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- EIA is a process which studies all aspects of the environment and seeks to anticipate the impact (positive and/or negative) of a proposed project or development on the environment.
- EIA is mandatory under the Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986 for 29 categories of developmental activities involving investments of Rs. 50 crores and above.

### Draft EIA Notification 2020

- It allows for post facto approval for projects. It has provisions to award clearances for projects even if they have started construction or have been running without securing environmental clearances.
- It has omitted prior screening requirements for Category B projects and expanded the list of projects categorised under B2
- It proposes to classify inland waterways as Category B2 projects and will not require public consultations irrespective of whether these projects are located in notified ecologically sensitive areas.
- It proposes to expand the list of projects that do not require public consultation before receiving Prior-EC. It confers absolute power to the central government to categorise projects as “strategic” and information related to these projects will not be put in public domain.
- New construction projects up to 1,50,000 square metres (instead of the existing 20,000 square metres) will not require detailed scrutiny by the Expert Committee, EIA studies and public consultation.
- It proposes an eased monitoring mechanism Under the draft, project owners are to submit environmental compliance reports (after getting clearance) every year in contrast to present 6 months.

### Issues with Draft EIA 2020

1. The draft notification is legally untenable as it does not conform to the Environment (Protection) Act 1986. The Act requires the Centre to take measures to protect and improve the environment. However, the draft EIA 2020, reduces the ambit and stringency of the scrutiny of impact assessment and thus is detrimental to the environment.
2. As the draft allows for post facto approval for projects, it is in violation of the “precautionary principle”-a principle of environmental sustainability. Further, any environmental damage caused by the project is likely to be waived off by only as the violations get legitimised.
3. There is no mention of climate change and related consideration. As India is a highly vulnerable to climate change impacts, the government should ensure that regulatory approvals do not regions in India more vulnerable or impact the adaptive capabilities of communities.
4. The Draft EIA completely dilutes public consultation process and there is a risk of states taking up development initiatives at the cost of environmental degradation
5. The draft notification reduces the time for appraisal from 60 days under the 2006 notification to 45 days. It also curtails the discretion of the expert appraisal committees by disallowing them from seeking fresh studies.

**Conclusion:** Dilution of EIA to boost economic growth is a flawed idea and it's high time for the government to address the increasing socio-economic and environmental challenges.

## 7. How the tiger can regain its stripes

Source: [The Hindu](#)

**Context:** On International Tiger Day, July 29, authorities declared that India should “celebrate” the increase in tigers from about 2,000 in 1970 to about 3,000 at present.

### Status of Tiger Population in India

#### According to All India Tiger Census 2018:

- The total count of tigers has risen to 2,967 in 2018 from 2,226 in 2014 — an increase of 741 individuals or 33% in four years. Tiger population within reserves is 1,923 (65% of the total tiger population of India) which means 35% of the tiger population still lives outside the reserves.
- Madhya Pradesh has maximum tigers at 526 followed by Karnataka at 524 and 442 in Uttarakhand.
- Corbett Tiger Reserve (Uttarakhand) has the highest tigers followed by Nagarhole tiger reserve (Karnataka) and Bandipur Tiger Reserve (Karnataka).

#### Steps taken by Government of India for Tiger Conservation:

1. **Project Tiger:** It was launched in 1973 by the government of India, based on the recommendations of a Special Task Force of the Indian Board for Wildlife. It aims at in-situ conservation of wild tigers in designated tiger reserves. The project is administered by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).
- The National Tiger Conservation Authority is a statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change constituted under enabling provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
2. **Tiger Reserves:** Tiger Reserves are protected areas established under the Project Tiger. The reserves aim at conserving the habitat to ensure a viable population of the tigers along with their prey base in their habitat. At present there are 50 Tiger Reserves in India.

#### Issues with Tiger Conservation in India

1. **No Pragmatic Plan:** India has the potential to hold 10,000 to 15,000 wild tigers. However, it does not have a pragmatic plan to achieve the goal.
2. **Low Political commitment:** Over the years there has been a decline in political commitment to conservation.
3. **Unnecessary Borrowings:** There has been unnecessary and massive borrowings from the Global Environment Facility-World Bank combine to create new models for tiger recovery.
4. **Poor Resource Allocation:** Excessive funding of a few reserves while neglecting large areas with greater recovery potential.
5. **Data and Monitoring:** lack of data transparency and rigorous, independent tiger monitoring is a major issue.
6. **Forest Conversion:** wildlife habitats have been converted for cultivation and exploitation by loosely defined “forest-dwellers” under Forest Rights Act, 2006.
7. **Issues with NTCA:** It has taken up schemes totally unrelated to tigers, such as the recovery of snow leopards and translocation of African cheetahs to India.

#### Way Forward:

- The role of the forest bureaucracy should be restricted to wildlife law enforcement.
- Project Tiger should be merged with other Central schemes for wildlife conservation
- Government monopoly over domains of tiger conservation such as tiger research, monitoring, nature education, tourism and conflict mitigation should be removed.

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- Private enterprises, local communities, NGOs and scientific institutions should be engaged in Tiger Conservation.

### 8. Dismantling of environmental rules

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

**Syllabus:** GS-3- Environment

**Context:** The Draft EIA Rules 2020 has been widely criticised for flouting environmental rules. In this article, the author puts forward other instances where environmental rules had been dismantled.

#### Recent Examples where Environmental Rules have been dismantled:

1. **Draft EIA 2020:** As the draft allows for post facto approval for projects, it is in violation of the “precautionary principle”-a principle of environmental sustainability.
2. **2018 CRZ Notification:** It defreezes CRZ II (Urban Area)-Floor Space Index (FSI) or the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) to allow construction projects. It also permits temporary tourism facilities in beaches and s in the “No Development Zone” (NDZ) of the CRZ-III areas.
  - It was rejected by the National Fish workers Forum and other stakeholders, for threatening the livelihoods of fishing communities and destroying coastal ecology along India’s 7,500-km long coastline
3. **Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016:** It has been criticised as it bypasses the FRA, 2006, and disempowers Adivasis, forest dwellers and gram sabhas.
4. **T.S.R. Subramanian Committee:** It was set up to review six major environmental laws. The TSR Committee Report was never released, but some of its recommendations were hastily implemented.
5. **Failure to address air pollution:** According to a study in the British journal, The Lancet, 12.4 lakh deaths i.e. 12.5% of all deaths in India in 2017, could be attributed to air pollution. However, the government has taken no concerted action to address the issue.

**Conclusion:** India ranked 177th out of 180 countries in the Environmental Performance Index 2018. It is high time for the government to bring forth stringent environmental regulations for the protection of the environment and strike a balance between economic growth and environmental sustainability.

### 9. Issues with Declaration of Critical Wildlife Habitat (CWH)

**Source:** [The Indian Express](#)

**Context:** A PIL has been filed in Bombay High Court seeking direction to the Forest Department to urgently notify Critical Wildlife Habitat.

#### Critical Wildlife Habitat (CWH)

It is a provision under the Forest Rights Act, 2006. It says that in protected areas (PAs) viz. wildlife sanctuaries and national parks, the forest rights could be reduced, and, if absolutely necessary (when there is an irreversible damage to wildlife), forest-dwellers could be relocated in the interest of wildlife conservation.

In 2018, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs issued guidelines on CWH. According to the guidelines, CWH is to be declared in the following way:

- The Chief Wildlife Warden of a state will notify an Expert Committee for the purpose of identification of critical wildlife habitats (CWH) in a national park or sanctuary.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of August (Third week), 2020

- The Expert Committee will identify areas within national parks and sanctuaries, based on scientific and objective criteria relevant to the protected area
- The Expert Committee will carry out open consultations with all stakeholders, and the proceedings of the consultations, especially the objections, will be documented appropriately.
- The committee will submit the CWH proposal to the Chief Wildlife Warden. The decision on the proposal will be taken by the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife.

### Issues in Declaration of Critical Wildlife Habitat

- The process of recognition of rights under the FRA is incomplete. For example, in case of Melghat Wildlife Sanctuary, a study found that many villages were resettled when they had rights claims pending.
- The constitution of the expert committees is faulty. They do not contain expert social scientists familiar with the area.
- The criteria being used by the committees to determine the threat of “irreversible damage” to wildlife are quite extreme and are not even supported by many ecologists.

**Conclusion:** The FRA recognises that forest dwellers “are integral to the very survival and sustainability of the forest ecosystem”. Therefore, peaceful coexistence between humans and animals should be acknowledged. A classic example, is that of BRT Tiger Reserve in Karnataka where number of tigers have increased steadily even as the Soligas continue to live inside and gather non-timber forest products.

### Syllabus – GS 3 - Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment

#### 10. Restructuring Global Supply Chain

Source- [Live Mint](#)

**Context-** Covid-19 has changed the collective and calculus of uncertainty in the global supply chain. The importance of supply chain resilience and risk management is more apparent than ever.

With COVID-19 disruptions in the economic space, there has been a shift from Just in time inventory to just in case inventory in countries across the globe -

##### 1. Just-in-time [JIT] inventory system

The JIT is a management strategy that aligns raw- material orders from suppliers directly with production schedules rather than having a stock of raw material. The system is no longer tenable, relies heavily on the exchange of information to forecast demand accurately.

##### 2. Just-in-case [JIC] inventory system

In JIC, producers hold sufficient inventories to have enough products to absorb maximum market demand. This management strategy provides sufficient response time to companies to configure their production process and possible mean to de-risking the business.

### Trends emerging from this shift

**1. Diversification of the supplier's bases** – It provides shield against geographical uncertainties.

**2. Reconfiguration** – Expansion of the ware house capacity to ensure uninterrupted supply even if few of the facilities end up in containment zone.

**3. Automation** – Increasing automation and technology in the bases to build more resilience.

### Issues with JIC tenets to the business strategies

- 1. Additional Cost-** Expansion of infrastructure will come at a significant additional cost.
- 2. Future disruption-** Companies need to analyze supply chain now to mitigate against future disruption caused by such pandemics.
- 3. Advancement-** Many warehouses are deeply manpower dependent using out dated technology. The labour crisis engendered by the pandemic has been toughest for them.

### Way forward

Investment in technology and consideration on sustainability in the supply chain will be a key for future economies. Just-in-CASE [JIC] marketing strategy could be an invaluable tool to keep supply chains running and reduce widespread suffering during global pandemics which disrupts supply-chain.

### Gs3: Science and Technology- Developments and their Applications and Effects in Everyday Life.

#### 11. Technology to ensure access to justice

Source: [LiveMint](#)

**Context:** India's approach to dispute resolution in the post-pandemic era needs to be changed.

#### Need of technology to ensure access to justice post-pandemic:

- **Increase in pendency of cases:** The pandemic has led to the closure of courts unless it is an 'urgent matter'.
- **To adapt to the "new normal":** there is need to adjust to the new situation by fast-tracking innovation led by technology.
- **To enhance flexibility:** The courts need to move to a **hybrid model involving virtual and in-court hearings and** frame a road map for courtroom resolution.
- **To increase efficiency:**
  - Efficient justice delivery will require the intervention of technology, and a **three-tiered approach** that stratifies **dispute avoidance, dispute containment, and dispute resolution.**
  - **Online dispute resolution (ODR):** For dispute avoidance and containment entailing low- and medium-value civil matters.
  - Need is to pre-empt disputes at an early stage.
- To make the delivery of justice **more affordable and convenient.**

#### Significance of Online Dispute Resolution (ODR):

- **Both transformative and disruptive:** ODR can help in reduce matters before the courts, through avoidance, containment and resolution.
- **Better use of data analytics:** Technology can aid the resolution of disputes by offering **analytical insights** for that purpose.
- **Technology as a "fourth party":** According to Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy's white paper titled ODR: The Future of Dispute Resolution in India, technology can play the role of fourth party.
  - **Help in asynchronous communication:** doing away with the need for parties to be present in person.
  - **More equitable access to justice mechanisms:** litigants and a neutral party do not have to depose simultaneously and can record their response at a time and place convenient to them.
  - **Cost-effective and easily accessible forum for dispute resolution:** Relying on video conferencing and technology to transmit information could reduce the expenses.

## 9 PM Compilation for the Month of August (Third week), 2020

- **Collaborative Resolution Mechanism:** ODR could potentially help solve small- and medium-value disputes at scale before they reach formal court processes.
- **Win-Win model:** ODR can increase ease-of-living and timely resolution of dispute for litigants and can reduce burden on courts.

### Implementation of Integration of technology and Justice delivery system:

- **Supreme Court** has made necessary changes and adjusted which shows a progressive vision.
  - The Court has also introduced **e-filing, and facilitated the creation of infrastructure** around the New Delhi district courts for lawyers and litigants to access hearings.
  - SC has exceeded the volume of online hearings conducted in other jurisdictions across the world.
- **The Lok Adalat mechanism:** pilot projects for the adoption of e-Lok Adalats.

### Global Best Practice:

- **Singapore International Arbitration Centre**, have released guidance documents for video-conferencing-led remote participation in hearings.
- **European Union:** an ODR platform provided by the European Commission helps make online shopping transactions fairer and safer.
  - EU has mandated all merchants in member countries to inform consumers of the availability of ODR systems.
- **The United States:** It has launched MI-Resolve in response to covid-19 to resolve small disputes.
- **United Kingdom:** online mechanism for the settlement of money claim disputes.
- **Canada:** online civil administrative tribunal for small-value disputes.

**Conclusion:** The need of the hour is to develop ODR collaboratively to enhance capacity, capability and efficiency. According to Justice Chandrachud, there needs to be a fundamental change in the mindset and we need to look upon dispute resolution as a service that is availed of.

# General Studies Paper - 4

**General Studies - 4**

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**Syllabus – GS 4 - Ethical issues in international relations and funding**

**1. Equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccine**

**Source – [Down to Earth](#)**

**Context–** Making human vaccine available on local as well as global scale requires an ethical and equitable distribution to ensure vaccines are potent and effective at their point of use.

**Challenges across global distribution of COVID-19 vaccine-**

- 1. Guideline** – The need of a policy regarding how much of the vaccine produced should go to other countries and at what cost. It must ensure whether agencies funding the research or the researchers or government authorities or citizens decide on a global policy of distribution.
- 2. Quantity of an export-** The increasing quantity of an export will increase the cost due to shortage in supply in home. People of that country must not bear the burden of the extra cost when their tax payer's money has already been used up in research.
- 3. Transportation-** The delay in transportation may result in vaccine losing its potency and increment in cost also.
- 4. Distributive hierarchy** – The cost of the vaccine and its possible loss will have to be borne by the last receiver which likely to be more needy people of the society.

**Challenges in the local distribution of COVID-19 vaccine-**

- 1. Priority** - Within the country, it is certainly not clear who should be treated first or it should be determined by need, affordability, vulnerability or some other criterion or a combination of all.
- 2. Cost-** If open market forces determine the cost of the vaccine and affordability then, the section of society most vulnerable to the disease would get left out.
- 3. Aspects of Distribution and supply of vaccine** - It includes economic, demographic, logistic, legal, socio-political aspects which are interlinked to each other and needs clear policy framework. There is the ethical aspect as well, which demands an equitable policy of distribution.

**Way forward**

It is, thus, imperative that a global policy of distribution must be in place so that all countries can receive the benefit almost simultaneously. Centre need to intervene to regulate and cap the price to avoid profiteering.

**Syllabus: GS 4 - Aptitude and foundational values for Civil Service, integrity, impartiality and non-partisanship, objectivity, dedication to public service, empathy, tolerance and compassion towards the weaker-sections**

**2. Civil services examination – Steel frame of India**

**Source: [The Hindu](#)**

**Context:** Evaluating civil service recruits for their intelligence and integrity, for raising credible and well-performing civil servants.

**Civil Service Examination:** A nationwide competitive examination in India conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) for recruitment to various civil services of the Government of India including the Indian Administrative Service, Indian Foreign Service and Indian Police Service.

**UPSC' Performance as a selection authority:**

1. The UPSC has a **strenuous protocol**.
2. The process is **clinical and as objective** as possible. It is also well known for its intense and spectacular features.
3. It is an **honest organization** which allows **no unethical practices** in the various stages of the selection process.
4. **Reflects social diversity** as candidates from all sections such as other backward Castes, Scheduled Tribes and castes as well as women are being selected in the services.

**Selection process in 1960s and at present:**

1. **Number of candidates:** In 1960s, the number of candidates was about 15,000 to 20,000. However, at present the number of appearing candidates was around 8 lakh for same number of vacancies as of 1960's.
2. **Stages of Examination:** In 1960's, No preliminary examination was conducted. However, at present the preliminary examination eliminates a majority of applicants.

**Challenges towards transforming the image of the Civil Services:**

1. **High burden on administrators:** There are 739 districts in India but the number of District Collector and the District Superintendent of Police are much less. Thus, the sheer workload prevents them from finding time to interact with every citizen.
2. **Availability to the common man:** As the area of jurisdiction and the number of population of different districts vary each other it is hard to make officials more easily available to the common man in distress, who looks up to the officialdom for assistance almost on a daily basis.
3. **Lack of selfless leaders:** There are a few young officers who are different from the majority and put their heart and soul into the task of alleviating the miseries of the poor.
4. **Instances of corruption:** There are officials of the bureaucracy who demand illegal gratification to provide a service which is the fundamental right of every citizen.
5. **Biased behavior of the Police officials:** As there are more than 15,000 of police stations in India, Majority of them have blemished record of ill-treating the poor. They do not have readiness to serve the not-so literate and the poor.

**Way Forward:** It is very important that the large core of enlightened senior officers need to mould the character of the new entrants. Further, wherever new officers see injustice or violence against unsuspecting citizens, it will be for them to rise in protest.