

**SOCIAL ISSUE****Expanding Scope of NCW**

Recently, the 30th Foundation Day (31st January) of the National Commission for Women (NCW) was celebrated. According to the Prime Minister, given the evolving needs of women in the country, the scope of NCW must be broadened.

**What is the need to expand the scope of the NCW?****Development of New India:**

- The Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India) campaign has shown the link between the ability of women with the development of the country.
  1. This change is visible as about 70% beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana are women.
  2. The country has seen a threefold increase in the number of women self-help groups in the last 6-7 years.
  3. Similarly, in more than 60 thousand startups that have emerged after 2016, 45% have at least one woman director.

**Old Thinking in Society:**

- Industries from textile to dairy have progressed due to women's skills and power. India's economy relies on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and there is a need to promote women entrepreneurs in the country.
- However, people with old thinking are of the view that the women's roles are restricted to domestic work.

**Increasing Crime Against Women:**

- In 2021, the NCW had informed that there was a rise of 46% in complaints of crimes against women in the first eight months of 2021 over the corresponding period of preceding year.
- Crimes that women were subjected to: Domestic violence, Harassment of married women or dowry harassment, Sexual harassment at workplace, Rape and attempt to rape, Cyber crimes.

**What is the Background & Mandate of NCW?****Background:**

- The Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI) recommended nearly five decades ago, the setting up of a NCW to fulfil the surveillance functions to facilitate redressal of grievances and to accelerate the socio-economic development of women.
- Successive Committees/Commissions/Plans including the National Perspective Plan for Women (1988-2000) recommended the constitution of an apex body for women.
- Under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990, the NCW was set up as a statutory body in January 1992.
- The First Commission was constituted on 31st January 1992 with Mrs. Jayanti Patnaik as the Chairperson. The commission consists of a chairperson, a member secretary and five other members. The chairperson of the NCW is nominated by the Central Government.

**Mandate and Functions:**

- Its mission is to strive towards enabling women to achieve equality and equal participation in all spheres of life by securing her due rights and entitlements through suitable policy formulation, legislative measures, etc.
- **Its functions are to:**
  1. Review the constitutional and legal safeguards for women.
  2. Recommend remedial legislative measures.
  3. Facilitate redressal of grievances.
  4. Advise the Government on all policy matters affecting women.
- It has received a large number of complaints and acted suo-moto in several cases to provide speedy justice.
- It took up the issue of child marriage, sponsored legal awareness programmes, Parivarik Mahila Lok Adalats and reviewed laws such as:
  1. Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961,
  2. Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act 1994,
  3. Indian Penal Code 1860.

**What is the major Legal Framework for Welfare of Women?****Constitutional Safeguards:**

- **Fundamental Rights:** It guarantees all Indians the right to equality (Article 14), no discrimination by the State on the basis of gender (Article 15(1)) and special provisions to be made by the State in favour of women (Article 15(3)).

- **Fundamental Duties:** It ensures that practices derogatory to the dignity of women are prohibited under Article 51 (A).

**Legislative Framework:**

- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005
- The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
- The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013
- The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO), 2012

**Women Empowerment Schemes:**

1. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme
2. One Stop Centre Scheme
3. UJJAWALA: A Comprehensive Scheme for Prevention of trafficking and Rescue, Rehabilitation and Re-integration of Victims of Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation
4. SWADHAR Greh (A Scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances)
5. NARI SHAKTI PURASKAR
6. Mahila police Volunteers
7. Mahila Shakti Kendras (MSK)
8. NIRBHAYA.

**Way Forward**

- **Amending NCW Act:** Women's role is continuously expanding in today's India and the expansion of the role of the NCW is the need of the hour. Further, the State Commissions must also widen their ambit.
- **Increasing Minimum Age for Marriage:** The age of marriage of daughters is being attempted to be raised to 21 years so that marriage at an early age does not hinder the education and career of daughters.
- **Addressing Violence Against Women:** Violence against women continues to be an obstacle to achieving equality, development, peace as well as to the fulfillment of women and girls' human rights. All in all, the promise of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - to leave no one behind - cannot be fulfilled without putting an end to violence against women and girls.
- **Holistic Effort:** Crime against women cannot be resolved in the court of law alone. A holistic approach & changing the entire ecosystem is what is required. All the stakeholders need to get their act together, including Law makers, police officers, forensic dept, prosecutors, judiciary, medical & health dept, NGOs, rehabilitation centres.

**SOCIAL EVENT**

**World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day**

Neglected tropical disease day is observed every year on 30th January. It was declared in the 74th World Health Assembly (2021). The proposal to recognise the day was floated by the United Arab Emirates. It was adopted unanimously by the delegates.

The World Health Assembly is the decision-making body of the World Health Organization (WHO).

**What are Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs)?**

- NTDs are a group of infections that are most common among marginalized communities in the developing regions of Africa, Asia and the Americas.
- They are caused by a variety of pathogens such as viruses, bacteria, protozoa and parasitic worms. NTDs are especially common in tropical areas where people do not have access to clean water or safe ways to dispose of human waste.
- These diseases generally receive less funding for research and treatment than malaises like tuberculosis, HIV-AIDS and malaria.
- Examples of NTDs are: snakebite envenomation, scabies, yaws, trachoma, Leishmaniasis and Chagas disease etc.

**Why is World NTD Day observed on 30th January?**

- World NTD Day commemorates the simultaneous launch of the first NTD road map (2012-2020) and the London Declaration on NTDs on 30th January 2012.
- **London Declaration on NTDs:**
  1. It was adopted on 30th January, 2012 to recognise the global burden of NTDs.
  2. Officials from the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, representatives from leading global pharmaceutical companies as well as representatives of several national governments met at London's Royal College of physicians to pledge to end the diseases.
- **WHO's New Roadmap for 2021-2030:**

1. From measuring process to measuring impact.
2. From disease-specific planning and programming to collaborative work across sectors.
3. From externally driven agendas reliant to programmes that are country-owned and country-financed.

**What is the impact of NTDs?**

- **Global Scenario:**
  1. NTDs affect more than a billion people globally. They are preventable and treatable. However, these diseases - and their intricate interrelationships with poverty and ecological systems - continue to cause devastating health, social and economic consequences.
  2. There are 20 NTDs that impact over 1.7 billion people worldwide.
  3. India carries the largest burden of at least 11 of these diseases, with parasitic illnesses like kala-azar and lymphatic filariasis affecting millions of people throughout the country – often the poorest and most vulnerable.
- **Indian Scenario:**
  1. 2021 witnessed improved case surveillance, case detection and case prevalence rates with respect to Kala-Azar.
  2. 35% fewer cases of the disease were reported in 2021, as compared to 2020 and all reported cases were treated.
  3. India is at the cusp of eliminating Kala-Azar, with 99% Kala-Azar endemic blocks having achieved the elimination target.

**What are the Indian Initiatives to Eliminate NTDs?**

- The Accelerated Plan for Elimination of Lymphatic Filariasis (APELF) was launched in 2018, as part of intensifying efforts towards the elimination of NTDs.
- A WHO-supported regional alliance established by the governments of India, Bangladesh, and Nepal in 2005 to expedite early diagnosis and treatment of the most vulnerable populations and improve disease surveillance and control of sandfly populations (Kala-azar).
- India has already eliminated several other NTDs, including guinea worm, trachoma, and yaws.
- Preventive methods like Mass Drug Administration (MDA) rounds are periodically deployed in endemic areas during which anti-filarial medicines are provided free-of-cost to at-risk communities.
- Vector-control measures like Indoor Residual Spraying rounds are undertaken in endemic areas to prevent sandfly breeding.
- The government also supports morbidity management and disability prevention for those affected by lymphoedema and hydrocele.
- State and central governments have also introduced wage compensation schemes for those suffering from Kala-Azar and its sequela (a condition which is the consequence of a previous disease or injury) known as Post-Kala Azar Dermal Leishmaniasis.

**Way Forward**

- India is poised to emerge as a global leader in the battle against NTDs, but success in this decade will demand bolder action. As India stands firm on its commitment to eliminate NTDs, multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral partnerships and collaboration will continue to play a central role in sustaining the momentum gained.
- An integrated approach to improving access to quality healthcare, water, sanitation, hygiene, addressing climate change and ensuring gender equality, mental health and well-being must lie at the core of eliminating these diverse NTDs.

**ECONOMY**

**Economic Survey 2022: Concerns & Suggestions**

Recently, the Economic Survey 2021-22 was tabled in Parliament by the Finance Minister soon after the President's address to both Houses of Parliament.

**What are the Key Challenges highlighted by Economic Survey 2022?**

**Increased Inflation:**

- The Survey notes that supply chain disruptions and slow economic growth have contributed to an increase in inflation. The withdrawal of stimulus in developed economies in the upcoming fiscal (2022-23) is likely to affect capital flows into the country.
- The surge in energy, food, non-food commodities, and input prices, supply constraints, disruption of global supply chains, and rising freight costs across the globe stoked global inflation during the year (2021-22).
- Stimulus spending in developed economies and pent up demand during the pandemic could lead to “imported inflation” (Inflation due to increases in the prices of import) in India.

**Volatility in Capital:**

- The economic survey noted that major economies had begun the process of withdrawing liquidity that was extended during the pandemic in the form of stimulus checks and relaxed monetary policy to stimulate an economic recovery. Higher inflation has led to a winding down of pandemic related stimulus.
- The likely withdrawal of liquidity by major central banks over the next year may also make global capital flows more volatile,” the survey said, noting that this may adversely affect capital flows, putting pressure on India’s exchange rate and slow economic growth.
- India’s large and rising imports are also likely to put pressure on India’s exchange rate if capital flows to India decrease as a result of a withdrawal of stimulus in developed countries.

**Employment:**

- A lack of jobs also continues to be among the primary concerns for the Indian economy with unemployment levels and labour force participation rates remaining worse than pre-pandemic levels.
- According to data from the PLFS, while the unemployment rate and labour force participation rate have improved somewhat from the start of the pandemic, they have still not recovered to pre-pandemic levels.

**What are the Major Suggestions?**

- The Survey calls for emphasis on developing a supply-side strategy to deal with the long-term unpredictability of the post-Covid world, emanating mainly from factors such as changes in consumer behaviour, technological developments, geopolitics, climate change, and their potentially unpredictable interactions.
- It calls for a “diversified mix of sources of energy of which fossil fuels are an important part”, but simultaneously calls for focus on building storage for intermittent electricity generation from solar PV and wind farms to ensure on-demand energy supply. It asks the government to focus on the pace of the shift from conventional fossil fuel-based sources, and encourage R&D to ensure an effortless switch to renewable sources of energy.
- It also has called for a standardised framework for Cross-Border insolvency as the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code (IBC) at present does not have a standard instrument to restructure the firms involving cross border jurisdictions leading to several issues.
- It proposes use of the Agile approach to policy making with 80 high-frequency indicators in an environment of “extreme uncertainty”. The approach, used in project management and technology development, assesses outcomes in short iterations while constantly making incremental adjustments. The suggestion is based on the availability of a “wealth of real-time data” to take feedback-based decisions.

**PRELIMS FACT**

**Bomb Cyclone**

Recently, ‘Bomb cyclone’ hits eastern US, which triggers transport chaos, outages.

**What is a Bomb Cyclone?**

**About:**

- A bomb cyclone is a large, intense midlatitude storm that has low pressure at its center, weather fronts and an array of associated weather, from blizzards to severe thunderstorms to heavy precipitation.
- Bomb cyclones put forecasters on high alert, because they can produce significant harmful impacts.

**Reasons for the Formation:**

- This can happen when a cold air mass collides with a warm air mass, such as air over warm ocean waters. The formation of this rapidly strengthening weather system is a process called bombogenesis.
- It occurs when a midlatitude cyclone rapidly intensifies, dropping at least 24 millibars over 24 hours. A millibar measures atmospheric pressure.

**How does a Bomb Cyclone differ from a Hurricane?**

- Hurricanes tend to form in tropical areas and are powered by warm seas. For this reason, they’re most common in summer or early fall, when seawater is warmest.
- Bomb cyclones generally occur during colder months because cyclones occur due to cold and warm air meeting. During the summer, there’s generally not much cold air across the atmosphere; this means a bomb cyclone is much less likely to occur.
- Hurricanes form in tropical waters, while bomb cyclones form over the northwestern Atlantic, northwestern Pacific and sometimes the Mediterranean Sea.

**SeHAT Initiative**

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has launched services for home delivery of medicines for veterans and serving military personnel services under an online medical consultation platform named Services e-Health Assistance and Teleconsultation (SeHAT).

#### What is SeHAT Initiative?

- It is the tri-services teleconsultation service of the MoD designed for all entitled personnel and their families.
- As part of the Government's commitment to Digital India and e-Governance, the Defence Minister launched SeHAT in May 2021.
- It aims to provide healthcare services to patients in their homes.
- SeHAT Stay Home OPD is based on the lines of eSanjeevani a similar free OPD service run by the MoHFW (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare) for all citizens.
- SeHATOPD is a patient to doctor system where the patient can consult a doctor remotely through the internet.

### DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

**Qns. Illustrate with examples how Science and Technology flourished in Ancient India. Do you think these developments have any relevance in making India the technological hub that she is today? (250 words)**

#### Introduction

Indian Science and technology, including astronomy has a long history and was a Vedanga, an auxiliary discipline associated with the study of the Vedas, dating back to 1,500 BCE or earlier. Varahamihira, Aryabhata, Bhaskara, Brahmagupta and others were astronomers who even mention their scientific instruments. Maharaja Jai Singh II of Jaipur constructed five Jantar Mantars in New Delhi, Jaipur, Ujjain, Mathura and Varanasi. They give us a good idea of the early scientific tools.

#### Body

##### Background

- Indian science and technology began at Mehrgarh (now in Pakistan) and continued throughout the country's history.
- People developed different systems of agriculture, irrigation, canals and water storage systems, including artificial lakes, by 3,000 BCE.
- Cotton was cultivated by 5,000–4,000 BCE. They farmed with animal-drawn ploughs in the Indus Civilisation in 2,500 BCE.
- The people of the Indus-Sarasvati region used weights and measures. Large numbers are used in the Vedas.
- The earliest-known dock in the world, which could berth and service ships, was situated at Lothal in Gujarat.
- Indian metallurgy was very advanced. Steel was made in India from 500 BCE. King Porus gifted Alexander a steel sword in 326 BCE.
- The iron pillar located in Delhi is seven metres high and has never rusted.
- Over 5,000 years ago, there were dentists in the Indus-Sarasvati region.
- A modern scientist who was looking at the teeth of people who had died there long ago found that ancient dentists had drilled teeth as far back as 9,000 years ago.

##### Science and Technology in ancient India

- Baudhayana in 800 BCE calculated the value of pi and discovered what is now known as the Pythagoras' theorem. Pythagoras lived in sixth century BCE Greece; and the third century CE sophist Philostratus says that Pythagoras studied under Hindu sages or gymnosophists in India.
- Brahmagupta lived in seventh century Ujjain and wrote several books on mathematics and astronomy. India was the source of the number system, now called the Arabic numerals because the Arabs took it everywhere. This number system is a feat of genius. It enables all numbers to be expressed with just ten symbols—the numbers 1 through 9 and the symbol for zero.
  1. Brahmagupta was the first to discuss zero as a number and established the basic mathematical rules for it.
  2. He did a lot of work in geometry, trigonometry and discovered new theorems. He also explained how to find cubes, cube roots, squares and square roots.
- Bhaskaracharya wrote about arithmetic, geometry, algebra and calculus. Isaac Newton and Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz are given credit for being the first to introduce calculus, but Bhaskaracharya had written about it 500 years earlier.
- Sushruta was a great surgeon who used 125 different surgical instruments and herbal sprays before an operation to prevent sepsis. His greatest contribution was in the fields of plastic surgery and cataract removal.
- Charaka wrote about herbal treatments that Indians are just rediscovering.

- In 300 BCE, Patanjali codified the Yoga sutras.
- In 200 BCE, Kanada wrote about gravity and that the universe is made up of
- Nagarjuna was a great metallurgist and chemist.

**Relevance today**

- All these inventions became a foundation for future inventions and discoveries.
- Their contribution in astronomy, mathematics, medicine, metallurgy, chemistry havemade an impact on modern scientists.
- It is clear that progress of science and technology in India has been quite significant. Many new methods, products and better-quality goods have been developed in the country.
- India has made rapid progress in the frontier areas of science and technology like space research and atomic energy.
- At present the country has a strong base in modern technology. It also has the third largest scientific and technical manpower in the world

**Conclusion**

It is clear that progress of science and technology in India has been quite significant. Many new methods, products and better quality goods have been developed in the country. India has made rapid progress in the frontier areas of science and technology like space research and atomic energy. At present the country has a strong base in modern technology. It also has the third largest scientific and technical manpower in the world.

**DAILY QUIZ**

Q1. The Global Competitiveness Report is published by the

- International Monetary Fund
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
- World Economic Forum**
- World Bank

Q2. Consider the following statements about Organization of Islamic Cooperation:

1. It is the second largest intergovernmental organization after the United Nations.
2. It was established upon a decision of the historical summit which took place in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.
3. India is not a member of the OIC.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 and 3 only**
- 2 and 3 only
- 1 and 2 only
- 1, 2 and 3

Q3. Consider the following statements about International Space Station (ISS).

1. It is a joint project among five participating space agencies.
2. It is a habitable artificial satellite in the low Earth orbit.
3. It serves as a microgravity and space environment research laboratory.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- 1 and 2 only
- 2 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3**

Q4. With reference to parliamentary proceedings in India, the power of adjournment as well as adjournment sine die lies with the:

- Speaker of the Lok Sabha
- Chairman of the Rajya Sabha
- President of India
- Either A or B in their respective houses**

Q5. Consider the following statements:

1. First time use of Electronic Voting Machine (EVMs) occurred in the general election in Kerala in 1982.
2. Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) is an independent system attached with the EVMs that allows the voters to verify that their votes are cast as intended.
3. The election commission has mandated one compulsory verification of slip count with the electronic count for one polling station for every constituency.

Which of the given above statements is/are correct?

- 1 and 2 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 1, 2 and 3**