

**GOVERNANCE**

**Share of Children in Budget 2022-23**

According to an analysis by a NGO, Children in the country received the lowest share of allocation in the Budget in 11 years. Budgeting for children by the Union Government had started as early as 2008 with the publication of the first-ever Child Budget Statement. Subsequently, several states have also initiated the practice.

**What is in the Budget for the Children?**

**About:**

- The total allocation for children in Union Budget 2023 is Rs. 92,736.5 crore, against an allocation of Rs. 85,712.56 crore in the last Budget. Though this is an increase of 8.19% in absolute terms, it's not proportionate to the increase in the total expenditure in the Union Budget. The share of the Budget for children is a meagre 2.35% of the Union Budget for the next fiscal (2022-23), which is a reduction of 0.11%, which is the lowest share children have received in the last 11 years.

**Sector-wise Analysis:**

- **For Child health:**
  1. The allocation for child health has decreased by 6.08%.
  2. One of the most important child health schemes, the NRHM-RCH Flexi Pool, has observed a reduced allocation of 8.22%. This flexipool addresses the needs of health systems strengthening and Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCH+A) of the States.
- **For Child Development Programme:**
  1. They have seen a drop of 10.97% in allocation for the next fiscal at Rs. 17,826.03 crore. These include supplementary nutrition and anganwadi (day care) services. Schemes for children such as Poshan 2.0, which provide integrated benefits to women and children, did not get any additional funds this year. In 2022-23, an estimated budget of Rs 10,234 crore has been sanctioned to the Pradhan Matri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) programme. Last year, the revised estimate was Rs 10,234 crore. This scheme was earlier known as the 'National Program of Midday Meal in Schools' and provided hot cooked meals to school children between the ages of 6 and 14 years.
- **For Child Education:**
  1. The share of child education has witnessed only a marginal increase of 0.3% points from 1.74% in the current fiscal to 1.73% for the next fiscal.
  2. A 'One class, one TV channel' programme announced in the budget is a difficult mode of learning for children. The 'One class, one TV channel' programme of PM eVIDYA will be expanded from 12 to 200 TV channels.
- **For Protection and Welfare of Children:**
  1. Schemes for the protection and welfare of children clubbed under the Mission Vatsalaya of the Ministry of Women and Children received Rs. 1,472.17 crore. This is 65% more than this fiscal, but below the allocation of Rs. 15,000 crore in 2019-2020, before the scheme was restructured.

**What are the issues with the Budgeting for Children?**

- **Mere Annual Accounting Exercise:**
  1. Budgeting for children by the Union Government has remained limited to being a mere annual accounting exercise culminating in the publication of the Child Budget Statement (CBS) by simply collating relevant budget heads across departments. This alone does little to address the core objective of remaining responsive to the special needs of children.
- **Lack of Responsibility from State Governments:**
  1. State Governments, being mainly responsible for implementing many of the critical schemes for children, play an important role in taking this exercise forward. But even for them, it has mostly been perceived as an accounting responsibility rather than as a tool to plan and execute interventions for children more effectively.
- **Lack of Standardisation:**
  1. Moreover, there is a lack of standardisation of norms among government entities for reporting in their respective Child Budget Statement (CBS).

### What about the State of Children in India?

- **NHFS-5 Findings:** The recent NFHS 5 survey has revealed a mixed picture on child health and nutrition. On one hand there are definite positives like reduction in child mortality rates, improvements in the levels of nutrition indicators like stunting and wasting etc. On the other hand, incidents of anemia among children have gone up from 58.6% in NFHS 4 to an alarming level of 67.1% in this round, leading experts to point out that more efforts are needed for meeting the 2030 SDG targets.
- **ASER Surveys Findings:** The consecutive ASER surveys have pointed out that there has been no improvement in the proportion of children currently not enrolled in school between 2020 and 2021 and there exists a lot of variability among the states in this regard.
- **Impact of Covid-19:** Covid-19 has impacted children in diverse ways – be it physical, emotional, cognitive, or social repercussions, including transition or migration, familial crises, isolation from friends, discontinuity of learning, environment, quarantine, hospitalisation of self or family members, and entry into adult roles of work or marriage. Consequently, the lives of India's children were severely restricted in terms of their access to education, nutrition and development, and child protection.

### Way Forward

- Orientation of the government officials working on child-related interventions through capacity building programmes is important, not only for reporting in the CBS but also for enabling them to redesign schemes better and monitor the progress on a regular basis.
- An outcome orientation of the budget for children is essential for translating the outlays into better outcomes.
- There is an urgent need to standardise the reporting structure in the CBS and the Union Government can develop a detailed framework for it in consultation with states and domain experts to make CBS an effective instrument of accountability as well.
- Regular monitoring and audits of relevant child related schemes must be taken up by the respective ministries.

## ENVIRONMENT & TECHNOLOGY

### Sustainable Cities India Program

Recently, the World Economic Forum and the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) signed a MoU to collaborate on a jointly designed 'Sustainable Cities India program'. The 'Sustainable Cities India' intends to enable cities to decarbonise in a systematic and sustainable way that will reduce emissions and deliver resilient and equitable urban ecosystems.

This initiative is in synergy with India's commitment to turn net zero by 2070 as a climate mitigation response at COP26.

### What are the Key Points of 'Sustainable Cities India Program'?

- The program aims to create an enabling environment for cities to generate decarbonization solutions across the energy, transport, and the built environment sectors.
- The Forum and NIUA will adapt the Forum's City Sprint process and Toolbox of Solutions for decarbonization in the context of five to seven Indian cities across two years.
  1. **City Sprint Process:** The City Sprint process is a series of multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder workshops involving business, government, and civil society leaders to enable decarbonization, especially through clean electrification and circularity.
  2. **Toolbox of Solutions:** It provides a digital platform containing over 200 examples of clean electrification, efficiency and smart infrastructure best practices and case studies across buildings, energy systems and mobility from over 110 cities around the world.

### What is the Need for Decarbonisation?

- As per the World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report 2022, densely populated countries that are highly dependent on agriculture, such as India, are especially vulnerable to climate insecurity. Decarbonization in cities is a real opportunity to keep global warming well below 2°C and cities in India can make an enormous contribution in reaching this goal.
- The World Economic Forum's Net Zero Carbon Cities' mission is to create an enabling environment for clean electrification and circularity, resulting in urban decarbonization and resilience. The program aims to do this by fostering public-private collaboration to bridge the gap across the energy, built environment and transport sectors.

**What is NIUA?**

- Established in 1976, the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) is India's leading national think tank on urban planning and development.
- As a hub for the generation and dissemination of cutting-edge research in the urban sector, NIUA seeks to provide innovative solutions to address the challenges of a fast urbanizing India, and pave the way for more inclusive and sustainable cities of the future.

**What Initiatives are Taken by Government of India's for Urban Development?**

1. Smart Cities Mission.
2. Atal Mission for Urban Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT).
3. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U).
4. Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs).
5. Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework 2.0.
6. TULIP-The Urban Learning Internship Program.

**INTERNAL SECURITY****P-8I Patrol Aircraft**

Aircraft manufacturer Boeing has delivered the 12th P-8I long-range maritime patrol aircraft to the Indian Navy. This completes the follow-on clause for four additional P-8I aircraft contracted in 2016.

**What are the Key Details of P-8I Aircraft?**

- It is a long-range Maritime Reconnaissance and Anti-Submarine Warfare Aircraft.
- It is an Indian variant of the P-8A Poseidon aircraft that Boeing company developed as a replacement for the US Navy's ageing P-3 fleet.
- With a maximum speed of 907 kmph and an operating range of over 1,200 nautical miles, the P-8Is detect threats and neutralize them if required, far before they come anywhere near Indian shores.
- The Indian Navy became the first international customer for the P-8 aircraft in 2009.
  1. The Navy had procured eight P-8Is under a USD 2.2 billion deal in 2009. The aircraft are part of the 312A Naval Air Squadron based at Arakkonam in Tamil Nadu.
  2. In 2016, the Navy exercised the optional clause for four more P-8Is in a deal worth over USD 1 billion.
  3. Further in May 2021, the US State Department approved the possible sale of six additional P-8I aircraft and related equipment, to India.
  4. The six P-8Is will come installed with encrypted communication systems since India has now signed the foundational agreement Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) with the US.

**How are Indo-US Defense Ties?**

- This proposed sale (approved in 2021) will help to strengthen the US-Indian strategic relationship. For the US, India continues to be an important force for political stability, peace, and economic progress in the Indo-Pacific and South Asia region.
- Defense purchases from the United States have been increasingly an integral part of growing ties between the two countries. From near zero in 2008, India-US defence trade touched USD 20 billion in 2020, helped along by major policy upgrades.
- The US designated India a Major Defence Partner (in 2016) and then granted it the same access to defence technology as NATO allies and Australia, Japan and South Korea under Strategic Trade Authorization-1 (STA) in 2018.

**What is the COMCASA Agreement?**

- COMCASA (Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement) is meant to provide a legal framework for the transfer of communication security equipment from the US to India that would facilitate "interoperability" between their forces — and potentially with other militaries that use US-origin systems for secured data links.
- It is one of the four foundational agreements that the US signs with allies and close partners to facilitate interoperability between militaries and sale of high end technology.
- It is an India-specific version of the Communication and Information on Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA).
- **Four Foundational Agreements between the US and its Partners:**
  1. **General Security Of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA)** - Signed by India in 2002. Allows militaries to share the intelligence gathered by them.

2. **Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)** - Signed by India in 2016. Allows both countries to have access to each other's designated military facilities for refueling and replenishment.
3. **Communications and Information Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA)** - Signed by India in 2018. Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) is the India specific version of CISMOA.
4. **Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA)** - India has signed BECA in 2020. Allows India and US militaries to share geospatial and satellite data with each other.

### PRELIMS FACT

#### Razzaza Lake: Iraq

Iraq's Razzaza Lake was once a tourist attraction known for its beautiful scenery and an abundance of fish that locals depended on. Now, dead fish litter its shores and the once-fertile lands around it have turned into a barren desert.

#### **What are the Key Points?**

- Razzaza Lake, also known as Lake Milh, Arabic for Salt Lake, is located between Iraq's governorates of Anbar and Karbala.
- It's the second largest lake in Iraq and is part of a wide valley that includes the lakes of Habbaniyah, Tharthar and Bahr al-Najaf. Lake Tharthar is the largest.
- The lake was constructed as a measure to control floods in the Euphrates and to be used as a huge reservoir for irrigation purposes. Euphrates River is the longest river in southwest Asia. It is one of the two main constituents of the Tigris-Euphrates river system. The river rises in Turkey and flows southeast across Syria and through Iraq.
- Iraqis and tourists frequented the lake as a recreational spot to cool down during Iraq's hot summers.
- In recent years, it has been affected not only by the water shortage but by drought, neglect and increased evaporation during Iraq's hot summers. It has also been hit by pollution due to the diversion of sewage water into the lake and the theft of water quotas allocated to it.

### DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

**Qns. Global competitiveness will be increasingly determined by the quality of science and technology, which in turn will depend on dynamicity of research and development ecosystem aided by budgetary allocation. Analyse. (150 words, 10 marks)**

#### **Introduction**

India spends only 0.66 percent of its GDP on Research and Development as per latest figures. This is below the expenditure of countries like the US (2.8), China (2.1), Israel (4.3) and Korea (4.2). A quick analysis of the allocations to various R&D organisations in the recently presented 2022-23 budget shows continued stagnation. This does not augur well for the future.

Government expenditure, almost entirely the Central Government, is the driving force of R&D in India which is in contrast to the advanced countries where the private sector is the dominant and driving force of R&D spend.

#### **Body**

#### **Link between R&D vis-a-vis nation's development and competency**

- Research and Development of new products are key drivers of economic performance and social well-being. Solutions to diseases, new technology to overcome obstacles in various sectors are hallmark of having good ecosystem.
- It is important to inculcate scientific temper among masses in order to fight superstitions, distorted truth and religious fanaticism that has been crippling India
- Innovation and technological improvement have become essential to combat and adapt to climate change and promote sustainable development.
- It is imperative for combating national security threats ranging from cyber warfare to autonomous military systems such as drones.
- Investing in research and providing adequate incentives leads to creation of jobs, especially for the pool of engineers and researchers in the society. Under the 'Make in India' program, the government has targeted to create 100 million jobs from the manufacturing sector by 2022.



### Improving R&D ecosystem in India

- The growth in research and development (R&D) expenditure should be commensurate with the economy's growth and should be targeted to reach at least 2% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2022.
- The line ministries at the Centre could be mandated to allocate a certain percentage of their budget for research and innovation for developing and deploying technologies as per the priorities of the respective ministries.
- To stimulate private sector's investment in R&D from current 0.35% of GDP, it is suggested that a minimum percentage of turn-over of the company may be invested in R&D by medium and large enterprises registered in India.
- To help and keep the industry enthused to invest in R&D, the weighted deduction provisions on R&D investment should continue.
- The states can partner Centre to jointly fund research and innovation programmes through socially designed Central Sponsored Schemes (CSS).
- The report also pitched for creating 30 dedicated R&D Exports Hub and a corpus of Rs 5,000 crore for funding mega projects with cross cutting themes which are of national interest.

### Conclusion

There is a need for greater participation of State Governments and the private sector in overall R&D spending in India especially in application-oriented research and technology development. There is a need to encourage investor-led research. In this direction, the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) has already been established. It is a promising start that needs to expand with more resources and creative governance structures.

### DAILY QUIZ

Q1. Which of the following Indian States share the longest border with Myanmar?

- a. Arunachal Pradesh      b. Nagaland      c. Mizoram      d. Manipur

Q2. Article 16 of the Constitution of India is related to

- a. equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.  
b. Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.  
**c. Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment.**  
d. Abolition of Untouchability.

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. The Moon is Earth's only natural satellite.
2. The Moon provides the best linkage to Earth's early history.
3. The first physical evidence of water has been found on the Moon by ISRO's Chandrayaan-2 mission.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q4. With reference to India's Drone Rules 2021, consider the following statements:

1. The aim of the Rules is to create a 'digital sky platform'
2. Nano and model drones (made for research or recreation purposes) are exempt from type certification.
3. Type Certificate required only when a drone is to be operated in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q5. Consider the following statements about National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC):

1. It is a Central Sector Scheme which was set up in the year 2015-16.
2. National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) has been designated as National Implementing Entity (NIE) for implementation of adaptation projects under NAFCC by Govt. of 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