

**SOCIAL ISSUE****Inequitable Food System**

According to a United Nations' report on the Food System, today's food systems are heavily afflicted by power imbalances and inequality, and do not work for most women. Women are affected disproportionately by the factors such as Climate Change, Covid-19, Discrimination, Less land rights, migration etc. The Report has come ahead of the Food Systems Summit in September 2021.

**Key Points****Food Systems:**

- Food systems are a complex web of activities involving production, processing, handling, preparation, storage, distribution, marketing, access, purchase, consumption, food loss and waste, as well as the outputs of these activities, including social, economic and environmental outcomes.

**Findings from the Report:**

- **Climate Change:**

1. Women farmers are disproportionately more affected by climate change and land degradation.
2. While women are more likely than men to notice the climate change impacts on agricultural productivity, livestock problems and water availability, they are less likely than men to receive key information on climate and agricultural information that would allow them to plan for climate concerns.

- **Malnutrition:**

1. They face high levels of obesity and are more susceptible to chronic disease.
2. Indigenous women play a crucial role in eradicating hunger and malnutrition. But limitations in the recognition and exercise of rights have hampered access to equitable systems of food.

- **Migration:**

1. Migration among youths over the course of urban transition have had impacts on the gendered nature of economic roles.
2. Such migration has entailed a growing gap between the location of food production and food consumption.
3. This may have been followed by a change in lifestyle, including dietary habits.

- **Covid-19:** A 2020 UN report had hinted how epidemics can significantly reduce women's economic and livelihood activities, increasing poverty rates and exacerbating food insecurity.

- **Food Insecurity:**

1. Rural women were among the worst affected among the food insecure population of 821 million (as of 2017).
2. As many as 31 African countries depended on external food aid till 2019.

- **Discrimination:**

- Rural women accounting for nearly half the agricultural workforce in developing countries, face discrimination. They have very little land rights, face difficulties obtaining ownership, do not have access to credit and are engaged in unpaid work.
- This lack of agency reflects in their dietary patterns: They eat least, last and least well. Women farmers who control resources generally have better-quality diets.

**Suggestions:**

- **Independent Women Groups are Needed:**

1. Dimitra Clubs in the rural regions of sub-Saharan Africa have been drivers of women's leadership for over a decade. These groups comprise women and men who shed light on the gender inequalities in households and communities.
2. The UN has called for more such independent, social systems at the national as well as the regional level to strengthen institutional architecture and make decision-making processes related to food systems more inclusive.

- **Ensure Access to Fundamental Services:**

1. It urged the systems to adopt policies that eliminate barriers in access to fundamental services, ensuring, for example, the right to food, shelter and health.
2. The report cited the example of German dual training system, an institutional infrastructure that creates a path to jobs and better livelihoods. It integrates school-based learning with work-based practice by providing theoretical training for aspiring farmers as well as short-term courses on specific skills.

- **Making Governments and Businesses Accountable:** The UN stressed that inequitable systems and structures that enable and exacerbate inequalities for food systems workers and consumers be dismantled and governments, businesses, and organizations be held accountable for ensuring equitable livelihoods.

#### **India's Initiatives for Equitable Food System**

- Class: Small and marginal farmers FPO (Farmer producer Organisation), Cooperatives, cluster mode of working in most development programs .
- Disadvantaged sections (Agricultural labour and tribal population): Dedicated budget allocation for better inclusion in programs.
- Gender budgeting, incentives for ensuring greater participation, mahila sashaktikaran pariyojana (women empowerment scheme of M/oRD), National Gender Resource Center for agriculture.
- Food and nutrition security: PDS, One Nation One Card, National Nutrition Mission, focus on nutri cereals.

#### **Road to Zero Hunger Goal: SDG 2**

According to a recent report by the United Nations, the goal of achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2 i.e. 'Zero Hunger' has been hit in the wake of the novel coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic. The zero hunger goal works in tandem with many others: Poverty elimination (SDG1), good health and well-being (SDG3), and the need for clean drinking water (SDG6).

#### **Key Points**

##### **Relation with other SDGs:**

- **SDG 2 and SDG 1:**
  1. Food security does not only rely on food availability, but also on food access.
  2. If food security and poverty can be seen as part of the same battle, reduction of poverty should not only be sought through lower food prices but also through higher income.
- **SDG 2 and SDG 3:**
  1. Nutrition is key to good health, so the relation between SDG 2 and SDG 3 is also synergetic.
  2. Environmental health through a more sustainable agriculture also establishes a link between SDG2 and SDG 3.
- ✓ Agricultural activities substantially contribute to global pollution: Biomass burning causes air pollution and land clearing contributes to fuel combustion emissions.
- ✓ Agriculture ammonia emissions also impact human health. They are behind several hundred thousand premature deaths per year globally.
- Other SDGs: Similarly, education (SDG4), gender equality (SDG5), decent work and economic growth (SDG8), reduction of inequality (SDG10), sustainable cities and communities (SDG11), peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG16), and partnership for the goals (SDG17) also influence consumption patterns and healthy diet choice.
  1. Gender inequality makes several women food insecure: Female workers are a substantial share of the agricultural workforce, but face difficulties in accessing land, livestock, education, extension and financial services.
  2. Decent work and economic growth (SDG8) and reduction of inequality (SDG10) can also support better nutrition by going beyond SDG1 and bringing economic resources.

#### **Challenges:**

- One of the most widely studied adverse environmental impacts of the food system is its contribution to climate change. The food system contributes 34% of the anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions.
- Overconsumption of water resources is another critical challenge faced by agriculture. Irrigation represents about 70% of global water withdrawals, and this demand is expected to continue to increase in the coming decades.
- Excess use of nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) is harmful for terrestrial and marine ecosystems. Excess of N causes acidification of soils and freshwater; Nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) causes climate-warming emissions and stratospheric ozone depletion.

#### **Suggestions:**

- Facilitating new investment, research and innovation for sustainable agriculture.
- Reducing food waste and losses.

- Changing our consumption patterns to leverage considerable benefits on SDG outcomes by relieving pressure on natural resources and fostering the health benefits.

#### **India's Initiatives for Making Food Systems Sustainable**

- Achievements of India's Green Revolution and learnings there from.
- Cropping patterns are being changed as per agro ecological zones defined for the country.
- Alternate farming including organic and natural farming
- Enhancing water use efficiency in agriculture.
- Integrated farming systems.
- National Initiative on Climate Resilient Agriculture

### **GOVERNOR**

#### **Continuation of Scheme for Fast Track Courts**

Recently, the Union Government approved the continuation of more than 1000 Fast Track Special Court (FTSCs) as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for two years (April 2021-March 2023). It includes 389 exclusive POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) Courts. The Central share will be provided from the Nirbhaya Fund.

#### **Key Points**

##### **Background:**

- Fast track courts (FTCs) were first recommended by the Eleventh Finance Commission in 2000 "to substantially bring down, if not eliminate, pendency in the district and subordinate courts over the next five years".
- Following the Finance Commission's report, Rs 502.90 crore was granted by the Centre to create 1,734 additional courts in different states for a period of five years.
- In 2011, the central government stopped funding fast-track courts. The decision was challenged in the Supreme Court (SC) in 2012, but the apex court said it was up to the states to continue or shut down these courts depending on their financial situation.
- Three states--Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Kerala--continued running these courts while Delhi, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka had said they would continue till 2013.
- Following the December 2012 Gangrape and murder, the Union Government set up a 'Nirbhaya Fund', amended the Juvenile Justice Act and set up fast-track Mahila Courts. Some other states such as Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Bihar etc. also set up FTCs for rape cases thereafter.

#### **Scheme for Fast Track Special Courts:**

- More recently, in 2019, the government approved a scheme for setting up 1,023 fast-track special courts (FTSCs) across the country for expeditious disposal of pending rape cases under the Indian penal Code (IPC) and crimes under the POCSO Act. In July 2019, the SC also directed setting up of a centrally funded special court in each district where more than 100 FIRs are registered under the POCSO Act in order to deal exclusively with these cases.
- FTSCs are dedicated courts expected to ensure swift dispensation of justice. They have a better clearance rate as compared to the regular courts and hold speedy trials.
- It also strengthens the deterrence framework for sexual offenders.

#### **Performance of Fast Track Courts So Far:**

- The Performance has been below par.
- According to NCRB (National Crime Records Bureau), at the end of 2019, rape cases had a pendency rate--pending cases at the end of the year as a percentage of total cases for trial--of 89.5% and the conviction rate of 27.8%.
- For POCSO cases, 88.8% cases were pending at the end of the year, and of those disposed of, 34.9% ended in a conviction.

#### **Issues with FTCs:**

- **Lack of Infrastructure:**
  1. Fast-track courts operate no differently than regular courts. It is just like any other court hall in the district judiciary.
  2. There are no changes in the legal process to enable the cases to move forward faster. There is no element of process engineering except where it is just fixed as an ad hoc thing (for instance, for high-profile cases), because there is simply no supporting infrastructure to ensure that the timeline is met.

• **No clear Mandate:**

1. There are no clear mandates on what kind of cases fast-track courts are supposed to hear.
2. The fast-track courts set up under the Nirbhaya Fund, for instance, were not clear whether all cases of gender-based violence such as 'eve-teasing' (street harassment) or domestic violence came under their purview.

**Delay in Judgement:**

- Delay due to absence of witnesses was seen as one of the main reasons for adjournments, showed a study.
- Another cause for delays is adjournments sought by lawyers. Litigation culture in India encourages seeking adjournments; in fact, clients come to lawyers to delay the cases.
- Delays can also be caused because many times the decision of a fast-track court is challenged in the high court or the Supreme Court.

**Overburdened Judges:**

- Less number of Judicial Officials. As of February, 2020, around 21% of the sanctioned strength (24,018) of judicial officers in subordinate courts was vacant in different states; of the 5,146 vacancies, a large number of seats were vacant in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Gujarat. They are more or less judges from sessions courts who are given the extra responsibility of fast-track courts.

**Way Forward**

- **The Push FTCs need:** For fast-track courts to be more effective, trials must be completed in a time-bound manner. For this, a two-pronged approach that improves the human capacity of these courts with dedicated judges and competent staff while restructuring processes is needed.
- **Capacity building:** They must have dedicated judges so that cases can be heard on a regular basis. Competent staff such as stenographers and clerks can help with evidence processing and serving notices to witnesses and investigating officers, which saves a lot of time.
- **Process engineering:** Certain time-consuming processes must be reengineered so as to make the system more efficient. There should be a realistic assessment of the time taken for each hearing and then have a proper time table which offers ample time to every case.
- **Clear Mandate:** There should be a clear mandate for fast-track courts as is the practice in countries such as Spain and Liberia. The hearings take place in a stipulated time frame and any case pertaining to gender-based violence is automatically transferred to these courts.

**ECONOMY**

**New Framework for Payment Systems Operators**

Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued a framework for payment and settlement related activities by payment system operators. This framework is issued under provisions of Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007. The Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 provides for the regulation and supervision of payment systems in India and designates the RBI as the authority for that purpose and all related matters.

**Key Points**

**New Framework:**

- Licensed non-bank Payment System Operators (PSOs), cannot outsource core management functions. Core management functions include risk management and internal audit, compliance and decision-making functions such as determining compliance with KYC norms. It will be applicable to all service providers, whether located in India or abroad.

**Objective:**

- To put in place minimum standards to manage risks in outsourcing of payment and settlement-related activities including tasks such as onboarding customers and IT-based services.

**Need:**

- There is a potential area of operational risk associated with outsourcing by payment system operators and participants of authorised payments systems. India's tech ecosystem has seen several high-profile cyber attacks such as those at Juspay, Upstox and Mobikwik over the last year targeting customers' payments data.

**Related Previous Initiative:** Earlier, the RBI has put in place restrictions with respect to investments in payments system operators (PSOs) by new entities from jurisdictions that have weak measures to deal with money laundering and terrorist financing activities.



### Way Forward

- Since, India is the second-fastest digital adapter among 17 of the most-digital economies globally, and rapid digitisation does require forward-looking measures to boost cybersecurity.
- It is important for the corporates or the respective government departments to find the gaps in their organisations and address those gaps and create a layered security system, wherein security threat intelligence sharing is happening between different layers.

### INTERNAL SECURITY

#### INS Vikrant Begins Sea Trials

Recently, the Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC) 1 named INS Vikrant, started sea trials (one of the last phases of trials). It is likely to be commissioned in 2022. At present, India has only one aircraft carrier, the Russian-origin INS Vikramaditya. Earlier, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) approved issuance of Request for Proposal (RFP) for six advanced submarines for the Indian Navy under Project-75I.

#### Key Points

##### About:

- The vessel, to be named Vikrant after the decommissioned maiden carrier of the Navy. India acquired the Vikrant from the United Kingdom in 1961, and the carrier played a stellar role in the 1971 war with Pakistan that led to the birth of Bangladesh.
- Over 76% of the material and equipment on board IAC-1 is indigenous.
- It will have an air component of 30 aircraft, comprising MiG-29K fighter jets, Kamov-31 airborne early warning helicopters and the soon-to-be-inducted MH-60R multi-role helicopter, besides the indigenous Advanced Light Helicopters.
- It is expected to have a top speed of 30 knots (approximately 55 kmph) and is propelled by four gas turbines. Its endurance is 7,500 nautical miles at 18 knots (32 kmph) speed.
- The shipborne weapons include Barak LR SAM and AK-630, while it has MFSTAR and RAN-40L 3D radars as sensors. The vessel has a Shakti EW (Electronic Warfare) Suite.
- It has a pair of runways and a 'short take off but arrested recovery' system to control aircraft operations.

##### Significance:

- Adds Combat and Sea Control Capability, especially in the Indian Ocean Region.
- Increased Ability of Air Power: It would offer an incomparable military instrument with its ability to project air power over long distances, including air interdiction, anti-surface warfare, offensive and defensive counter-air, airborne anti-submarine warfare and airborne early warning.
- Self-Reliance: Only five or six nations currently have the capability of manufacturing an aircraft carrier — India joins this elite club now.

##### Future Endeavours:

- Since 2015, the Navy has been seeking approval to build a third aircraft carrier for the country, which, if approved, will become India's second Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC-2).
- This proposed carrier, to be named INS Vishal, is intended to be a giant 65,000-tonne vessel, much bigger than IAC-1 and the INS Vikramaditya.

### IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM

#### World's Highest Motorable Road at Umling La

Recently, the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has constructed and completed black topping the world's highest motorable road at Umling La pass in Eastern Ladakh, located at an altitude of 19,300 ft.

#### Key Points

##### About the Road:

- By constructing this road, BRO has created a record in high-altitude road construction. It bettered the previous record of a road in Bolivia connecting to its volcano Uturuncu at 18,953 ft.
- The strategic road built under 'Project Himank' passes through the Umling La Top and connects Chisumle and Demchok villages.
- It will enhance the socio-economic condition and promote tourism in Ladakh.
- The road is close to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and will allow quick movement of troops and equipment.

**Comparing the Road:**

- The road has been constructed at an altitude higher than the Mt Everest Base Camps as the South Base Camp in Nepal is at an altitude of 17,598 ft, while North Base Camp in Tibet is at 16,900 ft.
- The road has been constructed much above the altitude of Siachen Glacier which is at 17,700 ft.
- The Khardung La Pass in Leh is at an altitude of 17,582 ft.

**Project Himank:**

- Project Himank, is a project of the BRO being implemented in the Ladakh region of Jammu & Kashmir.
- This project started in 1985.
- Under this project, BRO is responsible for the construction and maintenance of roads and related infrastructure including the world's highest motorable roads.

**DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE**

**Qns. Account for India's strides in providing basic necessities since independence. Discuss the challenges in provisioning basic necessities before it. (250 words)**

**Ans:**

**Introduction**

India will be celebrating its 75th Independence Day. This is also an occasion to reflect on how India's "tryst with destiny" has played out over these years. India started its journey as a newborn nation with deep wounds of Partition. Independent India's population was roughly 340 million, with more than 70 per cent extremely poor, and only 12 per cent literate.

**Body**

**India's strides in providing basic necessities since Independence**

- From more than 70 per cent poor in 1947, the head-count ratio (HCR) of poverty in India dropped to 21.9 per cent in 2011, as per the erstwhile Planning Commission's estimates based on the Tendulkar poverty line.
- Since 1947, India has achieved tremendous progress in raising growth, income levels and standards of living. The gross domestic product (GDP) increased from Rs 2,939 billion during 1950-51 to Rs 56,330 billion during 2011-12 (2004-05 constant prices). In 2018-19, India's GDP was valued at an estimated Rs 1,40,776 billion (2011-12 constant prices).
- The drop in HCR during 2004-11 was almost three times faster than during 1993 to 2004, and much faster than during the socialist era of 1947-91.
- The advent of the Green Revolution during the 1960s was a game-changer for the country. It saw the adoption of modern technology and methods to produce high yield variety seeds, that significantly raised agricultural productivity and increased foodgrain production.
- There has been tremendous success in food security, with the country moving from a "ship to mouth" situation in the mid-1960s to become the largest exporter of rice (17.7 MMT) in 2020-21, amounting to 38.5 per cent of the global rice trade.
- This has been achieved through the use of modern technology, improved seeds, irrigation, fertilisers, and, of course, the right incentives for farmers.
- India's public grain management system of procurement, stocking and distributing is, perhaps, the biggest food programme in the world.
- India has also come a long way in terms of improving its human development indicators. Literacy rates have increased significantly, from 18.3% during 1950s to 52% during 1990s to 73% during 2011.
- Households' access to safe drinking water at the all-India level improved from 81.4% during 1991 to 91.4% during 2011. In healthcare, the advent of sophisticated and modern technology has led to reduced prevalence of diseases and increased longevity.

**Challenges in provisioning basic necessities evening**

- It is ironic that after 2011, we have no official estimates of poverty.
- If India had invested in better quality education for the masses, especially for the girl child, the results would have been much better.
- Year after year, Pratham's ASER reports indicate that a large number of children in the eighth grade do not fulfil the learning requirements of the fifth or sixth grades.

- India still has to give almost free food (rice and wheat) to more than 800 million people under the National Food security Act (2013).
- Malnutrition is a bigger challenge, with child stunting, wasting etc being still prevalent in huge numbers in India.

**Conclusion**

All these promises to contribute to an ever growing and ever evolving economy and spur further economic growth. India@75 is the new milestone on which the country has set its sights, the year 2022 when it completes 75 years of Independence. The Indian growth story continues as it celebrates yet another glorious year as an independent nation.

**DAILY QUIZ**

Q1. In the recent assembly session, which of the following State Government has passed the Bhumiputra Adhikarini Bill, 2021?

- a. Haryana
- b. Madhya Pradesh
- c. **Goa**
- d. Kerala

Q2. Consider the following statements :

1. Zika is a virus that is spread mostly by mosquitoes.
2. Apart from the mosquitoes, an infected person can also spread the virus.

Which of the given above statements is/are correct?

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

Q3. Consider the following statements about Pangong Tso:

1. It is very close to Shaksgam Valley.
2. It is formed from Tethys geosyncline.
3. It is a salt water lake.

Which of the given above statements is/are correct?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 3 only
- c. **2 and 3 only**
- d. 1, 2 and 3

Q4. Consider the following statements about the Panthera pardus:

1. It is listed in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
2. It is listed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.

Which of the given above statements is/are correct?

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

Q5. Consider the following statements about “Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards” (CA|TS):

1. It is a set of criteria which allows tiger sites to check if their management will lead to successful tiger conservation.
2. It was developed by the Global Tiger Forum (GTF).

Which of the given above statements is/are correct?

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