

CSB IAS ACADEMY

TOPIC OF THE DAY (DATE: 05.09.2023)

AIR QUALITY LIFE INDEX -2023

WHY IN NEWS?

Recently, 'Air Quality Life Index (AQLI) Annual Update 2023' by the University of Chicago's Energy Policy Institute.

What is the Air Quality Life Index (AQLI) report about?

- **Prepared by-** University of Chicago's Energy Policy Institute (UCEPI)
- **Purpose-** To quantify the causal relationship between long-term human exposure to air pollution and life expectancy.
- **Data-** The latest report analysed particulate matter data from 2021 to determine its impact on life expectancy.
- **Policies-** It illustrates how air pollution policies can increase life expectancy if pollution levels were reduced to World Health Organization's (WHO) safe guideline Existing national air quality standards, or by user-selected % reductions.

key findings of the report

- **Ranking:** India ranked second among the countries worst hit by air pollution with Bangladesh topping the list.
- Nepal ranked third followed by Pakistan and Mongolia.
- **PMI in South Asia:** Particulate pollution has increased 9.7 percent from 2013 to 2021 in South Asia.
- In India, PM2.5 levels rose 9.5 percent; in Pakistan 8.8 percent; and in Bangladesh, levels rose by 12.4 percent over this same time interval.
- **Life Expectancy:** An average Indian citizen loses around 5.3 years of life expectancy due to air pollution.
- While an average citizen in Bangladesh loses 6.8 years of their life to air pollution
- An average Chinese citizen has seen an improvement — from 4.7 years of life expectancy being lost in 2013 to 2.5 now, an improvement of 2.2 years,
- **Pollution in India** has increased from 56.2 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2020 to 58.7 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2021.
- This is more than 10 times the WHO guideline of 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.
- While particulate pollution takes 5.3 years off the life of the average Indian, cardiovascular diseases reduce life expectancy by about 4.5 years, and child and maternal malnutrition reduces life expectancy by 1.8 years.
- **Poor Air in Delhi:** It is the most polluted city in the world. Delhi's annual average PM2.5 level in 2021 was found to be 126.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, which is more than 25 times the World Health Organization (WHO) guideline of 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.
- Delhi residents are on track **to lose 11.9 years of life expectancy** on average relative to the WHO limit and 8.5 years relative to the national guideline if the current pollution levels persist.

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SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN INDIA

Why does India need comprehensive sexuality education?

- **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB):** 51,863 cases under The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act in 2021; of them, 33,348 or 64% were of sexual assault.
- To prevent child abuse, an effective approach would be comprehensive sexuality education.
- NCRB data show that it is necessary for schools to impart comprehensive sexuality education not only to children, but also to parents and caregivers.
- Data show that both male and female children are victims of sexual abuse.

What is "Sexuality Education"?

- According to the United Nations (UN), it is a curriculum-based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality.

What is the current status of Sexuality Education in India?

- In India, the responsibility of sexuality education is vested with the State governments.
- Claiming that the sexuality education sexualises children, several state governments have either watered down the existing programmes or withdrawn them on the grounds that they violate "Indian values".
- Traditional values are often shaped by patriarchal and hierarchical social structures.
- Mass media often propagates such values.
- All this negatively affects young adults of all genders.

What is the role of consent in sexual relations? Why POCSO Act has come the scanner?

- In the context of POCSO cases, the Madras, Delhi, and Meghalaya High Courts along with the Chief Justice of India have highlighted the frequent criminalisation of consensual adolescent relationships and have asked the government to consider reducing the age of consent.
- Understanding sexual consent is important not only to learn about violation and abuse, but also to maintain healthy relationships.
- But are Indian teenagers and even young adults aware of what sexual consent means?
- A study by the dating app Tinder showed that more than 64% of young Mumbaikars were hesitant to give consent, ask for it, and to withdraw it when dating someone.

What is the way forward?

- As the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) says, "the right of access to comprehensive sexuality education is grounded in fundamental human rights and is a means to empower young people to protect their health, well-being and dignity".
- The UN global guidance recommends starting comprehensive sexuality education from the age of five along with formal education.
- This means that young children will be taught about their bodies, emotions, the basic principles of consent, and how to deal with violence, bullying or abuse.
- WHO: With comprehensive sexuality education, young people will be better informed of their rights and sexuality, and will be more likely to engage in sexual activity later.