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INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
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NEW DELHI

ANNUAL ESSAY PRIZE COMPETITION-2020

Entries are invited for the Annual Essay Prize Competition-2020. The value of the prize for the competition will be as under:

First Prize	Rs. 10,000/-
Second Prize	Rs. 7,000/-
Third Prize	Rs. 5,000/-

Any competitor who has got a prize on one occasion will not, on any subsequent occasion, be eligible for an equivalent or lower prize. The joint authorship of essays shall not be allowed and any essay with joint authorship shall not be considered for competition.

The topics for the competition are:

- (i) COVID and Public Health System
- (ii) One Nation, One Ration Card Scheme: PDS Reforms
- (iii) Migration and Job Creation

The essay writers are expected to cover the following aspects in their respective entries:

Topic: COVID and Public Health System

Focus Area to be covered

COVID-19 pandemic has caused half a million deaths, affected more than 10 million people so far globally, and it is here to stay for a long. The fear has gripped the world with not just developing countries but the ones having high health care facilities too, countries are still under reeling pressure on relaxing lockdown imposed for months. Covid-19 has caused catastrophe not just economically but also socially, mentally, and psychologically. Social distancing norms, travel restrictions, quarantine have hampered the economic sectors around the globe. COVID-19

necessitates the strengthening of the public health system on each of its building block i.e.

- (i) Service Delivery and medical infrastructure (testing facilities, hospital beds, ICU beds, and ventilators, etc.)
- (ii) Health workforce (including medical, paramedical, grassroots level functionaries, non-medical specialist required in the health sector)
- (iii) Health information systems (epidemiological evidence, communication to the public)
- (iv) Access to essential medicines, health facilities, and equipment
- (v) Financing (Cost of treatment and economic cost)
- (vi) Leadership/governance with a citizen-centric approach

The essay writers are expected to focus their discussion on any of the above-mentioned areas considering the diversity of India reflected in the COVID journey of states i.e. different levels of infection, response, and recovery.

Topic: One Nation, One Ration Card Scheme: PDS Reforms

In India food rationing and PDS system began during the famine of 1940, and was revived in 1970 as a universal food entitlement programme.. Post-liberalisation, in 1997, the universal food scheme was made a targeted one, covering poor and vulnerable sections of the society. Later, in 2013, due to civil society and judicial interventions, the landmark National Food Security Act (NFSA) was passed by Parliament. It made the right to food a legal entitlement for two-thirds of poor households in India.

From the inception of the food rationing system in India, a series of reforms have been carried out to identify legitimate beneficiaries, fix per capita food grain, include the most vulnerable people, digitalize and authenticate, in order to improve its target and efficiency. India has been on the move. The mobility of the poor inside the country for employment is quite complex and multifaceted. A majority of poor households practice temporary or seasonal migration in India. The seasonal rural-to-urban migration in India is somewhere around 10 crore people, who work as informal workers in urban areas. The incidence of mobility of poor people from poor and backward states is rising mostly due to the current agrarian crisis, unemployment, poverty and vulnerability resulting out of natural disasters.

Among poor households, a large number prefer their male members to migrate whereas some migrate with their families. The key sectors which

are accommodating migrating workers are construction, brick kilns, plantations, agriculture, manufacturing, services and other informal sectors. Usually, the migrant workers in these sectors are excluded from accessing PDS at their place of work. Moreover, most of the anti-poverty, rural employment, welfare and food security schemes were historically based on domicile-based access and restricted people to access government social security, welfare and food entitlements at their place of origin. That internal migration in India is huge is evident from the 2011 Census data. It indicates that 45.36 crore people or 37 per cent of the total population of India are migrants. On the other hand, migration for work and employment accounted for 10.22 per cent, which is about 4.3 crore people. Similarly, capturing information on the patterns of migration and especially seasonal or circular migration is hardly being done either at the state or national level. Workers in unorganized sector lack social security. Although there are provisions under the Inter State Migrant Workers Act of 1979 to register inter-state migrant workers, state governments have failed to register such workers and create databases about them, either at source and destination.

'One Nation, One Ration Card' is one initiative which will enable migrant workers and their family members to access PDS benefits from any Fair Price Shop in the country bringing perceptible changes in the lives of vulnerable migrant workers in India. It will assist seasonal and circular migrant workers to have better access to PDS, both, at source and destination. In the light of above the essay should focus on the following aspects:

Expected hard-hitting ground realities for designing and implementing the scheme.

Feasibility of the scheme in terms of exact data on the mobility of poor households migrating to work, locating intra- and inter-state destinations and sectors employing the workers.

Aspect of domicile-based legislation for accessing government schemes and social security

Providing answers to- What is the 'One Nation, One Ration Card' system?

How will the system of ration card portability work?

How many states have come on board to roll out inter-state portability of ration cards?

How has been the experience of Ration Card Portability so far?

Topic: Migration and Job Creation

The study in the dynamics of internal migration in India as a fact has drawn attention among policy makers, academicians and researchers in recent years. The term migration is used for movement involving a permanent or semi-permanent change of usual residence. The 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognizes for the first time the contribution of migration to sustainable development. Migration is a cross-cutting issue, relevant to all of the SDGs. The SDGs target 10 out of 17 goals contain targets and indicators that are relevant to migration or mobility. The SDGs central reference to migration is made in target 10.7 to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies. As per 2011 census, out of 1,210.2 million people in India, 455.8 million (about 37%) were reported as migrants of place of last residence.

Amid COVID-19, the country is beholding the second largest mass migration in its history after the Partition of India in 1947, where more than 14 million people were displaced and migrated to India and Pakistan respectively, depending on their religious faiths. The imposition of the lockdown as a measure to contain the exponential progression of the COVID-19 pandemic has hit the unskilled and semi-skilled migrant labourers the most. ILO (2020) estimates reports that in India, with a share of almost 90 per cent of people working in the informal economy, about 400 million workers in the informal economy are at risk of falling deeper into poverty during the crisis. The extent of this sudden reverse migration in the country was such that, even the best of the efforts of the Government of India, could not match the crisis. The authorities have developed shelters and quarantine homes for the deprived migrants and are looking after 600,000 migrants and providing food to more than 2.2 million individuals under Free Ration Scheme by Delhi Government and One Nation One Ration Card Scheme by the Central Government (BBC News Delhi, April 22, 2020). Creating short-term job opportunities for migrants based on their skills will be one of the key focuses of Central government's Atma Nirbhar Abhiyan. As part of the programme, the Centre has selected 116 districts with over 25,000 migrant workers, called the 'Atma Nirbhar districts' across six states (Skill Reporter July 8, 2020).

The authors may use the statistics relating to migration and job creation, covering the trend of labour migration and employment, migration and urbanization, gendered pattern of migration, migrant remittances and household well-being, implication of labour law reforms, reverse migration amid COVID-19 and migration policy.

The essay writers are expected to cover the following aspects in their respective entries:

Focus Area to be covered

- Migration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- Migration and Urbanisation
- Migration, Skills and Employment
- Gender and Migration
- Migration, Remittances and Household Well-being
- Implications of Labour Law Reforms on Internal Migrants
- Migration and Reverse Migration amid COVID-19
- Migration Policy

General Guidelines for the Essay

The essay should be in English or Hindi language. The length of an essay should be approximately around 5000 words. An essay exceeding 5500 word limit shall not be accepted. The contestant must indicate the total number of words of the essay, failing which it shall not be accepted. All essays must be typed in double space on only one side of the paper and those entries which do not adhere to the stipulation shall be deemed to be rejected. It should be submitted in triplicate under a “nom-de-plume” or “alias”. The full name and address of the competitor should be mentioned on a separate sheet and enclosed in a sealed envelope bearing the nom-de-plume on the outer cover with the following inscription.

Annual Essay Prize Competition – 2020, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi

All essays should be sent to the Director, Indian Institute of Public Administration, Indraprastha Estate, Ring Road, New Delhi-110002, by Registered Post and soft copy through email : trgiipa@yahoo.co.in, so as to reach him not later than August 31, 2020. The envelope should be marked “Annual Essay Prize Competition – 2020”. The entries received after the due date may not be entertained.

The essay will be adjudged by a body of judges and the award of the judges shall be final. The institute reserves the right not to make any award if none of the essays submitted meets the necessary standard. Any essay

which receives an award shall become the joint intellectual property of the author and IIPA.

N.B. Intending competitors who wish to seek any further clarification may write to the Director, Indian Institute of Public Administration, Indraprastha Estate, Ring Road, New Delhi-110002