

Mains Master

Employment scenario in India grim, says ILO report

Context

- India is facing challenges in its employment landscape, impacting job opportunities and growth.
- An ILO report provides insights into these challenges and their implications.

Background

- Rising unemployment among educated youth.
- Insufficient growth in non-agricultural sectors to absorb workers transitioning from agriculture.
- Dominance of informal work and declining share of regular, secure employment.
- Educated Unemployment: The share of unemployed youth with secondary or higher education has doubled since 2000.
 - Explanation: This highlights a significant mismatch between India's education system and the demands of the labor market. More people are getting educated, but the types of jobs available do not require or utilize their skills.
 - Potential Consequences:
 - Increased frustration and disillusionment among the educated youth.
 - Social unrest and instability if a large segment of educated people feel their potential is wasted.
 - Brain drain, as educated individuals seek opportunities abroad.

Skills Gap: Many young workers lack essential digital and workplace skills.

- Explanation: Even with education, many young people lack the practical skills needed in a modern workplace. This includes basic computer literacy, as well as soft skills like communication, problem-solving, and teamwork.
- Potential Consequences:
 - Limits the employability of educated youth, further exacerbating unemployment.
 - Hinders productivity and innovation potential within Indian businesses.
 - Makes it harder to attract foreign investment and integrate into global supply chains.

Labor Market Trends: Some paradoxical improvements in indicators, likely linked to economic distress, not robust growth.

- Explanation: The ILO report cautions that while some labor market indicators have improved lately, this might be a result of people taking any available job out of necessity during tough economic times, rather than a sign of a healthy, growing economy.
- Potential Consequences:
 - Precarious employment: People may be trapped in low-wage, informal sector jobs with little security or opportunity for advancement.
 - Disguised unemployment: People may appear employed but are significantly underemployed and not earning a living wage.

Persistent Inequalities: Women and marginalized social groups (Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes) face greater barriers to quality employment.

- Explanation: Deep-rooted social and cultural biases persist, hindering access to quality jobs for women and marginalized groups, despite policies aimed at inclusion.
- Potential Consequences:
 - Underutilized economic potential: India is missing out on the skills and talent of a large portion of its population.
 - Perpetuation of poverty and inequality: Social groups continue to be economically disadvantaged, limiting social mobility.
 - Social tension and unrest: Inequality fuels resentment and can lead to instability.

Learning for Policymakers

- The mismatch: The mismatch between increasing education and the lack of corresponding high-quality job opportunities needs urgent attention.
- Quality over Quantity: The focus should be on creating better jobs, not just more jobs. This means formalization of employment with social protection.
- Skills Development: There's a need for significant upskilling of the workforce to meet the demands of the modern economy.
- Addressing Inequality: Policies must actively reduce barriers to employment for women and marginalized social groups.

Way Forward

- Targeted Sectoral Growth: Policies encouraging growth in sectors with a higher potential for quality job creation.
- Investment in Education & Skills: Revamping education and vocational training to better align with labor market needs.
- Formalization of Employment: Incentivizing the formal economy to increase job security and benefits.
- Progressive Social Policies: Creating policies explicitly aimed at reducing gender and social inequality in the labor market.

Sensing China threat, India joins Sri Lanka in race for seabed mining; applies for exploration rights

Context

- Rising geopolitical tensions: The Indian Ocean is an increasingly contested region, with major powers like India and China vying for strategic advantage. Control over seabed resources could become a key point of leverage.
- Race for seabed resources: Minerals found deep below the ocean floor are critical components for high-tech industries (e.g., batteries and electronics). Nations want to secure access to these resources for economic and technological advancement.

Background

- Importance of seabed mining: While extremely challenging, deep-sea mining holds the potential to unlock vast mineral resources that could reduce reliance on traditional land-based mining.
- International Seabed Authority (ISA): Established under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the ISA oversees activities and ensures equitable distribution of benefits from deep-sea mining in international waters.
- Challenges of deep-sea mining: This includes extreme technical complexity, high costs, and potential environmental risks to deep-sea ecosystems that are poorly understood.

What is Deep Sea Mining?

- Types of resources: Deep-sea mining targets primarily polymetallic nodules (potato-sized lumps containing valuable metals), polymetallic sulphides (formed near hydrothermal vents), and cobalt-rich crusts (found on seamounts).
- Environmental concerns: Potential impacts include habitat destruction, sediment plumes, noise pollution, and the release of toxic substances that could disrupt fragile deep-sea ecosystems.

The China Threat

- Strategic competition: China's growing presence in the Indian Ocean is viewed with concern by India. Securing seabed mineral resources bolsters China's economic power and technological capabilities.
- India's counter-move: India is asserting its own interests in the region. By applying for exploration rights, India aims to both secure potential resources and limit Chinese dominance in the area.



India's Preparedness

- Strategic claim: India's overlapping claim with Sri Lanka emphasizes its determination to access these resources, even if it means potential legal disputes.
- Technological development: The Matsya 6000 submersible will provide India with the capability to independently explore and potentially exploit deep-sea resources.

India's Past Experience in Deep Sea Mining

- Existing ISBA contract: India's prior success demonstrates its recognized capability in this field and strengthens its position when negotiating future exploration contracts.
- Technological expertise: India has developed a strong knowledge base in deep-sea exploration technology, giving it an advantage in surveying and potentially mining these areas.

Government Initiatives

- Deep Ocean Mission: This dedicated program demonstrates India's commitment to deep-sea exploration and resource development as a priority.
- Investment and support: The government is fostering innovation and building necessary infrastructure for the long-term success of deep-sea mining activities.

Way Forward

- Technological advancement: India needs ongoing investment in submersibles, mapping, remote-operated vehicles, and extraction technology to remain competitive.
- International collaboration: Partnerships with other nations can help share costs, develop best practices, and mitigate the environmental impacts of deep-sea mining.
- Environmental focus: India must prioritize the study of deep-sea ecosystems and develop extraction methods that minimize harm.
- ISBA leader: India can shape the future of deep-sea mining by actively advocating for responsible, sustainable, and equitable regulations.

India supports Philippines' sovereignty, says Jaishankar; sparks Beijing response

Context:

- Visit to Manila: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar visited Manila as part of a diplomatic tour that also included stops in Singapore and Malaysia.
- Escalating Tensions: Tensions between the Philippines and Chinese navies have intensified due to aggressive maritime actions by China, particularly in the South China Sea (SCS) region.
- Philippines' Protest: The Philippines lodged a formal protest against China's actions, including an incident where the Chinese Coast Guard interfered with a Filipino ship transporting supplies to troops stationed in the Spratly Islands.

Background:

- China's Maritime Activities: China's Navy and Coast Guard have been accused of violating the territorial waters of other countries and making expansive territorial claims in the South China Sea.
- UNCLOS Framework: The 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) serves as the primary legal framework governing maritime disputes, emphasizing the principles of international law and sovereignty.

Sovereignty Issues with Philippines:

- Chinese Aggression: China's assertive actions in the South China Sea have raised sovereignty concerns for neighboring countries such as the Philippines, Vietnam, and Indonesia.
- BRP Sierra Madre Incident: The Philippines protested against China's interference with one of its ships, the BRP Sierra Madre, which was attempting to deliver supplies to Filipino troops in the Spratly Islands.

India's Stand:

- Support for Philippines: External Affairs Minister Jaishankar reiterated India's firm support for the sovereignty of the Philippines during his visit to Manila.
- Adherence to UNCLOS: India emphasized the importance of all parties adhering to UNCLOS as the foundational legal framework governing maritime disputes.

- Maritime Cooperation: India highlighted the need for enhanced maritime cooperation between like-minded countries in the Indo-Pacific region to address shared challenges and promote stability.

China's Response:

- Call for Respect: The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded to Jaishankar's comments, urging both India and the Philippines to respect China's territorial sovereignty.
- Rejection of Interference: China asserted that maritime disputes should be resolved directly between concerned countries and criticized third-party interference in the South China Sea issue.
- Emphasis on Sovereignty: China emphasized the importance of respecting its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights in the South China Sea.

Critical outlook :

- No Immediate Response: India's External Affairs Ministry did not provide an immediate response to China's remarks, suggesting a need for careful diplomatic consideration.
- Monitoring Brahmos Deal: Beijing closely monitors India's sale of Brahmos missiles to the Philippines, indicating potential implications for regional security dynamics.
- Areas of Cooperation: India and the Philippines discussed various areas of growing cooperation, including trade, digital infrastructure, and naval deployments.
- Emphasis on Bilateral Engagement: Both countries highlighted the importance of continued diplomatic engagement and collaboration in various international forums to address maritime tensions effectively.
- Need for Diplomatic Efforts: The situation underscores the importance of sustained diplomatic efforts to manage maritime tensions and promote stability in the South China Sea region.

Inaccessibility and cost cripple efforts to treat sickle cell disease

Context

- Sickle cell disease (SCD) is a serious health problem in India, disproportionately affecting marginalized tribal communities.
- Access to healthcare, including diagnostics and necessary treatments, is severely limited for these populations.

Background

- SCD is an inherited blood disorder causing red blood cells to become sickle-shaped.
- Complications of SCD include anemia, organ damage, severe pain, and shortened lifespan.
- India has a high number of SCD births, concentrated within tribal populations.

What is sickle cell disease?

- SCD is an inherited disorder in which the red blood cells form an abnormal, sickle shape.
- This abnormal shape limits oxygen flow in the body, leading to damage and pain.

Treatment available

- Hydroxyurea: A drug reducing complications, but often unavailable in India.
- Blood transfusions: Limited access even in emergencies.
- Bone marrow transplants (BMT): Potential cure, but expensive, requires matched donors, and has long wait times.
- CRISPR-based therapies: Approved in the US, but exorbitantly expensive (\$2-3 million), and requires advanced medical infrastructure.

Issues involved

- Healthcare inaccessibility: Basic care is difficult to access, especially in marginalized communities.
- Treatment costs: Even where treatments are present, high costs prevent access.
- Equity and access: Advanced therapies like CRISPR remain out of reach due to costs and lack of infrastructure, raising concerns about fairness.

Prelims Booster

Judicial Custody vs Police Custody

Judicial Custody

Meaning: Judicial custody involves sending an accused person to jail by court order, typically after the police file a charge sheet or the accused surrenders.

Purpose:

Prevent Interference: To prevent tampering with evidence or influencing witnesses.

Ensure Presence at Trial: Guarantees the accused's availability for court appearances.

Protect the Accused: May be for the person's safety in certain cases.

Authority: The magistrate or court exercises direct control over the accused in judicial custody.

Location: The accused is held in jail under the supervision of jail authorities.

Duration:

Bailable Offenses: Maximum of 60 days.

Non-Bailable Offenses: Maximum of 90 days.

Extensions: Granted with court justification for exceeding time limits.

Interrogation: Police can interrogate the accused in judicial custody only with court permission, ensuring protection against coercion.

Police Custody

Meaning: Police custody involves the physical detention of an accused person by the police post-arrest during the investigation phase.

Purpose:

Investigation: To gather evidence, interrogate the accused, and recover stolen property related to the alleged crime.

Authority: The police have primary control over the accused in police custody.

Location: The accused is typically held in a police lock-up or designated detention facility.

Duration:

Maximum: 24 hours from the time of arrest (excluding travel time).

Extensions: Can be granted by a magistrate up to a total of 15 days, with the police required to provide cause for further detention.

Interrogation: The police have the right to interrogate the accused without specific court permission.

Ugadi Jathara



Ugadi: Ugadi is a significant festival celebrated in parts of South India, including Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka, marking the commencement of the Hindu lunar new year.



Pre-Ugadi Jatharas: Pre-Ugadi Jatharas are festive fairs held in the days leading up to the Ugadi festival, often near temples or other cultural sites.

A heralding Ugadi



Rhythms and songs: Artists perform traditional dances at the temple of Sri Kanakamma Amman in Madhupalem in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, in connection with the 'jatharas' (fairs) organized ahead of the Ugadi festival. (AP Photo)

Features of Jatharas:

🎵 Cultural Performances: Including music, dance, and traditional shows.

🛖 Stalls and Vendors: Offering local crafts, food, and festive items.

🙏 Religious Rituals: Involving offerings and prayers at temples.

👥 Community Gatherings: Providing an opportunity for people to socialize and celebrate the onset of the new year.

Medaram Jathara: This is the specific jathara held in Telangana, India, that's being considered for UNESCO status. It's a centuries-old tribal festival honoring the goddesses Sammakka and Saralamma.

Way forward

- Prioritize basic care: Provide access to effective drugs like hydroxyurea and essential treatments such as blood transfusions.
- Reduce cost barriers: Address high costs that inhibit access to care.
- Build health infrastructure: Invest resources to make the healthcare system more accessible and responsive to the needs of those affected by SCD.
- Ethical considerations: Ensure patient and community voices are heard when considering advanced therapies, to create a more equitable system.

The need to curb black carbon emissions

Context

- India's commitment to net-zero emissions by 2070 at the COP26 climate talks.
- While carbon dioxide reduction will be crucial, short-term measures are needed to address other harmful emissions.

Background

- Black carbon is a dangerous pollutant with both health and climate impacts.
- India has a serious problem with black carbon emissions, mainly from residential burning of biomass.

What is black carbon?

- Black carbon is a type of soot formed during the inefficient burning of fuels like biomass (wood, dung) and fossil fuels.
- It significantly contributes to global warming.
- Black carbon poses serious health risks, including cardiovascular disease, respiratory issues, and premature death.

How is it different from brown carbon?

- While both are harmful particulate matter, they have distinct sources and effects:
 - Black carbon: Primarily from incomplete combustion of fossil fuels and biomass. Strong warming effect.
 - Brown carbon: Formed from burning of biomass and biofuels. Can have warming or cooling effects depending on its composition.

Implications on health

- Exposure to black carbon increases risks of:
 - Heart disease
 - Respiratory illnesses
 - Birth complications
 - Premature death
- Women and children suffer disproportionately due to being more exposed to indoor air pollution from traditional cooking methods.

Government initiatives

- Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY): This scheme aims to provide clean cooking fuel (LPG) to poor households.
- PMUY has been successful in creating infrastructure and reducing some reliance on biomass.
- Challenges:
 - High refill costs of LPG lead to continued use of traditional fuels.
 - Lack of LPG distribution in remote areas hinders access.

Way forward

- Prioritize black carbon reduction alongside CO2 mitigation for short-term benefits.
- Ensure affordability of LPG through continuous subsidies.
- Close gaps in the LPG distribution network for last-mile connectivity.
- Explore local production of cleaner fuels like coal-bed methane (CBM) from biomass.
- India can establish itself as a leader in addressing black carbon, improving public health and contributing to climate goals.