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The Veeraswami case: When can a sitting judge face an FIR

Recently, the Vice President of India has criticised the in-house inquiry as having "no legal sanctity" and called for reviewing the Veeraswami judgment, terming it a "scaffolding of impunity".

Constitutional Safeguard for Judges:

- It is fundamental to the independence of the judiciary that judges should be able to decide cases without fear of personal consequences, including criminal prosecution.

The only procedure prescribed in the Constitution is the removal of a judge through impeachment.

- **Article 124:** Removal of a Supreme Court (SC) judge.
- **Article 218:** Removal of a High Court (HC) judge.

The judge can only be removed by Parliament on two grounds:

- Proven misbehaviour or incapacity.
- Proven misbehaviour and incapacity are not defined in the Constitution.

The impeachment process requires a motion to be passed in both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha with at least two-thirds of those present and voting, in such a way that it is more than 50% of the total membership of each House, i.e., a special majority.

- If the Parliament approves, the President issues the final removal order. However, no SC Judge has been impeached so far.

What is an In-house Inquiry?

- The Chief Justice of India (CJI) sets up a panel of judges to verify if there is a prima facie case against a judge.
- The report is sent to the CJI, who may forward it to the President or the executive. If the judge is found guilty of misconduct, the panel can recommend voluntary resignation, withdrawal of judicial work and initiation of impeachment proceedings.
- It is not a legal or statutory proceeding, it is an internal fact-finding process. It cannot lead directly to an FIR or prosecution. The CJI himself has limited powers to deal with errant judges beyond transferring or withdrawing work from the judge.

Veeraswami Case (1991): When can a sitting judge face an FIR?

- In the Veeraswami case, Justice K. Veeraswami, former Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, was accused of possessing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income.

- The central legal question was whether a sitting judge could be prosecuted under the Prevention of Corruption Act, and if so, who had the authority to sanction such prosecution.

The SC held that:

- A sitting judge of a High Court or the Supreme Court can be prosecuted under the Prevention of Corruption Act, but only with prior sanction from the Chief Justice of India.
- While a judge can be considered a public servant for a corruption case to be registered against him, the sanction must come from the CJI.
- Ordinarily, the sanction is granted by the authority that has the power to appoint the public servant. But the SC emphasised that there is no master and servant relationship or employer and employee relationship between a Judge and the President of India.
- The judgment aims to maintain a balance between Judicial independence and judicial accountability.

In 2019, for the first time, then CJI Ranjan Gogoi permitted the CBI to register an FIR against Justice S N Shukla of the Allahabad High Court for alleged favours to a private medical college for MBBS admissions.

Removal process of a Judge of the High Court

- A judge of the High Court can be removed from his/her office by an order of the President. The President can issue the removal order only after an address by the Parliament has been presented to him/her in the same session for such removal.

- The address must be supported by a special majority of each House of the Parliament (i.e., a majority of the total membership of that House and a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members of that House present and voting).
- **The grounds for removal are two:**
  - Proven misbehaviour or incapacity. Thus, a judge of the High Court can be removed in the same manner and on the same grounds as a judge of the Supreme Court.

The Judges Enquiry Act (1968) regulates the procedure relating to the removal of a judge of a High Court by the process of impeachment:

- A removal motion signed by 100 members (in the case of Lok Sabha) or 50 members (in the case of Rajya Sabha) is to be given to the Speaker/Chairman.
- The Speaker/Chairman may admit the motion or refuse to admit it. If it is admitted, then the Speaker/Chairman is to constitute a three-member committee to investigate the charges.
- The committee should consist of (a) the Chief Justice or a Judge of the Supreme Court, (b) the Chief Justice of a High Court, and (c) a distinguished Jurist.
- If the committee finds the judge to be guilty of misbehaviour or suffering from an incapacity, the House can take up the consideration of the motion.
- After the motion is passed by each House of Parliament by a special majority, an address is presented to the President for the removal of the judge.

Finally, the President passes an order removing the judge.

Main question

Q. Critically analyse the significance of the Supreme Court's judgment in the Veeraswami case (1991) in balancing judicial independence and accountability. Do you agree with the Vice President's recent remarks calling for a review of this judgment? Justify your answer with relevant constitutional provisions and case precedents.

UPSC PYQ 2019

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. The motion to impeach a Judge of the Supreme Court of India cannot be rejected by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha as per the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968.
2. The Constitution of India defines and gives details of what constitutes incapacity and proven misbehaviour of the Judges of the Supreme Court of India.
3. The details of the process of impeachment of the Judges of the Supreme Court of India are given in the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968.
4. If the motion for the impeachment of a Judge is taken up for voting, the law requires the motion to be backed by each House of the Parliament and supported by a majority of total membership of that House and by not less than two-thirds of total members of that House present and voting.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 3 only
(c) 3 and 4 only
(d) 1, 3 and 4

Answer: (c)
The correct answer is (c) 3 and 4 only.

Explanation:

Statement 3 is correct: The Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, outlines the procedure for impeaching a Supreme Court Judge, including the process of initiating a motion, conducting an inquiry, and voting on the impeachment.

Statement 4 is correct: The process of impeachment requires a majority vote in both houses of Parliament, with at least two-thirds of the members present and voting in each house supporting the motion.

Statement 1 is incorrect: The Speaker of the Lok Sabha can reject a motion to impeach a judge if it is deemed frivolous or does not meet the necessary criteria.

Statement 2 is incorrect: The Constitution of India outlines the grounds for removal of a judge, but it doesn't provide the specifics of incapacity and proven misbehaviour. The Judges (Inquiry) Act fills in these details.

Why India Needs Stable Urban Forests

(GS Paper-3 – Environment and Ecology)

Cities in India are expanding rapidly, both in terms of population and concrete infrastructure. Amid this urban spread, there is a quiet organic crisis—the quick disappearance of urban forests. The dispute around the Kancha Gachibovali forest in Hyderabad reminds us how these green pockets have become delicate and neglected in the face of industrialisation and the development of real estate.

- Areas like urban forests in Mumbai, Delhi Ridge, and Bangalore are more than green areas. They are integrated parts of organic health, air quality, cultural ethos, and psychological welfare for the urban population.
- This interpreter explores why India needs stable urban forests, the threats that they face, the policy of their safety, the role of the judiciary, and the schemes, as the municipal WAN scheme is to achieve the goal by 2027

The meaning of urban forests

It is the ecosystems of wood gravelness in the landscape of the urban forest town that serve important organic, social and health work. Unlike traditional forests in rural or forest areas, urban forests interact intensely with human settlements and infrastructure. Their meaning is multi-phase:

Environmental shield: Air quality regulation: Urban One Filter Air Environment to PM 2.5, PM 10, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide and ozone. The study suggests that an acre of wood can remove lots of air pollution annually.

Carbon sequence: Trees act as a carbon sink, absorbing CO2 emissions, which reduces the effect of greenhouse gases.

Climate masonation: They help reduce the effects of urban goods, low ambient temperature and maintain microclimatic balance. Conservation of biodiversity. Their continuity quickly ensures survival corridors for birds, reptiles, insects and mammals in solid-sized scenarios. Water management

Feature :

- Stormwater management by reducing runoff.
- Erosion control through soil stabilisation.
- Charging groundwater, especially under the monsoon.
- Psychological and social welfare
- Access to green places improves mental health, reduces stress and promotes the spirit of society.

They also act as a vacant room for cultural activities, education and entertainment.

Case in Focus: Kancha Gachibovali, Hyderabad

- Kancibovali One became a national title when 400 acres of land were held for industrial use by the Telangana government. The decline of around 100 acres of trees gave rise to student protest and eventually the Supreme Court intervention.

This case underlines:

- Administrative ignoring of ecological value.
- Conflict between development and conservation.
- The role of civil society and the judiciary in conflicting erosion of the environment.
- It gives the example of a pattern repeated in cities such as Aarey, Delhi (Ridge) and Bhopal (Kerva Forest), where there are green places in urban details.

Judicial Landmarks

- **Godavaraman Case (1996):** Blued the definition of "forest" and led the instructions for the state forest mapping.
- **Delhi Ridge Case (2015):** Corrected the safety of the organic Arvalli Ridge.
- **Aarey Forest (2020):** SC issued to stay on felling trees and strengthened public belief in legal prevention.

Constitutional provision

- **Article 21:** The right to life entails the right to a healthy environment.
- **Article 48a:** Instructions for the state to protect the environment and forests.
- **Article 51A (G):** The basic duty of the inhabitants is to protect natural resources.

Policy

- **National Forest Policy, 1988:** Stress of Social and Urban Forestry.
- **Green India Mission (2014):** The goal is to increase the forest cover and improve ecosystem services.
- **Smart Cities Mission (2015):** Green Urban promotes infrastructure.
- **Nagar van Yojana (2020):** 1000 urban forests must be developed by 2027.

MUNICIPAL VAN YOJANA: A RAY OF HOPE

- To increase trees and forest decks to create "urban oases" in Indian cities.
- Progress so far
- According to the India State Forest Report 2023, 1445.81 square kilometres of urban forest cover were added. Examples include the construction of urban forests in Chandigarh and Pune.

Goal
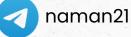
- 1000 forests by 2027.
- Emphasis on community participation and preservation of biodiversity.
- Challenges for urban forestry
- Intervention and pressure
- Clear ownership and a lack of forest mapping
- Insufficient enforcement of green criteria
- Low-budget distribution for urban ecology
- Poor urban planning and management coordination

The way forward: Creating green cities

- **Legally informing urban forests:** Like Delhi Ridge, other urban forests should be given legal protection.

- Integrated in the main plan: City forests will be built into regulatory laws and development plans.
- Use technology: GIS mapping and remote measurement should be used to monitor green cover.
- Public awareness campaign: Eco-literacy should be part of school courses and civilian training.
- Strengthen City Van importation: More money, social forest rights and participation are required.

Conclusion

Urban forests in India stand at a critical turn. When cities are expanded, the need to preserve and expand these green lungs is undeniable. Durable urbanisation may not exist without ecological justice, and organic justice begins by protecting the remnants of urban forests. For the UPSC ambition, it is not just a matter of environment and geography, but also governance, constitutional values and public policy.

Consider the following pairs:

Urban Forest	Location
Aarey	Bengaluru
Kancha Gachibowli	Hyderabad
Neela Hauz	Delhi
Dol Ka Baadh	Jaipur

Which of the pairs is/are correctly matched?
a) 2 and 3 only
b) 1, 2 and 4 only
c) 2, 3 and 4 only
d) All of the above

Answer: c) 2, 3 and 4 only
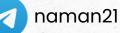
Mains Question
Q. Urban forests are critical to sustainable urban development, yet they remain vulnerable to rapid urbanisation and weak governance. Examine the ecological, social, and legal importance of urban forests in India

New Drugs on the block, old threats persist: Incomplete war against antimicrobial resistance

Introduction: A life-saving invention was a deadly threat.

Instead of treatment, he developed a festering wound with little complexity that was a spiral in a fully developed, fatal collision with antimicrobial resistance (AMR). When infections avoided the antibiotic after antibiotics, and the final lapse failed, the body surrendered.

- AMR - an event where bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasitic develop to remove the effect of antimicrobials and quickly become one of the most pressing public health hazards to humanity.
- According to the Institute for **Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME),** globally, **AMR contributed to 1.27 million deaths in 2019. 2.97 Lakh deaths were seen in India alone.**

- With a warning of 10 million annual deaths worldwide by 2050, AMR is no longer a distant concern.

Highlight

- Even India celebrated the launch of Nafithromycin, a globally developed antibiotic.
- The antimicrobial resistance (AMR) crisis of three decades is still a ticking time bomb.
- Abuse in areas, regulatory holes and a dull innovation pipeline seek immediate, coordinated and multi-level reactions. War against AMR alone cannot be won with new medicines - it requires ra evolution in mentality, politics and practice.

Nafithromycin: a landmark milestone

- The development and release of Nafithromycin (Marketing AS Miqnaf), in collaboration with Birack by Mumbai-based Walkhart, marks a rare and remarkable moment in modern medicine.
- Designed to treat societal task bacterial pneumonia (CABP), it claims a one- to three-day treatment 97% success rate.
- There are also India's first indigenous antibiotics in the classroom, which have been ready for more than 15 labour-intensive research. "We started this discovery program 25 years ago. While existing medicines like azithromycin became ineffective, there was no new alternative," said Hubil Khorakiwala, the founder president of Walkhart.

- His statement has seen a long-term innovation drought since it was so -called "golden age" of antibiotics between 1940 and 1960.
- Still, the slow pace of antibiotic innovation is not a coincidence. Large pharmaceutical companies have long withdrawn from antibiotic research, affected by low returns on investment compared to the treatment of chronic illness.

Results: A dangerous vacuum in the antibiotic development pipeline.

AMR: threat behind headings

- While the launch of Nafithromycin is a welcome development, it is very low to reduce the increasing tide of resistance. AMR is also fueled not only by clinical abuse, but also by an ideal storm of practice in agriculture, aquaculture and drug sales without medicine.
- In India, only 30% of antibiotics are used in human medicine. The remaining 70% are consumed in livestock, aquaculture and agriculture - often in the form of developmental protectors or immunologically instead of treatment. The enforcement is uneven, despite the recent ban on Colistin as a growth promoter in poultry.

Gap in India's health system
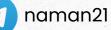
- For many Indian families like Vishwanathan, AMR is not just a microbial threat - this is a systemic failure.

- Vishwanathan's son, Vasakh, remembered how clinical delays, misunderstandings and inadequate medical equipment spoiled the father's position.
- "It took more than a week to get a proper antibiogram," he said. "We were always a step behind the transition." The story he shares is a symbol of widespread disabilities in India's overview of health services. High patient makes sense, creating proper reproductive grounds for inconsistent adherence to clinical guidelines.
- **Dr. Ihme joins. Tomislav Mestovic. "India's challenge is not only to control antibiotic sales, but also to strengthen the stewardship in hospitals. Diagnostic legs, equipment quality and clinical responsibility all need immediate improvement."**
- A versatile approach is non-bubbleExperts agree on one thing: AMR requires more than new medicines to solve. This requires a basic reassessment of how we use - and abuse - antibiotics.
- First, education is important. Public awareness about AMR is low. Patients often require antibiotics for viral infections such as flu or COVID-19 cases, where they have zero effect but pose a maximum risk. Doctors sometimes assume, patients are afraid of dissatisfaction or litigation.
- Second, regulatory improvement is necessary. Only the prescription conditions for antibiotics should be used strictly. Pharmacists should be trained and monitored, and punishment for illegal delivery should be implemented with seriousness.

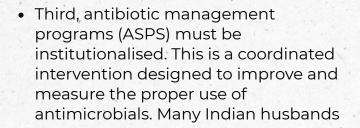- Third, antibiotic management programs (ASPS) must be institutionalised. This is a coordinated intervention designed to improve and measure the proper use of antimicrobials. Many Indian husbands

Government Initiative: Promise meets conveniently

- The government of India is not inactive. Since 2017, it has implemented a national action scheme on AMR, which has been in line with the WHO's global action plan.
- Strategy focuses on improving consciousness, strengthening monitoring, reducing the incidence of infection and promoting rational antimicrobial use.
- India's AMR monitoring network now covers large tertiary hospitals, which generate valuable data on the resistance pattern. Education campaigns have also been launched for the public to combat AMR. But the implementation is inconsistent.
- Many hospitals still lack infection control protocols, and public messages often fall from severe commercial sounds and push irregular medicines.
- **Innovation and encouragement:** The future of antibiotic development depends not only on science but also on economics.
- Antibiotic R&D is risky, expensive and provides little financial reward under the current model.
- To address this, experts advocate innovative funding mechanisms, including public-private participation, market entry prices and membership models.

Further Way: Shared Responsibility

- AMR is a classic example of a 'tragedy of the commons' - everyone benefits from antibiotics, but individual abuse reduces the efficiency of all.
- Getting to AMR is therefore not just a scientific or medical challenge - it is a social one.
- We have equipment," Dr. Mestovic said. "What we want is - decision makers, scientists, doctors and most importantly, from the audience."
- Shiksha Abhiyan, strict regulation, incentive innovation and global cooperation should all continue to parallel. Without it, we risk entering a post-antibiotic time, where common infections definitely kill as the plague once did.

Conclusion: A drug is not a cure for a broken system

The launch of Nafithromycin is a milestone celebrated - a testament to Indian scientific innovation and flexibility. But as the stories of Vishwanathan and millions of people remind us, a single medicine cannot cure a broken system. If we continue to abuse antibiotics, the most powerful of them will also become obsolete. The future of modern medicine is in balance. Whether we slide into the era of superbugs or tread into a flexible one, the AMR serving world will not depend on new molecules alone, but will depend on new thinking, strong institutions and a shared global commitment.

Q.. "While the development of new antibiotics like Nafithromycin offers hope, it does little to resolve the structural crisis of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in India."
Critically examine this statement in the context of India's AMR challenges. Suggest a multi-pronged strategy to tackle AMR at the national level.

Q. Regarding Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), consider the following statements:

- Nafithromycin is a once-a-day, three-day treatment developed to treat Community-Acquired Bacterial Pneumonia (CABP).
- The majority of antibiotics used globally are consumed by humans.
- Over-the-counter sale of antibiotics is one of the key contributors to AMR in India.
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) has identified AMR as one of the top 10 global health threats.

Which of the statements given above are correct?
A. 1 and 3 only
B. 1, 3, and 4 only
C. 1, 2, and 4 only
D. 2, 3, and 4 only
Correct Answer: B. 1, 3, and 4 only

Explanation:
1. **Correct:** Nafithromycin is a new, indigenously developed antibiotic by Wockhardt. It is a once-a-day, three-day course meant for Community-Acquired Bacterial Pneumonia (CABP) and has shown a 97% success rate.

2. **Incorrect:** Only about 30% of antibiotics are used for human treatment. The majority (i.e., around 70%) are used in livestock, aquaculture, and agriculture, contributing significantly to AMR.
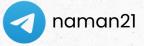
3. **Correct:** In India, antibiotics are frequently sold without a prescription, despite being classified as prescription drugs. This misuse is a key contributor to AMR.

4. **Correct:** The WHO has clearly stated that AMR is one of the top 10 global public health threats facing humanity.

Jayant Narlikar: The Indian astrophysicist

Eminent astrophysicist, science communicator, and Padma Vibhushan awardee Dr. Jayant Vishnu Narlikar passed away in Pune recently.

About Jayant Narlikar

- He is one of India's most distinguished astrophysicists and a global name in theoretical cosmology. He was born on July 19, 1938, in Kolhapur, Maharashtra.
- He earned his B.Sc. degree from the Banaras Hindu University (BHU) in 1957.
- He later went on to Cambridge University for higher studies, becoming a Wrangler and earning the Tyson Medal in the Mathematical Tripos — a mark of top academic distinction.
- After returning to India, Narlikar joined the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) in 1972 and led the Theoretical Astrophysics Group until 1989, during which time the group gained international recognition.

- In 1988, the University Grants Commission (UGC) entrusted him with the task of establishing the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA) inside the Savitribai Phule Pune University campus.
- As its founding director, he led IUCAA until his retirement in 2003. He served as President of the Cosmology Commission of the International Astronomical Union from 1994 to 1997. He is best known for co-developing the Hoyle–Narlikar theory of gravity.
- From 1999 to 2003, he led a space research experiment to collect microorganisms from the upper atmosphere (up to 41 km).

- He authored numerous popular science books and articles and appeared frequently on radio and television to explain complex scientific ideas in simple terms.
- In 1996, UNESCO honoured him with the Kalinga Award for science popularisation.
- In 2004, he received the Padma Vibhushan, India's second-highest civilian award.
- In 2014, the Sahitya Akademi honoured his Marathi autobiography with its highest prize for regional literature.
- He was a Fellow of all three national science academies of India, the Royal Astronomical Society of London, and the Third World Academy of Sciences.

Hoyle-Narlikar Theory of Gravity

- Dr. Jayant Narlikar is best known for co-developing the Hoyle–Narlikar theory of gravity, an alternative to Einstein's general relativity, and for championing the steady-state theory of the universe, a bold counterpoint to the widely accepted Big Bang model.
- The Hoyle-Narlikar theory offered a formulation of gravitation that synthesised Einstein's general relativity with Mach's principle, proposing that the inertial mass of a particle depends on the distribution of mass across the universe, an idea that challenged conventional big bang cosmology and continues to stimulate scientific debate.
- The theory produced evidence to support what is known as the steady-state theory of the universe. Unlike the Big Bang theory that suggests a definite beginning, and possibly an end, to the universe, the steady-state theory maintains that the universe has always been, and would continue to be, the way it is, infinite in extent, without a beginning or an end.
- The theory was first put forward in 1948 by British scientists Sir Hermann Bondi, Thomas Gold, and Sir Fred Hoyle. It was further developed by Hoyle to deal with problems that had arisen in connection with the alternative big-bang hypothesis.

Q. Concerning Dr. Jayant Vishnu Narlikar, consider the following statements:
1. He co-developed the Hoyle–Narlikar theory of gravity, which challenges the Big Bang theory of the universe.
2. He was the founding director of the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA) in Pune.
3. He was awarded the Padma Vibhushan and the Kalinga Award by UNESCO for his contributions to science communication.
4. He led the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) as its Director till 2003.

Which of the statements given above are correct?
A. 1, 2, and 3 only
B. 1 and 4 only
C. 2 and 4 only
D. 1, 2, 3, and 4

Correct Answer: A. 1, 2, and 3 only

Explanation:
1. **Correct:** Dr. Narlikar co-developed the Hoyle–Narlikar theory of gravity, which supports the steady-state theory as an alternative to the Big Bang model.
2. **Correct:** He was the founding director of IUCAA, established in 1988 by UGC at Pune University.
3. **Correct:** He was awarded the Padma Vibhushan in 2004 and the Kalinga Award by UNESCO in 1996 for science popularisation.
4. **Incorrect:** He led the Theoretical Astrophysics Group at TIFR, but he was never the Director of TIFR.

Banu Mushtaq's Heart Lamp wins the International Booker Prize 2025

(prelims)

Recently, the International Booker Prize 2025 was awarded to "Heart Lamp", written by Banu Mushtaq and translated by Deepa Bhasthi.

About the International Booker Prize

- The International Booker Prize is a prestigious literary award that recognises the best translated work of fiction from around the world.
- It was established in 2005. It was formerly known as the Man Booker International Prize.
- **Aim:** The prize aims to encourage more publishing and reading of quality fiction from all over the globe, and to promote the work of translators who bring these stories to an English-speaking audience.
- **Eligibility and Selection:** Books eligible for the International Booker Prize must be translated into English and published in the UK or Ireland.

Equal Sharing of Prize Money: The award comes with 50,000 pounds (USD 64,000), shared equally between the author and the translator.

About the International Booker Prize, 2025

- Banu Mushtaq, an Indian writer, lawyer, and activist, has become the first author writing in Kannada to win the prestigious International Booker Prize for her short story collection "Heart Lamp".
- "Heart Lamp" is a portrayal of the struggles faced by Muslim women in southern India.
- The anthology is also the first-ever short story collection to win the honour.

Question: In which language was "Heart Lamp" originally written?
A. Hindi
B. Malayalam
C. Urdu
D. Kannada
Answer: D. Kannada

Analysing poverty levels in India by comparing various surveys

A recent study titled 'Poverty Decline in India after 2011–12: Bigger Picture Evidence' shows that poverty in India fell from 37% in 2004-05 to 22% in 2011-12. However, poverty declined by only an additional 18% until 2022-23, and officials have not released any poverty estimates after 2011-12.

How much has poverty declined post-2011–12, and how does it compare with the earlier period?

- **Sharp slowdown:** Poverty fell from 37% (2004–05) to 22% (2011–12), a 15-point drop, but only to 18% by 2022–23, a mere 4-point reduction in over a decade.
- **Absolute poverty numbers:** The Number of poor declined from 250 million to 225 million in 10 years, a decline of only 10%, compared to a much faster fall earlier.
- **GDP correlation:** GDP growth slowed from 6.9% (2004–12) to 5.7% (2012–23), consistent with slower poverty reduction.

Why has the poverty reduction slowed since 2011-2012?
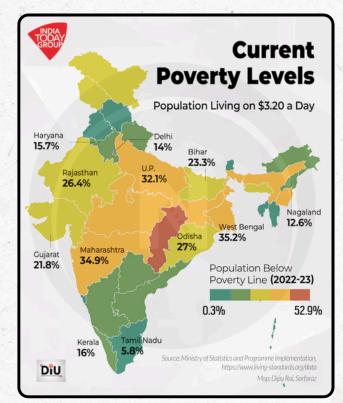
- Slower GDP Growth: Average GDP growth declined from 6.9% (2004-05 to 2011-12) to 5.7% (2011-12 to 2022-23), correlating with slower poverty reduction.
- **Declining Real Wage Growth:** Growth in rural wages slowed down significantly from 4.13% annually before 2011-12 to 2.3% after 2011-12.
- **Rising Agricultural Workforce with Lower Productivity:** After a decline in agricultural workers till 2017-18, 68 million workers joined agriculture post-2017-18, leading to lower agricultural productivity and wages, which hampers poverty reduction.

Poverty trends vary across Indian States.

- **Significant Poverty Reduction:** Some states have shown marked improvement in reducing poverty levels after 2011-12. E.g., Uttar Pradesh has notably decreased its poverty rate during this period.
- **Slow Progress:** Historically poor states continue to struggle with slow poverty reduction due to persistent socio-economic challenges. E.g., Jharkhand and Bihar have experienced much slower declines in poverty rates.
- **Stagnation:** Several large and economically important states have seen poverty reduction stagnate, with little change over the years. E.g., Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh show almost no improvement in poverty reduction post-2011-12.

Current Poverty Levels
Population Living on $3.20 a Day

Haryana 15.7%
Delhi 14%
Bihar 23.3%
Rajasthan 26.4%
U.P. 32.1%
Nagaland 12.6%
West Bengal 35.2%
Odisha 27%
Gujarat 21.8%
Maharashtra 34.9%
Kerala 16%
Tamil Nadu 5.8%

Population Below Poverty Line (2022-23)
0.3% — 52.9%

Source: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, https://www.living-standards.org/data
Map: Dipu Rai, Sarfaraz

Government initiative

- **Implementation of Social Welfare Schemes:** The government has launched various targeted welfare programs to support the poor and vulnerable groups. E.g.: Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana for affordable housing.
- **Focus on Employment Generation:** Programs aimed at creating jobs, especially in rural areas, to increase income and reduce poverty. **E.g., the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).**
- **Financial Inclusion Initiatives:** Efforts to increase access to banking and financial services for the poor. **E.g.: Jan Dhan Yojana,** which promotes the opening of bank accounts for the unbanked.
- **Agricultural Support and Reforms:** Policies to improve farmers' incomes and agricultural productivity to support rural livelihoods.

Eg: PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi, providing direct income support to farmers.
Health and Education Programs: Investments in healthcare and education to improve human capital and break the cycle of poverty. **E.g., the Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme for poor families.**

Three Ways to Check Poverty in India After 2011

- **Alternative NSSO Surveys:** Using different socio-economic surveys like the Usual Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure (UMPCE) from NSSO rounds after 2011-12, despite comparability issues with earlier surveys. E.g., Estimates based on UMPCE suggest poverty between 26-30% in 2019-20.
- **Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) Scaling:** Scaling consumption data from the 2011-12 Household Consumption Expenditure Survey using the growth rate of PFCE from National Accounts Statistics (NAS) to estimate consumption trends. E.g., used by economist Surjit Bhalla and colleagues in 2022.
- **Survey-to-Survey Imputation:** Filling data gaps by linking related surveys (e.g., consumption surveys with employment surveys) through imputation models, often at the State level for better accuracy. E.g., The recent study titled 'Poverty Decline in India after 2011-12: Bigger Picture Evidence' study using NSSO Employment-Unemployment Surveys with Consumer Expenditure Surveys to estimate poverty decline to about 18% in 2022-23.

Conclusion

India has made significant advances in reducing poverty, especially between 2004 and 2012. However, progress has become quite slow since then.

To resume poverty reduction, the government needs:

Promote economic Development. It is necessary to revive GDP growth with a focus on labour-intensive and rural areas. Increase in wages and employment generation: Actual wage growth should be improved through better employment opportunities, especially in non-agricultural sectors.

Strengthen data transparency: Regular, high-quality quality and publicly available poverty data is necessary to make informed political decisions. Targeted welfare reforms: Better monitoring of existing welfare schemes must be results in results to reach more efficiently to the poorest.

Question: Which of the following methods uses national accounts data to indirectly estimate poverty levels post-2011 in India?
A) Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)
B) Usual Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure (UMPCE)
C) Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) Scaling
D) Survey-to-Survey Imputation

Answer: C) Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) Scaling

Question: "Despite a wide range of welfare schemes, poverty reduction in India has slowed down significantly after 2011-12." Examine the key reasons behind this trend. Discuss the role of survey methods in measuring poverty and suggest measures to accelerate poverty reduction.

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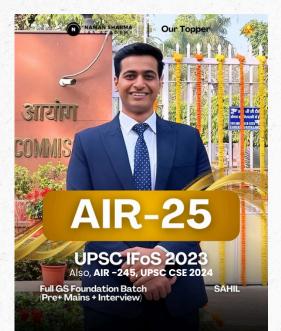Full GS Foundation Batch (Pre+ Mains + Interview)
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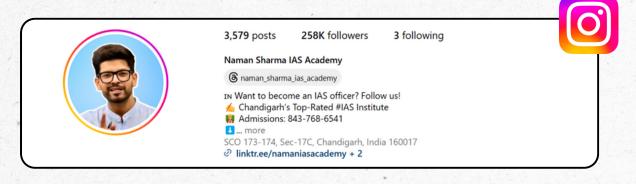AIR-231, CSE 2020

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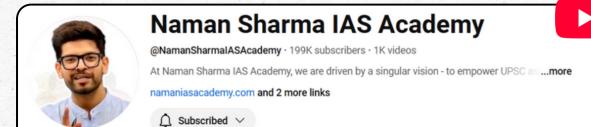AIR-2, HPAS 2024

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