



## CURRENT AFFAIRS



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### Mid-day Meal Audit

**Prelim:** economy and social development

**Mains:** GS II: government policies and intervention for the development, and resolve issues

#### **Why in the news?**

The central government has ordered the State government and Union Territories to carry out the social audit of the mid-day meal scheme in each and every district by November 30.

#### **What is a social audit?**

- It is an audit done jointly by the government and public agencies, checking the detailed resources, both financial and non-financial, for the development initiatives that are shared with the people, through a public platform.
- The social audits authorize the public to enforce accountability and transparency, providing the ultimate users with a window to scan the development initiative.

#### **Benefits of social audit**

Guaranteed Accountability:

- The audit authority guarantees public accountability, transparency and citizen participation in executing the government schemes services and programs, and also the direct performance of the implementing agencies.

Evaluation of the service

- The audit authority will evaluate the quality of the service delivered by the government schemes and programs. In addition, it will also carry out a people's satisfaction survey to find out the various outcomes of various schemes.

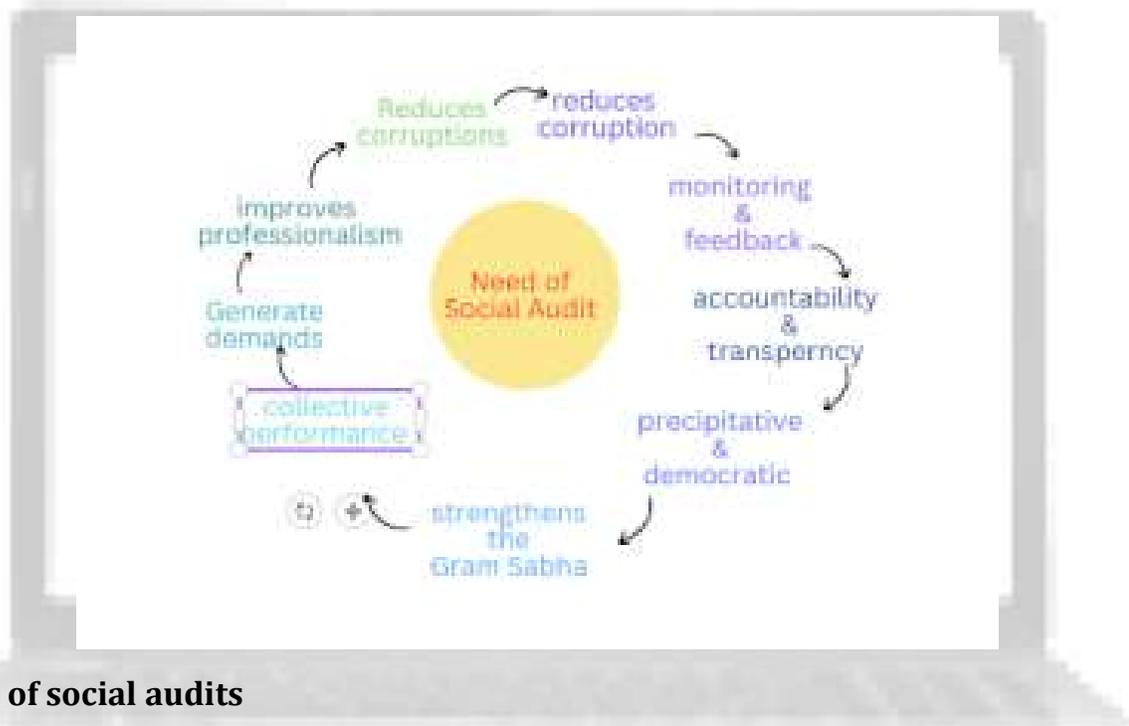
Plan and perform the social audit.

- It will find out the efficiency and effectiveness of the service delivery and whether public money is being used economically.

Recognizes and builds the capacity of civil services organisation

- It gives technical assistance towards the productivity of implementation of various schemes and programmes; provides technical aid to the finance and planning department towards strengthening the yearly plans and their result budgeting, and also evaluates the quality standards of development and infrastructure works in rural and as well as urban areas.

### Need for social audit



### Challenges of social audits

- In many parts of our nation, social audits are not unhampered to prevent corruption, due to the lack of adequate administration and political will in institutionalising social audits.
- It becomes difficult for Social audit units as well as village social audit facilitators, to access primary records for verification, due to the ongoing resistance and intimidation.
- As there is a lack of education, awareness, and capacity building in the common people, the participation of people is less.
- The absence of an independent agency to investigate and act on social audit findings

## Mid-day meal schemes



- It was started by the government in 1995 on 15th August, as the national Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE)'.  
• On October 27, 2007, it was renamed the "National Programme of Mid-Day Meal in Schools", and popularly known as Mid-day Meal (MDM) Scheme. Currently, it is functioning under the name of PM Poshan Shakti Nirman or PM Poshan from 2021.
- Under the Poshan Shakti Nirman or PM Poshan scheme, a freshly cooked hot meal per day is provided to all children (studying in Class I to VIII) enrolled in government schools, local body schools, government-aided schools, special training centres (STC), maktabas and madrasas which are supported by the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

## The objectives of the Mid-day meal scheme

- The main objectives of the mid-day meal scheme.
- To boost the admission in the school of the children who belong to the unprivileged sections of the society
- To boost the attendance of the student in the government and government-aided schools
- To keep up the children studying in classes I to VIII.
- to give nutritional support to the children studying in the early, particularly in the areas which are affected by drought.
- To address malnutrition and hunger and resolve the social issues among castes.

## Calories Intake

The calorie intake which is prescribed per child per school every day is given below

No.	Nutrition	Primary Class	Upper Primary Class
1	Protein	12gms.	20gms.
2	Calories	450 calories	700 calories

## **Funding and implementation of Mid-day meal**

- In each state and UT, at the state and district and block level, they have set up state steering –cum Monitoring committees (SSMCs), to supervise the implementation of this scheme, as well as establish a mechanism to keep up the quality and nutritional standards of the meal.
- It is a Centrally sponsored scheme, the fund is shared between the centre and state with a ratio of 6:4.
- But, Sharing is 90:10 for the Northeastern states, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, while the Centre bears 100% of the costs in UTs without legislature.

**Farhin**

# **Chip Shortage: Global Semiconductor Shortage and ramifications for India**

## **CONTEXT**

The Semiconductor Industry is facing severe semiconductor shortages worldwide for almost a year due to limited supply. Semiconductor chips are a vital component in a wide number of industries like the automobile sector, electronic goods, etc. As a result, the shortfall has crippled many crucial sectors. The current issue is exacerbated by the fact that the production process is itself complex, expensive and time taking and hence no immediate respite can be seen.

## **WHAT ARE SEMICONDUCTORS?**

A semiconductor is a material which conducts electricity more than an insulator (ex. glass) but less than a pure conductor (ex. Copper or aluminum). It is mostly made of silicon. They are also called chips and are found in a great number of products such as computers, smartphones, electronic gadgets, aviation and medical equipment



## REASONS FOR GLOBAL SHORTAGE OF SEMICONDUCTORS

- **Crisis in Taiwan strait:** Taiwan produces 63% of global semiconductors. Recent turn of events in Taiwan has created tensions and limited production. Ever since US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan, China has been uncomfortable with Taiwan's growing closeness to the USA. In retaliation, China sent fighter jets into Taiwan's air defense zone and there has been fear of a possible Chinese invasion into Taiwan.
- **Russia- Ukraine Conflict:** The war has contributed to the shortfall. Ukraines' two leading companies of neon gas, which is used as a key ingredient for making chips, have stopped their operations since the city of manufacturing has been seized by Russian forces. Russia supplies 25 to 30 percent of palladium, a rare metal used for semiconductors. There has been a downfall in its supply too. Moreover, the war has also led to supply chain blockages.
- **COVID-19:** The crisis started with the imposition of the first lockdown and though supply picked up, the resurgence of the virus with a new strain again affected the industry. It all led to bottlenecks in the supply chain. Chip packaging and testing are labor intensive in nature and hence more affected by the pandemic.
- **Structural Issues:** Various problems like insufficient capability, changes in auto industry leading to automation and e-vehicles which create more demand for chips and shift to work from home model contributing to greater demand for wireless connectivity and PCs have added to the problem.

## INDIA'S ROLE IN SEMICONDUCTOR MANUFACTURING

- The chip-making industry is a highly-concentrated one, with the big players being Taiwan, South Korea and the U.S. among others
- India imports 100% of its chips, memory, and display, with about 37% coming from China.
- The Indian semiconductor story has been full of missed opportunities. The only government-owned fabrication plant, Semiconductor Complex Limited (SCL), started operations in 1983 in Mohali, but had to stop due to a fire incident. It now focuses mostly on R&D.
- India has an advantage due to the industry being software driven and having a pool of talented engineers. It can work to scale up the industry for global production.
- Although India has two units producing semiconductors- SITAR, under Defense Research and Development Organization(DRDO), Bangalore and semiconductor laboratory in Chandigarh, they manufacture chips for strategic use like defense and space and not for commercial use

## GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES TO BOOST PRODUCTION

- **PLI Scheme** to boost semiconductor manufacturing: Due to low labour cost and vast production capacity, India will have an advantage in this sector. It would not only help domestic companies to reduce reliance on semiconductor imports, but also generate revenue from exports to other nations.
- **National Policy on Electronics 2019 (NPE 2019)** : It aims to make India a global hub for Electronics System Design and Manufacturing - (ESDM) by enhancing capabilities to produce core components like chipsets

- **Scheme for Promotion of Manufacturing of Electronic Components and Semiconductors (SPECS)** :It will provide financial incentive of 25% on capital expenditure for the identified list of electronic goods that comprise downstream value chain of electronic products which will include semiconductors thus giving a boost to the sector.
- **Increased FDI limit:** Government has permitted 100 percent (FDI) under the automatic route in the Electronics Systems Design & Manufacturing sector.

## CHALLENGES

- **High Investment:** Manufacturing of semiconductor is capital intensive and finding local investors remains a challenge
- **Technological Hurdles:** The indigenous manufacturing of semiconductors requires the use of high-end technologies which are licensed from patent holders at enormous price.
- **Lack of continuous uninterrupted power supply:** The production of semiconductors needs uninterrupted power supply 24×7. This is difficult in India
- **Lack of pure water supply :** Chip making required gallons of ultrapure water in a single day, which for a country battling drought conditions in various party becomes difficult

## WAY FORWARD

There is a need to establish a few successful units to begin with which can be increased to more in upcoming years. Both State and Central governments should come forward to provide infrastructure and long-term incentives. Scaling up our production will not only reduce our import dependence but also establish India as a potential player in supply of chips to the global world. Fiscal support and fixing the supply chain should be the immediate task at hand. Further, India needs a dedicated semiconductor policy and not occasional reimbursement schemes.

Saumya khedwal