

NORMATIVE ETHICS [GS-IV]**NET-NEET Crisis: Ethical aspects**

The NET (National Eligibility Test) and NEET (National Eligibility cum Entrance Test) controversy highlights systemic failures and poor policy implementation over the years. Recurrent paper leaks, exam cancellations, incorrect results, and unexplained grace marks have eroded trust in the National Testing Agency (NTA). The recurrent paper leaks and recruitment scams point to the lack of fairness in the governance which is one of the 4 principles of virtue ethics.

About Virtue ethics theory:

- Aristotle is one of the founders of the Virtue Ethics.
- Virtue Ethics focuses on the development of good character traits (virtues) rather than on rules or consequences.
- He says that the human is a rational animal. Human has got the ability to reason. This essential characteristic of being rational leads to achieve a particular goal or end which Aristotle calls virtue.
- There are 4 important principles of virtue ethics: Fairness, Courage, Temperance, Wisdom.
- Doctrine of Mean: Aristotle also says that virtue is a golden mean, that which lies in the middle of the two extremes. For example, courage as a moral virtue lies between the two extremes namely cowardice and fool-hardiness.

Virtues are of two types:

1. Intellectual virtues are that which can be taught and learnt. Prudence is one such virtue. We can easily learn from others as to how to be prudent.
2. Moral virtues can be achieved by repeatedly doing an action that becomes a habit. These cultivated habits lead to achieving ultimate happiness.

Application to Paper Leaks and Recruitment Scams in India:

- Fairness: Paper leaks and recruitment scams represent a significant breach of honesty and integrity. Upholding honesty in academic and recruitment processes ensures fairness and trustworthiness, which are essential for societal flourishing.
- Justice: These scams create an unjust advantage for some individuals, undermining the principle of fairness. Ensuring just and fair practices in examinations and recruitments promotes equality and meritocracy, contributing to societal well-being.

Impact on Individuals and Society:

1. Individual Character Development: Engaging in or benefiting from such scams hampers the development of virtuous character traits, promoting greed and dishonesty.
2. Social Trust and Cohesion: Scams erode public trust in educational and recruitment institutions, leading to cynicism and societal fragmentation.

IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, AGENCIES AND FORA – THEIR STRUCTURE, MANDATE [GS-II]**Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and Mutual Evaluation Report**

The Mutual Evaluation Report of India, adopted at the FATF plenary in Singapore from June 26 to 28, places India in the “regular follow-up” category, a status shared by only four other G-20 countries. This distinction highlights India’s significant progress in combating money laundering (ML) and terrorist financing (TF).

About Financial Action Task Force (FATF):

1. FATF is an inter-governmental policy-making and standard-setting body dedicated to combating money laundering and terrorist financing.
2. Objective: To establish international standards, and to develop and promote policies, both at national and international levels, to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism.
3. Origin: It was established in 1989 during the G7 Summit in Paris to develop policies against money laundering. In 2001 its mandate expanded to include terrorism financing.
4. Headquarters: Paris, France.
5. FATF members include 39 countries, including the United States, India, China, Saudi Arabia, Britain, Germany, France, and the EU as such. India became a member of FATF in 2010.

Mutual Evaluation Report of FATF:

1. The mutual evaluation report is an assessment of a country’s measures to combat money laundering, financing of terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

2. The reports are peer reviews, where members from different countries assess another country.
3. During a mutual evaluation, the assessed country must demonstrate that it has an effective framework to protect the financial system from abuse.
4. The FATF conducts peer reviews of each member on an ongoing basis to assess levels of implementation of the FATF Recommendations, providing an in-depth description and analysis of each country's system for preventing criminal abuse of the financial system.

Mutual Evaluations have two main components:

- Effectiveness: The most important part of a mutual evaluation is a country's effectiveness ratings. During this visit, the assessment team will require evidence that demonstrates that the assessed country's measures are working and delivering the right results.
- Compliance: The assessed country must provide information on the laws, regulations and any other legal instruments it has in place to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism and proliferation.

FATF has 2 types of lists:

1. **Black List:** Countries known as Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories (NCCTs) are put on the blacklist. These countries support terror funding and money laundering activities. The FATF revises the blacklist regularly, adding or deleting entries. Three countries North Korea, Iran, and Myanmar are currently in FATF's blacklist.
2. **Grey List:** Countries that are considered a safe haven for supporting terror funding and money laundering are put on the FATF grey list. This inclusion serves as a warning to the country that it may enter the blacklist.

Consequences of being on the FATF blacklist:

- No financial aid is given to them by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the European Union (EU).
- They also face a number of international economic and financial restrictions and sanctions..
- In addition to economic consequences, Black- and Grey-Listing damages a country's reputation and reduces its international standing.

[GS-III]

Understanding Barriers in Vaccination Programs in 2024

India's Capacity to vaccinate has been constrained by many factors. India needs to address those factors to improve its fight against the Pandemic.

Background

India's vaccination programme has been hampered by a short supply of vaccines and this has dominated the public discourse.

However, there are two other equally important matters that have been given insufficient attention

- First, the capacity of our health system to vaccinate people.
- Second, public demand for vaccination, including the issue of vaccine hesitancy.

Issues in increasing Vaccination capacity

One, given the vaccine shortage, state governments responsible for vaccination have been preoccupied with procuring doses rather than focusing on their capacity to vaccinate on-demand

Two, the matter of capacity is currently plagued by oversimplification and lack of nuance.

Issues that determine our effective capacity.

- **First, the capacity of India's Subcentres.**
 - The public health system's facility closest to villages is called a 'subcentre'. It is an extension of a PHC, or primary health centre.
 - Each subcentre is supposed to serve a population of 5,000. India has over 150,000 subcentres.
 - Though PHC is the first point of in-patient care and access to a doctor for most people, subcentres hold the key to any vaccination programme. Because
 - One, they are closest to habitations and designed to be staffed with people trained to give intramuscular injections, among other things.
 - Two, the capacity can only be determined by details at the sub-centre level. That is the actual presence of trained personnel, refrigeration facilities at the PHC and sufficiency of ice boxes for distribution to subcentres, etc.,

- **Second**, the data entry requirements for Covid are a very much needed task. However, poor internet connectivity across the country increases the cycle time for data entry. They deprive health personnel of significant time, reducing capacity.
- **Third**, Problems with the basic operating model in many places. India follows a ‘people-to-vaccine model’ where people are expected to come to Subcentres. An alternate model, a ‘vaccine-to-people model’, where the subcentre staff go to villages or mohallas and hold vaccination camps can increase capacity.
- **Fourth**, Public demand for vaccination needs to be increased by nudging people to give up ‘Vaccine hesitancy’.

SOCIAL JUSTICE-HEALTH [GS-II]

Antenatal healthcare

Researchers have recommended that oral glucose tolerance test (OGTT) used to determine if a pregnant woman has developed gestational diabetes should be replaced by an HbA1c test that can also be used at the point of care .

About Antenatal / Prenatal healthcare:

Antenatal healthcare refers to the medical and healthcare services provided to a pregnant woman throughout her pregnancy. The primary goals of antenatal care are to ensure the health and well-being of both the mother and the developing foetus.

Key components of antenatal healthcare:

- Regular Check-ups and Screening tests
 - Nutritional Guidance
 - Health Education
 - Management of Pregnancy Symptoms
 - Monitoring for Complications like gestational diabetes
 - Emotional Support
1. Government initiatives for pregnant women:
 2. Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), a demand promotion and conditional cash transfer scheme for promoting institutional delivery.
 3. Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakaram (JSSK) entitles every pregnant woman to free delivery, including for c-section, in public health institutions along with the provision of free transport, diagnostics, medicines, other consumables, diet and blood.
 4. Over 25,000 ‘Delivery Points’ across the country have been strengthened in terms of infrastructure, equipment, and trained manpower for provision of comprehensive Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, Adolescent Health and Nutrition (RMNCAH+N) services.
 5. Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA) provides pregnant women a fixed day, free of cost assured and quality Antenatal Care on the 9th day of every month.
 6. LaQshya (Labour room Quality improvement Initiative) to improve the quality of care in Labour room and Maternity operation theatres to ensure that pregnant women receive respectful and quality care during delivery and immediate postpartum.

Challenges with maternal Healthcare in India:

1. Maternal mortality rate: A United Nations report highlighted that India was among the top 10 countries responsible for 60% of global maternal deaths, stillbirths, and new-born deaths. In 2020, India accounted for over 17% of such deaths, making it the second-highest contributor after Nigeria.
2. Antenatal care (ANC): Only 34.1% of mothers attended one, two, or three visits, falling short of the World Health Organisation’s (WHO) recommendation of four visits.
3. Postnatal care: 16% of women in India did not receive any postnatal health check-ups, while 22.8% experienced delayed check-ups occurring two days after childbirth.

Lack of skilled health providers: 8% of Indian women did not receive tetanus shots, which are crucial for preventing infections during and after surgery. In about 11% of cases, no skilled health providers were present at the time of delivery, posing risks in detecting and managing complications.

PRELIM FACT

1.UNESCO World Heritage Site of Somanathapur

Recently, the Tourism Department in Karnataka has plans to promote the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Somanathapura as part of Mysore tourism circuit.

Hoysala Temples:

- About: Constructed in the 12th and 13th centuries, the trio of temples included in the UNESCO list are notable not only for demonstrating the exceptional skill of their builders but also for narrating the political history that shaped their construction.
- Chennakeshava Temple: The Chennakeshava Temple, devoted to Lord Vishnu, was consecrated around 1117 AD by the formidable Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana to celebrate his triumphs over the Cholas. Therefore, it is also referred to as the Vijaya Narayana Temple.
- Kesava Temple: The Kesava Temple, also a Vaishnava shrine, was built in Somanathapura in 1268 by Somanatha, a general under Hoysala King Narasimha III.
- Shaped like a 16-point star, it houses three shrines dedicated to Keshava (though the statue is now missing), Janardhana, and Venugopala.
- Hoysaleswara Temple: The Hoysaleswara Temple, considered the largest Shiva temple constructed by the Hoysalas, dates back to the 12th century.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites:

- About: A World Heritage Site (WHS) is a landmark or area that receives legal protection under an international convention overseen by UNESCO, established through the UNESCO World Heritage Convention in 1972.
- Significance: UNESCO designates these sites for their cultural, historical, scientific, or other forms of significance. Classified as cultural, natural, or mixed heritage (meeting both cultural and natural criteria), these sites are considered of outstanding value to humanity.
- Criteria: Criteria for selection as a World Heritage Site (WHS) include uniqueness, geographical and historical significance, and special cultural or physical importance.
- Examples of WHSs encompass ancient ruins, historical structures, cities, deserts, forests, islands, lakes, monuments, mountains, and wilderness areas.
- Management: UNESCO designates these sites as protected areas, managed and maintained by the international World Heritage Program under the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY[GS-III]

2.Meteorites strikes on Mars

A recent paper released determines how often meteorites impact the surface of Mars from seismological data from Nasa's InSight probe.

Meteorites strikes on Mars, About The Study

- Published in: The study is published in the journal Nature Astronomy
- Source of data: The researchers used the data from NASA's Mars probe InSight's seismometer which could hear every single impact within the landers' range.
- Process:
 - The scientists tracked a particular acoustic signal which is produced when meteorites strike Mars to estimate the diameter of craters and their distance from InSight.
 - They then calculated the number of craters made in one year near the lander, before extrapolating that number across the entire planet.
- Approach: The study's approach was to listen to the internal rumblings of the red planet when the meteorites struck rather than the previous approach of estimating the strike rate by images taken by orbiting spacecraft or models based on craters on the Moon.
- Listening for impacts seems to be more effective than looking for them if we want to understand how often they occur.
- Finding: It is estimated that Mars is hit by 280 to 360 meteorites every year, all of which blast craters bigger than eight metres (26 feet) wide.
- This rate was about five times higher than the number estimated from orbital imagery alone.
- Also it was estimated that a big meteorite strike makes a 30-metre crater on Mars about once a month.
- Significance:
- Future Missions: This data is definitely a valuable source for mapping mars which will be an invaluable source when it comes to plan for future missions to Mars.

- Shortcoming of the imagery approach: Frequent, intense dust storms on Mars makes it particularly difficult for spacecraft orbiting Mars to see small meteorite craters down below.

Why is Mars a Prime Target?

- Closer to the asteroid Belt: Mars is roughly twice as big as the Moon and is much closer to our solar system's main asteroid belt, thus being a prime target for large rocks hurtling through space.
- Thin Atmosphere: Martian atmosphere is 100 times thinner than Earth thus the Meteorites does not break apart in its atmosphere like it does on Earth giving it little protection.

3. Significance of Biomass briquettes

Recently, there has been growing attention worldwide on sustainable solutions to address climate change and environmental damage. An emerging trend in the supply chain sector involves utilizing biomass briquettes as an alternative fuel source for generating power and electricity.

1) **Definition:** It is a compact block of compressed organic matter.

2) **Raw Materials:**

- A) Rice husk, groundnut shells, sugarcane bagasse
- B) Sawdust, coffee husk, jute sticks
- C) Municipal solid waste (organic portion)

3) **India's Abundant Biomass Resources-**India is a leading country for using biomass. The Power Ministry reports that India has a plentiful and dependable biomass source, estimated at 750 million tonnes annually, mostly from agricultural leftovers.

What is the significance of Biomass briquettes ?

- 1) **Environmental Benefits-**Unlike fossil fuels, they are carbon-neutral, releasing no additional carbon dioxide when burned. Its adoption reduces reliance on fossil fuels, helping to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and support climate change mitigation efforts.
- 2) **Waste Management-**By repurposing these residues, it contributes to waste management and carbon sequestration, enhancing their environmental impact.
- 3) **Creation of Jobs-**In rural areas with abundant agricultural residues, setting up biomass briquette production units can create jobs and boost local economies.
- 4) **Supply Chain Resilience-**Biomass briquettes, sourced locally, are less susceptible to external disruptions such as price fluctuations and geopolitical factors compared to fossil fuels.
- 5) **Decentralised Energy Production-**It contributes to a more resilient and inclusive energy ecosystem by decentralizing energy production and distribution.

4. Understanding Stability in Power Supply in 2024

India's solar energy price reduction needs other reforms from the government to enhance India's solar capacity.

About Japanese Investment in Solar Energy:

In 2015, Japan's SoftBank Group announced the intention to invest \$20 billion in India in solar projects through SB Energy (SBE). It seemed ideal for India. With abundant sunshine and a big potential market, the logic for large solar projects was always compelling.

Further, India had about 4 GW of rural and rooftop projects. But this rooftop electricity is priced 50 per cent higher than power from coal.

Solar Power Cost Trajectory in India:

The Indian government has raised the solar target for 2022 from 20 GW to 100 GW. Prices fell since 2015. This is due to cheap solar modules from China, and increasing competition. All this led to the cost of Solar power became half that of coal. This means solar energy is a slower-payback infrastructure.

Challenges in Solar Energy:

- The preponderance of coal will continue because the current annual tendering capacity is 6-8 GW. This means higher costs and carbon footprint until the government is able to accommodate larger-scale investor interest.
- India's markets in electricity are roiled by low and unstable prices and uneven service quality. To bring out order and stability to electricity markets, India needs investors with significant capital willing to invest.

How to Improve India's Solar Energy?

- India needs investors like SoftBank, with the capacity and willingness to invest in slower-payback infrastructure. So, India needs to nurture serious investors willing to invest in electricity and other infrastructure.

- India has to develop integrated, stable services at reasonable prices. That might not necessarily be the least cost in the interests of efficacy. This is what India need to drive the economy in a sustained manner, to provide its foundation and fuel with its growth.
- Government policies and regulations need to be configured towards overarching objectives that are aligned or at least not contradictory.
- Various streams within and across sectors must be integrated to converge towards objectives. Such as fuel sources and electricity generation
- But, this will require Central and state governments to evolve integrated plans and develop interdepartmental coordination processes to steer the energy sector.
- A prerequisite to energy security is resolving the financial problems of state distribution companies, including payment discipline.

ANSWER WRITING

Q. How is the Indian concept of secularism different from the western model of secularism? Discuss.

Secularism promotes the separation of religion from the state. In the Indian context, secularism means equal respect for all religions, with the state actively intervening to ensure religious harmony. For example, India celebrates diverse religious festivals officially. In contrast, Western secularism, such as in France, involves a strict separation between religion and state, ensuring that the state remains neutral towards all religions, exemplified by France's prohibition of religious symbols in public institutions.

Difference between the Indian and the Western Concept of Secularism

- **Definition and Philosophy:**

- **Indian Secularism:** Emphasizes **equal respect and support for all religions**. The state actively supports various religious practices.

For example: India's **funding of pilgrimages** like the Haj subsidy (discontinued in 2018) and the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra.

- **Western Secularism:** Advocates for **strict separation** between religion and state, ensuring **state neutrality**.

For example: The US **First Amendment**, which prohibits the establishment of religion by the government.

- **Historical Context:**

- **Indian Context:** Emerged from the need to manage a **pluralistic society with diverse religious communities**, influenced by historical practices of **religious tolerance**.

For example: **Emperor Ashoka's edicts** promoting religious harmony and coexistence.

- **Western Context:** Rooted in the **Enlightenment**, reacting **against religious dominance** over state affairs.

For example: The **French Revolution**, which established secularism as a response to the Church's influence on the state.

- **Role of the State:**

- **Indian Model:** The state can **intervene** in religious matters to **ensure equality and prevent discrimination**.

For example: The **Hindu Marriage Act, 1955**, which reformed Hindu personal laws.

- **Western Model:** The state generally **refrains from intervening** in religious affairs, maintaining a **clear boundary**.

For example: The US **Supreme Court rulings** on the **separation of church and state in public schools**.

- **Legal Framework:**

- **Indian Constitution:** **Articles 25-28** guarantee **freedom of religion** while allowing **state intervention** in secular aspects of religious practices.

For example: The **regulation of temple finances** by the state.

- **Western Constitutions:** Prohibits the establishment of religion and protects the **free exercise of religion**.

For example: The **French Law of 1905** on the **Separation of the Churches and State**, which emphasizes state neutrality.

- **Social Integration:**

- **Indian Secularism:** Aims for **social integration** by **accommodating religious diversity** within the public sphere.
For example: Public holidays for various **religious festivals** like Diwali, Eid, and Christmas.
- **Western Secularism:** Seeks **social cohesion** by **minimizing religious identity** in the public domain.
For example: France’s ban on wearing religious symbols in public schools (2004 law).
- **Implementation and Challenges:**
- **Indian Scenario:** Faces challenges like **communalism** and **politicization of religion**.
For example: The communal riots in Gujarat in 2002 highlighted the vulnerabilities in India’s secular fabric.
- **Western Scenario:** Deals with issues like **secular intolerance** and **debates** over religious freedoms.
For example: The controversy over the burkini ban in France reflects ongoing tensions between secularism and religious expression.

Conclusion:

Indian secularism uniquely manages religious diversity by promoting equal respect and occasional state intervention, contrasting with Western secularism’s strict separation of religion and state. Future efforts in India should focus on fostering **inclusive policies** and **addressing communal tensions** to **strengthen its secular fabric** and ensure **harmonious coexistence**.

MCQS

1. Consider the following:

1. Shantiniketan
2. Dholavira
3. Hoysala Temples
4. Sundarbans National Park

How many of the above are included under the World Heritage List released by UNESCO?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) Only three
- d) All four**

2. Consider the following statements:

1. India is one of the founding member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).
2. FATF Secretariat is headquartered at the OECD headquarters in Paris, France.

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

3. Consider the following pairs:

Terms	Description
1. Meteors	These rocks still are in space.
2. Meteoroids	When a meteor enters earth’s atmosphere, it’s called a Meteoroid.
3. Meteorites	When a meteoroid survives a trip through the atmosphere and hits the ground, it’s called a meteorite.

How many pairs given above are correctly matched?

- a) Only one**
- b) Only two
- c) Only three

d) None

4. India has been placed in the 'regular follow up category' in the "Mutual Evaluation Report of India" by Financial Action Task Force (FATF). What does this imply?

- a) India is now subject to increased monitoring by FATF due to strategic deficiencies in its financial crime prevention regime.
- b) India has been placed on FATF "grey list" of jurisdictions under increased monitoring for money laundering and terrorist financing risks.
- c) India has demonstrated a high level of technical compliance with FATF standards and its anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing regime is achieving good results.
- d) India has significant deficiencies in its anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing systems.

5. Consider the following pairs [Geo-heritage Sites:States]

1. Ambenali Ghat : Odisha
2. Akal Fossil Wood Park: Rajasthan
3. St. Mary’s Islands: Kerala
4. Lonar Crater: Maharashtra

How many of the above pairs is/are correct?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two**
- c) Only three
- d) All four

6. Lake Natron is located in which nation?

- a) Kenya
- b) Uganda
- c) Tanzania**
- d) Ethiopia

7. Consider the following statements regarding “Mini RATNA” status:

1. “Mini RATNA” status is granted to Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs) that have consistently shown good financial performance.
 2. There are two categories of “Mini RATNA” status: Category-I and Category-II.
 3. Mini RATNA Category-I PSEs can incur capital expenditure on new projects without the approval of the Government up to ₹500 crore or equal to their net worth, whichever is lower.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- a) 1 only
 - b) 1 and 2 only
 - c) 2 and 3 only
 - d) 1, 2 and 3**
8. Which of the following statements about methanol is correct?
- a) Methanol is commonly used as a beverage.
 - b) Methanol has a higher boiling point than ethanol.
 - c) Methanol is used as an antifreeze in automotive applications.**
 - d) Methanol is produced through the fermentation of sugars.
9. Consider the following statements about Space MAITRI program:
1. Space MAITRI is a collaborative space mission between India and Russia focused on lunar exploration.
 2. The initiative aims to enhance satellite communication capabilities for rural and remote areas in 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**
10. Consider the following statements about Biomass briquettes
1. It is a compact block of compressed organic matter.
 2. Unlike fossil fuels, they are carbon-neutral, releasing no additional carbon dioxide when burned.
 3. Rice husk, groundnut shells, sugarcane bagasse, Sawdust, coffee husk, jute sticks, Municipal solid waste (organic portion)etc are its raw materials.
- Which of the above statements are correct?
- a) 1 and 2
 - b) 2 and 3
 - c) 1, 2 and 3**
 - d) none



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