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GENERAL STUDIES 2

1.1. POLITY & GOVERNANCE

1.1.1. LANGUAGE DECORUM & THREE-LANGUAGE FORMULA

Context:

The Supreme Court of India issued notices to the Union Government, the Central Board of Secondary Education, and the National Council of Educational Research and Training seeking a report on preparedness for implementing the three-language formula in CBSE schools for Class 9 from July 1, 2026. Petitioners

challenged the policy citing constitutional, administrative, and educational concerns.



Evolution of the Three-Language Policy in India

- **Constitutional Basis (Article 351):** Assigns the Union responsibility to encourage the development and wider use of Hindi while respecting India's linguistic diversity.
- **Kothari Commission (1964–66):** Recommended the three-language approach to promote national integration and multilingual learning, later influencing education policy.
- **National Education Policy, 1968:** Emphasised regional languages as the medium of instruction at school level and encouraged their wider use in higher education.
- **Programme of Action, 1992:** Stressed the use of mother tongue or regional language during early childhood and pre-school education.
- **Right to Education Act, 2009:** Recommended mother tongue-based instruction in schools, wherever feasible, to improve learning outcomes.
- **National Education Policy, 2020:** Advocates teaching in home, local, or regional language preferably up to Grade 8 to strengthen foundational learning and multilingualism.

Constitutional & Legal Concerns

- **Individual liberty & cultural freedom:** Language choice is tied to personal identity and cultural expression.
- **Autonomy & pluralism concerns:** Mandatory language learning may undermine individual choice and India's linguistic diversity.
- **NEP flexibility promise:** The policy appears inconsistent with NEP 2020's assurance that no language will be imposed.
- **CBSE's legal authority:** Questions arise whether CBSE can enforce such a major reform without parliamentary backing.
- **Article 21A (Right to Education):** Educational policies should ensure accessible and student-friendly learning.
- **Article 29 (Cultural & linguistic rights):** Protects citizens' right to preserve their language and cultural identity.

- **Federal structure** – Education lies in the Concurrent List; states have stakes in language policy

Arguments in Favour of the Policy

- **Promotes multilingual competence:** Helps students develop proficiency in multiple languages and improves communication across regions and cultures. It enhances linguistic adaptability in a diverse society.
- **Enhances cognitive skills:** Learning multiple languages strengthens memory, analytical thinking, and problem-solving abilities. It also improves mental flexibility and learning capacity.
- **Preserves linguistic diversity:** Encourages students to appreciate India's multilingual and cultural heritage. It helps protect regional languages and strengthens cultural identity.
- **Strengthens national integration:** Promotes understanding among people from different linguistic backgrounds and regions. This reinforces unity in diversity and social cohesion.
- **Boosts global competitiveness:** Multilingual skills improve employability and communication in an interconnected global economy. They also enhance adaptability in education, business, and diplomacy.

Key Challenges, Criticisms & Broader Issues

- **Administrative and infrastructural gaps:** Shortage of teachers, textbooks, and uneven school preparedness may hinder effective implementation.
- **Increased academic burden:** Additional language requirements could increase pressure on students and affect learning outcomes.
- **Federal and linguistic sensitivities:** Language politics and perceived imposition may trigger Centre–State tensions and regional resistance.
- **Imposition and over-centralisation concerns:** Mandatory implementation may restrict choice and undermine state autonomy in education.
- **Policy inconsistency and politicisation:** Abrupt policy shifts risk reducing trust and turning education into a cultural battleground.

Global Best Practices in Language Education

- **Flexible multilingual model (Canada/Switzerland):** Language education balances national cohesion with regional autonomy, allowing provinces/cantons flexibility in language choice while preserving linguistic diversity.
- **Mother-tongue based multilingual education (Finland/Singapore):** Early education prioritises the mother tongue alongside additional languages to improve learning outcomes, cultural identity, and cognitive development.
- **Phased and consultative implementation (European Union countries):** Language reforms are introduced gradually with trained teachers, curriculum readiness, and stakeholder consultation to avoid academic burden and resistance.

Way Forward

- **Flexible implementation & Choice-based approach:** States and schools should have contextual flexibility in language selection, offering a wider basket of Indian, classical, and foreign languages instead of a rigid formula. This would respect linguistic diversity, local realities, and student preferences.
- **No coercive imposition & voluntary multilingualism:** The policy should align with the spirit of NEP 2020 by encouraging language learning through choice rather than compulsion. Multilingualism should emerge as an educational opportunity, not an imposed obligation.
- **3C Framework for implementation (Consensus–Choice–Capacity):** Reforms should be built on **Consensus** through bodies like the Inter-State Council (Article 263) or CABE, **Choice** through flexible language options, and **Capacity** through teacher training, digital content, and institutional readiness before enforcement.
- **Phased rollout with institutional preparedness:** Implementation should be gradual after ensuring adequate teachers, textbooks, and digital learning resources. A calibrated transition can minimise disruption and improve policy effectiveness.
- **Stakeholder consultation & cooperative federalism:** Parents, teachers, states, and linguistic experts should be involved in policy design to build trust and reduce Centre–State tensions. Consensus-based implementation would improve legitimacy and acceptance.
- **Reduce student burden through flexible pedagogy:** Flexible assessment mechanisms, lighter curricular integration, and activity-based language learning should prevent excessive academic pressure. Language education must support learning outcomes rather than burden students.
- **Digital & AI-led multilingualism:** Tools such as the Bhashini and digital platforms can enable real-time translation, language learning, and teacher training. Technology-driven multilingualism can transform language acquisition into an accessible and future-ready skill rather than an administrative burden.

Conclusion

India's language policy must balance **multilingual aspirations with constitutional freedom, federal sensitivity, and educational practicality**. A future-ready approach lies in **flexible, consultative, and student-centric implementation rather than linguistic imposition**. If designed inclusively, multilingual education can become a tool for **national integration, cognitive growth, and global competitiveness**. The goal should be to build **linguistically empowered citizens for a diverse and knowledge-driven India**.

Q. "Language policy in education should promote inclusion rather than imposition." Discuss in the context of the three-language formula under the National Education Policy. 15 Marks

1.2. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1.2.1. IMEC NAVIGATING THE CROSSROADS OF CONNECTIVITY AND GEOPOLITICS

Context

- The ongoing **Iran conflict** has exposed vulnerabilities in the **global economic and security system**, showing that **military superiority** alone cannot ensure decisive outcomes and that disruptions in critical trade routes can significantly impact the global economy.
- The crisis has strengthened the case for the **India Middle East Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)** as **an alternative connectivity network**, while also highlighting the **geopolitical and security challenges** that could affect its successful implementation.



About IMEC: Concept, Objectives, Structure and Strategic Significance

1. Understanding the Concept of IMEC

- The **India Middle East Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)** was announced during the **G20 Summit held in New Delhi in 2023** as a **major multinational connectivity initiative** aimed at strengthening economic integration among **India, West Asia, and Europe**.
- **Objectives of IMEC:** It integrates **railways, ports, highways, energy pipelines, undersea high speed data cables, green hydrogen corridors, and transnational energy transmission grids** into a unified connectivity framework linking **India, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, and Europe**
- Unlike traditional transport corridors, IMEC is designed as a **comprehensive economic corridor** that simultaneously promotes **trade, investment, connectivity, regional cooperation, and long term economic growth**.

2. Structure of IMEC:

- **Eastern Section:** The Eastern Section connects **India** with the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** through maritime links.
- **Central Section:** The Central Section comprises an **overland route** passing through the **UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Israel**, culminating at the **Port of Haifa** on Israel's Mediterranean coast.
- **Western Section:** The **Western Section** is a **sea based route** linking **Haifa** with major **European ports**, from where Europe's existing transportation network facilitates further connectivity.

3. Strategic Significance of IMEC

- **Reducing Dependence on Strategic Choke Points:** IMEC provides an alternative connectivity route that reduces reliance on vulnerable trade routes such as the **Suez Canal**.
- **Complementing Global Connectivity Initiatives:** The corridor complements major projects such as the **International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC)** and the **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**, which also seek to diversify global trade networks.

- **Enhancing Resilience Against Geopolitical Disruptions:** The **Iran conflict** has reinforced the importance of developing **resilient and diversified trade corridors** that can minimise the impact of geopolitical tensions and disruptions on global commerce.

Why the Iran Conflict Has Increased the Relevance of IMEC

1. Evolving Nature of Modern Warfare

- The Iran conflict demonstrated that **military superiority** alone cannot guarantee victory, as resilience and sustained resistance can significantly challenge stronger adversaries.
- It highlighted the growing importance of **adaptability, strategic endurance, and asymmetric warfare**, where relatively weaker states can impose costs on stronger powers through innovative and unconventional tactics.
- The conflict reflects a shift in modern warfare, where **resilience, flexibility, and strategic innovation** are becoming as important as advanced weapons and military strength.

2. Critical Importance of Global Choke Points

- The disruption of the **Strait of Hormuz**, through which **nearly one third of global oil supplies** pass, highlighted the **strategic importance of global choke points** for **energy security** and **international trade**.
- The crisis exposed the vulnerability of oil importing countries such as **India** and underscored the need for **alternative trade corridors, diversified supply chains, and reduced dependence on sensitive maritime routes**.

Key Challenges Before IMEC

1. Regional Security and Conflict Related Risks

- The ongoing conflicts in **Gaza** and **Iran** have affected important segments of the proposed corridor, creating concerns regarding its smooth implementation.
- The **Port of Haifa**, a **crucial transit hub in IMEC**, has faced security challenges, while attacks on Gulf infrastructure have exposed vulnerabilities in the corridor's eastern segment.
- Such regional instability increases **operational risks, uncertainty, and implementation challenges**.

2. Political Differences Among Key Stakeholders

- Evolving **geopolitical dynamics** among participating countries present another major challenge for IMEC.
- Differences between **Saudi Arabia** and the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** could affect the coordination required for seamless connectivity.
- Since IMEC depends on cooperation among multiple countries, **regional rivalries and strategic divergences** may hinder its successful execution.

Way Forward for Building a Resilient and Flexible IMEC

A. Develop Alternative Eastern Gateways

- Developing **Oman's ports** such as **Salalah, Duqm, and Muscat** can reduce dependence on the **Strait of Hormuz** and improve the corridor's resilience during regional conflicts.

B. Utilise Egypt as an Alternative Western Route

- **Egypt** can serve as a viable western alternative until the **Port of Haifa** becomes fully secure and operational.
- Its existing infrastructure, including the **Suez Canal Economic Zone**, ports, and industrial hubs, makes it a strong connectivity partner.

C. Enhance Diplomatic Coordination

- **India** should leverage its strong relations with **Saudi Arabia** and the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** to promote regional cooperation and keep IMEC on track.
- **Italy** and **France** should support the corridor through **political engagement, investment, and strategic coordination**.

D. Build a Flexible Connectivity Framework

- IMEC should evolve into a **flexible and adaptive connectivity framework** with alternative routes and transit nodes.
- While exploring new options, the original **UAE–Saudi Arabia–Jordan–Israel–Haifa alignment** should remain the long term objective.

Conclusion

- The **Iran conflict** has highlighted that while **IMEC** is becoming increasingly important for global connectivity, its implementation has also become more challenging due to regional geopolitical tensions.
- Thus, the success of IMEC will depend not only on infrastructure development but also on **diplomacy, regional cooperation, and strategic flexibility**. With alternative routes, strong partnerships, and sustained multilateral support, IMEC can emerge as a major corridor connecting **India, West Asia, and Europe**.

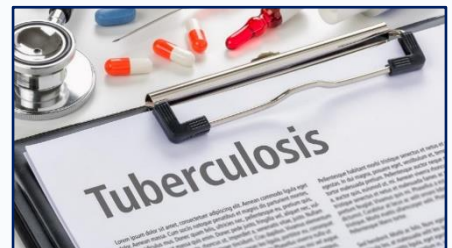
Q. The Iran conflict has highlighted both the necessity and challenges of the India Middle East Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). Discuss (15 Marks)

1.3. HEALTH

1.3.1. INDIA NEEDS INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES TO ELIMINATE TUBERCULOSIS (TB)

Context

- More than a century after the introduction of the **Bacillus Calmette–Guérin (BCG) vaccine**, tuberculosis (TB) remains one of the world's deadliest infectious diseases, disproportionately affecting **low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)** such as India.
- Recently, findings from the **PreVenTB trial** have highlighted the potential of targeted vaccination strategies, reinforcing the need for a comprehensive approach that combines vaccination, early detection, preventive therapy, and nutritional support to achieve TB elimination.



Tuberculosis Continuing to be a Major Public Health Challenge in India

A. Complex Nature of TB Infection

- **TB infection does not follow a single pathway**, making disease control difficult.
- After exposure to **Mycobacterium tuberculosis**, some individuals remain **asymptomatic**, some develop **latent infection**, while others progress to **active disease**.
- **Active TB can appear as:**
 - **Pulmonary TB (PTB)** affecting the lungs and driving transmission.
 - **Extrapulmonary TB (EPTB)** affecting organs such as lymph nodes, bones, brain, kidneys, and intestines.

B. Burden of Disease Remains High

- **Highest burden in the world:** India accounts for roughly **25% of global TB cases** and the **highest number of drug-resistant TB cases (about 32% of the global total)**, making it the epicentre of the disease.
- **Real but insufficient progress:** India's TB incidence has fallen by about **21% (from 237 to 187 cases per lakh)** in roughly the last decade, nearly **double the global pace**, while TB deaths have dropped from **28 to 21 per lakh**, but this is still far short of the elimination goal.
- **A systemic problem:** In many **low- and middle-income countries**, TB incidence runs at **200–300 per 100,000**, and bringing it down to the elimination threshold of **10–20 per 100,000** demands sustained effort and large-scale public health investment.

C. Challenges Associated with Extrapulmonary TB

- **EPTB is often difficult to diagnose due to non-specific symptoms.**
- It frequently remains undetected for long periods, resulting in severe complications and higher healthcare costs.
- Delayed diagnosis often leads to disability and poor treatment outcomes.

D. Why a “One-Shot” Vaccine Is Unrealistic

- As TB follows so many different pathways in the body, expecting a **single vaccine to prevent every form** of the disease is impractical and has fuelled repeated global disappointment.
- Most earlier vaccine trials targeted only **pulmonary TB**, leaving the dangerous extrapulmonary form largely untested and unaddressed.

The PreVenTB Trial: A Landmark Development in TB Vaccination

1. About the Trial

- The **PreVenTB trial**, conducted by **ICMR** across **18 sites in India** and involving over **12,700 household contacts of TB patients**, is the world's first **Phase III TB vaccine trial** to evaluate protection against both **Pulmonary TB (PTB)** and **Extrapulmonary TB (EPTB)** under real-world conditions.
- **Two Candidates:** It evaluated **VPM1002** (a single-dose, modified **BCG-based** vaccine) and **Immuvac**, including people with other illnesses and varying infection status, closely reflecting real life.

2. Key Findings: VPM1002

- **VPM1002**, developed by the **Serum Institute of India (SIPL)**, is a modified recombinant **BCG vaccine** designed to generate a stronger immune response.
- It demonstrated **21.4% efficacy against all forms of TB (PTB and EPTB combined)** across the study population.
- Notably, it showed **50.4% efficacy against Extrapulmonary TB**, marking the first **significant evidence of vaccine protection against EPTB**.
- Among **children aged 6–14 years**, efficacy reached **64.6% against all forms of TB**, highlighting the potential for a school-age booster vaccination strategy.
- As a **single-dose vaccine**, VPM1002 offers important operational advantages for large-scale deployment.

3. Key Findings: Immuvac

- **Immuvac**, developed by **Cadila Pharmaceuticals**, demonstrated **over 60% efficacy against EPTB among children aged 6–10 years**.
- It also showed **more than 60% efficacy in preventing progression from latent TB infection to active disease**, indicating its potential role in interrupting disease development and transmission.

4. Why This Trial Matters?

- **Tackling the hidden epidemic:** A reduction of **over 50% in extrapulmonary cases** delivers a real clinical and public health impact, lowering both **healthcare costs and patient suffering**.
- **Protecting school-age children:** The strong signal of **over 60% efficacy in children and adolescents** is vital because India currently has **no structured TB vaccination strategy beyond infancy**, opening the door to a possible **booster-dose approach**.
- **Nutrition Link:** Vaccine protection was **weaker in people with low Body Mass Index (BMI)**, proving that **nutritional support is essential** for vaccines to work well in undernourished populations.

Key Challenges in TB Elimination

- **Uneven Access to Diagnostics and Prevention:** Access to tools for detecting **latent and subclinical TB** remains patchy in rural, tribal, and urban slum areas, allowing silent infection reservoirs to persist. Access to **preventive therapy** is equally uneven, making targeted vaccination a critical pillar rather than an optional add-on.
- **Drug Resistance:** The growing burden of **Multidrug-Resistant TB (MDR-TB) and Extensively Drug-Resistant TB (XDR-TB)**, worsened by incomplete treatment and antibiotic misuse, demands longer, costlier, and more toxic regimens, straining the health system and pushing patients toward treatment abandonment.
- **Social Vulnerabilities and Poverty:** TB thrives on **undernutrition, overcrowded housing, poor ventilation, HIV, diabetes, and tobacco use**. Stigma, especially among women, further delays care and fuels household transmission, making medical interventions alone insufficient.

- **Funding fragility:** Global TB financing has stagnated, threatening hard-won gains, while India must reduce dependence on unpredictable international donor funding.
- **Perfect Vaccine Trap:** Waiting for a single ideal vaccine has cost decades of progress, when **moderately effective vaccines deployed strategically** can deliver immediate public health gains, as **India's rotavirus and COVID-19** experience clearly demonstrated.

India's Existing TB Elimination Architecture

- **National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP):** The **National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP)**, implemented under the **National Health Mission (NHM)**, follows the **Detect–Treat–Prevent–Build (DTPB)** strategy and aims to achieve **TB elimination by 2025**, five years ahead of the global United Nations **SDG 2030** target.
- **Pradhan Mantri TB Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan:** The **Pradhan Mantri TB Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan** seeks to transform TB elimination into a **Jan Andolan (People's Movement)** through the **Ni-kshay Mitra Initiative**, which enables **individuals, NGOs, institutions, and corporate entities** to support TB patients with nutritional, social, and community assistance.
- **Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana: Strengthening Nutritional Support:** Under the **Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana**, monthly nutritional assistance has recently been increased from **₹500 to ₹1,000** through **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)**, complemented by **Energy Dense Nutrition Supplementation (EDNS)** for undernourished TB patients.
- **Promoting Indigenous Public Health Innovation:** India has demonstrated a willingness to adopt **home-grown health innovations**, including the early deployment of the **TrueNat molecular diagnostic test**, the emergency approval of **Covaxin** during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the introduction of the **indigenous Rotavirus vaccine** despite modest initial efficacy, reflecting a pragmatic and innovation-driven public health approach.

Way Forward for a Smarter TB Elimination Strategy

- **Strengthen Early Detection:** Wider deployment of **TrueNat, CBNAAT (GeneXpert)**, and **AI-powered screening tools** must reach every primary health centre to catch **latent and subclinical TB** before it progresses and spreads.
- **Scale Up Preventive Therapy: Latent TB Preventive Therapy (LTPT)** must be systematically provided to **household contacts, healthcare workers, diabetics, HIV patients**, and immunocompromised individuals as a non-negotiable second layer of prevention.
- **Deploy Targeted Vaccination: VPM1002 and Immuvac** must be rolled out first among **household contacts and school-age children aged 6 to 14 years**, where trial efficacy was highest, using a **combination multi-vaccine framework** since no single vaccine covers all TB forms.
- **Integrate Nutrition: Nikshay Poshan Yojana** must be expanded and nutritional support treated as a **medical intervention**, not merely welfare, since low **BMI** directly reduces vaccine effectiveness and disease resistance.
- **Address Drug Resistance:** Stronger surveillance and strict treatment adherence protocols are essential to contain **Multidrug-Resistant TB (MDR-TB)** and **Extensively Drug-Resistant TB (XDR-TB)**.

- **Build Community-Centred Systems:** Reducing **stigma**, strengthening **frontline health workers**, and building on India's own precedents of **Covaxin** and **rotavirus vaccines** will ensure that urgency drives policy over the pursuit of perfection.

Conclusion

India's TB challenge will not be solved by one miracle vaccine but by the smart, combined use of **early detection, prevention, targeted vaccination, and nutrition support**. By deploying the tools available today, especially those that reduce the dangerous **extrapulmonary** form of the disease, India can convert its ambitious elimination goal into a realistic and achievable public health success.

Q. "Tuberculosis in India is as much a social and nutritional disease as it is a medical challenge." Critically examine the key bottlenecks in eliminating TB in India, and suggest an innovative, community-centered roadmap for the future. 15 Marks

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GENERAL STUDIES 3

2.1. ECONOMY

2.1.1. LAND POOLING: A SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION TO INDIA'S LAND ACQUISITION CHALLENGE

Context

- India's rapid urbanisation has significantly increased the demand for **roads, housing, public infrastructure, transport networks, and urban amenities**. However, securing land for these projects has become one of the biggest challenges for governments.
- In this context, **land pooling** has emerged as a practical and collaborative alternative to conventional land acquisition. Rajasthan's decision to launch its first land pooling scheme reflects the growing recognition of this model as a sustainable solution for urban development.



What Are the Major Challenges of Land Acquisition in India?

- **High Financial Burden on Governments:** The **Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013** has increased the financial burden on governments by mandating **higher compensation**, along with **rehabilitation and resettlement costs**, making **large scale infrastructure and urban development projects** increasingly expensive.
- **Frequent Legal Disputes and Litigation:** Land acquisition often leads to disputes over **compensation, ownership claims, and rehabilitation measures**, resulting in **prolonged litigation and legal** delays that frequently stall infrastructure projects for years.
- **Administrative Delays in Project Implementation:** Multiple **approvals, surveys, notifications, and consultations** make the acquisition process **lengthy and complex**, slowing project execution and increasing overall development costs.
- **Social Resistance and Public Opposition:** Compulsory acquisition is often perceived as a threat to **livelihoods and social security**, leading to **resistance from landowners and local communities**, which can delay or even halt important development projects.
- **Displacement and Social Disruption:** Land acquisition may force the relocation of families and communities, disrupting **social networks**, affecting **livelihood opportunities**, and creating long term **socio economic challenges** for affected populations.

Land Pooling as a Viable Alternative to Land Acquisition

- **Voluntary Contribution of Land by Landowners:** Under **land pooling**, landowners **voluntarily contribute a portion of their land** for infrastructure development and, in return, receive a share of the developed land with better amenities and higher value.
- **Balanced Land Sharing Mechanism:** Generally, landowners contribute around **25% to 40%** of their land for roads, parks, public amenities, and **Economically Weaker Section (EWS)** housing, while the remaining **60% to 75%** is returned as reconstituted plots with improved infrastructure.

- **Town Planning Scheme as a Successful Model:** The **Town Planning (TP) Scheme**, widely implemented in **Gujarat** and **Maharashtra**, is one of the most successful examples of the land pooling approach in India.
- **Integrated Framework for Urban Development:** The model simultaneously facilitates **land assembly, infrastructure creation, and cost recovery**, ensuring planned and efficient urban development.

Key Advantages of Land Pooling

- **Promotes Participatory Development:** Land pooling transforms landowners into **partners in development** rather than subjects of compulsory acquisition, fostering greater cooperation and trust.
- **Reduces Conflicts and Ensures Equitable Benefits:** The voluntary nature of the model minimises disputes and enables **equitable sharing of development benefits** among stakeholders.
- **Provides Financial Sustainability:** Development costs are largely recovered through the **increase in land value**, reducing the need for substantial upfront government expenditure.
- **Minimises Displacement and Preserves Communities:** The model reduces displacement, helps maintain **community ties**, and protects the social fabric of local populations.
- **Supports Sustainable Urban Planning:** Land pooling encourages **environmentally sensitive urban development** while facilitating the expansion of cities and improvement of urban infrastructure.

State Level Experiences Revealing About Land Pooling

- **Gujarat is the most successful example, with land pooling practised for nearly 100 years.** Formalised under the **Gujarat Town Planning and Urban Development Act, 1976**, over **1,000 sq. km** across Ahmedabad, Surat, Rajkot, Vadodara, and Gandhinagar have been developed through TP schemes. Strong legal support and institutional experience are the key reasons for this sustained success.
- **Maharashtra allowed its statutory provisions to become outdated but is now reviving the model.** TP schemes have recently been reintroduced in Pune and the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, demonstrating that legal reforms and political will can restart dormant planning tools effectively.
- **Guwahati adapted the model creatively to overcome local obstacles.** Challenges included unclear legal provisions and non digitised land records. Authorities simplified the process by relying on existing maps and reducing landowner contributions to just **12 to 15 percent**, which increased public acceptance and sped up implementation.
- **Rajasthan is modifying land value calculations and absorbing part of the development cost.** Although land pooling provisions existed in legislation since 2016, the state lacked experience. It is now tailoring the financial model to reduce the burden on landowners and make participation more attractive.

Way Forward for Effective Implementation of Land Pooling

- **Adopt State Specific Models:** States like **Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, and Delhi** must customise **land pooling frameworks** according to their **legal, administrative, and socio economic conditions**, as there is no one size fits all approach.
- **Build Trust and Public Participation:** Governments should strengthen **stakeholder consultations**, create awareness about the benefits of land pooling, and build trust among landowners to encourage voluntary participation.
- **Strengthen Legal and Institutional Frameworks:** Clear laws, well defined implementation procedures, and strong institutions are essential for ensuring smooth execution and resolving disputes effectively.
- **Ensure Fair and Transparent Mechanisms:** Transparent decision making, equitable land contribution norms, and fair benefit sharing arrangements are necessary to enhance acceptance and long term sustainability.
- **Improve Land Records and Governance Systems:** Accurate **digitised land records** and better governance mechanisms can reduce disputes, improve transparency, and facilitate efficient implementation of land pooling schemes.

Conclusion

Land pooling marks a decisive shift from the adversarial logic of compulsory acquisition to a model where landowners, communities, and governments share in the gains of urban growth. With **strong legal frameworks, transparent governance, institutional capacity, public participation, and state specific innovations**, land pooling can become a transformative instrument for building India's future cities and achieving balanced urban development.

Q. Land pooling represents a shift from compulsory acquisition to collaborative urban development. Critically examine the potential of land pooling in addressing India's urban infrastructure needs. 15 Marks

2.2. ENVIRONMENT

2.2.1. FUNDING INDIA'S CLIMATE TRANSITION: GAPS AND THE WAY FORWARD

Context

- India needs around **₹162.5 trillion (\$2.5 trillion)** by 2030 to achieve its **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** and nearly **\$10.1 trillion** by 2070 to achieve **Net Zero emissions target**.
- While climate finance instruments are available, the major challenge lies in creating an effective institutional and financial framework to channel funds towards climate action efficiently.



Understanding Climate Finance

A. What is Climate Finance?

- **Climate Finance** refers to financial resources mobilized from **public, private, domestic, and international sources** to support activities aimed at addressing climate change.
- It primarily finances **two categories of actions: Climate Mitigation**, which focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and **Climate Adaptation**, which aims to reduce vulnerability to climate change impacts.
- **Examples of Climate Finance:** Renewable energy projects, Green hydrogen initiatives, Electric mobility, Climate-resilient agriculture, Flood control and coastal protection infrastructure.

B. Why is Climate Finance Important for India?

- **Meeting Climate Commitments:** India needs large-scale investments to achieve its **NDC targets** and long-term **Net Zero emissions goal**. Hence, adequate climate finance is essential to accelerate this transition.
- **Supporting Green Industrial Transition:** Sectors such as **Steel, Cement, Power, and Road Transport** account for a major share of India's emissions. Financing is required to adopt cleaner technologies and reduce carbon intensity.
- **Enhancing Climate Resilience:** Investments are needed in **climate adaptation**, including drought management, flood protection, coastal resilience, and sustainable agriculture. Climate finance helps reduce the socio-economic impacts of extreme weather events.
- **Promoting Sustainable Development:** Green investments generate employment, improve energy security, and support sustainable economic growth. They contribute to achieving both environmental and developmental objectives simultaneously.

Magnitude of India's Climate Finance Challenge

- **Massive Investment Requirements**
 - According to estimates, India requires **₹162.5 trillion (\$2.5 trillion)** by 2030 to meet its climate commitments under the **Paris Agreement**.
 - Achieving the country's **Net Zero target by 2070** is expected to require investments worth nearly **\$10.1 trillion**, which is approximately three times India's present GDP.
- **Sector-Specific Financing Needs**
 - Decarbonization of the **Steel, Cement, Power, and Road Transport sectors** alone will require around **\$467 billion** in additional investments between 2022 and 2030.
 - These four sectors account for **more than half of India's carbon emissions** and therefore remain central to **India's green transition strategy**.
- **Insufficiency of Global Climate Finance**
 - Developed countries had committed to mobilizing **\$100 billion annually** under the **Paris Agreement**, but the target was not fully achieved.
 - The **New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG)** agreed at Baku aims to mobilize **\$300 billion annually by 2035**, which many developing countries, including **India**, consider inadequate.
 - Consequently, India will have to mobilize the majority of climate finance from domestic sources rather than relying heavily on international funding.

What is Climate Finance Taxonomy?

- **Meaning:** A **Climate Finance Taxonomy** is a classification framework that clearly defines which **economic activities and investments** qualify as **green, sustainable, or climate-friendly**. It serves as a common standard for governments, regulators, investors, banks, and financial institutions.
- **Expected Benefits:**
 - A **well-defined taxonomy** will improve transparency and **investor confidence**.
 - It will facilitate **greater domestic and international investment** in climate-friendly sectors.
 - It will provide a **standardized framework for sustainable finance** across sectors.

India's Existing Climate Finance Ecosystem

- **Growing Green Debt Market:** By the end of 2024, India had issued approximately **\$55.9 billion** worth of **Green, Social, Sustainability and Sustainability-Linked (GSS+) Debt Instruments**. This represents a significant increase since 2021 and reflects growing investor interest in sustainable finance.
- **Role of Sovereign Green Bonds:** India has issued **Sovereign Green Bonds worth ₹477 billion**, helping establish benchmarks for green financing. These bonds have strengthened investor confidence and contributed to the development of India's green finance market.
- **Availability of Financial Instruments:** India already possesses several climate finance instruments, including **Green Bonds, Sustainability-Linked Bonds, Blended Finance Mechanisms, Transition Finance Instruments, and Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs)**. However, the challenge lies in scaling up these instruments and improving coordination among them.

Role of RBI in Strengthening Climate Finance

- **Climate Risk Management Framework:** In 2025, the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** introduced the **Climate Finance and Management of Climate Change Risks Directions**, requiring banks to integrate **climate-related risks** into their lending and risk-management practices.
- **Green Activities under Priority Sector Lending (PSL):** The RBI has allowed eligible **green activities** to qualify under **Priority Sector Lending (PSL)**. Since PSL targets strongly influence **bank lending behaviour**, this measure can channel larger volumes of credit towards sustainable and climate-friendly sectors.
- **Climate Risk Information System (CRIS):** The RBI is developing a **Climate Risk Information System (CRIS)** to help **banks assess and manage climate-related financial risks** more effectively. This will strengthen risk assessment capabilities and improve the resilience of the banking sector.
- **Future Regulatory Reforms:** Going forward, the RBI may introduce **Climate Stress Testing** to evaluate the **impact of climate-related shocks on financial institutions**. It may also adopt **Differentiated Capital Requirements**, making carbon-intensive lending more costly while incentivising green investments.

Key Gaps in India's Climate Finance Architecture

- **Absence of Climate Finance Taxonomy:** Without a clear definition of what qualifies as "green", investors and financial institutions face uncertainty regarding project eligibility and sustainability standards.
- **Weak Institutional Coordination:** Existing climate finance instruments often operate in isolation, resulting in weak **institutional coordination** and therefore, reduces the efficiency of capital mobilisation and deployment.
- **Limited Private Sector Participation:** **Private sector participation** remains limited because green technologies in sectors such as steel and cement are still expensive and commercially challenging.
- **Inadequate Climate Adaptation Financing:** **Climate adaptation financing** continues to be inadequate because adaptation projects generally generate limited direct financial returns despite providing significant social and environmental benefits. Consequently, adaptation finance receives far less attention than mitigation finance.
- **State-Level Financing Constraints:** Many States lack the **borrowing capacity, technical expertise, and institutional mechanisms** needed to access climate finance effectively.

Way Forward

- **Finalize and Operationalize Climate Finance Taxonomy:** India should expedite the implementation of a comprehensive **Climate Finance Taxonomy** to establish clear standards for sustainable investments.
- **Strengthen RBI's Climate Finance Framework:** RBI should move beyond enabling green finance and adopt stronger measures such as mandatory climate stress testing and differentiated capital requirements.
- **Expand Priority Sector Lending for Climate Action:** Climate adaptation and mitigation projects should receive greater support under the **Priority Sector Lending** framework.
- **Establish a State Climate Finance Facility:** A dedicated financing mechanism involving the Union Government, **NABARD**, and international institutions should be created to improve States' access to climate finance.
- **Scale Up Sovereign Green Bond Issuance:** Greater issuance of **Sovereign Green Bonds** can deepen domestic green finance markets and attract long-term investors.
- **Promote Blended Finance at Scale:** Public capital should be strategically utilized to mobilize significantly larger volumes of private investment in climate-related sectors.

Conclusion

India's climate finance challenge is not primarily a problem of resource availability but one of institutional capacity and effective financial architecture. By strengthening regulatory frameworks, finalizing the **Climate Finance Taxonomy**, and improving access to climate finance at both national and State levels, India can successfully transform climate commitments into tangible outcomes.

Q. India requires massive investments to achieve its NDCs and Net Zero target. Discuss the role of climate finance in India's green transition and examine the challenges associated with mobilising and deploying climate finance. 15 Marks

2.3. INTERNAL SECURITY

2.3.1. AFTER MAOISM, THE REAL BATTLE FOR ADIVASI TRUST HAS JUST BEGUN

Context:

- The declaration of India as **Maoist-free on March 31, 2026**, marked a significant milestone in the country's internal security efforts, while the **government's vision of integrating every resident of Bastar into the mainstream by 2031** signals a shift from a security-centric approach towards development and social inclusion.
- However, **achieving lasting peace** will require more than welfare measures and infrastructure development; it will depend on addressing structural issues related to **Adivasi rights, governance, natural resource management, and the effective implementation of constitutional safeguards through meaningful community participation.**



Shifting of Focus from Security to Inclusive Development

A. Government's Post-Maoist Development Agenda

- Following the decline of Maoist insurgency, the government has prioritised **welfare delivery, road construction, mobile connectivity, and greater administrative outreach** in remote tribal regions.
- The government also aims to expand service delivery through dedicated centres and strengthen developmental interventions to improve the quality of life in Bastar.
- These measures can significantly enhance **access to services, connectivity, and socio-economic opportunities** for tribal communities.

B. Challenges in the Transition to Lasting Peace

- Development initiatives alone cannot address concerns relating to **justice, representation, and community control over resources.**
- As security challenges diminish, the government's performance will increasingly be judged on **justice delivery, protection of rights, and democratic accountability** rather than infrastructure creation alone.
- Adivasi communities are increasingly aware of their constitutional safeguards and are unlikely to lower their aspirations, making meaningful institutional reforms essential.

PESA and Constitutional Self-Governance

A. Constitutional Framework of Tribal Governance

- The constitutional vision for tribal governance is based on two parallel channels:
 - **Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)** led by the Gram Sabha.
 - **Government-appointed administrative institutions** such as Tehsildars and District Collectors.

- While both systems are intended to complement one another, bureaucratic institutions have often overshadowed elected local bodies in practice.

B. Significance of the PESA Act, 1996

- The **Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA)** seeks to strengthen decentralised governance in Fifth Schedule Areas by placing the **Gram Sabha at the centre of local self-governance**.
- PESA represents one of the most important constitutional mechanisms for ensuring tribal participation in governance and development.

C. Powers of the Gram Sabha

- Protection of **Adivasi identity, customs, and traditions**.
- Management of **community resources**.
- Resolution of local disputes through customary practices.
- Consent on matters affecting **lives, livelihoods, and local development**.

D. Jal, Jungle and Zameen: The Foundation of Trust

- For Adivasi communities, **water, forests, and land** are not merely economic resources but form the basis of identity, culture, livelihoods, and social organisation.
- The manner in which the state addresses **land rights, forest rights, and community resource ownership** will ultimately determine the level of trust that tribal communities place in government institutions.

E. Consent versus Consultation

- A crucial feature of PESA is the requirement of **Gram Sabha consent** on matters affecting local communities. Unlike consultation, **consent provides meaningful decision-making authority and protects community interests**. Any **dilution of consent-based provisions** weakens the spirit of tribal self-governance and grassroots democracy.

Major Challenges in Building Adivasi Trust

- **Weak Implementation of PESA:** The implementation of PESA across **Fifth Schedule States** has remained uneven, with states often interpreting and applying the Act in ways that dilute its original intent.
- **Attempts to Undermine Gram Sabha Authority:** The 2022 proposal in Chhattisgarh to replace "**consent**" with "**consultation**" reflected attempts to weaken the decision-making authority of Gram Sabhas.
- **Bureaucratic Dominance:** Administrative institutions continue to dominate governance processes, often sidelining elected local bodies and reducing meaningful community participation.
- **Manipulation of Democratic Processes:** Allegations of fabricated Gram Sabha resolutions and forged consent records have raised concerns regarding transparency and accountability.
- **Historical and Structural Grievances:** Issues relating to **land alienation, displacement, denial of resource rights, and limited participation in governance** continue to influence tribal perceptions of the state.

- **From Negative Peace to Positive Peace:** The decline of Maoist violence represents **negative peace**, characterised by the absence of armed conflict. Sustainable peace requires **positive peace**, which is rooted in **justice, inclusion, dignity, rights protection**, and **democratic participation**.

Way Forward for Strengthening Trust Through Constitutional Governance

- **Effective Implementation of PESA:** The post-Maoist phase presents an opportunity to fully implement the **Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), 1996** across all Fifth Schedule areas, with greater oversight to ensure uniform and effective enforcement.
- **Protecting the Authority of the Gram Sabha:** The **consent-based powers of the Gram Sabha** must be safeguarded through legal protection, transparent procedures, and independent monitoring mechanisms to prevent manipulation or fabrication of records.
- **Strengthening Forest Rights:** Effective implementation of the **Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006**, alongside PESA, is essential to secure tribal rights over forest land, minor forest produce, and community resources.
- **Promoting Participatory Integration:** Adivasi communities must be empowered to shape their own vision of development and integration, ensuring that inclusion into the mainstream remains a **participatory and rights-based process** rather than a top-down exercise.
- **Balancing Administrative Outreach with Democratic Empowerment:** Welfare delivery and administrative outreach should be complemented by strong democratic institutions and constitutional safeguards, ensuring that governance promotes **empowerment, participation, and self-governance** rather than dependence.

Conclusion

The defeat of Maoism in Bastar is a significant achievement, but it marks the beginning and not the end of the state's responsibility to its Adivasi citizens. **Lasting peace can only be built on the foundation of constitutional integrity, resource justice, and genuine participatory governance**, and the true measure of India's success in Bastar will not be the absence of conflict but the presence of trust.

Q. The elimination of Left-Wing Extremism marks only the first step towards peace. Discuss the challenges involved in transforming security gains into sustainable peace and development in tribal regions. 15 Marks

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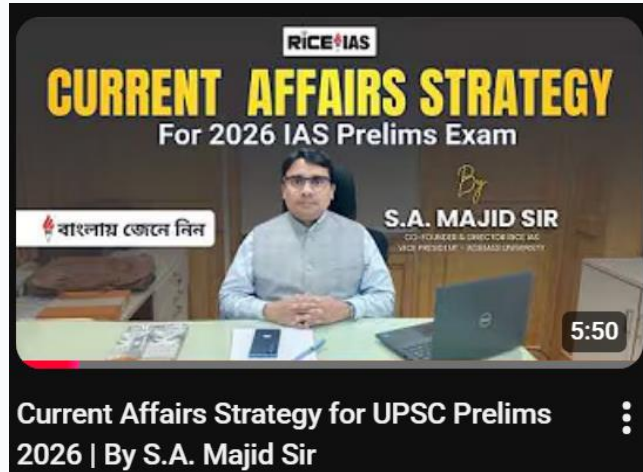
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