



Biodiversity Hotspots in India

//

Biodiversity Hotspots in India

Himalayas

- The **youngest and highest mountain chain** on Earth, **stretches in an arc across** northern Pakistan; Nepal; Bhutan; the northwestern and northeastern states of India adjoining Myanmar; and the southwest China border in the east.
- Home to important populations of numerous large bird and mammal species, including vultures, tigers, rhinos and wild water buffalo.
- Many unique and diverse human groups are also found here. **Nepal** counts more than 27 ethnic groups, **either of Tibetan-Burmese or Indo-Aryan descent**, while **Bhutan has three main ethnic groups—the Ngalongs, Sharchogpas and Lhotsampas**. The northeast part of India, meanwhile, has more than 500 distinct ethnic groups.

Western Ghats and Sri Lanka

- Western Ghats, a **biogeographically important formation of the Gondwanaland**, is formed of the Malabar plains and the chain of mountains running parallel to India's west coast, about 30 to 50 km inland.
- The Western Ghats **indigenously known as 'Sahyadri'**, starts downwards from the Tapi River in Gujarat to the country's southernmost tip Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu.
- It is interrupted by a number of natural gaps and passes, and the **widest being the Palakkad (Palghat) Gap**.
- The Agasthyamalai hills, Nilgiris, Anamalai hills, Palani hills, Meghamalai, Cardamom hills, Silent Valley- New Amarambalam forests, Wyanad-Kodagu, Shimoga-Kanara, Konkan and Mahabaleshwar-Khandala are some of chief centres of plant diversity and endemism in the Western Ghats.
- The 'Western Ghats' is a **world heritage site**.
- Sri Lanka is a continental island **separated from southern India by the 20-meter-deep Palk Strait**.

Indo-Burma

- Covers Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos PDR and includes the Gangetic plains, areas around the Brahmaputra River and parts of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- The **limestone karst formations** that are found throughout the hotspot support highly unique ecosystems, with high levels of endemism, particularly among plants, reptiles and molluscs.

Sundaland

- Politically, the hotspot **covers** a small portion of southern Thailand; nearly all of Malaysia; Singapore; Brunei; and the western half of Indonesia. The **Nicobar Islands**, which are under Indian jurisdiction, are also included. Interestingly, it extends to the tectonic plates under the Indian Ocean.
- The hotspot is **home to iconic species** like orangutans, pig-tailed langurs, Javan and Sumatran rhinos, and proboscis monkeys found only in Borneo.
- Sundaland also has the distinction of **being home to the world's largest flowers**, the rafflesia, which measure one metre across.

FACTS

- The term 'biodiversity hotspot' was **coined by Norman Myers** (1988).
- The **Conservation International** (non-profit organization) in association with Myers made the first systematic update of the hotspots.
- There are **currently 36 recognized biodiversity hotspots**. To qualify as a biodiversity hotspot, an area **must meet two strict criteria**:
 - Contain at least 1,500 species of vascular plants found nowhere else on Earth (known as "endemic" species).
 - Have lost at least 70 percent of its primary native vegetation.
- **Biodiversity Hotspots in India (4)**: The Himalayas, The Western Ghats and Sri Lanka, The Indo-Burma and The Sundaland.

Automobile Industry in India

For Prelims: Electric vehicle (EV), Production-Linked Incentive (PLI), Automotive Mission Plan 2016-26, NATIONAL ELECTRIC MOBILITY MISSION PLAN 2020 (NEMMP).

For Mains: Significance of Automobile Sector of India.

Why in News?

Recently, the Union Minister of Commerce and Industry addressed the 62nd **Automotive Component Manufacturers Association (ACMA) Annual Session**.

- The **Theme** of the session was '**Future of Mobility - Transforming to be Ahead of Opportunity**'.
- The **ACMA** is the **apex body representing the interest of the Indian Auto Component Industry**. Its membership of over 850 manufacturers contributes to more than 85% of the auto component industry's turnover in the organized sector.

What are the Key Highlights of the Session?

- The 5-point action agenda was given for the Automobile Industry:
 - To **Focus on Quality** in order to become globally competitive and reduce dependence on imports.
 - To **Think holistically** and have a larger vision to engage with others in the spirit of openness and competitiveness.
 - To Give **emphasis on Value Addition**.
 - To Exit the Uncompetitive market and **explore new market opportunities** in the sectors where we can be competitive.
 - To Think big and **set aggressive targets** and ambitions for the industry.
- Further, the government emphasize that future of the Automotive Component Industry rests on being more **Connected, focusing on Convenience, orienting towards Clean Energy** and clean mobility and using Cutting-edge technology.

What is the Status of Automobile industry in India?

- **About:**
 - **Automobile Industry** comprises all the automobile vehicles including Passenger Vehicles, Commercial Vehicles, Three Wheelers, Two Wheelers and Quadricycles.
 - India's Automotive Market was valued at **USD 100 billion in 2021** and is expected to reach **USD 160 billion in 2027**, registering a **compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 8.1%** over the forecast period (2022-2027).
 - India is the **4th largest producer** of Automobiles in the world, with an average annual production of more than 4 million motor vehicles.
 - India is the **largest tractor manufacturer**, second-largest bus manufacturer, and third largest heavy trucks manufacturer in the world.
 - The **Electric Vehicle (EV)** market is estimated to reach Rs. 50,000 crore (USD 7.09 billion) in India by 2025.
 - **Share in Gross Domestic Product (GDP): 7.1%**.
 - **Share in India's exports: 4.7%**.
- **Initiatives:**
 - **Production-Linked Incentive (PLI):**
 - The Union Cabinet announced the **Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme** in the Automobile and Auto Components sectors.
 - The PLI scheme (**outlay of USD 3.5 Billion**) for the automobile sector proposes **financial incentives of up to 18% to boost domestic manufacturing** of advanced automotive technology products and attract investments in the automotive manufacturing value chain.
 - **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):**
 - Under the automatic route, **100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is permitted along with full delicensing**. Hence, making it easy for investors to set up their manufacturing plant/shop in India.
 - **Automotive Mission Plan 2016-26 (AMP 2026):**
 - The **Automotive Mission Plan 2016-26 (AMP 2026)** outlines the **trajectory of**

growth of the automotive ecosystem in India, including the glide path of definite regulations and policies that govern research, design, technology, testing, manufacturing, import/ export, sale, use, repair, and recycling of automotive vehicles, components and services.

◦ **National Electric Mobility Mission Plan 2020 (NEMMP):**

- The NEMMP initiative has been taken up to **encourage consistent, affordable and competent xEVs (hybrid and electric vehicles)** that meet consumer performance and price expectations through government-industry collaboration.

What are the Challenges faced by the Automobile Industry?

- **Shared Cars:** Over the past three-four years, India has seen the **rapid rise of ride-share apps like OLA, Uber, etc.**
 - These apps make travel far more convenient without the hassle of driving through rigorous traffic and **avoiding maintenance cost of owning a vehicle, all at affordable rates.** This has certainly challenged the concept of ownership and thus affected sales.
- **Tight Credit Availability:** 80-85% of vehicles in the country are financed by the nationalised banks, private banks or NBFCs.
 - Banks have become extra-cautious in supplying credit to the people purchasing a car.
- **Transition to EV:** The government plans to ban internal-combustion powered two-wheelers and three-wheelers by 2023 and 2025 respectively.
 - This sudden transition, when the situation of the **automobile sector is already dire as the sales have slumped to a two-decade low**, has worsened the situation of job cuts and market disruption.
- **Decrease Demand for Commercial Vehicles:** The freight carrying capacity of the new model trucks has increased. Due to this, there has been a decline in the demand for new trucks as the consumers can carry freight in their own trucks.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Magnetite particles, suspected to cause neurodegenerative problems, are generated as environmental pollutants from which of the following?

1. Brakes of motor vehicles
2. Engines of motor vehicles
3. Microwave stoves within homes
4. Power plants
5. Telephone lines

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

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

Ans: (d)

Exp:

- Magnetic nanoparticles are a class of nanoparticles that can be manipulated using magnetic fields. Such particles commonly consist of two components, a magnetic material, often iron, nickel and cobalt, and a chemical component that has functionality. Whenever, any magnetic component is used in appliances, they generate magnetic flux which produces magnetic particles.
- The automotive industry uses ceramic or ferrite magnets to make vehicles safer. This kind of use of magnets in motor vehicles can generate magnetic particles. **Hence, 1 is correct.**
- Engines of motor vehicles can generate magnetic particles as they use high powered magnets

which generate magnetic flux. **Hence, 2 is correct.**

- In Microwave, a magnetic stirrer is used which can generate magnetic particles. **Hence, 3 is correct.**
- Power plants release metal content along with ash. Use of coal in power plants is a major source of combustion-associated magnetite fine particles. **Hence, 4 is correct.**
- Telephone lines produce low frequency, low energy electromagnetic fields which are the potential source of magnetite particles. **Hence, 5 is correct.**
- **Therefore, option (d) is the correct answer.**

[Source: PIB](#)

Shallow Water Mining

For Prelims: Deep-sea mining, Shallow Water Mining, Marine Ecosystem.

For Mains: Shallow Water Mining and its Implications.

Why in News?

Recently, a group of researchers has suggested that **Shallow Water Mining** is in direct conflict with **Biodiversity Conservation and [Sustainability Goals](#)**, as the activity poses **severe environmental risks**.

What is Shallow Water Mining?

- Shallow-water mining takes place **at depths less than 200 metres** and it has been touted as **less destructive than terrestrial mining** and less risky than mining in [Deep-Water Ecosystems](#).
- It is considered a relatively low-risk and low-cost option to satisfy the demand for metals and minerals. Also, technology for shallow-water mining already exists.
- Shallow-water mining projects are already underway in **Namibia and Indonesia**, and **projects have been proposed in Mexico, New Zealand, and Sweden**.

What are the Findings?

- **About:**
 - Shallow Water Mining is not a sustainable substitute for [Deep-Sea Mining](#).
 - The part of the ocean that lies **below a depth of 200 meters is defined as the deep sea**, and the process of extracting minerals from this area is known as deep-sea mining.
 - Mining metals from the shallow-water ocean floor **requires removing large amounts of sediment**.
 - **Removing these sediments, which takes** thousands of years to accumulate, **means**

jeopardizing organisms that call it home.

▪ **Impact:**

- As shallow-water ecosystems are already under stress due to pollution, and the impacts of **climate change**, even seemingly small-scale mining activities **can drastically affect marine ecosystems, especially at local scales.**
- Mineral mining alters habitats as well as causes **local biodiversity loss and changes in species communities.**
- The indirect effects of mining, such as the **spread of seabed material and harmful substances released** from the seafloor and the **clouding of water, contribute to impairing the state of the marine environment.**
- The overall environmental effects of shallow-water mining are similar to those of **operations where the seafloor is excavated**, such as dredging. This means that **it can take decades for the ecosystems to recover.**

What are the Suggestions?

- Shallow-water mining activities should not be considered the **“silver bullet to resolve the growing global need for metals”** until the environmental and socioeconomic impacts are thoroughly investigated.
- Without this information, one could not understand the potential risks of the mining activity for deep-ocean biodiversity, ecosystems and human well-being.
- The precautionary principle should be **applied to mining in shallow marine areas.** They believe **operations should not be permitted until their risks have been fully mapped.**

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. The Global Ocean Commission grants licences for seabed exploration and mining in international waters.
2. India has received licences for seabed mineral exploration in international waters.
3. 'Rare earth minerals' are present on the seafloor in international waters.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- The Global Ocean Commission was an international initiative between 2013 and 2016 to raise awareness and promote action to address the degradation of the ocean and help restore it to full health and productivity.
- **International Seabed Authority (ISA) is a UN body set up to regulate the exploration and exploitation of marine non-living resources of oceans in international waters.** It considers applications for exploration and exploitation of deep-sea resources from contractors, assesses environmental impact assessments and supervises mining activities. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- India was the first country to receive the status of a 'Pioneer Investor' in 1987 and was given an area of about 1.5 lakh sq. km in the Central Indian Ocean Basin (CIOB) for nodule exploration. **India's exclusive rights to explore polymetallic nodules from seabed in the Central Indian Ocean Basin was extended in 2017 for five years. Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- Rare earth minerals have unique magnetic, luminescent, and electrochemical properties and thus are used in many modern technologies, including consumer electronics, computers and networks,

communications, health care, national defense, etc. They are called 'rare earth' because earlier it was difficult to extract them from their oxides forms technologically.

- **Rare earth minerals** are **present on the seafloor in international waters**. The sea floor of various oceans boasts one of the world's largest untapped collections of rare-earth minerals. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- **Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

[Source: DTE](#)

India Discrimination Report

For Prelims: India Discrimination Report, Oxfam India, National Sample Survey on employment unemployment, Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), Right to Equality, Prohibition of Discrimination (Article 15).

For Mains: Impacts of Discrimination against Women & Minorities.

Why in News?

The **India Discrimination Report** which is released by **Oxfam India** highlighted that women and marginalized communities suffered discrimination in the job market.

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- The dataset was taken from the 61st round of the [National Sample Survey on employment unemployment](#) (2004-05), the [Periodic Labour Force Survey \(PLFS\)](#) in 2018-19 and 2019-20, and the **All-India Debt and Investment Survey by the Centre**.
- **Schedule caste/Schedule tribe:** There has been a **decline in discrimination in urban areas** due to education and supportive government policies.
 - **Difference in Earning:** The average earning of self-employed workers in 2019-20 was Rs 15,878 for people from non-SCs/ST categories, while it is Rs 10,533 for those from SC or ST backgrounds.
 - Self-employed **non-SC/ST workers earn a third more than** their counterparts from **SC or ST backgrounds**.
 - **Rise in discrimination in Rural areas:** The SC and ST communities in rural India are facing an increase in discrimination in casual employment.
- **Women:** Discrimination against women is so high that there is **hardly any difference** across **religion or caste-based sub-groups**, or the rural-urban divide.
 - The discrimination increased for women in this period — **from 67.2% in 2004-05 to 75.7% in 2019-20**.
- **Earning Gap between Males & Females:** The earning gaps are large, both in rural and urban areas for casual workers ranging between 50% and 70%. The range is low for regular workers, **with earnings of men exceeding those of women by 20 and 60%**.
 - In the case of the self-employed, the disparity is much higher, with men earning 4 to 5 times that of women.
 - Gender discrimination in India is structural which results in great disparities between earnings of men and women under 'normal circumstances'.

What are the Constitutional Provisions against Discrimination?

- **Right to Equality (Article 14, 15, 16):**
 - **Equality Before Law: Article 14** says that no person shall be denied treatment of equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.
 - The right is extended to all persons whether citizens or foreigners, statutory corporations, companies, registered societies or any other type of legal person.
 - **Prohibition of Discrimination: Article 15** provides that **no citizen shall be discriminated on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.**
 - **Equality of Opportunity in Public Employment: Article 16** of the Indian constitution provides for equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters of employment or appointment to any public office.

What are the Government Initiatives Related to Women Empowerment?

- [Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme](#)
- [Ujjawala Yojna](#)
- [Swadhar Greh](#)
- [Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana](#)
- [Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra Scheme](#)
- [One Stop Centre](#)

What do we know about the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)?

- The [National Statistical Office \(NSO\)](#) launched the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) in April 2017.
- The objective of PLFS is primarily twofold:
 - To estimate the key employment and unemployment indicators (viz. **Worker Population Ratio, Labour Force Participation Rate, Unemployment Rate**) in the short time interval of three months for the urban areas only in the CWS.
 - To **estimate employment and unemployment indicators** in both usual Status and CWS in both rural and urban areas annually.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. India is regarded as a country with “Demographic Dividend”. This is due to (2011)

- (a) Its high population in the age group below 15 years
- (b) Its high population in the age group of 15-64 years
- (c) Its high population in the age group above 65 years
- (d) Its high total population

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- Demographic dividend refers to the growth in an economy that is the resultant effect of a change in the age structure of a country's population.
- **Demographic dividend is a situation in a country when it enjoys accelerated economic growth due to the decline in fertility and mortality rates.**
- When fewer births are registered and the number of young dependents grow smaller relative to the working population, there remains fewer people to be taken care of whereas the labour force

increases.

- In such a situation, the resources of an economy are freed up and invested in other areas to accelerate the country's economic growth and development.
- Total high population does not necessarily mean that there is a high proportion of the working population.
- High population above 65 years of age amounts to a larger proportion of dependent population and lesser proportion of the labour force.
- A country that experiences low birth rates in conjunction with low death rates receives an economic dividend or benefit from the increase in productivity of their working population as their dependent population is low (i.e., children).
- High population in the age group of 15-64 years indicates towards a high working age population and labour force. **Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

Mains

Q. Comment on the challenges for inclusive growth which include careless and useless manpower in the Indian context. Suggest measures to be taken for facing these challenges. **(2016)**

Source: IE

Adivasi Group Agreement

For Prelims: North East India, Tribal Groups of Assam, Agreements for Peace in North East India

For Mains: Government Intervention in maintaining peace , Tribals of North East India

Why in News?

Recently, a historic agreement has been signed between the **Government of India, Government of Assam** and representatives of **eight Armed Adivasi Groups**.

- The agreement was signed to end the **decades old crisis of Adivasis and tea garden workers** in Assam.



What do we Need to Know about the Agreement?

▪ About:

- With the signing of this tripartite agreement, **1182 cadres of tribal groups of Assam** have joined the mainstream by laying down arms.

▪ Aim:

- The agreement is intended to **protect & strengthen** the social, cultural, linguistic and community-based identity of the groups.
- It also aims to fulfill the **political, economic and educational aspirations** of the Adivasi groups.
- It also aims to ensure **rapid and focused development of tea gardens** along with Adivasi villages/areas throughout the state.

▪ Provisions of the Agreement:

- The agreement provides for the establishment of a **Tribal Welfare and Development Council** with a view to ensure speedy and focused development of tea gardens.
- The agreement also provides for **rehabilitation and resettlement of armed cadres** and measures for the welfare of **tea garden workers**.
- A **special development package** of Rs.1000 crore will be provided over a **period of five years for infrastructure development** in villages/areas with tribal population.

▪ Recent Figures regarding Insurgency:

- Since 2014, around **8,000 insurgents have joined the mainstream of society** by laying down their arms.
- 2020 recorded the **lowest number of insurgency incidents** in the last two decades.
- In comparison to 2014, there has been a **74% reduction in the incidents of insurgency** in 2021.
 - In the same period, there has been a **60% reduction in the casualties of security forces and 89% in the number of civilian casualties**.

What Efforts has the Government Taken for Peace in North East India?

- **Agreements:**
 - **NLFT Agreement 2019:**
 - **National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT)** has been banned under the [Unlawful Activities \(Prevention\) Act, 1967](#) since 1997 and has been involved in violence, operating from their camps across the international border.
 - [NLFT Agreement 2019](#) resulted in the surrender of 88 cadres with 44 weapons.
 - **BRU-REANG:**
 - Bru or Reang is a community **indigenous to Northeast India**, living mostly in Tripura, Mizoram and Assam. In Tripura, they are recognised as a [Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group](#).
 - A landmark agreement was signed on 16th January 2020 to resolve the **23-year-old Bru-Reang refugee crisis** by which more than **37,000 internally displaced people are being settled in Tripura**.
 - **Bodo Accord 2020:**
 - Bodos are the **single largest community** among the notified [Scheduled Tribes](#) in Assam.
 - They have been demanding a **Bodo state since 1967-68**.
 - To resolve the **five-decade-old Bodo issue in Assam**, Bodo Accord was signed on 27th January, 2020 resulting in the **surrender of 1615 cadres** with a huge cache of arms and ammunition at Guwahati on 30th January 2020.
 - **Karbi Anglong Agreement 2021:**
 - It was signed to resolve the **long-running dispute in the Karbi regions of Assam** in which more than **1000 armed cadres renounced violence** and joined the mainstream of society.
 - **Assam-Meghalaya Inter-State Boundary Agreement 2022:**
 - [AMISB Agreement 2022](#) was signed on 29th March 2022 to settle the **dispute over six out of total twelve areas of interstate boundary dispute** between the states of Assam and Meghalaya.
- **Partial Withdrawal of AFSPA:**
 - The government of India, in April 2022, partially withdrew the [Armed Forces Special Powers Act \(AFSPA\), 1958](#) from parts of three Northeast states namely Assam, Nagaland and Manipur.

UPSC Civil Services, Previous Year Questions (PYQ)

Q. Human rights activists constantly highlight the fact that the Armed forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (AFSPA) is a draconian act leading to cases of human rights abuses by security forces. What sections of AFSPA are opposed by the activists? Critically evaluate the requirement with reference to the view held by the Apex Court. **(2015)**

[Source: PIB](#)

Cognitive Dissonance

For Mains: Cognitive Dissonance concept, Ethics and Human Interface

What is Cognitive Dissonance?

▪ About:

- Cognitive dissonance's definition is a **feeling of unease when there is tension between one's beliefs, attitudes, values, and one's actions.**
- The notion of cognitive dissonance was **developed by the American cognitive psychologist Leon Festinger** in the 1950s.
- Festinger thought that **people were driven to promote the harmony and coherence** of their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. Thus, when people develop a sense that there has been a breakdown in their mental harmony, they will attempt to end their cognitive dissonance.

▪ Experiment:

- Festinger developed an **experiment in which people had to perform a mundane, repetitive task** (turning pegs).
- They were then paid to lie to someone and attempt to convince the person that the task was interesting.
- Festinger created two groups, one group's members were paid a small amount of money, and another group was paid a larger amount of money. Festinger found that those who were given more money experienced less cognitive dissonance.

▪ Cognitive Dissonance Theory:

- **It attempts to explain not only feelings of discomfort that arise from a tension between one's beliefs and actions but also analyze how people resolve this tension.**

What are the Causes of Cognitive Dissonance?

▪ Forced Compliance Behavior:

- Forced compliance is a situation in which **a person is forced to perform an action that is inconsistent with their beliefs**
- Since the action already occurred and the behavior cannot be changed, the way to alleviate dissonance is for a person to re-evaluate what they have done.

▪ Decision Making:

- Decisions **can often create dissonance because decisions involve choosing one alternative over another**, which may mean accepting the disadvantages of one choice

• Example:

- A person gets a job offer in a great city, but rejecting the job offer means getting to stay near friends and family
- Both choices have positives and negatives: if the person takes the job, they will miss their loved ones, but if they turn down the job offer, they may miss the opportunities available in the city.

▪ Effort:

- Most people tend to place higher value on value goals or items that require a lot of effort to achieve.
- But **cognitive dissonance could occur if a person spends a lot of effort to achieve or acquire something** and it turns out to be negative or undesirable.

How can Cognitive Dissonance be Resolved?

▪ About:

- There were **different ways in which individuals or groups resolved cognitive dissonance** to best suit their situations.
- One could change one's thoughts, change one's behaviour to match one's thoughts, add a thought to justify the behaviour or trivialise the inconsistency between thoughts and behaviour.

▪ Example:

- X is a 25-year-old graduate (unemployed) who has newly started supporting a political party.
- He follows the political party as he believes in their promises of providing better job opportunities and development for youngsters in the country if they came to power.

- His party wins the elections. Despite five years of governance by his party, no significant changes occur in the employment sector and X is still unemployed. As the next elections approach, the political party members request his support. In such a situation, what would X do?
 - **X can Change his thought about the Situation:**
 - He looks at his neighbours B and C, who are also graduates. They have started a chai shop and samosa shop respectively, in their street.
 - X concludes that **though not in a conventional sense, jobs were created** after his party came into power, changing his opinion about the situation, and **reducing the inconsistency in his belief**. He will still vote for the same political party with a change in his perspective.
 - **X can Change his Behaviour towards the Situation:**
 - He understands and accepts that the promises made by the political party he supported were false and decides not to trust them anymore.
 - **X can add a Thought:**
 - He analyses the activities of his government and **concludes that though the government failed to provide jobs**, in the past five years under his party's leadership, there are **infrastructural development** such as the construction of the Supreme Court, bridges, roads etc.
 - He resolves the cognitive inconsistency between his thoughts and behaviour by adding a **thought that rationalises his support of the political party**. He will still vote for the same party with the hope that the party will fulfil its promise and provide employment for its citizens in the next term.
 - **X can Trivialise the Inconsistency:**
 - He **compares the state of his country after his party came into power** with economically poorer neighbouring countries.
 - He observes that **while only 40% of the educated youth in his country are employed**, the share is less than 30% in his neighbouring countries.
 - In trivialising the faults in his political party's governance, **the tension created due to the inconsistency between his thoughts and behaviour is negated**.
 - He will thus continue voting for the same political party as he has now justified the reason behind supporting the party.

What are the Some Instances where a Civil Servant may experience Cognitive Dissonance?

- An IPS officer who believes in non-violence or doing no harm to anyone when has to take decision of Lathi charge or using pellet guns to disperse crowd faces such cognitive dissonance.
 - **Strict adherence to ethical conduct** may cause problems in carrying out certain aims both in public and private life causing disaffection arising out of inability to reach goals. Being upright also pits the person against powerful vested interest, endangering his and his family's life, which may create inconsistency (dissonance) in civil servants' mind.
 - **Development v/s Environment:** A public servant faces dissonance when she has to take decision on displacement of tribal population for any development project.

Way Forward

- A civil servant **should always follow the constitutional moral values**, code of conduct of services and act within ethical framework of public service in any case of cognitive dissonance.
- **Emotional intelligence can be a tool for the public servants** to deal whenever such situation arises.

[Source: TH](#)

Social Entrepreneurship in India

For Prelims: Social Entrepreneurs, Poverty, ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) investing

For Mains: Social Entrepreneurship in India, Significance of Social Entrepreneurs, Issues Relating to Development, Growth & Development

Why in News?

In order for businesses and governments to make informed decisions about global socioeconomic and environmental issues, **social entrepreneurship is becoming increasingly important.**

Who are Social Entrepreneurs?

▪ About:

- It is a **construct that blends the idea of a commercial enterprise** with the tenets of a charitable nonprofit organization.
- It is about **creating business models** revolving around low-cost products and services to resolve social inequities.
- It **helps to succeed in economic initiatives**, and all the investment focuses on the social and environmental mission.
- Social entrepreneurs are also called **social innovators** as they are the agents of change and create significant change using innovative ideas.
 - They **identify the problems and build the difference** by their plan.
- Social entrepreneurship is a growing trend alongside Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) and **ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) investing.**

▪ Examples:

- Educational programs, providing banking services in underserved areas and helping children orphaned by epidemic disease.

What is the Significance of Social Entrepreneurs?

- **Focus on Social Problems:** Social Entrepreneurs **mainly focus on social problems.** They initiate innovation by mobilizing the resources available to build social arrangements in response to social problems.
- **Change Agent in Social Sector:** Social Entrepreneurs **act as change makers in society** who in turn influence others to contribute to the development of mankind.
 - They work not only as a strong catalyst in society, but as change agents in the social sector.
- **Bring the Changes:** They **adopt a mission to create and sustain social value**; recognizing and rigidly pursuing new opportunities, engaging in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation and learning.
- **Increased Accountability:** They **act boldly without being limited by resources** in hand and exhibit heightened accountability to the constituencies.
- **Improve People's Lives:** People are **attracted to social entrepreneurs** like the Nobel Peace Prize laureate **Muhammad Yunus** for many of the same reasons that they find business entrepreneurs like Steve Jobs so compelling – these extraordinary people come up with brilliant ideas and against all the odds succeed at creating new products and services that dramatically improve people's lives.
- **Help in Achieving Inclusive Society:** They are **also playing a pivotal role in the inclusive recovery** and rebuilding of communities at the grassroots level.

How can Social Entrepreneurs Contribute to India's Growth Story?

- **No more Not for Profit:**
 - India's development sector has undergone a rapid transformation including the **creation of social enterprises that are purely for-profit companies** and no longer restricted to "no-profit" or "low-profit" ventures.
 - These **for-profit social enterprises can generate enough funds** to run their operations without donations or grants.
- **Social Impact Investing:**
 - The **country's social entrepreneurs are being nurtured, encouraged and hailed** for being able to meet India's most challenging developmental demands.
 - According to the **Impact Investors Council (IIC)**, around 600 impact enterprises in India now affect 500 million lives, attracting over USD 9 billion in capital.
 - Impact Investors Council (IIC) is the **leading national industry association of Impact Investors in India.**
 - Its mission is to **encourage private capital to bridge the social investment gap in the country** while developing an impact investment asset class.
- **Deepening Social Innovation Movement:**
 - Today's social entrepreneurs have **become elemental innovators and dynamic problem-solvers** contributing to India's development.
 - These **enterprises are looking for strategic collaborations**, both domestic and international, to innovatively solve unique problems.
 - **Extensive use of technology and rapid digitalisation initiatives** by the government have further facilitated their innovation streak.
- **Support of Government:**
 - Government support for **startups** along with the announcement and impending launch of the **Social Stock Exchange** has paved the way for a more positive atmosphere for social entrepreneurship in India.
 - The **Securities and Exchange Board of India** has recently **released the framework for a Social Stock Exchange**, making it possible for social entrepreneurs to raise more funds and expand their impact and reach exponentially.
- **Sustainability and a Multi-Dimensional Approach:**
 - Both businesses and governments are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of sustainability.
 - **Social entrepreneurs and their business models** have always been **working on the sustainability framework.**
 - The government and corporate firms are **not only willing to take inspiration from their business models and incorporate those learnings**, but also to help these enterprises scale up.
 - Additionally, **in order to bridge the socioeconomic gaps prevalent in society**, one needs to adopt a multidimensional approach.
 - For example, beyond the lack of financial resources, **poverty also has cultural, social, psychological and emotional dimensions**, which manifest in the form of discrimination, exclusion, insecurity, vulnerability, powerlessness and rejection.
 - **Social entrepreneurial models offer customisation for each problem**, hence addressing all the dimensions of an issue.

Way Forward

- In the Amrit Kaal (the 25-year period to 2047), **these enthusiasts of social causes** — driven by purpose, vision, value, and ethos to create a sizeable socioeconomic impact — **can be trusted to shoulder more responsibility** and be given a significant share of the economy.
 - For over a decade, the **Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship**, a sister organisation of the **World Economic Forum**, and the Jubilant Bhartia Foundation **have nurtured social entrepreneurship in India** through their annual **Social Entrepreneur of the Year (SEOY) India Award**. SEOY Award India-2022 is the 13th edition of the award.
 - The high-impact finalists of this year's award mirror the above indications perfectly and reassure us that in the next 25 years, **when India celebrates its 100th year of Independence, social enterprises will be playing a much more pivotal role in the country.**

- The need of the hour is a **nourishing ecosystem for social entrepreneurs to take up programmes**, bridge pandemic-induced gaps, scale-up existing initiatives, and be part of the mainstream response system.

[Source: HT](#)

Ramakrishna Mission's Awakening Programme

For Prelims: Ramakrishna Mission's 'Awakening' Programme, Central Board of Secondary education (CBSE), Swami Vivekananda.

For Mains: Significance of the teachings of Swami Vivekanand.

Why in News?

Recently, the Union Minister for Education launched **Ramakrishna Mission's 'Awakening' Programme** for school students.

What do we know about the Awakening Programme?

- **About:**
 - It is an initiative towards ensuring overall personality development of a child in line with the philosophy of National Education Policy (NEP), 2020.
 - It is for the students of **classes I to V**.
- **Background:**
 - Ramakrishna Mission, Delhi branch, from 2014 onwards, has been successfully conducting the **Awakened Citizen Program (ACP)** for **middle school students** to enable them to build "**ATMASHRADDHA**" (Self-esteem) and make responsible choices. It helps them to find solutions for all problems of life.
 - There has been a **demand** from educationists for a similar program for Primary school students.
 - In response to this, '**Awakening**' has been designed and piloted across 126 schools.
- **Need:**
 - **Social transformation** is one of the key goals of education.
 - **Values and wisdom** are **more important than material wealth**.
 - Value-based education is important for building a future-ready and socially conscious generation.

What do we Know about Ramakrishna Mission?

- **About:**
 - **Ramakrishna Mission** carries out extensive educational and philanthropic work and expounds a modern version of **Advaita Vedanta**—a school of Indian philosophy.
 - The society was founded near Kolkata by Vivekananda in 1897 with a twofold purpose: to spread the teachings of Vedanta as embodied in the life of the saint Ramakrishna (1836-86) and to improve the social conditions of the Indian people.
 - The organizations were brought into existence by **Sri Ramakrishna (1836-1886)**, the great 19th-century saint from Bengal who is regarded as the Prophet of the Modern Age, and Sri Ramakrishna's chief disciple, **Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902)**.

- **Motto: “ATMANO MOKSHARTHAM JAGAD HITAYA CHA”** (“For one’s own salvation and for the welfare of the world”).

What do we know about Swami Vivekanand?

- **Birth:**
 - He was born **as Narendranath Datta on 12th January 1863.**
 - **National Youth Day** is held every year to observe the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda.
 - In **1893**, upon the request of **Maharaja Ajit Singh of the Khetri State**, he **took the name ‘Vivekananda.’**
- **Contributions:**
 - Introduced the world to the Indian philosophies of **Vedanta and Yoga.**
 - He **preached ‘neo-Vedanta’**, an interpretation of Hinduism through a Western lens, and believed in combining spirituality with material progress.
 - Laid the greatest emphasis on **education** for the **regeneration of our motherland.** Advocated a **man-making character-building education.**
 - Best known for his **speech at the World Parliament of Religion in Chicago** in 1893.
 - Spelt out the **four pathways of attaining moksha** from the worldly pleasure and attachment in **his books** - Raja-yoga, Karma-yoga, Jnana-yoga and Bhakti-yoga.
 - **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose** had called **Vivekananda the “maker of modern India.”**
- **Associated Organisations:**
 - He was the **chief disciple of the 19th-century mystic Ramakrishna Paramhansa** and established the **Ramakrishna Mission in 1897.**
 - In 1899, he **established Belur Math**, which became his permanent abode.
- **Nationalism**
 - Though growth of Nationalism is attributed to Western influence but Swami Vivekananda’s nationalism is deeply rooted in Indian spirituality and morality.
 - His nationalism is based on Humanism and Universalism, the two cardinal features of Indian spiritual culture.
 - Unlike western nationalism which is secular in nature, Swami Vivekananda’s nationalism is based on religion which is life blood of the Indian people.
 - The basis of his nationalism are:
 - Deep concern for masses, freedom and equality through which one expresses self, spiritual integration of the world on the basis of universal brotherhood.
 - “Karmyoga” is a system of ethics to attain freedom both political and spiritual through selfless service.
 - His writings and speeches established motherland as the only deity to be worshipped in the mind and heart of countrymen.
- **Death:**
 - He **died at Belur Math in 1902.** Belur Math, **located in West Bengal**, is the headquarters of Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission

Source: PIB

AgriTech Summit

For Prelims: AgriTech Summit, Initiatives Related to Agriculture.

For Mains: Importance of Technology in Agriculture.

Why in News?

The Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare addressed the 'Outlook Agritech Summit and Swaraj Awards 2022'.

What is the AgriTech Summit?

- Agritech Summit is a platform **to bring together the top political leadership, policymakers, thought leaders and companies involved in agriculture-related technology** to share knowledge and recognise the best practices in the field of agriculture in India.
- The annual awards recognise the best performances and innovations in the field of agriculture, and recognise those who are pushing the envelope by using smart technology.
 - The awards were given to various Krishi Vikas Kendras, Farmers' Producers Organisations as well as individual scientists.
- The Swaraj Award was organised in association with the [Indian Council of Agricultural Research \(ICAR\)](#) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare.

What are the Highlights of the Address?

- Many important schemes are being implemented so that the **challenges of farming can be reduced and the income of the farmers can be increased.**
- There are 86% of small farmers in the country, who have small acreage and cannot invest much. The government is working to take these farmers forward, because if the balance of these farmers remains low, then **neither agriculture nor the country will progress.**
- The government has started the **work of creating 10,000 new FPOs (Farmer Producer Organisation)**, if small farmers join these FPOs, then **the area under cultivation increases**, the collective power of the farmer's increases.
- The government is also **working in the field of pulses and oilseeds.** Both were areas of scarcity.

What is the importance of Technology in Agriculture?

- **Importance:**
 - The agriculture sector **poses its own unique challenges** such as dependency upon good monsoons, small and fragmented farm holdings, lack of mechanisation and scarcity of capital.
 - Technology in agriculture **can be used in different aspects of agriculture** such as the application of herbicide, pesticide, fertilizer, and improved seed.
 - Over the years, technology has proved to be extremely useful in the agricultural sector.
 - Presently, farmers **are able to grow crops in areas where they were thought could not grow**, but this is only possible through agricultural biotechnology.
 - For example, **genetic engineering** has made it possible to introduce certain strains into other genes of crops or animals.
 - Such engineering boosts the **resistance of the crops to pests** (e.g., Bt Cotton) and **droughts**. Through technology, farmers are in a position to electrify every process for efficiency and improved production.
- **Initiatives:**
 - The government is working on a **Digital Agri Mission** so that the **farmers can reach the government and the government can reach all the farmers.**
 - Under the **Digital Agri Mission**, if all the farmers, agricultural areas, government schemes, central and state governments and banks are also brought on this platform, then the benefits of the schemes will be easily available.
 - Farmers are being linked with mechanization.
 - The government is **promoting drone technology.**

What are the Initiatives Related to Agriculture?

- [Palm Oil Mission](#)
- [Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana](#)
- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana
- [AgriStack](#)
- Unified Farmer Service Platform
- National e-Governance Plan in Agriculture
- [Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization](#)

Way Forward

- There is a need to deal with the challenges of the agriculture sector, how technology should be introduced in it, how to increase the availability of private investment, and how to create employment opportunities.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. With reference to 'Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana', consider the following statements: (2016)

1. Under this scheme, farmers will have to pay a uniform premium of two percent for any crop they cultivate in any season of the year.
2. This scheme covers post-harvest losses arising out of cyclones and unseasonal rains.

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

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- **Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana** is a crop insurance scheme launched by the Union Government. It covers pre-harvest and post-harvest losses arising out of natural calamities (cyclones and unseasonal rains), pests and diseases. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- **Key Features**
 - **Uniform premium of only 2%** to be paid by farmers **for all Kharif crops and 1.5% for all Rabi crops. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
 - **A premium of 5% is to be paid for annual commercial and horticultural crops.**
 - The premium rates to be paid by farmers are very low and balance premium will be paid by the Government.
 - There is no upper limit on Government subsidy. Even if balance premium is 90%, it will be borne by the Government.
 - Capping on the premium has now been removed and farmers will get a claim against the full sum insured without any reduction.
 - Use of technology is encouraged to a great extent. Smart phones will be used to capture and upload data of crop cutting to reduce the delays in claim payment to farmers. Remote sensing will be used to reduce the number of crop cutting experiments.
 - **Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

Mains

Q. What are the main constraints in transport and marketing of agricultural produce in India? (2020)

[Source: PIB](#)

Financial Stability and Development Council

Why in News?

Recently, the Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs chaired the 26th Meeting of the [Financial Stability and Development Council \(FSDC\)](#).

What are the Key Highlights?

- The council stressed on the **early warning indicators for the economy and the preparedness to deal with them**, improving the efficiency of the existing financial and credit information systems, and issues of governance and management in systemically important financial institutions.
- It was noted that there is **a need to monitor the financial sector risks**, the financial conditions and market developments on a continuous basis by the Government and the regulators **so that appropriate and timely action can be taken** so as to mitigate any vulnerability and strengthen financial stability.
- The council took note of the **preparation in respect of financial sector issues** to be taken up during [India's G20 Presidency in 2023](#).

What is FSDC?

- **Establishment:**
 - It is a **non-statutory apex council** under the Ministry of Finance constituted by the **Executive Order in 2010**.
 - The Raghuram Rajan committee (2008) on **financial sector reforms first proposed the creation of FSDC**.
- **Composition:**
 - It is chaired by the **Finance Minister and its members include the heads of all Financial Sector Regulators (RBI, SEBI, PFRDA & IRDA)**, Finance Secretary, Secretary of Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Secretary of Department of Financial Services (DFS), and Chief Economic Adviser.
 - In 2018, the government **reconstituted FSDC to include the Minister of State** responsible for the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Secretary of Department of Electronics and Information Technology, Chairperson of the [Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India \(IBBI\)](#) and the Revenue Secretary.
 - FSDC sub-committee is headed by the **Governor of RBI**.
 - The Council can invite experts to its meeting if required.
- **Functions:**
 - To strengthen and institutionalize the mechanism for maintaining financial stability, enhancing inter-regulatory coordination and promoting financial sector development.
 - **To monitor macro-prudential supervision** of the economy. It assesses the functioning of large financial conglomerates.

UPSC Civil Services, Previous Year Questions (PYQ)

Q. With reference to 'Financial Stability and Development Council', consider the following statements: (2016)

1. It is an organ of NITI Aayog.
2. It is headed by the Union Finance Minister.
3. It monitors macro-prudential supervision of the economy.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans: (c)

Source: PIB

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/current-affairs-news-analysis-editorials/news-analysis/16-09-2022/print>

