

**The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE**

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वरिष्ठ विपक्षी सदस्य डेरेक ओ ब्रायन और मनोज कुमार झा ने प्रतिवर्ष न्यूनतम 100-120 संसदीय बैठकें अनिवार्य करने के लिए विधेयक प्रस्तावित किए हैं।

## Private Bills seek sitting of Parliament for 100 days a year

**The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI

Senior Opposition members in the Rajya Sabha Derek O'Brien and Manoj Kumar Jha have moved separate Bills seeking to make the sitting of Parliament mandatory at least for 100 days in a year. The leaders said the move is to reform the Parliamentary system by ensuring that the working hours of the House are not lost due to disruptions.

While Mr. O'Brien has proposed a minimum sitting of 100 days, Mr. Jha has sought 120 days sitting of the House annually.

Mr. O'Brien said that while the idea of a fixed calendar was explored by the General Purposes Committee of the Lok Sabha in 1955, the importance of having a minimum number of sittings was highlighted by the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution in 2002.

Mr. Jha said his Bill is to

provide a framework for enhancing the performance of Parliament through fixing a minimum number of days of sitting, introducing the provision for extending the hours of a sitting, bringing a short session in addition to the existing three sessions, instituting a mechanism to separately discuss Opposition business and compensating the hours not utilised due to disruptions.

Meanwhile, the Union Education Ministry opposed the introduction of the Coaching Institutes (Accountability and Regulation) Bill, moved by Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) MP Fauzia Khan saying that education is in the Concurrent List and the States would have to regulate the coaching centres.

But when Opposition members insisted that the Bill be introduced, the objection was withdrawn and the Bill introduced in the House.

### ऐसे विधेयक की आवश्यकता

- ▶ संसदीय बैठकों में कमी: पिछले कुछ वर्षों में संसदीय बैठकों की संख्या में उल्लेखनीय कमी आई है।
- ▶ 1950 के दशक में, संसद की बैठकें सालाना लगभग 120-140 दिनों के लिए होती थीं, लेकिन अब यह घटकर लगभग 60-70 दिन रह गई हैं।

## Daily News Analysis

- ▶ विधायी जांच सुनिश्चित करना: अधिक बैठकें विधेयकों, नीतियों और सरकारी निर्णयों की बेहतर जांच करने की अनुमति देंगी।
- ▶ लोकतंत्र को मजबूत करना: अधिक सक्रिय संसद सार्वजनिक मुद्दों का बेहतर प्रतिनिधित्व सुनिश्चित करती है और जवाबदेही बढ़ाती है।
- ▶ व्यवधानों को रोकना: बार-बार व्यवधानों के कारण काम के घंटे कम हो जाते हैं; एक निश्चित कैलेंडर इष्टतम विधायी कामकाज सुनिश्चित कर सकता है।
- ▶ रिपोर्ट से सिफारिशें: संविधान के कामकाज की समीक्षा करने के लिए राष्ट्रीय आयोग (2002) और पहले की संसदीय समितियों ने बैठकों की न्यूनतम संख्या की सिफारिश की है।

### चुनौतियाँ

- ▶ कार्यपालिका की हिचकिचाहट: सरकार प्रशासनिक बोझ और बढ़ती जांच के डर से विरोध कर सकती है।
- ▶ विपक्षी समन्वय: केवल व्यवधानों के बजाय प्रभावी बहस सुनिश्चित करना एक चुनौती बनी हुई है।
- ▶ राजनीतिक सहमति का अभाव: विभिन्न राजनीतिक दलों की संसदीय बैठकों को बढ़ाने के बारे में अलग-अलग राय हो सकती है, जिससे इस तरह के सुधार को लागू करने में देरी हो सकती है।
- ▶ विधायी कार्यभार: यदि गहन बहस और चर्चा के बजाय विधेयकों को जल्दी से पारित करने पर ध्यान केंद्रित किया जाता है, तो अधिक बैठकें बेहतर कानून निर्माण में जरूरी नहीं हो सकती हैं।

### आगे का रास्ता

- ▶ निश्चित संसदीय कैलेंडर: अनिवार्य बैठकों के साथ एक संरचित वार्षिक कैलेंडर कार्यकुशलता में सुधार कर सकता है।
- ▶ संसदीय समिति को मजबूत बनाना: गैर-बैठक अवधि के दौरान भी विधेयकों की विस्तृत जांच सुनिश्चित करना।
- ▶ खोए हुए घंटों की भरपाई करना: व्यवधानों के कारण खोए हुए घंटों को वापस पाने के लिए तंत्र शुरू करना।
- ▶ बहु-सत्र मॉडल: विपक्षी व्यवसाय और नीति समीक्षा पर चर्चा करने के लिए एक छोटा सत्र जोड़ना।
- ▶ रचनात्मक भागीदारी को प्रोत्साहित करना: सांसदों के लिए प्रदर्शन-आधारित मूल्यांकन जैसे तंत्र शुरू करना, उत्पादक चर्चा सुनिश्चित करना और संसदीय कार्यवाही में व्यवधानों को कम करना।

### UPSC Mains PYQ : 2019

प्रश्न: राष्ट्रीय विधिनिर्माता के रूप में व्यक्तिगत सांसदों की भूमिका में गिरावट आ रही है, जिसके परिणामस्वरूप बहसों की गुणवत्ता और उनके परिणाम पर प्रतिकूल प्रभाव पड़ा है। चर्चा करें। (250 words/15m)

Page 04 : Prelims Fact

- ▶ ट्रोपेक्स-25 अभ्यास में 65 जहाज, 9 पनडुब्बियाँ और 80 विमान शामिल हैं, साथ ही सेना, वायु सेना और तटरक्षक बल की संयुक्त भागीदारी भी है।

थिएटर लेवल ऑपरेशनल रेडीनेस एक्सरसाइज (ट्रोपेक्स)

- ▶ द्विवार्षिक नौसेना अभ्यास: ट्रोपेक्स भारतीय नौसेना का सबसे बड़ा द्विवार्षिक परिचालन अभ्यास है, जो हर दो साल में हिंद महासागर क्षेत्र में आयोजित किया जाता है।
- ▶ अवधि: 2025 संस्करण (ट्रोपेक्स-25) जनवरी से मार्च तक आयोजित किया जा रहा है।
- ▶ उद्देश्य: इसका उद्देश्य भारतीय नौसेना की संचालन अवधारणा को मान्य और नवीनीकृत करना है, एक विवादित समुद्री वातावरण में पारंपरिक, विषम और संकर खतरों का जवाब देने की इसकी क्षमता का परीक्षण करना है।
- ▶ प्रतिभागी: अभ्यास में लगभग 65 भारतीय नौसेना के जहाज, 9 पनडुब्बियाँ और 80 से अधिक विमान शामिल हैं, साथ ही भारतीय सेना, वायु सेना और तटरक्षक बल की पर्याप्त भागीदारी है।
- ▶ अभ्यास चरण: इसमें बंदरगाह और समुद्री चरण शामिल हैं, जिसमें लड़ाकू संचालन, साइबर और इलेक्ट्रॉनिक युद्ध, लाइव हथियार रिंग और उभयचर संचालन शामिल हैं।
- ▶ सामरिक महत्व: यह अभ्यास संयुक्त परिचालन तत्परता को बढ़ाता है तथा भारत के समुद्री सुरक्षा हितों की रक्षा के लिए समन्वित, एकीकृत प्रतिक्रिया सुनिश्चित करता है।



Indian Navy's TROPEX under way. ANI

9 submarines, 65 ships taking part in TROPEX exercise

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

Indian Navy's biennial capstone Theatre Level Operational Exercise (TROPEX) is under way in the Indian Ocean Region, from January to March, in which the combined fleet, comprising approximately 65 Indian Navy ships, nine submarines, and over 80 aircraft of different types are being "put through complex maritime operational scenarios to validate and refine the Navy's Concept of Operations".

This is conducted biennially with participation by all operational units of the Navy along with substantial participation of Army, Air Force, and Coast Guard assets.

'Maritime security'

"TROPEX-25 is aimed at validating Indian Navy's core warfighting skills, and ensuring a synchronised, integrated response to preserve and protect national maritime security interests in a contested maritime environment against conventional, asymmetric as well as hybrid threats," the Navy said in a statement.

The exercise is being conducted in various phases – both in harbour and at sea, integrating various facets of combat operations, cyber and electronic warfare operations, live weapon firings during the joint work-up phase, and amphibious exercise.

- भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक (RBI) की मौद्रिक नीति समिति (MPC) ने रेपो दर को 25 आधार अंकों से घटाकर 6.25% कर दिया है, जो मई 2020 के बाद पहली कटौती है।

### 57 महीनों के बाद रेपो दर में कटौती

- इस निर्णय का उद्देश्य इस तिमाही में ब्याज दर के 4.4% और 2025-26 में औसतन 4.2% रहने की उम्मीदों के बीच आर्थिक विकास को बढ़ावा देना है।
- रेपो दर में कमी से घर, कार और अन्य ऋणों के लिए उधार लेने की लागत कम हो सकती है।

### रेपो दर क्या है?

- रेपो दर वह ब्याज दर है जिस पर भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक (RBI) सरकारी प्रतिभूतियों के बदले वाणिज्यिक बैंकों को पैसा उधार देता है।
- यह अर्थव्यवस्था में ब्याज और तरलता को नियंत्रित करने के लिए इस्तेमाल किया जाने वाला एक प्रमुख मौद्रिक नीति उपकरण है।
- उच्च रेपो दर उधार लेना महंगा बनाती है, ब्याज को कम करती है, जबकि कम रेपो दर व्यवसायों और उपभोक्ताओं के लिए ऋण सस्ता करके उधार और आर्थिक विकास को बढ़ावा देती है।

### मौद्रिक नीति समिति (MPC)

- मौद्रिक नीति समिति (एमपीसी) भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक (आरबीआई) का छह सदस्यीय निकाय है, जो मुद्रास्फीति और आर्थिक वृद्धि को नियंत्रित करने के लिए रेपो दर निर्धारित करने के लिए जिम्मेदार है।
- इसकी स्थापना 2016 में संशोधित आरबीआई अधिनियम, 1934 के तहत की गई थी, और यह मुद्रास्फीति-लक्ष्यीकरण ढांचे का पालन करती है।
- एमपीसी में छह सदस्य हैं, जिनमें गवर्नर सहित आरबीआई के तीन सदस्य हैं, और तीन बाहरी सदस्य हैं जिन्हें सरकार द्वारा नियुक्त किया जाता है।
- एमपीसी की बैठक साल में कम से कम चार बार होती है, और निर्णय बहुमत से किए जाते हैं, अगर मत बराबर होते हैं तो आरबीआई गवर्नर के पास निर्णायक मत होता है।

### आर्थिक विकास और मुद्रास्फीति अनुमान

- आरबीआई ने 2025-26 के लिए वास्तविक जीडीपी वृद्धि 6.7% रहने का अनुमान लगाया है, जो इस वर्ष के लिए अनुमानित 6.4% से अधिक है।

### Growth over inflation

#### The interest rate cut signals a shift in the RBI's immediate priorities

For the first time in nearly five years, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) pivoted on interest rates, unanimously deciding to cut the benchmark repo rate from 6.50% to 6.25%. This move, while maintaining a neutral stance, marks a significant departure from the previous bi-monthly review, where the committee had opted for the status quo with a 4:2 vote. At the time, the MPC was contending with inflation at a 15-month high of 6.2% in October and a sluggish second-quarter GDP growth of 5.4%. Now, with inflation moderating to 5.2% in December, still above the RBI's 4% target, and growth projections for 2024-25 slipping to a four-year low of 6.4%, the central bank appears to be prioritising economic expansion over inflation control. RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra, in his first policy review, highlighted the challenges posed by global economic uncertainties, including stalled disinflation, diminishing prospects of rate cuts in the U.S., and a stronger dollar pressuring emerging markets and their currencies, including the rupee. These factors have complicated policy trade-offs for India, making the case for supporting growth even stronger. The MPC justified its decision to look past current inflationary concerns, citing expectations that price pressures will ease further, with inflation projected to average 4.2% in 2025-26 from 4.8% this year. This outlook hinges on assumptions of a favourable food inflation trajectory, a normal monsoon, and a bumper harvest of key vegetables such as tomato, onion, and potato, which are, historically, major contributors to price spikes. While inflation remains a concern, the panel has signalled that weak economic growth is more pressing, especially given the second-quarter slump and limited signs of recovery since then. The RBI's post-Budget policy stance also suggests closer alignment with fiscal policy, apparently heeding the government's call for monetary and fiscal measures to work in tandem rather than at cross-purposes. Whether the Budget's stimulus measures, combined with the rate cut, will revive consumption, attract private investment, and boost growth remains uncertain.

Interestingly, had the MPC met a week later, it might have had additional justification for the rate cut, given expectations that inflation in January could have cooled to around 4.5%. With a new Governor at the helm and an upcoming appointment for the Deputy Governor overseeing monetary policy, the RBI could consider adjusting the MPC's review schedule to incorporate the latest inflation data. A slight shift in the timing of its bi-monthly meetings could make monetary policy more responsive and data-driven, enhancing the committee's ability to justify its stance with real-time economic indicators.

- ▶ सामान्य मानसून को मानते हुए, मुद्रास्फीति में और गिरावट आने की उम्मीद है और धीरे-धीरे 4% लक्ष्य के साथ संरेखित होगी।

### मिश्रित मांग रुझान

- ▶ ग्रामीण मांग में सुधार हो रहा है, जबकि शहरी खपत कमजोर बनी हुई है।
- ▶ उच्च रोजगार, बजट से कर लाभ और कम मुद्रास्फीति से घरेलू खपत को समर्थन मिलने की उम्मीद है।

### मुद्रा और बाहरी क्षेत्र की स्थिरता

- ▶ आरबीआई किसी विशिष्ट विनिमय दर को लक्षित नहीं करता है, लेकिन अत्यधिक बाजार अस्थिरता को कम करने के लिए हस्तक्षेप करता है।
- ▶ भारत का विदेशी मुद्रा भंडार \$630.6 बिलियन (31 जनवरी, 2025 तक) है, जो 10 महीने से अधिक के आयात को कवर करता है।
- ▶ चालू खाता घाटा एक स्थायी स्तर पर रहने की उम्मीद है।

### UPSC Prelims PYQ : 2017

**प्रश्न: मौद्रिक नीति समिति (एमपीसी) के संबंध में निम्नलिखित में से कौन सा कथन सही है/हैं?**

1. यह आरबीआई की बेंचमार्क ब्याज दरें तय करता है।
2. यह आरबीआई के गवर्नर सहित 12 सदस्यीय निकाय है और हर साल इसका पुनर्गठन किया जाता है।
3. यह केंद्रीय वित्त मंत्री की अध्यक्षता में कार्य करता है।

नीचे दिए गए कोड का उपयोग करके सही उत्तर चुनें:

- (a) केवल 1
- (b) केवल 1 और 2
- (c) केवल 3
- (d) केवल 2 और 3

**उत्तर: a)**

तमिलनाडु के तट पर ओलिव रिडले कछुओं की मृत्यु की संख्या में नाटकीय वृद्धि हुई है, 31 जनवरी तक 1,200 शव पाए गए।



Fishermen and people from the Tamil Nadu Forest Department bury a dead Olive Ridley turtle that was washed ashore. S. JITHU/ANILKUMAR

## A surge of dead sea turtles in the sand

Hundreds of Olive Ridley sea turtle carcasses have been found since the first week of January in the Chennai and Chengalpattu districts. Conservationists say the number of deaths is three times the usual number during the mating season and have sounded alarm bells about bottom trawling, the widespread use of fishing gear, and plastic pollution. **Geetha Srinathi** reports on the tragedy along the coastline.

It is a sunny day in January. A. Prakash, 40, sits on a boat in Kovilam, off the East Coast Road (ECR) in Chengalpattu district of Tamil Nadu. He has just returned from a fishing trip where he saw 10 Olive Ridley sea turtle carcasses floating in the sea. "We fishermen have been seeing many such carcasses every day since the beginning of the year," he says, perturbed.

Prakash points to an elderly woman nearby, who comes to pick up a basket of tiger prawns from the boat, and says her son helps the Forest Department bury the carcasses. Placing the basket deftly on her head, Kani, 65, says, "My son just buried it and came home tired and hungry."

In the Chennai and Chengalpattu districts, located along the 1,076 kilometre-long coastline of Tamil Nadu, many people recall seeing dead Olive Ridley sea turtles washed ashore this year. C. Gnanasekar, 44, a fisherman from Uthandi, off ECR, spotted four of them in the first week of January. Raju Eai, 66, from Iyambalam in Chennai, says he has seen about 80 since the first week of the year. Maru, a nature enthusiast, says the sea at Nemmeli lagoon in Chengalpattu.

Olive Ridley turtles, which are found in warm waters, such as the southern Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans, haul themselves up on to India's eastern shore every year by the tens of thousands and lay eggs in an event known as *arribada* (termed by sea in Spanish). While Odisha is a mass nesting site for Olive Ridley turtles in India, thousands of these small wild animals also come sporadically to nest between December and April along the Tamil Nadu coastline, a lifeline for millions who depend on fishing for their livelihood. The biodiversity and eco-sensitive *taluk* of Mannar, located in the districts of Thoothukudi and Ramanathapuram in the south, is an essential feeding site for these turtles. The creatures then migrate to Odisha, West Bengal, and beyond.

Along the 34-km-long coast from the Marina Beach in Chennai to Kovilam in Chengalpattu, seeing dead sea turtles on the shore during mating season is not unusual — every year, an average of 250 dead turtles can be found, says Shrinan Krishnan, a volunteer with the Students Sea Turtle Conservation Network (SSTCN). However, this year, until January 31, conservationists had counted 1,200 dead sea turtles, more than three times the normal figure. The Tamil Nadu Forest Department provided a more conservative estimate (704 turtles until January 23). The department has refused to provide numbers since then.

To make matters worse, the number of sea turtle nests along the shore has been unusually low. "Last year, there were to nest have died. All the dead female turtles we bury have eggs in their bodies," says Gnanasekar, who has been working with the TREE Foundation, a marine conservation organisation, for two decades.

**Deaths from the sea**  
Olive Ridelies are the smallest of the seven sea turtle species. They weigh up to 45 kilograms.

The turtles are like the daughters of our village. They come back to their home to have children.

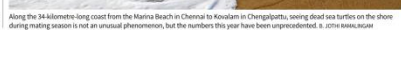
**R. SANKAR**  
Fisherman of Nemmeli

Sea turtles play a crucial role in the marine ecosystem. By feeding on crustaceans that live on the seabed, they help release the oxygen that is trapped there. They maintain healthy seagrass levels by nibbling on seagrass and algae. They provide shelter for commercially important fish species and control jellyfish populations that could otherwise harm fish larvae.

In Tamil Nadu, conservationists and fishermen refer to Olive Ridley turtles as "guests" and even "god". For fishermen such as A. Palayam, 62, from Vayalpuram in Besant Nagar in Chennai, sea turtles have a cultural and spiritual significance. "Our *luzi amma* (little mother) is important for us," he says. In addition to the creature's cultural significance, fishfolk view sea turtles as a symbol of a healthy ecosystem.

Every year, Olive Ridelies pore out of the sea, crowd the shore, give birth, and then wait to be swept into the sea again. Referring to his 8, Santhak, 37, a resident of Nemmeli, says, "The turtles are like the daughters of our village. They come back to their home to have children." Sankar says she has been seeing an unusually high number of dead turtles this nesting season.

In Chennai, one of the few metropolitan cities in India where these sea turtles come to nest, it is not just fishfolk who speak passionately about turtles; conservationists and students sport T-shirts urging people to save turtles and set off at midnight during the nesting season to scour dark



Along the 34-kilometre-long coast from the Marina Beach in Chennai to Kovilam in Chengalpattu, seeing dead sea turtles on the shore during mating season is not an unusual phenomenon, but the numbers this year have been unprecedent. S. JITHU/ANILKUMAR

When trawl boats often encroach into restricted areas, it increases the risk of turtle entanglement and death.

**SEKARAN RAMAN**  
Founder, TREE Foundation

deaths emerged, the Tamil Nadu government formed a task force headed by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden, Rakesh Kumar Dogra. On January 27, the task force decided to strengthen regulations on trawl fishing, enforce the use of Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs), and restrict the horsepower of boat engines.

TEDs are metal grids designed to allow turtles to escape from trawl nets. But fishfolk have expressed concerns that these devices could reduce their catch. A fisherman working on a mechanised boat in Kattimeda explains that with dwindling resources in the ocean, even a small fall in the catch can have a significant impact on his profits. "There have been no efforts from the Fisheries Department to introduce improved TED models or compensate fishermen for the months they are required to use them," he says.

Kumar reiterates this. He says TEDs do not result in significant catch loss. He explains that larger fish typically do not travel in schools and are not often caught in trawl nets.

The government has also increased joint patrols involving the Fisheries Department, Forest Department, Indian Coast Guard, and Marine Police. According to Dogra, long-term studies and monitoring, including telemetry research, will also begin soon. Plans have also been put in place to involve police authorities in monitoring and addressing trawler violations.

Meanwhile, the Southern Bench of the National Green Tribunal took suo motu notice of the issue on January 19 and criticised the Tamil Nadu government for failing to regulate trawlers and enforce the use of TEDs despite previous orders.

The surge in turtle deaths also coincided with an unusually rapid monsoon season. Fishermen report that the sea has been particularly turbulent as the north-east monsoon of 2024 persisted well beyond its usual last date of December 31, as per the India Meteorological Department.

Palayam says that it's not fair to place the blame solely on fishermen. He has been tracking currents and wind patterns every day since 2008 and notes that this season has been unusual. "During the onset of the Tamil That month, the sea is typically calm. But that hasn't been the case this year. The *ohai* (easterly) current could push objects back to the shore, which could explain how dead carcasses from Andhra Pradesh could be washing ashore in Chennai," he says.

**A collaborative effort**  
Kavik Shankar, an ecologist and author of *From Soap to Superstar: The Story of Sea Turtle Conservation along the Andhra Coast*, believes that the challenge lies in improving compliance with the engagement of all stakeholders, especially traditional fishermen. Shankar also points out that a specific focus on turtle conservation can sometimes be counter-productive, leading to conflicts between sectors.

"Sea turtle populations are increasing in many parts of the world, including on the east coast of India, but we need to make fishing regulations effective for the integrity of coastal ecosystems because bottom trawling is a destructive practice. Trawling tends to tear up the seafloor, causing damage to the entire habitat, not just turtles," he says.

Kumar says protecting critical turtle habitats can also benefit local fishermen. "When we see sea areas for turtles, it's not just good for conservation, but also supports the livelihoods of artisanal fishermen, who do not go venture deep into the sea," he says.

This is not an easy task, he adds. "The Tamil Nadu Forest Department must collaborate closely with fishermen, while the Fisheries Department needs to take a more serious approach to understanding where and what type of fishing is occurring," he says.

The pressure on the marine industry is immense, with demands for both local consumption and exports. "We need to conduct tracking studies specific to this coast. We can't just replicate what works in other regions," Kumar insists.

Seban calls for a more unified approach that includes identifying key mating and congregation areas in the sea. "This strategy should involve the Fisheries Department and local communities more closely," he says. However, the department has limited resources and manpower, which makes it difficult to enforce regulations effectively.

Monitoring such vast ocean areas is also a logistical challenge. "Collaboration between fishermen, conservation groups, and the use of technological tools like apps to track turtle activity will be crucial," he says.

Fishermen point out that in addition to trawlers, gill nets, and squid nets, the sea turtles face significant threats from the plastic waste that floods the ocean. "Why can't the government build a structure to prevent plastics from entering the sea," asks Gnanasekar.

Palayam also raises concerns about the growing number of hard structures, such as groynes, being built along Tamil Nadu's sandy beaches, which damage the nesting habitats.

"Over the years, we have noticed that when the turtles come to nest, they find the sand polluted and return without nesting," says Anilshankar.

Saving the turtles is about safeguarding the future of both the sea and the people who rely on it. Sankar says, "I remember my father offering prayers if a sea turtle accidentally got caught in his net. He would go out to sea for a day. If the turtles are in trouble, how will we survive?"

## समाचार का विश्लेषण:

- मृत्यु दर सामान्य वार्षिक औसत से काफी अधिक है, जिससे संरक्षणवादियों और स्थानीय शेरफोक के बीच चिंता बढ़ गई है।
- विशेषज्ञ बढ़ती मृत्यु दर के लिए विनाशकारी शिग प्रथाओं जैसे कि बॉटम ट्राॅलिंग और समुद्री नियमों के लगातार उल्लंघन को दोषी ठहराते हैं।
- अशांत मानसून धाराओं ने भी संकट में योगदान दिया है, जिससे लुप्तप्राय प्रजातियों के लिए स्थिति और खराब हो गई है।

- ▶ मृत्यु दर में खतरनाक वृद्धि ने सरकार को सख्त समुद्री संरक्षण उपायों को लागू करने के लिए कार्रवाई और कानूनी जांच के लिए प्रेरित किया है।
- ▶ संरक्षणवादी और हितधारक ओलिव रिडले कछुओं की रक्षा और समुद्री पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र संतुलन बनाए रखने के लिए स्थायी शिंग समाधानों का आग्रह कर रहे हैं।

### **ऑलिव रिडले कछुआ**

- ▶ ऑलिव रिडले कछुआ सबसे छोटी और सबसे प्रचुर समुद्री कछुओं की प्रजाति है, जो हिंद महासागर सहित गर्म उष्णकटिबंधीय जल में पाई जाती है।
- ▶ यह ओडिशा के गहिरमाथा और रुशिकुल्या समुद्र तटों पर विशेष रूप से अरिबाडा नामक सामूहिक घोंसले के शिकार की घटनाओं के लिए प्रसिद्ध है।
- ▶ आईयूसीएन रेड लिस्ट के तहत इसे संवेदनशील के रूप में सूचीबद्ध किया गया है और वन्यजीव संरक्षण अधिनियम, 1972 की अनुसूची I के तहत संरक्षित किया गया है, इसके खतरों में आकस्मिक बायकैच, आवास की हानि और प्रदूषण शामिल हैं।
- ▶ भारत समुद्री मत्स्य विनियमन अधिनियम और मौसमी शिंग प्रतिबंधों के माध्यम से कछुओं के संरक्षण को लागू करता है।
- ▶ कछुआ बहिष्करण उपकरण (TEDs) और तटीय निगरानी जैसे संरक्षण प्रयास ओलिव रिडले संरक्षण के लिए महत्वपूर्ण हैं।



यह समाचार महाराष्ट्र के सिंधुदुर्ग जिले के पारंपरिक नाट्य रूप दशावतार पर प्रकाश डालता है।



## The men who play women under the stars

For centuries, men in Maharashtra's Sindhudurg region and parts of northern Goa have been playing women characters in Dashaavtar performances that tell stories of Indian mythology. Purnima Sah talks to them to understand the complexities of their identities on and off stage, and their challenges in their roles and in society

Men apply make-up to transform themselves into mythological characters before a Dashaavtar play at Zarap village of Sindhudurg district in Maharashtra. (ANANAS, 2008)

Zarap village of Kudal taluka in Sindhudurg district, Maharashtra, is bustling. It's the evening, and the lanes are alive with Marathi devotional songs and snail selling boys and *vade-pav*, *shakarkhura* and *dhosa*. The village temple and its surroundings are lit up with twinkling lights. The fragrance of night jasmine and incense is in the air.

At 10.30 p.m., the Dashaavtar artists gather at Samir Tendolkar's house for dinner. Samir is the owner of the Tendolkar Paramparik Dashaavtar Narya Mandali, a theatre company that has been conducting shows on stories of Indian mythology for the past 40 years. After eating chicken, rice, and sliced onion for dinner, the artists head to the temple, a lake or to a shop. There, in the green room, behind the curtains of the concrete stage, they get ready for the show that will begin at midnight.

Artists pray to a *potara*, a box where the props used in the show, including the Ganesh mask, are stored. Ganesh is the god of auspicious beginnings. Then, they sit in a row next to each other with a mirror placed over their foreheads that hold costumes, hair, and make-up. Incandescent light bulbs hang over the artists, and a few children from the village squeeze themselves onto a cloth mat and watch two of the men transform into female characters.

Omprakash Chavan, 56, from Amdol village, is playing Rani Sakhami, a character in her 20, in a play from the *Shiva Purana*, a text considered sacred by the Hindus. Ganpat Anshuk Mangrulkar, 52, from Mochemad village is playing Lady, the wife of a drunk farmer. She's a comic in the play, who later saves the queen's life.

Dashaavtar is a form of theatre that relies on improvisation around a mythological narrative, and practitioners claim it has a history of at least 800 years in Maharashtra's Sindhudurg district and northern Goa. Ever since it began, men have been playing women's roles. The men are usually farmers or small business owners or daily wage labourers for some part of the year.

### Gender blender

Every year, the Dashaavtar season begins after the paddy harvest, towards the end of the Navratri fast in October and continues until May of the following year.

The plays are based on a clutch of stories of the 10 incarnations of the Hindu god Vishnu: Matsya (the fish), Kurma (the tortoise), Varaha (the boar), Narasimha (the lion-man), Varaha (the dwarf), Rama from the *Ramayana*, Parasurama (Rama with an axe), Krishna (his brother Kallabharata from the Mahabharata), Buddha, and Kalik (an avatar yet to come).

The temple authorities from villages offer contracts to Dashaavtar theatre companies to perform during the annual fair, called *zatra*. The companies sign up Dashaavtar artists through a verbal contract that they will be touring and performing with them for the season.

In Sindhudurg, there are around 400 Dashaavtar artists, of which about 25 experienced men play women characters. Prashant Tendolkar, 48, who has been playing only male characters for two decades, says, "For a society that has placed men and women in two brackets with a certain identity, we have a long way to go before people see artists as just artists".

He recalls instances when men who play women have difficulty finding a woman to marry. "People question their gender identity which is hard to deal with. Most want to play male characters as they are seen as strong, powerful, and dominating." Prashant has a motorcycle seat cover shop in Tendoli village in Kudal taluka. Dinesh Gore is an 18th generation practitioner, who claims his family started the Dashaavtar in Sindhudurg. His house has what he claims is an



800-year-old Ganesh *mukhamata* (face masks) used by his ancestors. He says his forefathers saw Karnatak's Yalaganga performances and were the need to promote mythological stories in Maharashtra.

Eight brothers split into different locations and formed Dashaavtar companies. Gore, who runs Balloshra Gore Dashaavtar Narya Mandali, claims, "Those days Dashaavtar was only performed by Brahmins, but after the death of the brothers, the Devadasi community (also known as Devadasi, considered low-caste people who clean temples) began performing to keep the tradition alive." Two years ago, Gore formed a women's Dashaavtar group, but participation and acceptance have been low.

A woman on stage

The night grows deeper in Zarap. Omprakash, who says he has performed in over 8,000 renditions across 40 years, cleans his face with water, puts on moisturiser, then layers it with foundation, lipstick on his cheeks for blush, and powder on the whole look into place. He carefully wears eyeliner, kajal, mascara, and shapes his eyebrows using a kajal pencil. He combs his shoulder-length black curly hair into place.

"When I performed the Dashaavtar at Mumbai's L.J. Hospital 25 years ago, the organisers had hired professional make-up artists. That is when I realised how make-up is done. Earlier, I would use powdered colours mixed with water to paint my face," Omprakash says, adding that the same colour is used to paint clay idols. "Many still use it." He was 10 when he first watched *Dashavtar* for *darshan* (just a Marathi stage play, at a high school in his village. He dreamt of training as a professional actor, but the closest he could get was Dashaavtar, because it required no trained acting. All it needed was knowledge of Hindu mythology and a sense of improvisation.

At 14, when his father passed away, his mother took up daily wage labour jobs and sculpted clay idols. Omprakash would draw science projects for his classmates to earn in stationery, to keep his schooling going. "I managed to study till class 10. I performed at the Dashaavtar near our village. I had two reasons to join: one to fill my stomach and another, to act," he says.

Until about 20 years ago, artists would pack a few cloths in a bedsheet and travel with theatre companies for six months, sleep in temples and move to the next location on foot. Omprakash's first performance was of *Utsaha*, the daughter of Balaram. The Malavalkar Dashaavtar company, which is over 100 years old, liked his work and offered him a two-year contract.

Later, he joined Naik Mochemadhar Dashaavtar company and performed with them for 29 years. Omprakash says he has played a 20-year-

old woman, a pregnant woman, a young bride, a queen, Draupadi and many more. He modulates his voice, pitching it higher, making movements that are fluid, to mimic a woman's voice.

Once he wears a blouse, Omprakash covers his chest with a piece of cloth to finish hair and jewelry, before draping the sari. "I grew up around my mother and have watched Pranali (his wife) by society's definition, men are supposed to be hot tempered, strong. But women have layers of emotions that they use when required. I was very nervous when I performed first as I was aware how society perceives a man dressing as a woman," he says, as he slips on green bangles that represent fortune and fertility in a happy married life.

He has been married 22 years now, and Pranali is an ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) worker. They have two sons and a daughter. From being childhood friends to falling in love, Pranali has seen her husband's journey. "I have always loved watching him get dressed and perform. I tell people my husband is more beautiful than I am," she says at their home before he sets out for the performance.

Pranali has her own challenges, and the mention of his name brings a good crowd," says Samir, who admits that there isn't enough money in the business to make it a full-time profession. "For one show we get around 50,000 to 1,00,000 from the temple authorities. I distribute some among the artists and the rest is used for expenses. A company does at least 200 shows each season," says Samir, who is a mechanic and owns a garage.

The future

Ravi Bhabhan Chavare, Director of Maharashtra's Cultural Affairs Department, says that for the last 25 years, the State government has been organising Dashaavtar festivals at different locations in the Konkan region. This year's festival is across January and February.

In March, at the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat, a Central government programme aimed at fostering cultural exchanges, Dashaavtar will be performed in Odisha. "Maharashtra has over 350 art forms and we can only select five for the league," Chavare says.

There are more than 70 troupes who perform Dashaavtar. Our aim is to preserve and promote the art form by organising such festivals. It is not the fault of the audience if they lose interest in Dashaavtar. It is up to us to keep them coming back to our performances," says Omprakash, who refuses to join social media to promote Dashaavtar. "Only those looking for validation need such tricks".

In Omprakash and Pranali's home, set in the middle of open land, the walls are covered with photographs of performances. There are dresses and awards next to each other on a table. In one of the wooden cupboards with a glass front are a few props. One is a baby wrapped in a cloth. "When I play the role of a mother, I carry this doll with me," Omprakash says.

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## Daily News Analysis

- इस रूप में सुधार, संगीत और प्रतीकात्मक सहारा शामिल है। कलाकार, अक्सर किसान या छोटे व्यापारी, पूरक आय के लिए दशावतार पर निर्भर रहते हैं।
- सामाजिक मानदंडों के विकास के बावजूद, प्रदर्शनों के बारे में लैंगिक धारणाएँ महत्वपूर्ण बनी हुई हैं, जो महिला भूमिकाएँ निभाने वाले अभिनेताओं की सामाजिक स्वीकृति को प्रभावित करती हैं।



# Technology and the challenge of equitable education

In India, the 1990s and the early 2000s were a time of education activities on a mass scale. But results from the nationwide Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) surveys of that period indicated that while enrolment and infrastructure indicators showed a rush to schools, learning indicators pointed to no change. At the same time, computers, mobile phones, and digital technology were making waves. It was a time of many possibilities and promises with digital solutions and businesses. However, it was when the COVID-19 pandemic struck that the digital revolution hit the ground in rural India. This is reflected very well in ASER data.

## Smartphone use and rural households

In 2018, nearly 90% of rural households had simple mobile phones and 36% had smartphones. In 2022, the proportion of households with smartphones had risen to over 74% and, according to ASER 2024, it has grown further to 84% this year. While the percentage of children who have access to a smartphone at home is nearing saturation, the proportion of children aged between 14 and 16 years who own a smartphone has risen from 19% to about 31% within a year.

It is not clear from the ASER data whether mothers of young children have their own phones. This ownership of smartphones is important when it comes to use in supporting young children's learning and their own learning.

The main use of smartphones during the pandemic period was that of a carrier of texts, worksheets, and videos, which were a substitute for textbooks. Virtual training sessions had become common too. As the pandemic faded away, the digital skills learned during the period sustained, although some of the practices became less important and a new excitement began to build around artificial intelligence (AI).

The best promise of the digital revolution was,



**Madhav Chavan**

is a co-founder of Pratham

India lacks a road map in the field of education that allows the promise of technology to be harnessed for those who need it the most

to this writer, in the open and continuing education domain for the underprivileged. The need and the possibilities in India are tremendous. For example, at this time, over 40% mothers of schoolchildren are not schooled or have completed school less than class five. Nearly another 40% are schooled between class six and class 10, and the remaining have completed class 10. Educating mothers so that they can help children is an investment India should make to accelerate and strengthen the education of children.

Over the past 30 years, we have lived through the computer, the Internet, and mobile revolutions, and we are now looking at AI. With every new wave of technology, there is new hope and talk of revolutionising education. By the time the technology becomes affordable, something new and exciting for the privileged shows up on the horizon, but technology has not delivered on its promise where the education of the underprivileged is concerned. One of the biggest constraints is the availability of devices.

But, as ASER 2024 data show, availability of individually owned smartphones is going to be less and less of a constraint. Most rural households already have a smartphone. Getting a second phone may be easier for many families in times to come.

## No language barrier

Hardware, without a doubt, is becoming easily available. Language used to be a major impediment. It is not so any more. Writing or dictation in local languages is now possible. Translation from one language to another is easy. All the tools needed for learning are accessible, if you know what to access, where, and how. But what if there was one place in a village – let us call it school – where questions of what, where, and how were answered by an intelligent device?

Access to schools is complete. But school

attendance is still a problem. In a village or a community, some children go to a private school, some to a government school, others to private classes and some do not go to school at all. This is somewhat of a chaotic situation at the level of the village and also at the larger community level, which reflects in the quality of learning in schools.

During the pandemic, in many villages of Maharashtra, a learning programme was broadcast from a vantage point. It should be possible to work out a curriculum and broadcast schedule in villages so that group learning can be organised. Organising new schools in this manner should be possible, although, initially, there may not be many takers.

Every civilisation has created its own schooling system over the last 5,000 years. Teachers and methods in one education system did not work in another, the curriculum in one country was not a good fit in another. That was because civilisations were separated by time, space, culture, and technology. The age of empires and colonialism started integrating civilisations. Although separated by national boundaries, countries today are integrated by science and technology. Education too is an integrating factor. But so is profit. Every technological innovation, barring those promoted by philanthropists as public goods, has to look for a 'for-profit market'. Where profits cannot be made, innovations find limited use.

The prediction that hardware and devices would become inexpensive has come true but the need for a higher order and bigger hardware is growing with the innovations of AI. Will philanthropic investments be enough to help universalise the innovations that could revolutionise education? As a country, India needs to come up with a road map that allows the promise of technology to be harnessed for the benefit of those who need it the most.

**GS Paper 02 : सामाजिक न्याय - शिक्षा**

**UPSC Mains Practice Question :** ग्रामीण भारत में शिक्षा को बढ़ाने में डिजिटल प्रौद्योगिकी की भूमिका पर चर्चा करें। समान पहुँच और सीखने के परिणाम सुनिश्चित करने में क्या चुनौतियाँ बनी हुई हैं? (250 Words /15 marks)

## संदर्भ:

- ▶ ग्रामीण भारत में डिजिटल तकनीक के विस्तार, खासकर कोविड-19 के बाद, ने शिक्षा की पहुँच में सुधार किया है।
- ▶ हालाँकि, न्यायसंगत शिक्षा और प्रभावी डिजिटल एकीकरण में चुनौतियाँ बनी हुई हैं।

## 1990 और 2000 के दशक की शुरुआत में शिक्षा के रुझान

- ▶ 1990 और 2000 के दशक की शुरुआत में भारत में शिक्षा का बड़े पैमाने पर विस्तार हुआ।
- ▶ उस समय के ASER सर्वेक्षणों की रिपोर्ट में नामांकन और बुनियादी ढाँचे के विकास में वृद्धि देखी गई।
- ▶ हालाँकि, अधिक बच्चों के स्कूल जाने के बावजूद सीखने का स्तर अपरिवर्तित रहा।
- ▶ इस बीच, डिजिटल तकनीक, मोबाइल फोन और कंप्यूटर प्रमुखता प्राप्त कर रहे थे।

## डिजिटल शिक्षा पर कोविड-19 का प्रभाव

- ▶ ग्रामीण भारत में डिजिटल क्रांति ने वास्तव में कोविड-19 महामारी के दौरान गति पकड़ी।
- ▶ ASER डेटा इस बदलाव को दर्शाता है, जो ग्रामीण परिवारों में स्मार्टफोन के उपयोग में वृद्धि दर्शाता है।
- ▶ महामारी से पहले, 2018 में, लगभग 36% ग्रामीण परिवारों के पास स्मार्टफोन थे।
- ▶ 2022 तक यह आंकड़ा 74% और 2024 तक 84% तक पहुँच गया।
- ▶ 14 से 16 वर्ष की आयु के बच्चों का अनुपात जिनके पास व्यक्तिगत रूप से स्मार्टफोन है, सिर्फ़ एक साल में 19% से बढ़कर 31% हो गया।

## शिक्षा के लिए स्मार्टफोन का उपयोग

- ▶ महामारी के दौरान स्मार्टफोन का उपयोग मुख्य रूप से वर्कशीट, वीडियो और ऑनलाइन कक्षाओं तक पहुँचने के लिए किया गया था।
- ▶ छात्रों और शिक्षकों के लिए वर्चुअल प्रशिक्षण सत्र आम हो गए।
- ▶ महामारी के बाद भी, उस दौरान सीखे गए डिजिटल कौशल उपयोगी बने रहे।
- ▶ हालाँकि, यह स्पष्ट नहीं है कि छोटे बच्चों की माताओं के पास स्मार्टफोन है या नहीं, जो बच्चों की शिक्षा का समर्थन करने के लिए महत्वपूर्ण है।

## भारत में डिजिटल शिक्षा के अवसर

- ▶ वंचित समुदायों के लिए खुली और सतत शिक्षा में एक महत्वपूर्ण अवसर निहित है।
- ▶ स्कूली बच्चों की कई माताओं की औपचारिक शिक्षा बहुत कम है:
- ▶ 40% से ज़्यादा बच्चों ने या तो कोई स्कूली शिक्षा नहीं ली है या कक्षा 5 से कम पढ़ाई की है।
- ▶ अन्य 40% ने कक्षा 6 और कक्षा 10 के बीच की पढ़ाई पूरी की है।
- ▶ शेष ने कक्षा 10 पास की है।

- माताओं को शिक्षित करने से उनके बच्चों की शिक्षा में सहायता करने की उनकी क्षमता बढ़ेगी, जिससे यह एक मूल्यवान निवेश बन जाएगा।

### वंचित वर्ग के लिए डिजिटल शिक्षा में चुनौतियाँ

- कई तकनीकी प्रगति के बावजूद, वंचित वर्ग के लिए शिक्षा में उल्लेखनीय सुधार नहीं हुआ है।
- व्यक्तिगत उपकरणों की उपलब्धता एक बड़ी बाधा रही है।
- हालाँकि, ASER 2024 के डेटा से पता चलता है कि स्मार्टफ़ोन का स्वामित्व बढ़ रहा है, जिससे यह सीमा कम हो रही है।
- अधिक परिवारों को निकट भविष्य में दूसरा फ़ोन खरीदना आसान लग सकता है।

### शिक्षा में भाषा संबंधी बाधाओं को तोड़ना

- हार्डवेयर अधिक सुलभ हो गया है, और भाषा संबंधी बाधाएँ कम हो रही हैं।
- स्थानीय भाषा में श्रुतलेख और अनुवाद उपकरण अब सीखना आसान बनाते हैं।
- छात्रों को यह मार्गदर्शन देने में चुनौती बनी हुई है कि उन्हें सीखने के संसाधनों तक क्या, कहाँ और कैसे पहुँचना है।

### स्कूल में उपस्थिति और सीखने की गुणवत्ता से जुड़े मुद्दे

- जबकि ज़्यादातर बच्चों की स्कूलों तक पहुँच है, लेकिन उपस्थिति में कोई अंतर नहीं है।
- गाँवों में निजी स्कूलों, सरकारी स्कूलों या निजी कक्षाओं में पढ़ने वाले बच्चों का मिश्रण है, जबकि कुछ बच्चे स्कूल ही नहीं जाते।
- इसका नतीजा असमान सीखने के नतीजों में होता है।
- महामारी के दौरान, महाराष्ट्र के गाँवों ने छात्रों को सीखने के कार्यक्रम प्रसारित किए।
- ग्रामीण समुदायों में समूह सीखने को व्यवस्थित करने के लिए एक समान मॉडल का इस्तेमाल किया जा सकता है।

### शिक्षा प्रणालियों का विकास

- ऐतिहासिक रूप से, प्रत्येक सभ्यता ने अपनी शिक्षा प्रणाली विकसित की।
- उपनिवेशवाद और वैश्वीकरण ने इन प्रणालियों को एकीकृत किया।
- आज, प्रौद्योगिकी और विज्ञान देशों में शिक्षा प्रणालियों को और जोड़ते हैं।
- हालाँकि, तकनीकी प्रगति अक्सर लाभ के लिए प्रेरित होती है, जो वंचित समूहों तक उनकी उपलब्धता को सीमित करती है।

### निष्कर्ष

- हालाँकि हार्डवेयर सस्ता हो गया है, लेकिन AI और नई तकनीकों के लिए उच्च-क्रम वाले उपकरणों की आवश्यकता होती है।
- परोपकारी निवेश शैक्षिक प्रौद्योगिकी तक पहुँच बढ़ाने में मदद कर सकते हैं।

## Daily News Analysis

- ▶ भारत को यह सुनिश्चित करने के लिए एक सुनियोजित रणनीति की आवश्यकता है कि प्रौद्योगिकी उन लोगों को लाभ पहुँचाए जिन्हें इसकी सबसे अधिक आवश्यकता है।

