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- IAS SELF STUDY GUIDE -

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MIND MAPS

● — JUNE 2018 — ●

Stereotypical thinking and Patriarchal mindset is the biggest challenge.

Declining child sex ratio (CSR), the practice of gender-biased sex selection, and child marriage.

Domestic violence against women is also high.

Women being exposed to violence by their partners.

Judicial remedies or police reforms, though absolutely necessary, are mostly curative, rather than being preventive.

Benefits like maternity leave or related facilities will not be accessible to her in the informal sector.

The private sector and business community will be crucial in helping bridge the gap between skills and jobs and enable access to decent work for women.

Vocational and technical training, life skills and financial literacy programmes for women to help them develop marketable skills and better decision-making abilities.

Companies can also invest in women entrepreneurs through microfinance, and bring their goods and services into supply chains.

Enhancing women's access to the internet and ICT can create a market of connected women who can be linked to business opportunities.

Increasing representation of women in the public spheres is important.

Female leaders serve as role models and raise educational and career aspirations for adolescent girls and their parents.

Attitudinal shift is essential for women to be considered as equal within their homes and in broader society.

Educating Indian children from an early age about the importance of gender equality.

More flexible workplace policies, affordable childcare, and expanded skills training, particularly in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics).

Investment in infrastructure and transportation can reap dividends by connecting more women to productive work opportunities.

Address women's under-representation in business leadership circles.

Changing social attitudes about gender roles.

Dismantling several barriers, like women should prioritise childcare over their careers.

There are views that "when a mother works for pay, the children suffer". Government, business, the media, and individual communities need to work together to change such views.

Improve women's access to digital technology, which can open countless economic (and social) doors—including into finance.

Asia-Pacific countries could come together to provide more financing for gender-equality initiatives, and to encourage more gender-based investment and budgeting.

Now is the time to accelerate progress toward gender parity, and to women's power to deliver growth and improve social well-being.

Concerns / Challenges

Potential Areas of Focus

Way Forward

Conclusion

Introduction

Gender Equality is central to inclusive economic growth and is critical for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Pink is the colour of the Economic Survey 2017-18, signifying the support and promotion of the growing movement to target and end violence against women and to promote women's rights.

To enable women to participate fully in society and contribute to the health and prosperity of the society.

It is estimated that India can potentially boost its GDP by \$700 billion by 2025, by raising female labour-force participation rate.

Gender equality contributes to growth by raising the female-to-male ratio of labor-force participation, increasing women's work hours, and having more women working in higher-productivity sectors.

Equality at work goes hand in hand with gender equality in society.

Economically empowered women boost demand, have healthier and better-educated children, and raise human development levels.

Enabling her to lead a life of dignity.

Preventing their socio-economic exploitation and lowers domestic violence.

Enhancing a woman's control over household decision-making

Why Gender Equality?

Women remain subject to traditional attitudes that define their primary role as being in the home.

Women often lack access to the financing needed to start or expand a business.

Globally, the value of women's unpaid work performed is three times higher than that of men, whereas in the Asia-Pacific region, it is four times higher.

Unconscious bias in the workplace.

Though they comprise almost 40 percent of agricultural labour, they control only 9 percent of land in India.

More than 50 percent of women have no valuable assets to their name.

India has a lower share of women's contribution to the GDP than the global average.

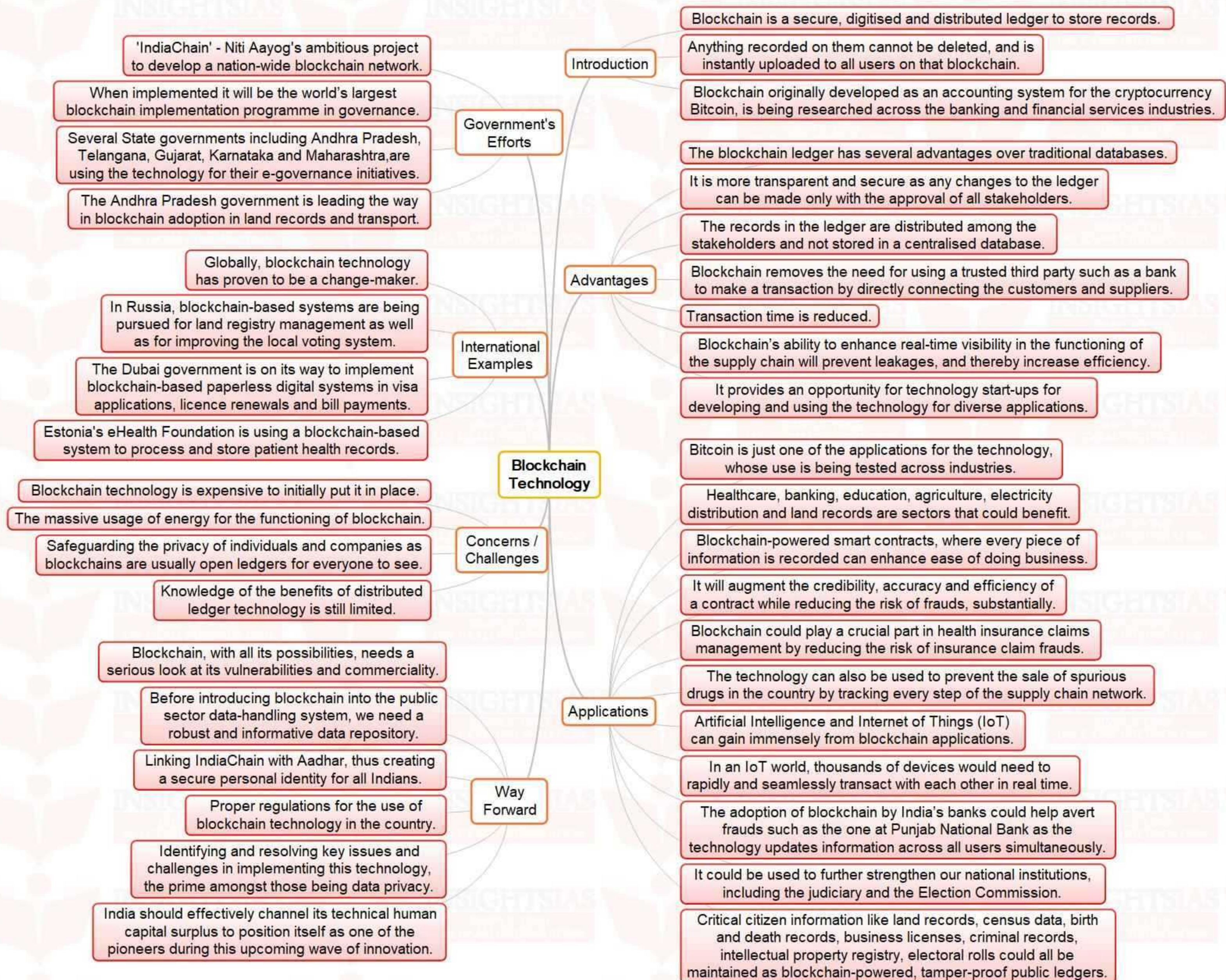
Women face great physical insecurity.

Crimes against women such as rapes, dowry deaths, and honour killings.

A culturally ingrained parental preference for sons — emanating from their importance as caregivers for parents in old age.

Gender Inequality

Gender Equality in India



Caste Census in India

Introduction

Caste is a social reality which determines one's social status and the limits of the social relations and also opportunities for advancement in the life of an individual.

Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011 was the first-ever caste-based census since 1931 Census of India.

There are demands for collection of caste data in 2021 Census.

It is important to understand the implications that caste data would have in the country.

Hasty inclusion of the caste question in the SECC has resulted in largely unusable data.

If we want information regarding the size and characteristics of various castes in India, we must look to the Census of 1931.

This does not address the change and requirement of present time.

Caste data will help to identify various backward and downtrodden classes.

It will give authentic information regarding the socio economic condition and education status of various castes.

It would help government identify beneficiaries for various socio-economic welfare schemes.

It would help in understanding the changes in society and exclude or include well off or deprived caste.

Without accurate data of thousands of jatis (castes) and upjatis (subcastes), it is difficult to infer the accuracy of the caste based political decisions.

Some jatis may have managed to pull themselves out poverty and marginalisation, while others may have sunk into it.

Data on caste can be used to rationalise reservation policies.

This data will strengthen the democratic system and will help to uplift a particular caste and in future there will hopefully be a casteless society.

Therefore it is time to collect data that reflects the current situation.

First Census in 1871, included questions about caste.

This data was then used to divide and conquer India.

It first privileged Brahmins as interpreters of Indian culture and then targeted them as the root of caste-based oppression and inequality.

This classification was also a source of anti-Brahmin movements of 20th century.

It generated a conception of community as a homogeneous and classifiable community and thereby influenced the processes of political representation.

Post-Independence Censuses have shied away from including questions about caste.

Need for Caste Census

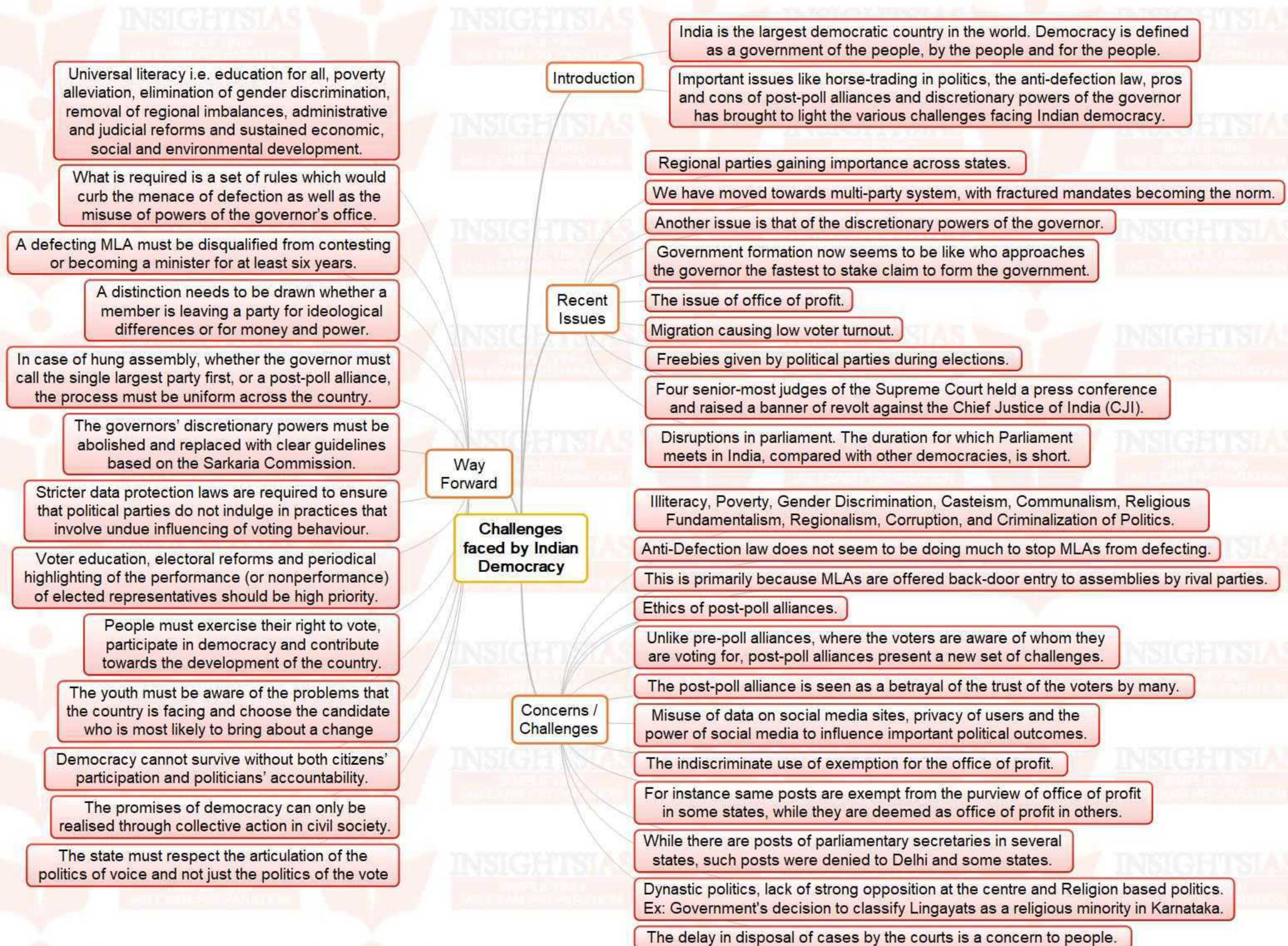
Concerns / Challenges

Way Forward

Present Status

Impact of Caste data on Society

- We are facing many challenges despite not giving credence to the caste census.
- Patels, Gujjars, Jats and Marathas are demanding reservations.
- Karnataka elections centres around Lingayat and Vokkaliga communities.
- Similar situation exists in several states.
- Land ownership that strengthened the power of upper castes has lost its hold now.
- Land fragmentation and decades of agricultural stagnation have turned many upper caste landowners into marginal farmers.
- Rising rural wages, particularly construction wages and social security schemes have now placed the Dalits and OBCs in a better position.
- National Sample Survey (NSS) data shows that poverty persists among forward castes.
- India Human Development Survey shows that 56% of Dalit children ages 8-11 cannot read but neither can 32% of forward caste and 47% of OBC children.
- Creates Caste-based political mobilisation
- Promote strong sentiments for or against reservations.
- Caste does play a role in elections in terms of vote banks.
- Caste-based census will give rise to caste division.
- Collection of caste data is not easy.
- Difficulty in ascertaining the correctness of the caste claimed by a person.
- Sometimes the same caste is spelt in different ways.
- Some individuals report their jati and others upjati making it difficult to create mutually exclusive categories.
- We have nearly three years before the Census of 2021. We have data from the SECC and technologies like Artificial Intelligence and machine learning.
- We have other data sources such as matrimonial advertisements and State-specific Scheduled Castes/OBC lists.
- We can condense them into meaningful categories via machine learning tools.
- These categories could then be validated by domain experts from the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) institutions in various States.
- This gives us district specific list of castes.
- Respondents can then be allowed to self-identify from the precoded list.
- However, the government must go beyond caste and work for the upliftment of illiterate, marginalised and poor section of population.
- The government should give more importance to economic division, education, health etc



Child Adoption in India

Introduction

Adoption means the process through which the adopted child becomes the lawful child of his adoptive parents with all the rights, privileges and responsibilities that are attached to a biological child.

An inter-ministerial panel headed by external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj has cleared a proposal making district magistrates the final authority to clear child adoption cases.

It is to quicken the adoption process that is often hit by year-long delays.

At present, prospective adoptive parents have to go to civil or family courts to get the final go-ahead after completing all other formalities related to adoption.

With high pendency of cases in civil and family courts, it is not easy to get a date for hearing.

Now It requires an amendment to the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 for allowing district magistrate to pass the adoption order.

800 to 850 adoption cases are pending in civil and family courts at any given time.

Though the Juvenile Justice law mandates that courts have to dispose of adoption cases within two months from the date of filing of application, it rarely happen.

There are cases that have been pending for more than a year also.

There are cases where it takes over two years to complete the process of adoption.

There are more district courts, thereby handling lesser number of cases than civil courts.

Survey shows that there are over 50,000 orphans in the country. The adoption continues to be low because of the delay in getting legal clearances.

Reasons

Benefits

The move to empower district magistrates (DMs) would bring down the time to approve adoption cases to two months.

The DM is on the ground implementing the adoption process.

The Child Welfare Committees, which does the verification of prospective parents, comes under DM.

So source verification and other processes can get completed much faster under DMs.

Apart from encouraging more people to adopt, the move will bring huge psychological and physical benefits for the adopted child.

Children who are adopted at young ages can even gain enough to overcome any nutritional disadvantages they may have suffered in the womb.

Developing into healthy and productive adults will contribute to India's growth story.

What the child rights activists say?

But child rights activists cautioned that the changing the process was fraught with risks.

There were adequate checks and balances at the moment. That may not be the case now.

For making the adoption process more expeditious, we may make children more unprotected in a country where so many children go missing every year.

Fundamental principles governing adoption

The child's best interests shall be of paramount consideration, while processing any adoption placement.

Preference shall be given to place the child in adoption with Indian citizens and in his own socio-cultural environment, as far as possible.

All adoptions shall be registered on Child Adoption Resource Information and Guidance System and the confidentiality of the same shall be maintained.

Adoption cases in India

Most Indian couples prefer child below age of 2 for adoption.

Differently-abled children are often refused for adoption.

Maharashtra tops states in number of girls adopted.

Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)

Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) is a statutory body of Ministry of Women & Child Development.

It functions as the nodal body for adoption of Indian children.

It is mandated to monitor and regulate in-country and inter-country adoptions.

CARA is designated as the Central Authority to deal with inter-country adoptions in accordance with the provisions of the Hague Convention on Inter-country Adoption, 1993, ratified by Government of India in 2003.

CARA primarily deals with adoption of orphan, abandoned and surrendered children through its associated /recognised adoption agencies.

Child Labour in India

Introduction

- "There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children." – Nelson Mandela.
- Child labour typically means the employment of children in any manual work with or without payment.
- Child labour is a deep rooted problem in India.

Poverty

- The main reason for child labour is poverty.
- Poverty forces families to push their children to work for a living.

Lack of educational resources

- There are instances where children are deprived of their fundamental right to education.
- There are areas with no proper facilities of education.
- Lack of affordable school for poor children leaves them illiterate and helpless which push them into the trap of child labour.

Social and economic backwardness

- Due to illiteracy, many times parents are not aware of various information and schemes for child education.
- Lack of education, illiteracy and lack of awareness of their rights have encouraged child labour.
- Also, uneducated parents do not know about the impact of child labour on their children.

Reasons

Disease or Disability

- In many families, due to disease or disability, there is no earning, and the child's wages are the sole means of family's sustenance.

Poor compliance of laws

- In the absence of proper compliance of the laws, child labour is continuing.
- It can be prohibited only by strict adherence to the related laws.

Lure of cheap labour

- Some shopkeepers, companies and factory owners employ children so that they have to pay less to them.
- With the development of globalization, privatization, and consumerist culture, the need for cheap labour and its linkage with economic needs of poor families have encouraged child labour.

Discrimination between boys and girls

- Even today some believe that girls are weaker and there is no equal comparison between boys and girls.
- Considering girls weaker than boys deprives them of school and education.
- In labourer families, girls are found to be engaged in labour along with their parents.

How to eradicate child labour?

Report cases of child working

- To prevent child labour, incidence of poverty needs to be reduced first.
- Spread awareness about child labour, so that people can understand that child labour is against the future of the country.
- Persuading owners to refrain from employing kids under 18 years.
- Reporting such cases to the police so that necessary legal action can be taken.

Educate parents of child workers

- Parents must be educated about the importance of education in a child's life.
- As well as the various government initiatives to help underprivileged kids study free of cost.

Work with NGOs

- A large number of NGOs actively work to rehabilitate and save children from being trafficked into child labour.
- People can either join such an organisation or assist the NGO.

Not employing children as house help

- We must refrain from employing them and make efforts to help them get an education.

Awareness about the existing laws

- People who employ children must be informed about The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) of Children Act of 2015 which could land them in prison.

Fund a poor child's education

- People can fund a child's education.
- Donate funds to organisations that help underprivileged kids.

More robust and stricter laws for child labour, so that the people fear from employing any child labour.

- The common man should take up a resolve that he will not buy any items from the shops where a child is employed as labour.

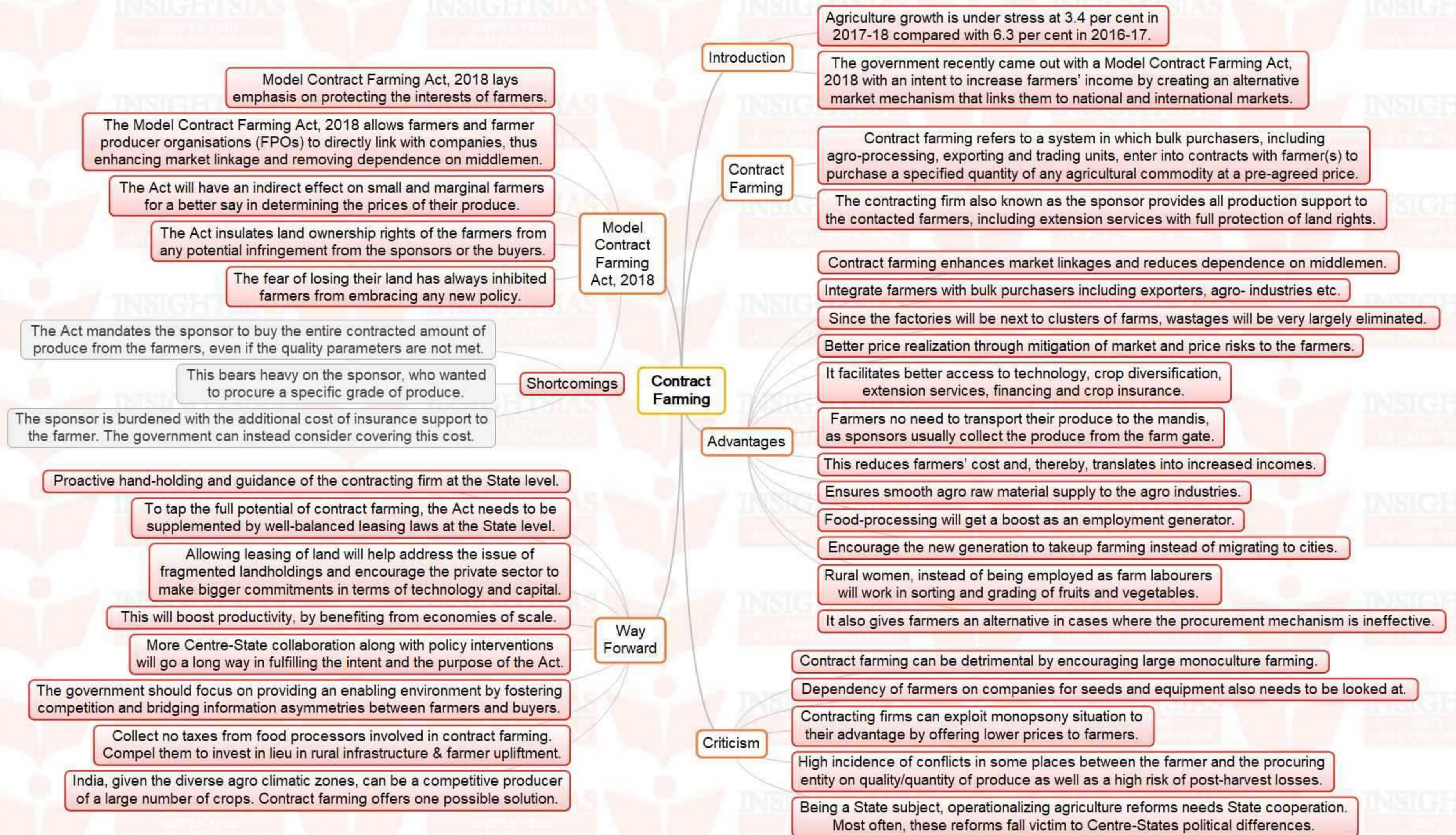
Say No to the use of something made of child labour. This can bring a big change in our society.

June 12 is observed worldwide as World Day Against Child Labour.

- The International Labour Organisation launched this day in 2002 to tackle the global issue of child labour.

Facts for Prelims

- India ratified core ILO conventions 138 and 182 on Child Labour to fight against the menace and achieve the objective of child labour-free nation



Cross-border Environmentalism

Introduction

- Ecological ruin is at fastest pace across South Asia, affecting the life and livelihood of nearly a quarter of the world's population.
- The distress is paramount in the northern half of the subcontinent.
- The emerging environmental concerns make cross-border environmentalism crucial for South Asia.

Threats

- On water, the subcontinent is running out of the resource due to the demands of industrialisation and urbanisation.
- Continuation of the colonial-era irrigation model based on flooding the fields.
- Ganga in Uttarakhand and the Teesta of Sikkim has been converted into dry boulder tracts by 'cascades' of run-of-river hydroelectric schemes.
- The natural drainage is destroyed by highways and railway tracks.
- Urban/industrial effluents have converted our great rivers into sewers.
- Rivers carry hundreds of tonnes of plastics daily into the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea.
- The underground aquifers are exploited to exhaustion.
- The retreat of the Himalayan glaciers is threatening the perennial nature of our rivers.
- Cloud of 'black carbon' containing soot and smog by stubble burning, wood fires, smokestacks and fossil fuel exhaust settles on Himalayan snow and ice, which absorb heat and melt much faster.
- The icefalls of the Himalaya could transform into waterfalls.
- The ground level fog engulfs the subcontinent's northern plains for extended periods in winter.

Need for Cross-border Environmentalism

- To save our common ground across borders.
- Because wildlife, disease vectors, aerosols and river flows across national boundaries.
- One country's pollution can quickly become another country's environmental and economic crisis.
- Therefore the environmental trends must be discussed at the inter-country level.
- As the largest nation-state of our region, India needs to be alert to the dangerous drift.

Climate Change

- Climate change is introducing massive disturbances to South Asia, most notably from the rise of sea levels.
- The entire Indian Ocean coastline will be affected.
- The hardest hit will be the densely populated deltas where the Indus, the Irrawaddy and the Ganga-Brahmaputra meet the sea.

Shortfalls

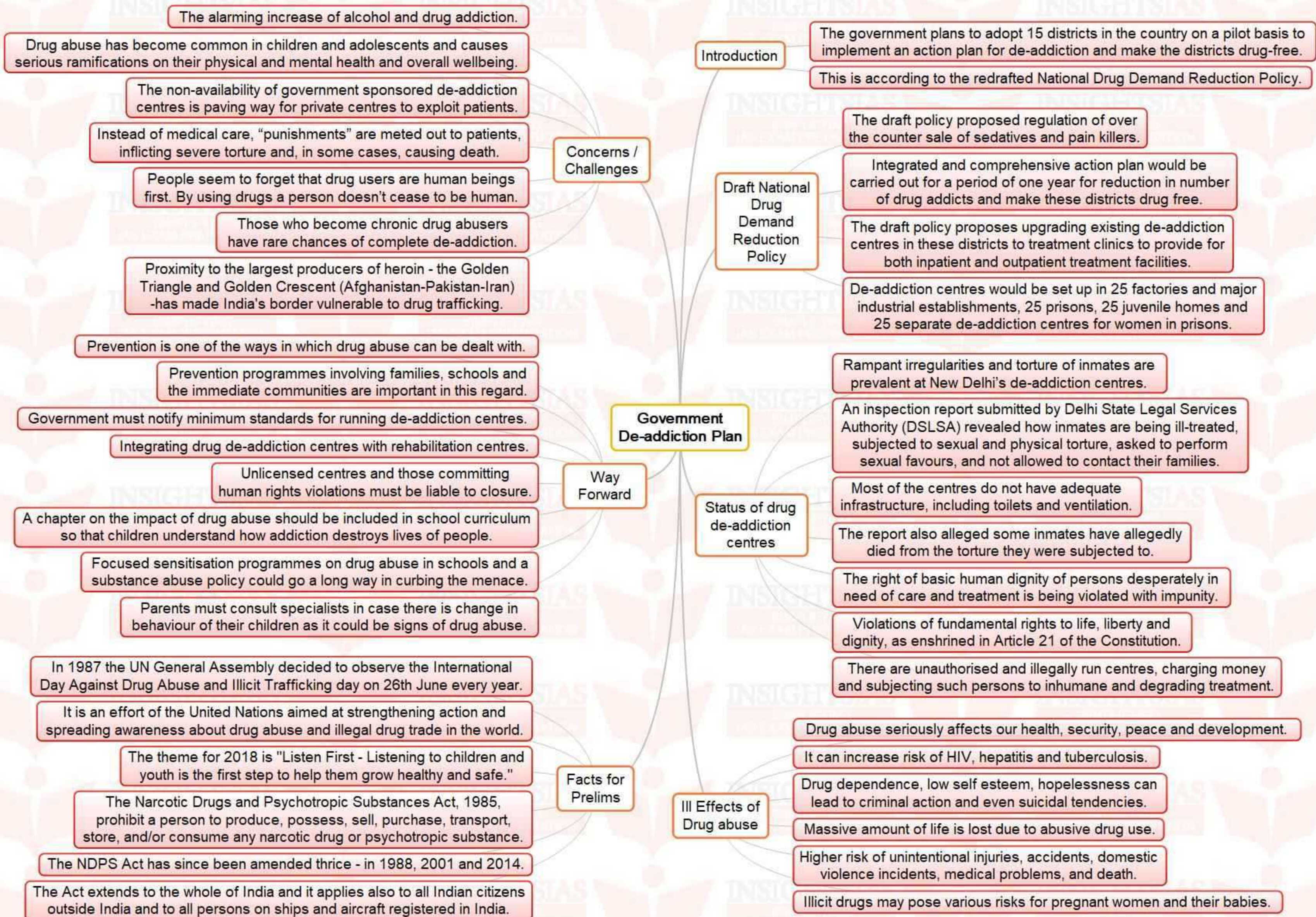
- The task of preserving the forests and landscapes are mostly taken up by the indigenous communities.
- The Adivasi communities organising to save ancestral forests, and the Lepcha fighting to protect the upper reaches of the Teesta.
- The urban middle class is not visible in environmentalism, other than in 'beautification projects'.

Concerns / Challenges

- India does not take the lead on cross-border environmentalism.
- The destruction of Siwalik range of Nepal for the construction industry's demand for boulders and conglomerate, leads to greater floods, desertification and aquifer depletion.
- Air pollution is high in Lahore, New Delhi, Kathmandu and Dhaka, but there is no collaboration.
- Wildlife corridors across States, provinces and countries are narrowing day by day.
- The environment ministry is invariably the least empowered in the major countries of South Asia and unable to coordinate the ecological response.
- De-silting a deep reservoir when it fills up with sand and mud.
- The climate change discourse has not evolved enough to address the 'climate refugees' who move to national boundaries in the search for survival.
- Eg: Farakka Barrage affected the livelihoods in downstream Bangladesh, causing the flood of 'undocumented aliens' in India.
- Rising consumerism

Way Forward

- India being the host country for 2018 World Environment Day, it is time for New Delhi to rise to connect the dots between representative democracy and ecological sanity
- India is the largest nation-state of the region, and the biggest polluter. India should take the lead role in cross border environmentalism.
- Governments must consider environmental protection as synonymous with wildlife protection.
- Need for civic participation for sustainability.
- The activists must work to quantify the economic losses of environmental destruction and get local institutions to act on their ownership of natural resources.
- The activists must harness information technology so as to engage with the public.
- Empowerment of local government all over.
- Elected representatives in cities and districts must emerge as the bulwark of environmentalism.



ABHY is a Central Sector Scheme with a total outlay of Rs. 6,000 Crore and implemented with World Bank assistance.

It aims to improve ground water management in priority areas in the country through community participation over a period of five years from 2018-19 to 2022-23

The priority areas identified fall in Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

These states represent about 25% of the total number of over-exploited, critical and semi-critical blocks.

Implementation of the scheme is expected to benefit nearly 8,350 'Gram Panchayats' in 78 districts in these states.

Funds under the scheme will be made available to the participating states as grants.

Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABHY)

Managing water resources is the key to create a water-secure future.

Strengthening the institutions responsible for ground water governance.

Encouraging community involvement for improving ground water management.

Behavioural changes that promote conservation and adoption of efficient water use practices to reduce ground water use for irrigation.

Focus on infrastructure development including building recharge structure/facilities for utilising rain water.

Monitoring and disseminating ground water data and water budgeting.

Need to revise current water-quality monitoring programs in India and re-evaluate human health risks in areas of high uranium prevalence.

Exploring new ways to prevent or treat uranium contamination will help ensure access to safe drinking water.

More efficient irrigation, growing less water-intensive crops in the dry season.

Improvement in the industry's water efficiency is essential.

Solar desalination, wastewater management and groundwater recharge for improving water security.

The low stress levels in West Bengal display the importance of state legislation to address groundwater depletion.

Curbing extensive groundwater withdrawals will require limiting agricultural electricity subsidies provided by state governments and rationing of power.

Training farmers on water conservation practices.

The commonly observed contaminants include arsenic, fluoride, nitrate and iron, which are geogenic in nature.

Other contaminants include bacteria, phosphates and heavy metals which are a result of human activities including domestic sewage, agricultural practices and industrial effluents.

The WHO has set a provisional safe drinking water standard of 30 micrograms of uranium per litre for India.

While the primary source of uranium is geogenic, anthropogenic factors such as groundwater table decline and nitrate pollution may further enhance uranium mobilisation.

Fundamental right to water has been evolved by the Supreme Court and various High Courts as part of 'Right to Life' under Article 21 of the Constitution.

Facts for Prelims

India's Groundwater Management

Way Forward

Introduction

India is the world's largest user of groundwater.

Groundwater is a primary source of drinking water and irrigation in India.

Over the past three decades, India has been grappling with intense and rapid depletion of groundwater.

Present Crisis

According to the assessment of the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), total 1,034 out of 6,584 assessed blocks in the country are over-exploited

Groundwater in India is severely contaminated with uranium higher than the WHO standard.

Uranium has yet not been included in the list of contaminants monitored under the Bureau of Indian Standards' Drinking Water Specifications.

Consumption of drinking water contaminated with uranium can cause chronic kidney disease, deformity of bones and liver.

High salinity, fluoride, and nitrate make them unsuitable for human consumption.

Reasons for Groundwater Decline

Green Revolution caused over use of ground water.

Successive droughts and erratic rainfall have led to excess extraction of groundwater.

Transition to water-intensive crops and spate of construction activity along catchment areas.

Farmers are digging more and more borewells.

Cities like Bengaluru are losing its capacity to recharge groundwater as the number of water bodies like lakes has reduced by 79%.

Government policies of power subsidies and irrigation equipment credits for farmers have contributed to the overexploitation of groundwater.

Existing rules on groundwater access that give landowners the right to pump on their land.

Commercial establishments like shopping malls, hotels, hospitals and high-rise apartments are using borewells in large number to meet the demand for the occupants.

Severity of the problem

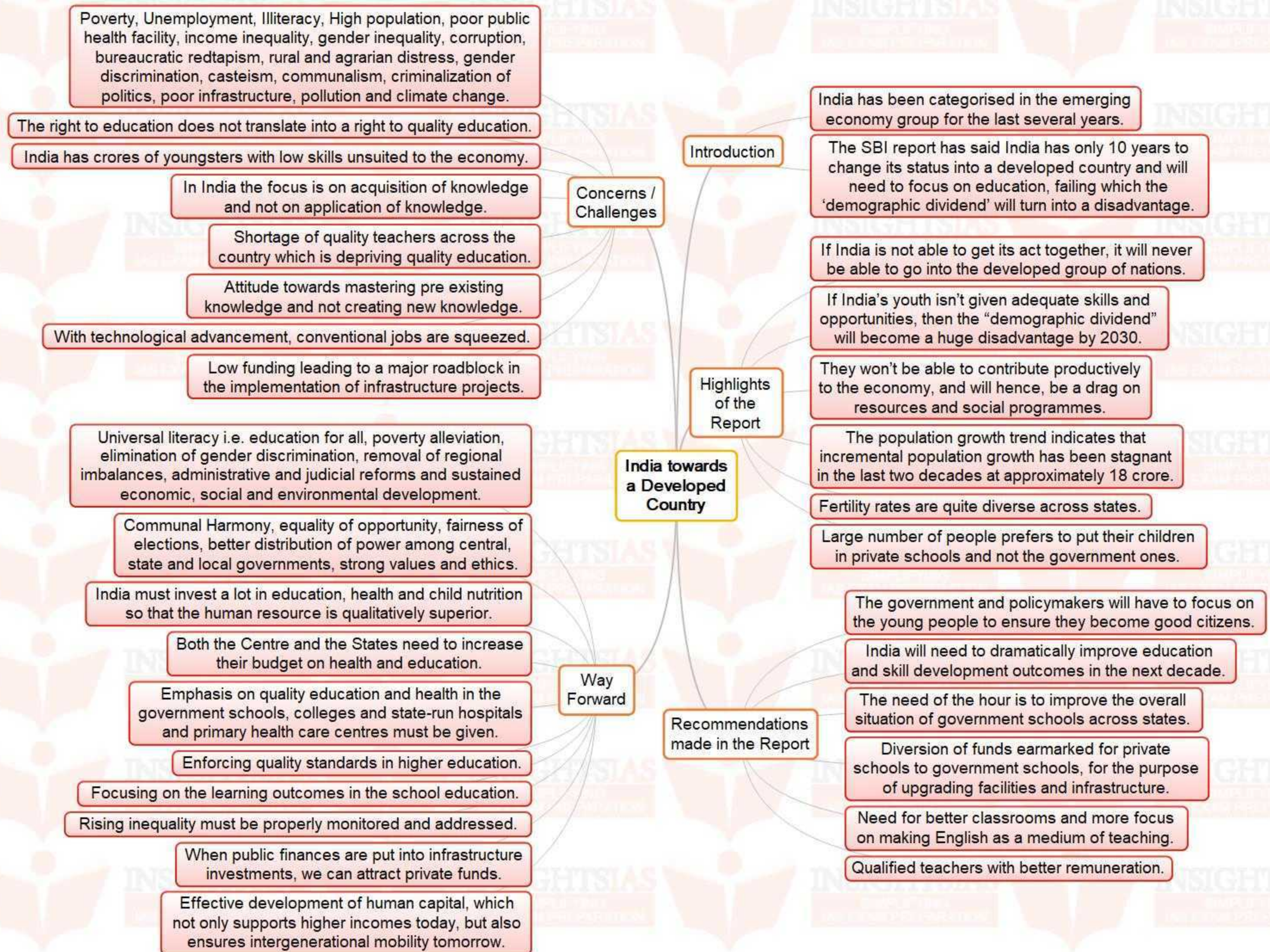
The World Bank predicts that by 2032, around 60 per cent of aquifers in the country will be in a critical state.

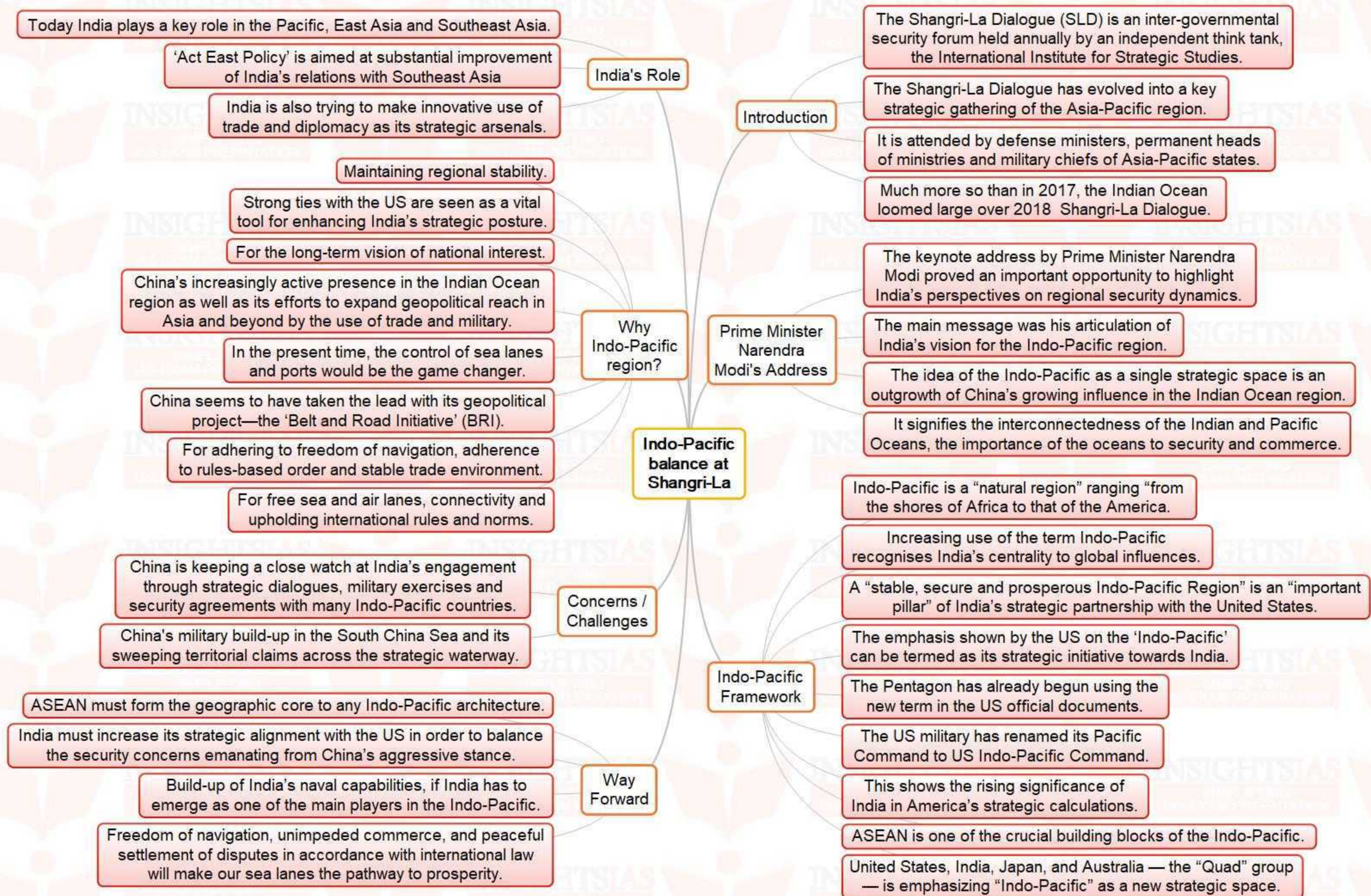
The severity of the problem is acute in the northwest.

Most of Punjab and Haryana, northern areas of Rajasthan and Gujarat, and parts of Uttar Pradesh face continued groundwater level declines.

As climate change alters the Indian monsoon, the stresses on India's groundwater resources may increase.

Groundwater depletion has severe consequences on India's water security, food security, health and the livelihoods of its population.





Lateral Entry into Civil Service

Introduction

The Union government has invited applications for 10 Joint Secretary level positions through lateral entry.

Need for Lateral Entry

- Civil servants enter public service as generalists and have grassroots realities.
- Building specific domain expertise starts quite late for career bureaucrats.
- Economic and governance changes since 1991 require quick decision making.
- The private sector implementing big ticket projects, subject experts with industry-academia interface and managerial talent that governments must bank on.
- IAS monopolies in ministries like home, S&T, sports, etc and other cadres must also be considered.
- To bring in "fresh ideas and new approaches to governance".
- The present system of 'frequent and arbitrary transfers' hinder gaining of the relevant experience by incumbent officers.

Arguments against Lateral Entry

- Differences in work culture may often come in the way.
- The width and depth of field experience which the civil services provide is not available with outside talent.
- Interests and motivation vary from person to person. Therefore, short term entry of officers through lateral entry might lead to corrupt practices.
- The private sector who ran Air India, Indian Airlines and Vayudoot proved to be failures.
- Lateral entry into civil services undermines reservation policy.
- If a person from a private infrastructure company is appointed in an infra ministry it will lead to questions of morality, ethics and conflict of interest."

Concerns / Challenges

- Lack of transparency, honesty and political interference in the selection process.
- Nobody knows why a particular individual was selected and why others more qualified were left out.
- It is difficult to assess the performance of a secretary to the government due to complex nature of the job. So it would be difficult to measure the performance of lateral entrants.
- If the selection is politically motivated, it may degrade the system.

Arguments in favour of Lateral Entry

- Expert advice and opinion for efficient administration and fulfilling the aspirations of people.
- Lateral entry into finance ministry produced illustrious public servants like Manmohan Singh, Montek Singh Ahluwalia and Vijay Kelkar.
- They bring in a vast number of fresh & vibrant ideas.
- Outside talent from the private sector is more likely to be target-oriented, which will improve the performance of the government.
- When civil servants are made to compete with outside talent, the lethargic attitude will diminish and induce competition within the system.
- More competition will encourage career civil servants to develop expertise.
- NITI Ayog's experience with lateral entry has been extremely good.

Way Forward

- Lateral entry shouldn't lead to politicisation of bureaucracy.
- Government must also allow deputation of its officers to private sector as well so that they get exposure to market practices and fresh ideas.
- A good managerial system encourages and nurtures talent from within instead of seeking to induct leadership from outside.
- The remedy lies not through lateral induction but through more rigorous performance appraisal and improved personnel management.
- The government can consider lateral entry to head certain mission-mode projects and public-sector entities where private-sector expertise actually matters.
- The process of selection needs to be transparent.
- A credible statutory agency like UPSC should be entrusted with the responsibility of recruitment.

Recommendations

- Lateral entry was recommended by Administrative Reforms Commission and various other expert groups.
- The ARC highlights that performance appraisals may be adopted from the armed forces, which could aid in weeding out non-performers.
- In the armed forces, only 3 per cent of officers make it to the grade of brigadier and above — and promotions are based entirely on merit, which fuels excellence.

