

Today's Prelims Topics

Eurasian Otter

Context

The **Eurasian Otter**, long thought to be extinct in the **Kashmir Valley**, has been sighted again after nearly 30 years, marking a significant moment for local biodiversity.

About the Eurasian Otter

- Also called the **European Otter**, **Common Otter**, or **Old-World Otter**.
- A **semiaquatic carnivorous mammal** native to **Eurasia**.
- Known locally in Kashmir as "**Vuder**", once a common part of the valley's aquatic ecosystem.



Distribution

- Among the **widest-ranging mammals** in the **Palearctic** region.
- Found across **Europe, Middle East, Northern Africa, Russia, China, and other parts of Asia**.
- In **India**, it is found in **northern, northeastern, and southern regions**, especially in **cold hill streams and mountain rivers**.
- Inhabits a variety of **freshwater and coastal ecosystems**:
 - Rivers, streams, lakes, marshes, swamp forests, and estuaries.
- Tolerant of both **highland** and **lowland** water bodies, regardless of size or origin.

Key Features & Adaptations

- **Elusive and solitary** by nature.
- Brown fur with a paler underside; long, flexible body, webbed feet, and a thick tail.
- **Aquatic adaptations**:
 - Can close ears and nostrils underwater.
 - Dense fur traps air for insulation.
- Highly developed **sight, smell, and hearing**.

Major Threats

- Water pollution (especially pesticides and industrial effluents).
- **Illegal hunting** for its valuable **fur**.

Conservation Status

- **IUCN Red List**: Near Threatened
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 (India)**: *Schedule II*
- **CITES**: *Appendix I* (International trade is highly restricted)

Source: [IndianExpress](#)

Vibrant Village 2.0

Context

40 villages in Uttarakhand will be revitalised under **Vibrant Village 2.0**, covering six blocks in **Champavat, Pithoragarh, and Udham Singh Nagar** districts.

About Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP)

- Launched in **2023**, the **VVP** is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** aimed at the **holistic development of villages** along India's **northern border**.
- Its dual aim is to **enhance the quality of life** of border residents and **strengthen national security**.
- **States/UTs Covered (VVP-I):** Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, and the **Union Territory of Ladakh**.

Key Objectives

- Improve **basic amenities** and create **livelihood opportunities** in remote border villages.
- **Involve local communities** as partners in **border management** and national security.
- Curb **trans-border crimes** and promote **national integration**.

Vibrant Villages Programme – 2.0 (VVP-2.0)

- 100% Centre-funded initiative.
- Total outlay: **₹6,839 crore**.
- Implementation period: Till **FY 2028–29**.
- **States/UTs Covered (VVP-II):** Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal.

Both **VVP-I and VVP-II** aim to make **border villages self-reliant, secure, and vibrant**, while also acting as a strategic counter to **population outmigration and border threats**.

Source: [TheHindu](https://www.thehindu.com)

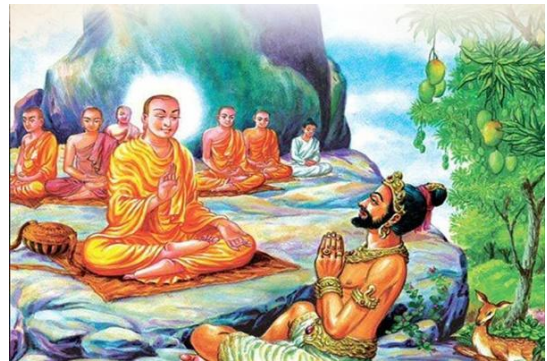
Poson Poya Festival

Context

Sri Lanka celebrated Poson Poya on June 10–11, 2025, marks over 2,000 years since Buddhism was introduced to Sri Lanka.

About Poson Poya

- Annual **Buddhist festival** observed on the **June full moon day**.
- **Second most important** Buddhist festival in Sri Lanka after **Vesak**.
- Commemorates the arrival of **Arahat Mahinda**, son of **Emperor Ashoka**, in the **3rd century BCE**.
- Arahat Mahinda preached Buddhism to **King Devanampiyatissa** at **Mihintale**.
- Major events held at **Mihintale** and **Anuradhapura**.
- Devotees:
 - Wear **white clothes**,
 - Visit **temples**, meditate,
 - Offer food, light lanterns,
 - Participate in **dansals** (free food stalls) and **religious pageants**.
- Promotes values like **non-violence (ahimsa)**, **compassion**, and **unity**.



Buddhism in Sri Lanka

Founded by **Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha)** in **6th century BCE** India.

Core teachings: **Four Noble Truths** and the **Eightfold Path**.

Introduced to Sri Lanka in **236 BCE** by **Arahat Mahinda**.

Accepted by King Devanampiyatissa; led to **mass spread** of **Theravāda Buddhism**.

Resulted in the construction of **temples, stupas**, and strong **monastic traditions**.

Source: [NewsOnAIR](#)

Sant Kabirdas

Context

Sant Kabirdas Jayanti was celebrated on June 11, 2025, marking his 648th birth anniversary and honouring his legacy of spiritual unity and social reform.

Who Was Sant Kabir Das?

- A **15th-century mystic poet, Bhakti saint, and social reformer** from **Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh**.
- **Born in 1440**, believed to be raised by a **Muslim weaver family**.
- Symbol of **religious harmony** and **spiritual universality**.
- Notable works include:
 - **Bijak, Sakhi Granth, Kabir Granthavali, Anurag Sagar.**
 - Several verses included in the **Guru Granth Sahib**.



Kabir's Philosophy

- **God within the self:** Emphasized **introspection over rituals**, saying God resides within, not in idols or temples.
- **Nirguna Bhakti:** Advocated devotion to a **formless, universal divine (Nirguna Brahman)**—not personal gods.
- **Rejection of rituals:** Opposed **religious orthodoxy, superstitions, and caste-based discrimination**.
- **Ethical living over dogma:** Stressed **humility, service (seva), simplicity, and Nam-smaran** (chanting the divine name).
- **Equality and non-violence:** Championed **social justice, non-violence (ahimsa), and human dignity** for all.

Kabir's Influence

- **Kabir Panth:** A devotional sect founded on his teachings, promoting **equality and simplicity** in spiritual practice.
- **Impact on Sikhism:** Highly revered by **Guru Nanak**; many of Kabir's hymns are included in the **Guru Granth Sahib**.
- **Inspired reform movements:** Influenced **Dadu Panthis** and other groups who resisted casteism and ritualism.
- **Universal appeal:** Respected by both **Hindus and Muslims**, Kabir remains a unifying spiritual figure across faiths.

Source: [IndianExpress](https://www.indianexpress.com)

Malta Golden Passport

Context

Malta's golden passport scheme was struck down by the European Court of Justice in April 2025 for turning EU citizenship into a commercial transaction, violating EU principles.

About Malta's Golden Passport Scheme

- Launched in **2020**, the scheme allowed **foreign nationals to acquire Maltese citizenship** in exchange for **large financial investments**.
- Citizenship of Malta meant **automatic EU citizenship**, granting rights like **free movement, work, voting, and residency** across the EU.
- Critics argued it **commercialised EU citizenship**, enabling **money laundering, tax evasion, and security risks**.
- Most beneficiaries were from **China, Russia, and West Asia**.
- Between 2013–2019, around **1.32 lakh people** entered the EU via CBI and RBI schemes, generating over **€20 billion**.
- The **European Commission** and **court** stated this **undermined trust among EU nations** and violated **EU treaties**.
- In 2025, the **European Court of Justice** officially **invalidated the scheme**, ending Malta's golden passport programme.
- Malta's scheme clashed with **EU laws on mutual trust, fair cooperation, and anti-discrimination**.
- The court prioritized **ethical citizenship practices** over financial gains.

Source: [TheHindu](https://www.thehindu.com)



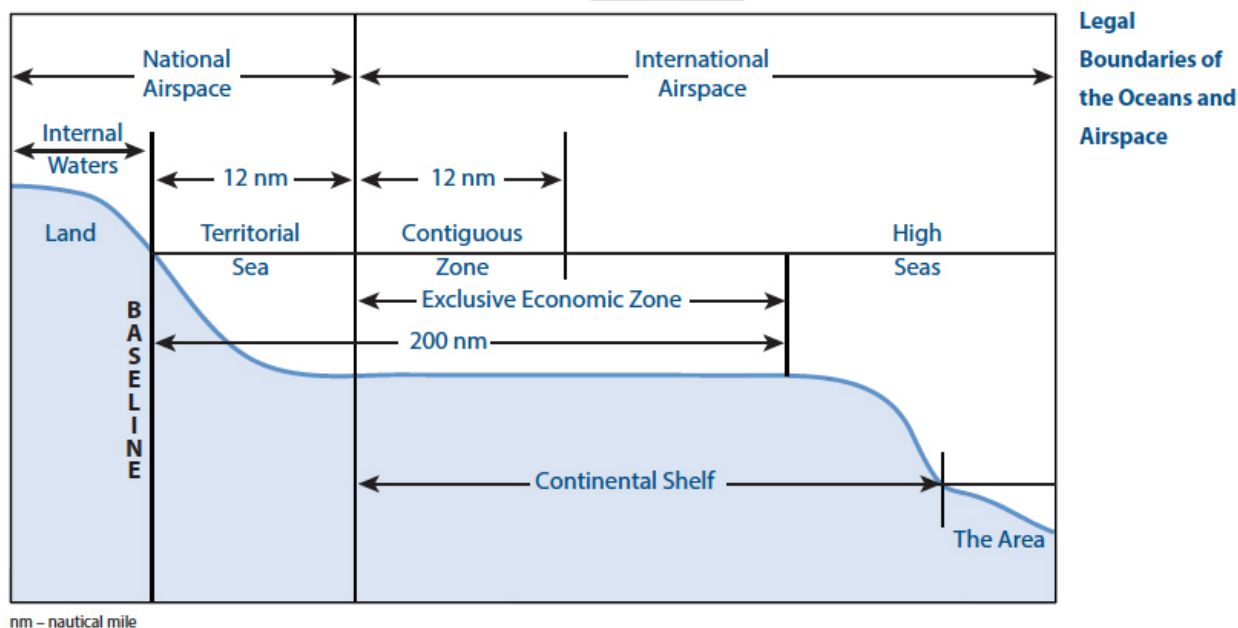
High Seas Treaty

Context

India is unlikely to ratify the 'High Seas Treaty' at the upcoming U.N. Ocean Conference.

About High Seas Treaty

- Officially titled the **"Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)"**, commonly known as the **High Seas Treaty**.
- It is a **new international legal framework under UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea)** aimed at protecting ocean ecosystems that lie **beyond national jurisdictions**.
- Why It's Needed:**
 - Only **1.2%** of high seas are currently protected.
 - 10%** of marine species face extinction risks.
 - Threats include **overfishing, deep-sea mining, acidification, and pollution**.
 - Calls for such a treaty have existed for over **two decades**.
- It is the **third implementing agreement under UNCLOS**, following the last one in **1982**.
- Main Negotiators:** EU, US, UK, and China played lead roles.
- Supports the **30x30 goal**: Protect 30% of land and sea by 2030.
- Legally safeguards **two-thirds of the ocean**, covering **over 40%** of Earth's surface.
- Crucial for **endangered marine species and coastal livelihoods**.



Key Objectives:

- Marine Conservation**
- Equitable Benefit Sharing**
- Capacity Building & Technology Transfer**
- Create **Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)**.
- Set rules for **Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs)** in international waters.

India & the High Seas Treaty

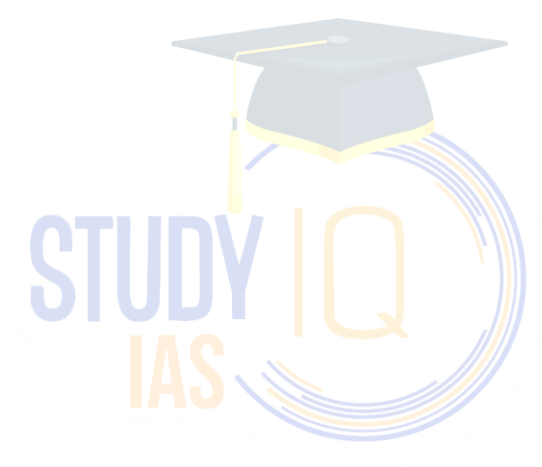
- India is **unlikely to ratify** the High Seas Treaty (BBNJ) at the ongoing UN Ocean Conference in Nice, France.
- India **signed the treaty in September 2024**, but formal ratification is **still pending**.
- Amendments to the Biological Diversity Act** are required before ratification — expected after the Monsoon Session (July 12–Aug 12).

- As of **June 10**, **49 countries** have ratified the treaty; it will take effect after **60 ratifications**.
- India highlighted its marine initiatives:
 - **Samudrayaan mission**: trial dive to 6,000 metres by 2026.
 - **\$80+ billion** invested in the Blue Economy.
 - Called for a **Global Plastics Treaty**.
 - Launched '**SAHAV**' digital ocean data portal.

Why India Has Concerns About Ratifying the High Seas Treaty

- **Equity Concerns**: India seeks fair sharing of marine genetic resource benefits with developing countries.
- **Commercial extraction** from the high seas is difficult, and **benefit-sharing rules** are still under negotiation.
- **Implementation Issues**: Practical enforcement of EIAs and MPAs in international waters is challenging.
- **Ratification Delay**: India is aligning the treaty with domestic laws before formal ratification.

Source: [TheHindu](#)



Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)

Context

Recently, the 7th edition of the International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (ICDRI) was held in Nice, France.

About CDRI

- **Purpose:** Aims to **strengthen the resilience of infrastructure systems** to climate change and disaster risks.
- **Launched in:** **2019** during the **United Nations Climate Action Summit** in **New York**.
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi, India.
- **Partnership:** Comprises **46 countries** and **8 international partner organizations**.
 - Includes national governments, international agencies, and the private sector
- **Funding:** Supported through **voluntary contributions** from member countries and organizations.
- **Major Donors:** India (host country), **USA, UK, Australia, France, Germany, Japan, Canada**, and the **World Bank**.
- **Key Focus Areas:**
 - Small Island Developing States (SIDS)
 - Urban Resilience
 - Data and Early Warning Systems
 - Finance and Governance
 - Critical and Social Infrastructure
 - Mountain Ecosystems
 - Africa-Focused Projects
 - Resilience for Major Events
 - Research and Innovation
 - Capacity Building and Training
- **Governance Structure**
 - **Governing Council:** Includes all members; meets **once a year**.
 - **Executive Committee:** Oversees programs and projects; meets **twice a year**.
 - **Secretariat:** Led by a **Director General**; manages **day-to-day operations**.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Pandya period

Context

An 800-year-old Shiva temple of the later Pandya period has been unearthed at Madurai district, Tamil Nadu.

Key Findings

- An old stone inscription from the year **1217–1218 CE** was found on a **Shiva temple** water channel (culvert).
- It dates back to the rule of **Maravarman Sundara Pandya**, a Pandya king.
- The temple was called **Thennavanisvaram**, and it was located in a village named **Attur**, which is now known as **Udampatti**.
 - The word “**Thennavan**” was actually a **title used by Pandya kings**.
- The inscription shows that the temple managed its **own money** and gives useful information about **how people lived and worked** during that time.

Pandyan Dynasty

- **Early Pandyan Dynasty:** The Pandyas rose to power in **southern Tamil Nadu** around the **end of the 6th century CE**, following the decline of the **Kalabhras**.
 - Their early decline began when **Chola king Parantaka I** defeated **Pandya ruler Rajasimha II**.
- **Later Pandyan Dynast:** After the fall of the Cholas, the **Pandyas re-emerged as the dominant Tamil power** in the **13th century CE**.
 - **Sadaiyavarman Sundarapandyan (1251–1268 CE)** was a notable ruler who extended his empire across Tamil Nadu and up to **Nellore in Andhra**.
 - He was succeeded by **Maravarman Kulasekharan**, who reigned for **40 years**, ushering in peace and prosperity.
 - The dynasty ultimately declined following the **invasion by Malik Kafur**, leading to internal divisions.

Administration

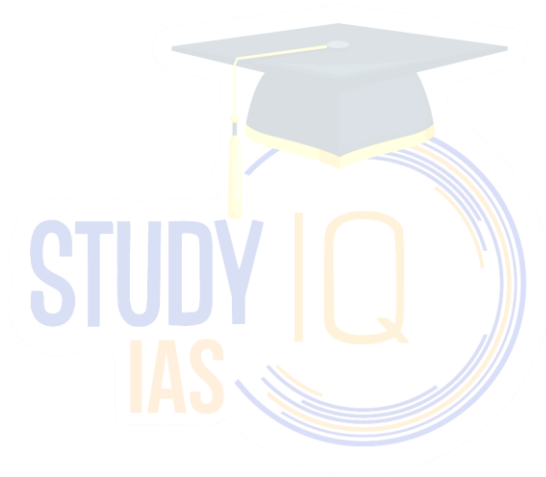
- The Pandya territory was called **Pandymandalam, Thenmandalam, or Pandynadu**.
- The region was mostly rocky and hilly, except for fertile river valleys like **Vaigai** and **Tamiraparni**.
- **Madurai** was the preferred **capital** of the Pandya kings.
- The administrative divisions were: Pandymandalam → Valanadus → Nadus → Kurrams (group of villages).
- **Brahmin settlements**, known as **Mangalam** or **Chaturvedimangalam**, were created with irrigation facilities and given royal or divine names.
- Key administrative titles:
 - Prime Minister: **Uttaramantri**
 - Royal Secretariat: **Eluttu Mandapam**
 - Military commanders: **Palli Velan, Parantakan Pallivelan, Maran Adittan, Tennavan Tamizhavel**
- The **main port town** under Pandya control was **Kayalpattinam** (in present-day Thoothukudi district).

Social and Political Aspects

- Royal palaces were known as **Tirumaligai** or **Manaparanan Tirumaligai**.
- **Royal couches** were often named after local chiefs, reflecting **recognized overlordship**.
- Land classification based on occupation:
 - For Brahmins: **Salabogam**

- For Ironsmiths: **Tattarkani**
- For Carpenters: **Taccu-maniyam**
- For Brahmin teachers: **Bhattavriutti**

Source: [The Hindu](#)



Editorial Summary

Child Labour

Context

- Every year, **June 12** is observed as **World Day Against Child Labour** under the aegis of the **International Labour Organization (ILO)**.
 - It serves to raise awareness and mobilize action to eliminate child labour globally.
 - Despite various efforts, the **issue remains deeply entrenched**, particularly in developing countries.

Global Target for Eradication of Child Labour

- The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) **Target 8.7** aims to: “Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking, and **secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour**, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 **end child labour in all its forms.**”

Status of Child Labour in India

- As per **Census 2011**, **43.53 lakh** (4.35 million) children in the **5–14 age group** were involved in child labour.
- India’s child labour is concentrated in:
 - **Beedi-making** (tobacco),
 - **Carpet weaving**,
 - **Firework industries** (notably in Tamil Nadu),
 - **Agriculture and domestic work** in both rural and urban areas.
- The **COVID-19 pandemic** reversed some progress, as many children dropped out of school due to economic pressure and did not return.

Challenges Associated with Child Labour in India

Challenge	Explanation & Example
Poverty	Families see child labour as an economic necessity. E.g. , agricultural labour in UP & Bihar, stone factories in Rajasthan, etc.
Lack of Access to Quality Education	Inadequate infrastructure and high dropout rates. Many children, especially girls, do not complete schooling.
Weak Enforcement of Laws	Despite legal frameworks like the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 , enforcement is often lax. E.g. , Firecracker units in Sivakasi (Tamil Nadu) have repeatedly faced scrutiny but continue employing minors.
Informal Economy and Hidden Labour	Many child labourers are “invisible” as they work in homes, fields, or family-run businesses.
Cultural Acceptance and Social Norms	Child labour is normalized in some communities where children are expected to support the family from a young age.

Intergenerational Debt and Bonded Labour

Many children are forced to work to repay family debts. This is seen in brick kilns and quarries.

Government Efforts To Eradicate Child Labour

Constitutional Provisions

Article	Provision	Significance
Article 21A	Right to Education	Provides free and compulsory education to all children aged 6–14 years. Prevents child labour by mandating schooling. Inserted by the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002 .
Article 24	Prohibition of Employment of Children	Prohibits employment of children below 14 years in factories, mines, or any other hazardous employment .
Article 39(e)	Directive Principle of State Policy (DPSP)	Directs the State to ensure that children are not abused and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and hazardous employment .
Article 39(f)	DPSP – Development and Opportunities	Directs the State to ensure that children are given opportunities to develop in a healthy manner, with freedom and dignity .
Article 45	DPSP – Early Childhood Care	Originally focused on free education up to age 14. Post-86th Amendment, it directs the State to provide early childhood care and education to all children under age 6.

Legislative Measures

Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 (Amended in 2016)

- Prohibits employment of **children below 14 years** in **all occupations**.
- Prohibits **adolescents (14–18 years)** from working in **hazardous occupations/processes**.
- Introduced stricter punishment:
 - Employers: ₹20,000–₹50,000 fine and/or imprisonment up to 2 years.
 - **Parents**: Exempt from punishment unless they **repeatedly** force child labour.

Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009

- Guarantees **free and compulsory education** to every child aged **6 to 14 years**.
- Encourages **school enrolment** and **reduces dropout** that leads to child labour.

Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015

- Treats child labour as a form of **abuse and neglect**.
- Allows stricter **legal action** against violators under child protection mechanisms.

Schemes and Programs

- **National Child Labour Project (NCLP) Scheme**
 - Launched in **1988**.
 - Provides **non-formal education, vocational training, stipends, nutrition, and healthcare** to rescued child labourers.
 - Operates **rehabilitation centres** in child-labour prone districts.
- **Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan**: Focus on **inclusive education** for out-of-school and working children.
- **Mid-Day Meal Scheme**: Incentivizes school attendance by providing **free cooked meals** to children.
 - Reduces the **economic burden** on poor families.
- **Skill India**: Trains youth (14–18 yrs) for formal sector jobs, reducing unsafe work.

Awareness Campaigns

- **"PENCIL Portal" (launched 2017)**: Platform for **Effective Enforcement for No Child Labour**.

- Integrates data, complaint management, and rescue operations.
- **Childline 1098:** A 24×7 helpline to report child labour or abuse cases.
- **Social Media Campaigns & School Drives:** Regular campaigns during **World Day Against Child Labour (June 12)** and **Child Rights Week**.

Way Forward

Measure	Details
Strengthen Enforcement	Stricter implementation of laws like the CLPRA (Amendment Act), 2016 which bans child labour under 14.
Universal Access to Quality Education	Ensure effective implementation of Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 with focus on retention.
Social Protection for Vulnerable Families	Expand coverage of welfare schemes like PM-KISAN , MGNREGA , and mid-day meals to reduce reliance on child income.
Awareness Campaigns	Change societal attitudes towards child labour through mass campaigns involving media, schools, and communities.
Skill Development and Adolescent Support	For children aged 14–18, provide vocational training and safe work alternatives .
Community Mobilization	Local ownership and monitoring, as seen in the Velpur Model , should be encouraged across India.

Velpur Model – A Community-led Success Story

- **Location:** Velpur Mandal, Nizamabad District, Telangana (then Andhra Pradesh)

Key Features:

- In **2001**, a 100-day community-driven campaign was launched to send all children (5–15 years) to school and eliminate child labour.
- **Initial Resistance:** Misinformation and hostility from the public.
- **Transformation:** With sustained engagement, the community embraced the movement.
- **Outcomes:**
 - Velpur was declared **child-labour free** on **October 2, 2001**.
 - Employers **wrote off debts worth ₹35 lakh**, freeing children from bonded labour.
 - Every **sarpanch signed an MoU** with the district administration to ensure school enrolment.
 - Local boards declared: *“There is no child labour in our village.”*
 - Recognition from **ILO**, **VV Giri National Labour Institute**, and **former President APJ Abdul Kalam**.
 - A rare example of **sustained success for over two decades**.

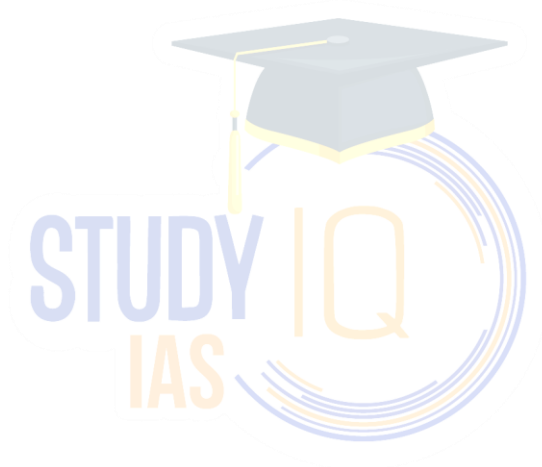
Takeaway: Velpur’s success shows that **social reform is sustainable only when it becomes a people’s movement**, backed by local leadership and supported by state capacity.

Conclusion

The fight against child labour is not just a legal or policy challenge—it is a **moral imperative**. While India has taken steps forward, the **Velpur model** proves that the **real change begins at the**

grassroots, with communities taking charge of their children's futures. Scaling such models with government support, legal enforcement, and civil society participation can help India meet the **SDG 8.7** target and ensure every child gets a fair start in life.

Source: [The Hindu: Recounting Velpur's Story in Ending Child Labour](#)



Juvenile Crimes in India

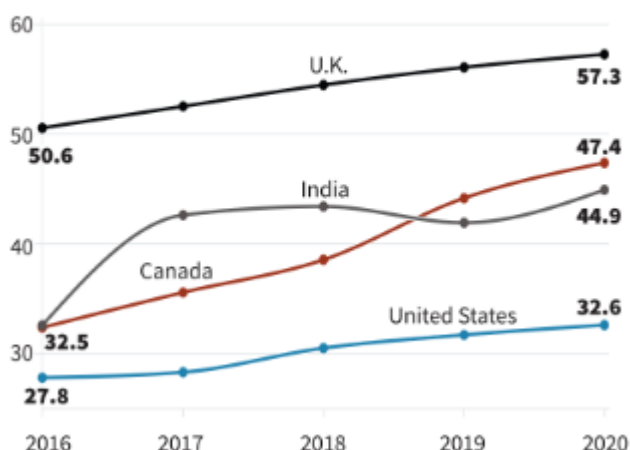
Context

- The British mini-series *Adolescence* has reignited global discussions on the rising incidence of **juvenile violent crimes**, especially among boys.
- The show sheds light on complex factors like cyberbullying, online misogyny, and adolescent psychology—issues increasingly relevant across countries, including **India**.

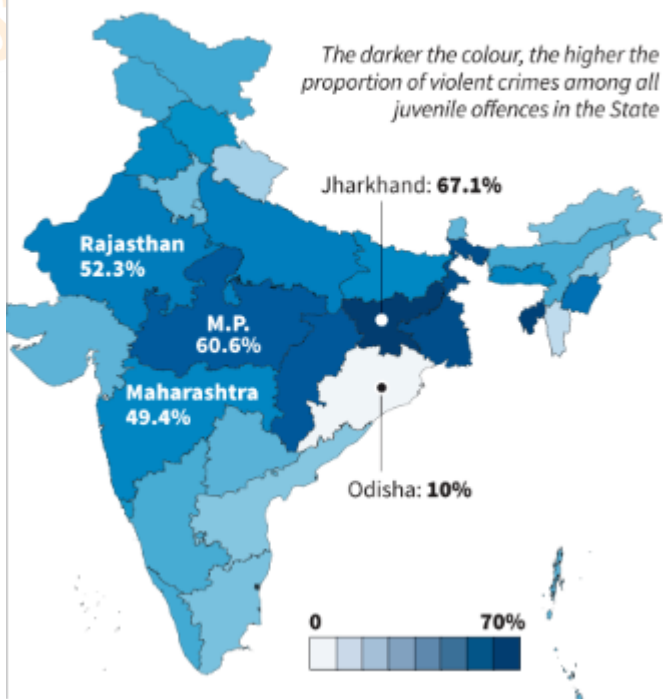
Status of Juvenile Crimes in India

- **Rising Share of Violent Offences:** While the total number of juveniles in conflict with the law **declined from 37,402 in 2017 to 33,261 in 2022**, the **proportion of violent crimes increased**.
 - In **2016**, 32.5% of juveniles were apprehended for violent offences.
 - By **2022**, this rose sharply to **49.5%** — nearly **half** of all juvenile apprehensions.
- **Nature of Violent Crimes:** A police study found that between January 2022 and May 2024, 259 minors were involved in incidents of murder, attempted murder, rape, robbery, and extortion
- **State-wise Trends:** **Madhya Pradesh** (20%) and **Maharashtra** (18%) lead in the total number of juvenile violent crimes (2017–2022).
 - **Jharkhand** had the **highest share** of violent crimes among all juvenile offences (67%).
 - **Delhi** accounts for 6.8% despite its smaller size, likely due to better reporting.
- **Regional Hotspots:** Central and eastern Indian States like **Madhya Pradesh**, **Chhattisgarh**, and **Tripura** are major **hotspots** for violent juvenile crimes.
 - **Odisha**, in contrast, reported only **10%** of juvenile crimes as violent.

Chart 1: The % of juveniles apprehended for violent crimes out of all the juveniles apprehended in select nations (2016-2020)



Map 4: The proportion of violent crimes among all juvenile offences within each State (2017-2022)



Key Reasons Behind the Rise in Juvenile Crime in India

- **Family Breakdown & Parental Issues:** **Broken homes** or absence of parents create emotional voids and lack of supervision.

- Parental imprisonment leads to psychological trauma, making children vulnerable to delinquency.
- **Poverty & Economic Pressure:** Financial hardship drives minors toward crime for **quick money** or a more glamorous lifestyle.
 - The lure of easy earnings and reckless thrill-seeking encourage thefts and robberies.
- **Peer Influence & Gang Culture:** Adolescents join **gangs or delinquent peer groups** for acceptance, status, or protection.
 - Social media platforms encourage committing and flaunting crimes (e.g., bike thefts for Instagram fame).
- **Mental Health & Psychological Stress:** Stress, trauma, or underlying psychological issues (like impulsivity or emotional instability) increase crime risk.
- **Easy Access to Weapons:** In Delhi, the availability of “**dragon knives**” has led to violent assaults and even homicide by minors.
- **Urbanization & Lack of Supervision:** In metropolitan areas, children may lack adult guidance or be drawn into street-based criminal networks.
- **Media & Cultural Influences:** Exposure to **violent content** in films, games, or social media can desensitize minors and normalize aggression.
- **Substance Abuse:** Usage of alcohol or drugs can impair judgment and heighten the risk of illegal behavior.

What Experts Recommend

- Implement **early interventions** by identifying at-risk children and providing counseling .
- Strengthen **family support systems**, focusing on parenting skills and mental health support.
- Increase **police vigilance**, especially in detaining minors with dangerous weapons.
- Promote **rehabilitation** over punishment—as emphasized under the JJ Act—through expanded observation homes and trauma-informed care

Source: [The Hindu](#)