

GOVERNANCE**Hunger in India**

Recently, the Union government informed the Supreme Court (SC) that no starvation death (Death by Hunger) has been reported by any state or Union territory (UT) in recent years.

Key Points**The Petition:**

- The court is hearing a petition that highlights how starvation deaths continue to eat into the right to life and dignity of social fabric and a “radical” new measure like community kitchens need to be set up across the country to feed the poor and the hungry.
- The petition also referred to Rajasthan’s Annapurna Rasoi, Indira Canteens in Karnataka, Delhi’s Aam Aadmi Canteen, Anna Canteen of Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand Mukhyamantri Dal Bhat and Odisha’s Ahaar Centre.

SC's Ruling:

- The SC asked the Centre to explore the possibility of a “model” community kitchen scheme by which it could support the States to ensure food security for the poor.
- It asked the Centre to make a model scheme and leave it to the States to follow the guidelines depending on their individual food habits.
- Called for the creation of a national food grid by the Centre which is beyond the scope of the Public Distribution Scheme.

Hunger in India**• Related Data:**

1. Food and Agriculture Report, 2018 stated that India houses 195.9 million of the 821 million undernourished people in the world, accounting for approximately 24% of the world’s hungry. Prevalence of undernourishment in India is 14.8%, higher than both the global and Asian average.
2. It had been reported in 2017 by the National Health Survey that approximately 19 crore people in the country were compelled to sleep on an empty stomach every night.
3. Moreover, the most alarming figure revealed is that approximately 4500 children die every day under the age of five years in the country due to hunger and malnutrition, amounting to over three lakh deaths every year, owing to hunger, of children alone.
4. India slipped to 101st position in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2021 of 116 countries, from its 2020 position of 94th.

Causes of Malnutrition:

- There are multiple dimensions of malnutrition in India that include
 1. Calorific deficiency- Though the government has surplus of foodgrains, there is calorific deficiency because the allocation and distribution is not proper. Even the yearly budget allocated is not fully utilised.
 2. Protein hunger- Pulses are a major contributor to address protein hunger. However, there is not enough budgetary allocations done to tackle the problem. With Eggs missing from menus of Mid-day Meals in various States, an easy way to improve protein intake is lost.
 3. Micronutrient deficiency (also known as hidden hunger): India faces a severe crisis in micronutrient deficiency. Its causes include poor diet, disease, or increased micronutrient needs not met during pregnancy and lactation.
- **Other factors:**
 1. Poor access to safe drinking water and
 2. Poor access to Sanitation (especially toilets),
 3. Low levels of immunisation and
 4. Education, especially of women.

Government Interventions

- **Eat Right India Movement:** An outreach activity organised by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) for citizens to nudge them towards eating right.
- **POSHAN Abhiyan:** Launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2018, it targets to reduce stunting, undernutrition, anaemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls).
- **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana:** A centrally sponsored scheme executed by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, is a maternity benefit programme being implemented in all districts of the country with effect from 1st January, 2017.

- **Food Fortification:** Food Fortification or Food Enrichment is the addition of key vitamins and minerals such as iron, iodine, zinc, Vitamin A & D to staple foods such as rice, milk and salt to improve their nutritional content.
- **National Food Security Act, 2013:** It legally entitled up to 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population to receive subsidised food grains under the Targeted Public Distribution System.
- **Mission Indradhanush:** It targets children under 2 years of age and pregnant women for immunisation against 12 Vaccine-Preventable Diseases (VPD).
- **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme:** Launched in 1975, the ICDS Scheme offers a package of six services to children in the age group of 0-6 years, pregnant women and lactating mothers.

Way Forward

- **Linking of Schemes:** Agriculture-Nutrition linkage schemes have the potential for greater impact in dealing with malnutrition and thus, needs greater emphasis.
- **Early fund disbursement:** The government needs to ensure early disbursement of funds and optimum utilisation of funds in schemes linked to nutrition.
- **Underutilisation of Resources:** It has been pointed out many times that expenditure made under many nutrition-based schemes is considerably lower than what was allocated under them. Thus, emphasis needs to be on implementation.
- **Convergence with other Schemes:** Nutrition goes beyond just food, with economic, health, water, sanitation, gender perspectives and social norms contributing to better nutrition. This is why the proper implementation of other schemes can also contribute to better nutrition.
- **PM Poshan Scheme:** The PM Poshan Scheme aims to enhance the nutrition of school children by providing a balanced diet in schools. By including milk and eggs in each states' menu, preparing a menu based on climatic conditions, local foods etc. can help in providing the right nutrition to children in different States.

SOCIAL ISSUE

National Commission for Safai Karamcharis

The Union Cabinet has approved the extension of the tenure of the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK) for three years beyond 31st March, 2022. The major beneficiaries would be the Safai Karamcharis and identified manual scavengers in the country.

Manual scavenging is defined as “the removal of human excrement from public streets and dry latrines, cleaning septic tanks, gutters and sewers”.

Key Points

About:

- The NCSK was established in the year 1993 as per the provisions of the NCSK Act 1993 to give its recommendations to the Government regarding specific programmes for welfare of Safai Karamcharis. The NCSK Act ceased to have effect from 29th February, 2004. After that the tenure of the NCSK has been extended as a non-statutory body from time to time through resolutions.
- It studies and evaluates the existing welfare programmes for Safai Karamcharis, investigates cases of specific grievances etc.
- As per the provisions of the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013, the NCSK has been assigned the work to monitor the implementation of the Act, tender advice for its effective implementation to the Center and State Governments and enquire into complaints regarding contravention/non-implementation of the provisions of the Act.
- The Chairperson and Members of the Commission undertake extensive touring of the country to study the socio-economic and living conditions of Safai Karamcharis and their dependents.
- The Commission calls for the factual reports in connection with these complaints/petitions from the concerned authorities and impress upon them to redress the grievances of the affected Safai Karamcharis.

Status:

- As per the NCSK (2020 data), a total of 631 people have died in the country while cleaning sewers and septic tanks in the last 10 years.
 1. 2019 saw the highest number of manual scavenging deaths in the past five years. 110 workers were killed while cleaning sewers and septic tanks.
 2. This is a 61% increase as compared to 2018, which saw 68 cases of such similar deaths.
- As per data collected in 2018, 29,923 people were engaged in manual scavenging in Uttar Pradesh, making it the highest in any State in India.

Related Schemes:

- **Prevention of Atrocities Act:** In 1989, the Prevention of Atrocities Act became an integrated guard for sanitation workers; more than 90% people employed as manual scavengers belonged to the Scheduled Caste. This became an important landmark to free manual scavengers from designated traditional occupations.
- **Safaimitra Suraksha Challenge:** It was launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs on World Toilet Day (19th November) in 2020. The Government launched this "challenge" for all states to make sewer-cleaning mechanized by April 2021 — if any human needs to enter a sewer line in case of unavoidable emergency, proper gear and oxygen tanks, etc., are to be provided.
- **'Swachhta Abhiyan App':** It has been developed to identify and geotag the data of insanitary latrines and manual scavengers so that the insanitary latrines can be replaced with sanitary latrines and rehabilitate all the manual scavengers to provide dignity of life to them.
- **National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation:** It is a not-for-profit company under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The primary objective of this corporation is to uplift the Safai Karamcharis, Scavengers and their dependents socially and economically.
- **SC Judgment:** In 2014, a Supreme Court order made it mandatory for the government to identify all those who died in sewage work since 1993 and provide Rs. 10 lakh each as compensation to their families.

GEOGRAPHY**Pacific Ring of Fire**

The Pacific 'Ring of fire' is situated just over 60 kilometers from the island nation of Tonga, where recently Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcano erupted sending ash and smoke thousands of feet into the air.

Key Points**About:**

- Also called Pacific rim or the Circum-Pacific Belt, is an area along the Pacific Ocean that is characterized by active volcanoes and frequent earthquakes.
- It is home to about 75% of the world's volcanoes – more than 450 volcanoes. Also, about 90% of the world's earthquakes occur here.

Geographical Stretch:

- The Ring of Fire is stretched to approximately 40,000 kilometers tracing boundaries between several tectonic plates including the Pacific, Juan de Fuca, Cocos, Indian-Australian, Nazca, North American, and Philippine Plates.
- The chain runs up along the western coast of South and North America, crosses over the Aleutian Islands in Alaska, runs down the eastern coast of Asia past New Zealand and into the northern coast of Antarctica.
- Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, United States, Canada, Russia, Japan, Philippines, Australia, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, New Zealand, and Antarctica are some of the important places located in the ring of the fire.

Causes of Volcanic Activity:

- Tectonic plates move towards each other creating subduction zones. One plate gets pushed down or is subducted by the other plate. This is a very slow process – a movement of just one or two inches per year.
- As this subduction happens, rocks melt, become magma and move to Earth's surface and cause volcanic activity. In the case of Tonga, the Pacific Plate was pushed down below the Indo-Australian Plate and Tonga plate, causing the molten rock to rise above and form the chain of volcanoes.

Recent Research:

- The Pacific Plate, which drives much of the tectonic activity in the Ring of Fire, is cooling off.
- Scientists have discovered that the youngest parts of the Pacific Plate (about 2 million years old) are cooling off and contracting at a faster rate than older parts of the plate (about 100 million years old).
- The younger parts of the plate are found in its northern and western parts, the most active parts of the Ring of Fire.

Subduction

- Subduction happens when tectonic plates shift, and one plate is pushed under another. This movement of the ocean floor produces a "mineral transmutation", which leads to the melting and solidification of magma i.e., the formation of volcanoes. In other words, when a "downgoing"

oceanic plate is pushed into a hotter mantle plate, it heats up, volatile elements mix, and this produces the magma. The magma then rises up through the overlying plate and spouts out at the surface.

- A subduction zone is the biggest crash scene on Earth. These boundaries mark the collision between two tectonic plates.
- When two tectonic plates meet at a subduction zone, one bends and slides underneath the other, curving down into the mantle, the hotter layer under the crust.

PRELIMS FACT**SaaRthi Mobile App**

Recently, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has launched SaaRthi – a mobile app on investor education. ‘R’ represents ‘₹’.

Key Points**About:**

- It aims to create awareness among investors about the basic concepts of the securities market.
- The app will also explain about KYC process, trading and settlement, Mutual Funds (MF), recent market developments, investor grievances redressal mechanism, etc.

Need:

- A recent surge is seen in individual investors entering the market, and more importantly a large proportion of trading being mobile phone based.
- According to NSE (National Stock Exchange) data, the share of Individual investors increased to 45% in 2021 from 39% in 2020. The NSE is India's largest financial market.

Securities Market:

- Securities are financial instruments issued to raise funds.
- The primary function of the securities markets is to enable the flow of capital from those that have it to those that need it.
- Securities markets provide channels for allocation of savings to investments and thereby decouple these two activities. As a result, the savers and investors are not constrained by their individual abilities, but by the economy's abilities to invest and save respectively, which inevitably enhances savings and investment in the economy.
- Eg. Equity, Debt securities, etc.

Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)

- SEBI is a statutory body established on 12th April 1992 in accordance with the provisions of the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992.
- Its basic function is to protect the interests of investors in securities and to promote and regulate the securities market.
- SEBI Board consists of a Chairman and several other whole time and part time members.
- SEBI also appoints various committees, whenever required to look into the pressing issues of that time.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. What is ‘hate speech’? Examine its impact on society. Do you think the present legal and constitutional measures been successful in curbing it? (250 words)

Ans:

Introduction

The term hate speech is understood as any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, color, descent, gender or other identity factor.

The Law Commission, in its 267th report on hate speech, said such utterances have the potential to provoke individuals and society to commit acts of terrorism, genocide, and ethnic cleansing.

There is no international legal definition of hate speech, and the characterization of what is ‘hateful’ is controversial and disputed.

Body**Impact on the society**

- Hate speech is a discursive process of pushing marginalised groups outside of social, economic and political spheres of society by disseminating hate propaganda and encouraging discrimination.
- At its most harmful, it is widely recognized as a precursor to ethnic cleansing.
- Internal Security: The Muzaffarnagar riots of 2013 was triggered by a fake video that incited communal passions. In the West, hate speech combined with fake news on minorities has induced an anti-immigration sentiment (e.g. : France, Italy, Greece)

- User homophily and Bubble phenomenon: Users with matching political views exchange one-sided information and opinions that suit their own convictions, reinforcing them even further, even if those were based on false information. E.g. : Twitter prompts users to follow those who express similar views or posts.
- Igniting extremist sentiments: Fake news' perpetuates, previously locally found, extremist ideas and groups together dangerously like-minded people e.g. – Neo-Nazis in Germany, Separatists in Kashmir.
- Mob lynching: Rumours of child lifting in Jharkhand led to mob lynching on innocent victims.
- Violence: An atmosphere of violence and chaos is created directly or indirectly. The Christchurch Terror attack on a mosque by an extremist was a result of Islamophobia (a direct result of hate speech).
- Misinformation and disinformation due to hate speech and fake news have led to riots as seen in the Delhi Riots case 2020.

Legal Provisions to deal with hate speech

- **Indian Penal Code:**
 1. Sections 153A and 153B of the IPC:Punishes acts that cause enmity and hatred between two groups.
 2. Section 295A of the IPC:Deals with punishing acts which deliberately or with malicious intention outrage the religious feelings of a class of persons.
 3. Sections 505(1) and 505(2):Make the publication and circulation of content which may cause ill-will or hatred between different groups an offence.
- **Representation of People's Act:**
 1. Section 8 of the Representation of People's Act, 1951 (RPA):Prevents a person convicted of the illegal use of the freedom of speech from contesting an election.
 2. Sections 123(3A) and 125 of the RPA:Bars the promotion of animosity on the grounds of race, religion, community, caste, or language in reference to elections and include it under corrupt electoral practices.

How sufficient are legal provisions?

- For a country like India with a massive population of diverse backgrounds and culture, subjects like hate speech become a complex issue to deal with as it is difficult to differentiate between free and hate speech.
- Several factors are to be considered while restraining speeches like the number of strong opinions, offensive to certain communities, the effect on the values of dignity, liberty, and equality.
- Certainly, there are laws for such atrocities but a major part of work is still left.

Way forward

- Clarity and technological upgradation is needed to deal with this and a mechanism to get down such material, which is prone to disturb social setup.
- Improving the level of training in equality and non-discrimination among police forces and legal bodies, improving research and encouraging reporting of such content.
- Indian government has been pushing for internet platforms to locate their servers in the country, which might help address dangerous speech in real time.
- Generating contra-narratives on social networks and raising public awareness through campaigns to tackle extremism.
- There can be an internationally accepted law that places the responsibility on social media companies like Facebook to tackle hate speech by deleting obviously illegal content within 24 hours if there is a request from the Government of a particular nation.
- Social media platforms need to take responsibility to ensure transparency, accountability and a system of rules and guidelines that users can recognize as standards, and which when enforced in a regularized fashion can begin to act as precedents. Thus, users, police and civil society actors will have a clear sense of what kind of material is likely to be taken down.
- Public authorities must be held accountable for dereliction of the duty of care and also for non-compliance with this court's orders by not taking action to prevent vigilante groups from inciting communal disharmony and spreading hate against citizens of the country and taking the laws into their own hands.
- Therefore giving a proper definition to hate speech would be the first step to deal with the menace and other initiatives such as spreading awareness amongst the public is the need of the hour.

DAILY QUIZ

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) is the nodal agency to deal with cyber security threats like hacking and phishing.
2. The CERT-In is an office within the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology of the Government of India.

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

Q2. Consider the following statements about the SHe-Box:

1. It is an online complaint management system for registering complaints related to sexual harassment at workplace.
2. It is an initiative of the National Commission for Women (NCW).

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

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. E-Daakhl portal is an initiative of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).
2. The portal was launched for online redressal of consumer grievances.

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

Q4. Consider the following statements with reference to Scheduled Banks in India:

1. Scheduled Banks in India refer to those banks which have been listed on the Bombay Stock Exchange.
2. Scheduled banks automatically acquires the membership of clearing house.

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

Q5. Nationwide River Ranching Programme was introduced as special activity under the:

- a. Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana
- b. National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture
- c. National Mission for Clean Ganga
- d. **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana**