



UDISE+ Report 2023-24

[Source: IE](#)

The [Unified District Information System for Education \(UDISE\) Plus report](#) shows a significant **decline in India's school enrolment**, linked to revised data collection methods.

▪ Key Findings:

- **Decline in Enrolment:** Enrolment fell from **26.36 crore** (2018-2022 average) to **25.17 crore** in 2022-23 and **24.8 crore** in 2023-24, a drop of **1.55 crore students**.
 - **Government** school enrolment dropped by **5.59%**, and **private** school enrolment fell by **3.67%**.
- **Gender-wise Trends:** Enrolment of **boys declined by 6.04%** and **girls by 5.76%**, compared to the 2018-19 to 2021-22 average.
- **State-wise Declines:** Largest declines recorded in **Bihar (35.65 lakh)**, **Uttar Pradesh (28.26 lakh)**, and **Maharashtra (18.55 lakh)**.
- **Level-wise Trends:** Decline observed across **primary, upper primary, and secondary levels**.
 - Enrolment in **pre-primary and higher secondary levels rose** in 2023-24 compared to the previous average.
- **Improved Data Accuracy:** [Aadhaar](#)-linked student records improved data accuracy by removing duplicates, including students enrolled in both government and private schools.
- **About UDISE+:** It is one of the largest **Management Information Systems** by the **Ministry of Education**, covering 14.72 lakh schools, 98.08 lakh teachers, and 24.8 crore children.

Read More: [UDISE Plus Report](#), [Smart Classrooms Under the Smart Cities Mission](#)

Draft Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025

[Source: PIB](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the **Ministry of Electronics & IT** has released **draft Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Rules, 2025** intended to safeguard **citizens' right to protect their personal data**.

What are the Key Points about the Draft DPDP Rules, 2025?

- **About:** It is a set of rules that operationalize the [Digital Personal Data Protection Act \(DPDP Act\), 2023](#), to protect citizens' digital personal data while **fostering India's digital economy** and innovation.
- **Data Transfer:** The rules allow the transfer of **certain personal data outside India**, as approved by the government.
- **Citizens at the Core:** Citizens are granted rights to **demand data erasure, appoint digital**

nominees, and have user-friendly mechanisms to manage their data by **Data Fiduciaries**.

- Entities such as **social media platforms, e-commerce companies and online gaming platforms**, etc, that collect and process an individual's personal data are data fiduciaries.
- **Data Erasure:** Data retention is allowed for up to **three years** from the last interaction with the **Data Principal (Users)** or the effective date of the rules, whichever is **later**.
 - The Data Fiduciary must notify the Data Principal **at least 48 hours before erasure**.
- **Digital-First Approach:** The rules also prescribe a "**digital by design**" **Data Protection Board of India** (DPBI) for consent mechanisms and grievance redressal, for **faster resolution of complaints** and grievances online.
- **Graded Responsibilities:** Graded responsibilities cater to **startups and MSMEs** with **lower compliance** burden, while **Significant Data Fiduciaries** have higher obligations.
 - Digital platforms with a large number of users such as **Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Amazon, Flipkart, Netflix**, etc, will qualify as significant data fiduciaries.
- **Consent Managers:** The digital platform may also collect consent through **consent managers**.
 - A Consent Manager handles the **collection, storage, and use of user consent**, mainly for data privacy and digital interactions.
 - Consent Manager must be a **company incorporated in India** with sound **financial and operational capacity**, having a minimum net worth of **two crore rupees**.
- **DPBI:** Draft rules have spelt out a framework for setting up the **DPBI** that will have **civil court powers** for personal data breach complaints.

Note: In **2011**, the Justice **AP Shah Committee** recommended privacy legislation, and in **2017**, the Supreme Court, in the case of **Justice KS Puttaswamy (Retd) vs Union of India**, recognized **privacy as a fundamental right**.

What are the Salient Features of the DPDP Act, 2023?

- **Right to Data Protection:** Empowers individuals to control their **personal data**, including **rights to access, correction, and erasure**.
- **Data Processing and Consent:** Requires **explicit consent** for data processing, with clear consent forms.
- **Data Localisation:** Sensitive data must be stored and processed **within India for security and enforcement**.
- **Regulatory Authority:** Establishes **the DPBI** for compliance and grievance handling.
- **Data Breach Notification:** Organisations must notify individuals and the **DPBI of data breaches**.
- **Fines and Penalties:** Strict **penalties for non-compliance** to enforce data protection standards.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. 'Right to Privacy' is protected under which Article of the Constitution of India?

- (a) Article 15
- (b) Article 19
- (c) Article 21
- (d) Article 29

Ans: (c)

Q. Right to Privacy is protected as an intrinsic part of Right to Life and Personal Liberty. Which of the following in the Constitution of India correctly and appropriately imply the above statement? (2018)

- (a) Article 14 and the provisions under the 42nd Amendment to the Constitution.
- (b) Article 17 and the Directive Principles of State Policy in Part IV.
- (c) Article 21 and the freedoms guaranteed in Part III.
- (d) Article 24 and the provisions under the 44th Amendment to the Constitution.

Ans: (c)

New ISRO Chairman Dr. V. Narayanan

Source: TH

Dr. V. Narayanan will succeed **S. Somanath** as **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** Chairman and Secretary of the **Department of Space (DoS)**, starting 14th January 2025, for a two-year tenure.

- **Narayanan's Role in ISRO's 2025 Missions:** As ISRO Chairman, Narayanan will oversee the launch of **NVS-02** for India's navigation system, lead the **unmanned Gaganyaan mission** with **Vyommitra**, and the **Indo-US NISAR satellite** launch in March 2025.
- **Contributions of Dr. S. Somanath:** Led **Chandrayaan-3**, **Aditya-L1**, **XpoSat**, and **INSAT missions**.
 - Spearheaded **Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV)**, **Re-usable Launch Vehicle (RLV-LEX)** and **Gaganyaan abort missions**.
 - As Secretary of DoS, initiated **National Space Policy 2023**, **IN-SPACE**, and fostered collaboration with ISRO and private ventures.
- **ISRO:** Formed on 15th August 1969, succeeded **Indian National Committee for Space Research (INCOSPAR)**, which was established in **1962** under **Dr. Vikram Sarabhai** to advance space technology for national development.
 - In 1972, India formed the **Space Commission** and established the **DoS**, bringing ISRO under its control.
 - The Secretariat of DOS and ISRO headquarters are located at Antariksh Bhavan in Bangalore.

//



Read more: [New ISRO Chairman S. Somanath](#)

Eradicating Manual Scavenging

For Prelims: [National Human Rights Commission \(NHRC\)](#), [Manual Scavengers](#), [Hepatitis](#), [Tetanus](#), [Cholera](#), [Asphyxiation](#), [Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act, 2013](#), [NAMASTE \(National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem\) Scheme](#), [Urban Local Bodies \(ULBs\)](#), [NALSA](#), [National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development Corporation \(NSKFDC\)](#), [Occupational Safety, Health, and Working Conditions Code 2020](#), [Swachh Bharat Mission \(SBM\)](#).

For Mains: Role of technology in eradicating manual scavenging in India. Role of judiciary in eradicating manual scavenging.

Source: [PIB](#)

Why in News?

The [National Human Rights Commission \(NHRC\)](#) organised an open house discussion on 'Dignity and Liberty of the Individuals- Rights of [Manual Scavengers](#)'.

Manual Scavenging

- **About:** Manual scavenging refers to the practice of **physically handling or cleaning human excreta** by individuals.

- It involves manual cleaning of human excreta from **insanitary toilets, open drains, pits, or railway tracks.**
- **Current Status:** In 2021, India recorded **58,098 manual scavengers**, with **women** comprising **75%** of them.
 - As on **31st July, 2024**, out of **766 districts** in the country, **732 districts** have reported themselves as **manual scavenging-free.**
- **Violation of Fundamental Rights: Manual scavenging violates fundamental rights, especially article 17** (abolition of untouchability) and **article 21** (Right to life with dignity).
- **Legal Framework Related to Manual Scavenging:**
 - **Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act, 2013: [Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act, 2013](#) prohibits manual scavenging**, including the construction of insanitary latrines, and mandates the demolition or conversion of such latrines into sanitary ones.
 - It also provides for the identification and rehabilitation of manual scavengers through **skill development, financial assistance, and alternative employment.**
 - **SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989:** It criminalises the employment of scheduled castes in manual scavenging.

What are the Major Challenges Faced by Manual Scavengers?

- **Health:** Manual scavengers are frequently exposed to human waste, which contains numerous **pathogens.**
 - This exposure makes them highly susceptible to diseases such as **Hepatitis, tetanus, and cholera.**
 - The presence of poisonous gases like **hydrogen sulphide** in septic tanks poses a serious risk of **asphyxiation**, which can lead to sudden death.
 - According to the government data, **377 persons** have died from **2019 to 2023** due to **hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks.**
- **Social Stigma:** Manual scavengers are stigmatized and treated as **untouchables**, reinforcing social exclusion and **perpetuating the caste system.**
- **Economic Challenges:** Manual scavengers are paid meager amounts, often below the **minimum wage**, keeping them trapped in a **cycle of poverty.**
 - They are employed on a **contractual or daily-wage basis**, without job security or benefits.
- **Double Discrimination:** Women, who form a significant portion of **manual scavengers**, face double discrimination in the **form of gender and inequality** such as sexual harassment and exploitation, alongside societal stigma.
- **Psychological Issues:** The social stigma attached to the profession often causes significant **mental health challenges**, such as anxiety and depression.
- **Drug Use:** To cope with the **stress and stigma** of their precarious work, many manual scavengers resort to **drug use**, which further exacerbates their health problems.

NATIONAL HUMAN *Rights* COMMISSION (NHRC)

According to NHRC, Human Rights are the rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the Constitution or embodied in the International Covenants and enforceable by courts in India

- Watchdog of Human Rights in India
- **Estd:** 1993 (in conformity with Universal Declaration of Human Rights)
- **Act:** Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993

State Human Rights Commissions

- Also constituted under the PHR Act, 1993
- **Appointment of Members:** by Governor
- **Removal of Members:** by President

Human Rights Day: 10 December

Functions

- ⌚ Investigates Complaints of human rights violations
- ⌚ *Suo Moto* cognizance of cases
- ⌚ Reviews and recommends human rights implementation
- ⌚ Spreading human rights awareness
- ⌚ Conduct studies, publish reports on human rights issues

Powers

- ⌚ Summon individuals, examine witnesses, and receive evidences
- ⌚ Inspect prisons and other institutions to ensure conditions are humane
- ⌚ Intervene in court proceedings relating to human rights

Members of NHRC

Composition

- ⌚ 5 full-time members and 7 deemed members
- ⌚ **Chairperson:** Retired CJI/Judges of the SC
- ⌚ **Administrative Head:** Secretary-General

Tenure

- ⌚ 3 years / till age 70 (whichever is earlier)

Appointment

- ⌚ All members appointed by **President** on recommendations of a **6-member** committee (PM, Speaker of LS, Deputy Chairman of RS, Union Home Minister and Leaders of Opposition of both Houses of Parliament)

Removal

- ⌚ President can remove the chairman or any member
- ⌚ **Ground:** Charges of proved misbehaviour or incapacity

Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) Status

- NHRC has been accredited 'A' Status since 1999
- **Retained 'A' Status:** 2006, 2011 and 2017
- **Suspension of 'A' Status:** 2023 and 2024



Drishiti IAS

What is the Supreme Court Guideline on Manual Scavenging?

- **Dr. Balram Singh Case, 2023:** The SC issued **14 directions to the Union, State and UTs** to completely eradicate manual scavenging ranging from forming guidelines and policies, rehabilitation, compensation, etc. Some of them are:
 - **Eradication of Manual Sewer Cleaning:** Phased measures to **eliminate manual sewer cleaning.**
 - **Rehabilitation of Sewage Workers:** Compensation (**Rs 30 lakhs for death, Rs 10-20 lakhs for disabilities**), **employment** for next of kin, and **education** for dependents.
 - **Accountability for Outsourced Work:** Accountability mechanisms, including **contract cancellations and penalties.**
 - **NALSA Involvement in Compensation:** **NALSA** to manage compensation disbursement and models.

- **Monitoring and Transparency:** A portal to **track deaths, compensation, and rehabilitation**

What are India's Initiatives to Curb Manual Scavenging?

- [Safaimitra Suraksha Challenge](#)
- [Swachhta Abhiyan App](#)
- [Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan](#)
- [National Commission for Safai Karamchari](#)
- [Swachhta Udyami Yojana \(SUY\)](#)
- [Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\)](#)
- [NAMASTE \(National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem\)](#)
- **Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs):** To develop a **professional, well-trained, and adequately equipped workforce.**
- **Technological Initiatives:**
 - **Bandicoot Robot:** Autonomously or remotely cleans, inspects, and removes blockages in sewer lines.
 - **Endobot & Swasth AI:** Diagnose pipelines to detect and mitigate water contamination, wastage, and sewer overflows.
 - **Robo-Drain System:** Automated robotic technology for cleaning underground sewers.
 - **Vacuum Trucks:** Use powerful pumps to remove sewage waste without human entry.

Way Forward

- **Mechanization:** The introduction of **automated or semi-automated equipment** offers a safer, more efficient way to manage sanitation work.
 - Robotic arms or vacuum trucks can carry out this work remotely, reducing human exposure to dangerous environments.
- **OHS Standards:** Recognising sanitation work as a [hazardous occupation](#) under the [Occupational Safety, Health, and Working Conditions Code 2020 \(OSH Code 2020\)](#) could transform safety standards and enforcement.
- **Health Screenings:** Implement **periodic health screenings** for sanitation workers across all ULBs, focusing on respiratory and dermatological conditions, with clear treatment and prevention protocols.
 - Expand the [Swachh Bharat Mission \(SBM\)](#) to include the health and dignity of sanitation workers, focusing on safety and empowerment.
- **Capacity Building:** Provide **capacity-building training** and **safety gear** for workers. Offer **financial assistance** for technological innovations in hazardous waste cleaning.
 - Incentivize **mechanization**, train workers, and empower **women-led SHGs** for sustainable livelihoods

Drishti Mains Question:

Examine the challenges faced by sanitation workers in India. Discuss the role of the judiciary in this regard.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. 'Rashtriya Garima Abhiyaan' is a national campaign to (2016)

(a) rehabilitate the homeless and destitute persons and provide them with suitable sources of

livelihood

(b) release the sex workers from their practice and provide them with alternative sources of livelihood

(c) eradicate the practice of manual scavenging and rehabilitate the manual scavengers

(d) release the bonded labourers from their bondage and rehabilitate them

Ans: (c)

Mains

Q. What are the impediments in disposing of the huge quantities of discarded solid waste which are continuously being generated? How do we safely remove the toxic wastes that have been accumulating in our habitable environment? (2018)

Q. "To ensure effective implementation of policies addressing the water, sanitation and hygiene needs the identification of the beneficiary segments is to be synchronized with anticipated outcomes." Examine the statement in the context of the WASH scheme. (2017)

Indonesia Joined BRICS

Source: IE

Recently, **Indonesia** has officially joined the **BRICS** group as the **10th member**, effective from **January 2025**.

BRICS:

▪ **About:**

- BRICS is an **intergovernmental informal grouping** of **10 emerging economies** of the world.
- BRICS stands for the original founding members, **Brazil, Russia, India, and China**, with **South Africa joining in 2010**.
- In 2024, **Iran, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt, Ethiopia, and Saudi Arabia** also became its members.
 - Argentina was initially expected to join the group in 2024 but **later decided against it**.
- The **first BRIC Summit** was held in **Russia in 2009**.

▪ **Significance:**

- **Economic Influence:** Prior to Indonesia's membership, BRICS represented **35% of global GDP** and **46% of the world's population**.
- **Counterbalance to G7:** Aims to strengthen the influence of emerging economies and **counter the dominance of the Western-led global financial system like G7**.

▪ **Future Agendas for BRICS:**

- **Reduce reliance on the US dollar** in international transactions, **strengthening local currencies** and **promoting non-dollar transactions**, potentially **reshaping global trade and finance**.
- It aims to **promote greater equity, inclusivity, and reforms in global institutions** such as the **IMF** and **UN**.

BRICS Expands Footprint in the Global South

G7 and BRICS member countries (as of Jan. 4, 2023)



* Formally joined on Jan. 1, 2024

Source: Statista research

Read More: [16th BRICS Summit & India-China Border Agreement](#)

30th Anniversary of World Trade Organisation

Source: VoV

Recently, 1st January 2025 marked the 30th anniversary of the [World Trade Organization \(WTO\)](#).

World Trade Organization (WTO):

- **About:** WTO is an international institution formed to regulate **the rules for global trade** among nations.
 - It was formed under the [Marrakesh Agreement](#) signed on **15th April 1994** by 123 countries after the [Uruguay Round negotiations \(1986-94\)](#) of the [General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade \(GATT\)](#), leading to the **birth of WTO in 1995**.
 - **WTO succeeded the GATT** which had regulated world trade since 1948.

- **GATT** focused on trade in goods, while **WTO** covers trade in goods, services, and intellectual property, including creations, designs, and inventions.

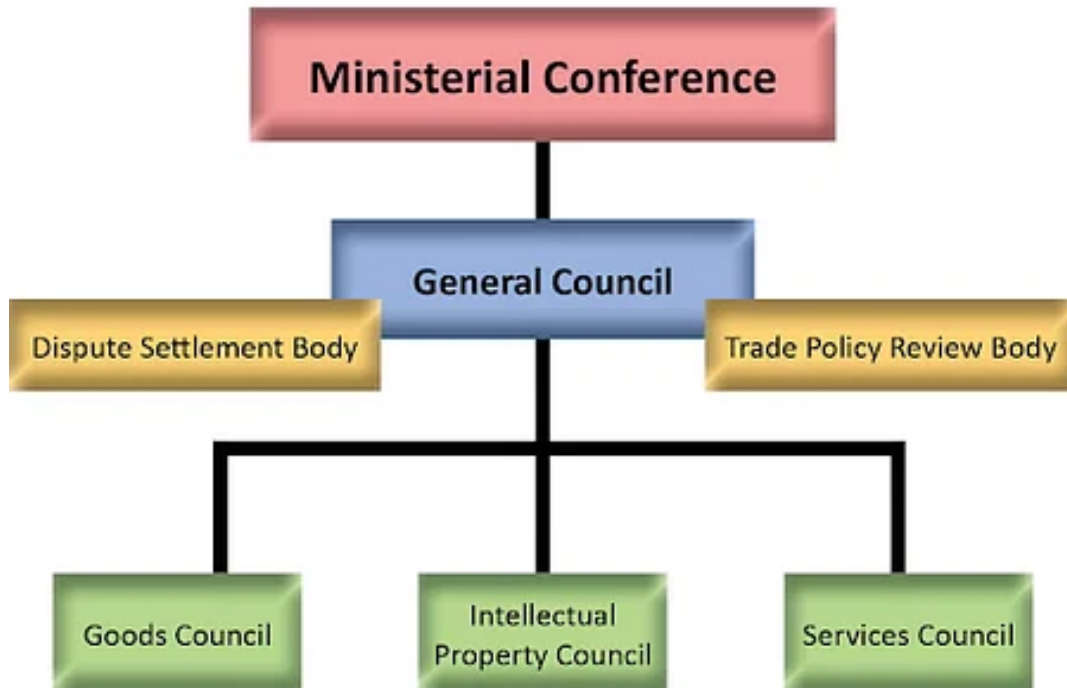
- **Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland.**

- **Members: 166 countries**, representing **98% of global trade.**

- **Key Bodies:**

- **Ministerial Conference (MC):** Highest decision-making authority.
- **Dispute Settlement Body (DSB):** [DSB](#) resolves trade disputes.

Structures of WTO



- **Key WTO Agreements:**

- **TRIMS (Trade-Related Investment Measures):** Prohibits measures that **discriminate against foreign products**, e.g., local content requirements.
- **TRIPS (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights):** [TRIPS](#) resolves disputes over **intellectual property rights**.
- **AoA (Agreement on Agriculture):** [AoA](#) promotes **agricultural trade liberalization**, focusing on market access and domestic support.
- **Other Agreements:**
 - [Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures](#)
 - [General Agreement on Trade in Services](#)
 - [General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade](#)

WTO AGREEMENT ON AGRICULTURE (AoA)

A WTO treaty negotiated during the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT); formally ratified in 1994 at Marrakesh, Morocco; Came into effect in 1995

FEATURES

- Market access (Promote market access for agricultural products by reducing trade barriers)
- Domestic support (Subsidy Boxes are included in this)
- Export subsidies (Reduce the use of export subsidies, which can distort trade)

SUBSIDY BOXES

Amber Box Subsidies:

- Can distort international trade by making a country's products cheaper in comparison to those of other countries
 - Examples: Subsidies for inputs such as fertilisers, seeds, electricity, irrigation, and Minimum Support Price (MSP)
- Amber box is used for all domestic support measures that are deemed to distort production and trade
 - As a result, the signatories are required to commit to reducing domestic supports that fall into the amber box
- Members who do not make these commitments must keep their amber box support within 5–10% of their value of production. (*De Minimis Clause*)
 - 10% for developing countries
 - 5% for developed countries
- India's MSP program remains under scrutiny, as it exceeds 10% ceiling

Blue box Subsidies:

- "Amber box with conditions" — designed to reduce distortion
- Any support that would normally be in the amber box is placed in the blue box if it requires farmers to limit production
 - These subsidies aim to limit production by imposing production quotas or requiring farmers to set aside part of their land
- At present there are no limits on spending on blue box subsidies

Green Box Subsidies:

- Domestic support measures that don't cause trade distortion or at most cause minimal distortion
- These subsidies are government funded without any price support to crops
 - Also include environmental protection and regional development programmes
- Allowed without limits (except in certain circumstances)



Read More: [Tepid Trade-Offs: On the WTO 13th Ministerial Conference](#)

Climate Change and African Easterly Waves

Source: DTE

Why in News?

A study published in *Communications Earth & Environment* predicts that **climate change** will increase the intensity and frequency of **extreme flooding in the Sahel region**, driven by changes in **African easterly waves (AEWs)**.

What are the Key Highlights of the Study?

- Increased AEW Activity:** The study predicts an increase in AEWs over the **Sahel-Sahara** by the end of 21st century.
 - The intensification is driven by **increased baroclinicity** (variation in **atmospheric pressure and density** with height) due to a **stronger meridional temperature gradient** (difference in temperature between regions) between the Guinea Coast and the Sahara.
- Enhanced Monsoon Flow:** The study found that **low-level warming reinforces monsoon**

flow, increasing **convergence** (more air entering a vertical column than leaving it) and vertical motion of air along the **intertropical discontinuity (ITD)** altering AEWs formation.

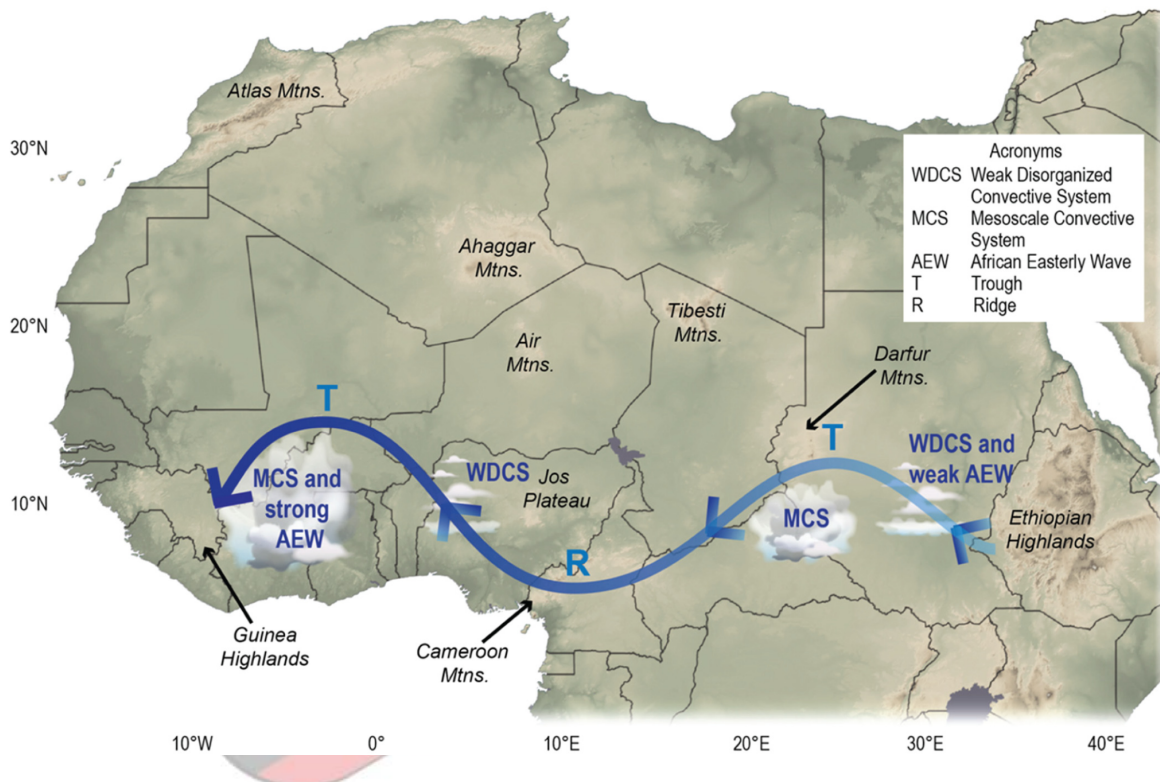
- The ITD is the boundary between the **hot and dry desert air** and the **cooler and more moist air** from the Arabian Sea.

▪ **Implications:**

- **Saharan Dust Transport:** Strong winds from a northern track AEW (close to Sahara Desert) can transport **dry Saharan air, preventing or delaying tropical cyclogenesis** (the formation of tropical cyclones) until more favorable conditions in the warmer western Atlantic.
- **Connection to MCSs:** AEWs are linked to **Mesoscale convective systems (MCSs)**, which cause extreme rainfall. The study suggests that increased AEW activity may **lead to more frequent and intense flooding events** in the Sahel.

What are African Easterly Waves?

- **Definition:** African easterly waves (AEWs) are weather systems that form over **northern Africa** during the summer and move **east to west toward the Atlantic Ocean**.
- **Significance:** AEWs bring rainstorms to drought-prone areas in northern Africa.
 - Carry **Saharan dust across the Atlantic ocean** and AEWs act as precursors for **Atlantic hurricanes**.
- **Influence:** AEWs significantly affect the **regional hydroclimate**, particularly in the Sahel, making it essential to understand their behavior under global warming.



Sahel Region

- The Sahel is a semiarid region of **western and north-central Africa**, stretching from Senegal in the west to Sudan in the east.
 - It acts as a transition between the **Sahara Desert** to the north and the humid **savannas to the south**.
 - It features **savanna terrain, with low-growing grass, thorny shrubs**, and sparse vegetation.
- **The United Nations (UN) limits the Sahel to ten (10) countries** they are Burkina Faso, Cameroon, The Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Chad.
- The **Niger River**, the longest and largest in western Africa, is a major water source for the region.

Boundaries of the Sahel within the context of the United Nations



PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/current-affairs-news-analysis-editorials/news-analysis/09-01-2025/print>

