



# INNOVATIVE IAS

## Daily News Analysis

25th January 2020

### General studies-2

#### Centre seeks to revamp child care scheme in urban areas

##### Why in news?

- NITI Aayog's draft policy to revamp the government's Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS).

##### Background:

- ICDS provides for anganwadis or day-care centers that deliver a package of six services for the children, including supplementary nutrition, pre-school non-formal education, nutrition and health education, immunization, health check-up and referral services to hospitals.

##### Details:

- Urban areas are likely to receive a renewed focus under the government's ICDS programme.
- In line with this proposal, NITI Aayog will prepare a draft working paper, which once approved would be circulated to different ministries for consultations.
- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Ministry of Urban Housing and Affairs and the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation would be involved in the consultation process.

##### The peculiarity of urban areas:

- The first-ever pan-India survey on the nutrition status of children provides useful insights with respect to the urban areas.
- The survey has brought to light, the fact that malnutrition among children in urban India is characterized by relatively poor levels of breastfeeding as mothers have to travel long distances for work.
- The survey also found a higher prevalence of obesity because of relative prosperity and lifestyle patterns, along with iron and Vitamin D deficiency.
- Given that urban areas are characterized by higher population density, transportation challenges, and migration issues, it may not be possible for a community worker to keep in contact with the beneficiaries, unlike in rural settings.

#### The long and the short of Uttar Pradesh

##### Why in news?

- The article argues for the division of Uttar Pradesh into smaller states to ensure development.



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### Low rankings in most surveys:

- There has been a view that over the last two decades, U.P. has witnessed some form of progress and decreased inequality. However, some official reports and surveys have noted otherwise:
- However, in the UN Human Development Index Report for 2017, U.P. along with Bihar has scored the lowest among all the States of India.
- A State Bank of India Research report of March 2019 noted that P. had not bettered its human development index over the last 27 years.

### Social issues:

- P. is plagued by the social issues of communalism, caste killings, gender-based brutality, etc.
- Communalism, casteism has been often used to seize political power in the state. Localized, regular, “small” communal conflagrations are often manufactured for political benefits.
- The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation's “Household Social Consumption” survey of 2019 and NITI Aayog's “School Education Quality Index” of 2019, measuring the participation of girl children in education, have U.P. taking the last spot.

### Crime rate:

- The “Crime in India Report” for the year 2017, released by the National Crime Records Bureau, notes that U.P. has topped the list with 10% of India's total crime and three lakh registered First Information Reports (FIRs).
- It has the highest number of crimes against women.
- P. leads in arms possession and gun licenses. The no of cases filed against illegal possession of arms is also the highest in India.

### Economic issues:

- Given the large population of the state and the low development level in U.P., the state is facing the economic problem of unemployment and underemployment.
- A large number of the poor from U.P. are forced to migrate to other states in search of better livelihood opportunities. They are subjected to sub-human treatment as migrant labour in other parts of India leading to their exploitation. They are often subject to onslaughts from nativists.
- In spite of this, illiteracy and poverty are still concerns for these migrant workers.

### Reasons:

- The state of Uttar Pradesh being the most populous and being a geographically large state is too big for administrative convenience.
- Countries in Africa, Europe, and South America have fewer people than U.P.
- In the 'Report of the States Reorganisation Commission', first published in 1955, the historian K.M. Panikkar, had also noted the disproportionate size of U.P.



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- There have been demands from Purvanchal (east U.P.), Bundelkhand, Awadh (central U.P.) and Paschim Pradesh (west U.P.), for higher resource allocations and greater power devolution.
- When any change such as “modernity” or “democracy”, is attempted, it usually activates nativist identity politics which can lead to a spurt in ethnic conflict in societies.
- Scholars have often attributed Hindu-Muslim and caste conflicts to the pressures of so-called modernization.
- The unevenness in modernization has worsened the condition in an already uneven society, pushing U.P.'s citizenry into collective religious and caste conflicts.

### Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) 2020.

#### Why in news?

- India has moved up eight places to the 72nd position in the Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) 2020.
- Switzerland topped the list of 132 nations, followed by the US and Singapore.

#### Key Points:

- It was started in 2013 and is an annual benchmarking report that measures the ability of countries to compete for talent, their ability to grow, attract and retain talent.
- Theme for 2020 was 'Global Talent in the Age of Artificial Intelligence'. It explores how the development of artificial intelligence (AI) is not only changing the nature of work but also forcing a re-evaluation of workplace practices, corporate structures and innovation ecosystems.
- Inequality: The report noted that the gap between high income, talent-rich nations and the rest of the world is widening. More than half of the population in the developing world lack basic digital skills.
- About GTCI Report: It is launched by INSEAD, a partner and sponsor of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Davos, Switzerland recently.
- INSEAD is one of the world's leading and largest graduate business schools with locations all over the world and alliances with top institutions.
- The six metrics used to decide a country's rank are - enable, attract, grow, retain, vocational skills and global knowledge skills.

#### India

- The report stated that India's GTCI score and GDP per capita are both lower than the other emerging market economies such as BRICS- Brazil (80th), Russia (48th), China (42nd), and South Africa (70th).
- India's key strength relates to growing talent, due to its levels of lifelong learning and access to growth. However, more could be done to improve India's educational system.
- The country's highest-ranked sub-pillar is employability but the ability to match labour market





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demand and supply stands in contrast to the country's poor "mid-level skills", which result in a mediocre score in vocational and technical skills.

- India faces the challenge of attracting and retaining talent and the weak ability to overcome it. India has to strengthen the role of minorities and women to raise the **level of internal openness in the country which would make it more appealing.**

### National Girl child Day

- On the occasion of National Girl Child Day (24th January), the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) have launched an initiative called 'Establishment of Chairs in the Universities in the name of eminent women administrators, artists, scientists and social reformers'.
- The programme intends to establish 10 chairs across different universities after eminent women to encourage women to pursue higher education and excel in their chosen fields.

### **Key Points:**

#### **Objectives:**

- The establishment of chairs will help the universities to recognise women's contributions and promote female role models in respective fields especially the formulation of public policies.
- Initially, the chairs will be set up for a period of 5 years.
- Each chair will be funded by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (₹50 lakh per year).
- All the universities that are eligible to receive grant-in-aid from the UGC are eligible to apply for the establishment of the Chairs.
- Any scholar or academician in the age group of 55-70 years, with specialisation in their fields, will be eligible for the chair.
- The selected academicians will be appointed for a period of five years, which can be extended to another five years.

#### **Functions:**

- Engagement in research and, in turn, contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the area of the study.
- Strengthening the role of university/academics in public policymaking.
- Designing short-term capacity-building programmes for teachers in higher education.
- Providing a forum for inter-university/ intercollegiate Post Graduate and Research level dialogues, discussion meetings, seminars.

#### **Assessment:**

- The University will review the progress of the Chair annually and submit a final report on the activities and outcome of the Chair to the UGC after five years.
- However, the UGC may undertake the exercise of reviewing the Chair for its continuance, at any stage.





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### Maharashtra and world bank

#### Why in news?

- Recently, the Union government, Maharashtra and the World Bank (WB) signed a loan agreement of \$210 million to support small farmers participate in competitive agriculture value chains, facilitate agri-business investments, increase market access and productivity, and build the resilience of crops to recurrent floods or droughts in Maharashtra.

#### Key Points:

- It is a significant step towards transforming the state's rural economy through sustainable agriculture and empowerment of farmers by connecting them directly to the markets and doubling agriculture exports from the state.
- This project is also in line with the National Action Plan on Climate Change (2008)
- Enhance the adoption of climate-resilient production techniques in the state.
- Increase private sector investments in agricultural value chains.
- Remove constraints for producers and entrepreneurs in accessing emerging domestic and export markets.
- Capacity-building of state to respond to commodity-price fluctuations by providing access to timely information on markets.

#### Focus on Women:

- At least 43% of farmers and farm-workers participating in project activities are expected to be women.
- Specific focus will be given to women-led enterprises and the participation of women in the decision-making processes of farmer producer organizations

#### Maharashtra and Agricultural Transformation

- Agricultural transformation is already underway in Maharashtra with an upsurge in the production of high-value crops such as fruits and vegetables, pulses, and maize and soybean for animal feed.
- The state has emerged as one of the country's largest producer and exporter of fruits, vegetables, pulses, cotton, and soybean.
- But, the area under cultivation for cereals such as rice and wheat has been declining since 2000.
- Many of these changes have led to several positive developments for Maharashtra where production is:
  - labour intensive in horticulture and floriculture.
  - climate-resilient (pulse-based cropping systems increases resilience, e.g. pigeon pea intercropping leads to higher soil carbon sequestration than mono-crop system)
  - Responds to domestic and global market needs.



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- With a substantial urban population, relatively high per capita incomes, and highest industrialization levels, Maharashtra is well-placed for an agriculture-sector transformation

### General studies-3

#### New Archeon

##### **Why in News?**

- Recently, scientists at the National Centre for Microbial Resource under National Centre for Cell Science (NCCS) in Pune have reported a new archaeon, which they discovered in Sambhar Salt Lake in Rajasthan

##### **National Centre for Microbial Resource**

- It started as Microbial Culture Collection (MCC) in 2009 with a mandate to preserve and catalogue the diversity of bacteria collected from different ecological niches from all over India and to make them available for biotechnological exploitation by researchers.
- In April 2017 MCC was transformed as a Centre of Excellence for National Centre for Microbial Resource (NCCS). It plays a crucial role as custodian of microbial diversity of India.
- It is a part of the National Centre for Cell Science.

##### **National Centre for Cell Science**

- It is a national level biotechnology, tissue engineering and tissue banking research centre located at SavitribaiPhule Pune University, Maharashtra.
- It is one of the premier research centres in India, which works on cell-culture, cell-repository, immunology, chromatin-remodelling.

##### **Key Points:**

- Archaea (singular archaeon) are a primitive group of microorganisms that thrive in extreme habitats such as hot springs, cold deserts and hypersaline lakes.
- These slow-growing organisms are also present in the human gut and have a potential relationship with human health.
- They are known for producing antimicrobial molecules and for antioxidant activity with applications in eco-friendly waste-water treatment.
- Scientists all over the world are working on the taxonomy of archaea but the studies on archaea are outnumbered and very little is known about how archaea behave in the human body.
- Based on mandatory genome analysis, researchers found that the organism has potential gene clusters that help maintain the metabolism of the archaea to survive in extremely harsh conditions.
- This particular organism also harbours specific pathways for DNA replication, recombination



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and repair.

- The new archaeon has been named Natrialbaswarupiae, after Dr RenuSwarup, Secretary of the Department of Biotechnology, for her initiative in supporting microbial diversity studies in the country.

### National voters day

- 10th National Voters' Day (NVD) is organized by Election Commission of India on 25th January 2020 to mark 70 years of Election Commission of India (ECI)
- NVD has been celebrated on January 25 every year since 2011.

### **Key Points:**

- Theme: The theme for NVD 2020 is 'Electoral Literacy for Stronger Democracy'.
- The theme sets the tone for year-long activities which focus on voter education and renewal of citizens' faith in the electoral process.
- Aim: NVD is celebrated to encourage, facilitate and maximize the voter enrolment, especially for the new voters. The day is utilized to spread awareness among voters for promoting informed participation in the electoral process.

### Election Commission of India

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) is an autonomous constitutional authority responsible for administering Union and State election processes in India.
- ECI was established on 25th January 1950.
- The body administers elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies, and the offices of the President and Vice President in the country.
- Structure of the Commission
  - Originally the commission had only one election commissioner but after the Election Commissioner Amendment Act 1989, it has been made a multi-member body.
  - The commission presently consists of one Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and two Election Commissioners (ECs).
  - The secretariat of the commission is located in New Delhi.

### Women in STEM

- The Department of Biotechnology (Ministry of Science & Technology) organized an International Summit on Women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) in New Delhi in January 2020.
- The overall aim was to boost the participation of women in the STEM fields for the development of a scientific career.
- Theme: Visualizing the Future: New Skylines.





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### Key Points:

- The objective of the summit was to showcase successful women in the field of STEM as real-world examples of women scientists, doctors and engineers as well as the rewards associated with it.
- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)
  - It is a curriculum based on the idea of educating students in 4 specific disciplines — science, technology, engineering and mathematics — in an interdisciplinary and applied approach.
  - A robust STEM education creates critical thinkers, problem-solvers, and next-generation innovators.
  - India is one of the countries that produce the highest number of scientists and engineers, the growth of STEM has picked up significantly over the last few years.
  - According to the National Science Foundation, it is predicted that 80% of the jobs created in the next decade will require some form of math and science skills.
  - Despite having the top-quality talent, the exam-focused education model of India has limited students when it comes to innovation, problem-solving and creativity. This is where the STEM players come in to fill this gap.
  - Under Article 51A of the Constitution of India it is a duty of every citizen of India to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform.

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