    - **Sardeshmukhi** was **an additional levy of 10%** demanded from areas outside of the kingdom.
- **Military Administration:**
  - o Shivaji organised a disciplined and efficient army.
  - o The ordinary soldiers were paid in cash, but the chief and military commander were paid through **jagir grants (Saranjam or Mokasa).**
  - o The army consists of Infantry i.e. Mavali foot soldiers, Cavalry i.e. Horse riders and equipment holders, Navy.

3.Incredible India Tourist Facilitator Certification Programme

Why in News

Recently, on the occasion of **World Environment Day (5ᵗʰ June)**, the Tourism Minister appreciated the **Incredible India Tourist Facilitator Certification Programme (IITFC).**

Key Points

- **About:**
    - IITFC Programme is **a digital initiative of the Ministry of Tourism (MoT),** for the citizens of India to become a part of the booming Tourism Industry.
    - It is **an online programme** where one can learn about tourism at their own time, space, path and pace.
    - The successful completion of this programme would enable the learner to become a **Certified Tourist Facilitator** of the Ministry of Tourism.
- **Tourism & Hospitality Sector in India:**
    - In FY20, the tourism sector in India accounted for 39 million jobs, which was **8% of the total employment** in the country. By 2029, it is **expected to account for about 53 million jobs.**
    - According to WTTC (World Travel and Tourism Council), India **ranked 10ᵗʰ among 185 countries in terms of travel & tourism's total contribution to GDP** in 2019. During 2019, the contribution of travel & tourism to GDP was 6.8% of the total economy.
    - **By 2028, international tourist arrivals are expected to reach 30.5 billion** and generate **revenue over USD 59 billion.**
- **Other Initiatives of the Ministry of Tourism:**
    - **DekhoApnaDesh Campaign:**
        - It is an initiative to encourage the citizens to travel widely within the country and explore the wonders of India thus enabling the development of Domestic Tourism tourist facilities and infrastructure in tourism spots in the country.
    - **Prashad Scheme**:
        - The Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive(PRASHAD) was launched in the year 2014-15 with the objective of holistic development of identified pilgrimage destinations.
    - **Swadesh Darshan Scheme**:
        - Swadesh Darshan, a **Central Sector Scheme**, was launched in 2014-15 for integrated development of **theme based tourist circuits** in the country.

- Currently, there are 15 theme based circuits - Buddhist, Coastal, Desert, Eco, Heritage, Himalayan, Krishna, North-east, Ramayana, Rural, Spiritual, Sufi, Tirthankara, Tribal and Wildlife.
- **Recent Initiatives:**
    o In **January 2021,** the Union Tourism Minister announced plans to develop **an international-level infrastructure in Kargil (Ladakh)** to promote **adventure tourism and winter sports.**
    o As of March 2021, the **e-Tourist Visa facility** was extended to citizens of 171 countries.
    o The **Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) runs a series of Bharat Darshan tourist trains** aimed at taking people to various pilgrimages across the country.
    o **All India Tourist Vehicles Authorisation and Permit Rules, 2021:** It was **introduced by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways,** in which a tourist vehicle operator can register online for All India Tourist Authorisation/Permit.

Way Forward

- India's travel and tourism industry has huge growth potential.
- The industry is also looking forward to the expansion of **e-Visa scheme,** which is expected to double the tourist inflow in India.
- India's travel and tourism industry has the potential to expand **by 2.5%** on the back of higher budgetary allocation and low-cost healthcare facilities according to a joint study conducted by **Assocham and Yes Bank in 2017.**

4)37th Anniversary of Operation Blue Star

Why in News

Recently, the 37th anniversary of Operation Blue Star was observed by the country.

Key Points

- **Operation Blue Star:**
    o It is a code name given to an **Indian Military Operation** to remove the separatists who were hidden inside the **Golden Temple** at Amritsar on **5th June 1984.**
    o The operation was ordered by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, primarily **to take control of the Harmandir Sahib Complex in Amritsar (popularly known as the Golden Temple).**

- o The Indian military entered into the premises of the temple **to drive out the Sikh extremist religious leader, Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale** and his armed followers.
- o The operation had **two components** to it, **Operation Metal** which was the invasion on the temple complex and **Operation Shop** which was confined to the countryside of the state.
- o This Operation **helped in eliminating Khalistani terrorism.**
  - It **resulted in the death of Bhindranwale.**
  - Few months post-Operation Blue Star, **Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards**, followed by severe **anti-Sikh riots in Delhi.**
- ▪ **Background:**
  - o **Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale wanted** the Indian government **to pass the Anandpur Resolution,** and thereby agree to the formation of **a separate state of Khalistan for Sikhs.**
  - o Since 1982, this radical leader of Sikhism had managed to gain enough support for his cause and **by mid-1983 had set up a base inside the Golden Temple complex, with ammunition and his followers.**
  - o Hence, Operation Blue Star was launched between **1st June and 6th June 1984**, with the aim of getting rid of Bhindranwale and his demands.

National Security Guard

- ▪ It is a **counter-terrorism unit** that formally came into existence in 1986 by an act of Parliament- **'National Security Guard Act, 1986'.**
  - o Its headquarters is located in **Manesar, Gurugram.**
- ▪ The idea behind raising such force came in the **aftermath of Operation Blue Star**, Akshardham Temple attack and the assassination of former PM Indira Gandhi, for combating terrorist activities with a view to protect states against internal disturbances.

GS 3 : Economy, Science and Technology,Environment

5.Need to deal with distortions built into GST

Context

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council in India is still engaged in a discussion on whether life-saving and hard-to-come-by products should be taxed. Such delay in decision-making can largely be explained by the distorted design and incentive structure of the GST itself.

Imbalance in collection and distribution of taxes

- The taxes collected under GST are accumulated by the Union government and a portion is **transferred back to each state under a formula.**
- As is the case with most federal countries, there is a large **imbalance in the collection and distribution of taxes** between states.
- this holds true also for **income accrued to, and distributed, from the GST pool.**
- Four states — Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Gujarat contribute nearly as much **as the remaining 27 states combined.**
- Most federal countries exhibit this characteristic where a few large, rich, provinces or states contribute disproportionately.

Variation in dependence of States on transfers from the Union government

- Only about **30 per cent of the overall revenue** of the states mentioned above — Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, and Karnataka — **comes from the Union government.**
- But for the **remaining 27 states, roughly 60 per cent of their revenues** are obtained through transfers from the Union government.
- For the smaller Northeastern states, these transfers from the Union government constitute 80-90 per cent of their total revenues.
- In effect, the states that contribute the most to the GST pool are **the least dependent on transfers from the Union government** while the ones that contribute the least are the most dependent.

Two problems in net-transfers in India

1) One-sided transfers

- In almost every federal union, **net-transfers work to reduce differences in development** between states over time.
- However, Over the last 25 years or so, net transfers have become increasingly one-sided in India.
- That is, the quantum of net-transfers diminishes, as states become more equal through such transfers.
- But in India, **the opposite has occurred.**

2) Indirect taxes and cess

- The Union government of the last seven years has greatly exacerbated this problem through two actions.

- First, it has reconstructed the composition of taxation away from the fair and progressive channel of **direct taxation towards the inherently regressive and unfair channel of indirect taxes.**
- Second, the Union has shifted a large proportion of taxation roughly **18 per cent of its overall revenues into cesses**, a special form of taxes that **remain outside the GST pool** and hence do not have to be shared with the states.
- Since 2014, cess revenues grew 21 per cent every year leading to a **doubling in terms of its share of GDP.**

Implications of these two problems for fiscal federalism

- The combined effect of these problems is that all states (collectively) get a lower share of overall revenues.
- Individual states face an **ever-increasing disparity** in the ratio of funds received from the Union as a proportion of taxes collected by the Union from that state.
- This is **an affront to fiscal federalism** and an assault on "cooperative federalism".

Issue of 'one state one vote' system

- States that are more dependent on transfers from the Union **want to maximise GST collections** while states that are less dependent can afford **to be more sensitive to citizens' concerns.**
- The case of **taxes on Covid products** is perhaps the starkest instance of such differences.
- **Most large states are ready to forego this tax revenue** for humanitarian considerations.
- But 19 states representing the remaining 30 per cent of the population seem keen to continue to levy GST on Covid products.
- These are mostly smaller states.
- Given the smaller population of such states, the adverse impact of Covid taxes will be minimal for them.
- **But they will reap the benefits of additional revenues from GST on Covid products** levied on the much larger populations of the bigger states.

Conclusion

When direct tax policy decisions are legislated by Parliament, which has proportional representation from states according to their size of the population, indirect tax policy decisions should not be subject to one state one vote system.

6.Black Carbon Report by World Bank

In news

- The report titled "**Glaciers of the Himalayas: Climate Change, Black Carbon and Regional Resilience**" has reported that the **glaciers are melting faster** than the global average ice mass.
- A **strong policy on black carbon** can **sharply cut** glacier melt.
- **Report released by: World Bank**
- The **Himalayas, Karakoram, and Hindu Kush (HKHK) mountain ranges** were covered in the report.

Key takeaways from the report

- **Black Carbon** (BC) is a **short-lived pollutant**
  - It is the **second-largest contributor** to cause Global warming after carbon dioxide (CO2).
  - **Unlike** other greenhouse gas emissions, **BC is quickly washed out** and **can be eliminated** from the atmosphere if emissions stop.

  -
  - **Industry (primarily brick kilns)** and **residential burning of solid fuel** together account for **45-66% of** regional man-made BC **deposition**, followed by **on-road diesel fuels** and **open burning** in the region.
  - It acts in **two ways hastening the pace of glacier melt**:
    - By **decreasing surface** reflectance of sunlight.
    - By **raising the air temperature**
  - **Full implementation of current policies** to mitigate BC can **achieve a 23% reduction** but **enacting new policies** and **regional cooperation among countries** can achieve enhanced benefits.
    - **National Mission on Sustaining Himalayan Ecosystem (NMSHE)** is one such policy adopted in India.
    - It is one of the **eight missions** under the **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC).**

- **Steps that can be taken in the Himalayas**

  -
  - **Reduce black carbon emissions** from – (1) cookstoves; (2) Diesel engines; (3) Open burning. It could **significantly reduce radiative forcing**
- **Steps to be Taken by Regional Governments:**
  - **Review the policies** on water management

- o **Careful planning** and **use of hydropower** to reflect changes in water flows and availability.
- o **Increasing the efficiency of brick kilns** through proven technologies.
- o **Greater knowledge sharing** in the region.

Important value additions

- There are almost 55,000 glaciers in the HKHK mountains which store more freshwater than any other region outside the North and South Poles.
- **Glacier melt** produces
  - o Flash floods
  - o Landslips
  - o Soil erosion

- **Glacial lake outburst floods (GLOF)**

- **Radiative forcing** is a **measure of the change in energy balance** as a result of a change in a forcing agent (e.g., greenhouse gases, aerosol, cloud, and surface albedo) to affect the global energy balance and contribute to climate change.

7.Srivilliputhur-Megamalai Tiger Reserve and Vaigai River: Tamil Nadu

Why in News

The recently declared **Srivilliputhur-Megamalai Tiger Reserve** in **Tamil Nadu** will provide protection to **Megamalai**, the **Vaigai's primary catchment**, in turn helping water levels to rise in the river.

Key Points

- **About Vaigai River:**
  - o **Origin and Tributaries:**
    - It **originates in the Western Ghats** (Varushanad Hills).
    - It travels through the **Pandya Nadu region** of Tamil Nadu.
    - Its **main tributaries** are Suruliyaru, Mullaiyaru, Varaganadhi, Manjalaru, Kottagudi, Kridhumaal and Upparu.
    - The Vaigai is **258 kms long** and finally **empties into the Palk Strait** near the **Pamban Bridge** in **Ramanathapuram district.**
  - o **Heritage River:**
    - The Vaigai was the river that **flowed through the noted city of Madurai**, the **capital** (4th-11th century CE) **of the ancient and prosperous Pandya kingdom** located in southern Tamil Nadu.

- The river finds a mention in **Sangam literature** dated to 3**00 before the Common Era.**
  - o **Significance:**
    - The river fulfils the **drinking water requirement of five districts of Tamil Nadu** namely Theni, Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Sivagangai and Dindigul.
    - It also provides **irrigation to 2,00,000 hectares** of agricultural land.
- **Rejuvenation of Vaigai:**
  - o Its **deterioration happened at the end of the 18th century** when the British started **deforesting the Megamalai region** which acts as a major catchment for Vaigai. Consequently, the **water flow in the river reduced gradually.**
    - Some **2,00,000 people died** in this region during the **Great Famine of 1876-77.**
  - o Following the famine, the British Crown **proposed diverting water from the Periyar river (Kerala)** and feeding it to the Vaigai through a tunnel.
    - The Vaigai presently **gets about 80% of its water from the Periyar dam.** The **balance 20%** is obtained from the **major watershed of the Megamalai region** during the northeast monsoon season.
  - o The **Srivilliputhur-Megamalai Tiger Reserve** will **protect wild animals and the natural forests, their habitats** which **act as watersheds.**
- **Srivilliputhur-Megamalai Tiger Reserve:**
  - o **Establishment:**
    - It was established **in February 2021.** It was jointly declared by the Centre and Tamil Nadu governments.
    - For this, the **Megamalai WLS** and the adjoining **Srivilliputhur WLS** were clubbed together.
    - Srivilliputhur-Megamalai Tiger Reserve is the **fifth Tiger Reserve of Tamil Nadu**, and **51th tiger reserve of India.**
  - o **Ecological Diversity:**
    - Animals seen here are **Bengal tiger, elephants, gaur**, Indian giant squirrel, **leopard, Nilgiri Tahrs ,** etc.
    - It has a mix of tropical evergreen forests and semi-evergreen forests, dry deciduous forests and moist mixed deciduous forests, grassland.
- **Other four Tiger reserves of Tamil Nadu:**
  - o **Anamalai tiger reserve**
  - o **Kalakkad - Mundanthurai tiger reserve**
  - o **Mudumalai tiger reserve**

- o **Sathyamangalam tiger reserve**

Prelims Practice Questions

1. With reference to "RESPOND Programme",consider the following statements:

1. The programme was started by Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
2. It is a research sponsorship programme for encouraging academia to participate and contribute in various space related research activities.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A 1 only
B 2 only
C Both 1 and 2
D Neither 1 nor 2

Answer : B

Explanation

- ▪ Recently, **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** has announced that it will support eight joint research projects mooted by the Space Technology Cell (STC), IIT-Delhi.
  - o The ISRO has extended support to the projects under its **RESPOND programme. Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- ▪ ISRO started the RESPOND (Research Sponsored) programme in the 1970s, with the objective of encouraging academia to participate and contribute in various Space related research activities.
- ▪ Under the Programme, ISRO **provides financial support for conducting research** and development activities related to Space Science, Space Technology and Space Applications in Academic Institutions in India. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**

2. Which one among the following statements is incorrect about Burkina Faso?

a. It is a landlocked country in West Africa
b. It is part of Africa's semi-arid Sahel region
c. Equator passes through Burkino Faso
d. The major ethno linguistic group of Burkina Faso is the Mossi

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Burkina Faso is a landlocked country in West Africa lying in Africa's semi-arid Sahel region. It is bordered by Mali to the northwest, Niger to the northeast, Benin to the southeast, Togo and Ghana to the south, and the Ivory Coast to the southwest. Ouagadougou is the capital of Burkina Faso.
- The Equator does not pass through Burkino Faso.
- The Mossi are the largest ethnic group in Burkina Faso, constituting more than 40% of the population, or about 6.2 million people. Other ethnic groups include the Gurunsi, Senufo, Lobi, Bobo and Fulani.

3. Which of the following organisation has released Nationally Determined Contribution Synthesis Report?

- a. Ministry of Coal
- b. Green Peace International
- c. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
- d. UN- Framework Convention on Climate Change

Answer : d

Explanation:

NDC Synthesis Report

- NDCs are at the heart of the Paris Agreement and embody efforts by each country to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- Each NDC reflects the country's ambition, taking into account its domestic circumstances and capabilities.
- The NDC Synthesis Report covers submissions up to 31st December 2020 and includes new or updated NDCs by 75 Parties, which represent approximately 30% of global greenhouse gas emissions.
- It has called for more ambitious climate action plans by the countries in order to achieve the Paris Agreement target of containing global temperature rise to 2°C (ideally 1.5°C) by the end of the century.

UNFCCC

- The UNFCCC secretariat (UN Climate Change) is the United Nations entity tasked with supporting the global response to the threat of climate change.
- The Convention has near universal membership (197 Parties) and is the parent treaty of the 2015 Paris Agreement.
- The UNFCCC is also the parent treaty of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol.

6. Consider the following statements:

1. India is the largest arms importer.
2. In the last five years, Russia was the largest arms supplier to India followed by the U.S.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

a. 1 only
b. 2 only
c. Both 1 and 2
d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: d

Explanation:

- India is the second-largest arms importer after Saudi Arabia.
- Russia was the largest arms supplier between 2011–15 and 2016–20.
- The U.S. was the second-largest arms supplier to India in 2011–15 but in 2016–20 India's arms imports from the U.S. were 46% lower than in the previous five-year period, making the U.S. the fourth-largest supplier in 2016–20.
- France and Israel were the second and third largest arms suppliers in 2016–20.

Therefore, both statements are wrong.

Mains Practice Questions

1Q. Indian constitution is federal in nature, but unitary in soul. Examine (150 words)

Approach

- Write the meaning of federal and unitary system of government in the introduction
- Describe the federal and unitary characteristics of Indian constitution.
- Examine how the centre government is more powerful than states.

2Q. Discuss the advantages of river linking projects and its possible impact on the environment. (150 words)

Approach

- Introduce by explaining about the river interlinking project.
- Discuss advantages of the project.
- Enumerate possible impacts of the project on the environment.