

# IMPORTANT NEWS ARTICLES & EDITORIAL FOR UPSC FRIDAY, 10TH MAY 2024

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## GS-III : The impact of 50 years of vaccination on children worldwide

- **In no time the next day. This incident occurred few weeks** after Neha Math, a first year Master of Computer Applications (MCA) and the chief of a Congress municipality, was killed by her classmate Fayaz Khan in Hubballi town. She had gone to attend an exam of As she was getting leave the college in the afternoon, she was suddenly stabbed to death by Fayaz. Neha Math was close to Fayaz but he distanced himself.
- **Just hours before death, a double-locked the State's galuru.** In a park in a posh locality of Beshangal, 46, who is a mother of children, stabbed her old colleague at a management camp. The article mentions that the vaccination rates in the last 50 years have been high. The chart shows the regions vaccinated against measles (Europe, Africa, Western Pacific, Southeast Asia, 2005-2013). The chart shows the share of the population aged 12 years and above who have had at least one DTP3 dose. India's population projections and the UN projects that India's population will be 1.64 billion peaking and then declining numbers driven by a sharp fall in fertility rates.



## GS-I : India's population data and tale of projections and predications

- **In this article, dated August 12, 2020, Sonalde Desai** analyses projections about India's demographic future. A the new study, published in the highly regarded journal, The Lancet, and prepared by Seattle-based Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), has shaken up the world of population policy. It argues that while India is destined to be the largest country in the world, its population will peak by mid-century. And as the 21st century closes, its ultimate population will be far smaller than anyone could have anticipated, about 1.09 billion instead of approximately 1.35 billion today.
- **It could even be as low as 724 million.** Readers who follow COVID-19 projections will remember that in March 2020, the IHME projected U.S. deaths from COVID-19 to be around 81,000 by August. Deaths in the U.S. today are more than twice that number. The underlying assumptions for the initial model were not borne out. The IHME population projections are also subject to underlying assumptions that deserve careful scrutiny. They predict that by the year 2100, on average, Indian women will have 1.29 children. Since each woman must have two children to replace herself and her husband, this will result in a sharp population decline. Contrast this predicted fertility rate of 1.29 for India with the projected cohort fertility of 1.53 for the United States and 1.78 for France in the same model.
- **It is difficult to believe that Indian parents could be less committed** to childbearing than American or French parents. Until 2050, the IHME projections are almost identical to widely-used United Nations projections. Th India's population will 2050, the IHME project 2048. It is only in the se century that the two pr with the UN predicting 1.45 billion by 2100, an billion. Part of this divergen IHME model's excessiv regarding current cont National Family Health and potential for increa use. Research at the Na Applied Economic Rese National Data Innovatic Santanu Pramanik and that contraceptive use i poorly estimated, and a need for contraception that estimated by the IH generating implausibly projections for 2100. Fertility decline Regardless of whether w UN's projections, or the projections, India's dem contains a peaking and declining population dri reduction in fertility.
- **In Total fertility rate (TFR) children per woman;** toe Ironically, the massive p planning coupled with fo during the Emergency b decline in TFR from 5.9 1980. However, between had fallen by 35% from 3 What happened to a decline to a level where Union Territories have are replacement level? Oneto the success of the fam programme but family plost its primacy in the Ine THE DAILY QUIZ discourse. Between 1975 and 1994, family planning workers had targets they were expected to meet regarding sterilisations, condom distribution and intrauterine device (IUD) insertion. Often these targets led to explicit or implicit coercion. Following the Cairo conference on Population and Development in 1994, these targets were abandoned. If carrots have been dropped, the stick of policies designed to punish people with large families has been largely ineffective.
- **Punitive policies include denial of maternity leave** for third and subsequent births, limiting benefits of maternity schemes and ineligibility to contest in local body elections for individuals with large families. However, as Nirmala Buch, former Chief Secretary of Madhya Pradesh, wrote, these policies were mostly ignored in practice. Aspirational revolution If public policies to encourage the small family norm or to provide contraception have been lackadaisical, what led couples to abandon the ideal of large families? It seems highly probable that the socioeconomic transformation of India since the 1990s has played an important role. Over this period, agriculture became an increasingly smaller part of the Indian economy,

school and college enrolment grew sharply and individuals lucky enough to find a job in government, multinationals or software services companies reaped tremendous financial benefits. Not surprisingly, parents began to rethink their family-building strategies. Where farmers used to see more workers when they saw their children, the new aspirational parents see enrolment in coaching classes as a ticket to success. The literature on fertility decline in western countries attributes the decline in fertility to retreat from the family; Indian parents seem to demonstrate increased rather than decreased commitment to family by reducing the number of children and investing more in each child.



➤ **My research with demographer Alaka Basu at Cornell University compares**

families of different size at the same income level and finds that small and large families do not differ participation in the workforce or how in their leisure activities, women's many material goods they purchase. However, smaller families invest more money in their children by sending them to private schools and coaching classes. It is not aspirations for self but that for children that seems to drive fertility decline. In language of the past Ironically, even in the face of this sharp fertility decline among all segments of Indian society, the public discourse is still rooted in the language of the 1970s and particularly in some areas such as Uttar Pradesh on supposedly high fertility rate, Pradesh and Bihar or among some groups such as women with low levels of education or Muslims. This periodically results in politicians proposing remedies that would force these ostensibly ignorant or uncaring parents to have fewer children.

➤ **Demographic data suggest that the aspirational** revolution is already under way. What we need to hasten the fertility decline is to ensure that the health and family welfare system is up to this challenge and provides contraception and sexual and reproductive health services that allow individuals to have only as many children as they want. Sonalde Desai is Professor of Sociology at the University of Maryland and Centre Director, NCAER National Data Innovation Centre. The views expressed.

## GS-II : Adopting a transformative vision for mediation

- **an era dominated by judicial backlog and prolonged litigation**, the emphatic directive from the Chief Justice of India, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, in April 2024, to "mediate, not litigate", echoes with increasing urgency. The Mediation Act, 2023, notified on September 15, 2023, promises a transformative shift towards alternative dispute resolution. This legislation not only formalises mediation but also provides a comprehensive definition that includes pre-litigation and court-annexed mediation, online platforms, and community mediation among its forms, all aimed at facilitating amicable settlements through the intervention of a neutral mediator.
- **Vaibhavi is an advocin Mumbai. leads the mwing** at Presan online disresolution pIPAPER The reflections of the former Supreme Court of India judge, Justice S.K. Kaul, further illuminate the nuanced role of mediation. Speaking at a recent event, he recognised the evolution of mediation from a concept met with scepticism to one that is now warmly embraced by the legal community. Justice Kaul underscored that mediation should not be seen as a replacement for established legal procedures such as the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code ("IBC"), but rather as a synergistic approach. Echoing the ethos of Mahatma Gandhi, who saw the true role of a lawyer not in litigation but in uniting parties in dispute, mediation reorients the focus from adversarial confrontation to reconciling differences and healing relationships. As peacemakers, mediators foster a democratic space for open dialogue, allowing individuals to express their emotions and grievances freely, thereby paving the way for mutual understanding and the restoration of balance. This narrative not only showcases the expanding scope of mediation but also emphasises its critical role in streamlining both legal and economic dispute resolutions.
- **It underscores our collective need to integrate** mediation more deeply into our dispute resolution framework and, more importantly, cultivate a new generation of mediators. Barriers to skill development To ensure the. While the legislation legisla sets a strong foundation, the true efficacy of mediation relies equally on practical on-ground Implementation and further improvements in the legislation. Under current guidelines, aspiring mediators are required to have 15 years of professional experience in their field before they qualify to practise as mediators. This experience equips mediators with a deep understanding of the nuanced dynamics necessary to effectively guide disputing parties toward resolution. However, the path from initial basic mediation understanding in law school to becoming a practising mediator involves significant challenges.
- **Law students are typically and specifically trained** to advocate strongly from their client's perspective, a necessary skill in litigation but one that contrasts sharply with the mediator's role, which emphasises neutrality, impartiality, and an unbiased commitment to the mediation process rather than to a specific outcome. This bifurcated approach - where one must unlearn mediation to practise advocacy and then, years later, unlearn advocacy to return to mediation underscores a deeper disconnect in our legal education and practice. It suggests a need for continuous, integrated learning that allows legal professionals to wear multiple hats, switching from advocate to mediator with fluidity rather than viewing these roles as mutually exclusive stages of their career.
- **Such an integrated approach would not only maintain** the mediator's skill set throughout their career but also enhance their overall effectiveness by combining deep legal knowledge with core mediation competencies. Fostering the next generation of mediators To elevate the effectiveness of mediation, it

is essential to recognise the distinct skill sets required beyond traditional legal expertise. Innovative training methods such as co-mediation and shadow under the Mediation Act 2023 for young lawyers. Co-mediation pairs novice mediators with experienced counterparts in actual mediation sessions, facilitating a dynamic learning environment where skills can be actively observed and practised. Concurrently, shadow mediation offers novices a chance to observe these sessions without direct involvement, providing them with insights into the subtleties of the mediation process and various conflict resolution strategies.



- **By merging direct participation and observational learning,** these training methods equip emerging mediators with a deeper understanding and practical experience, crucial for handling complex disputes effectively and confidently. This dual approach ensures a comprehensive learning experience, paving the way for well-rounded professional development in the field of mediation. Such practical exposure will ensure that emerging mediators develop the nuanced skills and the confidence necessary for mediating complex disputes effectively. Additionally, embedding a structured mediation training module within the law school curriculum is vital. Introducing law students early to mediation training can ignite their interest and equip them with critical skills for resolving disputes empathetically and efficiently, setting the stage for a new generation of adept mediators. Adoption of these strategic enhancements will not only tweak existing frameworks but also spearhead a significant evolution in the legal landscape.
- **These changes shall promise to transform the Mediation Act, 2023,** from statute to a dynamic catalyst for growth and innovation in dispute resolution across India. By empowering the next generation of mediators with the tools to succeed, we will be setting the stage for a more harmonious, efficient, and just society. Let us seize this opportunity to foster a robust culture of mediation, ensuring that every mediator not only learns the craft but also masters the art of peace making.

## GS-II : Stabilising India-Nepal ties in changings times

- **Stabilising India-n Nepal, there is a palpable sense of restlessness**, dissatisfaction and uncertainty in the air these days because of the overall political and economic environment. While the transition to a full-fledged democracy underpinned by credible political institutions seems to be an unending one, there is also confusion about the direction in which it is headed. And, there are a lot of questions. Was it premature for Nepal to have decided through a Constitution (which was rushed through and barely debated) that it should be transformed instantaneously into a secular federal democratic republic? This when as a young democracy it had just battled one upheaval after another, and was in dire need of leaders, experience and institutions capable of handling daunting challenges?
- **Should Nepal, which had a wonderful tradition of being deeply** religious but with a secular and tolerant ethos, revert to its Hindu identity which it had lost when political parties were negotiating with the Maoists for an end to their 10-year insurgency? Should the monarchy be restored for want of institutions which could make sure that red lines were respected in the interests of safeguarding democracy? Was a genuine federal setup not an invitation for Nepal's disunity? How can Nepal survive in the post-COVID-19 world when corruption and misgovernance are so rampant? The new government in New Delhi in June will have its hands full handling its foreign policy priorities.
- **One of them will continue to be China.** And for that reason alone, a high level of attention being paid to Nepal is certain, especially in view of recent developments there and the high probability that political certainty will continue there in the months ahead. Changes under China's shadow One reason for attention is the recent dramatic change in the coalition partners of the incumbent Prime Minister, Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', which saw the largest party in Parliament, the centrist Nepali Congress (NC), being replaced by the second largest party led by K.P. Sharma Oli, who when Prime Minister in the past, had gained the reputation of being pro-China and anti-India. The Chinese were the first to officially welcome the renewed alliance between the two major left parties, which they have been urging for long, sometimes publicly, and clumsily.
- **This time around they managed to avoid public controversy** and allow the revival of the partnership to look as if it was a purely internal matter. Yet, they would have relished the readiness of the new left government to ignore Indian sensitivities. Nepal's Foreign Minister departed from convention by making his first Adoptin UVE : official foreign visit to Beijing rather than New Delhi, and, despite domestic warnings of falling into a Sri Lanka like debt trap, agreed to revive China's Belt and Road Initiative cooperation on (BRI). There have also been high-level military visits where new understandings have reportedly been reached. China's intentions are very clear: to expand its influence in Nepal at the cost of India's. Interestingly, the revival of the far left is being accompanied by a strong clamour from forces on the far right, which include calls for the restoration of the institution of monarchy and Nepal's Hindu identity. Nepal, which was once the world's only Hindu kingdom, was converted by its Parliament into a secular federal republic shortly after the Maoist insurgency ended and the Maoists agreed to be mainstreamed into the country's democratic polity a few years ago.
- **Both sets of forces have the reputation of being** ultra-nationalistic, pro-China and anti-India. Even otherwise, continuing political instability and malgovernance could invite a proliferation of India-directed mischief from Nepal by third countries and their non-official partners - the 'nexus' of smuggling

and terrorism in Pakistan that India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar recently described as an 'industry'. During the last phase of the King Birendrayears, political instability accompanied by frequent changes of government (a result of political opportunism), facilitated the spread of a Maoist insurgency within Nepal which later established its headquarters in a jungle hideout in India. In parallel, there was an escalation of the smuggling of drugs, arms and terrorist-related cross-border activities masterminded from Pakistan against India, from Nepalese soil.

- **The latter culminated in the hijacking of flight IC 814 in December 1999.** The redeeming feature then was a stable relationship between India and Nepal under and Nepal's 'twin pillar' policy of supporting the king multi-party democracy, which resulted in India's discreet cooperation and good relations across the political spectrum. It also saw Indian and Nepalese intelligence agencies working to expose Pakistani involvement. Eventually, the situation quickly developed into a multi-faceted crisis, causing upheavals and transformations in Nepal and new questions about the quality of its bilateral ties with India. Unlike in the past, China is now proactively working against India in Nepal. No longer does it have a low profile. It would probably be openly supportive of any cross-border instigation of terrorist activities in India which, for China, would come under the category of "good terrorism".
- **It suits, India is not alone. It has the Quad (Australia, India, Japan, the United States),** Indo-Pacific and other groupings keeping a close watch on China's moves to expand its influence through fair means and foul. However, it would be risky to assume that these would be of help if a Great Game 2.0 begins in a shaky Nepal. India's stand in number of work save the workforce me pregnant as th on raising a famil been called the nalty" and has bee i's low labour forc in many countrie alty has also been ofessions such as ed to be rigid and Is those wanting In "Has the Rise Reduced the alty in the Labor Harrington and M whether (WFH) arrange me more flexible for India has been playing its cards reasonably well, keeping a low profile and avoiding controversy by staying out of Nepal's internal affairs. However, pressure from some Nepali quarters to give "advice", or the temptation by some in India to give it in at least two important matters can be anticipated. Should Nepal revert to its old identity as a Hindu nation?
- **And, should the calls for restoration of monarchy** be encouraged given rising frustration with a democracy without strong institutional underpinnings? India (whether at the level of central, State or civil society) will have to give careful answers. In Nepal, opinions are often over-interpreted and confusion caused as a result of 'mixed signals' from India. It is for the Nepalese to decide on such issues. India could consider offering a new and holistic development road map which would excite public imagination and attract cross-party political consensus. For example, there could be a transformative, sustainable development agenda aimed at improving the quality of life of its people.
- **Innovative approaches in sectors such as health, education,** food and nutrition, child development, gender and jobs, will ensure that the BRI and other Chinese pet projects are not a priority. High-level Indian attention could inject a sense of optimism, stimulate investment in key sectors, and promote cross-party consensus on major projects. This will ensure that there is continuity and time-bound results even in the midst of instability, foster new inter-linkages between industries in both countries, address the demographic dividend, respond to the yearning in Nepal for a sense of equality and sovereign space, and build on the foundation of common civilisational assets which make the India-Nepal relationship so unique. India should also never forget that for the big brother-small brother syndrome to be overcome, the onus lies on the big brother-the style of diplomacy matters as much as the substance in relations between the two countries. With regard to Nepal, the many concerns complicating the India-Nepal relationship need not be an insoluble migraine. The new government in New Delhi in June this year has its work cut out. The views expressed are personal.



## GS-III : The impact of 50 years of vaccination on children worldwide

- **Hannah Ritchien the last 50 years, the lives of about 150 million children** have been saved due to vaccinations against different diseases. Of these, measles vaccination alone accounts for saving 60% of lives. These are some of the findings from a new study published in The Lancet. The decrease in deaths due to vaccine-preventable diseases can be attributed to the large-scale expansion of immunisation programmes across the globe. For instance, the measles vaccination rate increased from less than 20% in 2000 to 70% by 2021, world wide. A similar pattern was observed in the case of vaccination against diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus (DTP3) too. The significance of vaccinations has been particularly pronounced in reducing infant mortality rates from around 10% in 1974 to 3% in 2024.
- **The researchers estimate that 40% of this decline is due** to vaccines. Chart 1 shows the number of vaccinations from 1974 to 2024 across the world. Measles vaccination has had the most impact, with 94 million individuals benefiting from the vaccine, followed by tetanus (27.9 million), whooping cough-pertussis (13.17 million) and tuberculosis (10.87 million) vaccine. Chart 2 shows the region-wise share of children fully vaccinated against measles, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), The Western Pacific region saw the most drastic increase in vaccination coverage from 2% in 15% in 2010 to nearly 80% in 2021, Southeast Asia also showed significant advancement in measles vaccination rates over the last decade. Chart 3 shows the share of one-Year-old children vaccinated against DTP3.
- **In 2021, more than 80% of infants received the third dose of the DTP3** vaccine. Here too, the Western Pacific region showed high progress, from less than 10% in 1980 to 90% in 2021. The progress in vaccination rates is noteworthy because 50 years ago, vaccination coverage outside of Europe and North America was almost negligible. For instance, less than 5% of infants received the DTP3 vaccine. But in 1974, the World Health Assembly, the decision-making body of the WHO, formed the Essential Programme on Immunization. Various vaccination programmes were initiated across the world, which aimed to eradicate vaccine-preventable diseases. This led to a significant rise in vaccination rates. But by 2000, progress was stalling, and many of the world's poorest infants were still being left behind, especially in Africa and Asia.
- **The formation of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance** partnership between the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the WHO, Unicef, and the World Bank has since helped close the gaps by ensuring that were available for all. While the world-wide progress in vaccination rate is commendable, millions still continue to lose their lives due to insufficient vaccination coverage.
- **Chart 4 shows the estimated number of deaths caused by various** vaccine-preventable diseases across years. Every year, tuberculosis claims the lives of over a million people, while hundreds of thousands still die due to measles, tetanus, whooping cough, meningitis, and hepatitis B. Thus, we need to push for universal vaccine coverage. This will require increased investment and coordination from governments to provide universal immunisation programmes. It is also imperative to address scepticism and the fear towards vaccination.

## GS-III : Declining poverty ratio: a continuing trend

- **poverty ratio: a continuing trend** Trends of the Household Expenditure Survey 2012-23 01630 by the Purtonal simulations of poverty and inequality trends by m renchers. Some to these cudes Trends in poverty, inequality Siene argue the st the serce of hund on the face sheen arede the average pren by declles In the fact sheet, the Bambers tooed Fon the fact sheet erich froes those of und level dits, we cal wh pretty and inequality the fact sheet dars.
- **The 22002 20022) (177% posta per year based on the Kang 20.0%** 2012 2002-23117 72% pas per year) based on the Tenshikar onder at the earlier period, the poverty esimes based on the Committee's poverty Resdulkar liems declinent from 7.2% 2004 012135 2000(21 points per year)The According to the estimanet on Inequality prinsed Subramania new 2011-42 and 1200)21 Gand corificiene dedioed from 0.202 rural areas 110.00 point decline and firme: 0.358 to are 100% print dedines. Bumal et al also show that the Dec coefficient for rural areas declined 0.240.266 for urhan 0363 areas, it declined Item 0305 berwe 2010 (21 2022 23This meane poverty declinesl sipatficantly becweno 200-r 2022 23. though the rate of dedine lover compared to the 2011-12 and 2004-05 1 2011 12 period mequality declined betw 2011 and 20022-27 cularly in urtain areas to be noted that all these estimates depend on particu5.
- **Muhendra Desfen ChamThere has been a decline in poverty.** The Inequality in consumption expenditure has crime down a bitwhere the poverty line is drawn The 100 has changed the reference se call period of dasthe reporting of spe These are available depending upon the recall peral of differe types of expenditure item reference period, and neference period Om sal modified reference period (MMR)Experts say the relemente periods the different muertying the MRT sus may be expected estimates may Ylell estimates that are closer to their true value. The TendulkarCormsimee estimated poverty ratios on the basis of MKP for 1993-94 and 2004-05.
- **The Planning Commsied the arme methodulig estimam poverty** ratio for 2009-10 and 200-1256, the estimates on poverty for 2022 23 Chased on MMIU) are not smily comparable with those of earlier years. However, the Ringarajan Committee used MMR for enimacing poverty ratios for2005-40 and 200 12. Theseestimates are compurable withthose of 20322 23. For the sake ofcomparability, we e cannot give up what is considered sa be the appropriate mts of the recall periods. We stay fave to live with this problem if we are comparing periods over a long time period For the 2002 21 dans, therewere changes in methodology such as coverage of more items multiple visits, esc. Changes may provide better estimates, but the problens of cumparability urisesMeasurement issuesartun poverty linesasderived bean the rural poverty The stun penetynew by ther Lakida Comune hod Tendulkar Commstre sha Indirectly issed these sotme defating the pre comumpras bok separatingthe poor from the nest the Expert Group Olang sand that shodd contain food compo thut addresses the capability to be adequately nourished and some cormative level of compos expenditure for essential non besdchoidesa a resid liem groups sidual set of betustoorally determined non-food expendinire.
- **The Group estimated afresh the poverty haikes and did not simply** upadane an old bosket with new prices The poverty line las based onरेविशे सखानपेian expenditure if we take imo sont public expenditure, the actual weit being of the housebeild will be higherthan what is indicand ty the poverty line. The tried so get impud values for some items of public expenditure The value futures for themseonived free entirely or at low by the households have been imputed saning an appropriate

method. However, look at the average monthly per capita expenditure (MPCD shows It captured the of the tonal public expenditure on subsidised and free items given to the householda.

- **The average MPCE Imputation as compared to MPCE without imputation** was only 2.3% rural areas and 0.9% for urban, We need to capture these values better as public expenditure on these items is substantial. Thus, there has been a decline. There has also been some discussion on measurement issues relating to poverty lines. Mobanan and Karstu say say "the Tendulkar Committee was clear that a calorie norm-based poverty line is no longer appropriate. The Expert Group (Chendulkar) did not construct a poverty line. It adopted the officially measured urban poverty line of 2001-05 based on the Expert Group Lakatawalal methodology and converted this poverty line, which is in poverty.
- **The inequality in consumption expenditure has come down a bit, Usually**, Income inequality is higher than inequality in consumption expenditure. There is no unique way of measuring poverty. The higher the poverty cut off, the more will be the number of poor. Women are safe. STATE OF K.V. Adithyayan in the flydagan KamCs 10crilygsher school and marks too. They are eminent toman called Prak. The Nutricon Unit interview would not be she furnished 18net, the angry up w her housout, beheader with her headcident sent through the Stracked him deed him the ne This incidefew weeks amath a flestdent of Conlom (MCA) aof a Congresscillor was killdasane Fasin in Flubballetaka. She acto amend anAs she wasleave the cothe afternoonedly stabbedpua by Fayazedly close tohad stanhimfast homdeath, arocked thepalun In apodi localress, 40, children, stold colle



## GS-III : An overview of the Smart Cities Mission

- **The Smart Cities Mission (SCM), a flagship programme of the NDA government**, has taken a back seat in this year's list of promises and achievements. What are smart cities? The term Smart City has been used widely ever since 2003, after the great financial crash. Smart cities were defined by urban practitioners as new Silicon Valleys built with a strong integration of a network of airports, highways, and other types of communications, a so-called intellectual city with advanced ICT.
- **The NDA government wanted to adapt to these global changes** already happening through the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). It went ahead with a major flagship programme and thus, the SCM was announced in June 2015. Hundred cities were selected for five years under the mission. However, the mission did not and on the way clearly define a smart city. It stated, "there is no universally accepted definition of a Smart City. The conceptualisation of Smart City varies from city to city and country to country, depending on the level of development, willingness to change and reform resources and aspirations of the city residents. A Smart City would have a different connotation in India than, say, Europe.
- **Even in India, there is no one way of defining a Smart City.** The Catheri What was the SCM? The SCM had two main aspects: area based development consisting of three components—redevelopment, city renewal, retrofitting, city improvement, and green field projects; city extension and pan-city solutions based on ICT. These further comprised some sub-categories that would include April 25, exhibits that 13 projects sanctioned under the SCM have seen a fall in governance, waste management, at management, city management, urban 100 in the total outlay from the expected 2nd batch of 7,475 crore, which is 100% less than the projected capital outlay.
- **The dashboard shows that the SCM grant funded 5,50 projects** worth 20,000 crore in June 2020, whereas till June 2016, 165,063 projects worth 121,000 crore in urban mobility, and skill development, and 72 lakh crore was kept aside for the mission, with public-private partnerships (PPP) an important driver of the same. The mission that was to be completed in 50 cities under the SCM as many as undertaken by the Mission are unlikely to meet the amended deadline of June 2014. Interestingly, the divergence between the vision and the ground realities. The scheme was divorced from the ground realities of urban India. The urban form is dynamic and not static like the SCM. The SCM became an exclusionary scheme wherein not more than 1% of a city's geographical area was selected for development.
- **For example, Chandigarh which received 7196 crore in the first tranche** under the SCM spent it on smart water meters, a Wi-Fi zone, and solid waste management programmes all ploughed into one pocket sector. According to two major reports by McKinsey, to make Indian cities liveable, capital expenditure of \$1.2 trillion is required by 2030. In this context, 7,475 crore is less than \$20 billion in around 0.027% of urban India for this nine years. This comes to 0.027% of the total requirement. Hence, there was little traction. Additionally, the model designed to meet the demands of the residents of the city in India, according to the World Bank has more than 40% of the population living in slums.
- **In the name of executing smart city projects, there was displacement** of people living in poorer localities. Street vendors, for example, were displaced and urban communities were affected. In the name of smart cities, the 7th Constitutional Amendment, which led to many cities objecting to the governance structure. The design, according to critics, was top-down. A hilly town that had an annual budget less than 30 crore claimed a project worth more than 12,500 crore. The widening gap between the vision and the ground realities. Another major consequence of the SCM has been enhanced urban fooding. Some of the swen.

## GS-III : The employment stories

- **Have always been surrounded by many disagreements**, perhaps more so in recent times as greater research, rising complexity of work and economy, and poor data made consensus and alignment difficult. The problem, at least in the public discourse, is that the ups of downs in employment figures are frequently and wrongly accompanied by opinions rather than robust research that can identify the underlying causality. Using NSSO data from 1983 to 2023, we focused on analysing employment figures and their changing nature, as well as disaggregating and unpacking them. We find that since 1983 for every sub-period under consideration, principal employment has grown. There has been no period that has seen any jobless growth.
- **Principal employment measures those working for** the bulk of the year as opposed to subsidiary employment, which is predominantly part-time, of shorter duration and is in addition to the principal activity of a person. We, therefore, do not include it in our measure of employment at all and argue that nor should anyone else. In that period, the fastest increase in employment has been from 2017-18 to 2022-23 when about 80 million additional employment was reported. This translates to about 3.3 per cent growth annually, much higher than population growth during the period. We also find that this growth is very well spread-rural and urban sectors, manufacturing, agriculture, construction and services. age segments, women, etc. interestingly, the growth has been highest for women during this period, by more than 8 per cent annually.
- **Also, we find that older citizens (age 60 plus) are entering employed** status in larger numbers, at about 4.5 per cent annually. Why are greater numbers of women and older people working? There could be different arguments for this. The most common argument we hear is that there is increasing distress and women and older people have no choice but to work. But there are other possibilities as well. With falling fertility rates, improved access to water, energy, etc, those involved in care-and home-related work now have greater flexibility if they choose to work. In the case of older cohorts, we find that employment in this segment has been growing since the 1980s and could also be reflecting the greater life spans. Among economic sectors, though manufacturing and construction grew well at 3.4 and 5.9 per cent annually, higher growth has been achieved in earlier years as well. However, the greatest success has been in agriculture and services. Within agriculture, we obtain results that suggest it is not so much the cropping sector but livestock and fisheries. Millililn Employed that may have seen the greatest rise. A characteristic of this growth, however, is that of total growth in employment of 80 million, a large part or 44 million is for own account workers and unpaid family workers.
- **These are typically self-employed and this form of employment is not** necessarily seen as entrepreneurial but a fallback option for those who do not have any other avenues. But note that this is the same segment that was the beneficiary of the massive PMMY scheme (Mudra) that disbursed slightly less than Rs 23 lakh crore among 380 million accounts in the period starting 2015-16 until the end of 2022. Therefore, if there is growth in self-employment, some of it presumably is due to the large government transfers to this cohort. At the same time, such a large increase in Direct Cash Transfers in this period may have also contributed to greater employment opportunities. Deciphering the underlying cause is key to understanding whether growth in this segment is desirable or can be sustained. We also find a relative stagnation in aggregate 2022-23. The greatest in agriculture. Within agriculture results that livestock and may have seen a rise. A characteristic growth, however, is that of total growth of 80 million. million is for workers and family workers.

## GS-II : India's stakes in Chabahar

- India's stakes in Chabahar Signing of a long-term contract with Iran on the strategically located port is part of India's strategic and economic vision for Central Asia and beyond. However, the project has always faced multiple challenges. SHUBHART ROY, MEOW DELA MAYA, INDIA AND Malay the the Cabstar is a deep water port in Iran's Sout-Malacetan poco the kansan port that the chestantykwnd in the avens for large cargo ships. Mer for Shipping Party and Waterways Sarbund Swed the spring of the contact between today Organisation of Iran ( MarIPC waves appay \$120 lion exquip and operate dhe port or the du sus of the contract, and the hare des will Father extend the peace in Cabbar thermafter India has aboofined a ondit w dow in rupees rout \$250 mon for mutually identified petects to improve in manicure reland is the pert Slow start to project Modern Chabutar camembenginthe 1970, and Tehran malond the ratepe im portatur if the port during the Iran-Iraq war of the 80s In 2007, Hanan Rouhan, who war frans National Security Advant under President Syed Mohammad Kutans at the time, held ducussions with his Indian counterpart Brajesh Mishia on developing the port, lo cated 22kwent.of Pakistan's Gwadar Gwadar port In January uary 2003.
- **Petide Khatam and Kazakhstan Bender Abba Araba CHABA HAR PORT bila** The strategic and economic importance of Iran's Chabahar port will be greatly enhanced by its integration with the planned INSTC comidar (in red) George W Bush The 15, which declared it an arone of the 'aun of evil along with itaq and North Korea, pushed New Delhi to abandon strangerelership with lehiranyarvi the Chabahar project became a casuatry Progress after 2015 While lodu spent about \$100 millatostrect a 218-kmmad Bim Delaram in western Mghantan to Zaranj you! on the Iran- Afghan border to link with Clubalsar the the pot berween Iran and the 15+1 bore fruit project itself progressed at a glacial pace.
- **But things started to change in 2015 aftertaliethen Prime Minister** Atal Bihari Vajpayee signed off on an ambitious roadmap of strategic cooperatites. Among the key prog ects the two countries agreed on was Chubahar, which held the the potential to link South Asia with the Persian Gulf Altustan Cometal Alla and Europe The New Deflu Declaration signed by the two leaders recogined that the courttieswing strategiccommerce needled onderpinned with a stron Chabahar held im mene state and economic sipulicanor ast provided a route toma land access to which had been blocked by a VICECE33the pro ship with escile Palontan.
- **But the amnestious timelines for ext were under** by India's growing relation th the United States under Presidentereobablyhas adeteon andmplicaDOOwod About three weeks after Iran and the odd powers announced their framework deal on April 2, 2015, and committed to finalising a compenhouve deal by the end of June, then Afghan President Ashraf Ghani visited India and stressed the importance of the Chutabar porttween the thime countries led to the signing of a Trilateral Agreement to establish the Intexsunonal Transport and Thanut Corridor in May 2016, when Prime Minister Modivis ited Iran. Thereafter, India's Shipping Ministry worked at a brisk pace to develop the project The attitude of the Donald Trump admin stration towards Iran complicated matters after 2017.
- **but South Block appeared deser mined to May the course.** New Delhi man aged to get a waiver from the US for the Chabatur project, citing access in Alghastan as a mator from the India's appenach also stemmed (TECH of contavertz more than million meter tonesof buck and general cargo since then The port has also facilitated the of humanitarian assistance, mperia ing the Cond 10 pandemic Till dat of 2.5

million tonnes of wheat and 100,000 tonnes of pulses have been transported from India to Afghanistan through the port. In 2021 India supplied 40,000 tonnes of pulses through the port to Afghanistan through the port to transport locust attacks. In August 2023 Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with President Ebrahim Raisani in Johannesburg on the sidelines of the Summit, and discussed the pending term contract on Chabahar.

- **The two gave a clear political indication to final sign the long-term contract on Chabahar and INSTC** With the operationalisation of the term investment, Chabahar could finally become an important hub to connect India with the landlocked countries of Central



Asia and Afghanistan, However to better realise its commercial and strategic potential, the development of the port should be integrated with the larger connectivity project of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). The INSTC, which was initiated by India, and Iran, is a multi-modal maritime route envisaged to link the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea and onward to northern Europe. The INSTC envisages the movement of goods from China to Europe. China's Belt and Road initiative for massive infrastructure development across large parts of Asia and Africa has been aggressively pursuing land and sea routes. In recent years India has so far supplied six mobile harbour cranes (two of 140-tonne and four of 100-tonne capacity) and other equipment worth \$25 million at Chabahar port. PCL has been operating Chabahar through its wholly owned subsidiary, Indo Ports Global Chabahar Free Zone (IPGCTZ) since December 24, 2018.

- **The port has handled more than 90,000 twenty-foot-equivalent units during Chahar** On April 27-29, 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi agreed to work closely with the Afghan government to make the port project a reality and to develop it as a viable gateway to Afghanistan and Central Asia. They agreed that routes additional to the existing ones will provide a major impetus to Afghan economic construction efforts. Over the next one year, construction of goods from Mumbai to Bandar Abbas by sea, from Bandar Abbas to Bandar-e-Anzali, a new port on the Caspian coast, from Bandar-e-Anzali to Astrakhan port in the Russian Federation by ship across the Caspian Sea, and other parts of the Russian Federation to Europe by rail. Phunchok Stubbins, a senior fellow at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA) and a former Indian Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan, wrote in an IDSA issue brief in June 2017 that "INSTC and Chabahar complement each other for optimizing connectivity with Russia and Europe. However, the war in Ukraine and the deterioration of Europe's relationship with Russia since 2022 have complicated the future.

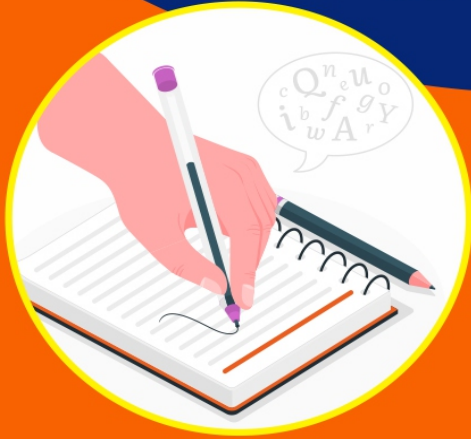


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