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The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

12th June 2025



CONTEXT: ILO: India's social security coverage has increased to 64.3%.

Evolution

- Kautilya's Arthashastra, Manusmriti, Yajnavalkya, Sukraniti
- Islam - Khairat & Sadaqah
- Establishment of ILO
- Statutory Enactments

Concerns

- Informal Sector
- Salaried worker Coverage
- Gender Gap
- Gig Workers
- Enterprise & Worker Contribution
- Disparities in Social Security Access

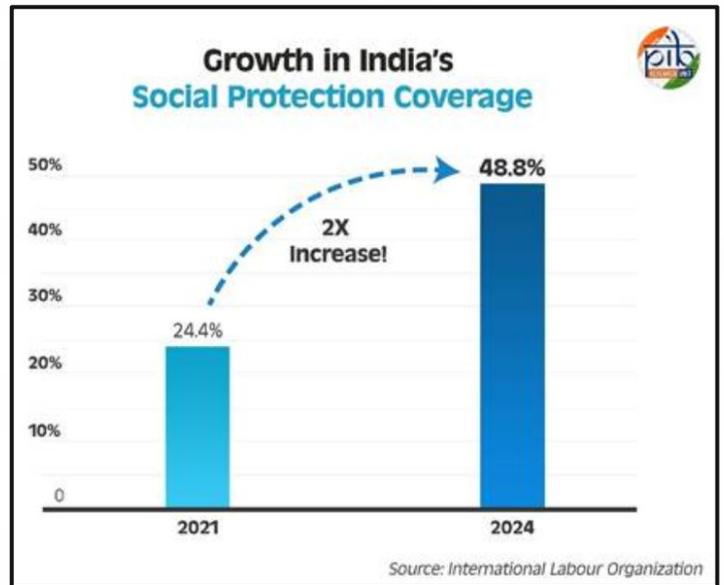
Constitutional Provisions

- Article 39
- Article 39A
- Article 41
- Article 42

Gaps in Coverage

1. Informal Sector and Exclusion

- Exclusion from Existing Laws
- Absence of Employer Contributions
- Gig Economy and Short-Term Contracts



2. Implementation Challenges

- Delayed Disbursements and Payment Issues
- Administrative Inefficiencies
- Complexity of Procedures
- Lack of Awareness

3. Migrant and Seasonal Workers

- Lack of Portability
- Disconnection Between States and Employers
- Short-Term Employment and Non-Enrollment

4. Other Gaps and Concerns

- Exclusion of Domestic Workers
- Vulnerability of Women Workers

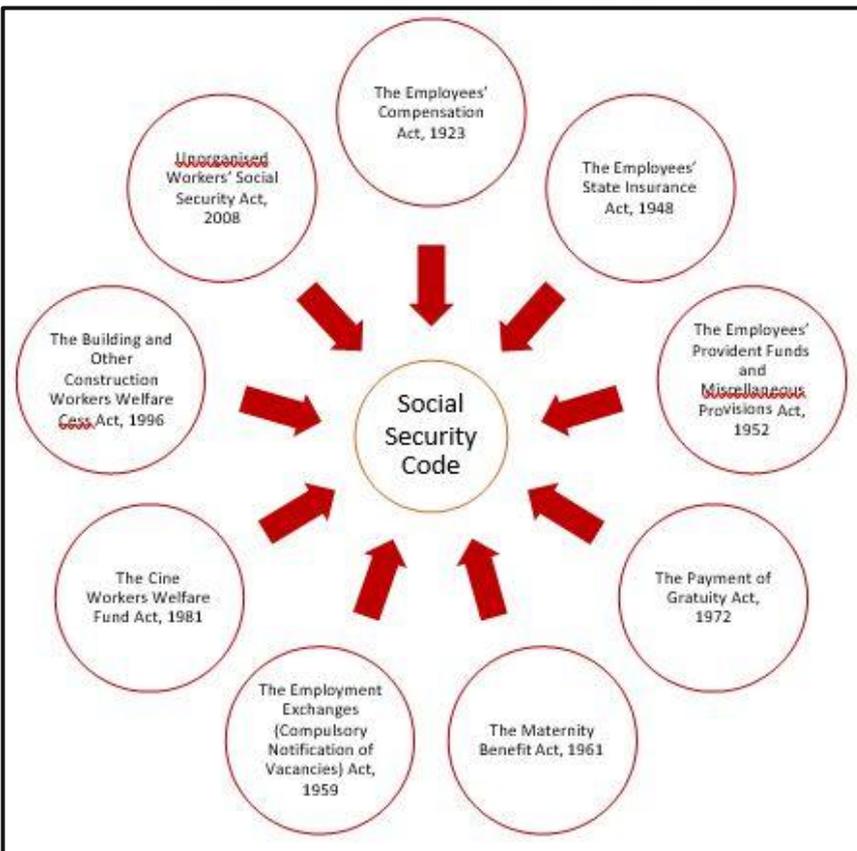


Social Security: 3x

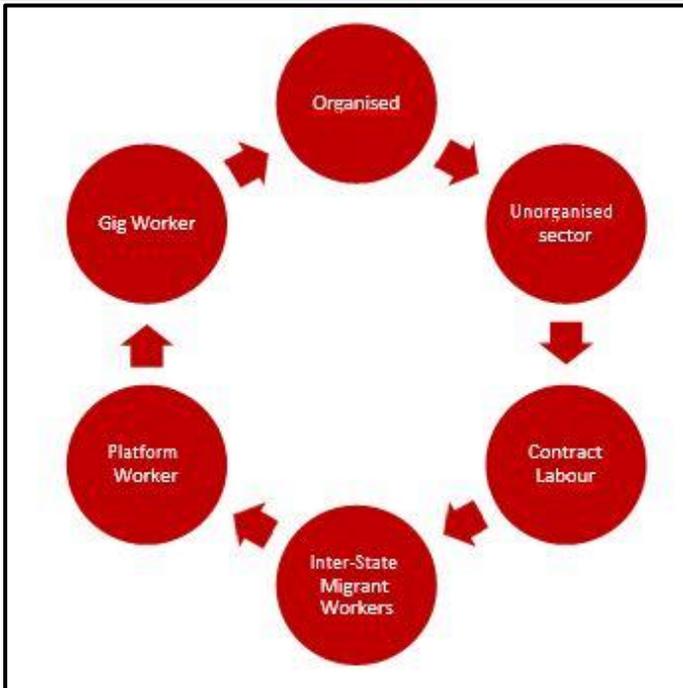
CONTEXT: ILO: India's social security coverage has increased to 64.3%.

Social Security Measures in India

Preventive Measures	Promotional Measures	Protective Measures
SBM	NRLM / DAY-NRLM	National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)
Ujjwala Yojana	SSA	AB – PMJAY / RSBY
NHM / NRHM	PDS, MDM	PMSBY, PMJJBY, APY
Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)	MGNREGA	ESI Scheme, EPF
Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)	PMAY	NPS
	PMJDY	Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY)
	PMKVY	Code on Social Security, eShram Portal



CONTEXT: ILO: India's social security coverage has increased to 64.3%.



Social Security – Global Scenario Concerns in Organized Sector

- Developed nations – fiscal sustainability
- Socialist Transition economies – cradle-to-grave
- Japan: Aging population, high life expectancy

Social Security in Japan

- First Asian country – 1922
 - Health Insurance, Pension Programs
 - Unemployment Insurance (1947, >5)

Social Security in Germany

- Branches:
 - Sickness Insurance (maternity, death grants)
 - Accident Insurance (occupational safety)
 - Pension Insurance (old age, disability)

- Unemployment Insurance
- Labour Courts (three-tier system), Arbitration
- Contract Labour
 - Employers must inform workers of full-time vacancies

Women's Employment

- **China:** State intervention since 1950s; but gaps
- **Japan:** Equal Employment Opportunity Law (1986)
- **Korea:** Gender-Equal Employment Act (1987)

Models for Informal Sector

- **Brazilian Social Security System**
 - outreach and worker education campaigns
 - integration of informal workers through digital platforms
- **South Africa's Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF)**
 - subsidized contribution model

Recommendations

- **Extending Coverage to the Informal Sector**
 - Portable Social Security Accounts
 - Mobile-Based Registration and Contribution Systems
 - Incentivizing Employer Contributions



CONTEXT: ILO: India's social security coverage has increased to 64.3%.

- **Strengthening Enforcement Mechanisms**
 - Dedicated Oversight Bodies
 - Stringent Penalties for Non-Compliance
 - Regular Audits and Inspections
- **Use of Technology**
 - Digital Platforms for Registration and Benefits
 - Blockchain Technology for Fraud Prevention
 - Digital Literacy Campaigns
- **Financial Sustainability**
 - Improve Tax Collection from Informal Workers
 - Incentivize Employer Contributions
 - Gradual Expansion of Coverage

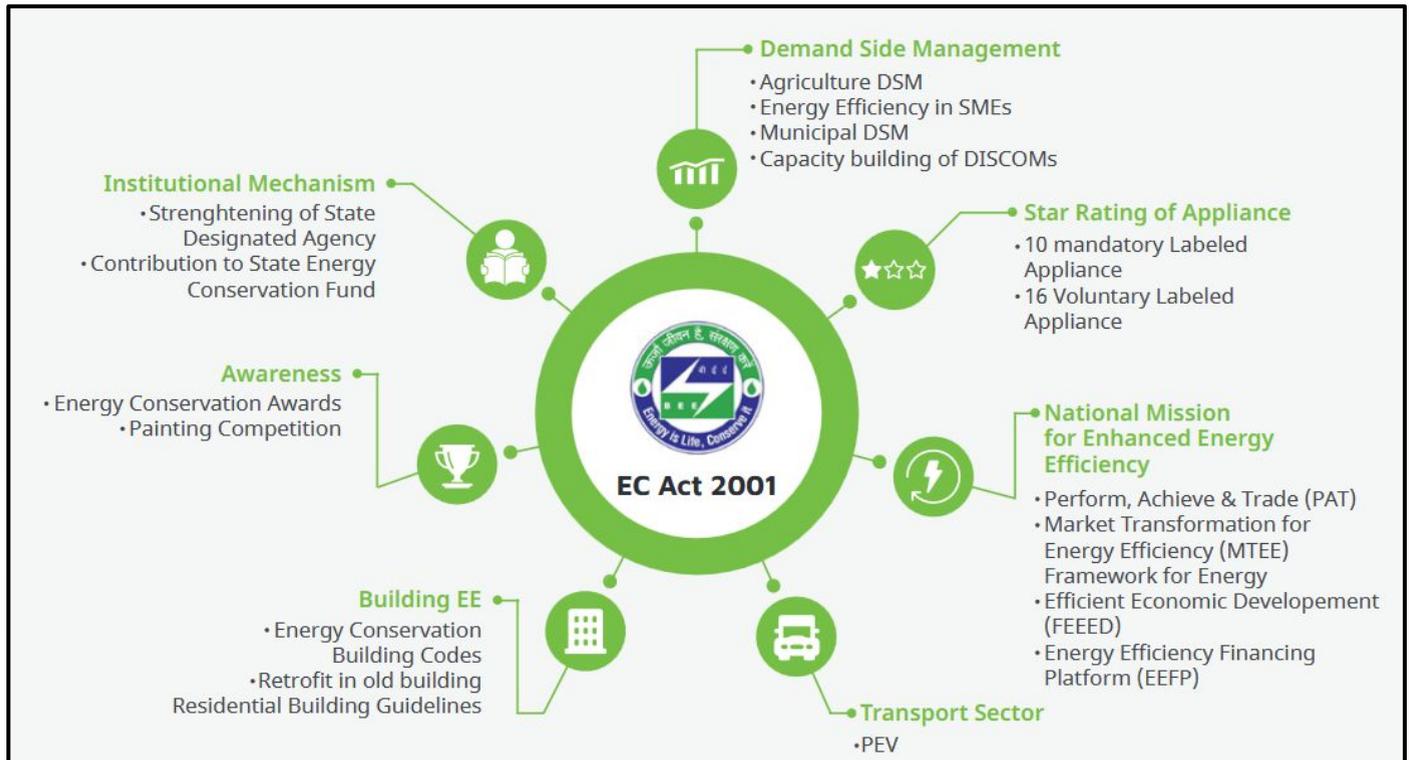
MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION:

“Despite significant reforms, India's social security system continues to suffer from gaps in coverage, especially for informal and migrant workers. Examine the major gaps in social security coverage in India. Discuss the key government initiatives undertaken to address these gaps. Suggest measures to make social security more inclusive and effective.”



CONTEXT: BEE is preparing a draft framework to standardise default AC temperatures.

Energy Conservation Act, 2001



EC (Amendment) Act, 2022

- Carbon Credit Trading
- Obligation to Use Non-Fossil Energy Sources
- Energy Conservation & Sustainable Building Code
- Energy Efficiency Standards for Vehicles & Vessels
- Enhanced Penalties for Non-Compliance
- Revised Composition of BEE Governing Council



CONTEXT: BEE is preparing a draft framework to standardise default AC temperatures.

Govt Initiatives

1. Building Energy Efficiency

- Star Ratings for Buildings
- Eco-Niwas Samhita (ECBC-R)
 - Energy Efficiency Label for Residential Buildings
- Energy Management Information System (EMIS)

2. Transport Sector Efficiency

- Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) Norms
- Constant Speed Fuel Consumption (CSFC) Norms

3. Standards & Labelling (S&L) Scheme

- LED lamps, ACs, pump sets, ceiling fans, LPG stoves

4. Municipal & Agricultural DSM

- efficient pumps under AMRUT

5. SME Energy Efficiency

- **SIDHIE Portal:** Knowledge hub for EE technologies

6. DISCOM Strengthening

- State Energy Efficiency Index (SEEI)

7. Awareness & Outreach

- National Energy Conservation Awards

8. India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP)

- First comprehensive national cooling plan globally

• Goals by 2037–38:

- Reduce cooling demand by 20–25%
- Cut refrigerant demand by 25–30%
- Cooling energy needs by 25–40%

9. DST Initiatives

- Clean Energy Research Initiative
- BHAVAN Fellowships: Indo-US collaboration on building EE

10. NITI Aayog Initiatives

- **India Energy Dashboard:** GIS-based energy data.
- **State Energy Index:** access, affordability, sustainability.
- **E-mobility:**
 - FAME-I/II for EV adoption
 - Phased Manufacturing Program for battery tech

Mains Practise Question:

“Energy efficiency is a critical pillar of India’s sustainable development and climate goals. Examine the key provisions of the Energy Conservation Act, 2001 and the amendment in 2022. Discuss major government initiatives aimed at promoting energy efficiency in India.”



SYLLABUS: GS Paper 3: Defence

Newspaper: Indian Express Page No : 14

Drones, a brief history

Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) date back to World War II and the Korean War, where they were used to train anti-aircraft gunners and in specific offensive missions. Their modern military usage took off in the 1990s, especially after the Gulf War of 1991.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict of 2020 was a turning point in drone warfare: Azerbaijan's use of Turkish Bayraktar TB2 and Israeli Harop drones devastated Armenian defences, decisively shifting the conflict's dynamics in favour of Baku.

Since then, drones have featured in:

- Yemen, where Houthi rebels targeted Saudi oil infrastructure using drone swarms;
- Gaza, where both Israel and Hamas have used drones for surveillance and strikes; and
- Ukraine, where both Moscow and Kyiv have deployed commercial quadcopters (DJI drones), military drones (Bayraktar TB2, Orlan-10, Shahed-136), and loitering munitions.

Not one, not two...

Swarm drones are autonomous or semi-autonomous UAVs that operate in coordinated groups, much like swarms of birds. They communicate via wireless networks and adjust in real time to achieve shared objectives.

Swarms are more resilient than traditional drones due to in-built redundancy — even if one drone is intercepted, others can continue on the mission. Drone swarms are thus used to saturate air defences (a few payloads may sneak through even robust defences), gather intelligence, and attack high-value targets.

WHY SWARM DRONES MATTER

Asymmetry: They let low-tech actors hit high-value targets.

Low cost: They are cheap while being expensive to deter.

Saturation: They overwhelm even sophisticated defence systems.

Autonomy: Reduced reliance on GPS or real-time human control.



SYLLABUS : GS Paper 3: Defence
Newspaper : Indian Express Page No : 14

A FEW NOTABLE SWARM DRONE SYSTEMS



IRAN

System: Shahed-136 (swarms)
Type: Loitering munition
Swarm Size: 10–50
Range: 2,000 km
Features: GPS-guided, low radar signature, low-cost



RUSSIA

System: Lancet & Shahed
Type: Loitering + fixed-wing
Swarm Size: 5–20
Range: 40–300 km
Features: Used in layered attacks with multiple decoys



USA

System: LOCUST
Type: Micro UAV swarm
Swarm Size: 50–100
Range: 30–60 km
Features: AI coordination, launched from tubes



CHINA

System: Drone Swarm (Airborne)
Type: Micro drones
Swarm Size: 100–200+
Range: 10–30 km
Features: Released from drones (see picture) or trucks, AI-powered

COUNTERMEASURES AGAINST DRONE SWARMS

KINETIC

System/Technology: Phalanx CIWS, C-RAM
Description: Anti-aircraft guns with radar-guided targeting (used on land/sea).

ELECTRONIC WARFARE

System/Technology: Jammers, GPS spoofers
Description: Disrupt drone communication and navigation systems. Widely used in Ukraine.

DIRECTED ENERGY

System/Technology: High-Energy Lasers (HEL), microwave weapons
Description: Rapid-target engagement, low cost-per-shot. Israel's Iron Beam and American THOR in testing/deployment.

DRONE-ON-DRONE

System/Technology: Interceptor drones
Description: Drones designed to chase and disable other drones. For example, US-made Foretrem DroneHunter.

NET SYSTEMS

System/Technology: SkyWall, DroneCatcher
Description: Launch nets to physically capture small drones. Effective only at short ranges.



SYLLABUS: GS Paper 3: Defence

Newspaper: Indian Express Page No : 14

Countering Drone Threats

traditional kinetic air defences, especially surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), are costly, and less effective against swarms. Automated gun systems such as C-RAM and Phalanx, which track targets and fire autonomously, are preferred in this role.

More cost-effective alternatives include:

Directed Energy Weapons (DEWs):

Lasers and microwave pulses that disable drones by damaging sensors or frying electronics;

Electronic Warfare (EW): Jamming GPS signals or communication links;

Spoofing: Misleading drones about their location or issuing false commands;

Cyber Attacks: Taking control of drones and crash them by exploiting software vulnerabilities; and

Interceptor drones & nets: For close-range neutralisation, protecting critical assets.

India's Capabilities

Akashteer Air Defence Control System:

Developed by Bharat Electronics Ltd, it integrates with the Indian Air Force's integrated command network for real-time tracking;

Bhargavastra: Solar Defence and Aerospace Ltd's system fires 64 micro-rockets in salvos to eliminate drone swarms;

DRDO's Anti-Drone System: It offers 360-degree radar coverage, with both jamming (soft kill) and laser (hard kill) capabilities. Drones can be detected up to 4 km away, and neutralised within a 1 km radius; and

Indrajaal: An AI-powered grid from a Hyderabad startup that combines jammers, spoofers, and intelligence to protect areas up to 4,000 sq km. Already deployed at naval sites in Gujarat and Karnataka.

The asymmetry in cost remains the central challenge in anti-drone warfare. A drone swarm costing roughly \$100,000 might take millions of dollars to neutralise using current technology. This is why nations, including India, are investing in more cost-effective solutions like EW and DEWs.

The ideal defence is a layered system, integrating multiple modes of interception for redundancy and cost-efficiency purposes. Examples include Israel's Iron Dome and the US's Directed Energy M-SHORAD.



SYLLABUS : GS Paper 2: Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections of the population by the Centre and States and the Performance of these Schemes

Newspaper : Indian Express **Page No :** 10

CJI: Supreme Court's SC sub-quota ruling ensured fair share for most marginalised

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 11

Chief Justice of India BR Gavai asserted on Tuesday that the objective of the Supreme Court ruling in favour of sub-classification within Scheduled Castes for the purposes of reservation was "to ensure that the most marginalised within marginalised groups receive their fair share".

Speaking at the Oxford Union on the topic, 'From Representation to Realization: Embodying the Constitution's Promise', CJI Gavai referred to the August 1, 2024, ruling of the Supreme Court and said "this was not to question the relevance or success of reservations, but to ensure that the most marginalised within marginalised groups receive their fair share".

The 6:1 majority decision overruled the 2004 judgment in *E V Chinniah vs State of Andhra Pradesh* that had held that Scheduled Castes constituted a homogeneous group and cannot be sub-categorised.

CJI Gavai said that "for India's most vulnerable citizens, the Constitution is not merely a legal charter or a political framework. It is a feeling, a lifeline, a quiet revolution etched in ink."

Recalling his journey from a municipal school to the office of the Chief Justice of India, CJI Gavai said that the Constitution "has been a guiding force".

"This is what the Constitution did. It told the people of India that they belong, that they can speak for themselves, and that they have an equal place in every sphere of society and power," the CJI said.

The CJI also said that "the Constitution of India carries within it the heartbeat of those who were never meant to be heard, and the vision of a country where equality is not just promised, but pursued. It compels the State not only to protect



Chief Justice of India
BR Gavai

rights but to actively uplift, to affirm, to repair".

CJI Gavai said that Dr B R Ambedkar "saw representation as a necessary check—a system of constitutional checks and balances—to guard against the arbitrary power and social hegemony of dominant caste and class groups".

"He understood that in a society where inequality had been systemically entrenched, change would not come naturally or voluntarily. Therefore, the constitutional text itself had to carry the weight of a mandate—a mandate to protect, to empower, and to ensure representation," CJI Gavai said.

CJI Gavai said that the "constitutional guarantees" on representation "reflect a vision of substantive equality, which goes beyond formal equality and requires the State to take positive action to correct historical disadvantages".

The CJI said, "The true beauty of Indian democracy lies in this: even as we commemorate 75 years of the Constitution, we continue to reflect, renew, and reimagine how to deepen and expand the meaning of representation. Just last year, Parliament passed a constitutional amendment to provide political reservations for women in Parliament and state legislatures."

- Haryana (1994) issued notification sub-classifying SCs

Arguments in Favor of Sub-Classification

- Not homogenous; some groups more backward
- Substantive equality - targeting the most deprived
- *Indra Sawhney* permits sub-classification
- Legislative competence under Entries 41 (List II)
- Article 341 - no bar on sub-classification
- Empirical data - inter-se backwardness among SCs
- Jarnail Singh (2018):
 - Creamy layer exclusion for SCs does not violate Article 341

Arguments Against Sub-Classification

- Article 341(2) bars any modification of the SC list except by Parliament
- *E V Chinniah* (2005)
 - SCs form a homogenous class
 - sub-classification violates Article 14
- *Indra Sawhney* explicitly excluded SCs/

Analysis

- **Sub-classification is permissible:**
 - Articles 15(4) & 16(4) allow affirmative action for backward classes
 - Intelligible differentia exists
 - Does not alter the SC list



SC Reservation: Sub classification



SYLLABUS : GS Paper 2: Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections of the population by the Centre and States and the Performance of these Schemes

Newspaper : Indian Express **Page No :** 10

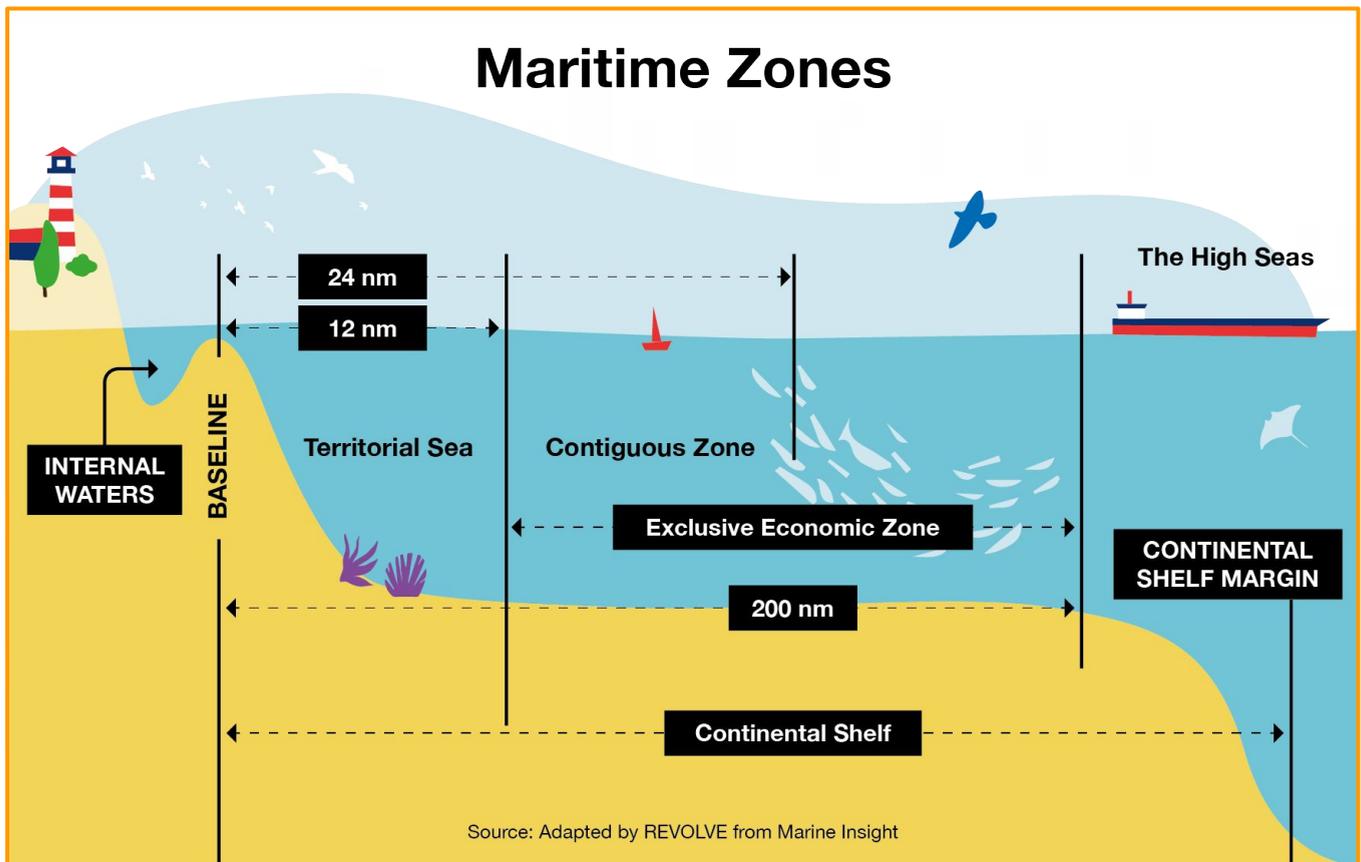
- **Overruling Chinniah:**
 - erred in treating as uniformly backward
 - Sub-classification is constitutional if:
 1. Based on rational criteria (e.g., social/educational deprivation)
 2. Does not exclude any group from reservation benefits
- States can provide preferential treatment to the most backward SC groups



SYLLABUS : GS Paper 2: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests
Newspaper : The Hindu **Page No :** 14

High Seas

- Under the jurisdiction of no country
- All countries - right to fish, ship, and do research
- > 60% of the world's oceans by surface area.
- Activities often unregulated and insufficiently monitored
- Paris Agreement for the Ocean
- Build on the legacy of UNCLOS



SYLLABUS : GS Paper 2: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests
Newspaper : The Hindu **Page No :** 14

High Seas Treaty

- Place 30% of the seas into protected areas by 2030
- Legal framework for establishing MPAs - wildlife, share genetic resources
- Environmental assessments - commercial activities
- Polluter-pays principle, mechanisms for disputes.
- Guidance - integrated approach to ocean management - ecosystem resilience
- Recognize the rights and traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples
- Freedom of scientific research, need for ABS
- special circumstances facing small-island, landlocked developing nations.
- Establish a CoP - member states accountable - governance, biodiversity
- pledge by signatories to share ocean resources

Figure 2

Limited Number of Nations Benefit From Most High Seas Fishing

Distant waters accessible only to those with greater resources



Sources: D.J. McCauley et al., "Wealthy Countries Dominate Industrial Fishing," *Science Advances* 4, no. 8 (2018): eaau2161, <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aau2161>; G. Carmine et al., "Who Is the High Seas Fishing Industry?" *One Earth* 3, no. 6 (2020): 730-38, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2020.11.017>

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High Seas Treaty



SYLLABUS : GS Paper 2: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Newspaper : The Hindu **Page No :** 14

India is unlikely to ratify the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) agreement – also known informally as the 'High Seas Treaty' – at the

Though India signed the agreement in September 2024, formal ratification is pending. Before proceeding, the government is required to amend certain laws, including the Biological Diversity Act, it is

As of June 10, 49 countries have ratified the treaty. Once 60 countries complete the process, the treaty will enter into legal force.

One of the most contentious aspects of the BBNJ is the sharing of resources. The high seas, lying beyond the exclusive economic zones (EEZ) of nations, are not under the jurisdiction of any single country, and are known to harbour unique and exotic marine life. While com-

mercial extraction remains technically challenging, a clear mechanism for equitable sharing of potential economic benefits is yet to be finalised.

India's progress on Samudrayaan, the country's manned submersible mission, which is expected to reach ocean depths of up to 6,000 metres and is slated for a trial dive in 2026.

India reiterated its call for a legally binding Global Plastics Treaty and launched the 'SAHAV' digital ocean data portal at the conference, underscoring its growing leadership in global marine conservation efforts.



SYLLABUS : GS Paper 2: Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections of the population; Mechanisms, Laws, Institutions and Bodies constituted for the Protection and Betterment of these Vulnerable Sections
Newspaper : The Hindu Page No : 8

Recounting Velpur's story in ending child labour

Every year, June 12 is observed as World Day Against Child Labor (WDACL) under the auspices of the International Labour Organization (ILO). In an attempt to draw the attention of the world on the issue of child labour, the day brings together governments, employers and workers' organisations as well as civil society to work towards ending child labour. Though Sustainable Development Goal Target 8.7 calls on the global community to take effective measures to end child labour in all its forms by 2025, we are far from achieving this.

Child labour is prevalent all over the world, robbing many children of their basic right to live with dignity, enjoy their childhood and attain their full development potential. Across the world, 160 million children are estimated to be involved in child labour – which is almost one among 10 children. The Africa, Asia and the Pacific regions together account for almost nine out of every 10 children being in child labour. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the situation for many underprivileged children, when their schools closed, and their parents lost their jobs/wages. Many children who dropped out of school, and who were forced to work to supplement their family income, have not returned to school.

The extent of child labour in India
India has a significant incidence of child labour. Census 2011 estimated that 43.53 lakh children in the age group of five to 14 were involved in child labour due to factors such as poverty, non-accessibility and illiteracy. Child labour is preferred in beedi, carpet-weaving and firework factories.

India enacted the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act (CLPRA) in 1986, while the National Policy on Child Labour, 1987 sought to adopt a gradual and sequential approach with a focus on rehabilitation. Its action plan included strict enforcement of the CLPRA and implementation of the National Child Labour Project (NCLP) in areas where there is a high incidence of child labour. The CLPRA was replaced with the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016, which prohibited the employment of children below 14 and had provisions for the prohibition on employment of adolescents (14-18 years) in scheduled hazardous occupations. The Right to Education now mandates that the state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children in the age group six to 14 years.

Most drives against child labour have been



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effective but only for a short time. There are several instances of children who were engaged earlier in labour and who dropped out of school returning to their workplace. But there is a success story.

The Velpur model

Velpur Mandal (tehsil) of Nizamabad district in erstwhile Andhra Pradesh (now Telangana), was once notorious for child labour. But in a dramatic way it became a rare exception of shunning child labour due to the total control, the commitment and the involvement of the local community. In June 2001, a drive involving the community was started in Velpur to ensure that all children in the age group of five to 15 years went to school and that no child would be engaged as labour in any form. After a sustained campaign for about 100 days, Velpur was declared to be a "child labour free mandal", on October 2, 2001. Twenty-four years later, there is 100% retention in schools and no child labour in a mandal once notorious for it.

The campaign to identify and track every out-of-school child and enrol them in schools was initially led by a committed set of officials. But the fact is that there was large-scale resistance in the beginning. Canards were spread that the teams moving in villages were part of a nationwide racket to kidnap children and sell their organs such as kidneys and eyes. Hotels refused to serve even tea, with those in hotels making sarcastic remarks that all their servers had joined school.

But after persistent efforts and discussions with the people, the tide began to turn. People began to cooperate and even transformed it as their movement. Children who were seen in work places were sent to bridge schools under the NCLP. Public meetings emphasised the necessity of education and the need for children to go to school. In these meetings, children recognised their (former) employers who let them stop work and go to school.

Under peer pressure, former employers also made a public announcement of writing off the balance amount (principal, the interest and penal interest) owed to them by the parents who took hand loans from them (the children were used as mortgage and as child labour till the amount was repaid). They even distributed school stationery to the children.

A study found that a total amount of about ₹35 lakh was written off – the price for a good cause. All sarpanchs signed a memorandum of understanding (as in the provisions of the Andhra Pradesh Compulsory Primary Education Rules, 1982), with the government (district education officer in the presence of the District Collector) to

ensure that all children in the five to 14 age group in their village were sent to school. The government in turn undertook to provide access, infrastructure and teachers. This was the first time that such an agreement had been signed between sarpanchs and the government. There is no child labour – an achievement that is very zealously guarded by the community. To cherish this proud achievement of being the first mandal in the State to be declared child labour free and to remind them of their commitment to sustain it, villagers erected boards in every village with the words, "There is no child labour in our village".

On October 8, 2021, as a part of the 'Azadi Ka Amruth Mahotsav', the VV. Giri National Labour Institute, (VVGNI) Noida, Uttar Pradesh (under the Ministry of Labor and Employment, Government of India) organised a programme in Nizamabad. The event was to celebrate 20 years of successful intervention "to eliminate child labour and the declaration of Velpur Mandal, as Child labour free". All sarpanchs, caste elders, zilla parishad members and people involved in the campaign were honoured for their role in sustaining it. The challenge made to the local media to identify at least one child who was not in school had no takers. A leading news magazine had an exclusive report on this event.

The Velpur story is well documented and has been appreciated by the ILO and the media. Velpur has been visited by many experts in the fields of education and child labour. The former President of India, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, and members of the National Human Rights Commission India sent letters of appreciation.

The Velpur model, where there was the complete participation of the community in sustaining the fight against child labour, is an integral part of all training programmes that are organised by the VVGNI. Made aware of its sustained success, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour, Textiles and Skill Development asked the then District Collector, who led this campaign, to make a presentation before it on November 24, 2022. The Parliamentary Standing Committee appreciated and acknowledged its success.

What is vital

This is a community-led success story that is testimony of the axiom that social issues can be successfully and sustainably addressed only if they metamorphose into a people's movement. It is a proud moment for this writer to have been associated with it. He was the Collector of Nizamabad district, when this drive against child labour was taken up in Velpur in 2001.

Twenty-four years later, there is 100% retention in schools and no child labour in this mandal in Telangana



SYLLABUS : GS Paper 2: Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections of the population; Mechanisms, Laws, Institutions and Bodies constituted for the Protection and Betterment of these Vulnerable Sections

Newspaper : The Hindu **Page No :** 8

- World Day Against Child Labour on June 12 under ILO
- SDG Target 8.7: Calls for eliminating child labour by 2025

Global Child Labour Scenario

- 160 million children (1 in 10) in CL worldwide
- Highest prevalence: Africa, Asia, Pacific (90%)
- COVID-19 impact: School closures and job losses

Child Labour in India

- Census 2011: 4.35 million children (5–14 yr) in CL
- Key industries: Beedi, carpet-weaving, fireworks
- **Legal framework:**
 - Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986 (amended in 2016)
 - Bans employment of children below 14
 - Prohibits hazardous work for adolescents (14–18 years)
 - RTE: Free schooling for 6–14-year-olds
- **National Policy on Child Labour (1987):** Focus on rehabilitation and strict enforcement

Success Story: Velpur Model (Telangana)

- Velpur Mandal (Nizamabad) - once a CL hotspot
- 2001 campaign: Community-led drive to enrol all children (5–15 years) in schools

- Result: Declared "child labour-free" on October 2, 2001

Key Strategies

1. **Community Mobilization**
 - Overcame initial resistance (e.g., false rumours about organ trafficking)
 - Employers waived off debts (~ ₹35 lakh) tied to child labour
2. **Government & Local Collaboration**
 - Sarpanchs signed MoUs ensuring education for all children
 - Bridge schools under National Child Labour Project (NCLP)
3. **Sustainability**
 - 100% school retention for 24+ years
 - Villages display boards: "No child labour here"

Lessons from Velpur

- Community ownership for lasting change
- Legal + Social efforts
- Debt bondage is a major driver—addressing it can break the cycle
- Awareness + Enforcement ensure compliance



SYLLABUS : GS Paper 3: Environment: Conservation

Newspaper : Indian Express Page No : 1

Feared extinct in Valley, rare sighting revives hope of Eurasian otter's comeback

PAGE 1
ANCHOR

BASHARAT MASOOD
SRINAGAR, JUNE 11

FOR THREE decades, the Eurasian otter, once an integral part of Kashmir's aquatic ecosystem, was thought to be extinct in the Valley. However, a rare sighting of the semi-aquatic mammal has now been reported in south Kashmir.

The otter, which has been globally classified as 'near threatened' by the International Union

for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), was spotted in the Lidder River in Srigufwara, south Kashmir.

While villagers initially thought it was a crocodile, wildlife officials identified it as an Eurasian otter after watching videos captured by the villagers. That was later confirmed through photographic evidence.

"It has been confirmed as Eurasian otter," Suhail Ahmad Wagay, the Wildlife Warden for south Kashmir, told The Indian Express. "After it was reported, we set up CCTV surveillance, and we have captured it (on camera) at a few places."

The Eurasian otter, locally known as Vuder, was an integral part of Kashmir's aquatic ecosystem and was abundantly found in the water bodies. Its presence was used to scare the children and keep them away from the water bodies.

However, over the last three decades, it was not spotted in the water bodies of the valley, and it was thought to be extinct in Kashmir.

The sudden decline in otters, a carnivorous mammal that feeds on fish and other aquatic fauna, was attributed to increased water pollution and hunting of the mammal for its



The Eurasian otter had not been spotted in Kashmir for the last 25-30 years. Photo courtesy: Wildlife Institute of India

fur. An official said, "The pollution in water bodies, especially the use of pesticides, is a cause for the death of fish, which are the primary food for the otters."

"Historical records suggest that Kashmir had a substantial otter population in Dachigam and the stream that fed the Dal lake. It was also commonly seen in Rambhara stream (in south Kashmir) and the Lidder river (in Pahalgam)," Wagay said. "However, it was not spotted for the last 25-30 years, so we thought it had gone extinct (in Kashmir)."

Wildlife officials say that this is the third occasion this year

that it has been spotted in the Valley.

"In May it was first spotted in the Gurez valley," Wagay said. "It was also spotted in Hiverpora (in south Kashmir's Shopian district)."

Wildlife officials say the sighting of the mammal is encouraging and could help restore Kashmir's aquatic ecology.

The sighting has also sparked excitement among wildlife enthusiasts in the Valley. "This is good news for people in general and experts in particular," said one wildlife expert.

"These sightings over the last six months indicate that the otter

population may have increased; now the need is to protect them."

The Eurasian otters grow up to four feet and weigh around 10 kilograms. The otters can swim close to 10 kilometres in an hour and remain submerged in water. They can go as deep as 20 meters underwater. These mammals show heightened activity during mornings and evenings.

The Eurasian otter, known to be extremely territorial, is also the most widely distributed otter species. It is found in parts of Asia and northern Africa, as well as being spread across Europe.

(IUCN), was spotted in the Lidder River in Srigufwara, south Kashmir.

The Eurasian otter, locally known as Vuder, was an integral part of Kashmir's aquatic ecosystem and was abundantly found in the water bodies. Its presence

The sudden decline in otters, a carnivorous mammal that feeds on fish and other aquatic fauna, was attributed to increased water pollution and hunting of the mammal for its

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SYLLABUS : GS Paper 3: Environment: Conservation

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About Eurasian Otter:

- Eurasian otter, European otter, Eurasian River otter, common otter, Old-World otter
- Semiaquatic carnivorous mammal
- **Scientific Name:** *Lutra lutra*

Distribution:

- One of the widest distributions among Palearctic mammals
- Found in the Middle East, Europe, Northern Africa, Eastern Russia, China, other Asian countries
- **India:** Northern, northeast, south

Habitat:

- Diverse aquatic habitats: highland/lowland lakes, rivers, streams, marshes, swamp forests, coastal areas
- **Indian subcontinent:** Cold hills, mountain streams

Features:

- Elusive and solitary
- **Appearance:** Sleek brown fur (paler underside), long body, thick tail, short legs

• Aquatic Adaptations:

- Webbed feet
- Ability to close ears and nose underwater
- Dense, short fur for insulation

• Sensory Traits:

- Vibrissae (sensitive hairs) around snout for locating prey
- Acute sight, smell, and hearing.

• Vocalizations:

- High-pitched whistle (mother-cub communication)
- Twittering during play-fighting
- Cat-like noises when fighting

Conservation Status:

- **IUCN:** Near Threatened
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule II
- **CITES:** Appendix I





Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Energy Conservation Act, 2001:

1. It empowers the Centre to specify energy efficiency norms and standards for appliances.
2. It established the Bureau of Energy Efficiency.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: c

Q2. Consider the following pairs:

Drone Systems	Countries
Shahed - 136	Russia
Lancet	Iran
LOCUST	USA

How many of the above pair/s is/are correctly matched?

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

Answer: a

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding the maritime zones:

1. Territorial sea extends to 24 nautical miles from the baseline.
2. Exclusive economic extends to 200 nautical miles from the baseline.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: b

Q4. Consider the following statement regarding the High Seas Treaty:

1. The treaty is built on the legacy of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.
2. It is also known as the 'Paris Agreement for the Ocean.'
3. It aims to place 30% of the seas into protected areas by 2030.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

Answer: c

Q5. Consider the following statements regarding Eurasian Otter:

1. It is found in the Middle East, Europe, Northern Africa, Eastern Russia, China, other Asian countries
2. Its IUCN conservation status is Critically endangered.

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

Answer: a





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