



Trust deficit

CruX: Apart from the fresh amendments, the Centre must consider a legal guarantee for MSP.

Farmers Fear:

1. Farmers are sceptical of the government claim that these laws would make agriculture more lucrative and secure by allowing market forces to play.
2. The fear that the new regime will dismantle the system of procurement under Minimum Support Price (MSP) and leave farmers at the mercy of corporations is real.

Centre offered

1. Responding to concerns, the Centre has suggested safeguards to prevent land alienation via contract farming; strengthening the State-run mandi system and ensuring its equal footing with private buyers through equalising taxes; allowing grievance redress in civil courts rather than just in the offices of Sub-Divisional Magistrates, and ensuring proper verification of private traders.
2. It has not, however, offered a legal guarantee of MSP and the question of power subsidies also remains contentious.

Intent and Reality

The government has a declared policy of ensuring farm prices that are at least 50% more than the input costs. This has remained more intent than reality, and the discussion has also been muddled by the government's refusal to include the rental value of the land in input costs.

Money matters

The government has increased the Minimum Support Price so that farmers will get 50% more than their 'production costs'

The government considers 'A2+FL' as production cost

where A2 = actual paid out cost on seeds, irrigation, etc., and FL= unpaid family labour



But some experts and activists want comprehensive cost (C2) to be considered for MSP

Where C2 = A2 + FL+ rentals or interest foregone on owned land and fixed capital

MSP based on C2 cost will be far higher than the proposed figure

Crop	Govt. MSP in ₹/quintal (A2+FL+50%)	C2+50% In ₹/quintal	Gap in ₹/ quintal
Paddy	1,750	2,340	-590
Cotton	5,150	6,771	-1,621



Future of Agriculture

1. Agriculture has to remain environmentally sustainable and remunerative for farmers. Significant challenges have emerged with regard to these benchmarks, though India has ensured substantial food stock and a robust distribution mechanism that covers the entire country.
2. There is a strong case for reworking the incentive structures and cropping pattern in order to account for changes in water availability and changing dietary requirements.
3. The problems faced by farmers are by no means the same across India. But a sense of hostility from the state and market is now pervasive.
4. Changes in land acquisition laws and the general thrust towards industrialisation together with the pressure on agriculture subsidies have increased the feeling of vulnerability of farmers in recent years.
5. The abrupt changes in the sector brought in through the three laws have aggravated the trust deficit of the government.
6. Food security is considered a component of national security by all countries. Thus, the Centre must strive for reaching an agreement with the farmers that addresses their concerns.

Mains:

1. While highlighting the significance of MSP policy for Food security and livelihood security, discuss negative externalities of it. Suggest reforms in the MSP regime to make it more sustainable and effective.

A regressive agenda, a new low in governance

Bottom line: The U.P. ordinance not only violates guaranteed fundamental rights but is also in conflict with existing personal laws. The law is against the spirit of secularism and constitutionalism.

What is Love Jihad?

It is a pejorative term used by religious conservatives to describe interfaith relationships and marriages.



Flaws in the Law

Various sections of the ordinance are in outright violation of the Constitution of India.

1. For instance, Section 12 of the ordinance flips the burden of proof onto the person who has converted or caused the conversion of religion to establish and prove that there was no force, fraud, misrepresentation, undue influence, coercion or allurement involved. Which is far too much breach into individuals freedom of conscience guaranteed under article 25.
2. Any conversion for the purpose of marriage can be declared void under Section 6 of the ordinance. It goes against the verdict of Allahabad HC in Salamat Ansari case and ethical autonomy guaranteed under article 21.
3. Under Section 3 of the ordinance, the scope of which the aggrieved person may lodge a complaint against any conversion of religion is expansive to include parents, brother, sister, or any other person who is related to him by blood, marriage or adoption. Which makes it difficult for adults to exercise the right to choose partner and privacy guaranteed under article 21.

Harmful Impact of the UP Ordinance

1. Sets up multiple barriers to inter-faith marriages and provides expansive powers to District Magistrates under the guise of prohibiting “unlawful conversions”.
2. The real and lasting impact of the ordinance must be measured in terms of the communal disharmony it sows
3. Outright denial of agency to young women and men.
4. The law, in its present form, is regressive, ultra vires and must be consigned to the bin of legislative history.
5. It goes against SC dictats in Hadiya case and KS Puttaswamy case.
6. Read cumulatively, this ordinance invades privacy, deepens communal divides, advances patriarchy and eliminates agency.



Background:

Allahabad HC Observation in Salamat Ansari Case

1. In short and well-reasoned order, the Allahabad High Court declared last month that religious conversions, even when made solely for the purposes of marriage, constituted a valid exercise of a person's liberties.
2. The High Court ruled that the freedom to live with a person of one's choice is intrinsic to the fundamental right to life and personal liberty.
3. In holding thus, the order recognised that our society rested on the foundations of individual dignity, that a person's freedom is not conditional on the caste, creed or religion that her partner might claim to profess, and that every person had an equal dominion over their own senses of conscience.

Intermarriages aid social change

1. Historically, intermarriages — be it inter-caste or inter-faith — have been advocated as an effective tool to break social barriers and repair societal divisions.
2. Babasaheb Ambedkar and Periyar E.V. Ramasamy placed a premium on intermarriage as much as they did on inter-dining.

Suppressing the rare phenomena

The most reliable statistical data shows that less than 5% of Indians have inter-caste marriages and less than 3% have interfaith marriages. In spite of being a rare phenomenon in society, interfaith relationships have attracted a disproportionate amount of attention from the right-wing political class. The bogey of “love jihad” plays right into the hands of those with communal and patriarchal mindsets. It is no less crime to stop an inter-faith marriage than it is to abet an “honour killing”.

How dearth of data killed a healthy diet

Bottom line: The tracking and monitoring of nutrition services to the poorest of the poor in India have been hampered by the lack of online data. This has affected pregnant women in a pandemic year when hunger and poverty have worsened.

The Disruption

1. The delivery of nutrition services to the poor in India has been brought to a halt or slowed down due to lack of online data, a problem caused by poor Internet and server issues.



2. This has not only affected the beneficiaries but also caused frustration among those working towards addressing India's malnutrition, poverty and health issues.
3. The lack of publicly available nutrition data is not only affecting India's nutrition goals but is also pushing States into thinking of ways of setting up their own systems to tackle the problem.

The Integrated Child Development Services-Common Application Software (ICDS-CAS)

An IT-based nutrition monitoring system called the Integrated Child Development Services-Common Application Software (ICDS-CAS) was inaugurated by the Prime Minister in 2018. Under this system, Anganwadi workers log the details of the beneficiaries and daily activities to enable monitoring at the district, State and Central levels for improvement in the quality of delivery of services. However, there is a huge deficit in implementation. The ICDS-CAS was the mainstay of Poshan Abhiyaan.

ICDS-CAS

1. Under the ICDS-CAS, Anganwadi workers are provided mobile phones, and Anganwadi supervisors, tablets. Anganwadi workers enter details of daily activities, including photo evidence of the opening of anganwadis; attendance of children; details of food, weight and height; etc.
2. These are then monitored at five levels — first by the Anganwadi supervisor and then at the block, district, State and Central levels.
3. Here, the efficient monitoring system ensures that if there is a lag in ration supply at the anganwadis, programme supervisors at block levels are alerted and supply is restored.
4. Smartphones distributed to Anganwadi workers also help to alert them when vaccinations are due. They are also able to maintain a list of the malnourishment levels of the entire village population. The phone helps them identify children at risk of being malnourished as well as those already stunted or wasted.



Internet issues

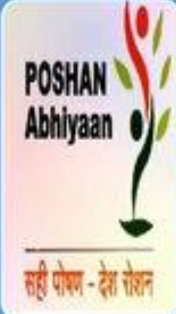
However, server issues and Internet problems plague the system here. Also, smartphones which were given to the workers to simplify their tasks have doubled their work. Workers are now expected to note down details not only in their phones but also in registers.

Lack of data

1. Even before the server problem, unavailability of data from an expensive technology system set up primarily to improve service delivery caused anger among implementation partners, researchers, nutrition advocates and public health experts.
2. This happened at a time when warnings were issued about the likelihood of an additional 10,000 under-five deaths per month globally and of 6.7 million more children suffering from wasting, a strong predictor of mortality, due to the pandemic.
3. The problem of lack of access to data is also faced by State governments. States are known to have written to the Centre raising their concerns about the unavailability of data for programme implementation and review.

Background:

Poshan Abhiyaan strives to improve nutritional outcomes for children, pregnant women and lactating mothers by reducing undernutrition, bringing down anaemia, and increasing birth weight. As the aim of Poshan Abhiyaan is to reach 10 crore beneficiaries at 14 lakh anganwadis, the government set up the ICDS-CAS to ensure swift tracking and effective implementation.



Targets under Poshan Abhiyaan

- Reduce stunting by 2% per year and from 38.4% (NFHS-4) to 25% by 2022
- Reduce under-nutrition by 2% per year
- Reduce low birth weight babies by 2% per year
- Reduce Anaemia among children, adolescent girls, and women by 3% per year