



## CURRENT AFFAIRS



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# **Five-Country Biosphere Reserve (GS-2: CONSERVATION, GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND ENVIRONMENT.)**

**CONTEXT:-** Mura-Drava-Danube (MDD) has been announced as the world's first 'five-country biosphere reserve' by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

### **About MDD**

MDD biosphere reserve covers a total area of 700 km of the Mura, Drava and Danube rivers and stretches covering the regions of Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary and Serbia. It covers a total area of over a million hectares and known as 'Amazon of Europe', makes it the largest riverine protected area on the continent.

The physiography of the forest consists of floodplain forests, gravel and sand banks, river islands, oxbows and meadows. Also, it is home to a variety of rare flora and fauna. Some of the rare species are Europe's highest density of breeding white-tailed eagle, some endangered species such as the little tern, black stork, otters, beavers and sturgeons. According to WWF it is also an important annual resting and feeding place for more than 250,000 migratory birds and home to 900,000 people who live in the biosphere reserve.

### **Criteria for Designation of Biosphere Reserve**

Biosphere Reserve (BR) is an international designation by the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** for regions of natural and cultural landscapes extending over large areas of terrestrial or coastal/marine ecosystems or a combination of both. These Reserves try to balance economic and social development and maintenance of cultural values associated along with the preservation of nature and are thus special environments for both people and nature and are living examples of how human beings and nature can co-exist while respecting each others' needs.

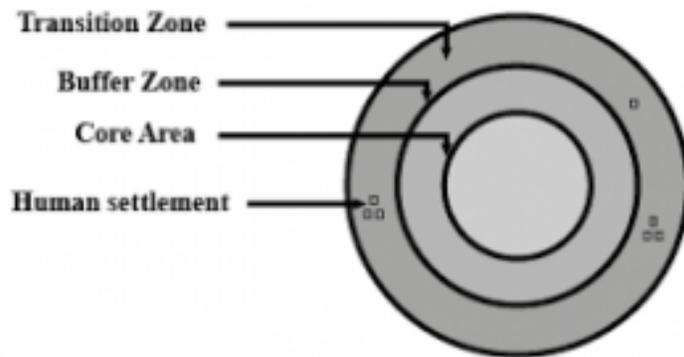
An area to be designated as Biosphere Reserve, a site must contain a protected and minimally disturbed core area of value of nature conservation. Core area must be a bio-geographical unit and should be large enough to sustain a viable population representing all trophic levels. It must involve all the stakeholders including participation of local communities and use of their knowledge in biodiversity preservation.

# Structure of Biosphere Reserve

**Core Areas:** It is the maximum protected area of a biosphere reserve. It may contain endemic plants and animals. It conserves the wild relatives of economic species and also represents important genetic reservoirs having exceptional scientific interest. It is a protected region, like a National Park or Sanctuary/protected/regulated mostly under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. It is kept free from human interference.

**Buffer Zone:** The core zone is surrounded by Buffer zone and its activities are managed in this area in the ways that help in the protection of the core zone. It includes activities ecological restoration, limited tourism, fishing, grazing, etc; which are permitted to reduce its effect on the core zone. Research and educational activities are to be encouraged.

**Transition Zone:** It is the outermost zone of the biosphere reserve. It is the zone of the blend of working where human ventures and conservation are done in harmony. It includes settlements, croplands, managed forests and areas for intensive recreation and other economic uses characteristics of the region.



## Functions of Biosphere Reserve

**Conservation:** Managing Biosphere Reserve's, endemic species, genetic resources, landscapes & ecosystems. It may prevent man-animal conflict along with the wildlife, culture and customs of tribals are also protected.

**Development:** Promoting economic and human growth that is sustainable on a sociocultural and ecological level. It seeks to strengthen the main three pillars of sustainable development: social, economic and protection of the environment.

**Logistic support:** Promoting scientific research activities, environmental education, training and monitoring in the context of local, national and international conservation and sustainable development.



## Man and Biosphere Programme

It is a programme launched in 1971 under UNESCO. Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) is an intergovernmental scientific programme that aims to establish a scientific basis for the improvement of cordial relationships between people and their environments.

MAB combines natural, social sciences, economics and education to improve human livelihoods and the equitable sharing of benefits, and to safeguard natural and managed ecosystems, thus promoting innovative approaches to

economic development that are socially and culturally appropriate, and environmentally sustainable. There are a total of 12 Biosphere reserves in India that find their place in UNESCO's List of Man & Biosphere Reserves Programme.

**By ANSHUM VERMA**

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## **Ballet Painting : Restoration of Art in Palestine (GS Paper I- Art and culture)**

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### **Context**

Palestine is a country facing the disaster of war. Ballet painting describing her situation became too popular . Ballet painting is a type of art emerged during the period of Renaissance in Italy (12th 13th century). Gradually this type of painting spread over the world and adopted its new form during the 19th century. In Modern days this type of painting has been the cultural Heritage of Palestine . Palestinian artist Abeer Jebril presented this type of painting .

Through this painting artists tried to express the painful condition of Palestine . Jibril is a 35 year old beautiful lady and she is residing in Gaza strip , Palestine

## History of the ballet Painting

- This painting became more popular during the time of French King Louis 13th , 14th and 15th.
- Louis 14th patronised this type of painting very well and for this purpose he established two institutions Academie De Danse and Academie Royale De Musique to promote this art. Since he was art lover and less focused in political affair
- Louis 15th and 16th could not take care of such a type of painting art because of the economic crisis that erupted in France .
- This painting was again flourished during 19th century in europe and from Europe it flourished entire world

## Characteristics

- In Ballet painting , the main theme is human. Generally painters make pictures of human beauty, mainly female pictures .
- Ballet means a theatrical dance . in this painting, mainly dance picture s are painted
- The Painting was named with the name of Italian musician and choreographer , an eminent artist Balthasar de Beaujoyeulx. This artist had been associated with the court of France for long time
- balance and symmetry.are fundamental feature of such type of painting
- This painting Generally narrates the story of couteseous dances and the atmosphere of the court

# Various types of Ballets

- Story Ballet
- Plotless Ballet
- Classical Ballet
- Neo Classical Ballet
- Contemporary Ballet

French artist . Edgar Degas inspired Abir Jebrils . jebril used black colour in this painting. In fact through her painting he wanted to express the pathetic condition of Palestine. His main concern was also to express the male domination over females . Through her painting she wanted to express how various types of restrictions have been imposed on our women by men and how women are tollering these restrictions .

Through her painting Jibril also criticized Israel and Egypt and told both responsible for the pathetic condition of the women in Palestine

Her portraits have been displayed in various countries like mainly Arab countries and European countries. The main feature of her portrait is the use of knives. Art should be protected in the countries which are facing the problem of anarchy, war, disturbance . UNESCO and other institutions and even art lovers of the world should bring this concern to the international platform . Presently art and cultural heritage is facing the problem of its decline mainly in Iraq , Iran and Afghanistan. International concerned agencies should do their best to protect them. These countries neither have resource nor have sufficient mechanism to protect their cultural heritage

# By Dr Anshul Bajpai

Swarn Singh

## Raise the social issue through the art work (GS paper I- art and culture )

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### Context

Six female artists raised the social issue of the polarised world, existing in binaries, through their works

In Delhi an exhibition on art is going on till October 16, 2021. In this exhibition various social issues or concerns would be discussed through Artwork . We are facing the problem of Pandemic and in this situation , through this exhibition an effort has been made to bring the situation to normal mode. The title of the exhibition is “***Playhouse of Her Mind***” . This title dwells upon memories and metaphors to rethink present-day realities and assess future possibilities. In this exhibition of work of 6 great artists has been appreciable . Through their work they raised the questions related to social issues successfully .

**Bakula Nayak, Gopa Trivedi, Pranati Panda, Revati Sharma Singh, Shalina Vichitra, and Shalini Dam** participated in this exhibition through their work .

In this exhibition it can be generally understood how in this world a division based on identity had been created . How this world is being polarised on the basis of a conscious identity . This type of division would create problems in society. Division between two , generally harmful.

Bhavna Kakar, Founder-Director, Latitude 28 organizer of this exhibition stated that this artwork represents more than a physical faculty. This artwork is a palpable rendition of character in a feeling, a frame of mind, a visceral response; an adjective that makes tangible as metaphor, elusive ideas or the texture of a distant memory.

#### Brief about Artists

Bakula Nayak was borned in Bengaluru. Her practice is centred around collecting vintage paper. She is a Pittsburgh-based artist . In her view The paintings should work basically as the eliminator of space and nature in our world. The blue and pink parts represent human construction and consumption. In her view every painter moves from an anthropocentric society (where everything is central to man and mankind) to a more biocentric one — where all forms of life have an intrinsic value.”

Gopa Trivedi belonged from Vadodara Gujarat . Her main concern is to address social and individual anxieties, through her art work. She is inspired by Indian miniature traditions. In her views “The images and forms are used

as metaphors that reflect the social and political concerns of my surroundings and time,”

Pranati Panda belongs from Delhi . She worked with varied materials, techniques, patterns and textures. Her works depict her mindspace and the relationship between human beings and nature. Her current series of work is about our mind, a strong sense of wonder about the fragility of mind, wonder about the working of one’s memory, about the visible and the invisible.”

Revati Sharma Singh belongs to Himachal Pradesh and graduated from Delhi university .Her work is inspired by her spiritual leanings and memories . Her most concern is expressing freedom through her artwork , Freedom from dogma and religion, from close mindedness, to not care for what was expected of me, to not get influenced by anyone...”

Shalina Vichitra address concerns and questions regarding ‘belonging’ and the fragility of our existence through her art work.Her series are simply chronicles that frame any piece of land, a chunk, markings on its surface, its layers and the patterns in the overall fabric of the earth

Shalini Dam is a postgraduate from Wales, UK. She creates an optical illusion with clay, by making only one part of the image visible from an angle and animating the surface.

Latitude 28 is an art gallery of delhi definitely playing an important role to promote art and culture . During these days many exhibitions are going one. Every art lovers should visit and appreciate these works

**By Dr Anshul Bajpai**

**Swarn Singh**

**‘Fund and faculty’ count in higher  
education rankings (GS-III,  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENTS)**

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Context:- The 6th edition of the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) for higher education was released by the Union Education Minister on September 9 2021. This new edition of NIRF highlights more gaps between the best of the Institutes also.



As NIRF ranks only the top 100, around 935 universities, are bound to remain out of its purview. Each higher educational institution in the country undergoes the trauma of hope and despair, whenever the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), Times Higher Education (THE) and Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) rankings are published.

Rankings offer many advantages. It may help students, faculty, and prospective employers, to help them choose institutions for admission, to enhance chances for securing research funding, and target campuses for hirings respectively. It may generally promote competition among institutions, which result in an overall improvement in quality. As in the current policy, ranking leads to privileges like getting autonomy, authority to offer open and distance mode programmes, and permission to enter into collaboration with foreign universities among others.

The ranking can serve one of the most useful purposes i.e.- to identify areas of improvement and then proactively work to overcome the necessary deficiencies, thus ensure quality and promote excellence. This would mitigate the currently existing difference between the best and the rest of the Higher Education Institutions. After all, no nation can afford a few 'islands of excellence surrounded by the sea of mediocrity', and condemning them to eternal inferiority.

## Basis of metrics

The Universities need to offer quality skills, knowledge, and application orientation, but in order to attain excellence, they must make a seminal contribution in research, publications, patents and innovations too. Since performance of universities can't be measured by a single indicator, and ranked on a metric of measures.

As most of them give considerable weightage to research output, quality and impact-

- The ARWU ranks universities solely on the basis of their research performance.
- THE and QS, accord 60% and 20% weightage to research respectively.
- NIRF accords 30% weightage to Research Performance and Professional Practices (RPP).

This is measured through-

- The combined metric of publications (PU, 35%),
- Quality of publications (QP, 35%),
- IPR and patent (IPR, 15%)
- Footprint of Projects and Professional Practice (FPPP, 15%).

After analysing this context, we come to know that even the top 100 universities in NIRF, present a very dismal picture which requires urgent attention.

The NIRF 2020 ranking reveals that-

- The best university in the country scored 92.16% on research performance.
- The 10th best university score declined to 60.52%.
- The 20th and the 50th best universities, scored 50.32% and 28.69% respectively .
- The 100th best university, the RPP declined to as low as 4.35%.

It is not difficult to guess the state of affairs of the remaining 935 universities in the country.

## **On salaries and research**

NIRF does not disclose data on the total number of teachers but includes the total expenditure on salaries of teaching and non-teaching staff bunched together plus the total number of PhD students enrolled in each of the ranked universities. Using the above two as proxy for the size of a university in terms

of the faculty members and research staff, they were transposed against the Research and Professional Practice (RPP) ranks grouped in 10 categories.

The data disclose that on an average, the more the expenditure on salaries of the staff, the higher is the ranking of the university. So is the case with respect to the research scholars. The more the number of research scholars, the higher the ranks of the universities in terms of RPP. What was already known intuitively is now proven by the data also.

To conclude, the fund and the faculty, the two most neglected areas, are critical not only for research performance but also for the overall ranking, as the two bear a high degree of positive correlation.

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