



# CURRENT AFFAIRS

WEEKLY COMPILATION

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# YOUTH SUICIDE IN INDIA



- **India** has the dubious distinction of having the **highest number of suicides** in the world. The **National Crime Records Bureau** reports that **1.71 lakh** people died by suicide in 2022.
- The **suicide rate has increased to 12.4 per 1,00,000** — the highest rate ever recorded in India.
- Unfortunately, **41% of all suicides are by young people below the age of 30**. Suicide in young people is best understood as multidetermined and the result of interaction between **biological, psychological, familial, and social cultural factors**.
- A current review of **adolescent suicides in India** shows that the most commonly reported risk factors were **mental health problems (54%), negative or traumatic family issues (36%), academic stress (23%), social and lifestyle factors (20%), violence (22%), economic distress (9.1%) and relationship factors (9%)**.
- Physical and **sexual abuse, examination failure, intergenerational conflicts**, parental pressures and caste discrimination are associated with youth suicide.
- There are specific sociocultural factors for suicide among young girls and women.
- Arranged and early **marriages, young motherhood, low social status**, domestic violence and economic dependence are well documented.
- Rigid gender roles and **discrimination** have also been implicated.
- Enormous competition to get into colleges, media hype around results, the shame associated with failure, and **months of pent-up pressures and emotions** result in a highly emotionally wrought state.
- **Alcohol and substance** use are known risk factors in **youth suicides**.
- Sensational reporting of **suicide, particularly by a celebrity**, is followed by increased suicidal behaviour.

## SOLUTION :

- Young people can be **taught problem solving, impulse control and emotional** regulation skills along with improving help-seeking behaviour.
- Early identification of **mental distress and provision** of care in a youth-friendly environment are essential.
- Adopting a healthy lifestyle improves **mental health and reduces suicide in the young**.
- Educational reforms such as alternative **assessment methods and provisions** to explore the **potential of a young person** are needed.

- National Suicide Prevention Strategy for India. The final strategy was launched on **November 21, 2022** with the objective of **reducing suicide by 10% by 2030**.
- The strategy has recognised that collaboration between the **Ministries of Health, Education, Information and Broadcasting, and Social Welfare is essential**.
- The strategy focuses on the need to leverage educational institutions and youth organisations to promote mental health and **reduce substance and behavioural addictions** through school health ambassadors and youth clubs.
- **Budgetary allocations** are necessary and the strategies need to be implemented at the earliest at the **State, district and community levels**.

09/04/24

# Right Against Climate Change a Fundamental Right.

- It is yet to be articulated that the people have a right **against the adverse effects** of climate change. This is perhaps because this **right and the right to a clean environment** are two sides of the same coin.
- As the **havoc caused by climate change** increases year-by-year, it becomes necessary to articulate this as a distinct right. It is recognised by **Articles 14** (right to equality) and **21 (right to life).**"
- The judgement came in a case connected with the survival of the endangered Great Indian Bustard species.
- Linking the **right against climate change to Articles 21 and 14**, Chief Justice Chandrachud said the rights to life and equality could not be fully realised without a clean, stable environment.
- The **right to health** (which is a part of the right to life under **Article 21**) is impacted due to factors such as **air pollution, shifts in vector-borne diseases, rising temperatures, droughts, shortages in food supplies due to crop failure, storms, and flooding**.
- The **court also** highlighted the **interconnection between climate change** and various human rights, including the **right to health, indigenous rights, gender equality, and the right to development**.



## INDIA'S SOLAR POTENTIAL

- India needed to shift to solar power due to three issues —
  - ➡ The country is likely to account for **25% of global energy demand growth** over the next two decades;
  - ➡ Rampant **air pollution** emphasises the need for cleaner energy sources;
  - ➡ Declining groundwater levels and decreasing annual rainfall.
- By shifting towards **renewable energy sources**, **India enhances its energy security**, reducing reliance on volatile fossil fuel markets and mitigating the risks associated with **energy scarcity**.

## EXPANDED THE SCOPE OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS TO INCLUDE RIGHTS AGAINST ADVERSE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

- **Article 21** recognises the right to life and personal liberty while **Article 14** indicates that **all persons shall have equality before law and the equal protection of laws**.
- These Articles are important sources of the **right to a clean** environment and the right against the adverse effects of climate change..
- The **right to health** (which is a part of the right to life under Article 21) is impacted due to factors such as **air pollution, shifts in vector-borne diseases, rising temperatures, droughts**, etc.
- The inability of underserved communities to adapt to climate change or cope with its effects violates the **right to life**.

## CONCLUSION

- The Supreme Court has, from time to time, expanded the **fundamental rights** chapter to include various facets of a **dignified existence**.
- However, this is the first time that it has included the **“right against the adverse effects of climate change**.





# The climate crisis is not gender neutral

- According to the **United Nations Development Programme**, women and children are 14 times more likely than **men to die in a disaster**.
- Agriculture is the most important livelihood source for **women in India**, particularly in rural India.
- The Supreme Court of India has just ruled that people have a **right to be free** from the **adverse effects of climate change**, and the **right to a clean environment** is already recognised as a fundamental right within the ambit of the **right to life**.
- Climate-driven crop yield reductions **increase food insecurity**, adversely impacting poor households that already suffer higher **nutritional deficiencies**.
- **National Family Health Survey 4 and 5 data** showed that **women living in drought-prone districts** were more underweight, experienced more intimate partner violence and had a **higher prevalence of girl marriages**.

## Gender-based violence

- Studies are increasingly showing a direct correlation between these **natural disasters and gender-based violence against women**.
- Of course, not all women are equally at risk, even within the same geographic or **agro-ecological zone**.

## Why does climate action need women?

- Climate action requires **100% of the population** if we want to achieve the **Paris Agreement** goal of limiting **global temperature rise to 1.5° C**.
- Women **mean better climate solutions** when provided with the same access to resources as men, women increased their agricultural yields by **20% to 30%**.



## On heat waves and water shortage

- **Water shortage** is probably the **biggest threat** to our very existence and needs concerted societal action.
- Work done by the **M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation** in a few districts of Tamil Nadu showed that using geographic information systems, the **panchayat could map key water sources**, identify **vulnerabilities and climate hazards** and develop a local plan to improve water access by directing government schemes and resources.

## Working at the village level

- A gender lens needs to be applied to all **State-action plans on climate change**.
- The **National Action Plan on Climate Change** and **State Action Plan on Climate Change** highlight the impacts on women, yet often default to portraying them as victims, missing deeper gender dynamics.
- A review of **28 SAPCCs showed a lack of transformative approaches**, with only a few recognising women as agents of change.
- **Recommendations** for the ongoing revision of **SAPCCs** lay stress on the need to move beyond **stereotypes, recognise the vulnerabilities of all genders**, and implement gender-transformative strategies, ensuring a comprehensive and equitable approach to **climate adaptation**.

## DMRC not required to pay Rs 8,000 crore to Reliance Infra arm – SC

- While hearing a **curative petition**, the Supreme Court has overturned its own decision from 2021 about a case involving the **Delhi Metro Rail Corporation** and **Delhi Airport Metro Express Private Limited**.
- Originally, DMRC was told to pay Rs 2,782.33 crore plus interest to **DAMEPL**, which is owned by **Anil Ambani's Reliance Infrastructure**. This was regarding their work on the **Airport Metro Express Line project in Delhi**. This has been set aside by the **SC in its latest judgement**.

11/04/24



## Curative petition

- A Curative writ petition as a lawyer of appeal against a **supreme Court is not prescribed in the constitution.**
- It is a judicial innovation, designed for correcting “grave injustice” in a ruling of the country's top court.
- The SC first articulated the concept of a curative writ in **Ripa Ashok Hurra vs Ashok Hurra(2002).**
- Scsaid that its “**concern for rendering justice** in a cause is not less important than the principle of **finality of its judgement.**
- However, curative wrists are sparingly used. There are narrow, mostly procedural grounds that permit the filling of a **curative writ.**
- Claim Must be made that principles of natural justice were not allowed - for example , that a party was not heard, or that a **judge was biased , had a conflict of interest .**

## Background of the case

- **DMRC entered into a public-private partnership with DAMEPL**
  - In 2008, the DMRC entered into a public-private partnership with DAMEPL, a consortium led by Reliance Infrastructure Ltd.
  - This partnership was for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the Delhi Airport Metro Express.
  - While DMRC acquired the land and bore the cost of construction, the consortium was to design, install, and commission the railway systems in two years.
  - Thereafter, **until 2038, DAMEPL** was to maintain the line and manage its operations, while paying a concession fee to DMRC.

## Rise of dispute

- A year after the line became operational, the consortium asked DMRC if it could defer payment of the concession fee.
- Among the reasons cited were delays in providing access to the stations by **DMRC**, and that retail activity had **not picked up on the line.**
- This triggered a dispute between the consortium and the Union Ministry of Urban Development.
- Later, the line was shut following a complaint from **DAMEPL** that it was unsafe to operate.
- The consortium triggered a termination of its agreement alleging there were technical problems in the civil structure of the Metro corridor, for which DMRC was responsible as per the agreement.
- As a result, a battle was started between DMRC and Reliance before an arbitration tribunal for losses due to cancellation of the agreement.

## Rulings of courts

- **Ruling by arbitration panel**

- In 2017, the panel of three arbitrators decided in favour of Reliance and ordered DMRC to pay nearly Rs 8,000 crore.

- **Ruling by single judge Bench of the HC**

- Against the orders of the panel of arbitrators, DMRC moved the Delhi High Court. A single judge Bench of the HC refused to interfere with the award.

- **Ruling by two-judge (division) Bench of the High Court**

- In 2019, the division Bench overturned the arbitral award, ruling in favour of DMRC.
- The Bench held that the tribunal had not considered some key facts, and had left some ambiguity in interpreting when the termination of the agreement took place.

- **Ruling by the Supreme Court**

- The SC heard the case, and in September 2021 reversed the HC verdict.
- The SC bench underlined that courts must exercise restraint when interfering with arbitral awards. This is crucial, since arbitration is an institutionalised alternative form of dispute resolution.
- It is devised and regulated by a 1996 statute to ensure speedy disposal of cases, especially commercial matters which suffer due to delays in the judicial system.

- **Subsequent review petition and curative petition**

- In November 2021, the SC dismissed a review petition against its judgment.
- Later, DMRC filed a curative writ petition.





# Malnutrition Remains sluggish

- Malnutrition is a significant contributor to the **disease burden** in India.
- A study by the **Indian Institute of Public Health Hyderabad** Comparing data from **NFHS-1 (1992–93) to NFHS-5 (2019–20)**, the study found that while the prevalence of wasting (low weight for height) increased marginally from **19.9% to 20.5%**, **stunting (impaired growth) and the incidence of underweight decreased from 51.9% and 34.1% to 45.8% and 29.4%**, respectively.
- The study identified significant factors affecting children's nutritional status, **including maternal education and the child's gender**.
- According to the study, **all States and Union territories** mirrored the national trend of decreasing rates of stunting and underweight among children, though no consistent trend was **observed for wasting prevalence**.
- In the **NFHS-1 survey**, stunting prevalence ranged from **33.2% (lowest) in Nagaland to 63.8% (highest) in Bihar**.
- The **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** have an ambitious target of **eradicating malnutrition by 2030**, prompting the World Health Organisation.

## What is malnutrition?

- Malnutrition refers to deficiencies, excesses or imbalances in a person's intake of **energy and/or nutrients**.
- The term malnutrition **covers 2 broad groups of conditions**.
- **One is 'undernutrition'**—which includes **stunting (low height for age)**, wasting (low weight for height), **underweight (low weight for age)** and **micronutrient deficiencies or insufficiencies (a lack of important vitamins and minerals)**.
- The other is overweight, obesity and diet-related **non-communicable diseases** (such as **heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer**).

## National Nutrition Mission (NNM): Focus on essential nutrition interventions

- Government appears determined to set it right — with an aggressive push to the National Nutrition Mission (NNM), rebranding it the Prime Minister's Overarching **Scheme for Holistic Nutrition, or POSHAN**.
- Window of opportunity: **The Ministry of Women and Child (MWCD)** continues to be the **nodal Ministry implementing the NNM** with a vision to align different ministries to work in tandem on the “window of opportunity” of the **first 1,000 days in life** (270 days of pregnancy and 730 days; 0-24 months).

## Way forward

- Child undernutrition in the **first three months** remains high. Creating awareness on EBF, promoting the technique of appropriate holding, latching and manually emptying the breast are crucial for the optimal transfer of **breast milk to a baby**.
- **Complementary feeding:** NFHS-5 also confirms a gap in another nutrition intervention — complementary feeding practices, i.e., complementing semi-solid feeding with continuation of **breast milk from six months onwards**.
- The fact that **20% of children in higher socio- economic groups** are also stunted indicates poor knowledge in food selection and feeding practices and a **child's ability to swallow mashed feed**.
- **Creating awareness:** So, creating awareness at the right time with the right tools and techniques regarding special care in the first 1,000 days deserves very high priority.
- **Revisit nodal system for nutrition program:** There is a need to revisit the nodal system for nutrition programme existing since 1975, the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) under the Ministry of Women and Child and examine whether it is the right system for reaching mother-child in the first 1000 days of life.
- **Alternative way to distribute ICDS supplies:** There is also a need to explore whether there is an alternative way to distribute the **ICDS supplied supplementary nutrition as Take- Home Ration packets through the Public Distribution (PDS)** and free the anganwadi workers of the ICDS to undertake timely counselling on appropriate maternal and child feeding practices.



13/04/24

**The blurry lines  
between wildlife  
'capture' and 'rescue'**

- The **escalating** frequency of **human-wildlife interactions**.
- Given the **inevitability of conflict** with wildlife, we should look for better solutions than those which focus solely on reactive capture and relocation, which have **frequently proven unsustainable**, or, worse, **fatal to the animals involved**.
- **Leopards killing livestock** or elephants damaging crops do impact communities but may not always warrant a capture in the **guise of rescue**.

- The **litmus test** of an effective response and proactive conflict management systems is when a tense situation is mitigated without the need to capture or **relocate an animal**.
- Guidelines issued by the **central government** for management of **human-leopard conflict**, based on advice from experts, specifically discourage the capture of leopards on mere sight.
- The **failure to distinguish between capture**, removal, and rescue becomes all the more apparent when we look further into how **conflict with snakes is managed**.
- **Rescue** as a solution to conflict draws a line in the sand, and pits animals against people. This does not help **long-term conservation goals**.
- Relocation of **a wild animal disrupts two ecosystems** — the one that the animal is taken from, and the one to which that **animal is introduced**.
- We need to see the community more holistically, as comprising and integrating both **human beings and non-human animals**, instead of driving divisiveness through our **wildlife management practices**.
- Proactive mitigation strategies to avoid **conflicts before they occur** should always be our first instinct.
- Some promising approaches being tested across India, especially by the **Karnataka Forest Department**, include **early warning systems, regular monitoring**, fencing, better lighting, public education, and improved waste management to reduce, or better prepare communities for **potential interactions with wildlife**.