

**DAILY  
CURRENT  
AFFAIRS  
ANALYSIS**



LAKSHYA ACADEMY®

**08 FEBRUARY 2024**

# 1 - Prithvi Vigyan Scheme:

## GS II

### Government Policies and Interventions

- **Context:**

- The Ministry of Earth Sciences' comprehensive "PRITHvi VIgyan (PRITHVI)" programme was recently approved by the Union Cabinet.
- With the goal of improving Earth System Sciences and offering essential services for societal, environmental, and economic well-being, this project consists of five sub-schemes.
- Additionally, the Cabinet authorised a collaboration agreement to create a “small satellite” between the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council (MRIC) and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- Since ISRO established a ground station in Mauritius in the 1980s to support its satellite missions and launch vehicle tracking and telemetry, India and Mauritius have enjoyed a long history of cooperation.
- **"PRITHvi VIgyan (PRITHVI)" Scheme: What is it?**

- **About:**

- It is the Ministry of Earth Sciences' (MoES) overarching plan for the years 2021–2026.
- It includes the following five active sub-schemes:
  - ACROSS: Observing Systems and Services for Modelling Atmosphere and Climate Research.
  - O-SMART stands for Ocean Services, Modelling Application, Technology, and Resources.
  - Polar Science and Cryosphere Research, or PACER.
- **SAGE: Geosciences and Seismology:**
  - Seismological monitoring and microzonation are two of the six activities that make up the system, which aims to improve earthquake monitoring and research on the solid components of Earth.
  - Research, Education, Training, and Outreach is known as REACHOUT.
  - The five elements of Earth System Sciences—atmosphere, hydrosphere, geosphere, cryosphere, and biosphere—are all thoroughly covered by the PRITHVI framework.
  - This all-encompassing strategy seeks to improve comprehension and provide dependable services for the nation.

- **Goals:**

- To supplement and maintain long-term monitoring of the Earth System's cryosphere, geosphere, atmosphere, and ocean in order to document changes and the Earth System's vital signs
- creation of modelling tools to comprehend and forecast climate, ocean, and weather dangers as well as the science behind climate change.
- exploration of the Earth's high seas and polar areas in search of new resources and occurrences;
- creation of technologies for ocean resource discovery and sustainable exploitation for social uses.
- conversion of Earth systems research information and insights into services that benefit society, the environment, and the economy.

- **Advantages for the Indian economy:**

- In order to enable quick and efficient disaster management, PRITHVI offers advanced warning services for natural disasters such as cyclones, floods, heat waves, and earthquakes.
- Furthermore, the programme guarantees accurate land- and ocean-based weather forecasts, improving safety and reducing property damage during bad weather.
- In order to get important insights and knowledge about the Arctic, Antarctic, and Himalayas, PRITHVI expands its reach to examine these three poles of the Earth.
- In line with recent developments in Earth Science, the plan promotes the development of technology for maritime resource exploration and sustainable exploitation.

- **Source** → *The Hindu*

## **2 - Committee for Legal Services at the Supreme Court:**

### **GS II**

#### **Judiciary related issues**

- **Context:**

- Justice BR Gavai, a judge of the Supreme Court, has been selected to lead the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee (SCLSC).

- **What is the Legal Services Committee of the Supreme Court?**

- Although the concept for a legal assistance system was first proposed in the 1950s, it wasn't until 1980 that a national committee was formed, led by Justice PN Bhagwati, who was then a Supreme Court judge.
- In India, the Committee for Implementing Legal Aid Schemes began to keep an eye on legal aid initiatives.

- **About:**

- Under Section 3A of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, the SCLSC was established to offer "free and competent legal services to the weaker sections of society" in matters under the purview of the highest court.
- The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) will be the committee's constituency, according to Section 3A of the Act.
- It is chaired by a serving Supreme Court judge and consists of additional members who meet the Centre's requirements for experience and qualifications. The CJI (Chief Justice of India) shall nominate the chairman and other members.
- Additionally, the Secretary may be appointed to the Committee by the CJI.

- **Participants:**

- In turn, the Committee may appoint officers and other workers as required by the Centre, in conjunction with the CJI. The SCLSC is composed of a chairperson and nine members chosen by the CJI.
- In addition, the SCLSC members' numbers, backgrounds, and qualifications are specified in Rule 10 of the NALSA Rules, 1995.
- In accordance with Section 27 of the 1987 Act, the Centre may issue regulations by notification to implement the Act's provisions after consulting with the CJI.

- **The Legal Services Authority Act of 1987: What is it?**

- Aiming to provide free and competent legal services to eligible groups, such as women, children, industrial workers, disabled people, SC (Scheduled Castes)/ST (Scheduled Tribes) and EWS (Economically Weaker Section) categories, the Legal Services Authorities Act was enacted in 1987 to give a statutory base to legal aid programmes.

- **NALSA:**

- NALSA was established in 1995 in accordance with the Act to oversee and assess the execution of legal aid programmes and to establish guidelines for providing legal services.
- The Act envisions a national network for the provision of legal aid and support.

- Additionally, it gives money and grants to NGOs and State Legal Services Authorities so they can run legal aid initiatives and schemes.
- **Authorities for State Legal Services:**
  - State Legal Services Authorities (SLSA) were subsequently founded in each state to carry out Lok Adalats, provide free legal services to the public, and execute NALSA's rules and directives.
  - The senior HC judge serves as the Executive Chairman of an SLSA, which is led by the Chief Justice of the corresponding High Court. The CJI is the chief patron of NALSA, whilst the HC Chief Justice is the chief patron of the SLSA.
- **Authorities for District Legal Services:**
  - In a similar vein, Taluk Legal Services Committees and District Legal Services Authorities (DLSAs) were set up in most taluks and districts. All DLSAs are housed at the District Courts Complex and are presided over by the district judge.
  - Under the direction of a senior civil judge, the Taluka or Sub-Divisional Legal Services Committees coordinate legal education initiatives, offer pro bono legal aid, and get certified order copies and other legal documents, among other things.
- **Which provisions of the Indian Constitution require the provision of legal services?**
  - Numerous provisions of the Indian Constitution have emphasised the importance of providing legal services. For example, Article 39A states that the State shall ensure that the legal system operates in a way that promotes justice on the basis of equal opportunity and shall, in particular, provide free legal aid by appropriate legislation or schemes or in any other way, to ensure that no citizen's ability to secure justice is denied because of their financial situation or other disabilities.
  - In addition, the State is required by Articles 14 (right to equality) and 22(1) (right to know the basis for an arrest) to provide equality before the law and a justice system that upholds equal opportunity.
- **Source → The Hindu**

### 3 - West Bengal's Child Marriage Rate Is Rising:

#### GS I

#### Indian Society

- **Context:**
- A recent study published in the Lancet on child marriage in India found that, while there has been a general decline in child marriage nationwide, some states—Bihar (16.7%), West Bengal (15.2%), Uttar Pradesh (12.5%), and Maharashtra (8.2%)—have contributed more than half of the nation's total headcount burden of child marriages among girls.
- Even after several policy interventions to reduce child marriage were put in place in West Bengal, the number of child marriages in the province has increased by 32.3%. This means that more than 500,000 more girls are getting married when they should not have been.
- **2019–21 National Family Health Survey–5:**
- According to the National Family Health Survey-5, West Bengal continues to have a higher than average percentage of women aged 20 to 24 who were married before turning 18—41.6%—than the national average of 23.3%.
- **Has West Bengal's Policy Intervention Successfully Reduced Child Marriage?**
- **Interventions in Policy to Prevent Child Marriage in West Bengal:**
- **The Prakalpa Scheme of Kanyashree:**
- Introduced in 2013, Kanyashree Prakalpa encourages adolescent girls between the ages of 13 and 18 to pursue an education while concurrently avoiding child marriage; as per the West Bengal Budget for 2023–24, the programme has enrolled 81 lakh girls.
- In 2017, the programme was recognised globally when it was given the United Nations Public Service Award.
- Although the number of girls enrolled in schools has increased in the State, there are concerns about whether the programme has succeeded in stopping child marriage, based on data from the Lancet research and the National Family Health Survey.
- **Prakalpa Rupashree:**
- The state government also administers the Rupashree Prakalpa, which offers financial incentives for girls' marriages, in addition to Kanyashree.

- Some families take use of both schemes, planning weddings soon after making money from the school system.
- **Rates of child marriage and educational attainment:**
  - "The incidence of child marriage remains high in West Bengal despite the fact that the number of girls enrolled in schools has significantly increased over the past few years."
  - West Bengal's expected female enrollment for 2020–21 is 9.29 lakh, greater than the state's estimated boy enrollment of 8.63 lakh, according to the All-India Survey of greater Education.
  - According to NFHS-5, the Purba Medinipur district has the highest prevalence of child marriage at over 57.6%, while having a literacy rate of over 88%.
  - Experts observed that migration in West Bengal, driven by societal conventions and economic circumstances, encourages child marriage since families are afraid of leaving unmarried daughters behind.
  - This feeds into a cycle wherein early marriages are valued by society in order for wives to have children while men are employed.
- **Obstacles in the Application of Law:**
  - In addition to social problems, difficulties enforcing the law fuel the continuation of child marriage.
  - Since states with smaller populations reported more incidents, West Bengal's 105 cases under The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), 2006 in 2021 raise concerns.
  - The Ministry filed the Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021, which would raise the legal age of marriage for women to 21. The bill is presently being reviewed by Parliament.
  - The information points to weaknesses in the legal system and emphasises the necessity of all-encompassing plans.
- **What Effects Does Child Marriage Have?**
- **The End of Childhood:**
  - Poverty exacerbates the problem of child marriage, which ends a boy's or girl's youth suddenly and forces them into adulthood before they are ready, both psychologically and physically.
  - Girls who are forced into arranged weddings frequently marry much older males, which makes their situation even more difficult.
  - Girls who marry young are much less likely to complete their education, which has long-term negative economic effects.
  - Childhood grooms who marry young typically drop out of school and take low-paying occupations to support their families.
  - Child brides and grooms frequently feel alone and have their independence restricted, which reduces their capacity for social connection and self-determination.

- **Human Rights Offence:**

- Child marriage has a negative influence on both mother and child health in the State and is acknowledged as a violation of human rights as well as a form of gender-based and sexual abuse.
- Child brides are often denied their basic rights, such as the ability to participate actively in society and the availability of health, education, and safety.
- Due to its detrimental effects on both girls' and boys' development, child marriage is classified by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) as a violation of human rights.
- An estimated 12 million more females marry before turning 18 every year, with 4 million of them being younger than 15.
- According to Save the Children's Global Girlhood Report, the Covid-19 epidemic has been linked to observed increases in all forms of gender-based violence, putting an additional 2.5 million girls at risk of underage marriage worldwide between 2020 and 2025.

- **Implications for Maternal and Child Health:**

- Maternal and child health are negatively impacted by child marriage.
- Adolescent brides are more likely to fall pregnant during their teens, which increases the likelihood of problems during pregnancy and childbirth. In addition, the practice isolates girls from their friends and family, which has a detrimental effect on their mental health.
- Additionally, child brides are more likely to have HIV (human immunodeficiency virus).

- **Which initiatives are being taken to address child marriage?**

- Act of 2006 Prohibiting Child Marriage (PCMA)
- Scheme called BetiBachaoBetiPadhao (BBBP).
- Child Rights Protection National Commission (NCPCR).
- The 2012 Protection of Children Against Sexual Offences Act.
- CHILDLINE.

- **The Way Ahead:**

- Gather political support to make ending child marriage through legislation a top priority at the state and federal levels.
- Engage in social campaigns with all relevant parties, such as panchayats, schools, and local communities. The situation at the grassroots level won't improve as quickly as it has in other regions of the nation if there isn't political will to uphold the current legal framework.
- Encourage a reporting and open culture by frequently updating and disseminating comprehensive data on child marriage situations under PCMA 2006.
- Encourage a thorough examination of PCMA 2006 in order to find any weaknesses and places where enforcement should be strengthened.
- Encourage the Parliamentary Standing Committee to approve the Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021 as soon as possible.



- The Bill will supersede any existing law, custom, or practice and change the PCMA 2006 to raise the age of marriage for females to 21.
- Give girls the knowledge, abilities, and support systems they need to make more independent and thoughtful decisions.
- *Source* → *The Hindu*

## 4 - Verdict in the Adani-Hindenburg Case by the Supreme Court:

### GS II

#### Judiciary related issues

- **Context:**
- The US-based company Hindenburg Research submitted accusations against the Adani group, and the Supreme Court of India has now finished its ruling on these cases.
- The supreme court demonstrated its faith in the Securities and Exchange Board of India's (SEBI) handling of the issue by declining to shift the inquiry to other organisations.
- Additionally, the Supreme Court directed SEBI to use its investigative powers to ascertain whether the Hindenburg report's short-selling practices breached legal regulations and caused harm to investors.
- **What is the Supreme Court's stance on the SEBI investigation and the Adani-Hindenburg dispute?**
- **Context:**
- The Adani group was accused by Hindenburg Research in January 2023 of manipulating stocks, engaging in accounting fraud, and mismanaging finances through the use of shell companies and illegal tax havens, all of which had a substantial negative effect on the stock market
- **Arguments and Petitions:**
- **Petition submitted:** Citing ramifications for the economy and national security, a number of petitions were submitted asking for a court-monitored probe.
- Additionally, they said that SEBI, the market regulator, lacked the independence or competence necessary to carry out an unbiased investigation.

- Counterarguments: The Adani group denied the claims, blaming them on misinformation and self-interested parties.
- SEBI maintained that it handled the probe with independence and competence.
- Current Assessment:
- Rejecting the transfer of the investigation to other investigative organisations, the Supreme Court decided in favour of the Adani group and SEBI.
- According to the court's ruling, the authority to transfer an inquiry can only be used in extraordinary situations and not when there are strong reasons not to.
- The Hindenburg report was judged untrustworthy by the Court and was intended to manipulate the market by providing biased and incomplete information.
- The Court ordered an expedited three-month completion period for SEBI's probe, while maintaining the agency's integrity.
- After Hindenburg Research accused the Adani Group of manipulating share prices and engaging in accounting fraud, investors incurred large losses as a result of market instability. In response, the Supreme Court established the Justice Sapre Committee in March 2023 to look into possible regulatory shortcomings.
- **India's Short-Selling Regulation:**
- According to recent statements from SEBI, investors in all categories will be able to engage in short sales, however naked short sales would not be authorised.
- As such, during the settlement period, all investors must fulfil their obligation to deliver securities.
- When an investor sells stocks or securities without first making arrangements to borrow them or making sure they can be borrowed, this is known as naked short selling.
- Retail investors can make a comparable disclosure by the end of the trading day, but institutional investors are required to disclose this information upfront.
- Additionally, equities traded in the F&O (Futures & Options) segment may be shorted, subject to SEBI's periodic evaluation of qualified stocks.
- Derivative instruments include futures and options (F&O). Futures entail a commitment to buy or sell assets at a predetermined price on a specified date, with an infinite risk.
- Options give the buyer or seller the option—but not the obligation—to purchase or sell assets by a specific date. The premium paid up front limits possible losses.
- **Source → The Hindu**