GS Paper - 2 Social Justice – Aug'18

NCRB To Track Complaints On Sexual Violence

Syllabus: Mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections

In News

- Under section 79 of the IT Act, 2000, the Ministry of Home Affairs has designated National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) as the nodal agency to curb easy availability of online child porn and rape videos.
- NCRB has been mandated to take steps either on the basis of complaints (via online portal) or by taking Suo motu cognizance.

NCRB

- NCRB is an Indian government agency which functions as a repository of information on crime and criminals so as to assist the investigators in linking crime to the perpetrators.
- It was set-up in 1986 on the recommendations of the National Police Commission (1977-1981).
- It is headquartered in New Delhi and is part of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act

Syllabus: Mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections

In News

- Union government has made it mandatory for companies to disclose whether they have constituted an Internal Complaints committee (ICC) to probe allegations of sexual harassment at workplace.
- For making the disclosure mandatory, Corporate Affairs Ministry has amended the Companies (Accounts) Rules, 2014, governed by the Companies Act, 2013.
- The amended rules state that the **Annual Reports of Private companies** will have to contain a statement about status of Internal Complaints Committee (ICC).

Internal Complaints Committee (ICC):

- Under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, it is mandatory for any organisation with 10 or more employees to constitute an ICC.
- An employer who doesn't do so could face a fine of up to □50,000.
- Composition: An ICC should consist of a
 - o presiding officer, who is a woman employee at a senior level in the same organization,
 - o at least two employees "preferably committed to the cause of women", and
 - a member from an NGO or a person "familiar with issues relating to sexual harassment."

• **Powers:** ICC would have powers similar to those of a civil court and would have to complete its inquiry within 90 days.

Parliament Passes Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill 2018

Syllabus: Mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections

In News

- Parliament has passed the Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill 2018 that proposes to enhance punishment for rape of Minors.
- The Bill replaces the Ordinance promulgated in April following the rape and murder of a minor girl in Kathua in Jammu and Kashmir.
- It amends relevant Sections of the IPC, CrPC and the POCSO Act.

Provisions of The Act

Age Group of victims	Offence	Punishment to Culprit
VICUIIS		
Under 12 years	Rape	Minimum sentence of 20 years, up from 10 years previously.
		The maximum punishment is death penalty.
	Gang rape	The minimum punishment is life sentence (earlier 20 years) while the maximum is death penalty.
Between 12 to 16 years	Rape	Minimum sentence of 20 years (up from 10 years) and Maximum punishment being life imprisonment.
	Gang rape	Minimum punishment of life sentence.
Between 16 and	Rape	Minimum punishment of 10-year jail term and maximum is life
18		imprisonment.
Repeat offenders will be punished with life imprisonment or death.		

- The Bill provides for **time-bound investigation** (it must be completed within two months).
- The case is to be tried in a **fast track court**. Any appeal against a sentence by the trial court **must be disposed of within six months**.
- Moreover, the accused is **not entitled to anticipatory bail**, in offences involving a child less than 16 years of age.

Analysis

- The NDA government has justified the bill on the ground that faith in the law will be restored only if there is a severe deterrent to those committing heinous acts. However, this is debatable.
- Report No. 262 of the Law Commission of India on the death penalty noted that there is no
 evidence to show that the death penalty acts as a deterrent. It is because criminals don't
 consider the probability of being punished sufficiently high.

- This can also be seen by the fact that brutal rapes in India have not decreased despite
 enforcement of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 —which prescribes death
 penalty and life imprisonment for sexual assaults that results in death.
- By focusing on death penalty as the ultimate measure of justice to victims, the **restorative** and rehabilitative aspects of justice are lost sight of.
- By equalizing the punishment for rape and murder, it is likely that most child victims of rape will be harmed so that the best witness is eliminated.
- The factors that derail the wheels of justice are shoddy police investigations, tardy filing
 of charge sheets, delayed forensic reports and low conviction rates. These needs to be
 addressed.

Way Forward

- Enhance conviction rates through reforms in the police and judicial systems; greater allocation of state resources towards the setting up of fast-track courts; proper witness protection etc.
- Improve measures to rehabilitate and empower rape survivors by setting up of more onestop crisis centers; more expansive compensation for rape survivors, and an overhaul of existing child protection services.
- Invest in combating the rape culture by age-appropriate sex education at all levels, by aggressive advertisement campaigns on issues of gender bias, everyday sexism, misogyny, stereotypes, consent and equality etc.

Begging Decriminalized in Delhi

Syllabus: Mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections

In News

The Delhi High Court has decriminalized begging in the national capital on the ground that the penal provisions in the law were unconstitutional.

Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959

- The act of begging was made a criminal offence after the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act 1959 was extended to Delhi by a Central government amendment in 1960.
- The law prescribes detention for 3 years in beggar homes in case of first conviction for begging and detention for 10 years in subsequent conviction.
- Currently, there is **no central law on begging and destitution** and most states have adopted the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act 1959, or have modelled their laws on it.

Delhi High Court's Observations

- Criminalizing begging doesn't address the root cause of the problem i.e. poverty.
- People beg as a last resort to subsistence. Criminalizing it violates the fundamental right to life accorded under Article 21 of the Constitution.

- The Act was found to be harsh, not just in terms of its disproportionate punishment, but also for the process it prescribed. All offences under the Act, except those under Section 11, were to be tried, without giving any opportunity of being heard to the accused.
- The Bench did not touch the provisions in the Act that deals with penalty for employing or causing persons to receive alms. However, it noted that the Delhi government was always at liberty to bring in alternative legislation to **curb any racket of forced begging.**

Fact File

Constitutional Provisions Against Begging

Indirectly, various constitutional provisions deal with the menace of beggary among childrens.

- Article 24 explicitly prohibits child labour and hazardous employment of children.
- Article 39(c) provides that children's should be given opportunities to develop in a healthy manner.

Persons in Destitution (Protection, Care And Rehabilitation) Bill 2015

- The bill has been drafted by the government to decriminalise beggary and offer a life of dignity to the beggars, homeless and others who live in poverty or abandonment.
- In April 2016 the standing committee commented that the bill is still under consideration and it should be implemented expeditiously.

Triple Talaq Bill

Syllabus: Mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections

In News

- The Union Cabinet has approved three crucial **amendments** to the **Muslim Women** (**Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2017** or the Triple Talaq Bill.
- The Supreme Court had, in Shayara Bano v Uol Case 2017, banned instant triple talaq in August 2017 and called the practice un-Islamic, arbitrary and not integral to religious practice. However, activists and lawyers urged the government to implement a concrete law to lay down the punishment which will be given to the offenders.
- Under **talaq-e-biddat** or popularly known as triple talaq, a Muslim man can instantly divorce his wife by orally repeating the word talaq three times.
- There are three types of talags in Islam viz. **Talk-e- Ahsan, Talag-e-Hasan and Talag-e-Biddat**. The first two are revocable however the third is irrevocable. Talag-e-Biddat has already been banned in many Islamic countries including Pakistan and Bangladesh.
- The Bill has already been passed by the Lok Sabha but is awaiting approval in Rajya Sabha. It
 proposes a three-year jail term and a fine to any Muslim man who opts out of a marriage by
 a quick verbal divorce.

Amendments

Although the bill still mentions it as a non-bailable offence, the accused can now seek bail
from a magistrate even before the beginning of the trail. The bail would be granted by the
magistrate after hearing the wife only if the husband agrees to grant compensation to his wife.
The magistrate would decide the quantum of compensation.

- An FIR against the husband will only be recognised if it is filed by the victim or a relative by blood or marriage. This has been done to prevent misuse as earlier anyone including the neighbours could file the complaint.
- Further, the law has been made **compoundable**, that is, if the wife and the husband agree to settle their differences, then the magistrate can compound the offence on appropriate terms and conditions and allow them to settle the case.
- The bill also notes an additional provision for the victim to seek custody of her children. As part of the new amendments, **mothers can now apply for a subsistence allowance** for herself and minor children before the magistrate who will take the final call.

Triple Talaq Bill 2017

Key Highlights

- Under the bill, the declaration of talaq "by a person upon his wife, by words, either spoken or written or in electronic form or in any other manner whatsoever, void and illegal."
- The practice of triple talaq is criminalised under this bill; a cognisable and non-bailable offence under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, wherein the punishment for pronouncing talaq upon one's wife is imprisonment that may extend to three years and fine.
- The bill provides for a 'subsistence allowance', determined by a magistrate, for her and any dependent children. A Muslim woman who has been subjected to triple talaq is also entitled to custody of her minor children.

Criticism

- The bill fails to take into account the nuances of women's human rights. The concept of 'subsistence allowance' is abstract at best, and knowing how Muslim property and maintenance laws work, the calculation of such allowance should have been prioritised.
- Under the bill, the protection of the rights of Muslim women does not include protection, prevention or redressal of violence against Muslim wives by their husbands as it looks at talage-biddat in an isolated manner.
- Section 7 of the draft Bill makes pronouncement of talaq-ul-biddat as a cognizable and non-bailable offence. However, it did not stipulate as to whose information regarding pronouncement of instant triple talaq will be construed as "information" required under Section 154 of the CrPC.
- This effectively means that any person can lodge an FIR against the husband and the husband will be under threat of arrest even without issuance of warrant.
- According to many critics, the bill suffers from several contradictions. These are:
- After rendering talaq-e-biddat inoperative in Section 3, its nugatory pronouncement can be considered a cognisable and non-bailable offence in Sections 4 and 7. This raises an important question: Can a law criminalise an act after conceding that it does not result in a crime?
- Sections 5 and 6 discusses post-divorce issues such as a "subsistence allowance" for the woman upon whom instant talaq "is pronounced" and the "custody of her minor children". How could the Bill talk of post-divorce matters ignoring the fact that the

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pronouncement (instant talaq) has already been voided in Section 3 and cannot result in a divorce?

Parliament Passes National Commission For Backward Classes (NCBC) Bill

Syllabus: Mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections

In News

- The 123rd Constitutional Amendment Bill has been passed by the Parliament. The Upper House adopted the legislation, along with the amendments made by the Lok Sabha, with over two-thirds majority of those present, voting in favour of the bill.
- The Bill provides for the grant of constitutional status to NCBC on par with the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, which was first set up under the National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993. It states that the President may specify the socially and educationally backward classes in the various states and union territories. He may do this in consultation with the Governor of the concerned state.

Highlights Of The Bill

- The bill seeks to repeal the National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993 and insert
 Article 338B in the Constitution in order to set up the constitutional body, besides inserting a
 new provision through *Article 342A* to provide for Parliament's approval for every inclusion
 into and exclusion from the Central List of OBCs.
- The Commission will consist of *a chairperson*, *a vice-chairperson and three other members*. The President will be in charge of deciding the conditions of service and the tenure of the office of all the members.
- It also seeks insertion of *clause (26C) under Article 366* with a modified definition viz. "socially and educationally backward classes" means such backward classes as are so deemed under Art. 324A of the Constitution.
- The bill states that the President may specify the socially and educationally backward classes
 in the various States and Union Territories. He may do this in consultation with the Governor
 of the concerned state. However, a law of Parliament will be required if the list of
 backward classes is to be amended.
- It would not encroach upon the rights of State governments as they would have their own backward class commissions and their own lists of castes who belong to OBC. The NCBC would recommend only to the central government regarding inclusion or deletion of a particular caste in the list.
- The Central and state governments will be required to consult with the NCBC on all major policy matters affecting the socially and educationally backward classes.
- It is the duty of the commission to investigate and monitor how safeguards provided to the backward classes under the Constitution and other laws are being implemented and also evaluate how effective these safeguards are.
- It will also have the power to probe specific complaints regarding violation of rights. In doing so, NCBC is set to have the powers of a civil court while investigating or inquiring into any

- complaints. These powers include: summoning people and examining them on oath; requiring production of any document or public record; receiving evidence.
- The Commission will also be in charge of working towards improving the socio-economic condition of Other Backward Classes and also evaluating the progress in development at the Centre and state level.
- Annually, it will present the President of India with reports that will include their recommendations on the implementation of protection, welfare and socio-economic measures that should be taken by the Centre and states.
- The President will then *lay down these reports in Parliament* along with a memorandum explaining the action taken or a proposed move on the recommendations. If any recommendation pertains to a particular state government, then it will be notified as well.

In Favour Of Bill

- This move is expected to remove the dichotomy between center and state reservation lists and bring about more transparency in the implementation of laws.
- The existing commission did not have the powers to hear complaints from OBC members like the SC/ST commissions did, and in that sense, a constitutional authority will ensure it has more power.
- As of now, it's the NCSC that looks into complaints and welfare measures that pertain to schedules classes, Anglo-Indians as well as backward classes. The Parliamentary Committee for welfare of OBCs in its report has also noted that the NCSC has not been able to discharge its duties for the OBCs in the present circumstances. With this step, the government recognises that backward classes not only need reservations, but development as well.
- The stipulation in article 342A that any inclusion or exclusion after President's notification can be made only by Parliament by law imparts greater transparency to the process.
- As the commission is established through a constitutional amendment, it cannot be amended by a simple majority in Parliament and adds to its robustness.

Against The Bill

- Although the provision for a female member has been made in the commission, it leaves out mandatory representation for minorities.
- The identification of communities who belong to BCs is significantly different and more layered than identification of SCs and STs. An expert body is required for finding and advising whether a caste fulfils the criteria of social and educational backwardness. This is found to be missing in the newly constituted body.
- Since the commission is only a quasi-judicial body, it does not have punitive powers hence it is another toothless tiger in the making.
- The recommendations of the commission **are advisory** and not binding on the government hence it lacks the desired strength to bring about significant changes.

Conclusion

Although conferring constitutional status on the commission is bound to add more strength to it. It is important that proactive steps are taken to identify and ameliorate the problems faced by the socially and educationally backward people of the country so that they can also reap the benefits of development equally, as merely creating bodies will not lead to equity at the grassroot level.

About NCBC

- The Commission will consist of a chairperson, a vice-chairperson and three other members. The President will be in charge of deciding the conditions of service and the tenure of the office of all the members.
- The government has also assured that it would include a woman on the committee when it frames the rules notifying the Commission.
- The Commission has the powers to look into specific complaints related to the rights and safeguards granted to socially and educationally backward classes under the Constitution.
- In doing so, the NCBC will have the **powers of a civil court** while probing any complaint.
- To investigate any matter deeply, it has the power to summon and enforce the presence of any person from any part of India and also examine them.
- The Commission will also be in charge of working towards improving the socio-economic condition of Other Backward Classes and also evaluating the progress in development at the Centre and state level.
- The Union and state governments will have to consult the Commission on any policy matters related to Other Backward Classes.
- Annually, it will present the President of India with reports that will include their recommendations on the implementation of protection, welfare and socio-economic measures that should be taken by the Centre and states. The President will then lay down these reports in Parliament along with a memorandum explaining the action taken or a proposed move on the recommendations. If any recommendation pertains to a particular state government, then it will be notified as well.

Parliament Passes SC And ST (Prevention Of Atrocities) Amendment Bill, 2018

Syllabus: Mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections

In News

The Parliament has passed the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Bill, 2018, which seeks to overturn a Supreme Court order.

Supreme Court's order

- SC mandated that a preliminary enquiry should be conducted before the FIR was registered
 to check if the case fell within the parameters of the Act, and whether it was frivolous or
 motivated.
- Further the court stated that in view of acknowledged abuse of law of arrest in cases under the Atrocities Act, arrest of a public servant can only be after approval of the appointing authority and of a non-public servant after approval by the SSP which may be granted in cases if considered necessary for reasons recorded. Such reasons must be scrutinised by the magistrate for permitting further detention.

- The SC justified the order saying that even Parliament cannot allow the arrest of a person
 without a fair procedure and asserted that it has protected the fundamental rights to life and
 liberty of innocents by ordering prior scrutiny of complaints.
- The ruling was greeted by a storm of protest from Dalit groups, which said the court's order diluted the legislation.
- The court refused to stay its ruling, leading to calls from Dalit groups demanding that the
 government introduce an ordinance or an Amendment Bill to restore the original provisions of
 the law. Following which the government introduced a bill to restore the original provisions of
 the Act.

Amendments

- The Amendment leads to the insertion of Section 18A in the new Act. According to it, a preliminary inquiry shall not be required for the registration of a FIR against any person.
- Further, the Investigating Officer will not require approval of any authority for the arrest of the accused.
- Moreover, the provisions of Section 438 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which deals
 with anticipatory bail, shall not apply to a case under this Act, notwithstanding any judgment
 or order of any Court.

SC/ST Act

- The SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act is popularly known as the SC/ST Act or the Prevention of Atrocities Act. The SC/ST Act was enacted in 1989 and the rules for the Act were notified in 1995.
- According to the SC/ST Act, protection is provided from social disabilities such as denial
 of access to certain places and to use customary passage, personal atrocities like forceful
 drinking or eating of inedible food, sexual exploitation, injury etc, atrocities affecting properties,
 malicious prosecution, political disabilities and economic exploitation.
- For speedy trial, Section 14 of the SC/ST Act provides for a Court of Session to be a Special Court to try offences under this Act in each district.
- The prime objective of the SC/ST Act is to deliver justice to marginalised through proactive efforts, giving them a life of dignity, self-esteem and a life without fear, violence or suppression from the dominant castes.

Common Service Centres To Implement Ayushman Bharat

Syllabus: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

- Ministry of Health's National Health Agency (NHA) signed a memorandum of understanding
 with Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology's Common Service Centres
 (CSCs) to implement the Ayushman Bharat scheme through three lakh CSCs across the
 country.
- Ayushman Bharat is the National Health Protection Scheme, which will cover over 10 crore poor vulnerable families (around 50 crore beneficiaries) providing coverage of up to □5 lakh (per family per year) for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation.

- Ayushman Bharat will work with CSC for the last mile reach. This will open new and easy
 ways for beneficiaries to validate their entitlement.
- Under the agreement, all CSCs are expected to be equipped by September-end with biometric facilities to allow for verification of beneficiaries who have Aadhaar cards
- CSC will help the beneficiary to **identify his/her name** in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare database and his/her entitlement for the scheme.

Common Service Centres

- CSCs are physical facilities for **delivering Government's e-Services to rural and remote locations** where availability of computers and internet was negligible or mostly absent.
- CSCs act as access points for delivery of essential public utility services, social welfare schemes, healthcare, financial, education and agriculture services, apart from host of B2C services to citizens in rural and remote areas of the country.

About Ayushman Bharat Scheme

- Under the Ayushman Bharat Scheme, the government aims to open 1.5 lakh health and wellness centre by 2022, which would be equipped to treat host of diseases, including blood pressure, diabetes, cancer and old-age illness.
- AB-NHPM will subsume the on-going centrally sponsored schemes -RashtriyaSwasthyaBimaYojana (RSBY) and the Senior Citizen Health Insurance Scheme (SCHIS).
- Under the scheme, the government has prepared the broad contour of the National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS). It aims to target over 10 crore families belonging to poor and vulnerable population based on Socio Economic and Caste Census 2011 (SECC) database.
- AB-NHPM will have a defined benefit cover of Rs. 5 lakh per family per year. There will be no cap on family size and age in the scheme.
- The benefit cover will also include pre and post-hospitalisation expenses. All pre-existing
 conditions will be covered from day one of the policy. A defined transport allowance per
 hospitalization will also be paid to the beneficiary.
- Benefits of the scheme are portable across the country and a beneficiary covered under the scheme will be allowed to take cashless benefits from any public/private empanelled hospitals across the country.
- AB-NHPM will be an entitlement based scheme with entitlement decided on the basis of deprivation criteria in the SECC database.
- To control costs, the payments for treatment will be done on package rate (to be defined by the Government in advance basis).
- One of the core principles of AB-NHPM is to co-operative federalism and flexibility to states
- For giving policy directions and fostering coordination between Centre and States, it is proposed to set up Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Mission Council (AB-NHPMC) at apex level Chaired by Union Health and Family Welfare Minister.
- States would need to have State Health Agency (SHA) to implement the scheme.

Impact

- In-patient hospitalization expenditure in India has increased nearly 300% during last ten years. (NSSO 2015).
- Rural households primarily depended on their 'household income / savings' (68%) and on 'borrowings' (25%), the urban households relied much more on their 'income / saving' (75%) and on '(18%) borrowings, for financing expenditure on hospitalizations. (NSSO 2015).
- Out of pocket (OOP) expenditure in India is over 60% which leads to nearly 6 million families getting into poverty due to catastrophic health expenditures.
- AB-NHPM will have major impact on reduction of Out Of Pocket (OOP) expenditure on ground of:
- ✓ Increased benefit cover to nearly 40% of the population (the poorest&the vulnerable).
- ✓ Covering almost all secondary and many tertiary hospitalizations. (except a negative list)
- ✓ Coverage of 5 lakh for each family, (no restriction of family size)
- AB-NHPM will lead to increased access to quality health and medication.
- Access to financial resources due to health protection component will result in timely treatments thereby improved health outcomes.

Homoeopathy Central Council (Amendment) Bill 2018

Syllabus: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

In News

Parliament has passed the Homoeopathy Central Council (Amendment) Bill, 2018. It replaces the Homoeopathy Central Council (Amendment) Ordinance, 2018 that was promulgated in May 2018.

Highlights Of The Bill

- The Bill amends the Homoeopathy Central Council Act, 1973 which sets up the **Central Council of Homoeopathy** (a body for *regulating homoeopathic education and practice*).
- It dissolves the existing Central Council and, in its place, a new Central Council will be **reconstituted within one year** from the date of its supersession.
- In the interim period, the central government will constitute a Board of Governors (consisting
 of up to 7 members), for exercising the powers of the Central Council.
- Existing homoeopathy colleges (and the courses run by them) will have to get approval from the central government within one year.
- If these colleges fail to get such permission, then the medical qualifications granted to the students will not be recognized under the law.

Homeopathy

Homeopathy is an alternative medical system that was **developed in 1796 by Samuel Hahnemann in Germany.** Its underlying theories are as follows:

- **Like cures like:** A substance taken in small amounts will cure the same symptoms it causes if taken in large amounts.
- Law of minimum dose: The lower the dose of the medication, the greater its effectiveness.
- Homeopathy treats each person as a unique individual. Treatments are "individualized" or tailored to each person.

Health Policies To Cover Mental Illness

Syllabus: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

In News

- Insurance regulator IRDAI has recently issued a circular directing insurer to cover mental ailments such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder etc.
- As per the National Mental Health Survey of India for FY16, **nearly 15** % **of Indian adults need active intervention** for one or more mental health issues.
- The Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 made it mandatory to provide "for medical insurance for treatment of mental illness". But to date, none of India's 33 insurers has complied, even though such covers are commonplace in many countries.
- The move is significant as it will ensure a life of dignity for people having mental health issues. It will create awareness, acceptance and inclusion of mental illness as any other physical ailment and 'normalize' diagnoses, by reducing associated myths and stigma.

Scrub Typhus

Syllabus: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

- As per recent findings by a team of experts, Scrub typhus is the key cause of Acute
 Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) in eastern Uttar Pradesh. AES is characterized by high
 fever and neurological problems (mental confusion, disorientation or coma).
- Scrub typhus is a disease caused by a bacterium called Orientia tsutsugamushi. It is spread to people through bites of infected chiggers (larval mites). The adult mites do not bite, rather the larvae which are too small to be seen by the naked eye do so. Its key symptoms are fever, changes in Tissue and rashes on skin.
- It is an occupational disease frequently found in people who work in the fields and are in the habit of gardening.
- It is also known as bush typhus because the larval mites that cause it reside in vegetation
 predominantly comprising small shrubs. The disease is more common during the wet
 season when the mites lay eggs.
- **Treatment:** Scrub typhus should be treated with the **antibiotic doxycycline**. Doxycycline can be used in persons of any age.

• **Prevention: No vaccine is available to prevent scrub typhus.** When traveling to areas where scrub typhus is common, avoid areas with lots of vegetation and bush.

Tsutsugamushi Triangle

- Scrub typhus is endemic to tsutsugamushi triangle (named after O. tsutsugamushi).
- It is a part of the world which extends from northern Japan and far-eastern Russia in north, to the territories around the northern Australia in the south, and to Pakistan and Afghanistan in the west.

Poshan Maah

Syllabus: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

In News

- An orientation workshop for various stakeholders participating in the Poshan Maah (National Nutrition Month) was recently held in New Delhi.
- Poshan Maah—being celebrated in the month of September—is an initiative of **Ministry of Women and Child Development and NITI Aayog** to give a push to Poshan Abhiyan.
- Its **objective** is to take the message of importance of nutrition to every household. It seeks to ensure 'har ghar poshan tyohar' (every house a celebration of nutrition).
- The program focuses on **8 themes**:(1) Antenatal Care, (2) Optimal Breastfeeding, (3) Complementary Feeding, (4) Anemia, (5) Growth Monitoring, (6) Girls-education, diet, right age of Marriage, (7) Hygiene & Sanitation, (8) Food Fortification.
- During Poshan Maah, activities like Prabhat Pheri, Poshan Melas, Nukkad Nataks, School Based Events will be held to achieve the above objectives.

Poshan Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission)

- It was launched by the Prime Minister in March, 2018 from Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan. By the year 2020, all 36 States/UTs and 718 districts will be covered in a phased manner.
- The Abhiyaan targets to reduce stunting, under-nutrition, anemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and reduce low birth weight by 2%, 2%, 3% and 2% per annum respectively.

World Breastfeeding Week (August 1 to 7)

Syllabus: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

- World Breastfeeding Week is a worldwide celebration held annually from August 1st to 7th and is dedicated to nursing mothers & to raise awareness about significance of breast milk in infant's life.
- This year's theme is **Breastfeeding: Foundation for Life** and is being organised by **WABA (World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action), WHO, and UNICEF.**

- The international campaign was started in 2016 to protect, promote and support breastfeeding globally with a larger aim to reduce malnutrition-related deaths and end poverty.
- It commemorates the **Innocenti Declaration** signed in August 1990 by government policymakers, WHO, UNICEF and other organizations.
- According to a report an estimated **7.8 crore newborns or three in five infants are not breastfed within their first hour of life** globally which lowers their chance of survival.

Importance of Breast feeding For Child

- Breastfeeding is a child's first inoculation against death, disease and poverty. According to the latest scientific evidence; breastfeeding is our most enduring investment in physical, cognitive and social capacity development.
- Breastfeeding creates a special bond between mother and baby and the interaction between
 the mother and child during breastfeeding has positive impact for life, in terms of stimulation,
 behaviour, speech, sense of well-being, security and how the child relates to other people.
 Kangaroo mother care, also known as skin-to-skin care, a technique in which the baby is
 kept in physical contact with its mother is touted to be the best forms of care for making the
 baby feel more secure and calmer.
- Breastfeeding from the first hour of birth ensures that infants consume the colostrum, which
 is the first secretion from the mammary glands after giving birth. Said to be high in
 antibodies, colostrum reduces the risk of death from hypothermia and helps in epithelial
 recovery.
- The antibodies also help the baby fight against virus and bacteria. Babies who are fed
 breastmilk exclusively for their first 6 months are lesser prone to diarrhoea, pneumonia, ear
 infections, allergies and respiratory illness.
- Breast milk is considered to be a **baby's first vaccine**. It is rich with immune and non-immune components which resist infection and also **accelerate intestinal maturation** in a child.
- Breastmilk provides ideal nutrition to infants. It has the perfect blend of fat, vitamins, proteins and everything else that the baby needs for healthy growth.
- Breastfeeding within the first hour of birth protects newborn babies from infections. Infants are at greater risk of death due to diarrhoea and other infections in the absence of breastfeeding.
- It improves immune system of the child.
- Breastfeeding also improves IQ, school readiness and attendance, and is associated with higher income in adult life.
- According to Lancet report, a non-breastfed child is 14 times more likely to die in the first six months than an exclusively breastfed child.
- According to WHO, breastfeeding for the first 2 years would save the lives of more than 8,20,000 children under age 5 annually.
- Therefore, WHO recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of an infant's life. Local, nutritious foods should be introduced, while breastfeeding continues for up to two years or beyond.

Importance of Breast Feeding For Mother

• It releases the hormone oxytocin, which helps the uterus to return to its pre-pregnancy size and also helps in reducing uterine bleeding after birth.

- It lowers the risk of breast cancer and ovarian cancer in mothers.
- Breastfeeding helps to reduce the weight which a mother has gained during pregnancy. As breast milk contains about 20 calories per ounce, feeding the baby automatically leads to weight reduction.
- Women who breastfeed have a lower risk of postmenopausal osteoporosis. The body of a pregnant and lactating woman absorbs calcium more efficiently

Breastfeeding Statistics in India

- Only 78.7% deliveries take place in hospitals.
- 44.6% of the newborns receive breastfeeding within one hour of birth.
- 64.9% of the newborns are exclusively breastfed for the first six months.
- Only 50.5% children between 6-8 months are given complementary foods.
- India accounts for more than one fifth of world's neo natal deaths. In 2016, India reported 6 lakh neo natal deaths out of the 26 lakh neo natal deaths reported globally.
- In this backdrop India launched MAA (mothers' absolute affection), a National Breastfeeding Promotion Programme to ensure that adequate awareness is generated among masses, especially mothers, on the benefits of breastfeeding.

Barriers To Breast Feeding

- Many women become mothers at an early age when they are not healthy enough to bear a child. Poor health of the lactating mother leads to insufficient production of milk due to which many women stop breastfeeding midway.
- Working mothers are pressed for time and are left with little time on their hands to breastfeed the child.
- Easy availability of infant formula food coupled with lack of awareness has created a culture of dependence on these ready to use products.
- **Breastfeeding in public is considered a taboo**. Every now and then mothers are forced to defend their right to nurse their babies in public. Malayalam magazine Grihalakshmi's March issue this year featured model Gilu Joseph nursing a baby which led to the creation of a huge controversy.

Conclusion

The drops of breastmilk are actually the **golden drops** that in every way are **a gift from a mother to the baby** for their healthier future. In a world filled with inequality, crises and poverty breastfeeding is the **strongest foundation for lifelong health and optimal nutrition**, and the best chance possible of achieving the highest attainable standard of health.

Three Northeastern States Emerge As New HIV Hotspots

Syllabus: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

In News

According to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura
have emerged as the new hotspots for HIV. However, the good news is that there has been
a steady decline in the number of HIV cases in India.

• The Ministry attributed the reason for the rise in the three northeastern States to the high-risk behaviour of Injecting Drug Users (IDUs), and unsafe sexual practices.

What is AIDS

- Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a life-threatening disease caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). HIV makes it difficult for the body to fight infections.
- As the infection progresses, it interferes more with the immune system, increasing the risk of
 developing common infections such as tuberculosis, as well as other opportunistic infections
 that rarely affect people who have a good immune system. These late symptoms of infection
 are referred to as acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).
- The medicines that treat HIV are called antiretroviral drugs and the consequent therapy is called Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART). Although there is no cure for HIV, ART leads to effectively suppressing the virus and reducing the transmission of HIV from the infected person.
- In India, almost 12.28 lakh people are covered under ART. The target is to bring 90% of the 21 lakh people living with the HIV infection in India under ART.

NACO

National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO), established in 1992 is a division of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. It is delegated with the responsibility of formulating, implementing and monitoring policies concerning prevention and control of HIV and AIDS in the country; in addition, it also manages the National Aids Control Programme (NACP). Under NACP, administrative and technical basis for programme management was established.

WORLD AIDS DAY

World AIDS Day is held on **1st December** each year. The Day is treated like an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in their fight against HIV, show their support for people living with HIV and to commemorate people who have died. World AIDS Day was the **first ever global health day** and the **first one was held in 1988**.

UN Report

- A new report from Joint UN Agency on AIDS (UNAIDS) titled 'Miles to go closing gaps, breaking barriers, righting injustices' bears good news for the global war against the syndrome. Between 2010 and 2017, several countries made rapid progress in reducing HIV incidence and getting antiretroviral therapy to patients.
- Today, three out of four people with HIV know their status, and 21.7 million get treatment.
- India, in particular, brought down the number of new cases and deaths by 27% and 56%, respectively, between 2010 and 2017. Also, India has done better than the global average in reducing HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths.
- Tuberculosis is the biggest killer of HIV patients across the world. India is now able to treat over 90% of notified TB patients for HIV.
- Social stigma surrounding AIDS-infected people in India, while high, is declining slowly too.

• But even as India celebrates such progress, it is important to be mindful of the scale of the challenge. With 2.1 million cases, India is among the largest burden countries in the world. And there are critical gaps in its strategy.

Way forward

- The need of the hour is to develop **rights-based**, **evidence-informed**, **and community-owned programmes** that use a mix of **biomedical**, **behavioural**, **and structural interventions**, so as to have a sustained impact on reducing new infections.
- Behavioural Interventions: Behavioural interventions seek to reduce the risk of HIV transmission by addressing risky behaviours through awareness programmes. It may include reducing the number of sexual partners individuals have; improving treatment adherence among people living with HIV; increasing the use of clean needles among people who inject drugs; or increasing the consistent and correct use of condoms.
- Biomedical interventions: Biomedical interventions use a mix of clinical and medical
 approaches to reduce HIV transmission. Examples of biomedical interventions include: Sex
 and reproductive health services, Voluntary medical male circumcision, Antiretroviral drugs
 for the prevention of mother to child transmission, pre-exposure prophylaxis, post-exposure
 prophylaxis, HIV testing and counselling etc.
- Structural interventions: Structural interventions seek to address underlying factors that make individuals or groups vulnerable to HIV infection. These can be social, economic, political or environmental. The fact that 90% of the world's HIV infections occur in developing countries is evidence that social, economic and political structures drive risky behaviours and shape vulnerability. To address these issues, the following key structural interventions are recommended by UNAIDS:
 - Strengthen legislation, law enforcement and programmes to end intimate partner violence
 - Increase girls' access to secondary education.
 - Use cash transfers to empower women economically, to keep them in school and to enable them to make healthy partner choices.
 - Remove third-party authorisation requirements and other barriers to women and young people's access to HIV and sexual and reproductive health services.
 - Decriminalise same-sex relationships, cross-dressing, drug possession and use for personal consumption.
 - Bring to scale community empowerment and other programmes that have been proven to reduce stigma, discrimination and marginalisation, including in health care settings.

Conclusion

Right to health is a fundamental right under the Constitution of India. Hence it is expedient that the government adopts a multi modal approach to keep a check on this debilitating disease and stays on course to achieve the SDG of ending the epidemic of AIDS by 2030.

WHO Lauds SBM-Gramin

Syllabus: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

- WHO has released a progress report on potential health impacts from increased sanitation coverage through Swachh Bharat Mission - Gramin.
- The report lauds India's commitment of accelerated coverage of safe sanitation services which, assuming 100% coverage is achieved by October 2019, could avert up to 300,000 deaths due to diarrhoeal disease and protein-energy malnutrition (PEM) by reducing mortality and accumulative Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) the sum of the years of life lost due to premature mortality and years lost due to disability or ill-health since the country launched the Swachh Bharat Mission in 2014.
- This is remarkable given that before 2014 unsafe sanitation caused an estimated 199 million cases of diarrhoea annually. Globally, diarrhoeal disease is the second leading cause of under-five mortality, while lack of clean water and sanitation is also a major contributor to malnutrition.
- Broader health impact of India's commitment to accelerated sanitation coverage include improved overall nutritional status and reduced incidence of infectious diseases such as neglected tropical diseases and acute respiratory infections, as well as vector-borne diseases.

Improved sanitation coverage also helps India to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, including **SDG** 6, under which countries have to ensure access to safe water and sanitation for all, and **SDG** 3, which obliges them to ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages.

Aspirational Districts - Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)

Syllabus: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

- NITI Aayog has identified 117 districts as Aspirational Districts. These districts have been selected on the basis of composite index which includes published data of deprivation enumerated under Socio-Economic Caste Census, health & nutrition, education and basic infrastructure.
- An Expert Committee, constituted by the University Grants Commission (UGC), had identified 374 Educationally Backward Districts (EBDs) where Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education was less than the national average of 25.2% based on All India Higher Education Survey (AIHES) released by the HRD Ministry.
- During the second phase of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), central assistance is provided for opening of new Model Degree Colleges (MDCs) in Aspirational Districts and in unserved & underserved districts in North Eastern and Himalayan States.
- The Project Approval Board (PAB) of RUSA has approved central support for one MDC each in 70 such districts. The central support provided under the component of new MDCs is infrastructural in nature in which funds are released for creation of Colleges with requisite infrastructure such as appropriate number of class rooms, library, laboratory, faculty rooms, toilet blocks, and other essential requirements for technologically advanced facilities.

- Further, under this component, a commitment is given by the State Governments that all recurring expenditure (including salaries), in respect of the MDCs being established, will be borne by the respective State Government.
- Additionally, under a separate component of RUSA viz., Faculty Recruitment Support, central support is provided for creation of additional posts of Assistant Professors subject to specific norms and approved period of the scheme (i.e. upto 31st March 2020). Further, under this component, a commitment is required to be given by the State Governments to take over liability of such faculty positions after 31st March 2020.
- While in March, the budget of the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (Rusa) was increased four times. The scheme would now cost Rs 96 billion, of which the Centre would contribute Rs 71 billion.

Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)

- RUSA's aim is to improve access, equity and quality in higher education through planned development of higher education at the state level.
- Its objectives include creating new academic institutions, expanding and upgrading the
 existing ones, developing institutions that are self-reliant in terms of quality education,
 professionally managed and characterised by greater inclination towards research and
 provide students with education that is relevant to them as well as the nation as a whole.

HRD Ministry Approves Norms Against Plagiarism

Syllabus: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

In News

- The Human Resource Development Ministry has approved new regulations on plagiarism drafted by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and notified the UGC (Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2018.
- The move is part of the ministry's effort to improve the quality of education and research in universities and institutes of higher learning; it recently made **PhDs mandatory for teaching** at the university level starting 2021.
- One of the main objectives of UGC's anti-plagiarism regulations is to create awareness about responsible conduct of research in promotion of academic integrity and prevent misconduct.

Features Of The Regulation

- For students, in non-core areas, plagiarism of up to 10% would not invite any penalty while
 that of between 10% and 40% would entail the submission of a revised research paper
 within six months.
- In case, the similarities are between 40 and 60%, students will be debarred from submitting a revised paper for one year. A student's registration for a programme will be cancelled if the similarities are above 60%.
- Teachers whose academic and research papers have similarities ranging from 10 to 40% with other papers will be asked to withdraw the manuscript. In case the similarities are between 40 and 60%, they will not be allowed to supervise new masters, M.Phil, PhD

students for two years and will also be denied the right to one annual increment. In case of repeat plagiarism of over 60% similarity, the faculty members will be suspended, even dismissed.

- If any member of the academic community suspects plagiarism, he or she shall report it to the
 Departmental Academic Integrity Panel (DAIP). Upon receipt of such a complaint or allegation
 the DAIP shall investigate the matter and submit its recommendations to the Institutional
 Academic Integrity Panel (IAIP) of the Higher Education Institutions (HEI).
- This year, PhD, MPhil and Masters students are also likely to **study responsible conduct of research and publication ethics** as a compulsory course work or module.

Conclusion

India has been witness to several plagiarism charges against central university vice-chancellors and teachers in the past few years which not only brings a bad name to the country's academic circles but also vitiates the academic culture of our universities. The step will surely go a long way in setting the right precedents and aid in the creation of a robust research ecosystem in the country.

IMPRINT 2

Syllabus: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

In News

- Ministry of Human Resource Development (MoHRD) has approved 122 new research projects at a cost of Rs.112 crore under IMPRINT-2.
- IMPRINT-2 has been approved with a revised strategy under which the initiative will be jointly funded and steered by MoHRD and Department of Science and Technology (DST).
- For the second phase, the government has sanctioned a fund of Rs. **1000 crore** for research in Science and Technology which will be provided over the course of next two years, i.e. 2018-19 and 2019-20.
- The projects that have been approved cover domains such as Energy, Security, Healthcare, Advanced Materials, ICT, and Security/Defence domains.
- Of the 122 new IMPRINT projects sanctioned, 81 are sponsored by industry. This industryacademic collaboration will bring excellence in research.
- IMPRINT proposals are now open for higher education institutions including private institutions bringing a spirit of competition.
- The knowledge portal for monitoring the progress of research projects and to disseminate findings will be launched in October 2018.

IMPRINT

• IMPRINT is a first of its kind initiative which is a Pan-IIT + IISc joint initiative. It not only addresses development of new engineering education policy but is also instrumental in creating a road map to pursue engineering challenges.

- IMPRINT provides the overarching vision that guides research into areas that are **predominantly socially relevant**. The principal objective is to **translate knowledge into viable technology**.
- It aims to address the major science and engineering challenges that India must address and champion to enable, empower and embolden the nation for inclusive growth and selfreliance.

Global Innovation Index (GII) 2018

Syllabus: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

In News

- At the India launch of Global Innovation Index 2018 in New Delhi, NITI Aayog announced that it will join hands with CII to drive innovation in the country.
- The launch was organized by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) one of the founding partners of GII along with World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), in collaboration with the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP).

About GII

- Gll is published by Cornell University, INSEAD, and the World Intellectual Property Organisation, in partnership with other organisations and institutions.
- It is a leading reference for measuring a country's innovation performance. Now in its second decade, the GII has established itself as a **tool for action** for decision makers, leading to the improvement of innovation metrics, the removal of obstacles to innovation, and the shaping of efficient national innovation policy strategies.
- The GII indicators are grouped into *innovation inputs and outputs*. Innovation inputs capture the efforts made by the country to boost innovation. Innovation outputs measure the results of these efforts in terms of scientific publications, patents, trademarks, production, exports, and other outputs.
- It provides an opportunity to look at examples from similar economies from across the world and understand how change was brought about those countries.
- This year's theme is **Energizing the World with Innovation** which looks at innovation taking place in the energy sector around the world.
- **Switzerland** continued its long run of being at the top. It has been at the top of the list since 2011.
- Other countries in the **top 5** are Netherlands, Sweden, UK and Singapore.
- China, at 17, broke into the world's top 20 most-innovative economies for the first time.

India's Performance

• India's rank on the GII has improved from 60th in 2017 to **57th in 2018**. India has been consistently climbing the GII ranking for the past two years. Its position improved from 80th in 2015 to 66th in 2016 after sliding for successive five years.

- Positioning in the top half of the GII ranking, India ranks well in several important innovation inputs, including graduates in science and engineering, expenditures of major R&D-intensive global companies, and capital formation.
- India earns excellent positions in ICT services exports, where it ranks first in the world, and labour productivity growth, where it is 4th globally. India is 2nd among middle-income economies (after China) in the indicators that capture the quality of the innovation inputs and outputs.
- In particular, the country ranks well in the quality of its scientific publication and local universities because of higher scores for the IISc Bangalore and the IIT.

NITI Aayog's Suggestions

At the conference NITI Aayog underlined the need to

- Transform India's Innovation Ecosystem by formulating a New Innovation Policy to attract R&D investment into cutting edge technologies and build appropriate infrastructure and institutions.
- Tap global hotspots of innovation in latest technologies like Al, Blockchain and Robotics etc.
- Connect Tinkering labs in schools with start-ups, business and high-end educational institutions.
- Target efficient, productive, and outcome driven R&D in the Government Sector

Digital Literacy Library by Facebook

Syllabus: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

- Facebook recently announced the launch of a Digital Literacy Library to help young people build the skills they need to safely enjoy online technology.
- The interactive lessons and videos, developed in partnership with the team at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at **Harvard University** for educators of youth aged 11 to 18, can be downloaded for free.
- Created from more than 10 years of academic research and built in consultation with teens, the curriculum is divided into five themes: Privacy and Reputation, Identity Exploration, Positive Behavior, Security, and Community Engagement. The lessons reflect the voices of young people from diverse geographies, socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities and education levels.
- The lessons work well together or on their own, in after-school programmes or at home, and can be modified to incorporate educators' own experiences and ideas
- There are 830 million young people online around the world and due to the lack of digital literacy they are exposed to various risks they're susceptible to believe hoaxes, propaganda and fake news; they risk their personal data by using insecure apps; they become addicted to social media and its feedback loop of likes; they bully and/or are bullied; and they don't take steps to protect their online reputation which can have real-world consequences.
- Earlier this year Facebook added a Youth Portal, which includes tips for young people on things like security and reporting content, as well as advice and first-person accounts from teenagers around the world about how they are using technology.

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- In addition, Facebook has begun to roll out educational guidance into its new app, Messenger Kids, aimed at the under-13 crowd. The app encourages children to be kind and respectful online by promoting empathy and positive messaging through things like the "Messenger Kids Pledge," kindness stickers, and other in-app challenges.
- These platforms will not only help the youth to better navigate the internet in a positive and a
 responsible way but also help the current generation to think critically and grow into
 responsible citizens.