

NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION, EMPOWERMENT ETC**Intersex Children**

Intersex individuals and rights organisations have sought a national ban on unnecessary medical surgeries conducted on children with intersex traits and appealed to the Union government to protect their human rights.

About:

- The demand for a nation-wide ban comes months after the Tamil Nadu government banned normative surgeries on infants and children except in life-threatening situations after a historic judgment of the Madras High Court on April 22, 2019.
- If adopted nationally, India could become only the third country after Malta and Taiwan, to have a legal regime which protects the rights of intersex children.
- The World Health Organisation and the United Nations Human Rights Council have called upon Member States to end invasive and irreversible medical surgeries and other medical treatment on intersex children.

Related Info:

- While the term intersex is confused with transgender, the two in-fact have very different meanings.
- Individuals who identify as transgender or transexual have a gender that is different from the one traditionally associated with the sex they were assigned at birth.
- Intersex refers to people born with biological or physical characteristics that are more diverse than stereotypical male or female bodies.

INDIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE, HISTORY**SAPTAMATRIKAS**

The Epigraphy Branch of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has discovered the earliest epigraphic evidence so far for the Saptamatrika cult. It is also the earliest Sanskrit inscription to have been discovered in South India as on date.

About:

- Saptamatrikas are a group of seven female deities worshipped in Hinduism as personifying the energy of their respective consorts.
- The inscription is in Sanskrit and in Brahmi characters and was issued by Satavahana king Vijaya in 207 A.D. It was discovered in Chebrolu village in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh.
- So far the Nagarjunakonda inscription of Ikshavaku king Ehavala Chantamula issued in his 11th regnal year corresponding to the 4th century A.D. was considered the earliest Sanskrit inscription in South India.

GOVERNANCE- WELFARE SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC.**Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)**

The Prime Minister released the Operational Guidelines of Jal Jeevan mission (JJM).

About:

- Aim: The Union Cabinet on 13.08.2019 approved Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) to provide Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC) to every rural household by 2024.
- Target: JJM aims at providing potable water in adequate quantity i.e. 55 litre per capita per day (lpcd) of prescribed quality i.e. BIS Standard of IS: 10500 on regular basis.
- Strategy: Time bound completion of schemes taken up under National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) has been proposed by providing FHTC to every rural household.
- For the implementation of JJM, following institutional arrangement has been proposed:
- National Jal Jeevan Mission at the Central level;
- State Water and Sanitation Mission (SWSM) at State level;
- District Water and Sanitation Mission (DWSM) at district level; and
- Gram Panchayat and/ or its sub-committees i.e. Village Water Sanitation Committee (VWSC)/ Paani Samiti at village Level.

Funding:

- The total project cost is estimated to be Rs 3.6 lakh Crore. lakh Crore. The fund sharing pattern is 90:10 for Himalayan and North-Eastern States; 50:50 for other States and 100% for UTs.

- The fund released by Central Government to the State Governments is to be deposited in one Single Nodal Account (SNA) that will be maintained by SWSM along with State matching share to be transferred within 15 days of Central release.

Related Info: Out of 17.87 Crore rural households in the country, about 14.6 Crore which accounts for 81.67% are yet to have household water tap connections.

Good Governance Index (GGI)

The Minister of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions launched the 'Good Governance Index (GGI)' on the occasion of Good Governance Day.

About:

- The Good Governance Index (GGI) is a uniform tool across States to assess the Status of Governance and impact of various interventions taken up by the State Government and UTs.
- The GGI takes into consideration ten sectors: 1). Agriculture and Allied Sectors, 2). Commerce & Industries, 3). Human Resource Development, 4). Public Health, 5). Public Infrastructure & Utilities, 6). Economic Governance, 7). Social Welfare & Development, 8). Judicial & Public Security, 9). Environment and 10). Citizen-Centric Governance.
- These ten Governance Sectors are measured on total 50 indicators.
- The states and UTs are divided into three groups: a). Big States, b). North-East & Hill States and c). UTs.
- The states and UTs are ranked on all indicators separately, at the same time composite ranking is also calculated for these states and UTs under their respective groups based upon these indicators.

Related Info: The Good Governance Day is observed on the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee (December 25).

Swadesh Darshan Scheme

The Union Cabinet has given its approval to release funds to the tune of Rs. 627.40 crore for the 10 projects sanctioned during 2018-19 and additional Rs. 1854.67 crore for sanctioning of new projects during 2019-20 in Swadesh Darshan Scheme.

About:

- Implementing Ministry: Ministry of Tourism.
- Type of Scheme: Central Sector Scheme.
- Launched in: 2015.
- Objective: Developing critical tourism infrastructure to make India a world class tourist destination.
- Under the Scheme 15 circuits have been identified for development namely Himalayan Circuit, North East Circuit, Krishna Circuit, Buddhist Circuit and Coastal Circuit, Desert Circuit, Tribal Circuit, Eco Circuit, Wildlife Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Ramayana Circuit, Heritage Circuit, Tirthankar Circuit and Sufi Circuit.

ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES

Desert Locust

Gujarat is under attack from hoppers — new-born locusts — that have flown in across the international border. As the swarms mature, they have ravaged farms in north Gujarat, devastating farms in the three border districts — Banaskantha, Patan and Kutch.

About:

- The Desert Locust known as tiddis locally, is one of about a dozen species of short-horned grasshoppers (Acridoidea) that are known to change their behavior and form swarms of adults or bands of hoppers (wingless nymphs). The swarms that form can be dense and highly mobile.
- The Latin name for Desert Locust is *Schistocerca gregaria* (Forsk.) The insects fly in during the day and settle on the farms at night, making it difficult to ward them off.
- During quiet periods (known as recessions) Desert Locusts are usually restricted to the semi-arid and arid deserts of Africa, the Near East and South-West Asia that receive less than 200 mm of rain annually. This is an area of about 16 million square kilometres, consisting of about 30 countries.

- During plagues, Desert Locusts may spread over an enormous area of some 29 million square kilometres, extending over or into parts of 60 countries. Desert Locust plagues occurred in 1926-1934, 1940-1948, 1949-1963, 1967-1969 and 1986-1989.
- The Agriculture Ministry's Locust Warning Organisation (LWO) is located in Jodhpur.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE ETC**Free Wifi To All Villages**

Communication and IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad has said that free WiFi services will be provided to all villages across the country through Bharatnet till March next year.

About:

- The Ministry has already connected one lakh 30 thousand gram panchayats through Bharatnet. The target is to take this to two lakh 50 thousand gram panchayats.
- The target of the government is to convert at least 15 per cent of villages to the digital village in the next four years.

BharatNet

- BharatNet, also known as Bharat Broadband Network Limited, is a telecom infrastructure provider.
- It was by the Government of India in 2012 under the Department of Telecommunications for the establishment, management, and operation of the National Optical Fibre Network to provide a minimum of 100 Mbit/s broadband connectivity to all 250,000 gram panchayats in the country.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. Increase of probity in governance does not always result in a decrease in corruption. Do you agree? Substantiate your argument with examples. (GS-4)

Probity is considered as an act of vigilance and public scrutiny in public office. It is about uprightiness, integrity, incorruptible and rectitude i.e. straightforwardness. Probity in governance is an essential and vital requirement for an efficient and effective system of governance and for socio-economic development.

It is generally perceived that increase in probity means a decrease in corruption. There has been more transparency and accountability due to various internal and external checks on the civil servants. However, if we analyze in detail, probity has increased but a manifestation of corruption has been changing with time. The corruption which was earlier in the lower level of bureaucracy has been reduced to a certain level but it has expanded in various forms. The corruption has shifted more from the implementation level to policy formulation level.

Due to LPG (Liberalization, Privatization, and Globalization) reforms and the growing role of the private sector in each and every field of the public interface, the nexus between politicians-bureaucrats-businessmen has increased. The use of technology has increased transparency on one side, but it has also led to different kinds of corruption like fake IDs. Thus, such systems are not foolproof.

Conclusion: According to the World Bank Development Report, although the transparency has increased in the administration, actionable accountability is yet to be established.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQs

1. With reference to the 'Good Governance Index (GGI)', consider the following statements:
 1. It was recently released by the World Bank.
 2. It is a uniform tool across States to assess the Status of Governance andimpact of various interventions taken up by the State Government and UTs in India.
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
2. With reference to the Jal Jeevan mission (JJM), consider the following statements:
1. It aims to provide Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC) to every rural household by 2024.
 2. It aims at providing 55 litre per capita per day (lpcd) of prescribed quality.

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
3. With reference to the BharatNet, consider the following statements:
1. It was set up by the Government of India in 2012 under the Department of Telecommunications.
 2. It was set up for the establishment, management, and operation of the National Optical Fibre Network to provide a minimum of 100 Mbit/s broadband connectivity to all 250,000 gram panchayats in the country.
- 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
4. With reference to the Swadesh Darshan Scheme, consider the following statements:
1. It is a Central Sector Scheme and implemented by the Union Ministry of Culture.
 2. Its objective is to develop critical tourism infrastructure to make India a world class tourist destination.

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
5. With reference to the Desert Locust, consider the following statements:
1. The insects fly in during the day and settle on the farms at night, making it difficult to ward them off.

2. The Agriculture Ministry's Locust Warning Organisation (LWO) is located in Bikaner.

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
6. With reference to the recent discovery by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) of the earliest epigraphic evidence so far for the Saptamatrika cult in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh, consider the following statements:
1. Saptamatrikas are a group of seven female deities worshipped in Hinduism as personifying the energy of their respective consorts.
 2. The inscription is in Sanskrit and in Brahmi characters and was issued by Satavahana king Vijaya in 207 A.D.

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
7. With reference to the Intersex individuals, consider the following statements:
1. Recently Union government banned normative surgeries on infants and children except in life-threatening situations in all over India.
 2. Intersex refers to people born with biological or physical characteristics that are more diverse than stereotypical male or female bodies.

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