



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.*