



**TATHASTU**  
Institute of Civil Services

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS



**8<sup>th</sup> January, 2024**



S.NO.	TOPIC
1.	CHILD MARRIAGE: A RISING CONCERN IN INDIA
2.	THE ELEMENTS IN ETHICAL GOVERNANCE
3.	PRELIMS POINTERS

## CHILD MARRIAGE: A RISING CONCERN IN INDIA

**SOURCE:** [THE HINDU](#)

**TAG:** GS Paper II- **Government Policies & Interventions, Human Resource**  
GS Paper III- **Growth & Development, Employment IT & Computers**

### ***Mains Practice Question:***

**Q. Discuss the socio-economic factors contributing to the prevalence of child marriages in India. How effective have governmental interventions been in addressing this issue?**

**Q. Analyse the role of legislative measures, such as the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, in curbing child marriages. What challenges persist in the effective implementation of these laws?**

### **Why In News?**

- A recent Lancet study on child marriage in India showcased a nationwide decrease but emphasized higher prevalence in Bihar (16.7%), West Bengal (15.2%), Uttar Pradesh (12.5%), and Maharashtra (8.2%).
- Titled 'Prevalence of Girl and Boy Child Marriage across Indian States, 1993-2021,' it revealed that one in five girls in India still gets married before the legal age.
- While some states made significant progress, West Bengal faced challenges in reducing child marriage rates.

### **Key Findings Of The Study**

- Approximately **one in five girls (20%) in India is married below the legal age.**
- While some states have notably reduced child marriage rates among girls, others, such as West Bengal, have faced significant challenges.
- West Bengal witnessed a substantial absolute increase in child marriage cases, specifically an increase of 32.3%, which translates to over 500,000 more girls getting married at a young age.
- Policy-makers in West Bengal have grappled with the persistent issue of girl child marriage for several decades.
- The **National Family Health Survey-5 conducted in 2019-20** highlighted that the prevalence of women aged 20-24 years married before 18 remains high in West Bengal at 41.6%, a figure consistent with the National Family Health Survey-4. This is notably higher than the national average of 23.3%.

### **Child Marriage In India:**

- It involves **formal or informal unions entered into before the legally eligible age.** In jurisdictions like India, the legal marriageable age is under 18 years.
- India hosts over **24 million child brides**, representing a significant portion of the global figure.
- The **National Family Health Survey highlights that 40% of the world's 60 million child marriages occur in India.**
- The **International Centre for Research on Women** ranks India as having the **14th highest rate of child marriage globally.**
- **Eight states**, including **West Bengal, Bihar, and Tripura**, surpass the national average in child marriage prevalence, with over **40% of women aged 20-24 married before 18, as per NFHS data.**
- Kerala shows a declining trend, with the percentage of women marrying before 18 dropping from 7.6% in 2015-16 to 6.3% in 2019-20.
- **Exclusion of girls and boys from marriage-related decision-making: Forced marriage**, that is marriage without the individual girl's or boy's consent is widespread in India. Large proportions of married young people report



no role in marriage-related decisions and no acquaintance with their husband until the marriage ceremony (**Youth in India survey; UDAYA surveys**).

#### Causes Of Child Marriage In India Encompass Various Factors:

- **Customs and Dowry:** Traditions like dowry stress families, as the dowry amount increases with the girl's age, prompting families to marry girls young to mitigate expenses.
- **Poverty and Caste Disparities:** Economic hardship forces families to 'sell' their children through marriage to clear debts, perpetuating poverty due to lack of education and work opportunities for young brides. Economic struggles and caste-based inequalities influence families to marry off daughters early, perpetuating social structures.
- **"Protecting" Girl's Sexuality:** Some cultures view early marriage as a safeguard for a girl's sexuality and family honour. The emphasis on a girl's virginity and family honour drives the desire for early marriages to protect these values.
- **Security and Safety:** Parents marry off daughters early to secure their future, particularly amidst risks of abuse, rape, and extreme poverty.
- **Lax Law Enforcement:** Poor implementation of laws leads to unchecked marriages without verifying the age of the bride and groom.
- **Gender Discrimination:** Child marriage is a manifestation of gender bias, resulting in various forms of abuse and deprivation for girls, hindering their access to education, healthcare, and mobility.
- **Regressive Customs and Religious Norms:** Deep-rooted cultural and religious beliefs often override laws, with some communities enforcing marriage before puberty to maintain societal norms.
- **Lack of Education:** Limited educational opportunities, especially in rural areas, make girls more vulnerable to early marriage and hinder their ability to reject it or pursue alternative paths.
- **Legal Loopholes and Fake Certificates:** Loopholes in laws and the procurement of fake birth certificates contribute to the continuation of child marriages without legal repercussions.
- **Impact of COVID-19:** The pandemic exacerbates existing disparities, putting millions of young girls at risk of early marriage due to increased financial strain and societal challenges.

#### Evil Impacts Of Child Marriages:

The detrimental impacts of child marriage are far-reaching and encompass various aspects:

- **Child Rights Violations:** Young brides lose their fundamental rights, including access to education, safety from physical and mental abuse, and other basic rights.
- **Health Ramifications:** Child brides often face health challenges such as child stunting, premature pregnancies due to limited knowledge about contraception and restricted access to reproductive health services. This leads to increased maternal and infant mortality rates, with girls under 15 facing a significantly higher risk of death during childbirth.
- **Infant Health and Education:** Babies born to young mothers have higher mortality rates and are more likely to be born prematurely or with low birth weight. Additionally, child marriage hampers the education of brides, perpetuating illiteracy among this demographic.
- **Cycle of Poverty:** Child marriage disrupts economic prospects by limiting education and job opportunities for both spouses. This perpetuates a cycle of poverty as early marriage often leads to early childbearing, increasing the economic burden on families.
- **Teen Widows and Divorcees:** Child marriage can lead to early widowhood or divorce, resulting in individuals under 18 facing the challenges of singlehood in societies that permit such marriages.

#### Other Social Issues Associated With Child Marriages:

Social issues deeply intertwined with child marriages in the context of India encompass:

- **Human Rights Violation:** Child marriages severely infringe upon girls' human rights, depriving them of fundamental entitlements like education, rest, protection from abuse, including sexual exploitation. These violations often go unnoticed within policy frameworks.



- **Disempowerment of Women:** Lack of education due to early marriage leaves girls dependent and disempowered, hindering their path toward gender equality. Their inability to complete education perpetuates cycles of dependence and inequality.
- **Health Complications:** Child marriage leads to several health issues, including teenage pregnancy, child stunting, and poor learning outcomes for children. It also contributes to population growth and decreases women's participation in the workforce. Young wives often face long hours of domestic labour, inadequate nutrition, anaemia, social isolation, domestic violence, and restricted decision-making abilities at home.
- **Inter-generational Health Challenges:** The combination of poor education, malnutrition, and early pregnancy results in low birth weight for babies, fuelling an inter-generational cycle of malnutrition and health challenges that persist across generations.

### Laws And Policies Aimed At Preventing Child Marriages In India

- The **Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929, commonly known as the Sarda Act**, sought to curb the practice of child marriage. It aimed to alleviate the hardships faced by young girls in handling marital responsibilities and to prevent premature deaths. **This act defined males under 21 and females under 18 as children in the context of marriage.**
- The **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act of 2006** further reinforced the prohibition of child marriage, setting the **marriageable age at 21 for males and 18 for females.** It solidified the legal stance against child marriage in India.
- The **Hindu Marriage Act of 1956** doesn't specifically penalize parents or individuals solemnizing child marriages. However, it allows a girl married before turning fifteen to annul the marriage if challenged before turning eighteen.
- Under **Muslim Personal Law, there's no restriction on child marriage.** The couple has the option of puberty, called **Khayar-ul-bulugh, enabling them to dissolve the marriage after reaching puberty.**
- Additionally, **The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act of 2012** aims to safeguard children from various forms of abuse, including those arising from child marriages.

### Government Initiatives

- **Bal Vivah Virodh Abhiyan (Campaign against Child Marriage):** In **2005 a nationwide awareness-raising** programme against child marriage was started by the National Commission for Women. It focussed particularly on the states of **Rajasthan, Bihar, Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.**
- The **Dhanalakshmi Scheme** aimed to **combat gender discrimination by providing financial incentives to families to support girl children, ensuring their education and preventing early marriages.**
  - It involved cash transfers contingent on fulfilling conditions like immunization, school enrollment, and insurance coverage.
  - The **scheme's objectives** included changing mindsets about valuing girl children, encouraging education up to class 8, promoting women's financial independence, preventing female infanticide, removing birth stigma, and empowering girls for future opportunities. However, the scheme is presently not operational in India.
- **Advika - Every Girl is Unique:** On the occasion of the International Day of Girl Child on 11th October, 2020, the **Department of Women and Child Development and Mission Shakti, Government of Odisha** launched "**Advika – Every girl is unique**", a new programme for the adolescent girls of the state.
  - The programme is an initiative of the State for the development and empowerment of **adolescent girls** between the **ages of 10-19 years.**
  - The **objective of the program "ADVIKA"** is to **reduce risks and vulnerability of all adolescent girls** in the age group of 10-19 years and making them self-reliant, empowered and sustainable by renewing commitments towards adolescent girls.



- It will be implemented through Anganwadi centres across 30 districts and municipal corporations of the state. ADVIKA is a comprehensive package consisting of **Anganwadi Pocket Book, Kishori Kalender, Kishori Barta, Tiki mausi Multimedia Package** and Frequently Asked Questions.
- The **Compulsory Registration of Marriages Act, 2006** mandates the registration of all marriages in India, irrespective of faith, within 10 days of marriage. Enforcing this law becomes critical in curbing underage marriages nationwide.
- A **committee**, led by **Jaya Jaitely under the Union Ministry for Women and Child Development**, was established in 2020 to address issues such as maternal health, women's nutritional status, and the average age of motherhood. It **proposed a gradual increase in the minimum marriage age for girls to 21**.
- The **Right to Education Act of 2009** ensures education for children aged 6 to 14, upholding the fundamental right to education (Article 21). By **fostering a conducive learning environment, the Act aims to prevent issues like child marriage**.

### Moving Forward:

- **Initiatives for Economic Empowerment:** Providing vocational training and entrepreneurship opportunities to girls at risk offers alternatives to early marriage. Enabling access to microloans encourages income generation, alleviating financial pressures that contribute to early marriages.
- **Community Engagement via Art and Media:** Organizing workshops, theatre performances, or storytelling sessions involving art helps educate communities about the repercussions of child marriage. Collaborating with local artists and influencers for impactful campaigns through music, street art, or short films is crucial.
- **Peer Education and Mentorship:** Empowering young leaders to advocate against child marriage and mentor their peers within communities is impactful. Introducing comprehensive education modules in schools fosters discussions and awareness among students.
- **Engaging Religious Leaders:** Collaborating with religious leaders has proven effective in combating child marriage and needs to be expanded nationwide.
- **Economic Empowerment:** Ensuring true economic empowerment for women, acknowledging their role in financial decision-making and control over earnings, is essential. Recommendations include sensitizing parents to encourage daughters' financial management skills and savings programs.
- **Communication Campaigns for Change:** Communication campaigns create platforms to discuss and challenge traditional beliefs about marriage. Emphasizing human rights, especially women's equality, access to education, and freedom from exploitation and discrimination, fosters behavioural change within communities.



## THE ELEMENTS IN ETHICAL GOVERNANCE

**TAG:** GS Paper IV- **Ethics, Civil Service Values and Ethics in Public Administration, Accountability and Ethical Governance**

### What Is Ethical Governance?

- **Ethical governance** embodies a **governing approach steeped in high moral values and conduct throughout the governance process.**
- For instance, it entails a **bureaucrat's commitment to serving the people** visiting their office, exemplified by actions like providing a glass of water to an elderly couple weary from waiting in a queue. These actions align with the ethics of public service and altruism.
- Similarly, ethical governance involves ensuring the distribution of Public Distribution System (PDS) rations to beneficiaries, especially women and senior citizens, even in cases where Aadhaar identification fails due to biometric data mismatches. **Prioritizing compassion and upholding human dignity** in such situations is crucial, as denying services could endanger a person's life.
- **Ethical governance serves as a vital approach in fostering trust and fostering collaboration between citizens and public servants**, emphasizing the values of compassion and human dignity as foundational principles.

### Ethical Governance Operates Through A Cohesive Interplay Of Four Key Elements:

1. **Enabling Organisational Structure:** This structure embodies rules, hierarchies, and specialized roles within an organization, setting the framework for ethical conduct. Laws, regulations, and established procedures form the ethical framework within this structure.
  2. **Positive Organisational Culture:** Organizational culture signifies a collective understanding among its members about values, objectives, and conduct. It dictates how members should behave to fulfill organizational goals. The effectiveness of the structure relies on the prevailing culture.
  3. **Individuals with Integrity:** Personal attributes and integrity of individuals significantly impact an organization's structure and culture. Upbringing, education, and social influences shape these attributes, emphasizing the importance of nurturing ethical values from childhood.
  4. **Cooperative Society:** Societal norms influence individuals, their behavior, and subsequently, the culture and structure of organizations. Aligning societal values with the state's vision is crucial for promoting enduring ethical values.
- **These elements are interdependent and reinforce each other.**
  - A robust structure aligned with ethical principles needs to be complemented by a **positive culture**. Individual integrity, shaped by upbringing and societal influences, further reinforces this structure and culture, highlighting the critical need for **alignment and mutual support among these elements for sustainable ethical governance.**

### Measures for Instilling Ethical Standards in Indian Administration:

1. **Central Services Conduct Rules, 1964:** These rules outline the expected conduct for civil servants, emphasizing **the need for unwavering integrity, dedication to duty, and political neutrality** while executing their responsibilities.
2. **All India Service Conduct Rules, 1968:** These rules specifically apply to officials of IAS, IPS, and IFOS, setting stringent ethical standards. They emphasize **integrity, honesty, political neutrality, and advocate for merit-based decision-making, fairness, impartiality, accountability, and transparency** in their duties.
3. **Code of Ethics, 1997:** This initiative aimed to introduce a code of ethics for public servants, intending to enhance governance. However, its application was limited and wasn't issued comprehensively for all public servants.
4. **Draft Public Service Bill, 2007:** Proposed by the Department of Personnel, this bill aimed to mandate moral conduct among civil servants. It enumerated values expected from public servants, including **patriotism, allegiance to the Constitution and national laws, and traits like objectivity, impartiality, honesty, diligence, courtesy, and transparency.** Upholding **absolute integrity** was a **core tenet.**



### Attributes Of Ethical Governance

- 1. Objective vs. Subjective Elements:** Decisions are a blend of objective, measurable factors and subjective, qualitative judgments. While **objectivity ensures standardization**, an excessive reliance on it can result in rigidity. Balancing this with discretionary powers for officers offers flexibility but raises concerns about misuse. Hence, **emphasizing officers with strong ethical values and a genuine dedication to public service is crucial**.
- 2. Means vs. Ends:** Decision-making involves both value premises and factual premises. Public values determine the ends or objectives, while administrative expertise determines the means to achieve these objectives. Harmonizing these aspects is essential for meaningful welfare. Yet, failure to comprehend or address public values leads to ineffective decisions. Officers with strong ethical values can better understand and balance these facets, avoiding the pitfalls of prioritizing only facts or only values.
- 3. Personal vs. Collective Welfare:** Decisions impact both personal and collective welfare. It's vital for individuals, especially those in administrative roles, to prioritize collective welfare over personal interests. The ideal scenario involves placing **duty before self-interest**. However, the professional environment often intersects personal aspirations with professional duties. Balancing these is challenging, particularly when faced with increased autonomy, authority, or compelling temptations.

### Ethical Challenges in Indian Governance:

- 1. Abuse of Authority:** Officials overstepping their roles, responsibilities, or rights can harm state interests or citizens.
- 2. Negligence:** When public officials fail or inadequately perform their duties, resulting in harm to the state or community.
- 3. Bribery and Corruption:** Widespread acceptance of corruption in transactions undermines ethical governance, impacting the integrity of commerce.
- 4. Status-Oriented Culture:** A prevalent culture valuing status, rank, and personal gain over dedication and conscientious work, leading to a majority of complacent officers.
- 5. Patronage in Post-Retirement Assignments:** Assignments to crucial roles post-retirement often rely on personal connections rather than established guidelines, potentially undermining merit-based selections.
- 6. Administrative Secrecy vs. Transparency:** Balancing administrative secrecy, necessary for public interest, with transparency, a key trait of ethical governance, poses challenges.
- 7. Nepotism:** Appointing relatives or acquaintances to public positions without considering merit can compromise the quality of public services.
- 8. Rigid Application of Rules:** A disregard for individual needs or flexibility in departmental decisions, favoring binding rules over fairness in individual cases, poses ethical dilemmas.

### Ways to Enhance Ethical Governance in India:

- 1. National Commission on Integrity:** Establish a commission dedicated to assessing and promoting ethical values among public servants, regularly reviewing policies and incorporating ethical dimensions into management frameworks.
- 2. Transparency in Service Delivery:** Rebuild public trust by ensuring citizen voices are heard, complaints are addressed, and services are efficiently delivered, aligning with the state's ethical and moral obligations.
- 3. Innovative Technological Tools:** Implement technology to reduce corruption opportunities, enhance transparency, and inclusivity while being cautious of potential exclusion errors witnessed in certain digitized systems.
- 4. Regulate Discretionary Powers:** Strive to limit and regulate discretion in decision-making processes, ensuring decisions involving public interface undergo proper review and aren't solely left to individual discretion.
- 5. Protect Honest Public Servants:** Ensure rewards, like transfers and postings, are based solely on merit and performance, discouraging political cronyism and nepotism that encourage corruption.
- 6. Ethics Training:** Develop comprehensive ethics training programs for public officials, covering rules, conflicts of interest, moral reasoning, and leadership, facilitated by agencies like the Indian Institute of Public Administration, with continuous evaluation and research.



TOPIC	DISCRIPTION
<b>AI VOICE CLONING</b>	<p><b>WHY IN NEWS?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ <i>Growing concerns over the misuse of AI-generated voice cloning.</i></li><li>❖ <i>Instances of AI voice cloning scams and disinformation have risen globally.</i></li><li>❖ <i>Specific incidents reported in India highlight the vulnerability of individuals to such scams.</i></li></ul> <p><b>ABOUT AI VOICE CLONING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ <b>Scammers use AI to replicate voices</b>, imitating relatives or friends to deceive individuals.</li><li>❖ <b>AI-generated voice scams have been prevalent in India</b>, with a high number of reported cases.</li><li>❖ McAfee reports that Indians are particularly vulnerable <b>to scams involving urgent requests for money.</b></li><li>❖ Popular AI cloning tools include <b>Murf, Resemble, Speechify, and ElevenLabs.</b></li></ul> <p><b>INVOLVEMENT OF TECH COMPANIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Tech companies, including <b>Meta and Apple, have entered the AI voice cloning space.</b></li><li>❖ <b>Meta launched SeamlessM4T</b>, an open-source multilingual foundational model.</li><li>❖ Apple introduced a <b>voice cloning feature in iOS 17</b> to assist those at risk of losing their voice.</li><li>❖ <b>YouTube's Dream Track allows creators</b> to use AI vocals with permission from pop stars.</li><li>❖ The <b>global market for AI voice cloning applications</b> is projected to <b>reach nearly \$5 billion by 2032.</b></li></ul>
<b>C-130J NIGHT LANDING</b>	<p><b>WHY IN NEWS?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ <i>Indian Air Force's C-130J Super Hercules aircraft successfully performed a night landing at the Advanced Landing Ground (ALG) in Kargil.</i></li><li>❖ <i>This marks the first-ever night landing at the Kargil airstrip, highlighting enhanced operational capabilities.</i></li></ul> <p><b>ABOUT C-130J NIGHT LANDING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ The C-130J aircraft carried out a night landing at the <b>Kargil ALG</b>, a restricted airstrip located at <b>an altitude of around 10,000 feet.</b></li><li>❖ The night landing was <b>accomplished using terrain masking techniques en route.</b></li><li>❖ The exercise also included a <b>training mission involving the Garud special forces.</b></li></ul> <p><b>INDIA'S C-130J SUPER HERCULES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Advanced airlifter delivered to <b>Indian Air Force (IAF)</b> under US Government Foreign Military Sales program.</li><li>❖ <b>Specially designed</b> for special operations with advanced features like <b>Infrared Detection Set and air-to-air refueling.</b></li><li>❖ Suited for India's diverse mission environment, <b>powered by Rolls-Royce AE2100 engines.</b></li><li>❖ Flexibility for various missions, <b>including aerial refueling, search and rescue, and electronic surveillance.</b></li></ul>





## PANSPERMIA HYPOTHESIS

- ❖ Offers enhanced performance and reliability compared to earlier C-130 models.
- ❖ Key improvements include **greater range, higher cruising ceiling, and increased speed.**
- ❖ Modern features like **multi-function LCD screens and holographic head-up displays.**
- ❖ Represents an **enduring partnership between Lockheed Martin and India**, with potential for additional acquisitions.

### WHY IN NEWS?

- ❖ **Recent scientific advances in various fields have brought the concept of panspermia into focus, making it a subject of contemporary discussion.**

### ABOUT PANSPERMIA HYPOTHESIS

#### ❖ Ancient Philosophical Roots:

- ☛ Speculations on the **origins of life date back to ancient civilizations.**
- ☛ **Anaxagoras, a Greek philosopher (500-428 BCE)**, introduced the concept of panspermia, suggesting that **life's seeds exist everywhere in the universe**, with the ability to travel between planets.

#### ❖ Panspermia Coined:

- ☛ **Anaxagoras coined the term panspermia**, describing the idea of life as seeds traveling between planets.
- ☛ Other Greek philosophers like **Anaximander and Thales also touched upon this philosophical point.**

#### ❖ Nineteenth-Century Scientists' Contributions:

- ☛ Renowned scientists in the nineteenth century, **including Svante Arrhenius in 1903, contributed to panspermia.**
- ☛ Arrhenius proposed that **microscopic spores could travel through interplanetary space via radiation pressure from the sun.**

#### ❖ Modern Formulation: Three Stages:

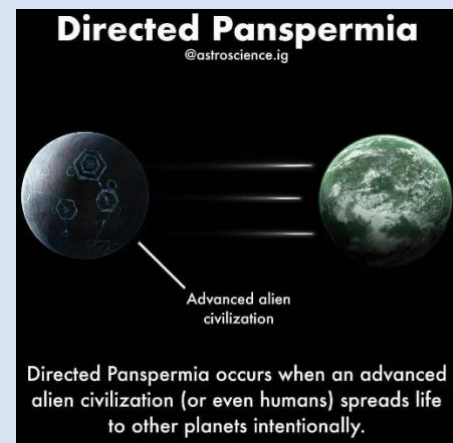
- ☛ The modern version of panspermia envisions three stages: **escape from a planet, transit through interplanetary space, and landing on a recipient planet.**
- ☛ Each stage has been **explored, providing some support for the hypothesis.**

#### ❖ Microbial Survival in Space:

- ☛ Research indicates the **potential for microbial spores to escape a planet, survive in low Earth orbits (LEO)**, and endure re-entry into a planet with an atmosphere.
- ☛ **High-altitude capture of radioresistant microbes** and space experiments on Earth orbiters and **the International Space Station (ISS) support these possibilities.**

#### ❖ Revival and Modification:

- ☛ The panspermia hypothesis has been modified and revived over time.





## ANAMALAI TIGER RESERVE

- Ongoing research and modifications of the theory have brought a **new perspective to explorations on Mars and the icy moons of Jupiter and Saturn.**

### WHY IN NEWS?

- ❖ A heartwarming story **unfolds in Tamil Nadu's Anamalai Tiger Reserve** as forest officials undertake a **challenging five-hour rescue operation to reunite a lost elephant calf with its mother and herd.**

### ABOUT ANAMALAI TIGER RESERVE

#### ❖ Historical Background:

- **Established in 1848, the Anamalai Tiger Reserve** has a rich management history, evolving from the erstwhile **Coimbatore South Forest division**, which served as a model forest division for the Madras State.

#### ❖ Geographical Location:

- Carved out of the Tamil Nadu portion of the Anamalais, **the reserve is known as Anamalai Tiger Reserve (ATR).**
- It lies **south of the Palakkad gap in the Southern Western Ghats.**

#### ❖ Biodiversity hotspot:

- A part of the **Western Ghats mountains chain in South West India**, the Tiger Reserve falls within the Western Ghats, **designated as one of 25 Global Biodiversity Hotspots.**
- This region is recognized as one of the **"hottest hot spots" globally.**



### SIGNIFICANCE OF ANAMALAI TIGER RESERVE

- ❖ **Wet evergreen, semi-evergreen, deciduous forests**, and montane grasslands.
- ❖ Includes **teak plantations, exotic species**, and freshwater ecosystems.
- ❖ **Rich collection of ≥ 39 red, endangered, and threatened plant species.**
- ❖ **≥ 70 fish, amphibian, reptile, and mammal species**, ≥ 300 bird species.
- ❖ Presence of **over 25 tigers emphasizes ecosystem health.**
- ❖ Designated '**Anthropological Reserve**' supporting Malasar, Malai malasars, Kadars, Eravallars, Pulayars, and Muduvars.
- ❖ **Parambikulam–Aliyar Project** and **Amaravathy dam** contribute to regional water, power, and agricultural prosperity.

## ENNORE- MANALI REGION WILDLIFE

### WHY IN NEWS?

*The Ennore-Manali region in northern Chennai witnessed an oil spill during Cyclone Michaung in early December, causing adverse effects on the eco-sensitive Ennore Creek and the Kosasthalaiyar river.*

### ABOUT ENNORE-MANALI REGION: OIL SPILL IMPACT ON WILDLIFE

#### ❖ Impacts on Ecosystem:

- **Mangroves, aquatic life, and migratory birds in the region**, including species like **open-billed storks, cormorants, egrets, and pelicans**, were heavily affected by the **slick and oily sludge** resulting from the spill.



❖ **Known Bird Species:**

- ☛ The wetlands in the Ennore-Manali region are **known to host a diverse range of bird species**, such as **spot-billed ducks, grebes, common coots, black-winged stilts, red-wattled lapwings, and pond herons.**

❖ **Drastic Drop in Birdlife:**

- ☛ The oil spill caused a significant decline in **birdlife in the creek during the first two weeks of December**, leading to the **death of over 50 pelicans**, particularly affecting spot-billed pelicans due to their feeding style.



❖ **Rescue Operations by Wildlife Organizations:**

- ☛ ECCF collaborated with the **Wildlife Trust of India (WTI)** and the **Besant Memorial Animal Dispensary (BMAD)** to rescue surviving birds, especially pelicans affected by the oil spill.

**ABOUT ENNORE CREEK**

❖ **Location and Geography:**

- ☛ Ennore Creek is a **backwater situated in Thiruvallur District, Tamil Nadu, serving as an arm of the Kosathalaiyar River.**
- ☛ It meets the Bay of Bengal at Mugathwara Kuppam, with a northern channel **connecting to Pulicat Lake.**

❖ **Ecological Significance:**

- ☛ The creek, along with the **Buckingham Canal and the Pulicat water system**, holds immense **importance for local fisherfolk.**
- ☛ It **nurtures a healthy aquatic ecosystem** known for its **rich biodiversity.**

❖ **Legal protections:**

- ☛ Designated as **CRZ IV (Water Body) in the coastal zone management plan** by the Tamil Nadu State Coastal Zone Management Authority
- ☛ Any reclamation, bunding, or alterations to the natural courses of such water bodies are illegal under various environmental regulations, including **CRZ Notification 2011, Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1974, and Environment Protection Act 1986.**