

**DAILY
CURRENT
AFFAIRS
ANALYSIS**



LAKSHYA ACADEMY®

25 MAY 2024

1 - Benefits and problems of public stockholding:

GS II

Government Policies and Interventions

- **Context:**
- India presented a strong stance on the long-term solution for public stockholding for food security at the World Trade Organization's (WTO) 13th ministerial session.
- **What are the Main Ideas India Is Emphasising?**
- **Broadening the Scope of the WHO:** India has demanded that the WTO broaden its mandate and stop focusing just on serving the commercial needs of farmers who export their produce.
- Rather, the organisation ought to give precedence to tackling essential issues like ensuring food security and maintaining means of subsistence.
- **Needs of Developing Countries:** India contends that in order to guarantee food security for its citizens, particularly the most vulnerable segments of society, public stockholding programmes are crucial for developing nations.
- Regarding public stockholding programmes, developing nations are given certain latitude under the current WTO regulations.
- These measures, meanwhile, are only short-term, and India is looking for a long-term solution that takes into account their demands for development.
- The developing country's ability to employ the Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM) as a crucial tool against sharp increases in imports or abrupt drops in prices was recently affirmed by the G-33 countries.
- **Demand for Fair Playing Fields:** India emphasised the need to establish fair playing fields in global agricultural commerce, particularly for low-income or resource-poor farmers. This is in line with the overarching objective of encouraging justice and fairness in trade practices.
- India drew attention to the stark differences in domestic farmer support offered by nations.
- Remarkably, subsidies in developing countries are reportedly as much as 200 times lower than in some rich countries.
- India, one of the G-33 countries, has pushed the WTO to resolve public stockholding permanently.
- **Public Stockholding: What Is It?**
- **About:** The act of governments buying, storing, and ultimately distributing food grains is known as public stockholding. This strategy is used by India and many other nations to guarantee food security for their citizens.

- **Benefits:**

- **Food Security:** In the event of a drought, crop failure, or disruption in the market, public stockpiles operate as a safety net against possible food shortages.
- This keeps food supplies for the populace stable, particularly in times of emergency.
- **Price Stabilisation:** Governments can control price fluctuations and avert steep spikes that could hurt consumers, especially low-income households, by releasing stockpiles when prices rise as a result of a shortage of supply.
- **Helping Farmers:** By purchasing grains at set minimum support prices, governments can provide some financial stability for farmers. This can sustain agricultural output and provide incentives for production.
- **Social Welfare Programmes:** Food that has been stored in reserve can be utilised for social welfare initiatives that offer subsidised food to individuals who are at risk of hunger.

- **Drawbacks:**

- **Fiscal Burden:** Governments may incur significant costs in maintaining substantial stockpiles. Costs associated with storage and upkeep can put a pressure on public coffers and take funds away from other development objectives.
- **Market Distortion:** Publicly subsidised food grains may undercut market prices, deterring private sector investment in agriculture and perhaps affecting the efficiency of production overall.
- Food grain deterioration and waste are caused by improper storage, which reduces programme efficacy and results in financial losses.
- **Risks of Corruption:** The administration of public stockpiles is susceptible to misbehaviour and corruption, which can result in systemic inefficiencies and leaks.
- **Problems with International Trade:** Practices of subsidised stockpiling may cause problems with international trade.
- Some governments contend that these actions hurt exporters from other countries and stifle honest market competition.
- For example, Thailand has lately accused India of unfairly gaining an export market advantage by exploiting public rice stocks intended for internal food security.

- **What is the Agriculture WTO Agreement?**

- **About:** The Uruguay Round trade discussions resulted in the establishment of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), a body of international regulations that became operative in 1995.
- It seeks to advance equitable trade in agricultural goods through:
 - **Reducing Trade Barriers:** The AoA calls on its members to lower import duties, quotas, and other restrictions.
 - **Domestic Support:** It establishes guidelines for the kinds and quantities of financial aid that national governments may give to their own farmers.

- **Market Access:** By lowering import restrictions, the AoA encourages increased market access for agricultural exports.
- **Agriculture Subsidy:** In accordance with WTO guidelines, developing nations' agri-subsidies cannot surpass 10% of the value of their agricultural output. Developing countries are granted specific safeguards, nevertheless.
- Under the terms of the December 2013 Peace Clause, WTO members consented not to contest any violation of the established ceiling by a developing country in the WTO's dispute settlement forum.
- India was forced to activate the "peace clause" on several occasions since their rice subsidy had exceeded the threshold.
- *Source → The Hindu*

2 - Question of Muslim Reservations in Andhra Pradesh:

GS II

Government Policies and Interventions

- **Context:**
- The controversy surrounding religion-based reservation has recently revived, with the 5% quota granted to Muslims in Andhra Pradesh in 2004 being one of the topics of discussion.
- **What is the history of Andhra Pradesh's Muslim reservation?**
- Certain Muslim groups have previously been added to the state's OBC lists in Andhra Pradesh, where Muslims make up roughly 9.5% of the population, with quotas varying from 7% to 10%.
- On the other hand, there has been a drive to incorporate all Muslims into the OBC category, imitating Kerala and Karnataka.
- **Reservation 2004:**
- A five percent reservation was established under Articles 15(4) and 16(4) after the government looked into the socioeconomic and educational standing of Muslims in the state in June 2004 in order to include them to the OBC list.
- The Andhra Pradesh High Court, however, invalidated the quota since it did not exclude the creamy layer and was imposed without first being reported to the Backward Classes Commission.
- The Muslim community cannot be regarded as a homogeneous group, the court ruled.
- Whether Muslims as a group are entitled to affirmative action under the constitution was one of the main issues before the court. The court decided in favour of affirmative action, ruling that such reservations do not conflict with secularism.

- **Reservation 2005:**

- The Backward Classes Commission stated that because Muslims are socially, educationally, and economically backward, reservations should be granted to the whole Muslim community.
- Once more, the state government adopted an Ordinance giving Muslims a 5% quota; however, this was later replaced by legislation.
- The High Court overturned the quota once more, arguing that the Commission's conclusion that Muslims in Andhra Pradesh were backward as a group was based on subjective standards rather than objective standards (M. Nagaraj v. Union of India, 2006).
- The decision was contested before the Supreme Court, which ordered in 2010 that the status quo be maintained until the matter was resolved.

- **Present Situation:**

- The Supreme Court's final hearing was set for 2022. Nevertheless, following the resolution of the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) quota dispute, the SC chose to hear the matter.
- November 2022 saw the removal of the EWS quota, but the AP quota dispute has not yet been resolved.

- **Problems With the Andhra Reservation Model:**

- The Basic Structure of the Constitution's equality principle is violated when Muslims are viewed as a homogenous group.
- Additionally, it disobeys Articles 15(1) and 16(2) of the Constitution, which forbid making reservations based only on religion.
- The High Court noted that the addition of a 5% quota for Muslims to Andhra Pradesh's already 46% reservation quota under Articles 15(4) and 16(4) violated the 50% limit. The Court questioned the absence of strong justification for this violation.

- **What are the points of contention surrounding India's religion-based reservations?**

- **Arguments in Support of India's Religion-Based Reservations:**

- Socio-Economic Backwardness: In terms of education, employment, and income, Muslims in India lag behind other communities, according to the Sachar Committee Report.
- Making reservations can assist in closing this gap.
- Constitutional Mandate: Affirmative action is allowed under the Indian Constitution for socially and educationally disadvantaged groups, regardless of their religion or cultural affiliation.
- Reservations can help guarantee that underrepresented religious groups are adequately represented in the workforce, in the classroom, and in other domains.

- **Arguments Against India's Religiously Based Reservations:**

- **Secularism:** Opponents contend that the Indian Constitution's secularism principle, which calls for the state to respect all religions equally, is violated by the provision of religiously motivated reservations.
- **Undermining National Unity:** Reservations based on religion have the potential to cause animosity and separation amongst various populations, which could compromise national unity.
- **Economic Criteria:** To guarantee that benefits reach individuals who are genuinely economically disadvantaged, regardless of their faith, reservations should be made exclusively on the basis of economic criteria rather than religious considerations.
- **Administrative Difficulties:** Establishing religiously based reservations may present administrative difficulties, such as figuring out the standards for identifying recipients and guarding against system abuse.
- **Socio-Economic Criteria:** Rather of being based on religion, reservations might be made based on socio-economic factors, guaranteeing that the most underprivileged people receive benefits regardless of their religious beliefs.
- **Empowerment Through Education:** To empower underprivileged populations and raise their socioeconomic standing, concentrate on enhancing the infrastructure of educational institutions and offering programmes for skill development.
- **Enact inclusive policies that, without turning to religious pretexts, address the unique needs of the underserved religious communities in sectors including healthcare, employment, and education.**
- **discussion and Consensus:** Hold a discussion with all relevant parties to reach a consensus on how to address the socioeconomic issues that each community is facing. Make sure that any actions done are compliant with the values and principles of the constitution.
- **Source → The Hindu**

3 – High Floods in Dubai:

GS II

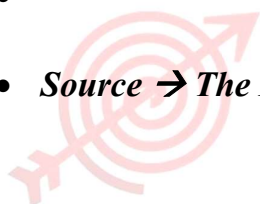
International Issues

- **Context:**
- Following a powerful thunderstorm that struck the nation, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) recently had one of the biggest rainfalls ever recorded. Before the storm made landfall in the UAE, it made landfall in Oman.

- However, Mumbai, which is located across the Arabian Sea, has been experiencing a humid heatwave with a high relative humidity of 55% over the past several days.
- **Why is the weather so hot in Mumbai?**
- Mumbai experiences scorching weather because of a strong anticyclonic effect that has formed there.
- Areas of high atmospheric pressure are known as anticyclones.
- Anticyclone winds compress as they descend downhill, heating the area. They frequently trigger widespread heatwaves.
- Anticyclones have the ability to obstruct other weather systems, creating harsh surroundings.
- The anticyclone in Mumbai heated the air even more by creating a "heat dome" effect.
- Sinking motion brought warm air from the Arabian Sea and West Asia in. Mumbai's humidity rose as a result, particularly before the monsoon season.
- Mumbai is normally cooled by sea breezes at night, but it's possible that the anticyclone prevented them. The result was higher-than-normal nighttime temperatures.
- **What is the rain pattern and climate of the United Arab Emirates (UAE)?**
- **Regarding:**
- Since the United Arab Emirates is located in an arid part of the planet, substantial rainfall is unusual there.
- Dubai receives 94.7 mm of rain annually on average. However, this was a remarkable event because it dumped over 142 mm of rain in a day, soaking Dubai.
- Possible Causes of Extreme Rain: The following factors may be responsible for this disastrous event.
- **Changes in Climate:**
- The heavy rains have been caused by a number of reasons related to climate change, including patterns of natural climate variability like El Niño and La Niña.
- Global warming: Higher temperatures have caused water to evaporate from land, oceans, and other bodies of water, increasing the amount of moisture in the atmosphere.
- The atmosphere can retain roughly 7% extra moisture for every degree Celsius that the average temperature rises.
- Due to the increased precipitation intensity, length, and/or frequency, storms become more dangerous as a result.
- **Cloud Seeding:**
- The technique known as "cloud seeding" involves inserting substances like crystals of silver iodide into clouds in order to enhance precipitation in areas where there is a risk of water scarcity.

- UAE has been at the forefront of efforts to seed clouds and boost precipitation because it is situated in one of the warmest and driest areas on the planet.
- **Thunderstorm:**
 - A number of factors, such as unstable, warm air rising quickly into the atmosphere, enough moisture to form clouds and rain, and upward lift of air currents brought on by colliding cold and warm weather fronts, sea breezes, or mountains, combine to create atmospheric imbalance and turbulence, which in turn causes thunderstorms.
- **Thunderstorms: What Are They?**
 - The storm, which is characterised by lightning strikes and a powerful auditory impact on Earth's atmosphere, is sometimes referred to as an electrical storm or a lightning storm.
 - It can result in heavy rain, hail, and strong winds and frequently happens in warm, humid climates. These storms can last anywhere from a few minutes to several hours, and they typically form in the afternoon or evening.
 - Formation: A thunderstorm forms during the course of three stages.
- **Stage of cumulus:**
 - The sun's insolation causes the ground to warm significantly.
 - A low pressure area forms as a result of the air parcel being intensely lifted (convection).
 - The low pressure causes a void that is quickly filled with air from the surrounding environment.
 - High-altitude cumulonimbus clouds are created by the strong convection of moist air.
- **Advanced Stage:**
 - characterised by a powerful warm air updraft that pushes clouds higher and wider as it rises. Afterwards, rain and cold air are brought to Earth by a downdraft.
 - A thunderstorm is approaching when there is a strong gust of wind. There is a significant downdraft causing this wind.
 - The updraft and downdraft dictate the path of the thunderstorm. Most of the time the course is unpredictable.
- **Dissipating Phase:**
 - When clouds reach altitudes below freezing, they generate hail, which then descends as hailstorms. A lot of precipitation has fallen.
 - Within a few minutes, the storm passes and clean skies take over.
- India saw a number of unusual weather events in 2023, which pointed to a troubling new normal brought on by climate change.
- Warm temperatures that broke a 123-year-old record in February heralded the start of 2023.

- Cyclonic Event: A massive cyclone named Biparjoy formed in the Arabian Sea and lasted an incredible 13 days, making it the longest-lasting storm since 1977.
- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) reports that 314 out of 365 days in 2022 saw harsh weather in India.
- Human Death Toll: Unpredictable weather puts millions of Indians at risk for climate-related catastrophes, claims thousands of lives annually, and exacerbates economic problems by reducing agricultural output.
- The incidents resulted in the loss of 1,96 million hectares (ha) of cropland and 3,026 fatalities.
- IPCC assessments from 2023 also provide strong evidence that extreme climate events like constant, heavy rainfall are being brought on by global warming.
- Climate change is costing India between three and five percent of its GDP, and if global warming continues at its current rate of two degrees Celsius, that amount might increase to ten percent.
- Modifying Monsoon Patterns: It is typified by extended intervals of insufficient rainfall succeeded by heavy downpours that last for several days.
- The last few decades have seen a strengthening of this pattern.
- Warmer temperatures, more moisture in the atmosphere, and the influence of the southwest monsoon are all contributing to heavy rainfall that is concentrated over a brief period of time.
- The interplay between the southwest monsoon and the western disturbance, a low-pressure weather system, is responsible for the recent significant rainfall in northern India.
-
- *Source* → *The Hindu*



LAKSHYA ACADEMY®

4 - Mpox Virus:

GS II

Health related Issues

- **Context:**
- A new study found that the Mpox virus has a novel adaptive mechanism that increases its capacity to infect humans during recent outbreaks.
- The term "mpox" was adopted in place of "monkeypox" to represent the virus's direct human contagiousness and prevent stigma against monkeys.
- **Mpox: What is it?**
- Monkeypox, also name is mpox, is a DNA virus. It is a member of the big, double-stranded DNA virus family Poxviridae.

- Although it was discovered that the virus also infects people, it was initially discovered to infect monkeys in 1958.
- **Transmission:** Direct touch or contact with contaminated materials are the main ways that animals, especially rodents and primates, can spread the mpox virus to humans.
- **Symptoms:** Human mpox infections usually manifest as fever, headache, sore muscles, and a distinctive rash that develops into macules, papules, vesicles, and pustules.
- **Immunisation:** Although there is a vaccine for mpox, its efficacy and accessibility are restricted, underscoring the necessity for enhanced preventive and management strategies.
- **Worldwide Outbreaks:** In 2022–2023, a massive outbreak of mpox that impacted over 100,000 people across over 118 nations brought the disease international attention.
- **High rates of human-to-human transmission,** especially via intimate touch and sexual interaction, were a defining feature of the outbreak.
- **WHO Declaration:** Coordinated measures were made to halt the spread of the mpox outbreak after the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared it a public health emergency.

- **Features of the Genome:**
 - **Clades & Lineages:** There is evidence to show that clade I of the mpox virus has a higher death rate than clade II.
 - **Clade IIb,** a novel lineage better suited for human-to-human transmission, was implicated in the epidemic of 2022.
 - **Through genomic analysis,** scientists discovered evidence of a unique clade I lineage linked to human-to-human transmission, pointing to a recent zoonotic spillover event.
 - **Evolutionary Adaptations:** In order to adapt to various hosts and conditions, mpox viruses can undergo genomic accordion through gene duplication or deletion.
 - **A 2022 outbreak of the mpox virus** was sequenced for publication in Nature Communications, and the results showed that specific regions of the virus's genome are very influential in human-to-human transmission.

- **Source → The Hindu**