NAMAN SHARMA
IAS ACADEMY

Daily
CURRENT AFFAIRS

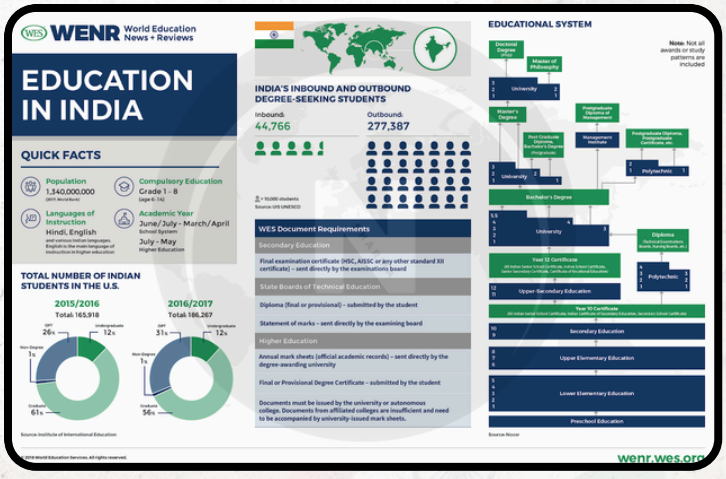
May 14th, 2025

Offline Centre Location:
SCO 173-174, Sector 17C, Chandigarh

Index

The educational landscape, its disconcerting shift

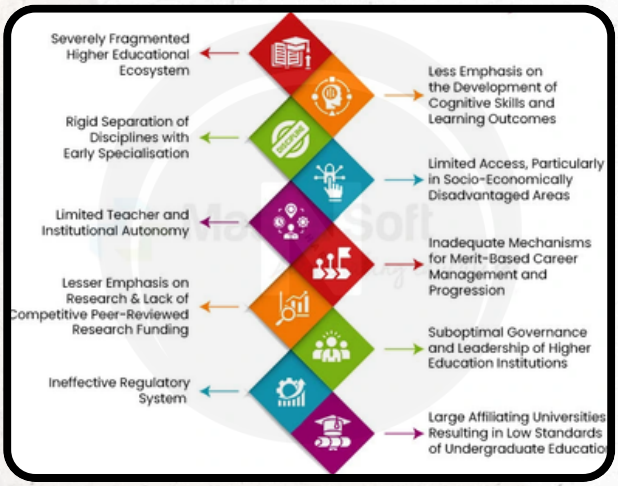
- India's education system has long been a pillar of social and economic progress, shaping generations through knowledge, skill development, and intellectual exploration. The increasing centralisation by regulatory bodies like the UGC, ideological interference, and the corporatisation of university spaces is leading to growing threats to academic freedom and institutional autonomy in Indian higher education. It reflects a broader crisis in higher education governance and the shrinking space for dissent and critical thinking.
- The growing entanglement of educational institutions with bureaucratic control, market forces, and ideological conformity signals a deep crisis in pedagogy and the broader democratic ethos.
- However, recent transformations in higher education, particularly within India but echoed globally, suggest a troubling departure from these ideals. As sanctuaries of free thought, they have nurtured dissent, encouraged critical inquiry, and expanded the frontiers of knowledge.



Educational Landscape

- Once granted considerable autonomy, universities are now subordinated to external authorities such as the University Grants Commission (UGC) and guided by national frameworks like the National Education Policy (NEP).
- Rather than coordinating standards, these bodies increasingly act as instruments of control, influencing appointments, curricula, and administrative decisions based on political or economic considerations. Under the guise of regulation, the UGC has eroded the autonomy of Indian universities to the point of extinction.
- The promise of self-governance has been replaced with bureaucratic tutelage. An institution that is stripped of autonomy in faculty selection, research direction, and protection of dissent ceases to be a university in any meaningful sense.

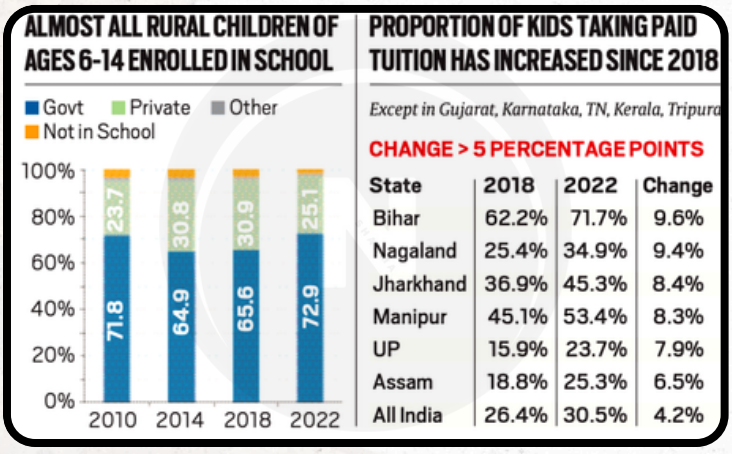
Challenges Facing India's Educational



- **Erosion of Academic Freedom:** Universities, once celebrated for nurturing dissent and innovation, are increasingly constrained by centralised regulations. The University Grants Commission (UGC), originally intended to coordinate academic standards, now plays a controlling role, influencing appointments, curricula, and administration. The National Education Policy (NEP), while aiming for reform, has raised concerns about standardisation over academic autonomy.
- **Rise of Market-Driven Education:** Corporatisation of higher education has led to a shift from intellectual integrity to managerial efficiency. Universities are increasingly prioritising market alignment, shaping curricula based on economic agendas rather than academic merit. Indoctrination and intolerance are becoming central concerns, affecting academic discourse and independent thought.
- **Digital Transformation and Accessibility Gaps:** While digital education initiatives have expanded learning opportunities, disparities in internet access and infrastructure continue to affect rural and marginalised communities. The Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE+) highlights enrollment trends, but bridging gaps in secondary and higher education remains a challenge.

Market-Driven Priorities

- Compounding these issues is the growing corporatisation of higher education.
- Universities are increasingly treated as businesses: their success is measured not by the quality of thought they inspire but by their profitability, brand appeal, and global rankings. This shift diverts attention and resources toward disciplines that promise immediate economic returns, such as engineering, business, and technology, while marginalising fields like philosophy, literature, and the arts.
- Knowledge is commodified, and education becomes a product to be consumed rather than a transformative process. Such an approach not only diminishes the intellectual richness of universities but also narrows the ethical and cultural foundation upon which societies evolve.



Regarding Educational

- The suppression of dissenting voices further intensifies the academic crisis.

- Universities that once led resistance movements and critiqued power structures are now pressured to maintain political neutrality, often defined by their avoidance of critique altogether.
- This climate breeds fear and self-censorship. Faculty members avoid controversial research topics, and students restrain their intellectual curiosity. The result is a shrinking space for academic debate and the gradual disappearance of public intellectuals who challenge the status quo.

Governance

- The infiltration of corporate values into academic governance reflects a broader transformation in leadership structures. Increasingly, universities appoint administrators from non-academic backgrounds, individuals who may lack engagement with educational ideals and scholarly traditions.
- This shift prioritises efficiency and metrics over intellectual substance and collegial decision-making. Moreover, the selection of Vice Chancellors and senior faculty with little or no engagement with social issues raises concerns about ideological bias.

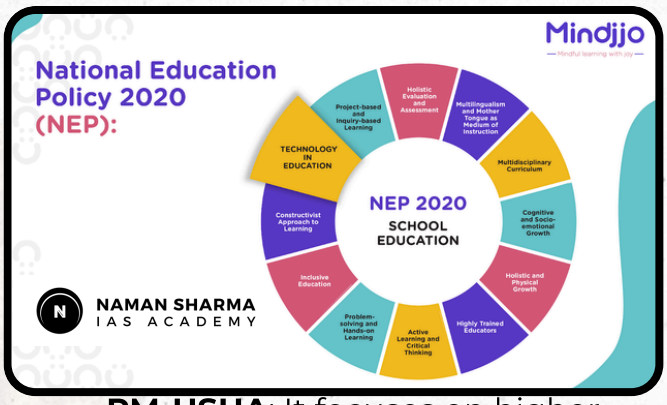
Challenges in Academic Governance

Managerial Takeover of Leadership: Corporate professionals are being appointed as university administrators, valuing efficiency and branding over scholarly depth. This detaches governance from academic realities.

- **Ideological Biases in Leadership:** Vice Chancellors often lack meaningful academic engagement, reflecting ideological filtering in selections. Leadership must be rooted in liberal intellectual traditions, with objective and rigorous appointments.

Government-Led Reforms

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020: Introduces multidisciplinary learning, skill development, and digital integration.



- **PM-USHA**: It focuses on higher education modernisation, improving research and innovation.
- **PM SHRI Schools:** Strengthens public education infrastructure.
- **Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan:** Ensures holistic school education from pre-primary to senior secondary levels.
- Expanding Digital Education: Platforms like DIKSHA and SWAYAM provide online learning resources, making education more accessible.
- **The National Testing Agency (NTA) streamlines standardised assessments, ensuring fair evaluation.**

Conclusion

- The crisis in higher education is a crisis of imagination, a failure to uphold the university as a sanctuary for critical inquiry, creative thought, and social transformation. If current trends of centralisation, corporatisation, and ideological policing persist, the university risks becoming a mere appendage of the state and the market.

Q. Which of the following best captures the multidimensional crisis currently facing Indian higher education as discussed in recent critiques of its transformation?

A. The growing emphasis on vocational skills under the National Education Policy (NEP) has successfully aligned academic curricula with industry needs, enhancing employability, but with some trade-offs in traditional disciplines.

B The increasing centralisation of regulatory control, combined with ideological influences and corporatisation, has undermined academic freedom, reduced institutional autonomy, and commodified knowledge, posing a threat to the democratic and critical ethos of universities.

C. The digital transformation through platforms like DIKSHA and SWAYAM has largely resolved access disparities and enabled inclusive learning across India, especially in rural and underprivileged areas.

D. Managerial and corporate-led governance reforms in higher education have strengthened efficiency and accountability, enabling universities to compete globally without compromising intellectual integrity.

Answer: B

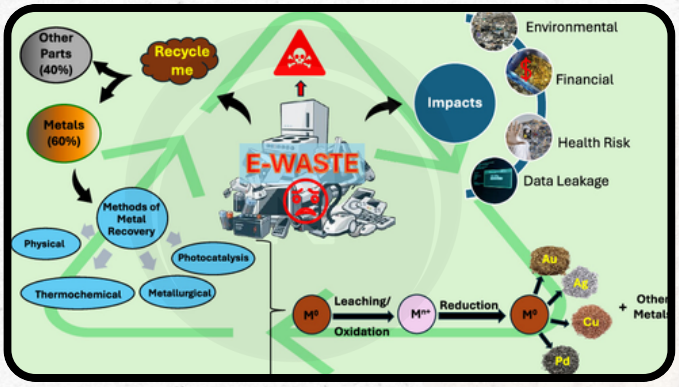
Explanation:

- Option A is partially true but lacks the critical tone needed; it ignores the deeper ideological and structural critiques presented.
- Option C misrepresents the digital divide; the passage clearly outlines how accessibility gaps remain a significant concern.
- Option D reflects the corporatised narrative but fails to address the erosion of intellectual and academic values as highlighted in the analysis.
- Option B accurately synthesises the major concerns: centralisation, ideological policing, corporatisation, loss of dissent, and commodification of education, aligning with the overall argument.

Critically examine this statement in the context of recent educational reforms, the role of regulatory institutions, and the corporatisation of academia. What implications does this shift hold for the future of knowledge production, public reasoning, and democratic citizenship in India?

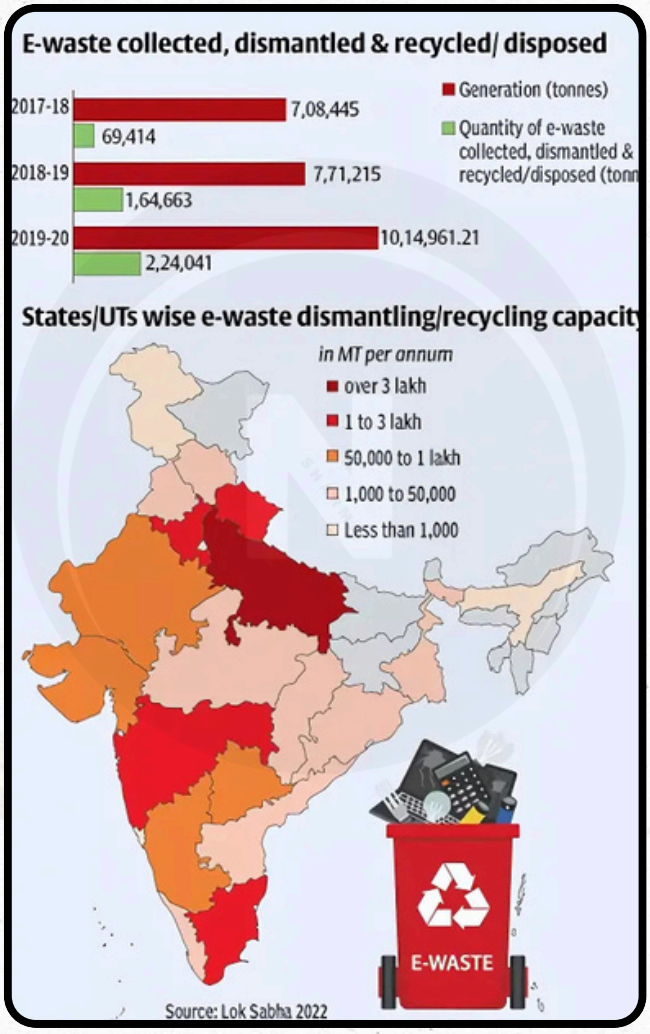
India's rising e-waste, the need to recast its management

India, now among the top global generators of electronic waste (e-waste), faces a critical challenge in managing the growing volume of obsolete electronic devices. India's digital revolution is redefining its development trajectory, propelling the nation towards its vision of Viksit Bharat, a developed India.
From smartphones and laptops to sophisticated industrial and medical technologies, digital infrastructure has become the cornerstone of economic growth, social inclusion, and innovation.



Rising E-Waste

- E-waste refers to the discarded electronic and electrical devices that have reached the end of their lifespan or become obsolete due to rapid technological changes, including computers, phones, TVs, and other equipment.
- **India ranks as the third-largest producer of electronic waste globally, following China and the United States.**



India's e-waste increased by 151% in six years — from 7.08 lakh metric tonnes in 2017–18 to 17.78 lakh metric tonnes in 2023–24. The annual increase now stands at 1.69 lakh metric tonnes.

- These figures position India alongside global e-waste giants such as China, the United States, Japan, and Germany. As the digital ecosystem deepens, India must balance its technological advancement with robust environmental safeguards.

Consequences of Poor E-Waste Management

- **Environmental Hazards:** Toxic substances such as cyanide and sulphuric acid pollute water, while lead fumes, open coal burning, and plastic incineration damage air and soil. These practices degrade soil and threaten ecosystems.
- Water Pollution: Toxic discharge from cyanide and sulphuric acid affects water bodies.
- Air Pollution: Emissions from lead fumes and plastic burning are severe.
- Soil Contamination: Hazardous substances leach into the soil, damaging agriculture and biodiversity.
- **Social Impact on Informal Workers:** Informal recycling is done mainly by women and children. Their exposure to toxic materials reduces life expectancy to under 27 years. The estimated annual social loss from such practices exceeds $20 billion.
- **Economic Losses from Informal Sector:** India loses ₹80,000 crore annually in critical metals due to crude extraction methods. Another $20 billion is lost in tax revenue because most informal recycling remains unrecorded and cash-based. **Environmentally, India suffers losses exceeding $10 billion annually due to pollution from harmful substances such as cyanide, sulphuric acid, and lead.**
- Socially, the unregulated and often illegal recycling sector, dominated by informal workers, including women and children, incurs a human cost, with average lifespans of these workers plummeting below 27 years due to toxic exposure.

Challenges in E-Waste Management

- **Lack of Consumer Incentives:** Consumers lack economic or logistical incentives to dispose of e-waste responsibly.
- **Sparse Collection Infrastructure:** There is a dearth of authorised collection centres, especially in Tier-II and Tier-III cities. Informal scrap dealers remain the primary point of contact for most consumers. Over 90–95% of e-waste is handled by the informal sector, which uses crude methods such as acid leaching, open burning, and manual dismantling without protective gear.
- **Grey Channel Imports: Used electronic goods often enter India under the guise of "donations" or "refurbished items," which eventually become waste.**

E-Waste Management Framework

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR): Producers, importers, and brand owners are made responsible for managing their products' end-of-life waste. An online EPR E-Waste portal has been developed by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) where entities such as producers, manufacturers, recyclers, and refurbishers of the e-waste are required to be registered


Highlights of new Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016

- It mandates segregation of waste at source to channelise the waste.
- Manufacturers of sanitary napkins are responsible for awareness on proper disposal.
- Power to local bodies across the country to decide the user fees.
- Bio-degradable waste should be processed, treated and disposed of through composting or bio-methanation within premises
- Department of fertilisers, ministry of chemicals and fertilizers should provide market development assistance on city compost.

- **The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has comprehensively revised the E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2016 and notified the E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022**.

- **India's first e-waste clinic was inaugurated in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh**. It's a facility for segregating, processing, and disposing of e-waste from both households and commercial units.
- To address these systemic issues, the E-waste (Management) Rules, 2022, introduced a floor price for EPR certificates.
- This policy innovation ensures fair compensation for registered recyclers, reducing the economic appeal of informal and unsafe recycling practices, which currently process 95% of India's e-waste. Stable pricing mechanisms incentivise investment in advanced, environmentally sound recycling technologies that can extract valuable materials like gold and copper, thereby supporting a circular economy. This economic intervention has substantial environmental benefits.
- Recyclers, now assured of minimum compensation, are encouraged to prioritise material recovery over hazardous disposal.
- This reduces the flow of toxins into soil and water systems, transforming e-waste from a pollutant into a valuable resource. By aligning EPR certificate pricing with global standards, India can develop a market that rewards compliance, innovation, and environmental stewardship.

Countering Concerns and Driving Innovation

- **Addressing Cost Criticism:** Some argue that floor pricing may raise product prices. But the cost of inaction—pollution, health crises, and lost materials—is far greater than the minor impact on consumer pricing.
- **Encouraging Sustainable Product Design:** Producers can reduce costs by designing longer-lasting, recyclable products. Globally, EPR fees are higher than India's floor price, aligning with best practices.
- **Learning from Plastic Sector Failure:** The plastic sector's underpricing led to fake recyclers and loss of trust. Floor pricing prevents such risks in e-waste and supports real innovation.

National Vision

- **Linking Economy and Ecology:** Weak pricing harms rivers, soil, crops, and communities. Fair valuation of recycling can reverse damage and promote responsible practices.

Formalising the Sector for Future Growth: A stable price can transform e-waste into a national resource. It allows India to build infrastructure, ensure compliance, and lead global sustainability efforts.

Balancing Costs and Long-Term Gains

- Critics of EPR floor pricing argue that it may raise production costs and, consequently, consumer prices. While this concern is valid, it overlooks the broader and more pressing costs of inaction: environmental degradation, public health crises, and squandered economic resources.
- Producers can mitigate these costs by embracing eco-design and product durability, central goals of the EPR framework. Lessons from the plastic industry, where under-pricing led to rampant non-compliance and sham recyclers, serve as a cautionary tale. In contrast, adequate floor pricing can catalyse innovation and build trust in the recycling ecosystem.

Toward a Visionary Recycling Framework

- The implications of EPR pricing transcend economic policy. Insufficient pricing threatens natural resources, agricultural safety, and public health. By valuing formal recycling, India can build a responsible, technologically advanced e-waste management infrastructure that ensures both environmental and economic sustainability. The introduction of floor pricing is not merely a financial tool; it is a strategic foundation for India's leadership in global sustainability efforts.
- As India witnesses a 73% increase in e-waste over just five years, the urgency for action is clear. A well-calibrated EPR pricing system can create a virtuous cycle: empowering formal recyclers, discouraging informal practices, supporting innovation, and protecting the environment.

Conclusion

- The explosive growth in electronic waste demands systemic interventions that combine regulation, economic incentives, and innovation. India's digital ascent must be matched by environmental responsibility. Extended Producer Responsibility and a stable floor price for recycling certificates offer a transformative solution.
- As India aspires to become a global sustainability leader, these measures will be critical in ensuring that the journey toward Viksit Bharat is not only technologically advanced but also environmentally conscious and socially just.

Regarding India's evolving e-waste management policy, consider the following statements:

1. The introduction of a floor price for EPR certificates aims to subsidise e-waste collection primarily in Tier-I cities where electronic consumption is highest.
2. EPR under the E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022, makes producers responsible for managing the entire lifecycle of their products, including collection and environmentally sound disposal.

3. Informal recyclers in India contribute to the majority of e-waste recycling but lack access to EPR certificate benefits due to their unregistered status.
4. The EPR certificate system is intended to curb grey-channel imports by mandating customs registration for refurbished goods.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

A. 2 and 3 only
B. 1, 3, and 4 only
C. 2, 3, and 4 only
D. 1 and 2 only

Correct Answer: A

Explanation:

- Statement 1 is incorrect: The floor price is not restricted to Tier-I cities; it is meant to strengthen the formal recycling economy nationwide.
- Statement 2 is correct: EPR mandates producers to manage the end-of-life of their products responsibly.
- Statement 3 is correct: Over 90–95% of e-waste is processed by informal recyclers who are not integrated into the formal EPR framework.
- Statement 4 is incorrect: The EPR certificate system is not directly linked to customs control or grey-channel imports.

Question: Critically examine the efficacy of the E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022, including the role of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and floor pricing in balancing environmental sustainability with economic growth. Suggest measures to bridge the gap between policy and practice. (250 words)

Dongria Kondh tribe

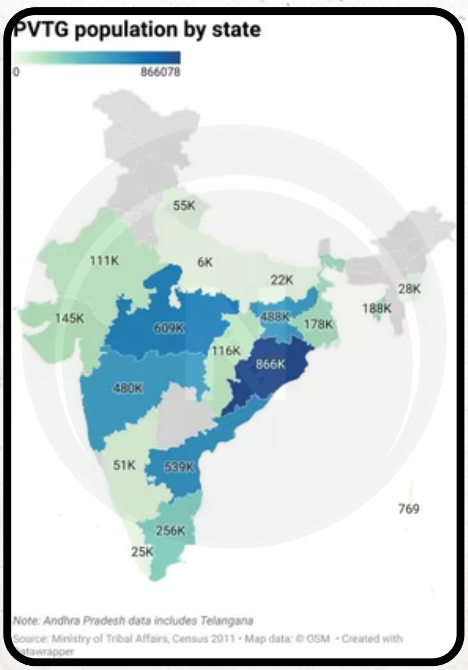
Recently, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) sought an Action Taken Report from the Odisha Chief Secretary on the precarious living conditions, lack of basic amenities and necessities of life of more than 10,000 families from “Dongria Kondh”, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) Community.

About Dongria Kondh

- They are a **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG).** They are located in the Niyamgiri hills in the state of Odisha in India. It is the largest tribal group in the state of Odisha. They are also designated **Scheduled Tribe in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Jharkhand and West Bengal.**
- They sustain themselves from the resources of the Niyamgiri forests, practising horticulture and shifting cultivation. Niyamgiri is a hill range which falls under the Rayagada and Kalahandi Districts in south-west Odisha, India. Its highest point is the mountain known as Niyamgiri or Niyam Dongar.
- **Language: Kui language. The Kui language does not have a script, but it is spoken among the people of the Kondh community.**
- They speak Kui and Kuvi as their native languages. They are most closely related to the Gondi language. Both are Dravidian languages and are written with the Odia script.
- Their religious beliefs were syncretic, combining totemism, animism, ancestor worship, shamanism and nature worship. The tribe has some sub-tribes, such as the Dongria, Kovi, Kuttia, Languli, Penga, and Jharnia.

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group

PVTGs are more vulnerable among the tribal groups. Due to this factor, more developed and assertive tribal groups take a major chunk of the tribal development funds, because of which PVTGs need more funds directed to their development. In this context, in 1975, the Government of India declared 52 tribal **groups as PVTGs on the recommendation of the Dhebar Commission.**



- Currently, there are 75 PVTGs out of 705 Scheduled Tribes. The PVTGs are spread over 18 states and one Union Territory (UT), in the country (2011 census).

Odisha has the highest number (more than 2.5 lakh) of PVTGs.

Characteristics

- Population – stagnant/declining
- Technology – pre-agricultural
- Literacy Level – extremely low
- Economy – Subsistence level

Government Scheme

- Ministry of Tribal Affairs implements a scheme in the name of 'Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)'. It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme having a provision of 100% Central assistance to **18 states and Union territory of Andaman & Nicobar Islands.**
- The scheme of Development of PVTGs aims at socio-economic development of PVTGs in a comprehensive manner, while retaining their **culture and heritage.**

Q. Regarding the Dongria Kondh tribe of India, consider the following statements:

1. The Dongria Kondh are primarily located in the Niyamgiri Hills, which are spread across both Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.
2. Despite being classified as a Scheduled Tribe in multiple states, the Dongria Kondh are designated as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) only in the state of Odisha.
3. The language spoken by the Dongria Kondh belongs to the Austroasiatic language family and is written in the Odia script.
4. The 'Development of PVTGs' scheme provides for 100% centrally funded support for education and healthcare, but excludes funding for infrastructure development to preserve traditional lifestyles.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A. 1 and 2 only
B. 2 only
C. 2 and 4 only
D. 1, 2 and 4 only

Answer: B. 2 only

Explanation:

- **Statement 1: Incorrect** – The Niyamgiri Hills are located only in Odisha (Rayagada and Kalahandi districts), not spread across Andhra Pradesh.
- **Statement 2: Correct** – Though Dongria Kondh are Scheduled Tribes in several states, they are classified as PVTG only in Odisha.
- **Statement 3: Incorrect** – Kui and Kuvi languages spoken by Dongria Kondh are Dravidian, not Austroasiatic, and are written in Odia script, though Kui has no traditional script.
- **Statement 4: Incorrect** – The PVTG development scheme does include infrastructure development (like roads, housing, etc.), as part of a comprehensive approach to socio-economic upliftment while preserving culture

Afrikaners Africa's white tribe

Recently, the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State welcomed the first group of Afrikaner refugees to the United States.

- Afrikaners are a white ethnic group native to South Africa, shaped through ethnogenesis on African soil, and are often referred to as "Africa's White Tribe" due to their deep-rooted historical presence since the 17th century.
- **Origin: The Afrikaner community originated in 1652, when Jan van Riebeeck, under the Dutch East India Company (VOC), established a resupply station at the Cape of Good Hope, initially settled by Dutch Protestants.**
- Over time, the settlers included French Huguenots fleeing persecution after the Edict of Fontainebleau (1685), along with Germans and enslaved people from India, Indonesia, Madagascar, and East Africa, contributing to the ethnic mix.

Formation of Afrikaner Identity

- A unique Afrikaner identity developed through interactions among Europeans, slaves, and the indigenous Khoikhoi

Marked by paternalistic household systems, strict social hierarchies, and the development of Afrikaans as a distinct language.

- Afrikaners were influenced by Calvinist values, frontier living, and a militant, self-reliant culture, especially among the Trekboers who moved inland in the 18th century and often engaged in violent conflicts with indigenous communities.

Which of the following factors most significantly contributed to the ethnogenesis of the Afrikaner identity in South Africa?

A) The exclusive settlement of Dutch Protestants under Jan van Riebeeck in 1652

B) The interaction of European settlers with slaves and indigenous Khoikhoi, along with the emergence of a distinct language and social hierarchy

C) The migration of British settlers in the 19th century and the discovery of gold and diamonds

D) The establishment of apartheid laws in the 20th century that defined Afrikaner political dominance

Correct Answer: B) The interaction of European settlers with slaves and indigenous Khoikhoi, along with the emergence of a distinct language and social hierarchy

Northeast region's first geothermal: Dirang, Arunachal Pradesh

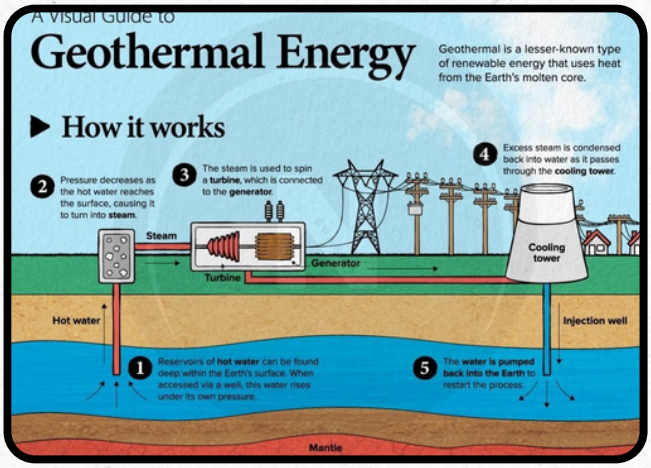
Recently, the Centre for Earth Sciences and Himalayan Studies (CESHS) has successfully drilled India's first geothermal production well in Dirang.

What is Geothermal Energy

Geothermal energy is derived from heat stored in the Earth's interior, primarily from the decay of radioactive elements. It can be utilised for electricity generation, heating, and industrial applications. It is considered a renewable energy source as the Earth continuously generates heat.

About the Dirang Geothermal Project:

- This project in West Kameng, Arunachal Pradesh, is the first successful geothermal drilling site in Northeast India. It is led by CESHS under the Arunachal Pradesh Department of Science and Technology, with support from the Ministry of Earth Sciences. It is a medium-to-high enthalpy zone (~115°C), with a fault between quartzite and schist, enabling efficient, low-impact drilling.



- The site was selected after two years of geochemical and structural surveys, and can support applications like agricultural drying, space heating, and controlled storage. International partners include the Norwegian Geotechnical Institute, Geotropy ehf (Iceland), and Guwahati Boring Service for execution.

India's Geothermal Landscape:

- The **Geothermal Atlas of India (2022)** identifies 381 thermally anomalous sites across the country. India has an estimated geothermal potential of 10,600 MW, enough to power over 10 million homes. Geothermal energy offers base load power, unlike intermittent solar and wind sources.
- The first operational plant was a **20 kw binary cycle pilot in Manuguru,** Telangana, developed by SCCL. A **25 MW project in Khammam remains stalled due to tariff issues with the Andhra Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission.In Puga Valley, Ladakh, ONGC resumed work in 2024 on a 1 MW** pilot plant, after a 2022 hot water leak raised safety concerns.

- **India has signed MoUs with Iceland (2007) and Saudi Arabia (2019), and included geothermal energy in the 2023 RETAP agreement with the United States.** In Dholera, Gujarat, geothermal energy is used for cooking and air conditioning at a temple, showing direct-use feasibility.

Regarding the recent geothermal energy developments in India, consider the following statements:

1. Dirang in Arunachal Pradesh is the site of Northeast India's first successful geothermal production well.
2. The Dirang project is a high-enthalpy geothermal site with potential applications in industrial electricity generation.
3. International collaboration was involved in the Dirang project, including partners from Norway and Iceland.
4. Geothermal energy is considered renewable because it relies on the Earth's continuous internal heat generation.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

A) 1, 2 and 3 only
B) 1, 3 and 4 only
C) 2 and 4 only
D) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: B) 1, 3 and 4 only
Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct** – Dirang is the first geothermal site in the Northeast region.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect** – It is a medium-to-high enthalpy site (~115°C), but not yet suited for large-scale electricity generation; applications include heating and agricultural uses.
- **Statement 3 is correct** – International partners include the Norwegian Geotechnical Institute and Geotropy ehf from Iceland.
- **Statement 4 is correct** – Geothermal energy is renewable due to the Earth's continuous heat production.

Ecology is the world's permanent economy

"Ecology is the permanent economy" will help us see that a healthy environment is essential for our survival, a strong economy, and protection against climate change. In a world marked by rapid industrialisation, climate change, and biodiversity loss, this concept demands a deeper recognition: true economic prosperity is inseparable from ecological health. It is not possible to pursue economic development without utilising natural resources, nor can we sustain that development without conserving them.

Ecology is the permanent economy, signified by human prosperity and ecological health.

- Ecology provides essential resources like air, water, food, and fertile soil — the base of all economic activity. Eg: Agriculture depends on healthy soil, pollinators, and water cycles. Degraded ecosystems lead to crop failures and food insecurity.
- Sustainable use of natural resources ensures continued economic benefits without exhausting the environment. Eg: Overfishing depletes fish stocks, harming both marine biodiversity and the fishing industry. Conservation efforts like fishing quotas help restore balance and maintain livelihoods.
- Ecosystems act as buffers against natural disasters and climate change impacts, protecting both lives and infrastructure. E.g.: Mangroves protect coastal areas from storms and floods. Their destruction increases disaster vulnerability and economic loss.
- Science has made remarkable strides in understanding the intricacies of natural systems through observation, experimentation, and modelling. These tools have allowed us to identify key environmental challenges, including climate change and the depletion of biodiversity. Yet, while scientific insight is essential, it is not sufficient on its own. What is more urgent is embracing the reality that ecology forms the bedrock of human survival, security, and prosperity.

Human Detachment and Its Consequences

- Despite being biological entities within the animal kingdom, humans have progressively distanced themselves from nature. This detachment has been cited as a significant driver of biodiversity loss, as noted in the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Transformative Change report.

In early human societies, nomadic lifestyles required direct interaction with nature, primarily for basic survival.

- Over time, individual resource use grew into collective consumption, eventually expanding into global-scale exploitation to meet not just present but future needs. Other species engage in such anticipatory, large-scale resource depletion. Unlike humans, animals live within the limits of their environments, maintaining a natural balance by consuming only what is necessary for survival.

Human Imperative

- While climate change and biodiversity shifts are not new phenomena, the unprecedented speed of current changes, driven by unsustainable human activities, poses a threat to all life, including our own.
- This calls for a fundamental internal transformation in how we view and interact with nature. As all development ultimately serves human needs, sustainability must begin at the individual level. Each person has a role to play in reshaping lifestyles that honour our interconnectedness with the environment.
- Though modern life, shaped by technology and convenience, has distanced many from nature, humans retain a unique capacity: the emotional ability to reconnect. This emotional connection can catalyse meaningful conservation efforts and sustainable behaviour. Thus, conservation strategies should prioritise rekindling humanity's innate bond with the natural world.

Developing this connection demands more than intellectual understanding, it requires a heartfelt realisation that ecology is the permanent economy.

Conclusion

- The notion that ecology is the permanent economy encapsulates the essence of sustainability. It calls on humanity to recalibrate its priorities, recognising ecological integrity as the cornerstone of economic and societal success.
- In the face of ecological degradation and climate change, this insight is not just relevant, it is vital. By reconnecting emotionally and ethically with the natural world, individuals and societies can embark on a path toward lasting resilience and harmony with the planet.

Q. The statement "Ecology is the world's permanent economy" implies a fundamental rethinking of development. In this context, which of the following statements best reflects the implications of this idea?

1. Economic growth can be decoupled from environmental degradation by increasing reliance on technology and market mechanisms.
2. Long-term economic stability is contingent upon maintaining ecological integrity and internalising the environmental costs of development.
3. Environmental conservation is a moral imperative, but is largely independent of economic functioning.
4. Human consumption patterns must increase to ensure that future generations can enjoy similar levels of prosperity through innovation.

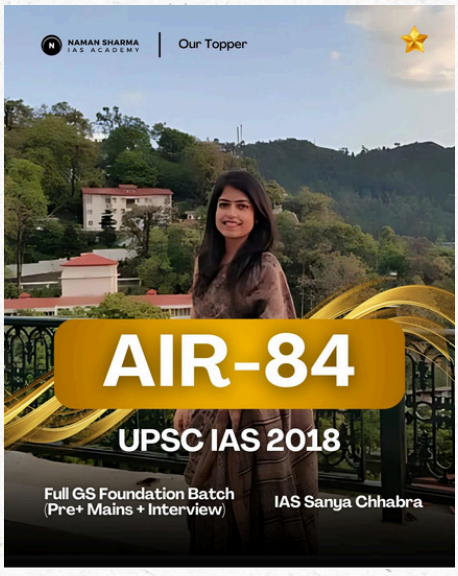
Select the correct answer using the code below:
A. 1 and 4 only
B. 2 only
C. 1 and 2 only
D. 2 and 3 only

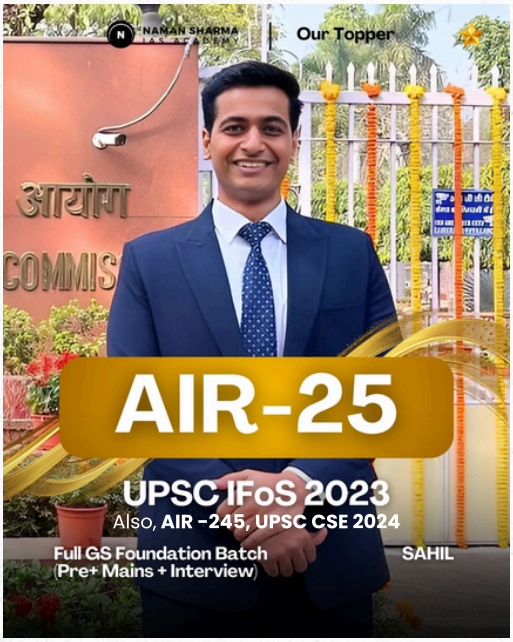
Correct Answer: B. 2 only
Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** While decoupling is discussed in sustainability discourse, blind reliance on technology and markets without altering consumption or ecological thinking does not reflect the core idea of "ecology as the permanent economy."
- **Statement 2 is correct:** This captures the core principle that ecological health is foundational to enduring economic prosperity.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** The statement separates morality from economy, which contradicts the essay's call for emotional and ethical reconnection with nature as essential to sustainability.
- **Statement 4 is incorrect:** It promotes increased consumption, which is against ecological sustainability and contrary to the principle of living within planetary limits.

NAMAN SHARMA
IAS ACADEMY

Our Recent Toppers:





IRS Rudraksh Ravi
AIR-617, CSE 2021

Anshul Shandil
AIR-7, HPPCS 2019

Arshiya Sharma
AIR-3, HPPCS 2019

Kirti Sharma
AIR-35, PCS 2021

IPS Vineet Ahlawat
AIR-231, CSE 2020

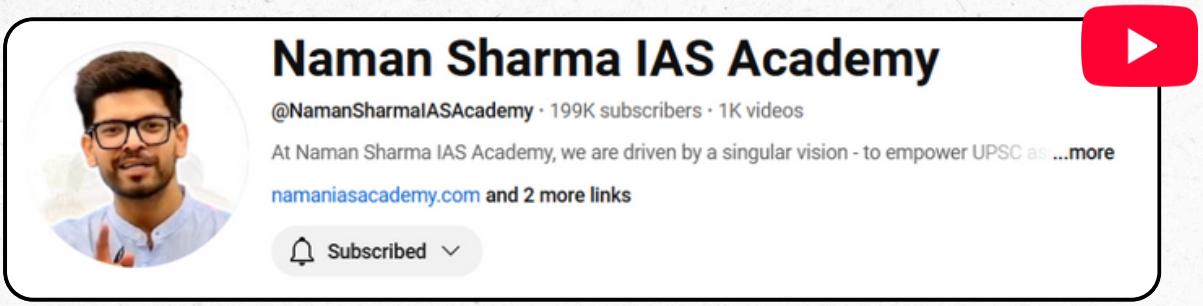
SDM Himani Sharma
AIR-2, HPAS 2024

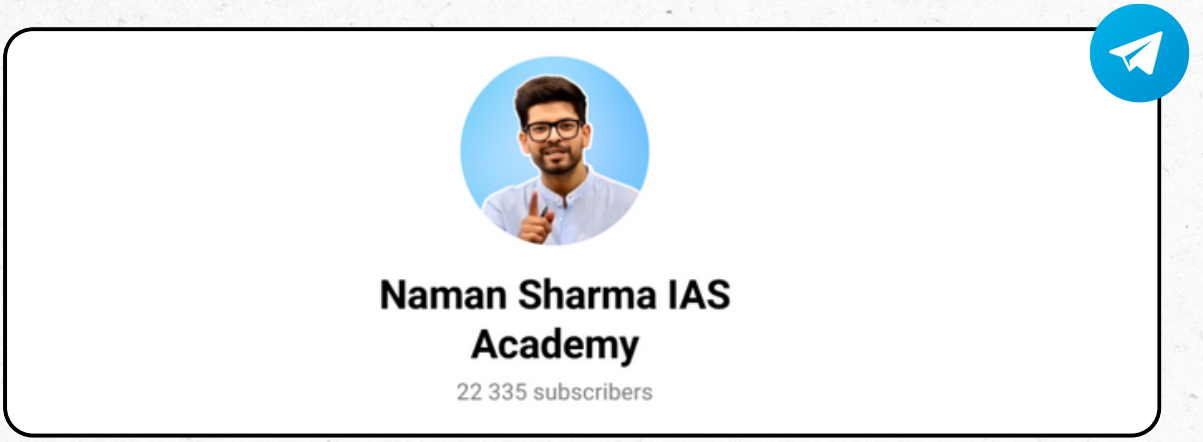
WhatsApp Now +91-843-768-6541

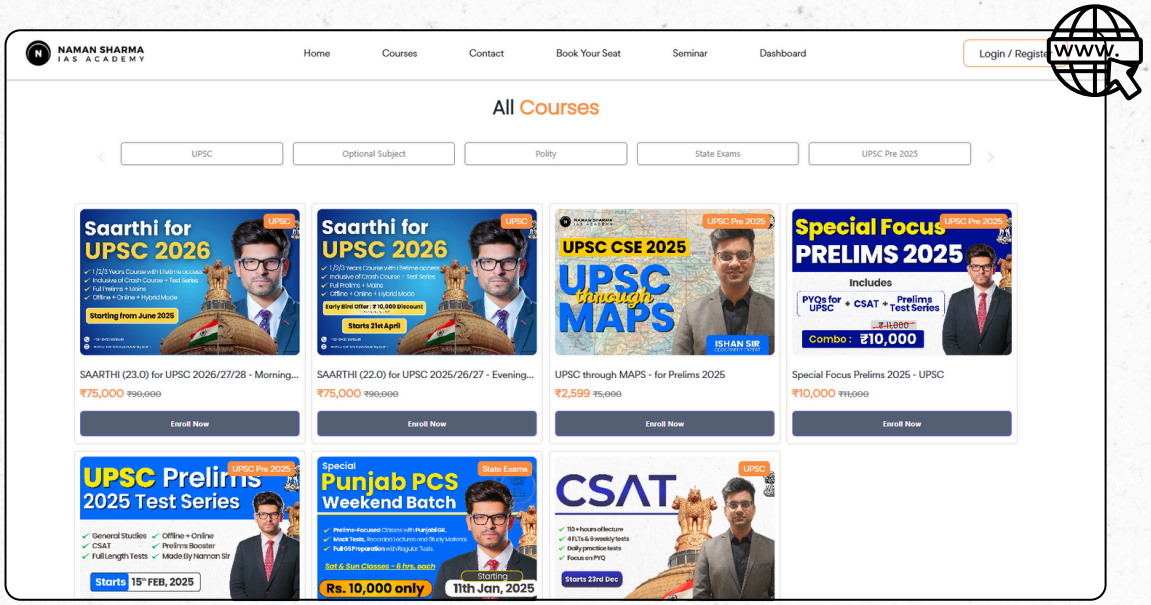
Offline Centre Location: SCO 173-174, Sector 17C, Chandigarh

NAMAN SHARMA
IAS ACADEMY

Join our Communities:







Offline Centre Location: SCO 173-174, Sector 17C, Chandigarh

NAMAN SHARMA
IAS ACADEMY

Admissions Now Open!

Enroll in just ₹2000

- Mode: Offline/Hybrid/Online
- Medium: Hinglish (Notes in English)
- Timings:
  - Morning: 9 AM - 1 PM
  - Evening: 4 PM - 8 PM

Enrollment Process:

- Visit Our Website: ***Naman IAS Academy***
- Call us at **+91-843-768-6541 for Free Seminar**

Free UPSC seminar
Saturday, 4PM

LIVE zoom

Offline Centre Location: SCO 173-174, Sector 17C, Chandigarh