



A conspiracy against inter-faith love

GS I: Communalism

Against the Marriage

1. In India, intermarriages between people of different regions, castes or religions have to a large extent been prevented by casteism, religious conservatism, and fear of parental authority.
2. In a country as large and diverse as this, intermarriages are still a rarity. There are few inter-caste marriages and even fewer inter-religious ones.
3. Surveys large and small confirm that the vast majority of Indians (between 95% and 99% depending on the State) have arranged marriages, which are, by nature, intra-caste and intra-religious.
4. Between 70% and 80% of Indians across all age groups and religions disapprove of inter-caste or inter-religious marriage.
5. Those of us and our forebears who married across caste groups or across religious communities are a very small minority of around 5% and about 2%, respectively.

The fiction of Love Jihad Busted

1. Starting in coastal Karnataka and northern Kerala in the mid-2000s, vigilantes claimed that Hindu-Muslim romances were a well-thought-out conspiracy to seduce Hindu women in order to convert them to Islam and produce Muslim children. It was among these vigilantes that the term 'love jihad' was bandied about.
2. A Karnataka Criminal Investigation Department (CID) investigation into complaints of 'love jihad' in 2009 concluded that there was no 'love jihad', only love and marriage between consenting adults.
3. A National Investigation Agency (NIA) probe was ordered following continuing claims in Kerala in 2018. The NIA reached the same conclusion as the Karnataka CID did in 2009: there was no conspiracy to convert Hindu women, nothing called 'love jihad', all the women concerned had married and/or changed religions as independent thinking adults.



4. The U.P. Police have found that the majority of the cases probed were consensual. And in the cases identified as 'suspicious' by the police, neither is there evidence of forcible conversion nor of the fact that the women did not make their own choices.

But keeping the conspiracy theory alive seems to be an important part of the communal political programme. And so, under the guise of anti-conversion laws, a few State governments have now announced their intention to make 'love jihad', a conspiracy theory, a crime punishable by imprisonment.

Patriarchy, Agency of women in Exercising choice and Honour Killings

Characterising Hindu women as dim-witted and easily led is socially more acceptable than the idea that a woman can love outside artificial social boundaries and exercise choice. This is borne out by the many examples from across the country of parents using provisions of criminal law on rape and kidnapping to try and break up their daughter's relationship or marriage, entered into by choice. There are also examples from across the country of families that have conspired to murder their daughter or her husband or both because their falling in love is an affront to family authority and to the social order determined by caste and religion.

Hadiya Case

The insidious linking of interfaith relationships with 'forcible conversion', however, gives this campaign powerful toxicity. The Supreme Court affirmed in the case of Hadiya (formerly Akhila) and Shafin Jahan that no one had a right to interfere in the marriage of consenting adults. What the State governments are proposing is a law that overturns this premise, by making the validity of a marriage subject to investigation on the basis of third-party complaints.

The changes in law proposed by a few State governments, if they go through, will create a decidedly hostile legal environment for Hindus and Muslims to marry. What is already difficult, because of family, community and Vigilante group pressures, will become impossibly hard.

Historical Parallels:

Nazi Germany's Nuremberg laws prohibited sexual relations and marriages between Jews and non-Jews. Violation of the law led to imprisonment and later, incarceration in a concentration camp. Segregationist U.S. and apartheid South



Africa had laws prohibiting inter-racial marriages and sexual relations. In South Africa, the law was enforced through surveillance and police raids. In both countries, violations were punishable by imprisonment. In India, the Sangh Parivar can achieve the same ends without a law explicitly banning such marriages, so long as those who are unable to see beyond caste and religion conspire in its plan.

Time for an Asian Century

GS II: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.



Economic power is shifting towards emerging countries in Southeast Asia

Bottom line: India's challenge is in securing an 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat' in the emerging world order. There is a need for Technological *Sovereignty and Superiority* in this Tech-based global order.

RCEP: an Asian Moment

In an irreversibly more equal world, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) has immediate geopolitical and economic implications, with the West adapting to Asian rules and marking the end of the colonial phase of global history. Will we see the world returning to the centrality of Asian civilisations sharing prosperity. India's challenge is in securing an 'Atma Nirbhar



Bharat' in the emerging digital order, navigating the U.S.-China technology and supply chain clash.

Asia-led world order

The mega trade deal was led by ASEAN, not by China, and includes Japan and Australia, military allies of the U.S., all opting for the Asian Century as they do not see China as a threat the way the U.S. does. 'ASEAN centrality' rejects the current frame of the West setting the agenda. RCEP's principles and objectives allow individual countries to choose the scope and product categories for bilateral tariff schedules and exclude divisive issues like labour and the environment. The new frame goes beyond the transfer of goods and services, focuses on integration and facilitating supply chains for sharing prosperity, requiring a very different calculus for assessment.

Need for Technological Sovereignty and Superiority

No country has become a global power relying on others. India needs a new strategic doctrine and mindset. With the Rafale aircraft purchase, India has recognised that there will be no technology transfer for capital equipment. Military Theatre Commands should be tasked with border defence giving the offensive role to cyber, missile and special forces based on endogenous capacity, effectively linking economic and military strength. The overriding priority should be infrastructure including electricity and fibre optic connectivity; self-reliance in semiconductors, electric batteries and solar panels; and skill development. Leveraging proven digital prowess to complement the infrastructure of China's Belt and Road Initiative will win friends as countries value multi-polarity.

RCEP Reconsideration

The RCEP already includes India's priorities such as rules of origin, services and e-commerce. The time-bound up-gradation of national capacity through 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat' should enable agreements with individual ASEAN countries. RCEP members have expressed their "strong will" to re-engage India, essentially to balance China. There are compelling geopolitical and economic reasons for shaping the building blocks of the Asia-led order, which is not yet China-led, to secure an 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat', and place in the emerging triumvirate.

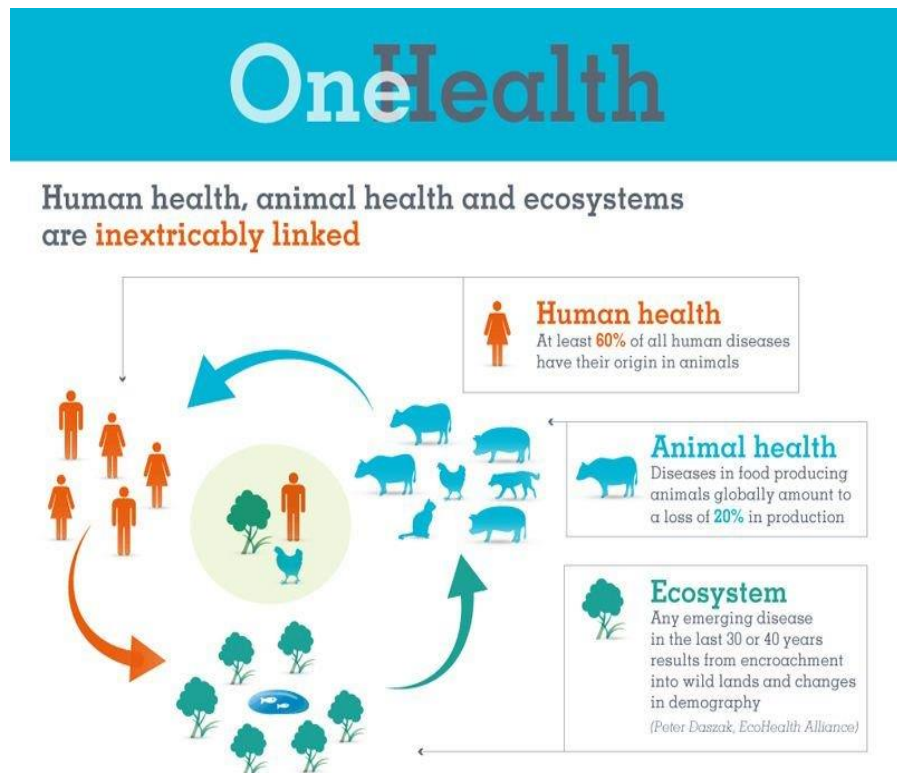
Weaker germs, stronger cures

GS II: Issues Relating to Development and Management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Crux: 'One Health' is the optimum approach to counter the impact of antimicrobial resistance.

Understanding Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)

1. The advent of antibiotics ignited the hope of the elimination of infectious diseases in humans and animals. However, this did not happen because of two reasons: the ingenuity and survival instinct of germs and the irrational use of antibiotics in humans and animals.
2. Most of the germs have acquired the capacity to resist the action of affordable antibiotics. This phenomenon is known as antimicrobial resistance (AMR).
3. The inability of antibiotics to treat patients and animals is wreaking havoc on human health, nutrition safety and economies.
4. The long-term impact of AMR is almost comparable to that of the COVID-19 pandemic. AMR is estimated to cause 10 million deaths annually by 2050 unless concerted actions are initiated now. It will result in a 7.5 % reduction in livestock production and negatively impact the global GDP by 3.5%.





Tackling the AMR challenge

1. There are two major possible solutions to combat the AMR menace: discovery of new drugs, before the emergence of resistance in germs; and prudent use of available antibiotics.
2. The first is an expensive and unpredictable process. Since 1984, no new class of antibiotics has been developed.
3. The estimated cost for developing a new antibiotic exceeds \$1 billion. With the rapid development of resistance, the life of new antibiotics becomes limited and the return on investment on new molecules gets diminished.
4. This discourages the pharmaceutical industry to invest in these initiatives. The world is left with only one option: to use the available antibiotics carefully to ensure their efficacy for as long as possible.

Global Action Plan on AMR (2015)

The World Health Organization Global Action Plan on AMR (2015) provides a road map for tackling this challenge. This plan has been endorsed by the UN General Assembly. Almost 80 countries have developed their respective national action plans in alignment with this Plan.

One Health Approach

1. The rational use of antibiotics in humans, animals, and agriculture warrants coordinated action in all sectors. These multi-sectoral, multidisciplinary and multi-institutional actions constitute the 'One Health' approach.
2. This has gained currency across the world as an efficient and cost-effective response to AMR and several other challenges, especially endemic zoonoses (diseases transmitted between animals and humans) and pandemics.
3. It is reinforced by the fact that all the epidemics in the current millennium (SARS, MERS, bird flu and COVID-19) have originated from animals because of unwanted excursion of humans into animal domains. The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasised the urgency of implementing One Health.
4. India's National Action Plan on AMR is an excellent example of the One Health approach and can be used as a guiding document to develop a workable road map for the country to respond to other similar public health challenges.

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Conclusion:

AMR is one of the biggest challenges to human and animal health. There is a need to optimally utilise emerging technologies to improve human health and development. One Health has been acknowledged as the optimum approach to counter the impact of AMR and future pandemics and must be adopted expeditiously.

Learn Through Graphics:



Understanding One Health