

**DAILY
CURRENT
AFFAIRS
ANALYSIS**



LAKSHYA ACADEMY®

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1 - Protection of Women from Domestic Violence:

GS I

Women Empowerment

- **Context:**

- The Delhi High Court recently emphasised the universality of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act of 2005, stating that it applies to all women regardless of their religious or social background.
- The High Court made these observations while dismissing a plea filed by a husband and his relatives.
- The plea challenged an appellate court order that reinstated a domestic violence complaint filed by the wife.

- **How Widespread is Domestic Violence in India?**

- In India, 32% of ever-married women reported having experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence by their husbands in their lifetime.
- According to the National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5), 2019-2021, “29.3% of married Indian women between the ages of 18 and 49 have experienced domestic/sexual violence; 3.1% of pregnant women aged 18 to 49 have suffered physical violence during their pregnancy.”
- That is only the number of cases reported by women. There are frequently many more that never make it to the police.
- According to NFHS data, 87% of married women who are victims of marital violence do not seek help.

- **What are the Factors Contributing to Domestic Violence?**

- **Gender Disparities:**

- India's wide gender gap, as reflected in global indices, contributes to a sense of male superiority and entitlement.
- Men may use violence to assert dominance and reinforce their perceived superiority.

- **Substance Abuse:**

- Alcohol or drug misuse that impairs judgement and exacerbates violent tendencies. Intoxication leads to loss of inhibitions and escalation of conflicts into physical or verbal abuse.

- **Dowry Culture:**

- There is a strong correlation between domestic violence and the dowry system, with instances of violence increasing when dowry expectations are not met.
- Despite legislation prohibiting dowry, such as the Dowry Prohibition Act 1961, cases of bride burning and violence related to dowry persist.
- Financial stressors and dependency dynamics that exacerbate tensions within relationships.

- **Sociocultural Norms:**

- Traditional beliefs and practices perpetuate gender roles and household power imbalances.
- Patriarchal systems that prioritise male authority and control over women. Violence often stems from notions of ownership over women's bodies, labour, and reproductive rights, reinforcing a sense of dominance.
- Desire for dominance and exertion of control over a partner, stemming from insecurity or entitlement.
- Social conditioning often portrays marriage as the ultimate goal for women, reinforcing traditional gender roles.
- Indian culture often glorifies women who exhibit tolerance and submission, discouraging them from leaving abusive relationships.

- **Socioeconomic Stressors:**

- Poverty, and unemployment, create additional stresses within households, increasing the likelihood of violent behaviour.

- **Mental Health Issues:**

- Untreated mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, or personality disorders that contribute to volatile behaviour.

- **Lack of Education and Awareness:**

- Limited understanding of healthy relationship dynamics and rights, leading to acceptance or normalisation of abusive behaviour.
- Ignorance about legal protections against domestic violence or available support services.
- Many women lack awareness of their rights and accept their subordinate status, perpetuating a cycle of low self-esteem and subjugation.

- **Why is Enforcement of Laws Against Domestic Violence Challenging?**

- **Social:**

- Victims often hesitate to report domestic violence due to societal stigma, fear of retaliation, or concerns about family reputation. This silence makes it challenging for authorities to take action.
- Domestic violence incidents are often underreported. Victims may not recognise certain behaviours as abuse or may normalise them.

- **Lack of Awareness:**

- Many people, including victims, are unaware of their legal rights and available resources. Without awareness, reporting and seeking legal help become difficult.

- **Dependency and Economic Factors:**

- Victims may be financially dependent on their abusers. Fear of economic repercussions can prevent them from seeking legal assistance.

- **Inadequate Implementation and Training:**

- Law enforcement agencies and judicial bodies may lack proper training on handling domestic violence cases. Inconsistent implementation of laws hinders effective enforcement.

- **Legal Hurdle:**

- Proving domestic violence in court requires substantial evidence. Lack of witnesses or physical evidence can weaken cases.

- **Complex Family Dynamics:**

- Domestic violence often occurs within family units. Legal actions can disrupt family relationships, making victims hesitant to pursue legal remedies.

- **Cultural and Regional Variations:**

- Different cultural norms and practices affect how domestic violence is perceived and addressed.
- Enforcement strategies must consider these variations.

- **Way Forward:**

- A fundamental prerequisite is a transformative change in attitudes towards gender roles and power dynamics. Initiatives targeting both men and women are crucial for fostering mutual respect and dismantling the patriarchal mindset deeply ingrained in society.
- Mandate gender perspective training for stakeholders like law enforcement, service providers, and magistrates to foster empathy and victim-centred approaches.
- Ensure victims have access to free or low-cost legal representation throughout the court process.
- Implement programs that equip survivors with job training and financial literacy skills, fostering economic empowerment.

Source → The Hindu

2 - Strategic Importance of A&N Islands:

GS III

Internal Security

- **Context:**

- The Indian government's renewed focus on developing the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (ANI) underscores their strategic significance in the Indo-Pacific region, prompting efforts to enhance infrastructure and security.
- The recent focus on building strategic infrastructure on the islands, both civilian and military, is long overdue and reflects a lack of strategic maritime vision since Independence.
- What is the Strategic Importance of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands?
- Located 700 nautical miles southeast of the Indian mainland, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands add 300,000 sq km to India's exclusive economic zone, with the potential for undersea hydrocarbon and mineral deposits.
- The islands' strategic location astride the Malacca Strait, makes them a crucial asset for India's ability to monitor and project power in the Indo-Pacific region.
- The Malacca Strait is a critical maritime choke point, with more than 90,000 merchant ships carrying about 30% of the world's traded goods passing through it annually.
- The islands share maritime boundaries with Myanmar, Thailand, Indonesia, and Bangladesh, giving India substantial ocean space under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in terms of exclusive economic zone and continental shelf.

- The islands can serve as the first line of defence against any attempt from the East to undermine India's maritime security, especially in the face of China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific region.
 - Port Blair can become a regional hub for navies to collaborate on disaster relief, medical aid, counter-piracy, search and rescue, and other maritime security initiatives.
 - What are the Challenges to the Development of the ANI?
 - The shift from India's Look East policy to a stronger Act East policy, along with the growing recognition of the significance of maritime power and the increasing capabilities of the Chinese PLA Navy, has underscored the need to develop Indian island territories, especially the Andaman and Nicobar group.
 - Lack of political prioritisation until recently, with the realisation of the islands' strategic importance only now.
 - Challenges of distance from the mainland and difficulties in developing infrastructure.
 - Complex environmental clearance procedures and regulations on forest and tribal conservation.
 - Coordination challenges due to the involvement of multiple ministries and agencies. The conflict between long-term strategic vision and immediate political gains.
- **What Strategic Infrastructure Development is Needed in A&N Islands?**
- **Enhancing Maritime Domain Awareness:**
 - Ensuring comprehensive maritime domain awareness and surveillance over the islands.
 - Bolstering deterrence capabilities against any naval misadventures from the East.
- **Bolstering Infrastructure:**
 - Developing infrastructure to support India's maritime economy, especially in the southern group of islands.
 - Improving transportation and connectivity to facilitate development and tourism. Developing Galathea Bay transshipment port on Great Nicobar Island.
 - The plan to connect the A&N Islands to the mainland through Submarine Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) needs revitalisation. This will provide cheaper and better connectivity and access to Digital India's benefits.
 - Reducing the islands' dependence on mainland support for essential supplies and services.
 - Enhancing transportation and connectivity for development and tourism.
 - Establishing high-speed inter-island ferry services and a seaplane terminal.
- **Enhancing Military Presence:**
 - The military must increase forces and deploy the appropriate assets at the Andaman Nicobar Command (ANC) to maintain island security. This includes basing surveillance and fighter aircraft there, as well as conducting frequent detachments.

- **International Collaborations:**

- Exploring partnerships with the Quad and Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) for development initiatives.
- Seeking infrastructure development concessions akin to those on India's northern borders.

- **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**

- **History:**

- India's association with Andaman and Nicobar Island dates back to the aftermath of the 1857 War of Independence when the British established a penal colony for Indian revolutionaries.
- The islands were occupied by the Japanese in 1942 and later became the first part of India to be liberated from British rule in 1943 when Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose visited Port Blair.
- After the Japanese surrender in 1945, the British reoccupied the islands. On the eve of Independence islands were given to India.
- The period from Independence until 1962 saw neglect of the islands due to their remote location and dark symbolism.
- In 1962, a naval garrison was established due to concerns about a Chinese submarine. In 2001, the Andaman Nicobar Command (ANC) was established in Port Blair after the post-Kargil War security review, marking India's first joint and Unified operational command.
- The ANC, established in 2001, is India's first joint/unified operational command, placing forces from all three services and the Coast Guard under a single commander-in-chief.
- The ANC is responsible for maintaining comprehensive maritime domain awareness and deterrence capabilities in the strategic Andaman and Nicobar archipelago.

- The Ten Degree Channel is a narrow strait that separates the Andaman Islands from the Nicobar Islands. It is located approximately at the 10-degree latitude mark.
- Indira Point is the southernmost tip of the Nicobar Islands. It is situated on Great Nicobar Island and marks the southernmost point of India.
- The ANI is home to 5 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups: Great Andamanese, Jarwas, Onges, Shompens and North Sentinelese.

- **Recent Development:**

- NITI Aayog is undertaking a project for Great Nicobar which will include an international container transshipment terminal, an airport, a power plant, and a township.
- Additionally, a proposal for Little Andaman calls for the development of a new greenfield coastal city to compete with Singapore and Hong Kong.
- The Kra Canal is a proposed canal in Thailand that would connect the Gulf of Thailand with the Andaman Sea. It aims to create a shortcut for shipping between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea.

3 - State of Medical Education in India:

GS II

Health related issues

- **Context:**

- The Ukraine-Russia war apart from other difficulties and hardships has led to tough times for Indian medical students in Ukraine. In February 2022, about 18000 Indian medical students studying in Ukraine were forced to return home after the country's conflict with Russia escalated into a war.
- As a one-time exception, the National Medical Commission allowed 4,000 of these students, who were in their final semesters, to complete their internship at home.
- According to a report, around 70% of these repatriated MBBS students are now pursuing their courses from colleges in Serbia, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Georgia.
- These colleges are also attracting students' new batches of students from India to pursue medical education.

- **What are the Challenges Related to Medical Education in India?**

- **Limited Number of Seats:** Medical college seats are still far less than the number of aspirants. The ratio of medical college seats to aspirants is about 20:1.
- **Increase in Number of Aspirants:** As per the study conducted by the National Institute of Educational Planning, the number of students taking the test has increased by almost 3 times in the past 10 years and only 0.25% make it to the top colleges.
- **Uneven Distribution of Medical Colleges:** Medical colleges in India are concentrated in urban areas which creates a vacuum in the rural areas.
- **High Fees of Private Medical Colleges:** Government institutions are more affordable in terms of fees and education quality.
- **Outdated Curriculum:** The curriculum of many medical colleges in India is outdated and not aligned with current medical practices. This leads to a gap between what students learn in medical school and the skills required in clinical practice.
- **Lack of Infrastructure:** Many medical colleges in India lack the necessary infrastructure to provide high-quality medical education. This includes modern laboratories, advanced medical equipment, and access to technology.
- **Insufficient Emphasis on Practical Training:** Medical education in India is often theory-based, with insufficient emphasis on practical training. This can result in doctors graduating without sufficient practical experience.

- **Poor Medical Research:** There is less emphasis on medical research in India as compared to other developed nations. Mostly, doctors in India prefer to take jobs after completion of their education, thus research is neglected.

- **National Medical Commission (NMC):**

- The NMC has been constituted by an act of Parliament known as the National Medical Commission Act, 2019.
- The NMC acts as India's top regulator of medical education and practice.
- Committed to upholding the highest standards in healthcare education, NMC ensures the delivery of quality medical education and training across the nation.

- **What Initiatives have been Taken to Reform Medical Education?**

- **National Medical Commission:** The inefficient and opaque Medical Council of India (MCI) has been completely overhauled, establishing the National Medical Commission (NMC) of the highest standards in professional integrity, experience, stature, and excellence.
- Competent individuals have been carefully selected and placed at the helm to further steer these reforms.
- **Raising the Number of Seats:** The Government is scaling up the number of seats by converting district hospitals into medical colleges using a private-public partnership model.
- **Regulation of Fees:** The National Medical Commission (NMC) Act has the provision to regulate fees and all other charges in 50% of the seats in private medical colleges and deemed universities. NMC is framing guidelines in this regard.
- **One Country One Exam:** For MBBS admissions, the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) was introduced in 2016, which ensured 'one country, one examination, one merit' system and a common counselling system.
- **Minimum Standard Requirement:** It pertains to streamlining the entire regulations on Minimum Standards Requirement (MSR) for the establishment of medical colleges.
- **Regular Quality Assessments:** Quality assessments of medical colleges should be regularly conducted, and reports should be available in the public domain. The NMC is conducting a common exit exam for all medical undergraduates as a quality control measure.

- **What are Recommendations for Improving the Quality of Medical Education in India?**

- NITI Ayog proposed to link private colleges to district hospitals to serve the underserved areas of the country.
- Enhancing the skills of Paramedics and nurses will help to cater to non-specialist demands of the medical sector and could tackle the problem of shortage of doctors.
- Public investment for starting medical colleges can be encouraged along with encouraging the private sector to set up medical colleges, with appropriate incentives.
- Optimal use of existing infrastructure to expand medical education facilities.
- Adopting a comprehensive India-specific approach for the creation of seats for specialists.

- To prevent the presence of 'ghost faculty' (teachers who exist only on paper but are paid a salary) in medical colleges, streamlining the recruitment process is imperative.
- Regular performance evaluations of colleges to identify and address concerns promptly.

Source → The Hindu

4 - India's Goods Exports Touches New Height:

GS III

Indian Economy

- **Context:**
- India's merchandise exports reached a peak of USD 41.68 billion in March 2024 compared to the FY 2022-23.
- **What does the Current Export Data Reveal?**
- **About:**
- India's goods exports reached USD 41.68 billion in March 2024 compared to the FY 2022-23, despite a 0.67% decline from last year's tally,
- Imports, on the other hand, dropped by 6% to USD 57.3 billion during the same period.
- The goods trade deficit contracted to USD 15.6 billion, the lowest in 11 months.
- **Key Factors:**
- **Gold Imports Decline:** Gold imports fell sharply by 53.6% in March to USD 1.53 billion.
- **Non-Oil, Non-Gold Imports:** The drop in non-petroleum, non-gold imports contributed to the overall decline.
- **Silver Imports Surge:** Interestingly, silver imports jumped to USD 816.6 million.
- **Impact on Full-Year Figures (2023-24):**
- While goods exports averaged USD 35.4 billion in the first ten months, the last two months' spike lifted the full-year export figure to USD 437.1 billion.
- This performance is 3.1% below the record USD 451.1 billion achieved in the previous year.

- **FY 2023-24 Projections:**

- Despite persistent global challenges like the Ukraine war, and the West Asian crisis, overall exports are estimated to surpass last year's record.
- India's overall exports (merchandise + services) are estimated to reach USD 776.68 billion.
- This represents a positive growth of 0.04% over the previous fiscal year (FY 2022-23).
- Despite global challenges, this figure slightly edges out the USD 776.40 billion recorded in FY 2022-23.

- **Merchandise Export Drivers: Key contributors to merchandise export growth include:**

- Electronic Goods: Exports increased by 23.64% to USD 29.12 billion.
- Drugs & Pharmaceuticals: Exports rose by 9.67% to USD 27.85 billion.
- Engineering Goods: Exports grew by 2.13% to USD 109.32 billion.

- **Agricultural Commodities Show Positive Growth:**

- Exports of agricultural commodities, such as tobacco, fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy products, spices, and oil seeds, exhibited positive growth in FY 2023-24.

- **Trade Deficit Improvement:**

- The overall trade deficit is estimated to significantly improve by 35.77% to USD 78.12 billion in FY 2023-24.
- Merchandise trade deficit improved by 9.33% to USD 240.17 billion compared to FY 2022-23.

- **Current Account Balance Outlook:**

- The easing of the goods trade deficit in March is expected to augur well for the current account balance in the final quarter of FY 2023-24.

- **What Should be the Strategy to Further Enhance India's Exports?**

- **Cost Optimisation:**

- Land, Power, and Capital Costs: The government must urgently address cost-related challenges associated with land acquisition, power tariffs, and capital availability.
- Scale and Efficiency: Encouraging economies of scale can significantly reduce cost disabilities for businesses.

- **Enhancing Competitiveness:**

- Infrastructure and Logistics: Improving transportation networks, ports, and warehousing facilities will enhance supply chain efficiency.
- Labour Flexibility: Streamlining labour laws and ensuring flexibility can make Indian companies more competitive.
- MSME Support: Strengthening Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) will contribute to overall competitiveness.

- **Market Access via Trade Treaties:**

- India should actively negotiate and sign trade agreements with key trading partners to facilitate market access for its exports.
- Bilateral and multilateral treaties can open up new avenues for Indian products globally.

- **Technology and Quality Focus:**

- Investing in research and development (R&D) and adopting advanced technologies will enhance product quality.
- Quality certifications and adherence to international standards are crucial for gaining consumer trust.

- **Promoting Brand India:**

- The government and industry bodies should collaboratively promote “Brand India” on the global stage.
- Highlighting India’s rich cultural heritage, skilled workforce, and innovative capabilities will attract international buyers.

- **China Plus One Strategy:**

- Encouraging multinational companies to diversify their manufacturing base away from China is essential.
- India can position itself as an attractive alternative for investment and production.
- By implementing these strategies, India can not only sustain its export growth but also surpass previous records, contributing to economic prosperity and global trade dynamics

Source → The Hindu