

**POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**

**SIMPLIFICATION OF ADOPTION PROCESS**

The Supreme Court issued notice to the Centre on a petition seeking to simplify the legal process for child adoption in India.

**Data and Statistics**

- Only 4,000 adoptions took place annually even as there were three crore orphan children in the country.
- 10 to 14% of the Indian population suffers from infertility, which is nearly 3.2 crore couples, who want to adopt an orphan.
  - But the Centre never had this data as it is a state subject and the state government did not have this data in the name of administrative convenience.
- The official figures put the number of orphans in India at 31 million.

**Procedure for Determining the Status of a Child**

- The district CWC first makes efforts to find members of the birth family and then makes an assessment.
  - The district CWC includes psychologists, sociologists, medical doctors and lawyers.
  - The local unit of the child rights protection committee can also help.
  - Moreover, every police station in the country has a designated child welfare officer who also helps in making the social investigation.
- If no one comes forward to claim such a child, the CWC refers the child to a special adoption agency for interim care.
- The District Child Protection Unit (DCPU) undertakes a social investigation, which includes efforts to find members from the extended family who can be given the custody of the child.
- Failing which, the child may be declared orphaned, surrendered or abandoned before being declared legally free for adoption.

**Adoption Process**

- First and foremost, under the JJ Act a child should be declared legally free for adoption.
- The child should be produced before the District CWC, duly constituted under the law in every district.
  - Section 31 of the JJ Act mandates the entire process is to be followed with the consent of the district CWC.
- A social investigation report and a home study report (of the child) are also done for the committee's assessment before the child is given up for adoption.
- What is in the best interests of the child is decided and only after this, the match-making with prospective parents can begin.
- The CARA provides extensive details of the process.

**Laws Related to Child Adoption**

- To follow the legal route in getting a child to an adoptive family, any concerned citizen can call Childline at 1098 to report a child who has been abandoned or orphaned.
- Citizens could follow the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956, or the Juvenile Justice (JJ) Act, 2015 to adopt or seek legal custody under the Guardianship and Wards Act of 1890.
- Section 45 of the JJ Act provides for sponsorship and to send children for institutional care.
- In July 2018, the JJ Act was amended to enable speedier adoption of children.
  - Prospective parents who wish to adopt will not be required to make several rounds to the courts to seek an adoption order as District Magistrates or District Collectors will be authorised to do so.
- All Child-Care Institutions (CCIs) will have to get registered and linked to the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA).

**Challenges**

- **Conflict:** There is anomaly on the legislature front as adoption is being governed by the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act of 1956 which has a nodal ministry as the Ministry of Law and Justice while the aspects of Orphans are dealt with by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- **In inter-country adoption of the child:** There are instances where none of the parents apply for his citizenship as a result he continued to be an Indian Citizen.
- It is a stigma that hovers over adoption in India because it indicates infertility among the adopting couple. Indian culture places high value on ideas of fertility and family, disregarding scientific evidence.

- **CARA's system only holds 2000 children at one time:** This also means crores of children can't become legally adoptable because the Government has not applied adequate resources towards getting the children registered.
- **Emotional trauma:** Children, who have faced crisis such as a loss of family members or separation from their parents due to death and desertion, have emotional trauma.
- **Adoption process:** There is an inherent disadvantage in the adoption process as children are not made aware of the situation and are kept in the dark.
- Cutting them off from their roots for the sake of putting them up in a child welfare institution or under the care of an NGO is not ideal.
- It is a common misperception that child shelters are a better option to care for an orphaned child. Many child shelters do a good job of taking care of kids in need, but most of them will never assess the children under their care for adoption.
- **The trafficking of such children is a challenge,** especially in the eastern part of the country like Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal.

#### Way Forward

- There is a need to introduce a scheme for orphan adoption document preparers, and reduce the number of pages of the home study report schedule VII to reduce paperwork to make the adoption process simple and corruption-free.
- Psychologists and child rights activists' reason that adoption is neither the first or best option for such children and recommend kinship care (non-institutional care with a family) as a more suitable alternative.
  - **Non-institutional** care with a family is far better for the child's evolution and normal growth.
- Additional measures should be taken such as assigning DCPUs the task of surveillance as well as follow up of children directly affected due to loss of one or both parents, or those whose parents are in hospital with nobody to look after them.
- State governments must make kinship care part of the child protection system.
  - For example, Maharashtra's Bal Sangopan Yojana, where the State grants educational support of Rs. 1,000 per month to families to look after orphaned children
- NGOs can help in doing the home study and the social investigation report to enable the district CWC in its task and can also help in sponsorship and play the role of a facilitator.
- The Central Bureau of Investigation's (CBI) anti-trafficking unit should be permitted by states to access records and take up cases to protect these vulnerable children from trafficking.

#### The legal adoption pool should be enlarged.

##### Central Adoption Resource Authority

- It has been set up as a statutory body of the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- It functions as a nodal body for the adoption of Indian children and is mandated to monitor and regulate in-country and inter-country adoption.
- It deals with adoption of orphan, abandoned and surrendered children through its associated adoption agencies.
- It is designated as the Central Authority to deal with inter-country adoptions in accordance with the provisions of the Hague Conventions on Inter-Country Adoptions, 1993, ratified by the Government of India in 2003.

##### Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction

- It is a multilateral treaty which came into existence in December 1983.
- It is an international treaty to ensure the prompt return of the child who has been abducted from the country of their habitual residence.
- It applies to children under 16 years.

## INDIAN ECONOMY

### NATIONAL MONETISATION PIPELINE (NMP)

Recently, the Centre has completed transactions worth Rs 96,000 crore under the National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) in 2021-22, surpassing the ambitious programme's first-year target of Rs 88,000 crore.

### Major Highlights of the Achievements

#### Ministry of Coal:

- In Financial year 2022, the Ministry of Coal was the biggest contributor to the asset monetisation pipeline, generating a monetisation value of about Rs 40,000 crore through the auctioning of 22 coal blocks and awarding MDO contracts, the official said.

#### Mineral mining assets:

- It achieved an estimated monetisation value of Rs 18,700 crore in FY22 after the completion of 31 mineral blocks auctions.

#### **The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways:**

- It achieved an overall monetisation value of about Rs 23,000 crore.
- In FY22, close to 390 kilometres of roads were monetised under the Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT) mode and three Toll Operate

#### **The Ministry of Power :**

- It reported a monetisation achievement of Rs 9,500 crore after state-owned transmission major Power Grid Corporation undertook the monetisation of its first batch of transmission assets using the InvIT model.
  - Apart from that, the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) also completed securitisation of one of its operational hydel assets raising about Rs 1,000 crore.

**New models** such as InViTs (Infrastructure Investment Trusts), REITS (Real Estate Investment Trusts) and public-private partnership models such as the toll-operate-transfer (TOT) in the roads sector and Mine Developer and Operator (MDO) contracts in the coal sector proved instrumental in the targets being met.

- The target for 2022-23 fiscal was fixed at Rs 1.67 lakh crore at the meeting.

#### **Unachieved Targets**

- Some ministries lack the technical expertise to put their monetisation plans in action .
- The underperformance of railways assets was also discussed at the review meeting as it could achieve a monetisation value of only Rs 800-900 crore against a target of Rs 17,810 crore.

#### **About National Monetisation Pipeline:**

- The pipeline has been developed by NITI Aayog, in consultation with infrastructure line ministries, based on the mandate for 'Asset Monetisation' under Union Budget 2021-22.
- NMP estimates aggregate monetisation potential of Rs 6.0 lakh crores through core assets of the Central Government, over a four-year period, from FY 2022 to FY 2025.
- It aims to unlock value in brownfield projects by engaging the private sector, transferring to them revenue rights and not ownership in the projects, and using the funds generated for infrastructure creation across the country.

#### **Framework**

- The pipeline has been prepared based on inputs and consultations from respective line ministries and departments, along with the assessment of total asset base available therein.
  - Monetization through disinvestment and monetization of non-core assets have not been included in the NMP.
- The framework for monetisation of core asset monetisation has three key imperatives.
- The top 5 sectors (by estimated value) capture ~83% of the aggregate pipeline value.
  - These top 5 sectors include: Roads (27%) followed by Railways (25%), Power (15%), oil & gas pipelines (8%) and Telecom (6%).
- In terms of annual phasing by value, 15% of assets with an indicative value of Rs 0.88 lakh crore are envisaged to be rolled out in the current financial year (FY 2021-22).

#### **Expected Benefits of the Scheme**

- Innovative way of Private Participation:**
  - Private sector is well known for its efficiency and technology.
  - NMP will provide a way to exploit the strength of the Private sector for infrastructure creation without transfer of ownership.
- Ensure Further investment in Infrastructure Building:**
  - It will help to properly monetise under utilised brownfield projects
- Revival of the economy and create sustainable demand.
- Spillover effect of infrastructure is high on cycle of demand
- It will create further value for infrastructure creation in the country
- It will enable high economic growth and seamlessly integrating the rural and semi-urban areas for overall public welfare

#### **Key Challenges**

- Lack of identifiable revenue streams in various assets,
- Level of capacity utilisation in gas and petroleum pipeline networks,
- Dispute resolution mechanism,
- Regulated tariffs in power sector assets, and
- Low interest among investors in national highways below four lanes, according to the NMP framework.

- Analysts also point to issues such as the lack of independent sectoral regulators as potential impediments.

### Conclusion

- Asset Monetisation needs to be viewed not just as a funding mechanism, but as an overall paradigm shift in infrastructure operations, augmentation and maintenance considering the private sector's resource efficiencies and its ability to dynamically adapt to the evolving global and economic reality.
- New models like Infrastructure Investment Trusts & Real Estate Investment Trusts will enable not just financial and strategic investors but also common people to participate in this asset class thereby opening new avenues for investment.

## IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM

### 1. Barbara Forest

- The Barbara Forest will be thrown open to the public from the next tourist season for promoting ecotourism.

#### About Barbara forest

- It is named after a British forest officer's wife, who was killed in a tiger attack in the area, 100-odd years ago.
- It is situated in Odisha and is dubbed as Asia's largest teak and sal forest.
  - Its teak plants are about 80-ft tall with a girth of 10-feet each, rarely found anywhere else in the country. Teak species from 10 different States are also preserved here.
- Spread over 870-sq km, the forest touches three districts Khordha, Nayagarh and Ganjam of Odisha.
- It is an enriched area that boasts several century-old plants sown by the British back in 1910.
- It was perhaps the only forest in India guarded by the jawans of the Central Reserve Police Force (for protecting forest resources).

### 2. El Nino and Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)

- Southwest monsoon 2022 will be "normal" predicted by private weather forecaster Skymet.
- El Nino and Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) are not going to affect it .

#### About El Nino:

- This is a name given to the periodic development of a warm ocean current along the coast of Peru as a temporary replacement of the cold Peruvian current.
- 'El Nino' is a Spanish word meaning 'the child', and refers to the baby Christ, as this current starts flowing during Christmas.
- The presence of the El Nino leads to an increase in sea-surface temperatures and a weakening of the trade winds in the region.
- In a normal monsoon year (without El Nino), the pressure distribution along the coast of Peru in South America has a higher pressure than the region near northern Australia and South East Asia.

#### Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD):

- It is defined by the difference in sea surface temperature between two areas (or poles, hence a dipole) – a western pole in the Arabian Sea (western Indian Ocean) and an eastern pole in the eastern Indian Ocean south of Indonesia.
- In scientific terms, the IOD is a coupled ocean and atmosphere phenomenon, similar to ENSO but in the equatorial Indian Ocean.
- It is thought that the IOD has a link with ENSO events through an extension of the Walker Circulation to the west and associated Indonesian throughflow (the flow of warm tropical ocean water from the Pacific into the Indian Ocean).
- The IOD affects the climate of Australia and other countries that surround the Indian Ocean Basin, and is a significant contributor to rainfall variability in this region.

## DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

**Q1. . Redesigning the PDS supply chain is essential for successful and seamless delivery of food in order to overcome hunger and malnutrition. Examine. (250 words)**

#### Introduction

The Public Distribution System (PDS) is an Indian food security system which evolved as a system for distribution of food grains at affordable prices and management of emergency situations. It distributes subsidized food and non-food items to India's poor. This scheme was launched in June 1947. It functions through a network of Fair Price Shops at a subsidized price on a recurring basis.

#### Body

##### Importance of PDS

- Food grains to the poor, at prices lower than the price of food grains at private shops.
- Food grains are directly purchased from farmers, assuring farmers with a greater price.
- Make goods available to consumers, especially the disadvantaged /vulnerable sections of society at fair prices.
- Rectify the existing imbalances between the supply and demand for consumer goods. Check and prevent hoarding and black marketing in essential commodities.
- Ensure social justice in distribution of basic necessities of life.
- Even out fluctuations in prices and availability of mass consumption goods.
- Support poverty-alleviation programmes, particularly, rural employment programmes, (SGRY/SGSY/IRDP/ Mid-day meals, ICDS, DWCRA, SHGs and Food for Work and educational feeding programmes.

**Challenges faced by PDS****Procurement:**

- Open-ended Procurement: All incoming grains accepted even if buffer stock is filled creating a shortage in the open market.
- The recent implementation of Nation food security act would only increase the quantum of procurement resulting in higher prices for grains.
- The gap between required and existing storage capacity.
- The provision of minimum support price has encouraged farmers to divert land from production of coarse grains that are consumed by poor, to rice and wheat.

**Storage:**

- Inadequate storage capacity with FCI.
- Food grains rotting or damaging on the CAP or Cover & Plinth storage.
- The storage of food grains inculcates high carrying costs on the government.

**Allocation of food grains:**

- Identification of poor by the states is not fool proof. A large number of poor and needy persons are left out and a lot of fake cards are also issued.
- Illicit Fair Price shops: The shop owners have created a large number of bogus cards or ghost cards (cards for non-existent people) to sell food grains in the open market.

**Transportation:**

- Leakage and diversion of food grains during transportation.
- Uneven distribution of Food generations, procurement and distribution. For example: north eastern states are very far from Punjab and Haryana, from where wheat is procured. To transport food grains from Punjab to far flung areas in North east will entail cost and time both.

**Other issues:**

- Many times, good quality food grains are replaced with poor quality cheap food grains.
- Public distribution system includes only few food grains such as wheat and rice, it does not fulfil the requirement of complete nutrition.
- Fair Price Shop owner gets fake Ration cards and sell the food grains in the open market.

**PDS Reforms undertaken by Government**

- Aadhaar Linked and digitized ration cards: This allows online entry and verification of beneficiary data. It also enables online tracking of monthly entitlements and off-take of food grains by beneficiaries.
- Computerized Fair Price Shops: FPS automated by installing 'Point of Sale' device to swap the ration card. It authenticates the beneficiaries and records the quantity of subsidized grains given to a family.
- DBT: Under the Direct Benefit Transfer scheme, cash is transferred to the beneficiaries' account in lieu of food grains subsidy component. They will be free to buy food grains from anywhere in the market. For taking up this model, pre-requisites for the States/UTs would be to complete digitization of beneficiary data and seed Aadhaar and bank account details of beneficiaries. It is estimated that cash transfers alone could save the exchequer Rs. 30,000 crores every year.
- Use of GPS technology: Use of Global Positioning System (GPS) technology to track the movement of trucks carrying food grains from state depots to FPS which can help to prevent diversion.
- SMS-based monitoring: Allows monitoring by citizens so they can register their mobile numbers and send/receive SMS alerts during dispatch and arrival of TPDS commodities
- Use of web-based citizens' portal: Public Grievance Redressal Machineries, such as a toll-free number for call centres to register complaints or suggestions.

**Way forward**

- Primacy should be given to ensuring that the functioning of FCI is streamlined and fast paced as per recommendations of the Shanta Kumar Committee.

- 100 lakh ton silo storage capacity must be created in the country. For this, RITES has been assigned the task of changing the silo model and they will give their recommendations in 90 days to FCI.
- At present, there are 3 types of labourers in FCI namely Departmental, Daily Payment System (DPS) and No work no pay workers along with contractual labour. Government of India is deliberating to finish the 3 different arrangements and bring all workers of FCI under a single, uniform system which will bring stability of tenure and secured wages for all.
- To improve the usage of Information Technology in FCI, a Human Resource Management System (HRMS) must be implemented.

**Conclusion**

- PDS has helped bring about the socio-economic justice by helping alleviate hunger, malnutrition, anaemia among poorest of the poor, BPL citizens, women and children. The use of ICT to reduce the touch-points will further increase the efficiency of PDS.

**DAILY QUIZ**

**Q1.** Which of the following are covered under the National Monetisation Pipeline?

1. Roads
2. Railways
3. Power
4. Oil & gas pipelines
5. Telecom

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) **1, 2, 3, 4 and 5**
- (c) 1, 5 and 2 only
- (d) 1, 3, 5 and 4

**Q2.** Which of the following are eligible to vote at the election to the Office of President of India ?

1. Elected members of both Houses of Parliament
2. Nominated Members of either Houses of Parliament
3. Elected members of the Legislative Assemblies of all the States .

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

**Q3.** With reference to Zonal Councils, consider the following statements

1. The idea of creation of Zonal Councils was mooted by the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.
2. The Prime Minister is the Chairman of each of these Councils.
3. It looks after the matter concerning border disputes also.

Which of the given above statements is/are correct?

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

**Q4.** With reference to Jallian Wala Bagh massacre, consider the following statements:

1. Reginald Dyer had ordered the massacre.
2. Passing of the Rowlatt Act was an important event immediately preceding the massacre.
3. People were protesting at Jallian Wala Bagh because of the arrest of Saifuddin Kitchlew and Satyapal.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 2 and 4 only
- (c) **1, 2 and 3 only**
- (d) 1, 3 and 4

**Q5.** Which organization releases the “Global Wind Report”?

- (a) **Global Wind Energy Council**
- (b) Wind Energy Association
- (c) International Renewable Energy Agency
- (d) European Renewable Energy Council