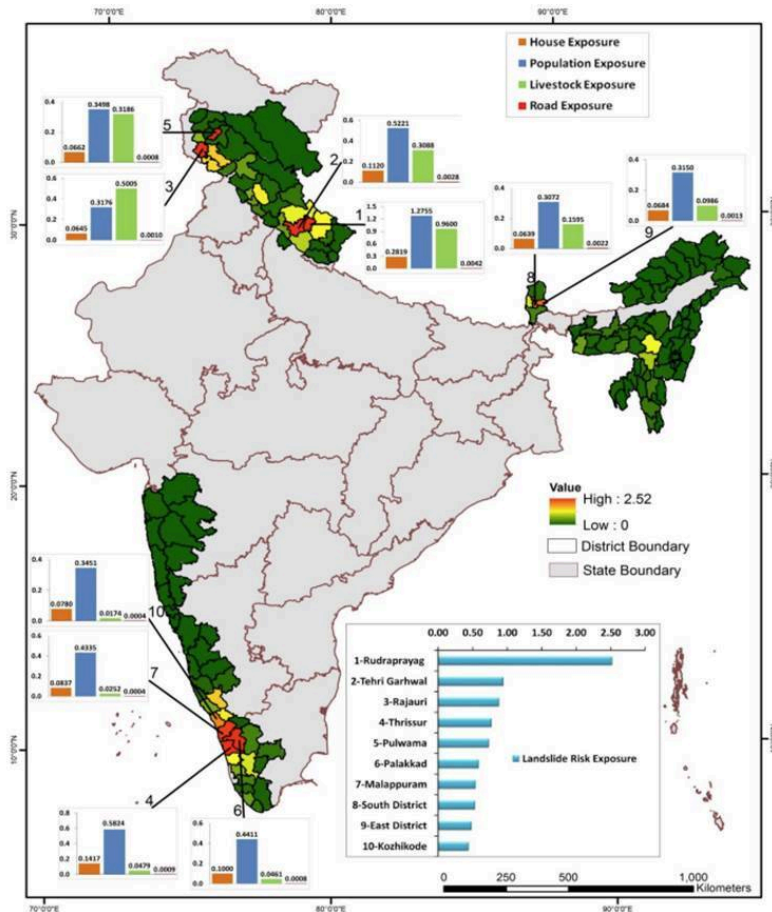


UPSC CURRENT AFFAIRS NOTES 08-01-2024

Landslide risk map for India



The Indian Landslide Susceptibility Map is the first of its kind by virtue of being on a national scale, leaving out no location in the country.

About National Landslide Susceptibility Map

- **Detailed Mapping:** This high-resolution map presents a comprehensive view of landslide susceptibility throughout India with a resolution of 100 square meters, identifying areas not recognized before.
- **Identification of New Risk Areas:** The map not only identifies traditional high-risk zones but also reveals previously unrecognized regions of concern, expanding the range of areas requiring landslide monitoring.



- **Innovative Analysis Technique:** The mapping utilized an ensemble machine learning approach to improve prediction accuracy and fill data gaps in unexplored regions.
- **Benefits of Ensemble Models:** This approach skillfully integrates multiple models, offering a more dependable assessment of landslide risks.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

- **Thorough Data Compilation:** Scientists gathered information on approximately 150,000 landslide occurrences from diverse outlets, incorporating data from sources such as the Geological Survey of India.
- **Recognition of Contributing Elements:** Utilizing tools like GeoSadak for remote data collection, the research team identified 16 crucial factors influencing the susceptibility to landslides.

Significance for Disaster Response

- **Valuable Resource for Stakeholders:** The map acts as a crucial tool for governmental bodies, disaster management agencies, and organizations dedicated to mitigating landslide risks.
- **Improving Preparedness and Planning:** It will streamline vulnerability assessments, aid in infrastructure planning, and support the implementation of mitigation strategies.

Rationale for the Map

- **Perpetual Hazard:** Landslides, impacting a significant yet limited portion of India, pose a recurring threat, particularly in mountainous areas.
- **Management Challenges:** The localized and sporadic occurrence of landslides has historically impeded effective monitoring and prediction, emphasizing the necessity for a comprehensive mapping solution.

Future Initiatives and Public Accessibility

- **Establishing an Early Warning System:** Building upon the map, endeavors are in progress to establish a comprehensive Landslide Early Warning System.



- **Cartogram for Infrastructure Vulnerability:** Work is ongoing to develop a cartogram that identifies vulnerable infrastructure.
- **Accessible to the Public:** The map and its data will be available through a web interface, encouraging public interaction and awareness.

First Advance Estimates of India's GDP: What are They and What do the Data Show

According to the First Advance Estimates (FAEs) released by the Government of India, India's GDP will grow by 7.3% in the current financial year (2023-24), slightly faster than the 7.2% growth in 2022-23.

What are the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Estimates?

- The FAE is presented at the end of the first week of January every year and are only the first estimates of growth for that financial year.
- By the end of February, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) will release the Second Advance Estimates and, by the end of May, the Provisional Estimates.
- The GDP estimates continue to be revised as more and better data become available and in the coming 3 years, MoSPI will release the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Revised Estimates of this year's GDP before settling on the "Actuals"/ final number.

What are the FAEs and their Significance?

The FAE are based on the **performance of the economy over the first 7-odd months**, and the data are **extrapolated** to arrive at an annual picture.

This means that the estimates available for the previous year (2022-23) are extrapolated using the relevant indicators reflecting the performance of sectors.

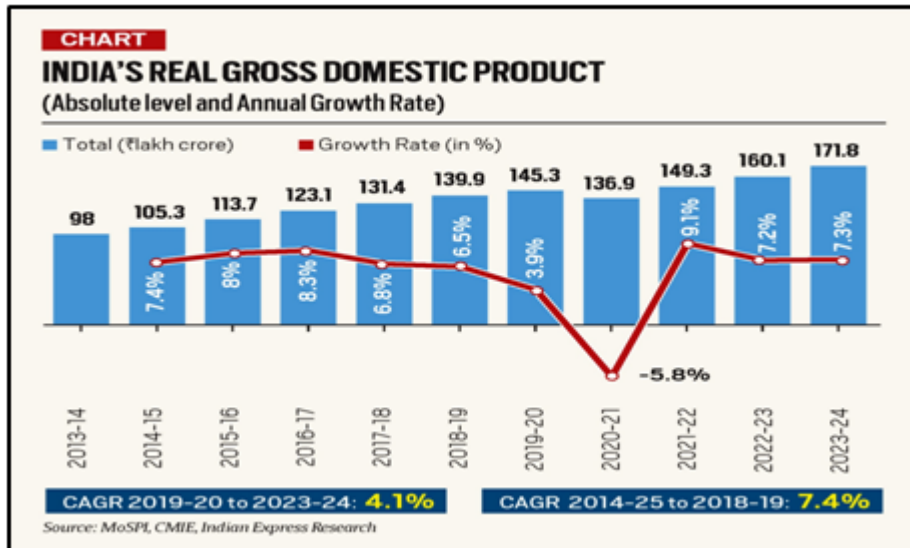
The crucial significance of the FAEs is that they are the last GDP data released before the Union Budget for the coming financial year (which is presented on February 1) is finalised.

As such, the FAEs constitute the base for the Budget numbers.

However, since Lok Sabha elections will be held in April-May (2024), a full-fledged Union Budget will not be presented this year.

This year's FAEs draw some additional significance from the fact that they provide the first complete picture of economic growth in the 10 years of the present government.

What does the FAE Data Show?



The chart shows India's real GDP (GDP after excluding the effect of inflation), both in absolute terms (in Rs lakh crore) and in terms of growth rate.

By the end of March 2024, India's GDP is expected to rise to almost **Rs 172 lakh crore** as compared to Rs 98 lakh crore in 2014 and Rs 140 lakh crore in 2019.

On an annual basis, **the 7.3% growth rate** estimated for 2023-24 presents a substantial and pleasant upside surprise.

During 2014-15 to 2018-19, the Indian economy grew at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.4%; and during 2019-20 to 2023-24, it was just 4.1%.

The big reason for this is that the economy grew by less than 4% in 2019-20 (before the Covid-19 pandemic), and then **contracted by 5.6% in 2020-21** (immediately after Covid struck).

How India's GDP Growth is Calculated?

India's GDP is calculated by adding up all kinds of spending in the economy - **the demand side of the economy**.

As such, there are four main "engines" of GDP growth.

Spending by people in their individual capacity/ Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE). It accounts for almost 60% of India's GDP.

Spending towards investments in boosting the productive capacity of the economy/ Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF). It accounts for 30% of the GDP.

Spending by governments to meet daily expenditures such as salaries/ Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GFCE). It is the smallest engine, accounting for around 10% of GDP.

Net exports: Since India typically imports more than it exports, this engine drags down GDP calculations, and shows up with a minus sign.

What is Contributing/Dragging India's Current GDP Growth?



PFCE: In the current year, the overall demand by people is **expected to grow by 4.4%**. This is similar to the CAGR (4.5%) in the 2nd term of the present government but is substantially lower than the growth rate in the 1st term (7.1%).

Muted private consumption is made worse by growing inequality (consumption among the urban rich has grown quite fast while rural India hasn't yet recovered enough).

While people should not consume more than their income, the muted performance of the biggest engine of growth is **a matter of concern**.

GFCF: Investments have grown by 9.3% in the current financial year, thus helping to push up the CAGR in the second term (5.6%) closer to the CAGR in the first (7.3%).

However, **there are two lingering concerns:** one, a large part of the investment spending is still coming from the government and, two, private consumption is still muted.



GFCE: As weak as the growth in private demand has been in the current year, at 3.9%, government spending has grown even slower.

Net exports: When data for any particular year shows up with a negative sign, it suggests Indians are importing more than they are exporting.

With global growth remaining weak, the external sector remains a major drag on India's growth, with net exports **contributing negatively to real GDP growth** (at -3 percentage points).

iDEX (Innovations for Defence Excellence)

Innovations for Defence Excellence- Defence Innovation Organization (iDEX-DIO) is all set to participate in the tenth edition of the Vibrant Gujarat Summit 2024 from 10 to 12 January 2024 at Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

It is the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Defence, Govt of India launched in 2018.

The objective of the scheme is to cultivate an innovation ecosystem in the Defence and Aerospace sector by collaborating with startups, innovators, MSMEs, incubators, and academia.

iDEX offers grants and support for R&D with significant potential for future adoption in Indian defence and aerospace.

It is currently engaged with around 400+ Startups and MSMEs.

It is recognized as a game-changer in the defence ecosystem, iDEX has received the PM Award for Innovation in the defence sector.

Funding: It will be funded and managed by a 'Defence Innovation Organization (DIO)' which has been formed as a 'not for profit' company as per the Companies Act 2013 for this purpose, by the two founder memberse. Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) - HAL & BEL.

iDEX will function as the executive arm of DIO, carrying out all the required activities while DIO will provide high level policy guidance to iDEX.



Child Marriage in India

One in five girls and one in six boys are still getting married below the legal age of marriage in India.

This has been highlighted by a new study published in the Lancet Global Health on December 15th, 2023.

In India, child marriage reduced from 47.4% in 2005-06 to 26.8% in 2015-16.

In the last five years, it declined by 3.5% points to reach 23.3% in 2020-21, according to the latest National Family Health Survey-5 data.

There is a growing trend for decline in the overall prevalence of child marriage, but 23.3% is still a disturbingly high percentage in a country with a population of 141.2 crore.

Eight States have a higher prevalence of child marriage than the national average:

West Bengal, Bihar and Tripura top the list with more than 40% of women aged 20-24 years married below 18, according to NFHS data.

Some States have shown a reduction in child marriages, like Madhya Pradesh (23.1% in 2020-21 from 32.4% in 2015-16), Rajasthan (25.4% from 35.4%) and Haryana.

Global Scenario:

According to data from UNICEF, the total number of girls married in childhood stands at 12 million per year.

The 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals aim to eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilations, under goal 5.

While it is encouraging that in the past decade great progress has been made in South Asia, where a girl's risk of marrying before she is 18 has dropped by more than a third, from nearly 50% to below 30%, it is not enough, and progress has been uneven.



Impact of Child Marriage:

While child marriage is considered a human rights violation and a recognised form of sexual and gender-based violence, the adverse impact of child marriage is manifested across maternal and child health.

Recently, 10 infants died at Murshidabad Medical College and Hospital in a span of 24 hours.

The hospital authorities said the majority of the children were born with extremely low birth weight.

Murshidabad, one of the economically poorer districts of the State, has one of the highest numbers of child marriages in West Bengal.

The NFHS - 5 points out that 55.4% of women aged 20-24 years are married before the age of 18 years in the district.

The district saw a rise from NFHS-4 numbers, which stood at 53.5 %.

Legal Intervention in India:

There are several laws including the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, which aim at protecting children from violation of human and other rights.

The Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021 seeks to increase the marriage age of women from existing 18 years to 21 years.

Why Minimum Age of Marriage for Females should be Increased?

Lack of access to education and employment:

Women face inequalities when it comes to access to education and employment as a consequence of their early marriages.

It is often the case that women are denied access to education and an economic means of livelihood after entering into the institution of marriage at an early age.

Increasing the minimum age for marriage will lead to more women pursuing higher education and opt for employment.

Impact of early marriage on health of women and children:



An early age of marriage and consequent early pregnancies have a substantial impact on the nutritional levels of mothers and their children, along with their overall health and mental wellbeing.

Underage mothers are at a higher risk of reproductive health challenges, malnutrition, postpartum haemorrhage, and a susceptibility to sexually transmitted diseases.

Schemes/ Policies for Preventing Girl Child Marriage:

Sukanya Samridhi Yojana (SSY):

Sukanya Samridhi Yojana (SSY), was launched in 2015, in order to promote the welfare of girl children.

It encourages parents to invest and build funds for the future studies and marriage expenses of the girl's children.

Balika Samridhi Yojana:

Balika Samridhi Yojana is another central government scheme to support girls in financially vulnerable sections of society.

This scheme ensures the enrolment and retention of girl child in primary and secondary schools.

It aims at the prosperity of a girl's child and provides them with a better quality education.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao:

Among all the other girl's child welfare schemes, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao is the most popular.

This scheme celebrates girl children, literally translating to Save the Girl Child, Educate the Girl child. It believes in women empowerment and creating an inclusive ecosystem for the same.

This scheme is to promote girl children's safety before and after they are born.

One in five girls and one in six boys are still getting married below the legal age of marriage in India, as per a new study published in the Lancet Global Health.

The researchers used data from five National Family Health Surveys from 1993, 1999, 2006, 2016, and 2021 to compile the study.



Key highlights of the report

There remains an urgent need for strengthened national and state-level policy to eliminate child marriage by 2030, say the researchers.

Researchers have noted that substantial variation exists in the prevalence of girl and boy child marriages across the states and Union Territories during the study period.

All states, except Manipur, experienced a decline in the prevalence of girl child marriage between 1993 and 2021.

According to researchers in 2021, the headcount of child marriage in girls was 13,464,450 and 14,54,894 in boys.

Four states – Bihar (16.7%), West Bengal (15.2%), Uttar Pradesh (12.5%), and Maharashtra (8.2%) – accounted for more than half of the total burden of child marriages in girls.

For boys, Gujarat (29%), Bihar (16.5%), West Bengal (12.9%), and Uttar Pradesh (8.2%) accounted for more than 60 per cent of the burden.

Jharkhand had the largest percentage increase in headcount (53.1%) between 1993 and 2021.

Most states and Union Territories saw a decrease in headcount of child marriage in girls between 1993 and 2021.

Uttar Pradesh had the most substantial absolute decrease, which accounted for an estimated one-third of the all-India decrease in headcount of child marriage in girls observed between 1993 and 2021.

West Bengal saw the largest absolute increase with over 500000 more girls married as children.

SUPREME COURT LEGAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Justice BR Gavai has been nominated as the Chairman of the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee (SCLSC), which offers free legal services to underprivileged individuals in cases under the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.



The Supreme Court Legal Services Committee (SCLSC) holds a crucial role in providing free and competent legal services to vulnerable sections of society.

Mandate of SCLSC

Established under Section 3A of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, the SCLSC's primary objective is to offer free and competent legal services, specifically in cases falling under the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.

The committee comprises a sitting Supreme Court judge as the chairman and members appointed by the Chief Justice of India (CJI) possessing prescribed experience and qualifications.

The NALSA Rules, 1995, outline the specifics regarding the numbers, qualifications, and experiences required for SCLSC members.

The CJI appoints the Secretary to the Committee, and the Committee, in consultation with the CJI, can appoint officers and other employees as per the prescribed norms.

Legal Services and Constitutional Obligations

The Indian Constitution, particularly Article 39A, emphasizes the state's responsibility to ensure justice and provide free legal aid to citizens, ensuring justice isn't denied due to economic or other disabilities.

Articles 14 and 22(1) also stress the need for equality before the law and provisions for informing individuals about the grounds for arrest.

Legal Services Authorities Act of 1987

Enacted to establish a statutory foundation for legal aid programs, the Act aims to provide free and competent legal services to eligible groups, including women, children, SC/ST and EWS categories, industrial workers, disabled persons, and others.



NALSA, constituted in 1995, oversees and evaluates the implementation of legal aid programs and formulates policies to ensure the availability of legal services.

State and District Legal Services Authorities

The Act also led to the establishment of State Legal Services Authorities (SLSA) and District Legal Services Authorities (DLSA), headed by High Court Chief Justices and District Judges, respectively.

These bodies aim to provide legal aid, conduct Lok Adalats, organize legal awareness camps, and facilitate the dissemination of legal services and information at the district and taluk levels.