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GOND TRIBES



- The Gond or Gondi (Gōndi) or Koitur are a **Dravidian ethno-linguistic group**.
- They are one of the **largest tribal groups in India**. According to the 2001 census, their population was nearly **11 million**.
- **Distribution:**
 - The states of **Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, and Odisha** are home to the largest Gond populations.
 - Gond tribes also live in the states of **Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Gujarat**.
- Gonds are mainly **divided into four tribes**, namely **Raj Gonds, Madia Gonds, Dhurve Gonds and Khatulwar Gonds**.

History:

- Gonds settled in the Gondwana region in the 9th and 13th century AD.
- In the **14th century** they **ruled several parts of central India**.
- They **built a number of forts, palaces, temples, tanks, and lakes** during the rule of the **Gonds dynasty**.
- The **Gondwana kingdom** survived till the **late 16th century**.
- They also **gained control over the Malwa** after the decline of the **Mughals** followed by the Marathas in the year 1690.
- During the British regime in India, Gonds **challenged the Britishers** in several battles.
- **Language:**
 - The majority of Gond people speak **dialects of Gondi**, an unwritten language of the **Dravidian language family**.
 - Some Gond have lost their own language and speak Hindi, Marathi, or Telugu, depending on which is dominant in their area.

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- **Economy:** The basis of the Gond economy is **agriculture**, but they also practice **animal husbandry**. Some Gond also gather wild plants to eat.
- **Religion:** The religion of the Gond tribes centers on **clan and village gods**, together with **ancestor worship**.
- **Customs and Festivals:**
 - **Keslapur Jathra and Madai** are important festivals of the Gonds.
 - Apart from this, they also celebrate Hindu festival called **Dussehra**.

MAJULI ISLAND



- Often called the **soul of Assam**, Majuli is the **world's largest river island**.
 - It lies at the heart of **Assam**, spreading over an area of 421 sq. km.
 - The island is **formed by the Brahmaputra River** in the south and the **Kherkutia Xuti, an anabranch of the Brahmaputra**, joined by the **Subansiri River in the north**.
- In 2016 it became the **first island to be made a district in India**.
- The island's landscape is characterised by lush greenery, water bodies and paddy fields.
- The island has also been the **hub of Assamese neo-Vaishnavite culture**, initiated around the 16th century by the **great Assamese saint-reformer Srimanta Sankardeva and his disciple Madhavdeva**.
 - They initiated the **tradition of Satras** (monastic institutions), and these Satras have preserved **Sattriya dance**, literature, **bhaona (theatre)**, dance forms, mask making, and boat-making.
- **Most of the islanders** belong to **three tribes-Mishing, Deori and Sonowal Kachari**, with the non-tribal Assamese comprising the rest.
- Apart from Satras or Vaishnavite monasteries, Majuli is **famous for mask-making** and has a tradition of **pottery making**.
- **Rice cultivation** is the **primary livelihood** for the residents of Majuli, with several **unique varieties** of rice, such as **Komal Saul and Bao Dhan**.

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DELIMITATION IN INDIA - BALANCING DEMOCRACY AND DEMOGRAPHY

Understanding Delimitation in India:

- **Delimitation** adjusts constituency boundaries based on population changes to ensure proportional representation in Parliament.
- **The process has been frozen since 1976** to avoid penalizing states that successfully controlled population growth, mainly in the South.
- As a result, states like **Uttar Pradesh and Bihar** remain underrepresented compared to Tamil Nadu and Kerala, despite their larger populations.
- This disparity, known as **malapportionment**, is expected to **shift political power toward North India post-2029**.

Constitutional and Legal Framework:

- **Article 82** of the Indian Constitution mandates periodic delimitation. **The Delimitation Commission** - an independent body, implements the process.
- Delimitation exercises were conducted in **1952, 1962, and 1972** but were halted by the **42nd Constitutional Amendment (1976)** and extended in 2001 until 2026.
- **Meghraj Kothari v Delimitation Commission (1966)** upheld the finality of delimitation orders, restricting judicial intervention.
- Recently, the Court dismissed a petition challenging the Jammu & Kashmir delimitation, despite claims that it marginalised minority communities.

Concerns and Impact:

- **Concerns:**
 - **Southern states vs northern states:**
 - **Southern** states surpass the North in **per capita income**, infrastructure, healthcare, and education but risk losing political representation due to **slower population growth**.

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- Southern states contribute more to the central treasury but may **end up subsidizing northern states** with larger populations but lower economic output.
- **The Red Queen Effect:** If population growth in the north is unchecked or southern economic growth stagnates, political disparities will widen.
- **Risk of gerrymandering:** Delimitation could lead to electoral manipulation favoring certain political parties or social groups and establishing permanent political or electoral majorities.
- **Impact on representation:** While delimitation raises above concerns, it brings promises to devolve power to:
 - **Scheduled castes (SCs) and scheduled tribes (STs):**
 - According to **Article 330(2)** of the Constitution, reserved seats for SCs and STs should be proportional to their population in each state.
 - Currently their representation is based on the 2001 Census, ignoring recent demographic changes.
 - **For example**, Bihar's 2023 caste-based survey showed an increase in SC/ST population.
 - **Women:** For example, the Women's Reservation Act (2023) mandates 33% women reservation in Lok Sabha and state legislatures.
 - However, it will take effect only after delimitation, delaying gender parity in Parliament until 2029.

Conclusion:

- Delimitation has the potential to **enhance the quality of India's electoral democracy** and **rejuvenate its democratic longevity** in the long term.
- **Without careful navigation** of demographic and political complexities, **it could deepen regional disparities.**
- A **balanced approach** ensuring fair representation, gender inclusivity, and decentralization can strengthen India's democracy in the long run.

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WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME



- It is a **United Nations agency** that deals with hunger eradication and promotes food security in the world.
- It is operating in more than 120 countries, which provides food assistance during emergencies and works with communities to enhance nutrition and generate resilience.
- It has been **functioning in India since 1963**.
- It is a member of the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**.
- **Funding:** WFP is funded by **voluntary donations** from governments, corporates and private donors.
- It is the **largest humanitarian agency** saving lives in emergencies and using assistance to help communities become self-sufficient and resilient to shocks.
- Report released by the WFP is **Global Report on Food Crisis**.
 - The Global Report on Food Crises describes the scale of acute hunger in the world.
 - It provides an analysis of the drivers that are contributing to food crises across the globe.
 - The report is produced by the Global Network against Food Crises, an international alliance working to address the root causes of extreme hunger.

DESIGNING INDIA'S AI SAFETY INSTITUTE

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) **has become a critical driver of technological progress**, and India is positioning itself as a significant player in this domain.
- The recent announcement by Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw regarding India's plan to launch an **indigenous AI model and establish an AI Safety Institute (AISI)** highlights the country's commitment to AI development and regulation.

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- **India's Leadership in AI Governance for the Global South**
 - India's position as a leading technology hub in the Global South gives it a **unique opportunity to champion inclusive AI governance**.
 - Many emerging economies **lack the resources and technical expertise to establish their own AISIs**.
 - **India can take the lead in creating a collective effort among developing nations** to co-develop AI safety frameworks and evaluation metrics tailored to local challenges.
 - India's **ongoing collaboration with UNESCO on AI readiness has laid the groundwork** for ethical AI development and deployment.
 - Insights from this partnership can help India's AISI **formulate comprehensive guidelines** that ensure AI systems are not only powerful but also ethical and safe.
 - Additionally, **initiatives under the IndiaAI Mission**, such as machine unlearning, synthetic data generation, AI bias mitigation, and privacy-enhancing technologies, **can serve as foundational components of a robust AI safety ecosystem**.
 - By advancing these technologies, **India can contribute to global AI safety efforts while ensuring that AI systems developed within the country align with ethical and responsible AI principles**.

India's AI Safety Priorities: Addressing Local Challenges

- While international collaboration is crucial, **India must also prioritise its unique AI challenges**.
- **One of the most pressing concerns is AI inaccuracy** and its potential to reinforce discrimination in an Indian context.
- Given India's linguistic diversity, socioeconomic disparities, and varying levels of digital literacy, **the risks of bias in AI systems are heightened**.

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- To mitigate these risks, the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** has structured India's AISI under a **hub-and-spoke model**, developing partnerships with academic institutions, startups, industry players, and government departments.
- **This approach ensures that AI solutions are developed with an awareness** of India's diverse landscape.
- **Startups such as Karya are already addressing AI bias** by enabling rural communities to generate high-quality datasets in Indian languages.
- **Other initiatives focus on multilingual AI development, promoting inclusivity and accessibility.**
- India's AISI should leverage these efforts to create AI systems that are not only technically sound but also equitable and representative of India's vast population.
- **Additionally, the IndiaAI Mission has launched Responsible AI projects targeting areas such as watermarking, ethical AI frameworks, risk assessment, and deep-fake detection.**
- These efforts align with the Safe and Trusted AI pillar, ensuring that AI development in India is both innovative and responsible.

Conclusion

- **The establishment of an AISI represents a significant step toward ensuring AI development aligns with ethical standards, technical excellence, and global safety frameworks.**
- **While India must address local concerns such as AI bias and inclusivity, it cannot ignore the importance of global collaboration in AI governance.**
- By actively engaging with international AISIs, adopting standardized safety taxonomies, and leading AI governance efforts in the Global South, **India can position itself as a key player in shaping the future of responsible AI.**

SEAGRASS



- It is a **flowering plant** that grows submerged in shallow **marine waters** like bays and lagoons.
- It is so-named because most species have long green, grass-like leaves.
- **Characteristics of Seagrass:**
 - Seagrasses have roots, stems, and leaves and produce flowers and seeds.
 - Like terrestrial plants, **seagrass also photosynthesizes** and manufactures their own food and releases oxygen.
 - They evolved around 100 million years ago, and there are approximately 72 different seagrass species that belong to four major groups.
- **Distribution of Seagrass:**
 - They are found on **all continents except Antarctica**. The **tropical waters** of the **Indo-Pacific hold the highest diversity** of seagrasses in the world.
 - India too has vast seagrass meadows, home to 16 species of seagrass with major concentrations in the **Gulf of Mannar, Palk Bay, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep Islands and the Gulf of Kutch**.
- **Advantages of Seagrass:**
 - They are better than trees for **capturing carbon** and providing food for millions of people.
 - Beyond supporting marine life, seagrass also acts as a **natural barrier, protecting coastal communities from storms and erosion**.
 - These underwater plants can **store carbon up to 35 times faster than tropical rainforests**, locking it away for thousands of years.
- **Threats:** Pollution from cities, industries, and agriculture continues to degrade these meadows, while coastal development and tourism put additional pressure on fragile habitats of seagrass.

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DRAGON COPILOT



- It is the **new healthcare AI tool** which is being offered as part of **Microsoft Cloud for Healthcare**.
- It is designed to help doctors and healthcare professionals transcribe clinical notes and draft paperwork as well as quickly search for information from medical sources.

Features of Dragon Copilot:

- It harnesses the **natural language voice dictation** and ambient listening technology developed by AI voice company Nuance.
 - These capabilities have been further **fine-tuned using generative AI** and adapted to incorporate healthcare safeguards.
 - It is built on top of existing tools such as **Dragon Medical One (DMO)** and **DAX** rolled out by speech recognition company Nuance Communications.
 - It can be **used to draft memos and notes** in a personalised style and format.
 - Besides voice-to-text transcription, the Dragon Copilot user interface also allows users to **submit prompts or use templates to create AI-generated notes**.
 - Apart from documentation work, the AI assistant allows clinicians to search for general-purpose medical information from trusted sources.
 - It can also be used to automate **key tasks such as conversational orders, note and clinical evidence summaries**, referral letters, and after-visit summaries, in one centralised workspace.
 - It can be **accessible through a mobile app, browser or desktop**, and it integrates directly with several different electronic health records.
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