

**GS PAPER 2-STATUTORY, REGULATORY AND VARIOUS QUASI-JUDICIAL BODIES****SEBI's efforts to regulate the securities market**

The article discusses SEBI's efforts to regulate the securities market. It highlights SEBI's proposals to curb manipulation in SME IPOs, including stricter norms like increased lock-in periods for promoters and better fund monitoring. SEBI also seeks to regulate finfluencers and digital platforms, raising concerns over free speech and jurisdictional overreach.

**Why is SEBI focusing on SME IPOs?**

SEBI is addressing concerns about manipulation in small and mid-cap IPOs. Recent SME IPO data shows that 159 companies raised Rs.5,700 crore in 2023-24, compared to 31 in 2021-22. SEBI proposed stricter norms, including:

1. Increasing the minimum application size to attract informed investors.
2. Raising the minimum investor base from 50 to 200 for better liquidity.
3. Requiring promoters to lock-in their shares for five years to ensure accountability.
4. Restricting IPO funds from being used to repay promoter loans.
5. SEBI suggests appointing monitoring agencies for IPOs above Rs.20 crore to ensure proper fund utilization. It has warned about promoters inflating business operations to boost stock prices. These measures aim to protect retail investors and maintain market integrity.

**Why is SEBI targeting finfluencers on digital platforms?**

1. SEBI is concerned about misleading securities-related content shared by finfluencers on platforms like YouTube and WhatsApp.
2. Misleading content can manipulate investors' decisions, impacting market integrity.
3. SEBI aims to regulate these platforms, requiring them to block false information, blacklist violators, and report regularly. For example, SEBI penalized unregistered finfluencers for sharing deceptive content and settled some cases with heavy penalties.
4. SEBI proposes that financial intermediaries only associate with registered finfluencers to ensure accountability.

**What concerns arise from SEBI's move to regulate finfluencers?**

1. **Disruption to Price Discovery:** SEBI's regulation of speech could harm the price discovery process, which benefits from a mix of optimistic, pessimistic, and neutral views. For example, In the Adani-Hindenburg episode, short-sellers, Adani promoters, and analysts (including finfluencers) provided contrasting opinions, helping investors make informed decisions.
2. **Existing Regulations Are Adequate:** SEBI already penalizes unregistered finfluencers under its existing powers. For example, it uses laws against fraudulent and manipulative practices and mandates that investment advisors and analysts register with SEBI.
3. **Jurisdictional Overlap:** Digital platforms like YouTube and WhatsApp are regulated by MeitY under the IT Act. SEBI's involvement may lead to conflicts over jurisdiction.
4. **Threat to Free Speech:** SEBI's proposals risk curbing free speech in the securities market, a fundamental right. The marketplace of ideas allows investors to evaluate different views and build trust.
5. **Parliamentary Oversight is Necessary:** SEBI's attempt to expand its powers through a circular bypasses parliamentary approval. Expanding jurisdiction over non-securities entities requires legislative endorsement to avoid overreach.

**GS PAPER 3-ENVIRONMENT****Challenges of indoor and outdoor air pollution**

The article discusses the challenges of indoor and outdoor air pollution, focusing on the impact of PM2.5 on health. It explains how air purifiers can improve indoor air quality but highlights the inequities of relying on personal solutions instead of addressing outdoor pollution sources.

**What is the Impact of Air Pollution on Different Groups?**

1. **Privileged Groups:** They stay indoors in homes, offices, and vehicles, where air quality can be controlled. They use N95 masks, air purifiers, and AC cars to reduce exposure.
2. **Vulnerable Groups:** Street vendors, delivery workers, and laborers face prolonged outdoor exposure due to their work. They cannot afford air purifiers or sealed homes, making them more vulnerable to pollution.
3. **Gendered Impact:** Women in poorly ventilated kitchens face high indoor air pollution from cooking with solid fuels, leading to severe health risks.

**How Can Indoor Air Quality Be Improved?**

1. **Limit Entry of Pollutants:** Close windows and doors and seal gaps around them to reduce air leaks.
2. **Use Air Purifiers:** Place HEPA-based purifiers in high-use areas like bedrooms. Closing doors enhances efficiency. Avoid purifiers emitting ozone, as it worsens air quality.
3. **Improve Ventilation:** Ensure proper airflow, especially in kitchens, to prevent a build-up of cooking-related pollutants.

4. **Monitor Air Quality:** Use low-cost sensors to check PM2.5 levels indoors.
5. **Reduce Harmful Activities:** Avoid burning candles or incense, which release fine particles and harmful gases.

**What are the Sources of Indoor Air Pollution?**

1. **Cooking with Solid Fuels:** Releases fine particulate matter and carbon monoxide. Kitchens often have the highest pollution levels, especially in poorly ventilated homes. Women face the greatest burden due to traditional gender roles.
2. **Burning Incense and Candles:** Emits fine particles and volatile organic compounds, worsening air quality.
3. **Poor Ventilation:** Traps pollutants indoors, even in homes with modern stoves.
4. **Outdoor Pollution Infiltration:** Unsealed homes allow outdoor pollutants, like PM2.5, to enter easily.

**How Do Air Purifiers Help?**

1. Air purifiers use a HEPA filter and a fan to trap PM2.5 particles.
2. **Activated Carbon Filters:** Help capture gaseous pollutants.
3. **Clean Air Delivery Rate (CADR):** Indicates purifier efficiency, especially for large rooms. DIY purifiers with HEPA filters and fans are cost-effective. Avoid purifiers that emit ozone, as they can worsen air quality.

**What are the Ethical Issues With Air Purifiers?**

1. Air purifiers benefit those who can afford them but highlight inequality. They address symptoms of air pollution, not the root cause.
2. This selective protection may reduce the urgency for systemic changes needed to improve overall air quality.

**GS PAPER 3-ENVIRONMENT**

**Delhi's persistent air pollution issue**

The article highlights Delhi's persistent air pollution issue, comparing it to Beijing's effective strategies. It critiques Delhi's ineffective measures, stresses dispersed pollution sources like vehicles, and calls for long-term, integrated plans with political and regional coordination.

**What is the air pollution problem in Delhi and other cities?**

1. Delhi faces severe air pollution, especially in October, despite long-term efforts since M.C. Mehta's 1984 PIL.
2. Air pollution remains a "wicked problem," needing long-term and coordinated solutions.
3. Other cities like Los Angeles and Beijing face similar issues, with 60% of pollution from vehicles, 20% from soil dust, and less than 20% from other sources.

**Why have existing measures failed?**

1. The **National Clean Air Programme (2019)** has had little impact despite focusing on monitoring, targets, and emergency measures.
2. The **Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM, 2021)** addresses symptoms but not the deeper, interlinked causes of pollution like urbanization and traffic.

**What are the major causes of pollution?**

1. **Vehicles:** Account for 60% of pollution due to emissions and traffic congestion.
2. **Photochemical reactions:** Sunlight and low temperatures create ozone from vehicle emissions.
3. **Stubble burning:** Its share in Delhi's PM 2.5 was less than 1% on October 17, but it still draws disproportionate focus.
4. **Dust:** Soil dust contributes 20%, prompting dust control measures.

**How does judicial intervention help?**

1. The **Supreme Court** emphasizes the right to clean air under the **fundamental right to life**.
2. It questions why compliance reports show minimal ground results and highlights coordination issues.
3. The court critiques Delhi for relying on "cosmetic steps" and shifting blame to Haryana and Punjab.

**What lessons can Delhi learn from Beijing?**

1. **Monitoring:** Beijing uses 1,000 sensors to track high-emission areas.
2. **Public transport:** Beijing operates over 30,000 low-floor buses, compared to Delhi's 6,000.
3. **Warning systems:** Smog forecasts are issued 24 hours in advance.
4. **Regional solutions:** Managing regional transportation and secondary pollutants like PM 2.5 is prioritized.

**What Should be done?**

1. Mandate the **Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)** and create a long-term toxicity management plan.
2. Ensure proper budget and political support for effective implementation.
3. Focus on regional mechanisms and public awareness campaigns instead of quick-fix measures like smog towers.

**GS PAPER 3-FOOD SECURITY**

**Report by the Access to Nutrition Initiative (ATNi)**

The article discusses a report by the Access to Nutrition Initiative (ATNi), which found that food companies sell less healthy products in low-and-middle-income countries (LMICs) compared to high-income countries (HICs). It highlights health risks, affordability, and the need for better food labeling in India.

**What are the various reports related to food products?**

1. **ATNi report find:**
2. The Access to Nutrition Initiative (ATNi) analyzed 52,414 products from 30 top food companies.
3. Products in low-and-middle-income countries (LMICs) were less healthy than in high-income countries (HICs).
4. Products scored 1.8 in LMICs compared to 2.3 in HICs on a health star rating system.
5. Only 30% of companies had strategies to make healthier products affordable for lower-income consumers.
6. Micronutrient data was less available in LMICs compared to HICs.
7. In April 2024, a **report by Public Eye and IBFAN** found that Nestle's baby foods in India and LMICs had higher sugar content than in Europe. Nestle denied the claim, but the Indian government asked the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to investigate.

**Why is This Significant in India?**

1. **NCD Burden:** India faces a high non-communicable disease (NCD) burden. Over 10.13 crore Indians have diabetes, and obesity affects 24% of women and 23% of men (NFHS-5 data).
2. **Dietary Impact:** The Economic Survey 2023-24 reported that unhealthy diets cause 56.4% of India's disease burden.
3. **Changing Diets:** The ICMR dietary guidelines (2023) highlight increased consumption of processed foods rich in sugar and fat, worsening obesity and micronutrient deficiencies.
4. **Affordability Issues:** Over 50% of Indians cannot afford a healthy diet (UN data). Meanwhile, spending on processed food is rising.

**What About Food Labeling in India?**

1. India lacks strong policies for food package labeling.
2. A 2017 National Action Plan addressed Non-Communicable Diseases but made little progress on front-of-package labeling.
3. In 2022, a draft regulation on labeling foods with high sugar, fat, and sodium was introduced but hasn't advanced.
4. Countries like Chile and Mexico have seen reduced consumption of sugary drinks after introducing mandatory front-of-pack labeling.

**What should be done?**

1. **Implement Mandatory Nutrition Policies:** The ATNi report emphasizes mandatory policies, as voluntary efforts by companies have failed to ensure widespread improvement in nutrition.
2. **Strengthen Advertising Regulations:** Limit the marketing of unhealthy foods, especially to children, as per WHA resolutions.

**PRELIM FACTS**

**1.PM Vidyalaxmi Scheme**

On November 6, 2024, the Union Cabinet approved PM Vidyalaxmi, a **Central Sector Scheme** aimed at providing financial support to meritorious students pursuing higher education.

- The scheme offers collateral-free and guarantor-free loans to cover tuition fees and related expenses for students admitted to select quality institutions ranked by the **National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)**.

**About PM Vidyalaxmi Scheme:**

- **Objective:** To provide financial assistance to meritorious students, eliminating financial constraints in accessing quality higher education.
- **Eligibility:** Available to students admitted to top 860 HEIs in India, as per NIRF rankings, covering over 22 lakh students annually.
- **Loan features:** Offers collateral-free, guarantor-free education loans with a user-friendly, digital application process.
- **Credit guarantee:** Government provides a 75% credit guarantee on loans up to Rs.7.5 lakhs, supporting banks in loan expansion.
- **Interest subvention:** For families with an annual income up to Rs.8 lakhs, a 3% interest subvention is provided on loans up to Rs.10 lakhs. Full interest subvention is available to students with family incomes up to Rs.4.5 lakhs under the PM-USP scheme.
- **Complementary schemes:** Supplements existing schemes like CSIS and CGFSEL under PM-USP, offering comprehensive support for technical and professional courses in approved HEIs.

**How PM Vidyalaxmi Differs from Other Schemes?**

- **Broader Income Coverage:** Extends benefits to middle-income families with an income cap of Rs.8 lakh, unlike earlier schemes focused on low-income groups.
- **Interest Subvention:** Offers 3% interest subvention during the moratorium period for loans up to Rs.10 lakh, benefiting 1 lakh students annually.
- **Institution Eligibility:** Restricts eligible institutions to top NIRF-ranked colleges and universities, unlike earlier schemes that required NAAC and NBA accreditation.
- **Focus on Quality:** Targets high-ranking institutions, reducing the number of eligible institutions to around 860, emphasizing quality over quantity.
- **Simplified Loan Process:** Uses the Vidyalaxmi portal for streamlined loan applications, tracking, and linkage with major public and private banks.
- **Outlay and Reach:** Allocates Rs.3,600 crore for the period 2024-2031, aiming to benefit 22 lakh students.

## 2. "Waves" OTT Platform

Prasar Bharati, India's public broadcaster, launched its OTT platform "Waves" during the opening ceremony of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) 2024.

### About Waves OTT Platform:

- **Developer:** Prasar Bharati, under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
- **Launch Event:** Inaugurated at IFFI 2024.
- **Tagline:** "Waves – Family Entertainment Ki Nayi Lehar."
- **Languages and Content:** Offers content in 12+ languages, including Hindi, English, Tamil, Konkani, and Assamese. Features infotainment, gaming, education, and shopping.
- **Live Channels:** Streams 65 live TV channels, including "Mann Ki Baat" and Ayodhya's Prabhu Shriram Lalla Aarti.
- **Unique Features:**
  1. **Content Accessibility:** Leverages BharatNet for rural connectivity.
  2. **Diverse Content:** Includes films, student projects, music shows, animations, and crime thrillers.
  3. **Collaborations:** Partnerships with FTII, Annapurna, ONDC, and CDAC for cybersecurity awareness.
  4. **Support for Creators:** Open platform for young content creators and National Creator Awardees.

## 3. "Bhu-Neer" Portal

The Hon'ble Minister of Jal Shakti launched the "Bhu-Neer" portal during the ceremonial conclusion of India Water Week 2024.

### About the "Bhu-Neer" Portal:

- **Ministry:** Ministry of Jal Shakti, developed by Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) in collaboration with NIC.
- **Aim:** To regulate, manage, and monitor groundwater resources transparently and efficiently, promoting sustainability.
- **Key Features:**
  - **PAN-Based Single ID System:** Simplifies user registration for all stakeholders.
  - **NOC with QR Code:** Ensures verifiable and trackable compliance documentation.
  - **Streamlined Processes:** Simplifies permit application for groundwater withdrawal.
  - **Centralized Database:** Offers access to legal frameworks, groundwater policies, and sustainable practices at state and national levels.
  - **Ease of Doing Business:** Aligns with the Prime Minister's vision by making groundwater regulation seamless and faceless.

## 4. WEP and Urban Company Collaboration

NITI Aayog's Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP), in collaboration with Urban Company, launched a pilot program aimed at empowering women-led MSMEs in the beauty and wellness sector.

### Key Points:

- **Program Focus:** Aims to train women entrepreneurs managing salons and parlors in six areas: skilling, legal compliance, access to finance, market and business development, mentorship, and networking.



- **Objective:** Enhance sustainability and scalability of women-led MSMEs in beauty and wellness, fostering a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- **Collaboration:** A significant partnership between NITI Aayog's WEP and Urban Company to drive women's economic empowerment.

**Relevance to UPSC Syllabus:**

- **GS Paper II:** Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and their implications on the growth of women entrepreneurs.
- **GS Paper III:** Economic development, especially MSMEs' role in employment generation and inclusive growth.
- **Essay:** Women empowerment and entrepreneurial inclusivity in India.

**5. Green World Awards 2024**

Coal India Limited (CIL), under the Ministry of Coal, received the Green World Environment Award 2024 in the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) category.

- This international award has been given to CIL for exemplary work in the field of CSR i.e **Thalassemia Bal Sewa Yojna**.
- The company was also honoured with the title of **Green World Ambassador** for its contributions to environmental sustainability and social responsibility.

**About The Green Organization.**

- **Established:** 1994.
- **Headquarter:** East Amherst, New York, United States.
- It is an independent non-political, non-profit group.

• **Award Ceremony**

- The award was presented by **The Green Organization**.
- The ceremony took place at **The Orangery, Kensington Palace, London**.

**About Thalassemia Bal Sewa Yojna**

- It offers curative treatment for Thalassemia patients through stem cell transplant called Bone Marrow Transplant (BMT).
- **Achievements of the Scheme:**
  - Over 600 patients have received permanent treatment under the program.
  - Financial **assistance of up to Rs.10 lakh** is provided as per BMT procedure.
  - The initiative partners with 17 leading hospitals across India.

**About Coal India Limited (CIL)**

- It is a state-owned coal mining corporate.
- **Established:** 1975
- **Classification:** classified as a 'Maharatna' enterprise under the Ministry of Coal, Government of India.
- **Headquarters-** Kolkata

**6. Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative**

Tzaporah Berman, Chair and Founder of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative, recently, spelt out the latest threats to the planet at COP29 in Baku.

**About Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative**

- **Launched:** The idea was conceptualised in 2016 and officially launched in 2019 through a **Climate Breakthrough award**.
- **Endorsed by:** The treaty is endorsed by 14 nations-states comprising,
  - Vanuatu, Tuvalu, Tonga, Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Niue, Antigua and Barbuda, Timor-Leste, Palau, Colombia, Samoa, Nauru, the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia
- **First Ministerial Meeting:** The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative convened its first meeting in **May 2024 in Antigua and Barbuda**.
- **Objective:** The FF-NPT desires to **make it legally binding on the nations** to end fossil fuel extraction and phase down existing production, and manage a just transition to renewable energy.
- **Pillars:**
  - **Non-Proliferation:** It is a global cooperation model to **end the expansion of coal, oil and gas production**
  - **Fair Phase-Out:** A fair and equitable plan to shut down existing fossil fuel production by inculcating the **Common yet Differentiated Responsibility Principle**.

- **Just Transition:** To fast-track the **adoption of renewable energy and economic diversification** away from fossil fuels universally.
- **Aligned with Paris Agreement Goals:** The Treaty aims to support the work of Paris Agreement through,
- **Implementing the New Collective Quantified Goal:** It aims to establish a new financial target to assist developing countries in their climate actions post-2025.
- **Through Nationally Determined Contributions** (the climate action plans submitted by countries) and Just Transition Work Programmes

### 7. Artificial Intelligence (AI) Data Bank

The Ministry of Science and Technology launched India's first Artificial Intelligence (AI) Data Bank at the 7th Edition of the ASSOCHAM AI Leadership Meet 2024.

#### **About India's First Artificial Intelligence (AI) Data Bank:**

- **Launched By:** Minister of Science and Technology.
- **Event:** Unveiled during the ASSOCHAM AI Leadership Meet 2024.
- **Purpose:**
  - To provide high-quality, diverse datasets for researchers, startups, and developers.
  - To enable scalable and inclusive AI solutions.
  - To enhance national security through real-time analytics of satellite, drone, and IoT data.
- **Applications:**
  - **National Security:** Strengthens real-time surveillance and cyber defense.
  - **Disaster Management:** Facilitates predictive analytics for risk mitigation.
  - **Public Service Delivery:** Optimizes governance and citizen services.
  - **Sectoral Impact:** Governance, healthcare, business, education, and space exploration.
- **Ethical Use:** Frameworks to address algorithmic bias, data privacy, and equitable access.
- **Vision:** To ensure AI bridges societal divides, empowers citizens, and drives economic growth.

### **ANSWER WRITING**

**Q. "Segregation of professions based on gender reinforces stereotypes rather than addressing underlying issues of harassment." Analyse this statement in the context of the recent regulation of gendered staffing in tailoring shops and unisex salons.**

Segregation of professions based on gender, though often proposed as a preventive measure against harassment, risks reinforcing stereotypes and gendered roles. Recent regulations, such as gender-specific staffing in tailoring shops and unisex salons, fail to address the root causes of harassment, such as societal attitudes, inequality, and lack of awareness. A more holistic approach focused on systemic changes is essential to achieve gender equality and safety.

#### **Underlying Issues of Harassment**

- **Patriarchal Norms:** Societal beliefs often portray **women as vulnerable** and **men as aggressors**, promoting unequal gender dynamics that perpetuate harassment.  
**For instance:** Studies by the **National Institute of Health** reveal that workplace harassment disproportionately affects women due to ingrained patriarchal attitudes.
- **Lack of Awareness:** Many people, including employers and employees, lack knowledge about **workplace harassment laws**, leading to **unchecked misconduct**.  
**For example:** Only **35%** of Indian women workers are aware of the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (PoSH) Act, 2013.
- **Weak Enforcement Mechanisms:** Inefficient implementation of laws and **lack of accountability** embolden harassers.  
**For example:** The **Nirbhaya Fund (2013)**, allocated for women's safety, remains underutilised due to poor administration.
- **Gender Imbalance in Workforce:** Underrepresentation of women in certain professions creates **male-dominated environments** prone to power abuse.  
**For example:** According to the **Economic Survey 2023–2024**, the female labour force participation rate (LFPR) has risen but remains at approximately **37%**.
- **Cultural Stigma:** Fear of **judgement, victim blaming** or **retaliation** discourages victims from reporting harassment, perpetuating a **culture of silence**.  
**For instance:** According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, crimes against women, including sexual harassment, remain grossly underreported due to fear of repercussions, inadequate awareness, and societal biases.

**Segregation Reinforcing Stereotypes Instead of Addressing Harassment**

- **Stereotyping Women as Helpless:** Gender segregation implies that women **require constant protection, undermining their agency** and professionalism.  
**For instance:** Restricting male tailors from measuring women reinforces notions of women's **dependency** for safety.
- **Portraying Men as Inherently Unsafe:** Such policies **generalise men as potential threats**, cultivating mistrust and damaging workplace dynamics.  
**For instance:** Studies suggest that **inclusive work environments** promote greater respect and collaboration between genders.
- **Undermining Gender Equality:** Segregation perpetuates **unequal opportunities**, restricting participation in professions dominated by one gender.  
**For example:** **India's armed forces** historically restricted women from **combat roles**, reflecting segregation's impact on professional opportunities. Reforms like NDA induction mark progress, but biases persist.
- **Ignoring Systemic Issues:** Instead of addressing **societal attitudes**, segregation targets symptoms while leaving root causes like **power imbalance** and **poor education** untouched.  
**For instance:** The **NCRB report (2023)** highlighted that a significant proportion of crimes against women under the IPC involved '**Cruelty by Husband or His Relatives**'.
- **Economic Disparities:** Segregation **reduces the customer base** for male professionals, disproportionately affecting those from lower-income groups.  
**For instance:** In **smaller towns or villages** where unisex salons may not be available, such practices can lead to **reduced job opportunities** for male barbers.

**Way Ahead**

- **Comprehensive Gender Sensitization:** Conduct widespread **awareness campaigns** focusing on **respect, consent**, and **workplace ethics** to address harassment at its roots.  
**For example:** The **PoSH Act, 2013** mandates training sessions, which should be expanded to informal sectors like tailoring and salons.
- **Encourage Inclusive Workspaces:** Promote mixed-gender staffing in professions to develop **mutual understanding** and reduce stereotypes.  
**For example:** Initiatives like **UN Women's HeForShe campaign** encourage men and women to collaborate as equals in diverse settings.
- **Strengthen Legal Frameworks:** Ensure stricter implementation of **anti-harassment laws** and create robust mechanisms for **complaint resolution**.  
**For instance:** Expanding **Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs)** to informal sectors can protect vulnerable workers.
- **Promote Privacy and Safety:** Instead of surveillance, prioritise **safer infrastructure**, such as private fitting rooms and customer-friendly layouts.
- **Support Economic Inclusivity:** Provide **financial and training support** to professionals affected by restrictive regulations, ensuring their livelihoods remain secure.  
**For instance:** Government-funded **skill enhancement programs** under National Urban Livelihood Mission (**NULM, 2013**) can help barbers and tailors diversify their clientele.

Segregation of professions based on gender is a superficial response that reinforces stereotypes while failing to address systemic issues of harassment. By promoting inclusive workspaces, strengthening legal protections, and promoting attitudinal change, India can create a society rooted in equality and respect. Drawing inspiration from global best practices like the HeForShe campaign, India must strive for a future where safety and dignity are inherent, not enforced.

**MCQ**

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| <p>1. Consider the following statements about Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. RAS can be set up in regions without access to natural water sources.</li> <li>2. It eliminates the need for monitoring water quality and filtration systems.</li> <li>3. RAS ensures higher production rates compared to traditional aquaculture systems.</li> </ol> <p>How many of the above statements is/are correct?</p> | <p>a) Only one                      <b>b) Only two</b><br/>c) All three                      d) None</p> <p>2. Consider the following statements about the Reducing Methane from Organic Waste Declaration and its priority actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It aims to improve methane data collection from waste sources.</li> <li>2. It promotes banning the use of methane as an energy source.</li> </ol> |
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3. Its focus includes better landfill and wastewater facility management.
4. It calls for setting sector-specific targets for organic waste emissions reduction.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- a) 1 and 3 only      b) 1, 2, 3, and 4  
c) 2 and 4 only      d) **1, 3, and 4 only**
3. Consider the following statements regarding Biofloc Technology (BFT):
1. It relies on heterotrophic bacteria to convert organic waste into microbial biomass.
  2. It eliminates the need for aeration in aquaculture systems.
  3. BFT heavily depends on antibiotics to maintain water quality.
- 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
4. With reference to the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty (FF-NPT), consider the following statements:
1. The FF-NPT is modeled after nuclear weapon treaties and aims to legally bind nations to phase out fossil fuel production.
  2. It was officially launched at the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015.
  3. The treaty emphasizes a fair phase-out of fossil fuels, with wealthier nations transitioning first.
  4. India is among the countries actively endorsing the FF-NPT framework.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- a) **1 and 3 only**      b) 2 and 4 only  
c) 1, 3, and 4 only      d) 1, 2, and 3 only
5. Which of the following is the primary focus of the VISION Portal (Viksit Bharat Initiative for Student Innovation and Outreach Network)?
- a) To promote education and skill development exclusively for urban students.
- b) **To foster creativity, enhance technical skills, and support technology-enabled projects by students, while bridging rural-urban divides through public-private partnerships.**
- c) To create a platform for aligning public and private sector development strategies.
- d) To establish a unified research and development policy for educational institutions across India.
6. With reference to India's AI Data Bank, consider the following statements:
1. The AI Data Bank is designed to provide high-quality datasets for researchers, startups, and developers to develop scalable AI solutions.
  2. One of its objectives is to enhance national security through real-time analytics of satellite, drone, and IoT data.
3. It aims to address challenges like algorithmic bias and data privacy to ensure ethical and responsible use of AI.
- How many of the above statements are Correct?
- a) Only one      b) Only two  
c) **All three**      d) None
7. Consider the following statements:
1. The Assembly of States is the main decision-making body of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).
  2. CARICOM holds the United Nations General Assembly observer status.
  3. The India-CARICOM Summit reflects India's growing engagement with Caribbean nations as part of its Global South strategy.
- How many of the statements given above are correct?
- a) Only one      b) **Only two**  
c) All three      d) None
8. With reference to the PM Vidyalaxmi Scheme, which of the following statement(s) is/are correct?
1. It allows students to get collateral-free and guarantor-free loans from banks and financial institutions.
  2. The scheme does not consider caste or other socio-economic factors for eligibility.
  3. Only institutions that register and qualify for National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) rankings are eligible under the scheme.
- Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
- a) 1 only      b) 1 and 3 only  
c) 2 and 3 only      d) **1, 2 and 3**
9. Waves an OTT platform has been launched by which of the following organization
- a) **Prashar bharti**      b) Door darshan  
c) Bollywood      d) Tollywood
10. Consider the following statements:
- Statement-I: India has a mandatory front-of-pack labelling (FOPL) rule for packaged foods.
- Statement-II: India is a party to the World Health Assembly (WHA) resolutions.
- Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?
- a) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- b) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
- c) Statement-I is correct but Statement-II is incorrect
- d) **Statement-I is incorrect but Statement-II is correct**