



VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

29th September 2026



Reimagining Indian Agriculture



CONTEXT: The future of Indian agriculture lies in earning more, wasting less, using water wisely, adding value and managing risk.

The Central Paradox: Agriculture's Economic Share vs Employment Share

- 46.1% of India's Workforce
- ~ 1/5th of National Income
- Avg. Growth ~ 4.4%; Livestock and Fisheries

TWO ASPECTS -

Why Agriculture Remains a Livelihood Challenge?/ Structural Challenges

- **Small and Fragmented Holdings**
 - Small landholding → low bargaining power → limited investment capacity → higher vulnerability → low and unstable farm income.
- **Water: The Double Problem**
 - A. Too little / uncertain water - *Economic Survey 2024-25*
 - B. Too much extraction - *Green Revolution Belt; Cauvery dispute*
- **Climate Change is Multiplying Existing Agricultural Risks**
 - Major climate-related risks -
 - *Economic Survey 2024-25* -
 - Shift Needed: **From YIELD to Resilience**
- **Rising Input Costs Squeeze Farm Incomes**
 - Inputs -
 - Higher agricultural output ≠ higher farmer income.
- **The Value-Chain Problem: Farmers Often Capture a Small Share**
 - Farmer → Aggregator → Local trader → Wholesale market → Processor → Distributor → Retailer → Consumer
 - Bargaining Power?
 - **CAUSES** - Fragmented Production, Weak Logistics, Inadequate Processing Infra, etc.

What Was the National Commission on Farmers?

Farmer Distress & Agricultural Policy

farmer livelihood security + income + sustainability + market access + risk management

PRODUCTION CENTRIC → FARMER CENTRIC

Major Recommendations

- **Equitable Access to Productive Resources**
 - Land, Water, Credit, Tech., Livestock, Research, Market Info
- **Ecological Sustainability: Productivity Cannot Come at Any Cost**
 - Excessive use of natural resources - Undermine agriculture
 - Emphasis - Efficient Water Use, Soil Health, CRA, etc.
- **Agricultural Marketing**
 - Better Infra. -
 - Better Market Access -
 - Better Bargaining Power -
- **NCF's Broader Livelihood Vision**
 - NO Complete Dependence On Cultivation
 - Rural Enterprises -
 - Non-farm employment -

Farm → Farm + Allied Activities → Rural Enterprise → Non-farm Employment

What Has Been Implemented Since the NCF?

Agriculture and Globalisation: The New NCF Challenge

- **Global integration can provide** - Markets, FOREX, HV Products, Tech., Investment, Share in GVCs
- **Challenges** - Volatile Prices, Barriers, SPS/TBT Stds., Geopolitical Disruptions



Reimagining Indian Agriculture



CONTEXT: The future of Indian agriculture lies in earning more, wasting less, using water wisely, adding value and managing risk.

Farmer/FPO → grading → processing → certification → branding → export market

NCF concern	Contemporary policy response
Farmer income support	PM-KISAN
Institutional credit	Kisan Credit Card
Crop risk	PM Fasal Bima Yojana
Farmer aggregation	10,000 FPO scheme
Agricultural infrastructure	Agriculture Infrastructure Fund
Digital markets	e-NAM
Food processing	PM Kisan SAMPADA Yojana
Micro food processing	PMFME
Irrigation efficiency	PMKSY / micro-irrigation
Organic/natural farming	PKVY, National Mission on Natural Farming
Allied activities	Fisheries, livestock and dairy programmes
Soil health	Soil Health Card
Renewable energy for agriculture	PM-KUSUM

- **Reform Agricultural Markets**
 - e-NAM, Grading & Standardisation, etc.
- **Make FTAs Farmer-Friendly**
 - Developing Export competitiveness -
 - Domestic safeguards -

Mains Practise Question

Q. Despite the declining contribution of agriculture to India's GDP, the sector continues to support a disproportionately large share of the workforce. Examine the reasons for this structural imbalance and assess how far the recommendations of National Commission on Farmers remains relevant to Indian agriculture today. (15 Marks, 250 words)

Way Forward: From "More Production" to "More Farmer Income"

- **Shift from production-centric to income-centric policy**
 - STABILITY, PRODUCTIVITY & RESILIENCE
- **Strengthen farmer aggregation**
 - FPOs, Cooperatives, SHGs
- **Build the post-harvest economy**
 - Cold chain, Grading, Processing, etc.
- **Promote value addition**
 - Raw produce → processed product → branded product → premium market
- **Climate-resilient agriculture**
 - drought/heat/flood-resistant varieties, Micro irrigation, Agroforestry, Groundwater Budgeting, etc.
- **Strengthen Agricultural Research and Extension**
 - Advisories, Precision agriculture, Mechanisation, etc.



CONTEXT: Cutting food losses can strengthen food security, conserve resources and advance climate goals.

Food Loss & Waste In India

- Enough Food, But Significant Loss
- **Triple Loss**
 - Food Security Loss
 - Economic Loss
 - Environment Loss

FOOD LOSS ≠ FOOD WASTE -

WHERE DOES FOOD GET LOST?

- **Harvesting**
 - Improper harvesting techniques
- **Storage**
 - Inadequate warehouses
 - Pests
- **Transportation**
 - Poor packaging
 - Lack of processing/recovery facilities
- **Retail & households**
 - Poor inventory management
 - Consumer behaviour

WHY PERISHABLES ARE PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE?

- Highly perishable + temperature sensitive + difficult to store for long periods

CLIMATE DIMENSION

Food = Land + Water + Energy + Fertilisers + Labour + Transport

SDG 12 — Responsible Consumption & Production

WHOLESALE MARKETS — AN OVERLOOKED OPPORTUNITY

- wholesale agricultural markets - underutilised intervention point
- **100 tonnes of organic waste/day.**
- **Shift Required**
 - Waste → Disposal
 - Organic waste → Resource

CASE STUDY - SURAT BIO-CNG MODEL

Wholesale market waste + segregation + private investment + technology → Waste-to-energy / circular economy

FINANCING IS THE MISSING LINK

Capital → Technology adoption remains low

FAO & SIDBI - Identify hotspot → Identify appropriate technology → Provide affordable finance → Measure impact

WHY SMALL FARMERS & MSMEs NEED SPECIAL ATTENTION?

- FPOs, SHGs, Cooperatives

Other Key Challenges

- Data gaps
- Fragmented supply chains
- Consumer behaviour
- Weak waste segregation
- Infrastructure deficit
- Finance
- Regional variation
- Limited redistribution mechanisms



The Food We Lose



CONTEXT: Cutting food losses can strengthen food security, conserve resources and advance climate goals.

WAY FORWARD — 8-POINT AGENDA

- Measure - Close data gaps
- Identify hotspots
- Build infrastructure
- Finance adoption
- Promote digital traceability
- Strengthen redistribution
- Build circular systems
- Integrate policy

Food Loss - Agriculture + Food Processing +
Climate + Urban + Waste + Investment Policy

THE BIG PICTURE — THE "TRIPLE WIN"

- **FOOD SECURITY**
- **ECONOMY**
- **ENVIRONMENT**

Mains Practise Question

Q. Food loss and waste represent not merely a food-security challenge but also a loss of economic value and the resources embedded in food production. In this context, examine the measures needed to reduce food loss and waste across India's agri-food value chain.

(10 Marks, 150 words)



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Newspaper: The Hindu Page Number : 07

Unequal responsibility

The data for the charts were sourced from the National Family Health Survey reports released by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and Sample Registration System statistical reports. With inputs from Gandla Sneha, who is interning with The Hindu's Data Team



CHART 1: India achieved the goal set in the National Population Policy 2000 for its Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of 2.0 in 2021. It fell to 1.9 in 2025, below replacement level

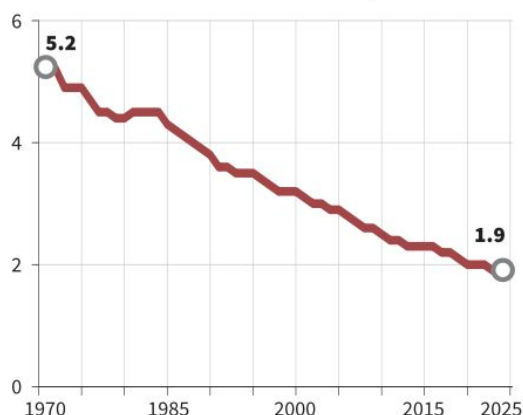
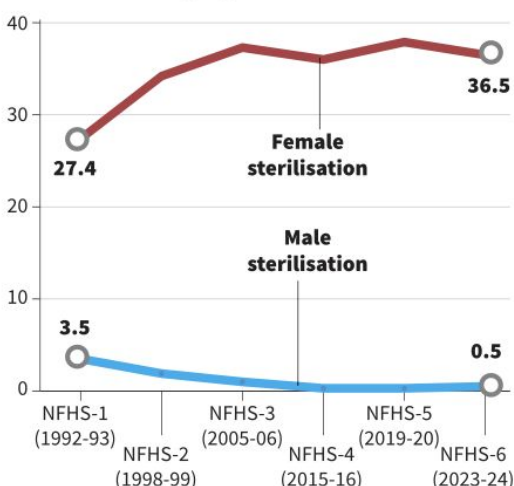


CHART 3: While the share of women undergoing sterilisation has increased, the same has dropped for men from the already abysmal level



WHO has developed its first "Target Product Profile" for male contraceptive methods, setting out the characteristics methods should aim to meet, including safety, effectiveness, acceptability and affordability

CHART 2: A majority of married women used modern methods of contraception, but use of traditional methods have risen sharply. Values outside the bars show the totals

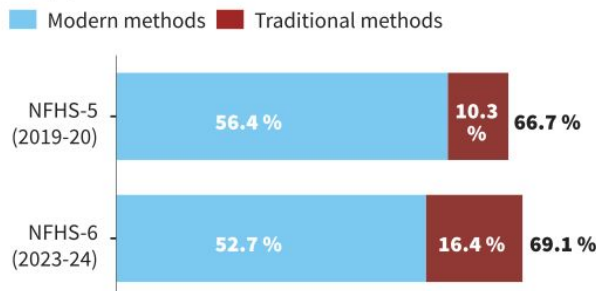
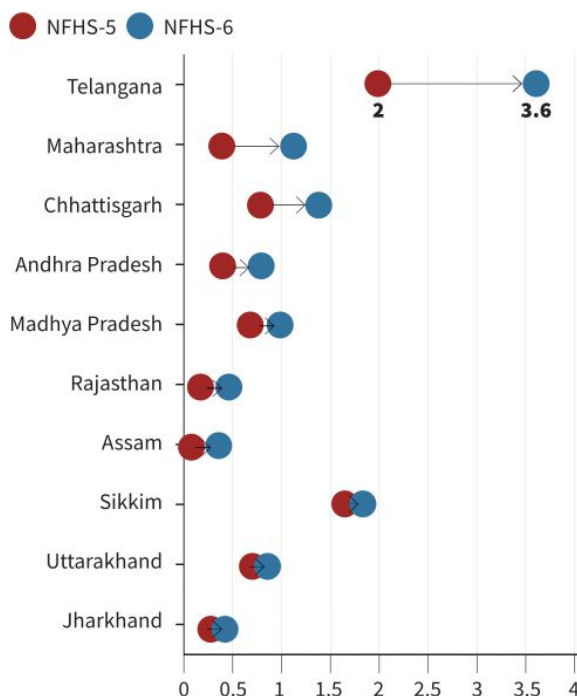


CHART 4: The 10 States that recorded the highest increase in the share (%) of men using sterilisation as their method of contraception. The increase is miniscule as the chart shows



SYLLABUS : Prelims: Polity

Newspaper: The Hindu **Page Number :** 08

Ladakh's Sixth Schedule Demand

- **Core issue:** Ladakh's demand for **Sixth Schedule status** raises a constitutional question because the Sixth Schedule currently applies only to **Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram**, while Ladakh is a **Union Territory without a legislature**.
- **Why Ladakh wants protection:** Local groups seek greater safeguards for **land, culture, language, traditions, customary practices and political representation**, amid concerns over the impact of outside intervention.
- **Sixth Schedule framework:** Based on **Articles 244(2) and 275(1)**, it provides substantial autonomy through **Autonomous District Councils**, with powers over specified local matters. It is designed particularly to protect tribal communities and their distinctive institutions.
- **Federal context:** India has a **flexible federal structure with a strong unitary bias**. The Supreme Court described this character as "**amphibian**" in *State of Rajasthan v. Union of India* (1977)—federal in normal circumstances but capable of assuming a stronger unitary character when required.
- **Government's alternative:** Instead of Sixth Schedule status, the Centre has proposed a **directly elected legislative body** for Ladakh and reportedly a new **Article 371-K** to create a **sui generis governance arrangement**.
- **Constitutional validity:** Parliament can create differentiated governance arrangements for Union Territories. **Articles 239AA–239AB**, which provide special arrangements for Delhi, demonstrate that UT governance need not follow a uniform model.

- **Key concern:** The proposed authority could improve **political representation and local participation**, but questions remain regarding its **powers, financial autonomy and relationship with the Lieutenant Governor and existing Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils (LAHDCs)**.
- **Strategic dimension:** Ladakh's sensitive location, particularly its proximity to China, makes the balance between **local autonomy and national security** especially important.

Bottom line

The debate is essentially about finding a **constitutional balance between local self-governance, protection of Ladakh's cultural identity, democratic representation and national security**. The proposed sui generis model seeks to provide autonomy without necessarily extending the full Sixth Schedule framework to a Union Territory.



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SYLLABUS : Prelims: Social Justice

Newspaper: The Hindu **Page Number :** 03

About District Mineral Foundations

- DMFs are **statutory bodies** in India established by the state governments by notification.
- They derive their **legal status** from Section 9B of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, as amended on 26 March 2015 as the **Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2015**.
- In any district affected by mining-related operations, the **State Government** shall, by notification, establish a trust, as a **non-profit body**, to be called the DMF.
- **Purpose:** To work in the interest and benefit of persons and areas affected by mining-related operations in a manner as may be prescribed by the respective State Government.
- **Jurisdiction:**
 - The **operation of DMFs** falls under the jurisdiction of the relevant State Government.
 - **Composition and functions** of the DMF are prescribed by the State Governments.
- **Funding:** It is funded through the **contributions from the holders of major or minor mineral concessions in the district**, as may be prescribed by the Central or State Government.
- The **Central Government** has notified the rates of contribution payable by miners to the DMFs.
 - In the case of all mining leases executed before 12th January, 2015, miners will have to **contribute an amount** equal to **30% of the royalty payable** by them to the DMFs.
 - If mining leases are granted after 12.01.2015, the rate of contribution would be **10% of the royalty payable**.



SYLLABUS : Prelims: Social Justice
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- The Fund available with the Trust shall be **used for:**
 - The overall **development of the area affected by mining**-related operations in the District in accordance with the Annual Action Plan prepared by the Trustees of the Foundation for the purpose.
 - **Creation of local infrastructure** for socio-economic purposes.
 - Providing, **maintaining, or upgrading community assets and services** for the local population in the area affected by mining-related operations.
 - Organising or **conducting training programmes** to skill development and capacity building for creating employment and self-employment capabilities.

Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY)

- The **Ministry of Mines** launched PMKKKY in **2015** for the **welfare of areas and people affected by mining**-related operations, **using the funds generated by DMFs**.
- **Objectives:**
 - To implement various **developmental and welfare projects in mining-affected areas**, complementing the existing ongoing schemes of the State and Central Government.
 - To **minimize/mitigate the adverse impacts, during and after mining**, on the environment, health, and socio-economics of people in mining districts.
 - To ensure **long-term sustainable livelihoods** for the affected people in mining areas.
- **Utilisation of Funds:**
 - **At least 60%** of PMKKKY funds to be utilized **for high-priority areas** such as **Drinking water supply, Health care, Education, Environment preservation, etc.**
 - **Up to 40%** of the PMKKKY to be utilized for other priority areas such as **Physical infrastructure, Irrigation, Energy, and Watershed Development, etc.**



SYLLABUS : Prelims: Polity

Newspaper: The Hindu **Page Number :** 12

What is the Collegium System in the Indian judiciary?

The Collegium system is a system for the appointment and transfer of judges in the **Supreme Court** and **High Court**.

- It is not rooted in the Constitution. Instead, it has evolved through judgments of the Supreme Court.
- Under the system, the Chief Justice of India (CJI), along with four senior-most Supreme Court judges, recommends the appointment and transfer of judges.
- A High Court Collegium, meanwhile, is led by the incumbent Chief Justice and the two seniormost judges of that court.
- The government can also raise objections and seek clarifications regarding the Collegium's choices, but if the Collegium reiterates the same names, the government is bound to appoint them to the post.

Constitutional Provisions for Judicial Appointments

Articles	Constitutional Provisions
Article 124	Supreme Court judges should be appointed by the President after consultation with such judges of the High Courts and the Supreme Court as the President may deem necessary. The CJI is to be consulted in all appointments except his or her own.
Article 217	High Court judges should be appointed by the President after consultation with the CJI and the Governor of the state. The Chief Justice of the High Court concerned too should be consulted.



SYLLABUS : Prelims: Polity
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What is the genesis of the collegium system in India?

The collegium system has its genesis in a series of Supreme Court Judgements:

- **S P Gupta Vs Union of India, 1981 (First Judge Case):** Supreme Court held that consultation in the process of appointing judges does not require concurrence, and instead only involves the exchange of views.
- **Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association Vs Union of India, 1993 (Second Judge Case):** The Supreme Court reversed its previous and altered the definition of **consultation to mean concurrence**.
 - It was decided that the advice tendered by the CJI in regard to the appointment of judges to the Supreme Court is binding on the President.
 - Further, the CJI is required to consult with two of his most senior colleagues before tendering such advice.
- **Third Judge Case, 1998:** Supreme court stated that the consultation process to be adopted by the CJI requires '**consultation of plurality judges**'.
 - The CJI should consult a collegium of four senior most judges of the Supreme Court. Even if two judges give an adverse opinion, they should not send the recommendation to the government.
- **National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Act, 2014:** It was brought to replace the existing collegium system for appointing judges.
 - However, a five-judge Constitution Bench declared it as unconstitutional and nullified it, stating that it posed a threat to the independence of the judiciary.



SYLLABUS : Prelims: Institutions / Defence
Newspaper: The Hindu **Page Number :** 10

About Indian Coast Guard

- It is a **maritime armed force** operating under the **Ministry of Defence, Government of India**.
- It is a **multi-mission organization**, conducting round-the-year real-life operations at sea.
- It was formally **established in 1978** by the **Coast Guard Act, 1978** as an independent Armed force of India.
- **Headquarters:** The Headquarters of the ICG is **located in New Delhi**, and is under the command of the Director General Indian Coast Guard.
- **Moto:** "VAYAM RAKSHAMAH" – WE PROTECT
- **Mission:**
 - To protect our ocean and offshore wealth, including oil, fish, and minerals.
 - To assist mariners in distress and safeguard life and property at sea.
 - To enforce maritime laws with respect to the sea, poaching, smuggling, and narcotics.
 - To preserve the marine environment and ecology and protect rare species.
 - To collect scientific data and back up the Navy during war.



Q 1. With reference to the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, consider the following statements:

1. It presently applies to tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.
2. Autonomous District Councils can make laws on specified matters such as land and social customs.
3. The existing Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils are constitutional bodies constituted under the Sixth Schedule.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: a

Q.2 With reference to District Mineral Foundations (DMFs), consider the following statements:

1. These are statutory, non-profit trusts established by State Governments in districts affected by mining-related operations.
2. Their primary purpose is to work for the interests and benefit of persons and areas affected by mining-related operations.
3. The composition and functions of DMFs are prescribed uniformly by the Central Government for all States.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

Answer: b

Q.3 With reference to the Pradhan Mantri Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY), consider the following statements:

1. It seeks to undertake developmental and welfare projects in mining-affected areas using funds generated by District Mineral Foundations.
2. At least 60% of the funds under the scheme are to be used for high-priority sectors such as drinking water and health.

Which of the statements given above is/are NOT correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: d

Q4. With reference to the Collegium System in India, consider the following statements:

1. The Constitution does not provide for the Collegium System.
2. The Second Judges Case established judicial primacy in appointments.
3. The Third Judges Case expanded the Supreme Court Collegium to the CJI and four senior-most judges.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

Answer: c

Q5. With reference to the Indian Coast Guard (ICG), consider the following statements:

1. It is a Central Armed Force under the administrative control of the Indian Navy.
2. Its mandate includes marine environmental protection in India's maritime zones.
3. It can assist the Indian Navy during wartime.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: b





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