

UPSC Syllabus Topic : GS Paper 3 Indian Economy – Indian Economy and issues relating to planning and employment.

Public Consultations in Economic Policy: Prioritizing People's Voices Over Statistical Figures

Issues with the Indian Economy:

1. Incomes Problem:

- While the Indian economy is experiencing growth, there is a significant issue with incomes not growing sufficiently or sustainably for a large segment of the population.

2. Job Creation Concerns:

- There are apprehensions about the economy's ability to generate an adequate number of jobs, and doubts have been raised about the accuracy of government data. This has led to increased pressure for job reservations for economically weaker sections, irrespective of caste or religion.

3. Limited Job Opportunities in High-End Services:

- The transition from agriculture to other sectors is challenging due to a lack of opportunities, especially in high-end services. Moreover, the required skill levels for these jobs are often beyond the reach of individuals in rural areas.

Issues with the Jobs Being Created:

1. Insufficient Pay:

- Many of the jobs being created do not offer adequate remuneration.

2. Job Insecurity:

- A significant number of jobs are temporary or on short-term contracts, contributing to a sense of job insecurity among workers.

3. Lack of Social Security:

- There is a notable absence of social security measures for workers, leaving them vulnerable.

4. Limited Skill Development Opportunities:

- The jobs often do not provide opportunities for individuals to develop higher skills, hindering their professional growth.

Recommended Actions:

1. Reform in Economic Measurements:

- Economic growth and employment measurements should be reformed to align with the changing nature of work and evolving enterprise models, moving away from traditional 20th-century concepts.

2. Recognition of Caregiving Economic Value:

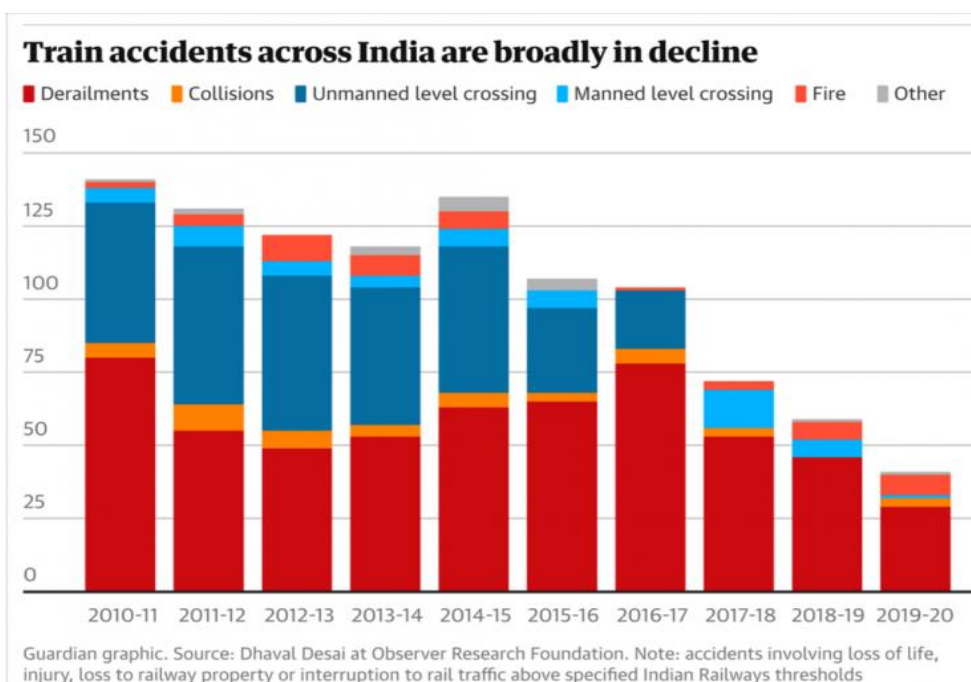
- Economists should recognize and assign economic value to the informal work performed by women, including caregiving responsibilities outside formal employment. This acknowledgment is crucial for a more comprehensive understanding of women's participation in the labor force.

3. Consultations with the Masses:

- Policymaking processes should initiate consultations with traditionally undervalued segments of society, including workers, small-holding farmers, small entrepreneurs, and women. Listening to these voices is essential for creating policies that address their unique challenges and contribute to more inclusive economic development.

UPSC Syllabus Topic : GS Paper 3- Economy- Infrastructures (railway)**Rising Train Accidents in India – Navigating TRACK CHANGES: Coping with Mounting Pressure on Railway Infrastructure****Background:**

In recent years, India's railway system has experienced a reduction in the overall number of consequential accidents. However, the persistence of severe incidents remains a significant concern. Notably, the first half of the current financial year has witnessed 20 serious accidents, including the Buxar derailment and the Vizianagaram collision. This pattern, when contrasted with the 48 consequential accidents recorded in the entire preceding year, underscores the necessity for continual and improved safety measures within the railway network.

**Reasons for the Increase in Train Accidents in India:****1. Increased Traffic:**

- Post-COVID-19, there has been a 30% rise in consequential train accidents attributed to a surge in passenger and freight traffic, putting additional strain on the railway network.

2. Maintenance Challenges:

- Pressure to maintain punctuality has led to reduced maintenance blocks. The Buxar accident in October is an example where a broken rail, potentially preventable with better maintenance, was a contributing factor.

3. Equipment Failures:

- There is an observed increase in equipment failures, including wagon detachments and signal issues. In the first half of the current financial year, these failures surpassed the numbers recorded in the previous year.

4. Human Errors:

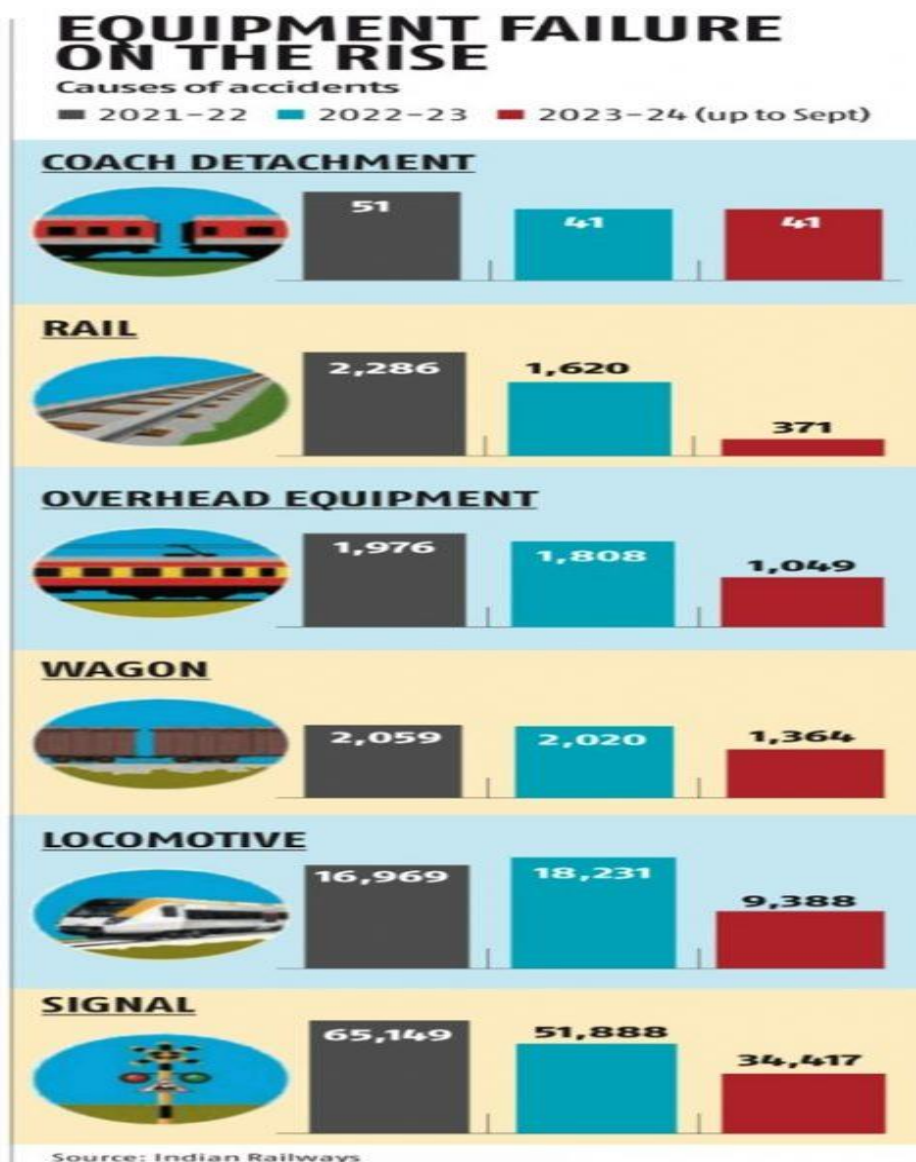
- Long working hours and a lack of accountability contribute to accidents caused by human error, highlighting the need for improvements in workforce management and oversight.

5. Slow Capacity Expansion:

- Delayed infrastructure upgrades, such as the Bahanaga Bazar accident in Odisha attributed to faulty wiring and signaling, strain the railway system, affecting its capacity to handle growing demands.

6. Incomplete Safety Systems:

- While promising, safety systems like Kavach (Train Collision Avoidance System) cover only 1% of the rail network. This limited coverage is insufficient to significantly reduce accidents caused by human errors, emphasizing the need for comprehensive safety implementations.



Initiatives Addressing Railway Safety in India:

Railway Safety Fund:

- The establishment of the Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh (RRSK) with a corpus of ₹1 trillion for a five-year period starting from 2017-18. It focuses on the replacement, renewal, and upgrade of critical safety assets. By 2021-22, a gross expenditure of ₹1.08 trillion was allocated to RRSK works.

Kavach System:

- Introduction of Kavach, an indigenous automatic train protection system designed to prevent accidents caused by signal passing and over-speeding.

Maintenance and Renewals:

- Planning of railway maintenance in advance, with around 3000 kilometers of track renewals completed by November 2023, meeting 66% of the annual target.

Audit Reports and Recommendations:

- Periodic audits conducted by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) on Indian Railways, identifying shortcomings and providing recommendations to address safety concerns.

Recommendations for Improvement:

Increase Accountability and Training:

- Address human errors by enforcing stricter accountability measures and providing enhanced training for railway personnel. For instance, the Andhra Pradesh collision resulting from signal overshooting emphasizes the need for improved crew training.

Establish a Safety Regulatory Body:

- Creation of a dedicated Safety Regulatory Body to oversee safety standards, especially with the increasing involvement of private operators and the development of new high-speed corridors.

Leverage Technology and AI:

- Adoption of more advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence, to reduce human error and enhance overall safety operations. Embracing innovation in safety measures can significantly contribute to accident prevention and mitigation.