

1. One District One Product (ODOP) Initiative

Why in News?

- As a major boost to Centre and State collaboration in promoting products under the ODOP Initiative – a State Conference was recently held by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).

One District One Product (ODOP):

- ODOP spearheaded by the Uttar Pradesh government in 2018, is an important initiative that is being adopted all over India to realize the true potential of each district.
- ODOP is an Initiative which is seen as a transformational step forward towards realizing the true Potential of a district, fuel economic growth and generates employment and rural Entrepreneurship.
- It is operationally merged with ‘Districts as Export Hub’ initiative being implemented by DPIIT as a major stakeholder.
- The main philosophy is to select, brand and promote one product from each district of India that has a specific characteristic feature to enable profitable trade in that product and generate employment.

Why needs this Scheme?

- India is home to several agricultural and non-agricultural (including manufacturing) products that are region-specific.
- Every district has products that are unique and provide livelihoods and generate income.
- This scheme is in tune with the PM’s call to transform every district into an export hub and realize the goal of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

What needs to be Done for its Success?

- The important aspect that the policy initiatives in India should thus be mindful of are:
- Ownership of the initiative should lie at the center of implementation.
- The stakeholders irrespective of the sector along the value chain need to be identified and provided information and awareness.
- It is important to streamline other initiatives such as registration of Geographical Indications (GI), formation and development of farmer producer organizations etc.

2. Budgeting for the Education Emergency

Why in News?

- Faced with an unprecedented education emergency, this is the time to substantially ramp up public spending on education and make it more effective.

Low Allocation for Education:

- UNESCO's 2030 framework for action suggests public education spending levels of between 4% and 6% of GDP and 15%-20% of public expenditure.
- A recent World Bank study notes that India spent 14.1 % of its budget on education, compared to 18.5% in Vietnam and 20.6% in Indonesia, countries with similar levels of GDP.
- But since India has a higher share of population under the age of 19 years than these countries, it should actually be allocating a greater share of the budget than these countries.
- Public spending on education in most States in India was below that of other middle-income countries even before the pandemic.
- Most major States spent in the range of 2.5% to 3.1% of State income on education, according to the Ministry of Education's Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure on Education.
- This compares with the 4.3% of GDP that lower-middle-income countries spent, as a group, between 2010-11 and 2018-19.
- In the 2021-22 Budget, the Central Government's allocation for the Education Department was slashed compared to the previous year, even though the size of the overall budget increased.
- Of the major States and Delhi, eight either reduced or just about maintained their budget Allocation for education departments in 2021-22 compared to 2020-21.

Way Forward:

- The vast majority of the 260 Million Children enrolled in preschool and school, especially in Government Schools, did not have meaningful structured learning opportunities during the 20 months of school closures.
- **Infusion of Resources:** The education system now needs not only an infusion of resources for multiple years, but also a strengthened focus on the needs of the poor and Disadvantaged Children.

- What it is spent on and how effectively resources are used are important.
- It is clear what additional resources are required for.
- **The Needs Include:** back-to-school campaigns and re-enrolment drives; expanded nutrition programmes; reorganisation of the curriculum to help children learn language and mathematics in particular, and support their socio-emotional development, especially in early grades; additional learning materials; teacher training and ongoing support; additional education programmes and collection and analysis of data.
- **Focus on Teacher Training:** How does expenditure on technology compare with the amounts spent on Teacher Training, which represents just 0.15% of total estimated Expenditure on Elementary Education?
- Teachers are central to the quality of education, so why does India spend so little on teacher training?

The opacity of Education Finance data in India:

- The opacity of education finance data makes it difficult to comprehend this.
- For instance, the combined Central and State government spending on education was Estimated to be 2.8% of GDP in 2018-19, according to the Economic Survey of 2020-21.
- This figure had remained at the same level since 2014-15.
- On the other hand, data from the Ministry of Education indicates that public spending on Education had reached 4.3% of GDP in the same year, rising from 3.8% of GDP in 2011-12.
- The difference in the figures is due to the inclusion of expenditure on education by departments other than the Education Department.
- Including expenditure on education by, for example, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (on Anganwadis, scholarships, etc.), the Ministry of Science and Technology (for higher education) is of course legitimate.
- However, the composition of these expenditures is not readily available.

3. Global Counter Terrorism Council (GCTC).

Why in News?

- The International Counter Terrorism Conference 2022 was recently organised by the Global Counter Terrorism Council (GCTC).

Highlights:

- GCTC is an International Think-Tank Council with an overarching mission of reducing the vulnerability of people worldwide to terrorism by preventing, combating and prosecuting terrorist acts and countering incitement and recruitment to terrorism.
- Earlier, in the 13th BRICS Summit held in 2021, BRICS counter terrorism action plan was adopted.
- Emergence of new “religiophobia”, especially against Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs, is a matter of serious concern and needs to be recognised, just like Christian phobia, Islamophobia and anti-semitism, to bring a balance in discussions on such issues.
- An irrational or obsessive fear or anxiety of religion, religious faith, religious people or religious organisations.
- In the past two years, several Member States have been trying to label terrorism into categories such as racially and ethnically motivated violent extremism, violent nationalism, right wing extremism, etc.
- Calling it a “dangerous” tendency, India said this goes against some of the accepted principles agreed to by all UN Member States in the recently adopted Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.
- Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy states that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations should be condemned and there cannot be any justification for any act of terrorism, whatsoever.
- India’s annual resolution on the issue of counter-terrorism was adopted by consensus in the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).
- India, a victim of state-sponsored cross-border terrorism, has been at the forefront in highlighting the serious threat to international peace and security emanating from acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by terrorist groups.
- Amid growing fears that terrorists will again nest in Afghanistan and increase attacks in Africa, India’s foreign minister has recently urged for the adoption of the convention.
- In 1996, with the objective of providing a comprehensible legal framework to counter terrorism, India proposed to the UNGA the adoption of the "Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism" (CCIT).
- CCIT seeks a universal definition of terrorism, prosecution of terrorists under special laws, making cross-border terrorism an extraditable offence worldwide, among others.

4. ICE360 Survey 2021

- Recently ICE360 Survey 2021, K-shaped recovery emerges from the economy hit by the coronavirus pandemic. The survey, between April and October 2021, covered 2,00,000 households in the first round and 42,000 households in the second round.

Highlights:

- It was conducted by People's Research on India's Consumer Economy (PRICE), a Mumbai-based think-tank.
- The annual income of the poorest 20% of Indian households, constantly rising since 1995, plunged 53% in the pandemic year 2020-21 from their levels in 2015-16.
- In the same five-year period, the richest 20% saw their annual household income grow 39% reflecting the sharp contrast Covid's economic impact has had on the bottom of the pyramid and the top.
- The survey shows that the pandemic hit the urban poor most and eroded their household income.
- This resulted in job losses and loss of income for the casual labour, petty traders and household workers.
- The pandemic brought economic activity to a standstill for at least two quarters in 2020-21 and resulted in a 7.3% contraction in GDP in 2020-21.
- While 90% of the poorest 20% in 2016, lived in rural India, that number had dropped to 70% in 2021.
- On the other hand, the share of the poorest 20% in urban areas has gone up from around 10% to 30% now.
- The Government needs to do more to prevent a K-shaped recovery of the economy hit by the Coronavirus Pandemic.
- The Indian Economy has "some bright spots and a number of very dark stains" and the government should target its spending "carefully" so that there are no huge deficits.
- The bright spots are the health of Large Firms, the roaring business the IT and IT-enabled sectors are doing, including the emergence of unicorns in a number of areas, and the strength of some parts of the Financial Sector.
- The "dark stains" are the extent of unemployment and low buying power, especially amongst the lower middle-class, the financial stress small and medium-sized firms are experiencing, "including the very tepid credit growth, and the tragic state of the schooling".

K-Shaped Recovery:

- It occurs when, following a recession, different parts of the economy recover at different rates, times, or magnitudes. This is in contrast to an even, uniform recovery across sectors, industries, or groups of people.
- It leads to changes in the structure of the economy or the broader society as economic outcomes and relations are fundamentally changed before and after the recession.
- This type of recovery is called K-shaped because the path of different parts of the economy when charted together may diverge, resembling the two arms of the Roman letter "K."

5. Environmental Emergency

Why in News?

- Recently, the Peruvian government declared a 90-day “environmental emergency” in damaged coastal territories, after an oil spill that saw 6,000 barrels of crude oil pour into the sea.

Highlights:

- The spill was caused by freak waves, which resulted from the eruption of a volcano in Tonga.
- The oil spill came out of a tanker belonging to the Spanish energy firm Repsol. The incident occurred at the La Pampilla refinery, some 30 kilometers north of the Peruvian capital of Lima in the Ventanilla district of the port city of Callao.
- A freak wave or rogue wave is usually defined as a wave that is two times the significant wave height of the area.
- The significant wave height is the average of the highest one-third of waves that occur over a given period.
- Rogue waves can disable and sink even the largest ships and oil rigs.
- These so-called “freak waves” are not confined to the Atlantic Ocean or North Sea.
- One of the places rogue waves appear to happen most frequently is off the southeast coast of South Africa.
- An oil spill refers to any uncontrolled release of crude oil, gasoline, fuels, or other oil by-products into the Environment.
- Oil spills can pollute land, air, or water, though it is mostly used for oceanic oil spills.

- Oil spills have become a major environmental problem, chiefly as a result of intensified petroleum exploration and production on continental shelves and the transport of large amounts of oils in vessels.
- Oil spills that happen in rivers, bays and the ocean most often are caused by accidents involving tankers, barges, pipelines, refineries, drilling rigs and storage facilities.
- Threat to Indigenous people: Oil pollution poses health hazards for the indigenous population who depend on seafood.
- **Harmful to Aquatic Life:** Oil on ocean surfaces is harmful to many forms of aquatic life because it prevents sufficient amounts of sunlight from penetrating the surface, and it also reduces the level of dissolved oxygen.
- Crude oil ruins the insulating and waterproofing properties of feathers and fur of birds
- Thus, oil-coated birds and Marine Mammals may die from hypothermia (decrease in body temperature to below-normal levels).
- Threat to Mangroves: Saltwater marshes and Mangroves frequently suffer from oil spills.
- If beaches and populated shorelines are fouled, tourism and commerce may be severely affected. The power plants and other utilities that depend on drawing or discharging sea water are severely affected by oil spills.
- Major oil spills are frequently followed by the immediate suspension of commercial fishing.

Suggestions

- Bacteria can be used to clean up oil spills in the ocean through bioremediation.
- Specific bacteria can be used to bioremediate specific contaminants, such as hydrocarbons, which are present in oil and gasoline.
- Using bacteria such as *Paraperlucidibaca*, *Cycloclasticus*, *Oleispira*, *Thalassolituus*, *Zhongshania* and some others can help remove several classes of contaminants.
- Floating barriers, called booms, are used to restrict the spread of oil and to allow for its recovery, removal, or dispersal.
- They are devices used for physically separating spilled oil from the water's surface.
- Various sorbents (e.g., straw, volcanic ash, and shavings of polyester-derived plastic) that absorb the oil from the water are used.
- These are chemicals that contain surfactants, or compounds that act to break liquid substances such as oil into small droplets. They accelerate its natural dispersion into the sea.