The Hindu News Analysis – 31st December 2019 – Shankar IAS Academy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>News Articles</th>
<th>Page Number*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Overall green cover rises, but northeast records a dip</td>
<td>9, 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kerala leads race for UN development goals</td>
<td>1, 12, 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>AFSPA extended in Nagaland for six months</td>
<td>12, 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Holding a mirror to our face (OPED)</td>
<td>11, 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Gender Disparity (Data Point)</td>
<td>11, 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>RBI buys ₹10,000 crore worth govt securities via OMO</td>
<td>15, 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Practice cum Revision - MCQs</td>
<td>@end of the video</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall green cover rises, but northeast records a dip

Sharpest decline in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Mizoram, says ISFR report

The forest cover in the country increased by 3.37% (24,701 sq km) but, with the sharpest declines in the northeastern states of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Mizoram, according to the 2009 edition of the bulletin State of Forest Report (SOF) that was made public on Monday. At 71.25% of the country’s geographical area or 0.2% more than last year.

The ISFR, a biennial exercise, assesses the forest and tree cover, bamboo resources, carbon stock and forest fires. The top three states showing an increase in forest cover are Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

Part A—Preliminary Examination

Paper I (200 marks)

- Current events of national and international importance.
- General issues on Environmental ecology, Bio-diversity and Climate Change - that do not require subject specialization.

India State of Forest Report 2019

- Published by Forest Survey of India once in 2 years
- Provides information on
  - Forest Cover
  - Tree Cover
  - Mangrove Cover
  - Growing Stock
  - Forest type & Biodiversity
  - Forest fire monitoring
  - Forest cover in different slopes & altitudes
  - Bamboo resources

- Forest Cover & forest cover changes assessed from Indian Remote Sensing Satellite data - Resourcesat-Ⅱ

- Objectives

The main objectives of the biennial forest cover mapping exercise done by FSI are as follows:

- to monitor forest cover and changes therein at the National, State and District levels
- to generate information on forest cover in different density classes and changes therein
- to produce forest cover and other thematic maps derived from it for the whole country
- to provide primary base layer for assessment of different parameters including growing stock, forest carbon etc
- to provide information for international reporting
**Classification of Forest Cover**

**TABLE 2.2** Forest cover classified in terms of canopy density classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Dense Forest</td>
<td>All lands with tree canopy density of 70 percent and above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately Dense Forest</td>
<td>All lands with tree canopy density of 40 percent and more but less than 70 percent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Forest</td>
<td>All lands with tree canopy density of 10 percent and more but less than 40 percent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrub</td>
<td>Forest lands with canopy density less than 10 percent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-forest</td>
<td>Lands not included in any of the above classes. (includes water)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Canopy: The cover of branches and foliage formed by crowns of trees.
- Canopy Cover: The percentage of ground covered by a vertical projection of outermost perimeter of natural spread of foliage of plants.
- Canopy Density: Percent area of land covered by canopy of trees. It is expressed as a decimal coefficient, taking closed canopy as unity.
- Growing Stock: The sum (by number or volume) of all the trees growing/living in the forest or a specified part of it.
- Forest Area: The area recorded as a forest in the Government records. It is also referred to as “Recorded Forest Area”.
- Forest Blank: A patch within a forest which bears few or no trees.
- Forest Cover: All lands, more than one hectare in area, with a tree canopy density of more than 10 percent irrespective of ownership and legal status. Such lands may not necessarily be a recorded forest area. It also includes orchards, bamboo and palm.
- Recorded Forest Area: Forest Area recorded as forests in Government records.
- Tree Cover: It comprises of tree patches of size less than 1 ha occurring outside the recorded forest area. Tree cover includes trees in all formations including scattered trees.
- Trees Outside Forests (TOF): TOF refers to all trees growing outside recorded forest areas irrespective of patch size.
Report Findings

1. Forest Cover

* Overall gain in forest cover compared to IFSR - 2017 → By 3976 sq km

% increase when compared to geographical area: 21.67%

**States with large forest cover as a percentage of total forest area**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mizoram</td>
<td>85.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arunachal Pradesh</td>
<td>79.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>76.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>75.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>75.31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Quality of forest cover in terms of canopy density classes is waverering*

**Greener cover**

Forest cover in Kerala grew by 4.05%, the most in the country, while the largest decrease of 2.88% was recorded in Manipur.

*Gain* in terms of area:
- Karnataka
- Andhra Pradesh
- Kerala

*Loss* in terms of area:
- Manipur
- Arunachal Pradesh
- Mizoram

**Forest cover within the ‘Recorded Forest Area’** → Decrease (330 sq km)
Forest cover outside such recorded area → Increase 4306 sq km.

2. Forest & Tree Cover

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage of geographical area</th>
<th>Increase when compared to IFSR 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Forest Cover</td>
<td>21.67%</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Cover</td>
<td>2.89%</td>
<td>1.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Forest &amp; Tree Cover</td>
<td>24.56%</td>
<td>0.65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**National Forest Policy 1988 – 33%**
3. Mangrove Cover

* Increase in mangrove cover → 1.1% when compared to IFSR 2017

![Pie chart showing Mangrove Cover in different States & UTs]

4. Forest Carbon Stock

9.4.2 Change in Forest Carbon Stock

Change in carbon stock in India’s forests between 2017 and 2019 is presented in the Table 9.4.

**TABLE 9.4** Change in forest carbon stock of India between 2017 and 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Carbon Stock in forest in 2017</th>
<th>Carbon stock in forest in 2019</th>
<th>Net change in Carbon stock</th>
<th>Annual change in Carbon stock</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Above Ground Biomass</td>
<td>2,237.5</td>
<td>2,256.5</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Ground Biomass</td>
<td>698.7</td>
<td>700.8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dead wood</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Litter</td>
<td>136.2</td>
<td>127.9</td>
<td>-8.3</td>
<td>-4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soil</td>
<td>3,979.5</td>
<td>4,003.6</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7,082.0</td>
<td>7,124.6</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*India’s NDC

1. To create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent through additional forest & tree cover by 2030
### Special features in India State of Forest Report 2019

1. Assessment of plant biodiversity in forests,
2. Wetlands in Forest Areas,
3. Mapping of Fire Prone Forest Areas,
4. Major Invasive Species,
5. Important Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) Species,
6. Quantified estimation of dependence of people living in the forest fringe villages on forests for fuelwood, fodder, small timber and bamboo,
7. Extent of Trees outside Forest in the country,
8. Major species in Trees Outside Forests (TOF),
9. Refined Forest Type Map of India,
10. Forest Cover on Slopes,
11. Diameter-class wise distribution of major tree species in forests.

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**Practice Question – Prelims**

Q. Consider the following statements.

1. Forest Survey of India (FSI) presents findings of its mapping and forest resource assessment activities at the national level, biannually, by publishing India State of Forest Report (ISFR).

2. The extent of Trees Outside Forests (TOF) has been derived for the first time in ISFR 2019.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?

a) 1 only  
b) 2 only  
c) Both 1 and 2  
d) Neither 1 nor 2
Second edition of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

India Index released by NITI Aayog

Sustainable Development Goals

- Idea conceived at 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development
- Adopted in 2015 to end poverty, protect the planet, ensure peace and prosperity by 2030
- Replaced Millennium Development Goals
- UN SDGs - 17 goals, 169 targets, 306 national indicators
- Leave No One Behind
**India and SDGs**

- SDGs mirrored in India’s National Development Agenda
- Overall coordination by NITI Aayog
- SDG India Index
  - To measure progress of States & UTs
  - Developed in collaboration with MoSPI, UN in India & Global Green Growth Institute

**SDG India Index - 2019**

- Based on 100 indicators from MoSPI’s National Indicator Framework
- Covers 16/17 SDGs; 2018 Index covered only 13 goals
- Score on a scale of 0-100 based on performance in 16 indicators
  - Aspirant (0-19)
  - Performer (50-64)
  - Front Runner (65-99)
  - Achiever (100)
- India’s composite score in 2018: 57 in 2018
  - 60 in 2019

**UP, Bihar, Assam → to 'Performer' category**
- A.P, Telangana, Karnataka, Goa, Sikkim → to 'Front Runner' Category

**Top Performers → Kerala, Himachal Pradesh**
- Biggest improvement → U.P, Odisha, Sikkim
- At bottom → Bihar

**Maximum gains**
- Clean Water and Sanitation
- Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
- Peace, justice and strong institutions
- Affordable and clean energy

**Poor Performance**

- a) Ending hunger
- b) Gender equality

**SDG - Zero hunger**

- Top → Kerala, Goa, N.E.
- Bottom → Jharkhand, M.P, Bihar, Chhattisgarh

**SDG 5 - Gender Equality**

- Poor performance by almost all states

**Reasons**

- Sex ratio 896/1000
- 17.5% female labour participation
- 1/3rd women experience spousal violence
Q. Consider the following statements regarding the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDGs).

1. It was adopted by the UN member countries during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development at Rio de Janeiro in 2012.

2. In India, NITI Aayog has the responsibility to provide the overall coordination and leadership to implement the SDGs.

3. The Sustainable Development Goals India Index is released by the NITI Aayog.

Which of the above statements are correct?

a) 1 and 2 only
b) 2 and 3 only
c) 1 and 2 only
d) 1, 2 and 3
AFSPA extended in Nagaland for six months

Entire State declared a ‘disturbed area’

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has declared the entire State of Nagaland as a “disturbed area” for six months, under the controversial Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) which empowers security forces to conduct operations anywhere and arrest anyone without prior notice. The AFSPA has been in force in the North East since 1958. Nagaland got statehood in 1963.

In a notification, the MHA said the central government is of the opinion that the area comprising the whole state of Nagaland is in such a “disturbed and dangerous condition” that the use of armed forces in aid of civil power is necessary. “Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 3 of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (No. 28 of 1958) the central government hereby declares that whole of the said State to be a ‘disturbed area’ for a period of six months with effect from December 30, 2019 for the purpose of that Act,” the notification said. Presently, AFSPA, 1958, is operational in the entire States of Assam, Nagaland, Manipur (except Imphal Municipal area), three districts namely Tirap, Changlang and Longding of Arunachal Pradesh and the areas falling within the jurisdiction of the eight police stations in the districts of Arunachal Pradesh, bordering Assam.

Centre’s notification

The notification declaring Manipur and Assam as “Disturbed Areas” has been issued by the State governments. For Nagaland, the notification is issued by the MHA. The Act has not been withdrawn despite a framework agreement being signed on August 3, 2015 between Naga insurgent group NSCN(IM) general secretary Thuingaleng Muivah and government interlocutor R.N. Ravi in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

AFSPA

* Armed Forces (J & K) Special Powers Act, 1990
* AFSPA - 1958 for North Eastern States

AFSPA - 1958

* Gives special powers to armed forces to maintain public order
* Special powers
  * To prohibit assembly of 5 or more persons
  * Prohibition on carrying fire arms
  * can use force / fire upon them
  * Arrest without warrant
  * Impunity for actions

Disturbed Area - Under Section 3 AFSPA

* by Governor of State or Administrator of UT or Centre
* Need armed forces to aid civil power

AFSPA applicable in

* Assam
* Nagaland
* Manipur (except Imphal Municipal area)
* parts of Arunachal Pradesh
Practice Question – Prelims

Q. Consider the following statements.

1. Under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act of 1958, only the Central government can declare an area as disturbed area.

2. At present, AFSPA 1958 is operational only in the states of Assam and Nagaland.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2
Holding a mirror to our face

The HDI rankings show that India’s demographic dividend is morphing into a nightmare.  

For some time now, in political and bureaucratic circles, a new mantra has been doing the rounds: “India is a Huge nation in terms of population which is also the larger part of the world community. But at the same time, it is a smaller country in terms of resources, and therefore, it has to be more efficient in terms of our use of resources.” This new mantra has become a rallying point for a larger group of Indian leaders who have been fighting against the issues like unemployment, poverty, and inequality.  

For the first time, a country like India which has a large population is being compared to a smaller country in terms of resources. The world community is aware of the resources that India has, but it is not aware of the numbers that the country has. India is a huge country in terms of population, but it is a smaller country in terms of resources. The world community is aware of the resources that India has, but it is not aware of the numbers that the country has. 

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The Regional Computation Centre for Population, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) has recently published a report on the progress of HDI in India. According to the report, India has moved up from 121st position in 2009 to 119th position in 2018. However, the report also points out that the progress has been slow and there is a need to focus more on improving education and health indices. 

The report states that India has made significant progress in terms of education and health indices, but there is a need to focus more on improving these indices. The report highlights the need for improving the literacy rate and reducing the child mortality rate. It also points out that India has a long way to go in terms of improving the life expectancy at birth. 

The report also highlights the need for improving the economic indices. It points out that India has a long way to go in terms of improving the per capita GDP and reducing the poverty rate. The report states that India has made some progress in terms of reducing poverty, but there is a need to do more to reduce the poverty rate further. 

The report also highlights the need for improving the social indices. It points out that India has made some progress in terms of reducing infant mortality and increasing the contraceptive prevalence rate. However, there is a need to do more to improve these indices further.

Human Development Reports

- Published by UNDP
- First released in 1990 - released annually
- HDI, Inequality-adjusted HDI, Gender Development Index, Gender Inequality Index

Human Development Index

- ‘people and their capabilities should be the ultimate criteria’ for assessing development of a country
- assessment not to be based on economic growth alone
- measures of achievement in three important dimensions

Human Development Index (HDI)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIMENSIONS</th>
<th>Long and healthy life</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>A decent standard of living</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INDICATORS</td>
<td>Life expectancy at birth</td>
<td>Expected years of schooling</td>
<td>GNI per capita (PPP $)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIMENSION INDEX</td>
<td>Life expectancy index</td>
<td>Education index</td>
<td>CNI index</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cultspedia Team - Powered by Shankar IAS Academy
**India - HDI**

- HDI (2018) - 0.647 - Medium Human Development Category
- 129th rank (HDI) - out of 189 countries

**China and Sri Lanka**
- China - 0.758 - 85th rank
- Sri Lanka - 0.78 - 71st rank

**Challenges:** malnutrition, alarming number of children who drop out of school, untrained (unskilled) youth

**India - GDP (PPP) and GDP (PPP) per capita**

- GDP (PPP) - 3rd in the world
- GDP (PPP) per capita - 124th position

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**Practice Question – Prelims**

Q. Both the Gender Development Index and Gender Inequality Index are released by

a) World Economic Forum
b) United Nations Development Programme
c) World Bank
d) None of the above
Practice Question – Prelims
Q. ‘Human Development Index’ is often seen in the news. It is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development. Which of the following are the key dimensions?
1. Long and healthy life
2. Empowerment
3. Knowledge
4. A decent standard of living
Select the correct answer from the codes given below.
   a)  1, 2 and 3
   b)  2, 3 and 4
   c)  1, 3 and 4
   d)  1, 2 and 4

Practice Question – Mains
GS-III
Q. Do you agree with the view that economic growth in terms of GDP reflect the development of people and their capabilities? Give reasons in support of your arguments.
(Answer in 150 words, 10 marks)
India has slipped 4 places, from last year’s 112th rank (from 108th rank) in World Economic Forum’s ‘Global Gender Gap Index 2020’. The Global Gender Gap Index introduces a new metric for understanding the gap between men and women. It is calculated based on a set of indicators and data from around the world, providing a comprehensive view of the gender gap in terms of economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment.

In 2020, the Global Gender Gap Index shows that the gender gap in health and survival, economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, and political empowerment are the main areas where the gap persists. The index tracks the progress towards closing these gaps over time, allowing effective comparisons across the regions and covering 153 countries.

India comes under “South Asian Region” in the Global Gender Gap Index. In 2020, the index shows that India’s gender gap has narrowed, but it still ranks among the lowest in the region. The index highlights the importance of addressing gender inequalities to improve economic growth and social outcomes globally.
India’s Performance

* India moved down from 108th rank (2018) to 112th rank (2019)
* has closed two-thirds of its overall gender gap (score of 66.8%)

1) Economic Participation and Opportunity

- 1/3rd of the gap closed (35.4%)
- gap has widened, since 2006
- only country where Economic Gender Gap is larger than Political Gender Gap

2) Health & Survival

- Two sub-parameters
  - i) Life Expectancy for Women
  - ii) Sex ratio at birth
- India ranks low in this parameter
- Lowest rank attributed to “skewed” sex ratio at birth

3. Unhealthy rank | Among all indices, India’s rank was the worst in the Health and Survival parameter which is computed in terms of life expectancy for women and sex ratio at birth. India ranked second-worst among South Asian and BRICS nations in the sex ratio category

4. Unhealthy rank | Among all indices, India’s rank was the worst in the Health and Survival parameter which is computed in terms of life expectancy for women and sex ratio at birth. India ranked second-worst among South Asian and BRICS nations in the sex ratio category

Performance of India among the BRICS Nations

* Performance → Poor

3) Educational Attainment

- more positive in closing gender gap

4) Political Empowerment

- Relatively better performance, still, low female political representation
  - 14.4% women in Parliament
  - 23% women in Ministerial positions
Practice Question – Prelims

Q. Consider the following statements with reference to “Global Gender Gap Index”.
1. It is released by World Economic Forum.
2. It benchmarks national gender gaps on economic and political criteria only.
Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2
RBI buys ₹10,000 crore worth government securities via OMO

In its second special open market operation (OMO), the Reserve Bank of India on Monday bought ₹10,000 crore of long-term government securities and sold ₹8,500 crore of three short-term bonds.

Last week, the RBI had said it would buy and sell government securities under OMO for ₹10,000 crore each, simultaneously.

Though the central bank offered to sell four securities in the auction, it accepted bids for only three. In the OMO purchase of 6.48% GS 2026, the 10-year benchmark security, the RBI received ₹23,002 crore worth of bids but accepted ₹10,000 crore worth. It also received 285 bids to purchase 8.48% 2029 security but accepted only 15 bids.

The cut-off yield at which bids were accepted was 6.4146%.

The RBI offered to sell four government securities – 6.65% GS 2020; 7.7% GS 2020; 8.26% GS 2020; and 8.42% GS 2020 through the OMO sale. It accepted only ₹8,501 crore worth of bids for the three securities as against ₹8,515 crore bids it received for four securities.

Separately, the RBI also proposed a reduction in the loan amount an urban co-operative bank can lend to a single entity and a group of borrowers to 10% and 25%, respectively, with an aim to prevent occurrences as with PMC Bank, caused by large exposures to one group.

Currently, urban co-operative banks are permitted to have exposures up to 18% and 40% of their capital funds to a single borrower and a group of borrowers, respectively.

Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative Bank collapsed because of its huge exposure totalling ₹6,250 crore to Housing Development and Infrastructure Ltd Group firms.
Practice Question – Prelims

Q1. Consider the following statements.

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2. The extent of Trees Outside Forests (TOF) has been derived for the first time in ISFR 2019.

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Practice Question – Prelims

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDGs).

1. It was adopted by the UN member countries during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development at Rio de Janeiro in 2012.

2. In India, NITI Aayog has the responsibility to provide the overall coordination and leadership to implement the SDGs.

3. The Sustainable Development Goals India Index is released by the NITI Aayog.

Which of the above statements are correct?

a) 1 and 2 only
b) 2 and 3 only
c) 1 and 2 only
d) 1, 2 and 3

Practice Question – Prelims

Q3. Consider the following statements.

1. Under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act of 1958, only the Central government can declare an area as disturbed area.

2. At present, AFSPA 1958 is operational only in the states of Assam and Nagaland.

Which of the above statement(s) is/are correct?

a) 1 only
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Practice Question – Prelims
Q4. Both the Gender Development Index and Gender Inequality Index are released by
a) World Economic Forum
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c) World Bank
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Practice Question – Prelims
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4. A decent standard of living
Select the correct answer from the codes given below.
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Practice Question – Prelims

Q1. Option ‘b’ – 2 only
Q2. Option ‘b’ – 2 and 3 only
Q3. Option ‘d’ – Neither 1 nor 2
Q4. Option ‘b’ – United Nations Development Programme
Q5. Option ‘c’ – 1, 3 and 4
Q6. Option ‘a’ - 1 only
Practice Question – Mains
GS-III
Q. Do you agree with the view that economic growth in terms of GDP reflect the development of people and their capabilities? Give reasons in support of your arguments. (Answer in 150 words, 10 marks)