

**GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND INTERVENTIONS****DRAVIDIAN SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MODEL**

**CONTEXT :** Social justice has been the integral part of the Dravidian development model.

**What is the Dravidian model?**

- The Dravidian model of governance is about peace, progress and prosperity, which is achieved by pursuing the principles of social justice, rational thought and action firmly rooted in equity.
- This translates to inclusive financial planning, access to education, housing, nutrition and health for all, a meaningful implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, encouraging independent decision-making in structures of democratic governance at all levels, and the State adhering to the Indian Constitution in letter and spirit on all issues—including that of religious and personal freedom.
- **Beginning**
  - Social justice principles in Tamil Nadu were initially emphasised and propagated by Periyar, who fought for community-based representation while fighting the evils of the caste system.
  - Dravidian politics in Tamil Nadu has played a significant role in democratising the public space for wider participation.
- **Progress**
  - Tamil Nadu has been a pioneer in broad-basing entry into school education through a slew of incentives, the noon meal scheme being the most well-known.
  - Over time, mobilisation and policy response fed into the creation of school and college infrastructure, apart from expanding the horizon of aspirations among lower caste households, and enabled one of the highest enrolment rates for women and lower caste groups.
    - Among other factors, lowering the cost of education played a key role.

**Backward Classes (BC) Commission's report**

- **First BC commission report**
  - The report of the first Backward Classes (BC) Commission, headed by A.N. Sattanathan in its report of 1970 highlighted the unequal distribution of reservation benefits in favour of certain communities within backward castes.
  - It stated that around nine castes (that accounted for 11.3% of the total backward castes) held 48% of gazetted posts and 37% of non-gazetted posts.
  - In the education sector, it was 47% of medical seats, 44% of engineering seats and 34% of scholarships denying an opportunity for the remaining 88.7% of backward castes in Tamil Nadu.
  - **Recommendations**
    - It recommended economic criteria and taking out certain castes out of reservation benefits, due to political and electoral reasons, the government increased the quota for Other Backward Classes (OBC) from 25% to 31% and for Scheduled Castes (SC)/Scheduled Tribes (ST) from 16% to 18%.
- **Data from second commission**
  - The AIADMK government increased the Other Backward Classes quota from 31% to 50%, which made the Supreme Court of India direct the Tamil Nadu government to set up a second Backward Classes' Commission in the year 1982 to assess the ground reality.
  - The commission, under J.A. Ambasankar, reiterated the unequal distribution of benefits among backward classes as stated by Sattanathan in the first Backward Classes Commission.

**Political moves**

- In 1989, the government under M. Karunanidhi divided the 50% OBC reservation into 30% for backward classes and 20% for Most Backward Classes (MBCs) and denotified communities (DNC) due to agitations led by Dr. S. Ramadoss of the Pattali Makkal Katchi, demanding more representation for the Vanniyar caste.
- In 2000, then Chief Minister Karunanidhi released a white paper on the 'Reservation in Government Employment for the Adi Dravidars, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Classes, Most Backward Classes and Denotified Communities.'
  - In 96 government departments, the SC representation in Group A, B and C was below their constitutionally mandated quota.
    - The BC had more than majority representation. It was only in the Group D category that SC/STs and MBC/DNCs had noticeable representation.

**Neoliberal state, social justice**

- The neoliberal phase after the 1990s has expanded the scope of the private sector in key sectors of the Tamil Nadu economy which included social sectors such as education and health.
  - According to the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2019-20 report, 86% of colleges and 44% of universities in Tamil Nadu are owned by the private sector.

**Challenges**

- The pandemic and the unprecedented fiscal burden are the most immediate concerns.
- The growing concentration of power in the Union government and the erosion of policy autonomy aggravating challenges.
- The New Education Policy seeks to centralise policies pertaining to education, restricting the role of state governments.
- Affirmative action in employment has already become less effective due to the reduction in the public sector and has been further eroded now.
- Apart from inserting a quota for economically weaker sections from the upper castes, the Supreme Court recently ruled against the possibility of increasing the total reservation of seats to more than 50 per cent.
  - it has suggested that state governments can no longer retain the right to frame their own reservation policies, such as deciding on the backwardness of castes.

**Recent Initiatives taken**

- DMK government signed five important orders that included Rs.4,000 as financial assistance for families during the COVID pandemic, free bus travel for women, reduction of milk prices, creation of a department to fulfil the promise of addressing people's complaints within 100 days and covering expenses for COVID treatment in private hospitals under the Chief Minister's health insurance scheme.
- Sustainable industrial development is the key to prosperity. The government has initiated various methods to attract investment and improve the industrial climate.
  - Through investment conclaves held in Chennai, Coimbatore and Thoothukudi, it has so far signed 124 MoUs for investments totalling Rs.62,276 crore, which will create job opportunities for 1,90,702 persons.
- The government is creating a Land Bank to the extent of 45,000 acres in the next five years.
- It has released the Tamil Nadu Fintech Policy 2021 and the Tamil Nadu Export Development Strategy 2021 and launched the Single Window Portal 2.0, the Single Window Mobile App and the Tamil Nadu Land Information Portal at Investment Conclaves.

**Way Ahead**

- The Dravidian social justice model was able to democratise the public sphere by opening the space in education and employment, there is a need to revisit many aspects of social justice to reach out and benefit more people.
- The Tamil Nadu government should release a white paper on reservations and pursue quota in the private sector
- It is imperative for the Tamil Nadu government to release a white paper on reservations in Tamil Nadu to take stock of changes that have happened in the social composition of employees in the government sector after the year 2000.
- Apart from filling the SC/ST backlog vacancies, the government should increase the SC/ST reservations as their population according to the 2011 census is 21.1%.
- The State government should pursue the policy of reservations in the private sector, which the DMK principally supported in its election manifesto.
  - Reservation in private educational institutions has a constitutional mandate in Article 15(5), which came through 93rd Constitution Amendment Act in 2005.
  - Such proactive measures are needed to add meaning to social justice principles under the Dravidian model.

### PRELIMS

#### 1. India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Commission

Recently, the seventh round of the India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Commission (JCC) was held in New Delhi.

##### Outcomes of the meeting

- Both the countries expressed satisfaction that despite challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, both countries have worked closer than ever before in every sector.
  - Cooperation is seen in sectors like security and border management to mutually beneficial trade and investment flows, as well as enhanced bilateral and sub-regional multimodal connectivity, greater power and energy cooperation, developmental assistance and capacity building exchanges, cultural and closer people-to-people ties.
- The plan is to further work closely together to deepen and strengthen cooperation in the areas of:
  - Common rivers and water resources management,
  - IT and cybersecurity,
  - Renewable energy,
  - Agriculture and food security,
  - Sustainable trade,
  - Climate change and
  - Disaster management
- Both sides reiterated the importance of safe, speedy and sustainable return of the forcibly displaced persons from the Rakhine State to Myanmar, currently being sheltered by Bangladesh.

##### Significance of the meeting

- **Land Boundary Agreement and River management:**
  - India and Bangladesh have resolved border problems through the Land Boundary Agreement of 2015.
  - But both the countries have been in dialogue over the sharing of multiple rivers that define the borders and impact lives and livelihoods on both sides.
  - Bangladesh has been particularly keen on receiving a fair share of the waters of the Teesta that flows through the northern part of West Bengal.
- **Repatriation of Rohingyas:**
  - Bangladesh has been hosting more than a million displaced persons from Rakhine, known as the Rohingyas, since 2017.

- 2022 marks the fifth year of the exile of this community that Dhaka wants to repatriate with “security and dignity”.

## 2. West Seti Power Project: Nepal

India will be taking over an ambitious hydropower project in Nepal, **West Seti**, nearly four years after China withdrew from it.

### Key Points

- **Why was the Project given to India:**
  - Since India was Nepal’s power market and it had a policy of not buying power from China-executed projects, West Seti was given to India.
- **Project being handled by:**
  - India’s National Hydro Power Corporation (NHPC) has already begun preliminary engagement of the site in far-western Nepal following the Indian Prime Minister’s visit to Lumbini in May 2022.
- **Why china withdrew:**
  - The CWE Investment Corporation, a subsidiary of China Three Gorges Corporation, had informed the Nepal Government in August 2018 that it would not be able to execute the 750-MW West Seti Hydropower Project it had undertaken on the ground that:
    - i. It was financially unfeasible and
    - ii. Its resettlement and rehabilitation costs were too high.
- **Cost of the Project:**
  - Estimated to cost Nepali Rs 104 billion (Indian Rs 6,500 crore), the project is envisaged to provide Nepal 31.9% electricity free.
  - Besides, locals affected by the project are being given a share of Nepali Rs 10 million plus 30 units of electricity per month free.
- **Significance of the Project:**
  - Once the projects are made multi-purpose, with flood control, navigation, fisheries, irrigation contributing to agricultural growth etc, the cost of power will be much lower compared to existing rates.
  - This will help people on both sides and will have multiple benefits.

### Nepal’s Constitution on such Projects

- It has a provision under which any treaty or agreement with another country on natural resources will require Parliament’s ratification by at least a two-thirds majority.
- That will also mean homework will be required before any hydro project is signed and given for execution.

## 3. Flood Situation Grim In Northeast

Flood situation in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya continues to remain grim with no signs of a let-up in the rainfall causing widespread floods and landslides. The Floodplains (flat areas of land next to a river) of River Brahmaputra, Barak and their numerous tributaries are highly flood-prone.

### **Reasons for floods**

- Sediment load of Brahmaputra is among the highest in the world which reduces water carrying capacity of river.
- Unstable character of Brahmaputra due to earthquake-prone nature of the region.
- Bank erosion and debris deposition around Brahmaputra, Barak and their numerous tributaries.
- Man-made: Habitation, deforestation, population growth in catchment areas, encroachment in forest lands and water bodies etc.

### **Measures that can be adopted**

- Short term: Building and strengthening embankments on the rivers, dredging of riverbed etc.

- Long term: Integrated Basin Management System bringing in all the basin-sharing countries; Flood-Plain Zoning (Dividing flood-plains into categories based on vulnerability and accordingly banning activities like farming, urbanisation etc.); River channel improvements to increase hydraulic capacity etc.

**ANSWER WRITTING**

**Q. Discuss the role of women in various social, political and environmental movements since independence in India? (150 words)**

**Introduction**

India's independence movement witnessed enormous participation from the women community due to Gandhian leadership and social reforms, aimed at ending their subjugation in society. Even after independence, women from various strata of society continued to voice their opinions and discontents through social, environmental and political grassroots movements.

**Body**

- **Political Movements:** Indian Constitution guaranteed de jure political equality to women by Universal Adult Franchise under article 326. However, de facto women were subordinated in politics. Women through their participation in political movements like anti-price rise movement of 1973-75, JP movement, and other tribal and peasant movements tried to achieve an equal footing in modern India.
- **Social movements:** Conflicts and hierarchy in Indian society necessitated a response from the women. Thus, women started struggles against gender discrimination, domestic violence, alcoholism, rapes, and patriarchal social attitudes. Organisations like Saheli, Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), Naga Mothers Association, etc. have been at the forefront of these movements.
- **Environmental Movements:** Environment protection movement in India could not have succeeded without the much-needed support of the women activists. Women-led environmental movements like Chipko, Narmada Bachao Andolan, Navdanya, etc. not only protected local ecological rights and environment but also inspired environmental movements in other parts of the world as well. As a result of which women empowerment and participation are now regarded indispensable for "sustainable development".

**Conclusion**

The role of women in transforming the social, economic and political landscape of India could never be ignored. These movements erupted to ensure constitutionally guaranteed rights for women. But, despite their overwhelming contribution women still lack adequate political representation and social empowerment. Our society remains in want of more such movements that assert equality, demand rights and generate democratic dialogue for change.

**QUIZ**

1. Consider the following statements.
  1. India was one of the first countries to recognize Bangladesh and establish diplomatic relations immediately after its independence in December 1971.
  2. Bangladesh is India's biggest trade partner in South Asia.
  3. Exercise Indra is a joint exercise by both the nations..Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?
  - (a) 1 only
  - (b) 1 and 2 only
  - (c) 1 and 3 only
  - (d) 2 and 3 only
2. Consider the following statements:
  1. The Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950 form the bedrock of India-Nepal relations.
  2. In recent years India's relations with Nepal have witnessed some lows.
  3. The Belt and Road initiative of China has not been signed by Nepal.Select the correct statement(s)

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

3. Consider the following statements:

- 1. Inflation expectation refers to people's or households' expectations of what the inflation rate will be in the future.
- 2. An economy is said to undergo recession when it contracts for three consecutive quarters where a quarter is a period of four months.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

4. Consider the following statements:

- 1. The Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change has banned polythene bags under 20 microns.
- 2. According to the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016, there is a complete ban on sachets using plastic material for selling gutkha, tobacco, and pan masala.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

5. Consider the following statements regarding the Psyche mission:

- 1. It is a journey to a unique metal-rich asteroid orbiting the Sun between Mars and Jupiter.
- 2. It operates with the goal of exploring the building block of planet formation, the iron cores.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2