



For success in a changing world

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 18-09-2024

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Konyak Tribes

Syllabus: GS-1; Tribes of India

Context

- A tribal group in Nagaland called the Konyak Union has raised concerns with the Chief Minister of Nagaland, Neiphiu Rio, about mistakes in how the boundary between **Mon district (in Nagaland) and Charaideo district (in Assam)** is shown on Google Maps.

Geographical Location

- The Konyaks primarily inhabit the Mon district in the northeastern state of Nagaland.
- However, they are also found in parts of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, and across the border in Myanmar.

Cultural Practices



- **Headhunting Tradition:** Konyaks were once known for their headhunting practices, which were carried out to display power and bravery.

Warriors used to tattoo their faces to signify successful headhunts.

This practice was banned after the 1960s with the advent of Christianity and modernization.

- **Tattooing:** *Tattoos, especially on the face and body, were a symbol of achievement and social status, often acquired after a successful headhunt.*
- **Wooden Carvings:** *The Konyaks are skilled artisans known for their wooden carvings, especially of totems and human figures.*

Social Structure

- *The tribe is known for its well-organized village administration led by the **village chief or Angh**.*
- *In Konyak society, the Angh is considered a powerful leader, holding both spiritual and administrative authority.*
- *The Konyak tribes are one of the few Naga tribes that maintain this **hereditary chieftainship**.*
- *Their villages often have a **Morung (community house)**, where young boys are trained in various skills, including warfare.*

Religion

- *Traditionally, Konyaks followed **animism**, worshipping nature and their ancestors.*
- *However, Christianity has become the dominant religion among them since the early 20th century due to the influence of Christian missionaries.*

Economy and Livelihood

- *The Konyaks practice **shifting cultivation (Jhum)**, growing rice, vegetables, and other crops. They are also known for hunting and fishing.*
- *Konyaks are excellent in craftsmanship, especially in making weapons like **daos** (a type of machete), spears, and shields.*

Festivals

- *The Konyak tribe celebrates the **Aoling Festival** in the first week of April.*
- *It marks the arrival of spring and the beginning of a new agricultural season.*
- *The festival involves vibrant dances, feasts, and rituals to appease the gods for a good harvest.*

Language

- Konyaks speak the Konyak language, which belongs to the Sino-Tibetan family. The tribe has its dialects, but English and Nagamese are commonly used for communication today.

Significance in Contemporary Society

- Despite modernization, the Konyaks maintain many of their cultural practices, and efforts have been made to preserve their rich heritage.
- The tribe is also gaining recognition through cultural tourism, where visitors can learn about their traditions, lifestyle, and history.

Strategic Importance

- The Konyak tribe occupies areas near the India-Myanmar border, making them important for India's border security policies.
- Some Konyaks also live across the border in Myanmar, creating trans-border ethnic ties.

Parliamentary Committee on Official Language

Syllabus: GS-2; Indian Polity- Official Language

Context

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah was unanimously re-elected as the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Official Language.

About

- The Parliamentary Committee on Official Language plays an important role in the promotion and implementation of the **Official Language Act, 1963**, which governs the use of Hindi as the official language of the Union of India.

Background

- The Official Languages Act, 1963, and Article 343 to 351 of the Indian Constitution emphasize the use of Hindi in official communication.
- The Committee on Official Language was **constituted in 1976** under Section 4 of the Official Languages Act.

Composition

- *The Committee consists of 30 members: 20 from the Lok Sabha (Lower House) and 10 from the Rajya Sabha (Upper House).*
- *Members are nominated by the Speaker of Lok Sabha and the Chairman of Rajya Sabha, respectively.*

Functions

- *Review the Progress:*
 - *The primary function of the committee is to review the progress made in the use of Hindi for official purposes.*

Recommend Measures

- *The committee suggests steps to increase the usage of Hindi in official communications across different government departments and states.*

Submit Reports

- *The committee prepares and submits its report to the President of India every 10 years.*
- *The President of India places the report before both Houses of Parliament and sends directions on the recommendations to be implemented.*

Bilingual Policy

- *The committee ensures that the promotion of Hindi does not undermine the use of English as an associate official language.*

Implementation of the Three-Language Formula

- *The committee also advocates for the implementation of the three-language formula in schools (regional language, Hindi, and English).*

Latest Developments

- *The latest reports focus on promoting Hindi in central government offices and ensure that non-Hindi speaking states are not adversely affected by any measures.*
- *Recommendations are often about translating official documents into Hindi and promoting Hindi in technical fields like law, medicine, and science.*

Constitutional Provisions

- **Article 343:** Declares Hindi as the official language of the Union.
- **Article 344:** Provides for the establishment of a Commission and Committee of Parliament on Official Language.

- **Article 351:** Directs the Union to promote Hindi and develop it so that it serves as a medium of communication.

Issues & Challenges

- There has been opposition from non-Hindi speaking states, especially in South India, regarding the imposition of Hindi.
- Balancing the use of Hindi and English continues to be a sensitive issue for the Committee.

Women led development in Rajya Sabha

Syllabus: GS-2: Indian Parliament – Women in Rajya Sabha.

Context:

- The Rajya Sabha under Jagdeep Dhankar's chairmanship is leading by example in translating the ideal of women-led development into a reality.

Women-Led Development in G20 Presidency

- **Concept:** Women are not just beneficiaries but key participants in planning and decision-making.
- Recognised as a major focus under India's G20 presidency.
- Aims to empower women to lead development, setting agendas for progress.

Political Representation of Women in India

- Women's role in governance is pivotal, emphasized by Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar.
- Women are seen as the backbone of Parliament and key contributors to economic development.

Progressive Measures in Rajya Sabha

- **Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023:** Women's Reservation Bill passed.
 - Vice President reconstituted the panel of vice-chairpersons with only women, sending a strong message globally.
 - 50% of the vice-chairpersons' panel now consists of women members.

- *S. Phangnon Konyak: First woman Rajya Sabha member from Nagaland to preside over the House.*
- *P.T. Usha: First nominated MP to become Vice Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha.*

G20 Declaration on Women's Empowerment

- **Goal 5.5 of SDGs:** *India is focused on women's participation and leadership in all spheres (political, economic, and public life).*
- *G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration emphasised investment in women's empowerment as crucial for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.*

Gender Balance in Rajya Sabha Secretariat

- **Training of Women Officers:** *Gazetted women officers trained for House-related duties, traditionally a male domain.*
 - *Women officers now manage the Table of the House.*
 - *Introduction of the 'Vahan' app for safe commutation during late sittings.*
 - *Women officers appointed as chamber attendants, creating a favourable environment for women MPs.*

Leadership Roles for Women in Rajya Sabha Secretariat

- *Women officers hold key positions in HR, legislative sections, and capacity-building divisions.*
- *High-skill roles, including working in Parliamentary Standing Committees, are now led by women.*
- *Women appointed in senior security positions.*
- **Recognition:** *Top-performing women officers are rewarded, and a woman officer serves as a master trainer for iGOT-Karmayogi Bharat.*

Gender Sensitisation and Workplace Culture

- *Gender sensitisation workshops are conducted to promote gender parity in the Secretariat.*
- *Women's Day celebrated with programmes organised by women officers, fostering creativity and recreation.*

Interaction with Academia

- *Regular interactions between the legislature and academia promoted.*
- *Five interns from Miranda House were invited for a 15-day course on parliamentary procedures.*

Conclusion

- *Rajya Sabha, under the leadership of Mr. Dhankar, is setting a precedent in women-led development.*
- *Other legislatures in India may follow this example to further enhance women's role in governance and development.*

Precision farming

Syllabus: GS-3; Agriculture

Context

- *The Centre is contemplating to earmark Rs 6,000 crore to promote precision farming, a modern approach that uses smart technology such as Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, drones and data analytics to boost production through maximal use of resources while minimising environmental impact.*

About

- *Precision farming, also known as precision agriculture, is a modern farming practice that uses technology and data-driven approaches to optimize agricultural inputs and increase productivity.*
- *It involves the use of information technology, sensors, GPS, and data analytics to manage variations in the field and ensure optimal crop growth.*
- *This practice allows farmers to make informed decisions, improving efficiency, and reducing waste of resources like water, fertilizers, and pesticides.*

Importance of Precision Farming in India

- **Food Security:** *With the increasing population, precision farming can help ensure food security by increasing the efficiency and yield of crops.*
- **Resource Optimization:** *India faces water shortages and land fragmentation. Precision farming helps in using resources like water, fertilizers, and pesticides efficiently.*
- **Environmental Sustainability:** *Reducing the overuse of fertilizers and pesticides helps in reducing environmental pollution and soil degradation, promoting sustainable farming.*
- **Economic Benefits:** *Precision farming can help farmers reduce costs, optimize labor, and enhance profitability by maximizing yields.*

Key Technologies in Precision Farming

- **Global Positioning System (GPS):** *GPS is used to map fields and monitor the precise location of crops. It helps in soil sampling, guiding machinery for planting, and applying inputs accurately.*
- **Geographic Information Systems (GIS):** *GIS is used for mapping and analyzing field data such as soil type, moisture levels, and crop health. It helps in creating variable rate applications for water and nutrients.*
- **Remote Sensing:** *Remote sensing technologies like drones and satellites provide real-time data on crop conditions, soil health, and weather patterns. This information helps in managing crops effectively.*
- **Internet of Things (IoT):** *IoT devices, such as soil moisture sensors, weather stations, and automated irrigation systems, allow continuous monitoring of field conditions and automation of farming tasks.*
- **Data Analytics and Artificial Intelligence (AI):** *Advanced analytics and AI algorithms process the collected data to provide actionable insights for decision-making. For example, AI can predict crop diseases or suggest the best times for irrigation.*

Key Components of Precision Farming

- **Variable Rate Technology (VRT):** *VRT allows the precise application of inputs like seeds, water, and fertilizers based on the needs of specific areas of a field, reducing waste and improving crop yields.*
- **Yield Monitoring:** *This involves collecting data on crop yields in real time during harvest. Yield data helps in understanding the performance of different areas of the field and making future decisions.*
- **Soil Mapping:** *Soil mapping identifies variations in soil properties across the field, helping farmers apply nutrients and water more precisely, improving crop health and productivity.*
- **Field Sensors:** *Sensors provide real-time data on soil moisture, temperature, and nutrient levels, enabling timely interventions in irrigation, fertilization, and pest control.*
- **Drone Technology:** *Drones are used for aerial imaging and monitoring crop health, allowing for the early detection of issues such as pest infestations or nutrient deficiencies.*

Benefits of Precision Farming

- **Increased Productivity:** *Precision farming optimizes the use of resources, resulting in higher crop yields and better-quality produce.*

- **Cost Reduction:** By using inputs like fertilizers, water, and pesticides more efficiently, farmers can significantly reduce costs.
- **Sustainability:** Minimizing the overuse of resources helps in reducing the environmental impact of farming, leading to more sustainable agricultural practices.
- **Improved Decision-Making:** Access to real-time data enables farmers to make informed decisions, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of farming operations.
- **Reduced Environmental Impact:** Precision farming reduces the runoff of chemicals into water bodies, decreasing pollution and preserving biodiversity.

Challenges in Adopting Precision Farming in India

- **High Initial Costs:** The equipment and technology required for precision farming, such as drones, sensors, and GPS devices, are expensive, making them inaccessible to small and marginal farmers.
- **Lack of Awareness and Skills:** Many farmers in India are unaware of precision farming techniques or lack the technical skills to use the technology effectively.
- **Fragmented Land Holdings:** Land fragmentation is a significant challenge in India. Precision farming is more efficient on large farms, and small landholders may struggle to justify the investment in such technologies.
- **Inadequate Infrastructure:** Rural areas in India often lack the necessary infrastructure, such as reliable internet connectivity and electricity, which are essential for precision farming.
- **Limited Access to Credit:** Small farmers often face difficulties in accessing credit for investing in precision farming technologies, due to lack of collateral or awareness.

Government Initiatives to Promote Precision Farming

- **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY):**
This scheme focuses on improving water efficiency and promoting micro-irrigation, which is an integral part of precision farming.
- **National e-Governance Plan in Agriculture (NeGPA):**
Aims to promote the use of IT and data-driven technologies in agriculture, including precision farming practices.
- **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY):**
This scheme promotes organic farming through precision methods, encouraging the use of modern technologies for sustainable agriculture.
- **Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM):**
This scheme provides financial assistance for the purchase of farm machinery, including precision farming tools.
- **Digital India Initiative:**
Promotes the use of digital technologies like GIS and GPS in agriculture to enhance farm productivity and decision-making.

Future of Precision Farming in India

- **Expansion of IoT and AI:** *The use of AI and IoT is expected to grow, providing farmers with more accurate data and automation tools.*
- **Increased Government Support:** *With growing recognition of the importance of precision farming, the government is likely to expand subsidies and infrastructure to support it.*
- **Collaborations with Private Sector:** *Collaborations between the government, private sector, and startups can drive the adoption of precision farming, especially for small farmers.*
- **Customized Solutions for Small Farmers:** *Technology solutions tailored to the needs and capacities of small farmers, including affordable equipment and mobile applications, will help make precision farming more accessible.*

Conclusion

- *Precision farming has the potential to transform Indian agriculture by increasing productivity, optimizing resource use, and promoting environmental sustainability.*
- *However, challenges such as high costs, lack of awareness, and fragmented landholdings must be addressed through government support, technological innovations, and farmer education.*

Project Cheetah Audit

Syllabus: GS-3: Wildlife conservation.

Context:

- *Project Cheetah audit flags concerns: 'Unjustified' expenses, Centre-state coordination.*

Background

- **Project Cheetah:** *A central government initiative to reintroduce cheetahs in India.*
- **Kuno National Park (KNP):** *Originally planned as a secondary habitat for Asiatic lions, later selected for cheetah reintroduction.*
- **Audit by Accountant General of Madhya Pradesh:** *A report based on sample audits from August 2019 to November 2023, flagged several concerns related to Project Cheetah.*

Key Concerns Raised in the Audit

➤ **Lack of Coordination**

- **Central-State Coordination:** *The audit highlights a lack of coordination between the central government and Madhya Pradesh government departments.*
- **Forest Division Involvement:** *Local ground staff and forest officials were reportedly not involved in key decisions such as site selection for the cheetah reintroduction.*

➤ **Absence of Proper Documentation**

- **Management Plan:** *No mention of cheetah reintroduction in KNP's work and management plans.*
- **Action Plan for Cheetahs:** *The project is based on the Cheetah Action Plan 2021, but no specific management plan addressing cheetah reintroduction was available for KNP.*

➤ **Mismanagement of Expenditure**

- **Labour Expenses:**
 - *Rs 90 lakh was spent on labour-related work, but JCB machines were used instead of manual labourers, contradicting directions to employ local residents.*
 - *This led to a loss of local employment and inflated costs.*
- **Construction Irregularities:**
 - *A 5.9-km wall had 67 fewer cement bags than required, resulting in substandard construction.*
 - *Overpayment of Rs 4.14 lakh for construction work.*
 - *Failure to deduct royalty for materials like sand and gravel, leading to a revenue loss.*

➤ **Unjustified Transfer of Personnel**

- **Divisional Forest Officer Prakash Kumar:** *Transferred shortly after receiving training in Namibia for cheetah reintroduction. The audit flagged this as a missed opportunity since the officer's training could not be utilized.*

➤ **Questionable Habitat Prioritization**

- **Kuno for Asiatic Lions:** According to a Supreme Court decision (April 15, 2013), Kuno was designated as an alternate habitat for Asiatic lions.
- **No Efforts for Lion Reintroduction:** The report found no progress in reintroducing Asiatic lions to Kuno as of November 2023, despite the expenditure on Project Cheetah.

Financial Overview

- **Expenditure (2021-2024):** Rs 44.14 crore was spent on Project Cheetah up to January 2024.
- **Mismatch with Management Plan:** The expenditure was not aligned with the approved management plan, raising questions about financial management.

Response from KNP Officials

- **Ongoing Audit:** KNP officials clarified that the audit was not final and further clarifications will be provided in the coming months.
- **Director's Statement:** KNP Director declined to comment, awaiting the completion of the audit.

Conclusion

- **Significance:** The audit report underscores concerns over project management, financial mismanagement, and lack of strategic planning in the cheetah reintroduction program at Kuno National Park.
- **Next Steps:** Officials are expected to respond to the audit queries and take corrective measures in the future.