DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 19-08-2024

GS-2

1. **Egg or sperm has no legal right on child: Bombay High Court**
2. **Jiyo parsi scheme**

GS-3

3. **Long Subclinical TB**
4. **Does India have laws on the movement of ballast water?**
5. **FloodWatch India**

Egg or sperm has no legal right on child: Bombay High Court

Syllabus: GS-2; Judicial Interventions

Context

- *A sperm or egg donor has no legal right on the child and cannot claim to be its biological parent, the Bombay High Court held while allowing a 42-year-old woman visitation rights to her five-year-old twin daughters.*

What is the case?

- *The woman, in her plea, said her daughters, born via surrogacy, were living with her husband and younger sister, who was the egg donor.*
- *The petitioner's husband had claimed since his sister-in-law was the egg donor, she had a legitimate right to be called a biological parent of the twins and that his wife had no right over them.*
- *A single bench of Justice Milind Jadhav, however, refused to accept this contention, citing that though the petitioner's younger sister was the egg donor, she has no legitimate right to claim that she is a biological parent of the twins.*

To know

- **Legal Ruling:** *The Bombay High Court ruled that neither an egg donor nor a sperm donor has any legal rights over a child born through assisted reproductive technology (ART).*
- **Rights and Obligations:** *The court clarified that all rights and responsibilities regarding the child rest solely with the intended parents.*
- **Relevant Law:** *This decision aligns with the provisions of the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Act, 2021.*
- **Genetic Link:** *The genetic connection of a donor does not entitle them to parental rights or obligations.*
- **Child's Best Interests:** *The ruling reinforces the legal protection of the child's best interests and the integrity of the intended family formed through ART.*
- **Parental Rights Clarity:** *The judgment ensures that donors cannot claim custody or visitation rights, providing legal clarity and security for ART families.*

Jiyo parsi scheme

Syllabus: GS-2; Government policies and Interventions

Context

- *The Jiyo Parsi Scheme is a government initiative launched by the Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India, with the primary objective of reversing the declining population trend of the Parsi community in India.*
- *This community, known for its rich cultural heritage and contributions to the country's development, has been facing a steady decline in its population due to various demographic challenges.*

Key Objectives

- **Population Stabilization***: The scheme aims to stabilize and increase the population of the Parsi community by addressing the issues of infertility and delayed marriages.*
- **Awareness and Advocacy***: Promotes awareness about the declining population trend and encourages early marriage and childbirth within the community.*
- **Support for Infertility** *Treatment: Provides financial assistance to Parsi couples who need medical interventions like In-Vitro Fertilization (IVF) to conceive.*
- **Counseling Services***: Offers counseling for couples and individuals to address concerns related to marriage, family planning, and parenting.*

Components of the Scheme

- **Advocacy and Outreach***: This component focuses on creating awareness about the declining population and the importance of increasing family size within the Parsi community.*
- **Medical Assistance***: Financial support is provided for infertility treatment, including IVF and other assisted reproductive technologies (ART).*
- **Counseling and Support***: Counseling services are provided to address mental and emotional concerns related to family planning, marriage, and parenthood.*

Impact and Significance

- **Population Growth:** *The scheme has contributed to a gradual increase in the birth rate within the Parsi community, helping to stabilize its population.*
- **Cultural Preservation***: By addressing the declining population, the scheme plays a crucial role in preserving the unique cultural and religious heritage of the Parsis.*
- **Empowerment:** *The scheme empowers Parsi couples to take proactive steps toward building families, thereby contributing to the overall well-being of the community.*

Challenges

- **Social Stigma:** *Despite the availability of medical assistance, some couples may face social stigma associated with infertility treatments, which could deter them from seeking help.*
- **Limited Reach:** *The scheme's impact is limited to the Parsi community, and its success depends on widespread participation and awareness.*

Long Subclinical TB

Syllabus: GS-3: General Science – diseases.

Context:

- *Subclinical TB is the reason for slow drop in TB incidence, says Soumya Swaminathan.*

Concept of Subclinical TB:

- *Subclinical TB is a form of tuberculosis where the person is infected with TB bacteria but does not show the typical symptoms (like a persistent cough).*
- *According to the National TB Prevalence Survey (2019-2021), 42.6% of TB cases were subclinical, often detected only via chest X-ray.*
- *A recent TB prevalence survey in Tamil Nadu also found 39% subclinical TB cases.*

Prevalence and Impact on TB Control

- **Prevalence in High-Burden States:**
  - *Subclinical TB prevalence in high-burden states is likely significant, as shown by studies in high-burden countries in Asia and Africa (30-80% subclinical TB).*
  - *In India, the TB prevalence rate of bacteriologically positive TB is estimated at about 300 per 100,000, while notification rates show only 100 per 100,000.*
- **Impact on Incidence and TB Elimination:**
  - *Subclinical TB may contribute to the slow reduction of TB incidence despite improved case notifications.*
  - *Addressing subclinical TB is essential for meeting global TB elimination goals, as the incidence reduction is currently around 2-3% annually, far from the target.*

Screening and Detection of Subclinical TB

- **Large-Scale Screening Example:**
  - *In Vietnam, a large-scale, symptom-agnostic TB screening (including X-rays and molecular testing) reduced TB prevalence by 50% in screened districts.*
- **Challenges in Scaling X-ray Screening:**
  - *Convincing asymptomatic individuals to undergo chest X-rays for TB screening is challenging.*
  - *A mobile approach with regular screening camps and handheld X-ray units could potentially increase detection rates.*
- **Additional Considerations:**
  - *Incorporating TB screening into broader health programmes, including regular community health camps, may help identify subclinical cases.*

Treatment Challenges for Subclinical TB

- **Convincing Asymptomatic Patients:**
  - *It is difficult to convince individuals without symptoms to take a six-month TB treatment regimen.*
  - *Although patients with fewer symptoms tend to have better outcomes, dropout rates are often higher among them.*
  - *Extensive counselling, education, and follow-up are necessary to ensure adherence to treatment.*

Managing X-ray Abnormalities and Diagnostic Alternatives

- **Managing Non-TB Abnormalities:**
  - *When screening large populations with chest X-rays, some abnormalities may not be TB-related, requiring a proper referral system to manage non-TB diseases.*
  - *An alternative is molecular testing (e.g., CBNAAT), which can help in detecting only TB cases without the need for an X-ray.*

Focus on High-Risk Populations

- **Targeting High-Burden Districts:**

- *Screening efforts could start with high-burden areas, such as tribal and aspirational districts where malnutrition and other risk factors are prevalent.*
- *Urban low-income populations, especially in areas with high population density (e.g., northern states, Delhi, Mumbai), should also be prioritized for screening.*

Future Directions for Subclinical TB Control

- **Emerging Research on Subclinical TB:**
  - *The concept of subclinical TB is gaining traction, with research focusing on the continuum from latent TB to full-blown symptomatic TB.*
  - *Implementation research is needed to determine the best strategies and cost-effectiveness for community-wide screening.*
- **Screening Strategies:**
  - *Focusing solely on high-risk groups (e.g., household contacts) is less effective since most subclinical TB cases come from the general population.*
  - *Regular screenings, at least once every two to three years, should be conducted in high-risk areas.*

Infectiousness and Public Health Implications

- **Infectiousness of Subclinical TB:**
  - *Studies suggest that individuals with subclinical TB can be infectious even without coughing.*
  - *Genetic fingerprinting could be used to track transmission, but treating subclinical TB promptly is crucial to prevent further spread.*

Innovations in Screening and Diagnosis

- **AI-Based Chest X-rays:**
  - *AI algorithms for chest X-rays are being validated by ICMR, which may soon become a useful tool for large-scale TB screening.*
- **Molecular Testing for TB Diagnosis:**

- *The goal is to increase molecular testing from 30% to 100% in the next 12 months, using machines like TrueNet and GeneXpert, and validated PCR machines.*

Does India have laws on the movement of ballast water?

Syllabus: GS-3: Marine pollution

Context:

- *Tamil Nadu Water Resources Department (WRD) has requested* **₹160 crore from Kamarajar Port in Ennore.**
- *The funds are needed to remove invasive mussels, specifically the charru mussel (Mytellastrigata), that are damaging marine ecosystems and affecting fishermen's livelihoods.*

WRD's Charge*:*

- *The WRD holds Kamarajar Port responsible for the spread of invasive species due to improper regulation of ballast water from ships.*

Understanding Ballast Water

- **Purpose***:*
  - *Ships need ballast water* **to maintain stability after discharging cargo**, *ensuring proper immersion in water.*
  - **Ballast water is taken into tanks** *when cargo is unloaded and is discharged when cargo is loaded.*
- **Regulation***:*
  - *Historically, there were no regulations on the intake and discharge of ballast water, which often carried invasive species to new locations, disrupting local ecosystems.*

The Seriousness of the Invasive Species Problem

- **Impact in India***:*
  - *Nearly 30 invasive species have been recorded in Indian waters due to ballast water from ships.*

- *The* **charru mussel (*Mytellastrigata*)** *is particularly harmful, replacing native species in Pulicat Lake, Tamil Nadu, and Ashtamudi Lake, Kerala.*
- *The mussel's high survival rate and adaptability to fresh water make it a* **significant threat to local biodiversity**.

Global Regulations on Ballast Water

- **Ballast Water Management (BWM) Convention**:
  - *Implemented by the* **International Maritime Organization** *(IMO) in 2017.*
  - *Requires ships to manage ballast water to remove or neutralize harmful organisms before discharging in a new location.*
- **Requirements for Ships**:
  - *New ships with ballast water management systems must treat ballast water with chemicals to ensure it is biologically safe before discharge.*
  - *Older ships without such systems are required to exchange ballast water taken at ports with oceanic water during transit to prevent the spread of invasive species.*
- **Stringent Enforcement**:
  - *Countries* **like Australia and New Zealand** *are highly proactive in enforcing ballast water regulations to protect sensitive ecosystems such as the Great Barrier Reef.*

India's Position on Ballast Water Management

- **Current Status**:
  - *India has* **not signed the BWM Convention**, *meaning there are no mandatory regulations for ballast water management at Indian ports.*
  - *Other environmental regulations, such as oil discharge, are enforced, but* **ballast water discharge is not regulated**.
- **Legal Implications**:
  - *According to maritime law expert V. J. Mathew, ports facilitate ship traffic but are not liable for the consequences of ballast water discharge.*
  - *Vessel owners may be held accountable if laws are in place, highlighting the need for India to adopt the* **BWM Convention** *to protect its marine ecosystems.*

FloodWatch India

Syllabus: GS-3: Disaster Management – Floods.

Context:

- *Union Minister Shri C.R. Paatil launches Version 2.0 of 'FloodWatch India' mobile app; to enable extensive and detailed overview of flood conditions across the country.*

About FloodWatch India

- **Initial Launch***: First version released on 17th August 2023.*
- **Purpose***: Disseminate real-time flood information and forecasts up to 7 days to the public via mobile phones.*

Enhancements in Version 2.0

- **Expanded Coverage***:*
  - *Added 392 flood monitoring stations.*
  - *Total stations now number 592.*
- **Reservoir Data***:*
  - *Provides storage positions of 150 major reservoirs.*
  - *Aids in understanding potential downstream flood situations.*

Technical Features

- **Advanced Technologies Used***:*
  - *Satellite data analysis.*
  - *Mathematical modeling.*
  - *Real-time monitoring.*
- **User Interface***:*
  - *Available in English and Hindi.*
  - *Information presented in readable and audio broadcast formats.*

- **Nearest Location Feature***:*
    - *Users can check flood situations at the station nearest to them directly from the home page.*