

Q2]

Are we entering an era of de-globalization ?

Today, the world community is facing an unprecedented crisis namely COVID-19. The Pandemic has not just disrupted systems and shaken economies but has also cast a shadow on how countries perceive and interact with each other in today's global times. Restrictions on movement of goods and people, suspensions of visas, ~~there~~ debates around vaccine nationalizations and a flurry of measures to promote domestic economy have added to the ongoing trend of protectionism which is likely to lead the world onto a path of de-globalization.

In this essay, we will analyse the trends indicating that the world is entering an era of de-globalization. We will then discuss how the same is not a solution to the plethora of challenges plaguing the world. and finally briefly discuss the ideal way out.

Before we begin, let us quickly discuss the meaning of 'de-globalization'.

De-globalization is an expression used to indicate a trend of countries going back to practices of the pre-globalized world. This includes

placing restrictions on movements of people, goods and services. This also includes a decrease in the popularity of global decision making bodies and other intergovernmental organizations. It also involves giving precedence to one's national interests

in such a way that they might hamper the larger global interests.

Having discussed what the term ~~is~~ de-globalization means, now let us analyse certain key trends which indicate that the world is entering in an era of de-globalization.

The first trend is that of discouraging immigration by adopting policy measures ~~with~~ which restrict inflow of foreign citizens. The 'America First' approach of the Trump

administration which involved giving preference to locals in jobs and making it difficult for outsiders to procure visas eg. H1-B Visa for skilled workers is an example of this trend. A similar narrative was seen during BREXIT negotiations which 'outsiders taking up all the jobs' was an argument that was repeatedly put forward to justify the move. Further the insensitive approach of some nations towards the refugee crisis also indicates the trend of deglobalization with regard to movement of persons.

The second trend adds to the ~~above~~ above as it is the one restricting flow of goods and services by imposition of sanctions. In some cases, sanctions are in response to adverse international events but at times they are also used in settle economic rivalries and promote domestic interest. The US-China trade war also points towards this trend of de-globalization. Not just sanctions but also restrictive trade policies

in the form of tariff and non-tariff barriers are employed to reduce in flow / import of foreign goods and in turn secure national interest. While this is totally acceptable if it done with a fair intent eg. Social Justice, doing so to purposefully challenge a rules-based order is an aspect of the trend of de-globalization.

This brings us to the third trend of de-globalization which is that of challenging a rules based world order by ~~is~~ either not following the directions of global organizations like UN or altogether withdrawing from these organisations. US withdrawal from UNHRC, Paris COP, JCPOA - Iran Nuclear Deal and Japan's withdrawal from the International Whaling Commission support this trend. Similarly, China's unilateral claims over South China Sea is also an indication of the disruption of the rules-based world order which is the foundation for a globalized world.

The next trend indicating the entry into an era of de-globalization is that of nations focusing more on bilateral and regional groupings rather than multilateral world level organizations.

The rise of ASEAN, BIMSTEC, SCO, BRICS and G-20 while a simultaneous poor performance of the United Nations and World Trade Organization is highlighting this trend. Countries are finding it much easier to interact and coordinate in smaller circles than to indulge in global mechanisms which again is a feature against the larger spirit of globalization.

Last but not the least, failure of multilateral global institutions like United Nations to reflect contemporary realities and resolve disputes in a legitimate, sensitive and amicable manner ~~has~~ is pushing nations further on the path of de-globalization.

All the above trends indicate that if proactive measures are not taken, the world might

revert to be a pre-globalized order.
Now, let us discuss why this is
a cause of concern. One of the
foremost ~~the~~ reasons behind the
onset of globalization was the
need for the world to grow and
develop in an integrated manner. This
involved fighting scarcity in some
regions with the abundance in
others, enabling achievements of some
to benefit those who, due to
any reason, failed and most importantly
firmly believing in the idea that
for communities and nations to
develop sustainably, cooperation is a must.

All the above core ideas behind
globalization continue to be relevant
today. In fact the challenges of the
21st century across all fields such
as social, economic, political,
environmental and security related
necessarily require a collaborated
global response. Whether it is
the ongoing war against the
Pandemic or it is the fight

against climate change, the response needs to be collaborative and cooperative embracing the idea of "common but differentiated responsibilities".

Similarly, the challenges of terrorism, hunger, poverty and disaster management require nations to come together and put up a ~~unif~~ united front.

A trend of de-globalization will leave all these issues unattended which in turn will prove catastrophic for all in the longer run.

De-globalization might bring short term results in the form of more jobs for citizens and higher GDP numbers but will prove to be unsustainable in the longer run.

The question that now arises is what can be done to contain this trend of de-globalization and simultaneously address the needs at home. The best possible answer to this is India's Atmanirbhar Bharat Mission which intends to

promote self reliance and resilience
but simultaneously promotes continued
engagement and integration with the
larger global community. An
'Atmanirbhar India' will not only
protect its core national interests
but will also safeguard and
strengthen ~~its~~ ^{the nation's} commitment towards
addressing global challenges. An
example of the same is how India
has supplied ~~drugs~~ ^{medicines} to over 150 nations
during the Pandemic so far.

In a nutshell, while there
are trends indicating an ^{entry into an} era of
deglobalization, the world must
ensure that national priorities
do not endanger greater global
goods. The central ethos of
'Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam' should serve
as the ultimate guiding light for
all countries.

Q6]

Challenges of Water Management in 21st c India

A recent report of Niti Aayog has highlighted that India is currently facing its 'worst ever' water crisis and if the same continues, we are all set to run out of potable water by 2030. This trend is supported by other studies which talk about the drying of Himalayan springs, the overuse of groundwater and the high levels of water contamination in the country. At the same time, India continues to be ravaged by floods year after year. In fact, this excess of water in several parts of the country becomes a menace for many. This paradox of abundance and scarcity of water within ~~over~~ India indicates that water management is indeed a major challenge in this 21st c.

In this essay, we will discuss in detail the multiple challenges of water management in 21st century India. We will also briefly discuss the impact of these challenges and the measures that can be taken to address them.

Before we begin, let us very briefly talk about the water related statistics of India. India accounts for about 4% of world's water resources. These support a population of about 2.3 billion, which is about 16% of the world's total population. The resources exist ^{primarily} in the form of rivers, lakes, groundwater and ice caps. About 70% of these today are contaminated. These basic statistics in itself bring out the mismatch between demand and supply which lies at the heart of water management challenges in 21st century India. The same are aggravated by various other natural and manmade factors which we shall discuss in the subsequent paragraphs. Now let us begin discussing the numerous challenges of water management in 21st C India.

The first major water management challenge is the uneven distribution of water resources across space and time.

The country receives over 60% of its rainfall during the South West Monsoon.

season. which lasts for about three to four months. Further, not every part of the country receives the same amount of rainfall. While places like Western Ghats, North East India and states like Odisha and Bihar receive heavy rainfall, others like Thar desert, Trans-Himalayas and central India continue to get only scanty rains. As a result while some parts of the country are getting much more than what they require others continue to struggle for meeting their basic needs.

The above disparity in space and time is aggravated by the phenomena of climate change. According to Climate Change Vulnerability Index (2019), India is the 5th most vulnerable country to climate change. The increase in frequency of climate disasters such as floods, as seen in Assam, Bihar and even urban areas like Bengaluru and Hyderabad, and droughts ^{as seen} in parts of Maharashtra and Gujarat is adding to the overall water management crisis in 21st c India.

Not just uneven distribution but improper and non judicious use of the available water resources is another major challenge of water management in India. This ~~theory~~ fact is supported by the fact that India manages to harvest only 8% of its rainwater. Further, our rate of water recycling also stands at a low 30%. The non judicious use of water is widely visible in the agriculture sector which accounts for over 80% of India's groundwater extractions. A part of the above is due to absence of stringent policies to promote recycling and water harvesting ~~and~~ as seen in nations like Israel and Singapore and a part is due to a careless attitude of the masses.

The rising population and associated increasing in pollution levels of water is another management challenge in 21st century India. According to a UNFPA report, India is all set to

become the most populated country by 2027. This will not just create an added demand for water but will also create more scope for contamination of the existing resource if ~~for~~ not dealt with smartly. The rising levels of arsenic contamination in the Ganga-belt is a warning bell which must be ~~taking~~ taken seriously by all stakeholders.

In addition to the above challenges of water management in 21st century India, the poor levels of ^{water} data collection and analysis continue to pose a major hurdle. Lack of sufficient data makes policy making difficult. Further, implementation of ongoing water management schemes and monitoring of various other water related initiatives ~~is~~ ~~affected~~ ~~due~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ suffers due to gaps ~~in~~ data collection. When this is coupled with an overall low level of R&D in water management technology eg. sewage treatment infrastructure, the consequences are disheartening and alarming.

Last but not the least, another major challenge of water management in 21st c India is the fact that rivers flow through multiple states and at times multiple countries.

While the former creates federal tensions as seen in the case of Cauvery dispute, the latter continues to be a bone of contention between India and its neighbours. The Indus dispute with Pakistan, Teesta issue with Bangladesh and Brahmaputra challenge with China are also examples of how geopolitics ~~also~~ casts a shadow on water management in India.

Having discussed all the above challenges of water management in 21st c India, let us briefly see its Impact on individuals and nation at large. At an individual level, insufficient intake of water or intake of contaminated water can have severe health implications. This not only compromises a person's Right to Health (A-21) but also creates a big hole in his/her pocket through

the medical expenses that follow. In a country where about 58% of health expenses continue to be out of the pocket (World Bank), the same is indeed a cause of worry. Not just human beings, but biodiversity too gets impacted by reckless water management in turn endangering the health of several ecosystems.

At the national level, poor water management leads to decrease in productivity of citizenry, increase in health burden and underperformance of critical sectors like agriculture, 52% of which is rainfed, and manufacturing. The massive economic cost of disasters induced by poor water management further adds to the misery of the Government. There is thus a dire need to address this issue of water management in India.

Fortunately, with missions like Jal Jeevan Mission the Government has adopted an integrated, proactive and modern approach to water

management in the country. The PM Krishi Sinchayee Yojana is turning out to be revolutionary in the field of agriculture water management. In addition to the above, modern scientific methods of the 21st c such as interlinking of rivers and desalination of sea water are being vigorously explored by the Government. An overall blue economy model of growth is also helping address the challenges of water management in 21st c India.

Apart from the above initiatives, there is a need to aggressively promote the concept of rainwater harvesting. Here, we can draw a leaf from china Sponge city approach. Upgrading the water recycling infrastructure is also key to ensuring better water management. The success story of Israel and Singapore in this domain is worth emulating.

Finally, as responsible citizens, we must all pledge to use water resources judiciously. The cooperation of the citizenry is a must for the success of any initiative in a country as vast and diverse as ours. With this thought and approach, India is bound to overcome the challenges of water management in 21st c. Not only will our nation fulfill its own water requirements but will also help the world community inch closer to its water related sustainable development goals.