



CURRENT AFFAIRS



Argasia Education PVT. Ltd. (GST NO.-09AAPCAI478E1ZH)
Address: Basement C59 Noida, opposite to Priyagold Building gate, Sector 02,
Pocket I, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, 201301, CONTACT NO:-8448440231

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State of Terror : First Novel of Hillary Clinton (GS Paper I : Art and Culture)

Context :

- Hillary Clinton, a renowned politician of the USA , former candidate of US presidential election and former Secretary of State of USA has released her book (a novel) entitled ***State of Terror*** which she co-authored with Canadian mystery writer Louise Penny (a Canadian author of mystery novels). This book is a fiction as declared by Hilery Clinton

About the novel

- The theme of this novel is based on the contemporary issue maily raising the issues of women in orthodox regime .
- In this novel a female character Ellen Adams is shown who is the protagonist and another character Ellen Adams is also there in this novel who has been inducted into the new cabinet of the president Douglas Williams. Earlier she was a media magnate .

- As the secretary of state, Adams is to unravel the issue of global terror conspiracy involving Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran with the assistance of other employees of foreign services who are of Lebanese origin and with the support of US-Pakistani journalists.
- Before this novel, Hillary Clinton had already worked on some books related to non-fiction. In fact Hilary used to raise the issue of contemporary politics through her writings. The books “It Takes a Village” (1996), “Living History” (2003), “Hard Choices” (2014) and “What Happened” are inclusive part of her thinking regarding contemporary issues related to political system
- When Hilary Clinton had to face her defeat in the presidential election from the hand of Trump, the idea of this book ***State of Terror*** had emerged in her mind. Even though it is fiction, at least it provides us an idea why political leaders write novels.
- As per the view of Renowned book critic of America Jacob Appel, the political leaders write a novel for the coming generation. In fact they want to leave their legacy for upcoming generation

Literature Work of other Politicians

- In fact, politicians think that they would send their ideas and principles to the public through their literature work. Definitely some of the politicians had succeeded in this regard but many of them had failed.
- In America, the literature work started by politicians goes back during the last of the nineteenth century when Donnelly, a Minnesota Congressman, wrote a novel entitled “Caesar’s Column” (in 1890). This novel had become too popular because it was based on technological changes in the future.
- Former American President Jimmy Carter was the first American President who had become the author of a novel. He wrote novels entitled *The Hornet’s Nest: A Novel of the Revolutionary War*. Following the legacy of Carter Bill Clinton had also written a novel entitled *The President is Missing*
- Apart from these works of US politicians, Indian politicians had also done a lot of work on literature. For example – Pt Nehru wrote

Discovery of India . Atal Bihari Bajpai was a great poet and his works on literature is profoundly commendable

- It is not necessary that books written by powerful leaders have become much popular . Jimmy Carter's "The Hornet's Nest" novel had failed among readers . Bill Clinton also could not place his place among readers .
- But definitely the leaders of the countries of the world had done a lot of works on literature and through these literature they spread their ideas among the public

Dr Anshul Bajpai

Protecting Geo-Heritage Sites → India's natural laboratories [GS III]

INTRODUCTION: India's Geo-diversity, or variety of the geological and physical elements of nature, is unique and very diverse. India has mountain ranges, gorges and valleys, different landforms, long-stretched coastlines, volcanoes, various soil types, areas having different minerals and resources, and some important fossil-bearing sites globally. India can be very useful for geo-scientific learning

BACKGROUND-

A supercontinent Pangea was broken into Laurasia and Gondwana, India formed out of Gondwana. India then drifted northwards due to Plate-Tectonics Theory.

The geological features and landscapes that evolved over billions of years through numerous cycles of tectonic and climate disruptions are recorded in India's rock formations and terrains, and are ultimately part of the country's heritage.

FOR EXAMPLE-

1. The Kutch region(Gujarat) has dinosaur fossils and so it resembles India's version of Jurassic Park.
2. The Tiruchirappalli region(Tamil Nadu), is a storehouse of Cretaceous period marine fossils.
3. The environmental history of the Indus River Valley has to be studied in order to understand how physical geography gets transformed into a cultural unit.

GEO-HERITAGE SITES-

- These sites are educational spaces where people find geological literacy.
- In comparison to subjects like physics, biology, and chemistry, the disciplines like environmental science and geology are not taught and studied that way. As there is uncertainty in the future climate, hence decision-making is bit difficult.
- Learning from the geological past may serve as an analogue for future climate.
- The awareness accrued through educational activities in geo-heritage parks will make it easy for us to memorise past events of climate change and appreciate the adaptation measures to be followed for survival.
- These **Geo-heritage sites** promote geo-tourism that generates revenue and employment.

Preserving geological heritage is also very important like safeguarding the biodiversity and cultural heritage.

EFFORTS BY UNESCO:

- The importance of the shared geological heritage of Earth was first recognised in 1991 at an UNESCO-sponsored event, 'First International Symposium on the Conservation of our Geological Heritage'. In this Event, the delegations from Digne, and France, assembled.
- The Man and the Earth share a common heritage, of which “we and our government is the custodian” declaration predict the establishment of geo-parks as sites that celebrate unique geological features and landscapes thus educate the public on geological importance.
- In the late 1990s, as a continuation of the Digne resolution, **UNESCO** facilitated efforts to create a formal programme promoting a global network of geoheritage sites, to complement the World Heritage Convention and the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere programme(MAB).
- UNESCO provided guidelines for developing national geo-parks to make them a part of the Global Geoparks Network, currently 169 Global Geoparks across 44 countries.

Unfortunately, **India** does not have any such legislation and policy for conservation unlike Vietnam and Thailand. The Geological Survey of India (GSI) has identified 32 sites as National Geological Monuments.

There is not a single geo-park in India which is recognised by the UNESCO, even when India is a signatory to the UNESCO Global Geoparks establishment .

The development campaign agenda-

In India, Many fossil-bearing sites have been destroyed in the name of development. The development juggernaut may soon overwhelm almost all our sites of geo-heritage:

For example-

- The Tiruchirappalli region (Tamil Nadu), a storehouse of Cretaceous marine fossils.
- The Kutch region in Gujarat has dinosaur fossils and is our version of a Jurassic Park.
- A National geological monument exhibiting a unique rock called Nepheline Syenite in Ajmer district of Rajasthan was destroyed in a road-widening project.
- The Lonar impact crater in Buldhana district(Maharashtra) is an important geo-heritage site of international significance (under threat of destruction)

India is moving towards the disappearance of most of its geological heritage sites due to factors like:

- unplanned and booming real estate business
- Unregulated stone mining activities

Natural assets, if destroyed, can't be recreated similarly they lose much of their scientific value, if uprooted.

The protection of geo-heritage sites requires some strong and immediate legislation. **The Biological Diversity Act** was implemented in 2002 and now there are 18 notified biosphere reserves in India.

TO CONCLUDE: Geo-conservation should be a major guiding factor in land-use planning. A progressive legal framework is needed to support such strategies. In 2009, a National Commission for Heritage Sites was constituted, through a bill introduced in the Rajya Sabha later the government backtracked and the bill was withdrawn. The Government has to sympathise with these issues and take some strong action in order to save these geological heritage

sites and hence the culture. Therefore the Govt. has to take some necessary steps in this direction.

Rajeev Yadav

Right to Clean Environment GS-2

Important International Organisation

CONTEXT

Recently, the **United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)** unanimously voted for recognising **a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a Universal Human Right**. If recognised by all, the right will be the first of its kind in more than 70 years since the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)** was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948. **UDHR:** The 30 rights and freedoms **include civil and political rights**, like the right to life, liberty, free speech and privacy and economic, social and cultural rights, like the right to social security, health and education, etc.

ABOUT UNHRC

It is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the world. The Council was created by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2006. It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

It is made up of 47 United Nations Member States which are elected by the UNGA. India was elected in January 2019 for a period of three years.

Universal Periodic Review: UPR serves to assess the human rights situations in all United Nations Member States. UN Special Procedures: These are made up of special rapporteurs, special representatives, independent experts and working groups that monitor, examine, advise and publicly report on thematic issues or human rights situations in specific countries.

HUMAN RIGHTS V/S ENVIRONMENT

The concept of human rights in general emerged after the Second World War (1939-45), but the right to a healthy environment, as one of those human rights, was never a priority. The right to a clean environment is rooted in the **1972 Stockholm Declaration**, popularly called as the Magna Carta of human environment. It contained principles and recommendations for environmental policy. 'Caring for the Earth 1991' and the 'Earth Summit' of 1992" also declared that human beings are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION

- The human right to a healthy environment brings together the environmental dimensions of civil, cultural, economic, political, and social rights, and protects the core elements of the natural environment that enable a life of dignity.
- The right to life (Article 21) has been used in a diversified manner in India. It includes, inter alia, the right to survive as a species, quality of life, the right to live with dignity and the right to livelihood. Article 21 of the Indian Constitution states: 'No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedures established by law.'

- Further the Constitutional (forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976 incorporated two significant articles viz. Article 48-A and 51A (g) thereby making the Indian Constitution the first in the world conferring constitutional status to the environment protection.
 - Article 48-A: The State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country.
 - Article 51A(g): It is a duty of every citizen to protect and preserve the environment.

Environment Protection Laws in India:

- **Wildlife (rotection) Act, 1972.**
- **Water (prevention and control of pollution) Act, 1974.**
- **The Forest (conservation) Act, 1989.**
- **The Air (prevention and control of pollution) Act, 1981**
- **The Environment (protection) Act, 1986.**
- **The National Green Tribunal Act, 2010**

Environmental Principles:

- **Inter-generational Equity:** It states that every generation holds Earth in common, therefore its resources should be used judiciously and for the common benefit of all.
- **Polluter Pays Principle:** It states that the polluter should bear the cost of damage caused by it to the natural environment.
- **Precautionary Principle:** It states that even in the absence of scientific evidence, measures must be taken to anticipate and prevent the causes of environmental degradation. It is the social responsibility of the State to protect the public from any plausible risk.
- **Public trust Doctrine:** It states that resources like water, air, sea and forest have a great importance to the general public that it would be unjustified to make it the subject of private ownership. It poses a duty on the State to protect such resources for the benefit of all and not to permit any commercial use of it.

- **Sustainable Development Principle:** It states that the State should try to strike a balance between development and environment.

ANSHUM VERMA

Reflections on the ‘quasi-federal’ democracy [GS II]

CONTEXT: Events coinciding with the jubilee of India’s Independence draw attention to the federal structure of India’s Constitution,

INDIA:- which is a democratic country, where its units are based on language, caste, tribe or religion etc. The resolution of such conflicts needs some innovative federal craftsmanship and sensitive political management.

The diversity of India is within its sovereign boundaries. With the features like universal adult franchise, integrated judicial system and governance, it is difficult to polarise its diversity, even with Hindutva.

In Spite of its operational weaknesses, the democratic structure and national integrity are interlinked.

THE UNWANTED CHANGES DEVELOPING:-

1. The uncontrollable Parliamentary sessions, where the Rajya Sabha Chairperson broke down (in August 2021), and was unable to conduct proceedings despite having marshals in the house.
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Still the House passed a record number of Bills through a number of adjournments. It is quite strange but has become like a new normal.

2. Cross-border police firing by one State against another, causing casualties, resulting in revengeful action in the form of a ban on goods trade and travel links with its land-locked neighbour.
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The Union Law Minister (while in Opposition) said that Legislative disruptions are 'legitimate democratic right, and duty', thus he was justifying the current debate and discussion.

Legislative scenes in 1960's-

- Posters with displays like 'CIA Agent', during debates
 - Suitcases were transferred publicly to save the ruling Government
 - Honorable Members coming out from debates with injuries, on some of the occasions.
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Legislative scenes in current scenarios:-

- In the federal chamber, Honorable Members and Marshals are seen in physical contact both claiming injuries.
 - Official papers are normally vandalised.
 - Chairpersons are immobilised
 - Assuming new dimensions in Inter-State conflict is new normal
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Federal theorist **K.C. Wheare** consider India as **quasi-federal**.

Like popular voting behaviour, institutional preferences are based either on ethnic or kinship network, or like anti-incumbency factors, some personalities like:

- **T.N. Seshan** w.r.t→ the Election Commission of India
 - **J.F. Ribeiro**→ the police
 - **Justices Chandrachud or Nariman** → the judiciary.
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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT- 1935-

India's federal structure, basic structure has been taken from the 'GOI ACT1935', which has :-

- Provincial Autonomy
- Attempted to democratise it by: renaming "Provinces" to autonomous "States"
- Transferring "Reserved Powers" to popular governance
- Constitutionally dividing powers between the two tiers
- Inserting federalism in the Preamble

- Inserting Part 3 and 4 containing citizens' "Fundamental Rights" and "Directive Principles of State Policy"
 - It is silent about States' rights and their territorial boundaries
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Vacancies in judicial appointments are still continuing (approx 41% lying vacant), judicial promotion and transfers becoming a central prerogative.

Indian federalism needs institutional amendment to be democratically federal.

Structural conflicts-

- **All India Services**, including the State cadres.
 - **The role of Governors**
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Joint sessions of LOK SABHA and RAJYA SABHA do not appear successful.

TO CONCLUDE:- India's federal structure is described in different ways like quasi Federal, having central tendency, sui Generis among others. In the democratic process, conflicts have to be resolved and opposition has also to be taken into consideration. India needs to arrive at a solution where Democratic Process should be restored with the participation of all also in the democratic process. Otherwise it will be a threat to national security.

Rajeev Yadav

Plutus IAS