

**The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC  
 CSE**

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**Edition : International Table of Contents**

<p><b>Page 01</b>  <b>Syllabus : GS III : Indian Economy / Prelims Exam</b></p>	<p><b>West Asia war cuts India's growth outlook to 6.6%</b></p>
<p><b>Page 07</b>  <b>Syllabus : GS II : Social Justice / Prelims Exam</b></p>	<p><b>Semaglutide is off patent: what does this mean for obesity in India?</b></p>
<p><b>Page 07</b>  <b>Syllabus : GS III : Environment / Prelims Exam</b></p>	<p><b>Climate change reshaping disease patterns, straining health systems: report</b></p>
<p><b>Page 10</b>  <b>Syllabus : GS II : Governance / Prelims Exam</b></p>	<p><b>What does the Jan Vishwas Bill do?</b></p>
<p><b>Page 10</b>  <b>Syllabus : GS III : Science and Tech / Prelims Exam</b></p>	<p><b>How will Gaganyaan astronauts return safely to earth?</b></p>
<p><b>Page 08 : Editorial Analysis</b>  <b>Syllabus : GS I : Social Issues</b></p>	<p><b>Nari Shakti, India's defining reform for the next decade</b></p>

India's economic trajectory, while resilient, is facing significant external pressure due to the prolonged conflict in West Asia. The World Bank's downward revision of India's growth forecast to **6.6%** for 2026-27 underscores the deep-rooted structural linkages between India and the Gulf region. This slowdown is primarily attributed to disruptions in global energy markets, increased input costs, and a potential dip in remittances, which together dampen both household consumption and industrial momentum.

## West Asia war cuts India's growth outlook to 6.6%

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The World Bank has revised downwards India's growth outlook for 2026-27 to 6.6% from 7.2%, citing the impact of the war in West Asia on household and government consumption, as well as on industrial activity.

The India Development Update report by the World Bank said that "in the absence of the conflict", India's GDP growth was projected at 7.2%, a reflection of better-than-expected growth in 2025-26, "strong initial momentum" in the fourth quarter of that year and a "broad pro-growth reform agenda". "Growth is now projected at 6.6% in FY27, reflecting headwinds from the Middle East conflict – assum-

### Revised figures

World Bank reports says that 'in the absence of the conflict', India's GDP growth would have been 7.2%

#### OUTLOOK FOR FY27:

- Real GDP growth: **6.6% vs 7.6%** in FY26
- Inflation (Consumer Price Index): **4.9% vs 2.3%** in FY26
- Net FDI, inflow (as % of GDP): **0.6 vs 0.5** in FY26



ing an extended disruption in global energy (oil and gas) supply till end-2026," the report said.

The India Development Update report is a companion to the South Asia Economic Update 2026. That report had projected growth in South Asia to slow to 6.3% in 2026 from

7% in 2025 due to disruptions in energy markets.

The World Bank's Acting Director for India Paul Procee noted that there are things that can be done to boost growth. "Boosting private sector-led growth will be critical to strengthening economic resilience and supporting

more young people to enter the workforce," Mr. Procee said.

#### Cross-sector slowdown

The report said that industrial activity is expected to slow to 7.5% in 2026-27 from 8.8% in the previous year. It said that the manufacturing sector – especially electronics, automobiles, and other tradable goods – will prop up industrial growth.

"However, higher input costs and decreased export demand from the Gulf region will weigh on overall industrial growth," the report said. "Business services are likely to be impacted by the global economic slowdown and higher input costs (particularly of LPG) will adversely impact food and accommodation services."

The report went on to say that there are "substantial downside risks" to its outlook, suggesting that growth could slow further if the conflict in West Asia is prolonged. "Although India can absorb temporary shocks, its reliance on energy imports from the region leaves the external balance, inflation, and fiscal position vulnerable," the report said. A disrupted labor market in Gulf economies could significantly lower remittances.

Notably, the report further said that, if the government and oil marketing companies continue to shield consumers from the full brunt of higher energy prices through excise rate cuts and increased subsidies, the government's fiscal consolidation efforts could reverse.

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### Key Highlights of the World Bank Report

#### A. The Growth Revision

**Current Forecast:** 6.6% for FY27 (2026-27).

**Original Forecast:** 7.2% (projected in the absence of conflict).

**Regional Context:** South Asia's overall growth is expected to slow to **6.3%** in 2026, down from 7% in 2025.

#### B. Sector-Specific Impact

**Industrial Activity:** Expected to drop to **7.5%** (from 8.8% in FY26). While electronics and automobiles remain strong, higher input costs and reduced demand from the Gulf are significant drags.

**Services Sector:** High LPG prices are expected to hurt the food and accommodation (hospitality) sectors. Business services may slow due to a global cooling of demand.

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**Consumption:** Both government and household consumption are expected to soften. The government may have to divert funds toward energy and fertilizer subsidies, potentially impacting fiscal consolidation.

## Dimensions of Impact: Why West Asia Matters to India

### I. Energy Security & Inflation

India imports nearly **85-90% of its crude oil** and **50% of its natural gas**. A significant portion of this transits through the **Strait of Hormuz**.

**Cost-Push Inflation:** Higher oil prices increase logistics and manufacturing costs, leading to "imported inflation."

**Fiscal Deficit:** If the government shields consumers via excise duty cuts or higher subsidies, the fiscal deficit target (the path to **4.5% of GDP**) may be breached.

### II. The "Remittance" Cushion

India is the world's largest recipient of remittances, with the Gulf region accounting for nearly **38% (approx. \$50 billion)** of these inflows.

Disruptions in the Gulf labor market directly impact the disposable income of millions of households in states like **Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar**, thus slowing domestic consumption.

### III. Trade and Infrastructure

**Export Demand:** The Gulf is a major destination for Indian engineering goods, textiles, and agricultural products.

**Strategic Projects:** The conflict jeopardizes the progress of the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)** and complicates India's strategic investments in the **Chabahar Port**.

## Challenges and Risks

**External Balance:** A widening **Current Account Deficit (CAD)** due to higher import bills puts pressure on the Indian Rupee.

**Vulnerability of Diaspora:** The safety of over **9 million Indians** in the region is a paramount diplomatic and humanitarian concern.

**Fertilizer Subsidies:** Since India imports a vast amount of natural gas and urea from West Asia, any supply disruption spikes the cost of farming, necessitating higher government intervention to keep food prices stable.

## Way Forward

**Energy Diversification:** Accelerating the transition to renewables and expanding **Ethanol Blending** to reduce the "oil-dependency" on volatile regions.

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**Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR):** India needs to expand its SPR capacity (currently covering only about **9.5 days** of emergency needs) to provide a sturdier buffer.

**Private Sector-Led Growth:** As noted by Paul Procee, creating a "business-enabling environment" is essential to offset external shocks by boosting internal productivity.

**Diplomatic Multi-alignment:** Utilizing "Strategic Autonomy" to maintain ties with all regional players (Iran, Israel, and the Arab states) to ensure the safety of sea lanes and the diaspora.

### Conclusion

The World Bank's report serves as a "wake-up call" regarding the external vulnerabilities of the Indian economy. While India remains one of the world's fastest-growing major economies, its growth is not immune to the "geopolitical tax" imposed by West Asian instability. To achieve the vision of **Viksit Bharat by 2047**, India must transform this crisis into an opportunity by strengthening its energy independence and deepening its domestic industrial base to withstand global volatility.

### UPSC Prelims Exam Practice Question

**Ques: The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) primarily aims to:**

- (a) Enhance military cooperation in West Asia
- (b) Develop a trade and connectivity corridor linking India to Europe via the Middle East
- (c) Replace the Suez Canal route
- (d) Promote cultural exchange programs

**Ans: b)**

### UPSC Mains Exam Practice Question

**Ques:** Discuss how disruptions in global energy markets can affect India's agricultural sector. Highlight the role of fertilizer subsidies in this context. **(150 Words)**

The expiration of the patent for **Semaglutide** (the active ingredient in drugs like Ozempic and Wegovy) in India marks a pivotal shift in the country's battle against the "twin epidemics" of obesity and Type 2 Diabetes. By allowing local pharmaceutical giants to produce generic versions, the landscape of metabolic healthcare is transforming from a luxury niche to a broad-based clinical tool. Here is an analysis of what this means for India.

## Semaglutide is off patent: what does this mean for obesity in India?

India is facing a growing epidemic of obesity and metabolic disease and GLPI drugs are one form of treatment; while a reduction in costs means easier and more widespread access to these drugs, it must be remembered that they serve as add-ons to the fundamental precepts of lifestyle modifications and exercise

**Nanditha Ramachandran**

**W**hen Rakesh (name changed) first walked into the clinic, he could not fit into a chair with armrests due to his body weight. Weighing 169 kg, Rakesh had almost given up on his weight loss goals, having tried multiple diets, and attempted various forms of exercise.

"I am fed up, doc!", he said. "I cannot even drive a car - I cannot fit in the seat!"

Fast forward to today and Rakesh walks in, having lost 37 kgs, over a span of 9 months.

"It has changed my life!" he said. "I can drive again! I swim now, I feel so much more confident!"

What changed his life was GLPI therapy, the "weight loss" drugs that have revolutionised the way we treat metabolic disease!

As his doctor, what I see, goes far beyond the numbers on the scale: GLPI therapy has improved Rakesh's metabolic health, reduced his cardiovascular risk, improved his fatty liver and optimised his cholesterol and blood pressure. These, therefore, are not just weight loss drugs; they are disease-modifying agents that target the root of metabolic disease.

GLPI therapy has taken the world by storm in recent times. These drugs, which have been around for almost two decades now for the management of diabetes, gained popularity, when their indication expanded beyond diabetes, as anti-obesity/weight management drugs.

Obesity has been found to be the main reason for the increasing prevalence of diabetes in all populations. Therefore, targeting obesity seems to be the right strategy, especially at individual levels. GLPI therapy, in that regard, has been a game-changer, transforming the management of both obesity and diabetes.

**The Indian context**

The growing burden of type 2 diabetes and metabolic disease, including obesity, in India, is a matter of grave concern. This is related to changing food habits, especially an increase in the consumption of fat, as well as sedentary lifestyles. Indians have a high risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease, even with lower levels of generalised obesity due to what is known as the "thin fat" phenotype. This means that even if not obese by overall body weight, Indians have higher body fat percentage and higher insulin resistance, thus increasing our risk for type 2 diabetes and lifestyle diseases.

Targeted therapies such as GLPI, combined with lifestyle changes, can play a crucial role in addressing this growing epidemic in India. GLPI therapy, when used in the right individual, is a great option for the typical "insulin resistant" Indian. Through its actions, it can result in meaningful weight loss - reducing waist circumference and body fat and improving metabolic health.

On March 22, the originator company,



**THE GIST**

- ▼ The growing burden of type 2 diabetes and metabolic disease, including obesity, in India, is a matter of grave concern. GLPI therapy, in that regard, has been a game-changer, transforming the management of both obesity and diabetes.
- ▼ GLPI therapy, when used in the right individual, is a great option for the typical "insulin resistant" Indian. Through its actions, it can result in meaningful weight loss - reducing waist circumference and body fat and improving metabolic health.
- ▼ On March 22, the originator company, Novo Nordisk's patent for semaglutide (the active ingredient) expired, and the floodgates opened. More than 50 companies in India are now selling semaglutide at cheaper rates than the multinational companies.

**New-found popularity:** From ₹11,000 to ₹18,000 a month for a pen, the cost of GLPI has now dropped to around ₹5,000 per month, making it more affordable and thus increasing access. GETTY IMAGES

Novo Nordisk's patent for semaglutide (the active ingredient) expired, and the floodgates opened. More than 50 companies in India have now launched semaglutide at almost half the price that multinational companies sold it at.

What does this mean for India? One of the biggest barriers for GLPI therapy so far, the cost, may now be overcome. From ₹11,000 to ₹18,000 a month for a pen, the cost has now dropped to around ₹5,000 per month, making it more affordable and thus increasing access.

**Who can take it?**

GLPI therapy has clear indications, as to who can use it and when.

Being primarily an antidiabetic agent, its use in type 2 diabetes is clear. In people without diabetes, these drugs have been approved for weight reduction. Here, they can be used in anyone with a BMI of over 27, suffering from obesity-related complications such as obstructive sleep apnea, diabetes, hypertension etc., or in a person with a BMI of over 30 without diabetes. This is a boon to many, in whom lifestyle changes alone do not suffice, and in fact, bridges the gap between lifestyle management and bariatric surgery for obesity management.

It is important to note that these drugs are not shortcuts and not for casual use or as cosmetic quick fixes.

**Do they really work, and how?**

The short answer is yes. But this also depends on two factors: pharmacogenomics, as each person's response to a drug may be different, and tolerability to the drug, which in turn determines compliance to taking it, and ease with dose escalation, as weight loss is best with higher doses.

GLPI therapy, primarily works through natural pathways in the body, by regulating/suppressing appetite, delaying gastric emptying time and other mechanisms. Hence the response to the drug is largely dependent on each person's natural response. On an average, a good response would be between 10 to 15% of body weight loss from baseline weight.

As with any other drug, GLPI therapy must only be used under medical supervision, by a certified health professional.

Side effects are mainly gastro-intestinal (due to the mechanism of action) and include - nausea, loss of appetite, burping and in some cases, diarrhoea. However it is important to note, that these side effects are usually transient, and subside after the first few weeks. With medical guidance, these side effects can be mitigated to a large extent.

As far as safety is concerned, there is a rare association with pancreatic inflammation, thyroid tumours and rare case reports of eye complications. Proper guidance and monitoring are key to safe and effective use.

**When one stops**

If you lost a lot of weight through diet and exercise, and then stopped both, what would happen? You would potentially regain the weight. The same principle applies to GLPI therapy. As with any intervention, stopping the drugs may cause a regaining of weight to some extent. This serves to illustrate the fact that obesity is a chronic, relapsing condition, requiring long-term treatment.

It is important to reiterate that GLPI therapy is not a replacement to lifestyle changes or a shortcut for weight loss. It is only an add-on to lifestyle modifications, including diet and exercise.

Another factor to remember while on GLPI therapy is that it is important to include strength training/muscle strengthening, and sufficient protein in the diet, so as to reduce muscle loss. A study found that the use of semaglutide, when combined with sufficient protein intake and resistance training, resulted in fat mass loss of 18%, and although lean body mass initially dropped, it was subsequently maintained and stabilised.

India is facing a growing epidemic of obesity and metabolic disease, including in the young population.

This looming crisis demands immediate attention and action. GLPI drugs are one form of treatment and while exciting, there is an urgent necessity to tackle the problem on other fronts. We need to change food policies to reduce consumption of processed food and reduce fat content in marketed food products. Similarly, urban and town planning must be rejigged to encourage physical activity.

Obesity now is considered a chronic metabolic disease. While clinicians today have an effective tool, with GLPI therapy enriching the landscape of options, the real question that remains is, will this translate into meaningful change in public health? Only time and our actions now, will tell.

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### The "Democratization" of Weight Loss

The most immediate impact of the patent expiry is the drastic reduction in cost.

**Price Drop:** Costs have plummeted from ₹11,000-₹18,000 per month to approximately ₹5,000.

**Increased Access:** With over 50 Indian companies launching generic versions, the drug is moving from elite urban clinics to middle-class households, potentially reaching millions who were previously priced out.

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## Addressing the "Thin-Fat" Phenotype

India faces a unique challenge known as the "**Thin-Fat**" Phenotype.

**The Concept:** Many Indians may appear "thin" or have a normal BMI but possess high levels of visceral (internal) fat and high insulin resistance.

**The Benefit:** GLP-1 receptor agonists like Semaglutide are particularly effective for this profile because they don't just reduce weight; they improve **metabolic health** by targeting insulin resistance and reducing fatty liver.

## How Semaglutide Works

Semaglutide mimics a natural hormone called **Glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1)**. It targets the body through three primary pathways:

**Brain:** It acts on the hypothalamus to suppress appetite and increase feelings of fullness (satiety).

**Stomach:** It slows down "gastric emptying," meaning food stays in your stomach longer, making you feel full for extended periods.

**Pancreas:** It stimulates insulin secretion (in a glucose-dependent manner), which helps manage blood sugar levels.

## Clinical Context: Bridging the Gap

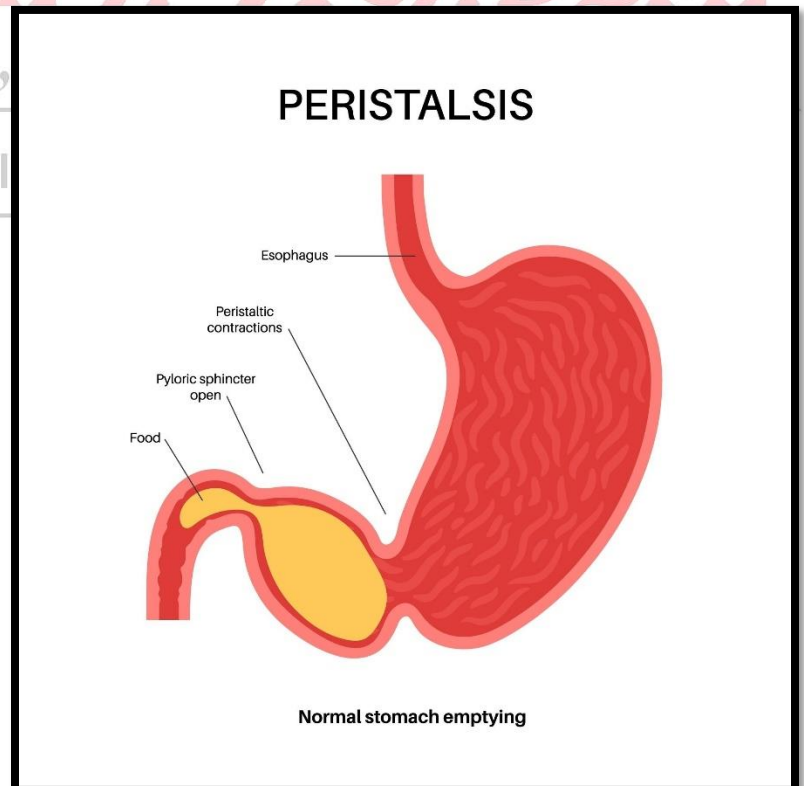
For many years, there was a massive gap in treatment options for obesity:

**Level 1:** Lifestyle modifications (Diet/Exercise) — often insufficient for morbid obesity.

**Level 2: The New Gap (Semaglutide)** — A potent pharmacological intervention that can result in **10–15% body weight loss**.

**Level 3:** Bariatric Surgery — Effective but invasive and expensive.

Generic Semaglutide provides a non-invasive "bridge" for patients who are not seeing results from exercise alone but are not candidates for (or are afraid of) surgery.



# Daily News Analysis

## The Critical Caveats

While the drug is a breakthrough, medical experts emphasize several "fine print" items:

**Not a "Quick Fix":** It is a **disease-modifying agent** for chronic conditions, not a cosmetic shortcut for losing a few kilograms before a wedding.

**Muscle Loss Risk:** Rapid weight loss can lead to muscle wasting. Patients must prioritize **high protein intake** and **resistance training** to ensure the weight lost is fat, not lean muscle.

**The "Rebound" Effect:** Obesity is a chronic relapsing condition. If the drug is stopped without permanent lifestyle changes, weight regain is highly likely.

**Medical Supervision:** Side effects like nausea, burping, and rare risks (pancreatitis) necessitate that these drugs be taken only under a doctor's prescription.

## Summary: A Tool, Not a Cure

The availability of affordable Semaglutide in India is a massive win for public health, but it is not a silver bullet.

Pros of Generic Semaglutide	Challenges for India
60-70% reduction in monthly cost	High risk of "off-label" or unmonitored cosmetic use
Improved cardiovascular & liver health	Need for long-term adherence to avoid weight regain
Accessible alternative to bariatric surgery	Risk of muscle loss without proper protein/exercise

As India's urban landscape becomes more sedentary, the focus must remain on a multimodal approach: using these new, affordable drugs to support—not replace—better food policies and active lifestyles.

**UPSC Prelims Exam Practice Question**

**Ques:** Which of the following best describes the term “Thin-Fat Phenotype” often seen in India?

- (a) Individuals with high BMI and low visceral fat
- (b) Individuals with normal BMI but high visceral fat and insulin resistance
- (c) Individuals with low BMI and low metabolic risk
- (d) Individuals with obesity due to genetic disorders only

**Ans:** b)

**UPSC Mains Exam Practice Question**

**Ques:** Discuss the mechanism of action of GLP-1 receptor agonists and evaluate their role in managing obesity and Type 2 Diabetes in India. **150 Words)**



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**Page 07 : GS III : Environment & Disaster Management / Prelims Exam**

This report from **Dasra** highlights a critical shift in the public health narrative: climate change is no longer just an environmental issue; it is a **"health-risk multiplier"** that is fundamentally altering the epidemiological profile of India.

**Climate change reshaping disease patterns, straining health systems: report**

**Geetha Srimathi**  
 CHENNAI

Climate change is emerging as a major public health threat in India, reshaping disease patterns, straining healthcare systems, and placing nearly 40% of districts at high risk from extreme weather events, according to a new report.

The report, *Under the Weather: India's Climate-Health Intersections and Pathways to Resilience*, by Dasra, a philanthropy fund organisation, highlights how rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, floods, and cyclones are no longer isolated events but part of a continuous cycle of disruption affecting health, livelihoods, and access to care across the country.

**Changing disease landscape**  
 Extreme weather events in India are increasing in frequency and intensity, bringing both immediate and long-term risks, the report notes. Floods trigger outbreaks of water-borne diseases such as cholera and hepatitis, while heatwaves lead to dehydration, heatstroke, and increased cardiovascular stress. The report says climate change is altering how diseases spread. Warmer temperatures and shifting

rainfall patterns are expanding the range of vector-borne diseases such as dengue and malaria into new regions. Areas that were previously unaffected, including Shimla, parts of Jammu & Kashmir, and the Himalayan foothills, are now reporting cases. The report also identifies Pune as a major dengue hotspot, with cases expected to rise further.

Non-communicable diseases are also linked to climate stress. Heat exposure has been associated with higher cardiovascular mortality, while worsening air pollution contributes to respiratory illnesses and chronic conditions. Climate change, the report says, is acting as a "health-risk multiplier", increasing both disease burden and pressure on healthcare systems.

**Unequal burden**  
 The impact is not evenly distributed. Vulnerable communities — including rural populations, informal workers, women, and children — face the greatest risks. These groups are often the least equipped to cope with climate shocks, deepening existing inequalities. Extreme heat, for instance, reduces labour productivity and increases health risks for outdoor



**Big impact:** Vulnerable communities — including rural populations, informal workers, women, and children — face the biggest impact of climate change. K.V.S. GRI

workers. The report notes that India lost an estimated 160 billion labour hours due to heat exposure in 2021. Women and children face heightened risks from climate-related health impacts. The report notes that exposure to extreme heat is linked to a 16% increase in the odds of preterm birth

during heatwaves, with risks rising further for every 1 degree Celsius increase in temperature. Air pollution, particularly fine particulate matter (PM2.5), has been associated with hypertensive disorders in pregnancy, including pre-eclampsia, as well as increased gestational blood pressure. As

infants and young children have limited ability to regulate body temperature, it makes them more prone to heat stress, dehydration, and respiratory illnesses.

Exposure to air pollution is also linked to low birth weight, asthma, and reduced lung function, the report says.

Climate disasters also disrupt access to healthcare. Floods and cyclones can damage hospitals, cut off roads, and interrupt the supply of medicines and vaccines. In remote areas, even a small disruption can leave communities without access to basic services.

Beyond direct health impacts, climate change is also affecting livelihoods and economic stability. Rising healthcare costs, loss of income, and reduced productivity are creating a cycle of vulnerability, particularly for those already at risk.

**Efforts taken**

Despite these challenges, the report highlights growing efforts to address the climate-health link. Over the past decade, India has begun to move from broad climate policies to more targeted approaches that recognise the connection between climate and health. Initiatives such as the National Action Plan on Climate

Change and Human Health and State-level action plans are helping shape local responses. Heat Action Plans, which include early warnings and preparedness measures, are now being implemented in several cities and districts.

These efforts are helping communities adapt to both immediate shocks and long-term climate risks.

**Challenges ahead**

However, the report identifies several challenges, including a lack of local, disaggregated data linking climate events to health outcomes, limiting targeted interventions. Funding for adaptation remains constrained and skewed towards mitigation, while weak public awareness and fragmented data systems further hinder effective response.

The report calls for stronger collaboration between government, civil society, and the private sector, along with greater investment in local data systems and climate-resilient healthcare infrastructure. It also calls for placing health at the centre of climate policy, rather than treating it as a secondary concern. (geetha.srimathi@thehindu.co.in)

**The Changing Disease Landscape**

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The report identifies a geographical and systemic shift in how diseases manifest in India:

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**Vector Expansion:** Warmer temperatures are pushing diseases like **Dengue and Malaria** into high-altitude "refugia" such as **Shimla and Jammu & Kashmir**, which were historically too cold for mosquito breeding.

**Water-Borne Cycles:** Intensified flooding leads to immediate spikes in **Cholera and Hepatitis**, particularly in urban slums with poor drainage.

**Heat & NCDs:** Extreme heat is now directly linked to higher **cardiovascular mortality** and chronic kidney stress, complicating the management of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

**The Vulnerability Gap: Socio-Economic Dimensions**

Climate change acts as a regressive "tax" on the most vulnerable, deepening existing inequalities:

Vulnerable Group	Specific Health/Economic Impact
Outdoor Workers	Lost <b>160 billion labor hours</b> (2021); high risk of heatstroke and dehydration.

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# Daily News Analysis

Vulnerable Group	Specific Health/Economic Impact
<b>Pregnant Women</b>	16% increase in <b>preterm births</b> during heatwaves; air pollution linked to pre-eclampsia.
<b>Children/Infants</b>	Limited thermoregulation leads to rapid dehydration; PM2.5 linked to stunted lung function.
<b>Rural Populations</b>	"Disaster-induced isolation" where floods cut off access to primary healthcare and life-saving vaccines.

## Structural Challenges to Resilience

While India has established the **National Action Plan on Climate Change and Human Health (NAPCCHH)**, several "bottlenecks" remain:

**Data Fragmentation:** There is a lack of **disaggregated, local data** that correlates a specific weather event (like a localized heatwave) with hospital admission rates.

**Funding Skew:** Most climate funding is directed toward **mitigation** (renewables/EVs) rather than **adaptation** (building climate-resilient hospitals).

**Infrastructure Fragility:** Healthcare centers in the 40% "high-risk" districts are often not built to withstand the cyclones or floods they are now frequently encountering.

## Way Forward: Building a Climate-Resilient Health System

To mitigate these risks, the report and policy experts suggest a "Health-in-All-Policies" approach:

**Decentralized Heat Action Plans (HAPs):** Moving beyond city-level plans to district-specific protocols that protect informal workers.

**Climate-Smart Infrastructure:** Retrofitting PHCs (Primary Health Centers) with solar power and flood-resistant storage for temperature-sensitive medicines.

**Integrated Surveillance:** Linking the **Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP)** with **IMD weather alerts** to predict outbreaks before they occur.

**Nature-Based Solutions:** Increasing urban green cover to reduce the "Urban Heat Island" effect, which exacerbates respiratory and heat-related illnesses.

## Conclusion

India stands at a crossroads where its healthcare success is tied to its climate resilience. As 40% of its districts face extreme weather threats, the healthcare system must evolve from a "reactive" model to a "proactive," climate-aware framework. Placing

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health at the heart of climate policy is no longer an option but a necessity for ensuring the socio-economic stability of the nation.

**UPSC Prelims Exam Practice Question**

**Ques :** With reference to the National Action Plan on Climate Change and Human Health (NAPCCHH), consider the following statements:

1. It aims to integrate climate change concerns into health policy.
2. It focuses only on mitigation strategies like renewable energy.
3. It includes capacity building for climate-resilient healthcare systems.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: b)**

**UPSC Mains Exam Practice Question**

**Ques:** Climate change is a health-risk multiplier. Discuss this statement with suitable examples from India's changing disease profile. **(150 Words)**

**Page 10 : GS II : Governance / Prelims Exam**

The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2025-26 represents a strategic pivot in India's legislative philosophy, moving from a "command and control" punitive model toward "trust-based governance." Building on the foundation of the 2023 Act, this new Bill is a massive undertaking to clean up the statute books, affecting 79 Central Acts and over 780 provisions.

# What does the Jan Vishwas Bill do?

What does the Jan Vishwas Bill propose? Which offences are being decriminalised? Why remove jail terms for minor lapses? How does the Bill ensure proportionality? How will penalties be structured?

**EXPLAINER**

G.S. Bajpai

**The story so far:**

**U**nnecessary criminalisation is an anathema to business regulations. India's regulatory framework has significant punitive aspects. Under dozens of Central Acts, minor procedural lapses, missed filings, or technical defaults could land a citizen or a small business owner in jail. The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2025-26, seeks to shift India's regulatory approach from a punitive model to "trust-based governance." It builds on the earlier Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2023, which decriminalised 183 provisions across 42 Central laws.

**Why is the Bill being introduced?**

The 2026 Bill proposes amendments to 784 provisions across 79 Central Acts administered by 23 ministries. Of these, 717 provisions are earmarked for decriminalisation, while the rest address ease of living more broadly. Its governing principle is proportionality – the severity of the State's response must bear a rational relationship to the gravity of the conduct it targets.

The Bill pursues three related goals, all rooted in ensuring proportionality in regulation.

First, it seeks a principled separation between conduct that warrants criminal sanction, such as fraud, wilful evasion, and threats to public safety, and procedural non-compliance that carries no comparable moral charge. Conflating the two does a disservice to the seriousness of the former and an injustice to those caught by the latter.

The second objective is equity. Smaller enterprises and MSMEs are disproportionately exposed to compliance risks, not because they violate laws more often, but because they lack the capacity to absorb the consequences when accused of doing so. The idea is to make compliance simpler.



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Third, it seeks to provide institutional relief. India's district and subordinate courts carry over 4.8 crore pending cases (NJDG, December 2025), a significant share of which consists of minor regulatory matters. Decriminalising such cases is not leniency but a rational reallocation of judicial resources.

**What are the key features?**

The Bill focuses on removing the criminal liability clause for minor procedural lapses and improving the ease of doing business and living.

Its central mechanism is the replacement of criminal penalties with civil and administrative alternatives. The measures on imprisonment provisions are intended to be replaced by monetary penalties calibrated to the gravity of the violation.

For minor or first-time defaults, graded responses such as warnings and advisory notices replace prosecution. Compounding provisions are expanded to provide faster resolution without full adjudication.

Adjudicating officers are empowered to decide cases within defined timelines, with appellate mechanisms to ensure fairness. Penalties are to be periodically revised to retain their deterrent value, and the Bill emphasises digitisation and procedural simplification to reduce inconsistencies in enforcement.

**How does it impact institutions?**

For the judiciary, the most immediate consequence is meaningful relief. Diverting routine regulatory cases from criminal dockets should free courts to concentrate on matters of genuine public significance.

For regulatory agencies, the Bill increases responsibility. Administrative adjudication is faster and less resource-intensive than criminal prosecution, but it requires institutional capacity, clear guidelines, and oversight mechanisms to avoid arbitrariness. The appellate structures built into the Bill acknowledge this risk, and hence, their effectiveness will depend entirely on how seriously they are operationalised.

For businesses, particularly MSMEs, reduced criminal exposure could meaningfully shift the calculus around formalisation. The fear of prosecution, even where the underlying conduct is technical rather than intentional, has long acted as a disincentive to transparency and engagement with the formal economy.

**How does the Bill promote efficient justice?**

The indiscriminate use of criminal sanctions – treating a tax fraudster and a businessperson who faltered on a procedural formality – undermines the law's pragmatism. By reserving criminal liability for conduct involving genuine intent or harm, and channelling procedural defaults through civil mechanisms, the Bill narrows the scope for over-criminalisation in a structured way.

A more predictable regulatory environment encourages voluntary compliance. When the consequence of a minor lapse is a proportionate penalty rather than the spectre of prosecution, the incentive structure shifts towards transparency. The durability of these gains will depend on implementation. Enhanced administrative discretion must be matched with clear guidelines, meaningful oversight, and appellate mechanisms that function as genuine checks.

The Jan Vishwas Bill is a serious and overdue reform. Its success will depend less on what it says than on whether the institutions tasked with carrying it forward are genuinely equipped, and held accountable, to do so.

There is a risk of excessive discretion in administrative authorities, weak appellate safeguards in some sectors, the possibility that monetary penalties may replace criminalisation without reducing the burden, and limited clarity on uniform standards across different laws. (The author is the Vice Chancellor of the National Law University, Delhi. Contributions of Vibhuti Sharma, Academic Fellow, NLU Delhi, are acknowledged)

**THE GIST**

▼ The Bill seeks to shift India's regulatory framework from a punitive model to 'trust-based governance' by decriminalising minor procedural lapses and ensuring proportionality between the gravity of conduct and the State's response.

▼ It also aims to promote ease of doing business and living, reduce burden on courts through civil and administrative alternatives, while raising concerns about administrative discretion, appellate safeguards, and implementation gaps.

**Core Objectives: Why Now?**

The Bill is driven by three pillars of "Regulatory Rationalization":

**Proportionality:** Ensuring the punishment fits the "moral charge" of the crime. It separates **wilful fraud** (criminal) from **procedural lapses** (civil).

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**Economic Equity:** MSMEs often operate without large legal teams. Decriminalizing minor slips prevents these small players from being crushed by the weight of criminal litigation for technicalities.

**Judicial De-clogging:** With over **4.8 crore cases pending** (as of Dec 2025), removing minor regulatory defaults from criminal courts preserves judicial bandwidth for heinous crimes and complex litigations.

### What is Being Proposed?

The Bill targets **717 provisions** for decriminalization. The primary shift is the **replacement of jail terms with monetary penalties**.

### Key Features of the Proposal:

**Graded Response:** Instead of immediate prosecution, the law introduces "Warnings" and "Advisory Notices" for first-time or minor defaults.

**Administrative Adjudication:** Moving cases from Magistrate Courts to **Adjudicating Officers** within ministries. This allows for faster, timeline-based resolutions.

**Compounding of Offences:** Expanding the scope for "settling" matters out of court by paying a specified sum, thereby avoiding a criminal record.

### The Structure of Penalties

Under the new framework, penalties are not static; they are designed to be "living" regulations:

**Calibration:** Fines are scaled based on the gravity and frequency of the default.

**Periodic Revision:** To ensure the fines remain a deterrent against inflation and economic growth, the Bill mandates periodic updates to the penalty amounts.

**Appellate Safeguards:** To prevent "Bureaucratic Overreach," the Bill establishes appellate mechanisms where a business can challenge the Adjudicating Officer's decision.

### Impact on the Business Ecosystem

For an educator and mentor, the "Ease of Doing Business" (EoDB) aspect is a vital link to the **Indian Economy** syllabus:

**Formalization:** Reduced fear of "Inspector Raj" and jail time encourages informal businesses to register and join the formal economy.

**Investment Climate:** A predictable, civil-penalty-based regime attracts foreign direct investment (FDI) by lowering the "compliance risk" of operating in India.

### Potential Challenges (The "Flip Side")

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While the Bill is a reformist milestone, the report highlights critical risks that could appear in a **Mains-style critical analysis**:

**Administrative Discretion:** Giving bureaucrats the power to fine businesses could lead to corruption or "excessive discretion" if not monitored.

**Institutional Capacity:** Many ministries may lack the trained "Adjudicating Officers" needed to handle thousands of technical cases fairly.

**Monetary Burden:** If the new fines are set too high, they might be just as crippling for a small business as a suspended jail sentence.

### Conclusion

The Jan Vishwas Bill, 2025-26, is an attempt to "decriminalize the spirit" of Indian entrepreneurship. By treating a businessperson who misses a filing deadline differently than a tax fraudster, the State is acknowledging that technical defaults are not moral failings. However, its ultimate success rests on the transparency of the appellate process and the digitisation of enforcement to prevent human bias.

### UPSC Prelims Exam Practice Question

**Ques:** Which of the following best describes the concept of "compounding of offences"?

- (a) Mandatory imprisonment for repeated offences
- (b) Transfer of cases from civil courts to criminal courts
- (c) Conversion of civil offences into criminal offences
- (d) Settlement of an offence by paying a prescribed penalty without court trial

**Ans: d)**

### UPSC Mains Exam Practice Question

**Ques:** Discuss how decriminalization of minor business offences can contribute to improving the Ease of Doing Business in India. (150 Words)

As India moves closer to its maiden human spaceflight mission, Gaganyaan, the focus has shifted from the power of the launch to the precision of the return. For any crewed mission, the "return leg" is the most perilous phase. As of April 2026, ISRO has successfully completed the second Integrated Air Drop Test (IADT-02), further validating the sophisticated deceleration systems required to bring our "Gaganyatris" home. Ensuring a safe return involves a complex interplay of physics, material science, and naval coordination.

## How will Gaganyaan astronauts return safely to earth?

Why can't parachutes alone ensure a safe landing? How does Gaganyaan module lose its enormous speed?

Unnikrishnan Nair S.

The story so far:

The Gaganyaan crew module, which will host the Indian astronauts on their human spaceflight mission, will orbit the earth at about 7,800 m/s. When it re-enters the atmosphere, it will have to shed its kinetic energy. The atmospheric drag itself will be the primary brake, taking away most of its energy in a process called aerobraking. To further reduce the module's velocity for a soft landing, a multi-stage parachute system will be deployed once the module comes within 12 km of the ground. A typical recovery system includes all the items required to soft-land the module in sea or on land after aerobraking. This includes parachutes, locating devices to find out where the module has splashed down, and a system to ensure the module is pointing in a favourable direction in case it drops in the sea. For touchdown on

land, apart from parachutes, the recovery system will fire braking motors to reduce the impact velocity before touchdown. The Russian Soyuz and Chinese Shenzhou modules are designed for terrestrial landing and use retro-rockets for braking.

**Why do parachutes alone not suffice?**

As the land is hard, touching down on land needs to be around 1-2 m/s. The module can, however, tolerate landing at around 7-9 m/s in the sea, as water is a natural energy absorber.

Land touchdowns also require vast, empty territories free of people or buildings, while offering easier crew recovery and quicker refurbishing of the module.

Sea landings are preferred by countries that lack large deserts or plains. However, it requires recovery ships, flotation bags, and specialised gear to keep the crew safe in rough waters.

Reducing a module's velocity to less than 2 m/s using parachutes alone is

impractical due to the inverse-square relationship between speed and drag area. To slow a module from 7 m/s to 1 m/s, the parachute will have to be roughly 49x larger, incurring a large weight and volume penalty.

A parachute that large would also be difficult to deploy without tangling.

**Why is the landing zone elliptical?**

When a module returns to the earth, it doesn't aim for a bull's-eye but rather a large ellipse. This is because the module's kinetic energy is concentrated almost entirely along its flight track. At hypersonic speeds, minor fluctuations in atmospheric density or re-entry conditions like velocity can cause the module to over- or undershoot its target by hundreds of kilometres.

In contrast, energy available to make any significant path changes in a direction sideways to its track is very low and hence lateral deviations are minimal. The result is a landing footprint significantly

elongated along the path of travel.

Once a module is in the water, recovery teams use predictive tracking, electronic signalling, and visual aids to find it. The module transmits its GPS coordinates and homing signals to satellites and aircraft and also releases a bright green fluorescent dye.

If the splashdown is at night or in low visibility, flashing from high-intensity strobe lights from the module will be used to locate it. To ensure it stands out against the deep indigo colour of the water, the module and its flotation bags are painted international orange.

**How will the Gaganyaan crew module be recovered?**

The Gaganyaan recovery operation will be led by the Indian Navy, plus other stakeholders. After the module is slowed by parachutes, it will splash down in the Bay of Bengal. Immediately after, the parachutes will be released to avoid any entanglement and the flotation bags will automatically inflate.

Once naval divers find and secure the module with a flotation collar and towing gear, it will be winched onto a ship's deck to safely extract the crew.

(Unnikrishnan Nair S. is former director, VSSC and IIST; founding director, HSFC; and an expert in launch vehicle systems, orbital re-entry and human spaceflight technologies: Currently Dr Sarabhai Professor at VSSC)

**THE GIST**

The crew module sheds most of its kinetic energy through aerobraking, with atmospheric drag acting as the primary brake, followed by a multi-stage parachute system and, for land touchdowns, braking motors to ensure a soft landing.

Due to high re-entry speeds and limited lateral control, the landing zone is an elongated ellipse, and recovery involves locating devices, GPS signals, and Indian Navy-led operations after splashdown in the Bay of Bengal.

### How Gaganyaan Astronauts Return Safely

The return journey is a three-stage process designed to transition the Crew Module (CM) from orbital speeds to a gentle splashdown.

#### Aerobraking (The Primary Brake):

The module enters the Earth's atmosphere at a staggering velocity of approximately **7,800 m/s**. By tilting the module to utilize atmospheric drag, the craft converts its massive kinetic energy into heat. This "aerobraking" sheds over 95% of the velocity before mechanical systems even engage.

#### Parachute Deployment:

Once the module reaches the thicker lower atmosphere (around **12 km** altitude) and slows to subsonic speeds, a multi-stage parachute system—developed by **DRDO's ADRDE**—is deployed. This includes drogue parachutes for stabilization followed by the main parachutes.

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### Splashdown and Recovery:

The module is designed to land in the **Bay of Bengal** (or the Arabian Sea as an alternative). The **Indian Navy**, leading the recovery, uses "International Orange" flotation bags and strobe lights to locate the capsule, winching it onto a ship for crew extraction.

### The Limitations of Parachutes: Why They Aren't Enough

While parachutes are iconic symbols of re-entry, they cannot handle the task alone for several technical reasons:

**The Weight Penalty:** To slow a heavy module from 7 m/s to a "land-safe" 1 m/s, the parachute would need to be nearly **49 times larger** due to the inverse-square law governing drag. Such a parachute would be too heavy and bulky to fit in the spacecraft.

**Deployment Complexity:** Massive parachutes are prone to tangling and "squidding" (not fully inflating), which increases the risk of mission failure.

**Energy Absorption:** Land is unforgiving. Unlike water, which acts as a natural shock absorber allowing a touchdown at **7–9 m/s**, landing on solid ground requires a speed of **1–2 m/s**. Without retro-rockets (like those used in the Russian Soyuz), a parachute-only land landing would be fatal for the crew.

### Understanding the Landing "Footprint"

The landing zone is an **ellipse** rather than a circle due to the physics of re-entry:

**Downrange Variation:** At hypersonic speeds, even tiny changes in atmospheric density or entry angle cause the module to travel much further or shorter along its path (the "long" axis).

**Crossrange Stability:** Because the module has very little lateral (sideways) energy, it rarely drifts far to the left or right, keeping the "width" of the landing zone narrow.

### Conclusion

The Gaganyaan recovery protocol is a testament to India's "Safety First" approach. By choosing a sea landing, ISRO leverages the Indian Navy's vast maritime expertise and the natural cushioning of the ocean, circumventing the need for heavy retro-rockets. As India prepares for the **G1 uncrewed mission in 2026**, the successful trials at **INS Garuda** and the IADT tests signify that the nation has mastered the delicate art of "shedding speed" to bring its heroes home safely.

**UPSC Prelims Exam Practice Question**

**Ques:** Consider the following statements regarding spacecraft re-entry:

1. A significant portion of kinetic energy is dissipated as heat due to atmospheric friction.
2. Parachutes alone are sufficient to safely land heavy crew modules on land.
3. Water landings allow higher impact velocity compared to land landings.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 2 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: a)**

**UPSC Mains Exam Practice Question**

**Ques:** Discuss the scientific principles behind aerobraking and its significance in human spaceflight missions. **(250 Words)**

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## *Nari Shakti, India's defining reform for the next decade*

Over the past decade, India has done something few nations have achieved at scale: it has moved women's empowerment from intent to infrastructure. This shift did not happen organically; it was designed. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, policy has placed women at the centre of development recognising that when women move forward, entire economies accelerate.

The results are visible and measurable. More than 57 crore bank accounts have been opened under the PM Jan Dhan Yojana, with over 55% held by women, giving millions their first foothold in the formal financial system. Nearly 10 crore women, organised into over 90 lakh self-help groups, are now driving grassroots entrepreneurship and local economic resilience. The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana has reached over 10.5 crore households, reducing health risks and freeing women from time-intensive labour. Moreover, access to credit has expanded, with close to 70% of MUDRA loans going to women entrepreneurs. Female labour force participation has also risen to nearly 37%, reversing a long-standing decline.

In healthcare, programmes such as the Ayushman Bharat and the Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan have expanded access and reduced vulnerability at critical life stages. Initiatives like the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme have begun to shift deeply embedded social attitudes.

Individually, these are strong programmes. Taken together, they represent a structural shift in how India views women not as recipients of support, but as drivers of growth. For policymakers and administrators, this offers a clear lesson: scale works when design, delivery, and accountability are aligned.

In healthcare, where the author's expertise lies, outcomes improve when systems are built



**Sangita Reddy**

Joint Managing Director, Apollo Hospitals

Over the next five years, India must invest in preparing women to lead not just electorally, but institutionally

around real needs, and not theoretical models. Where access is simplified; delivery is consistent; and outcomes are tracked, impact follows. And yet, the next phase will demand even greater focus, as the challenge before us is no longer policy creation, it is policy penetration.

### **The last mile**

Despite the scale of programmes, awareness gaps remain. Enrolment is uneven, and last-mile delivery continues to depend on local capacity. For every woman who has accessed opportunity, there are many more who remain on the margins due to lack of access. This is where administrative leadership becomes decisive.

India must move from announcing schemes to ensuring saturation; from measuring outputs to tracking outcomes; and from eligibility on paper to access in practice. District-level ownership, data-driven monitoring, and convergence across departments will be critical. And while technology can accelerate this, it cannot replace on-ground accountability. Therefore, the question for every policymaker is simple: how do we ensure that no eligible woman is left out?

This is where the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam can become one of the most consequential reforms of our time. By expanding women's representation in legislative bodies, it creates the possibility of aligning policy design with lived experience. Women leaders can bring their insights shaped by community realities which can strengthen programmes, and their delivery, targeting, and adoption.

Additionally, the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam when implemented with intent, can trigger a multiplier effect with more women in leadership, more responsive policy, higher participation, and stronger leadership pipelines, making reform self-reinforcing.

Globally, we are entering a decade defined by

knowledge, innovation, and technology. India already has a strong base, with one of the highest proportions of women in STEM education globally. This is an opportune moment to translate this gain into leadership across sectors such as healthcare, science, enterprise, and governance without losing time.

The past decade has shown what is possible when political will aligns with policy design. With today's strong foundation, the implementation of Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam can move empowerment beyond access, to authority.

### **The way forward**

However, representation must translate into capability, and capability must be built through institutional support to ensure that implementation delivers results. Over the next five years, India must invest in preparing women to lead not just electorally, but institutionally. This means structured mentorship, policy exposure, and administrative support systems that enable effective governance.

It also means rethinking how the country designs policy itself. Programmes must be simpler to access and faster to deliver. Feedback loops must be strengthened so that policy evolves with need. And success must be measured not just by coverage, but by change in outcomes across sectors. As India moves towards its vision of becoming a developed nation by 2047, this is not a peripheral agenda – it is central to its success. Women's participation is directly linked to economic growth, social stability, and institutional effectiveness.

If India can achieve saturation in access, strengthen participation, and enable leadership, it will not just empower its women – it will redefine its growth trajectory. For policymakers and administrators, the mandate is clear: the time to implement is now.

### **GS Paper I: Social Issues**

**UPSC Mains Exam Practice Question:** What is meant by "policy saturation"? Analyze the challenges in achieving last-mile delivery of women-centric schemes in India. **(150 Words)**

**Context :** The concept of **Nari Shakti** (Women Power) has transitioned from a rhetorical goal to a core pillar of India's developmental strategy. In this analysis, based on insights from Sangita Reddy, we explore how the past decade has built a robust infrastructure for women's empowerment and why the next decade will focus on shifting

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# Daily News Analysis

women from being "beneficiaries" to "decision-makers." As of **2026**, this trajectory is seen as the primary engine for India's goal of becoming a **Viksit Bharat** (Developed India) by 2047.

## Key Pillars of the "Empowerment Infrastructure"

The shift from intent to infrastructure is evidenced by measurable outcomes across four critical sectors:

Sector	Key Initiatives & Impact
Financial Inclusion	<b>PM Jan Dhan Yojana:</b> 55% of 57 crore accounts held by women; <b>MUDRA Loans:</b> 70% of credit directed to women entrepreneurs.
Social Welfare	<b>Ujjwala Yojana:</b> 10.5 crore households provided clean cooking gas, reducing "time poverty" and respiratory health risks.
Health & Education	<b>Ayushman Bharat &amp; Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan:</b> Reducing maternal vulnerability. <b>Beti Bachao Beti Padhao:</b> Improving child sex ratios and school enrollment.
Economic Agency	<b>Self-Help Groups (SHGs):</b> 90 lakh groups involving nearly 10 crore women driving grassroots entrepreneurship.

## The Paradigm Shift: Policy Penetration and "Saturation"

While the "design" of these schemes is complete, the current administrative challenge is **policy penetration**.

**From Outputs to Outcomes:** Moving beyond "number of accounts opened" to "active financial participation."

**The "Last Mile" Challenge:** Bridging awareness gaps and ensuring that bureaucratic hurdles do not prevent eligible women from accessing benefits.

**Institutional Ownership:** District-level leadership must take ownership of "saturation"—ensuring 100% coverage of eligible beneficiaries through data-driven monitoring.

## Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam: The Game Changer

The **Women's Reservation Act (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam)** is identified as the most consequential reform for the coming decade.

**Lived Experience in Governance:** Increasing women's representation in legislatures ensures that policy design is informed by community realities.

**The Multiplier Effect:** More women in leadership creates a pipeline for future leaders, making the reform self-reinforcing and more responsive to ground-level needs.

**STEM Advantage:** India has one of the world's highest proportions of women in **STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). The next step is translating this educational success into leadership roles in healthcare, tech, and enterprise.

## The Way Forward: Implementation Priorities

To ensure this transition is successful, the analysis highlights three strategic imperatives:

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**Capacity Building:** Investing in mentorship and administrative support to ensure women leaders can govern effectively.

**Simplified Access:** Reducing the complexity of government schemes to ensure faster delivery.

**Feedback Loops:** Creating systems where policy evolves based on the real-time needs of women across different socio-economic strata.

### Conclusion

Nari Shakti is no longer a peripheral social agenda; it is a central economic necessity. The past decade provided the **access** (financial, digital, and social); the next decade must provide the **authority**. By integrating women into the highest levels of legislative and institutional decision-making, India is not just empowering a gender—it is redefining its entire growth trajectory toward 2047. The mandate for administrators is clear: move beyond eligibility on paper to actual power in practice.

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