

NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT ETC**Traditional water preservation systems**

Recently the Central Water Commission has warned that Water storage in reservoirs of most States of west and south India has dipped to less than the average of last 10 years. It could worsen the ongoing water crisis in the rain-deficit parts of the country. In relation with it, it is imperative to take a glance on water conservation systems developed in the history of India. Many experts have said that traditional knowledge methods seems to be the only way to counter the approaching national water emergency.

Overview

- Historical evidence such as Images, rituals, cultural practices, and metaphors, etc. displays the community ownership of the water resources.
- Women has an important role in building water bodies and keeping them clean for centuries. For Example, Rani Ki Vav in Patan, Gujarat, and the Rani and Padam Sagar in Jodhpur.
- There is the mention in a Kaifiyat (an early colonial document on land holdings) of a Devadasi building a tank in Yagati, and Nagamandala in Karnataka.
- Dances on special 'Ganga Geet' songs are performed by Women to create awareness on water conservation.
- The sanctity and hygiene of the water is extended to the sacred realm in several regions.
- Example of this is in Rajasthan, there is a pre-monsoon ritual called Lasipa. The entire village gathers, cleans, mends and desilt all water bodies.
- The ancient Apatani tribe of the Ziro valley in Arunachal practice wet rice cum fish cultivation that can be found in several parts of Asia for centuries. This agricultural system consists of various waste recycling techniques.
- Heritage knowledge on irrigation is also practiced in the remote cold desert of Spiti. The Khuls (channels) are designed to carry long distances the water from glaciers to villages.
- In Rajasthan, Rejwani system of water harvesting is famous. Rainwater is percolated through sand, settles on the gypsum layer and is brought for use by a complex capillary system called Beri.
- In different parts of India, in the desert, even the dew on leaves were harvested.
- Traditionally, the water management was a community responsibility. A neeruganti in Karnataka was a person who controlled and managed distribution of water.

CONSTITUTION AND POLITY**Election Commission's (EC) Working Group recommendations**

Many recommendations of the Election Commission's (EC) Working Groups are pending since 2014. The nine working groups were set up by the ECI to suggest improvements in specific areas. Groups suggested around 337 recommendations. Out of which 300 are already disposed off. These recommendations deals with wide range of spectrum of problems,

- Disqualification of candidates at the stage of framing of charges to attract a minimum of five years' imprisonment
- Increased punishment for false affidavits
- Permanent disqualification of those guilty of corruption and heinous crimes, etc.

Key recommendations

- A candidate contesting a different election should resign from the current seat.
- Working group suggested amendments empowering the Commission to issue notice to a party for necessary corrections in its manifesto with reference to the Model Code of Conduct (MCC).
- It suggested setting up of courts to adjudicate electoral offenses and disallowing the use of government designations for the purposes of political publicity.
- It asked for the introduction of indelible marker ink pens, instead of ink vials, as a pilot project. The quality check of the ink should be done by multiple independent laboratories.

- It recommended community legal demographic profiling and election time zones system to constrict the election of electoral process.
- The number of members required for the registration of a party should be increased from 100 to 1,000.
- Drafting a comprehensive bill that deals with registration, recognition, and funding of political parties.
- Standardization of Electors' Photo Identity Card numbers, as they are of 10 digits in some States and 16 in others.

INDIAN ECONOMY

Slowdown confirmed: on deepening economic crisis

Recent macro data shows that India's economy is under-performing with GDP growth falling to 5.8% in the fourth quarter of 2018-19. It has pulled down the overall growth for the fiscal to a five-year low of 6.8%. Growth in gross value added (GVA), which is GDP minus taxes and subsidies, fell to 6.6% in 2018-19. Recent unemployment data showed that joblessness was at a 45-year high of 6.1% in 2017-18. Growth in core sector output, i.e. a set of eight major industrial sectors, fell to 2.6% in April, compared to 4.7% in the same month last year. Rural economy remains in distress as seen by the 2.9% growth in agriculture last fiscal year.

Why such things are happening?

- The economy is troubled by a consumption slowdown as reflected in the falling sales of everything from automobiles to consumer durables, even fast-moving consumer goods.
- Private investment is slowing down.
- Government spending was cut down in the last quarter of 2018-19 to meet the fiscal deficit target of 3.4%.

Which of the following things are positive things?

- Inflation is undershooting the target.
- Oil prices are on declining mode.

How to improve the situation?

- In short-term, Government needs to boost consumption by providing more money in the hands of people.
- It can be done by cutting taxes, which is not easy given the commitment to rein in the fiscal deficit.
- In long-term, measures should be taken to boost private investment.
- This can be done by starting with land acquisition and labor, corporate taxes by reducing exemptions and dropping rates, and nursing banks back to health.
- Other options such as recapitalization and consolidation of the ailing banks should be explored.
- Centre will have to look at alternative sources such as disinvestment and more privatization.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Failure isn't the opposite of Success, rather an integral part of it.