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DAILY NEWS DIARY

Of

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FOR PRELIMS AND MAINS

Warm Greetings.

- DnD aims to provide every day news analysis in sync with the UPSC pattern.
- It is targeted at UPSC – Prelims & Mains.
- Daily articles are provided in the form of Question and Answers
- To have a bank of mains questions.
- And interesting to read.
- Providing precise information that can be carried straight to the exam, rather than over dumping.

Enjoy reading.

THE HINDU - TH
INDIAN EXPRESS - IE
BUSINESS LINE - BL
ECONOMIC TIMES - ET
TIMES OF INDIA - TOI



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ESSAY PAPER

Editorial

Q- A questionable quota policy of the Odisha Government betrays a lack of political will in improving government schools. Comment?

INTRODUCTION = Reservation as a tool of social engineering seems to be flavour of the season in India. To add to the competitive populism of caste-based reservations, a few months ago, the Odisha government proposed a 15% reservation for government school students in medical and engineering colleges to reduce “inequity arising” from lack of “physical and economic access to coaching institutions”.

The infographic features a blue and white color scheme. At the top, a photograph shows a group of students in white uniforms walking on a school campus. The main title is 'Odisha Notifies Reservation In Medical & Engineering Courses'. Below this, three key points are listed, each preceded by a pencil icon: 'Reservation of 15% seats in Medical & Engineering colleges of State', 'For students who have passed 10th Board Exam under BSE from Govt High Schools & 12th Board Exam under CHSE from Govt Higher Secondary Schools/Govt Junior Colleges', and 'Such reservations will be horizontal covering all vertical reservations as well as Unreserved Group.' On the right side, there is a portrait of a man in a white kurta with his arms crossed. At the bottom, there are social media handles for Facebook (CMO.Odisha) and Twitter (@CMO_Odisha).

The state machinery hailed it a historic decision. But is it?

A number of reports highlight the poor condition of government schools in many parts of the country. Odisha is no exception. Whether the State government has any serious plan of action to improve the functioning of government schools is not clear. But this decision certainly reflects a lack of political will in improving the state of education in schools.

Failing in its duty -

About 62% of students attend government and government-aided schools in India. The other 38% go to private institutions, some of which belong to the elite category and the rest of which are of questionable quality.

- A much higher percentage of students in Odisha go to government schools. Reserving seats in higher technical institutions for government school students rather than focusing on improving these publicly funded institutions defies all logic.
- By announcing this policy of reservation, the government seems to be admitting that it has failed in its duty to provide the majority of students with good education and equip them with requisite competence to get admission in technical institutions on the basis of their own merit.

What Changed?

Decades ago, students from Odisha had a high success rate in national-level competitive examinations. This was attributed to the strong educational foundation laid in government-run schools. During those days, teachers were known for their unquestionable sincerity and integrity. They were dedicated to their calling and commanded respect from the society. Over time, this seems to have changed.

There is no dearth of ideas or practices that can improve the quality of education in government schools.

- What is lacking is the government's resolve to work on these ideas including capacity building of teachers to implement new pedagogic practices, emphasis on language teaching, filling up vacant teaching posts, and a change in the mindset among people and policymakers that government schools are typically backward and inferior to private schools.
- Instead of addressing relevant issues, government is trying to find a solution which could worsen the problem. The policy of automatically promoting the students to higher classes without passing examinations needs to be scrapped.
- Building an institution is tough. Rebuilding it is even more so. The state can't simply shirk this responsibility of improving education in government schools where an overwhelming majority of the children study.
- Focusing on them will go a long way in building the morale of teachers and students who are likely to grow up with an inferiority complex if flawed policies like the one mentioned above are pursued.

Conclusion

Some may argue that the quota would help some sections of the society which have long been deprived of good education and decent jobs. But this justification can nevertheless be questioned on several grounds. One of them is that the benefits of quota, if any, would be cornered by the creamy layer of students with better access to coaching and additional technology-enabled resources. There might also be an urban bias in the benefit-sharing.

GS 2

❖ Governance

Q- Comment on the farmer aid measures taken by centre amidst the Farm Laws protests?

BACKGROUND = The government on Wednesday increased the minimum support price (MSP) for wheat for the upcoming rabi season to ₹2,015 per quintal, a 2% hike from the ₹1,975 per quintal rate of last year.

HOW THEY STACK UP

Rabi MSP for 2020-21 marketing season that will start from April
In ₹/quintal

Crops	2019-20	2020-21	% Change
Lentil (masur)	4,475	4,800	7.26
Barley	1,440	1,525	5.90
Gram	4,620	4,875	5.51
Safflower	4,945	5,215	5.46
Rapeseed & mustard	4,200	4,425	5.35
Wheat	1,840	1,925	4.61

Source: Government of India

1. Oilseeds and pulses such as mustard, safflower and masoor dal saw higher MSP hikes of up to 8% in a bid to encourage crop diversification.
2. The MSP is the rate at which the government purchases crops from farmers. Currently, rates are fixed for 23 crops, including six crops during the upcoming rabi or winter season for which sowing will begin in October.
3. According to the Centre, the cost of production of wheat for the upcoming marketing season of 2022-23 is ₹1,008 per quintal, meaning that the new MSP of ₹2,015 will result in 100% returns. Rapeseed and mustard farmers, who saw MSP rise 8.6%, or ₹400 per quintal, to a rate of ₹5,050 per quintal can also expect 100% returns. Masoor dal also saw a ₹400 per quintal hike, which means MSP for the lentil will be 7.8% higher than last year, with 79% returns over the cost of production. Chana or gram saw a 2.5% hike in MSP, resulting in 74% returns.
4. The government had decided to fix the MSPs of all kharif and rabi crops at least 1.5 times more than their production cost and this has helped in enhancing the farmers' income.
5. The Centre's decision to procure pulses and oilseeds apart from wheat and paddy is also benefitting farmers.

6. The expected returns to farmers over their cost of production are estimated to be highest in case of wheat and mustard seed (100% each), followed by lentil (79%), gram (74%); barley (60%) and safflower (50%).
7. Concerted efforts were made over the past few years to realign the MSPs in favour of oilseeds, pulses and coarse cereals to encourage farmers to shift to a larger area under these crops and adopt best technologies and farm practices to correct the demand-supply imbalance.

Criticism -


1. The protesting farm unions under the Samyukt Kisan Morcha pointed out that the rate of inflation was higher than the MSP hike for most crops, arguing that in real terms, the MSP for wheat has dropped 4%.
2. The unions are now in the tenth month of protest against the three farm reform laws, which they claim will hurt the MSP regime, and have also demanded a legal guarantee for MSP.

Snippets

❖ Governance

Q- Write a note on the need for the Panel set up to draft Bill on drugs, cosmetics and medical devices?

- The Union government has constituted a committee for framing legislation regarding new drugs, cosmetics and medical devices. The eight-member panel, headed by Drugs Controller General of India **V.G. Somani**
- The separate rules were a good step to allow us to have our own home but the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation [CDSCO] is not letting go. If food can have the FSSAI [Food Safety and Standards Authority of India], we need something similar for devices, which are engineering goods undergoing constant innovation,
- The NITI Aayog Bill to regulate devices separately from drugs and decriminalise minor non-compliances was in the right direction

INDIA IMPORTS 80% OF MED DEVICES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Medical devices market in India is estimated at around \$7 billion ➤ India imports around 80% of medical devices ➤ Medical devices market in India is projected to grow to \$50 billion by 2025 ➤ At present, only 23 medical devices are regulated under the Drugs & Cosmetics Act 	

GS 3

❖ Economic Development

Q- Incentives aim to boost investment in new capacities in man-made fibre apparel, technical textiles. Elaborate?

BACKGROUND = The Union Cabinet approved a ₹10,683 crore Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for the textile sector with a view to “helping India regain its historical dominant status in global textiles trade”.

1. The incentives are designed to encourage investment in new capacities in man-made fibre (MMF) apparel, MMF fabrics, and 10 segments or products of technical textiles.
2. The government expects the scheme to help attract fresh investment of more than ₹19,000 crore, creating an additional 7.5 lakh direct jobs. Investment in the sector would have a multiplier effect especially in job creation.
3. Two-thirds of India’s textile exports now are cotton based whereas 66-70% of world trade in textiles and apparel is MMF-based and technical textiles. India’s focus on the manufacture of textiles in the MMF sector is expected to help boost its ability to compete globally.

Govt. approves

PRODUCTION LINKED INCENTIVE SCHEME FOR TEXTILES

- Incentives worth ₹10,683 crore over 5 years for manufacturing notified products
- Fresh Investment of more than ₹19,000 crore
- Leveraging economies of scale, additional production turnover of over 3 lakh crore

Key Features -**1. Two categories -**

1. The scheme envisages two levels of investment with different sets of incentives. While any person or firm can invest a minimum ₹300 crore in plant, machinery, and civil works to produce the identified products to ensure eligibility for the PLI.

- II. In the second category a minimum investment of ₹100 crore would make an individual or firm eligible to apply for the incentives.
2. Priority would be given for investment in aspirational districts, tier-three, tier-four towns and rural areas.
 3. The scheme is expected to benefit States such as Gujarat, U.P., Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Andhra, Telangana and Odisha.
 4. A portal would be opened to receive applications and the plan is to allow two months time to the units to apply for benefits under the scheme.
 5. Applicants would have two years as investment period and 2024-2025 would be the 'performance' year. The incentive flow would start in 2025-2026 and extend for five years.
 6. S.K. Sundararaman, chairman of the Indian Technical Textile Association, said the PLI plan, along with other schemes, was 'a boon' to the MMF sector. It would help accelerate decisions by firms eyeing the sector.



Q- Consider the following statements:

1. People have fundamental right to drinking water
2. Water being supplied daily for at least a few hours is a part of the right.

Which of the above statements is/are INCORRECT regarding the Fundamental Rights?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 and 2



Q- Which if the following statements describes the objective of the newly launched "Vidyanjali 2.0" Portal by the central government?

- a. Education Portal for Mobile and Web Application in school management
- b. To coordinate private contributions for school development.
- c. Integrated platform for managing school schemes and funds allocated for the same
- d. None of the above

Ans – b

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