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**MAD- 2020
SCIENCE
Day - 35**

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Question:

In your view, does India need urgent and radical reforms in its space sector? Explain.

Answer:

- From its early years of resource crunch, ISRO has traversed a long distance in providing cutting edge space missions such as the Lunar mission, Mars mission etc. It fairs well in the success rate and overall economy of the projects, but a little course correction every now and then can only do good.

The current space race is driven by rapid innovation, and comprises the following trends

1. **Privatisation:** ISRO has been running on the 20th century governmental domination model. Parallely, private space companies such as SpaceX, SpaceIL are taking command.
2. **New Players:** Small countries like Luxembourg and UAE have shown interest in space sector, thus challenging space to be the stronghold of big powers alone. India need to diversify it services from cheap satellites to inter-planetary space-based research.
3. **Miniaturisation of satellites:** Cubsats and nanosats might make research in deep-space viable and ISRO should be on the forefront.
4. **Offensive space technologies:** Satellite infrastructure is critical for present-day nations and a policy of offensive-defence cannot be ruled out. Moreover, there is a lot of scope for regulations in this sphere.

These trends need to be paid heed to for keeping up ISRO's potency.

Yet a lot of positives such as its autonomy, specialist workforce and its technocratic top management, right location in the geography of India, close to the scientific and IT hub and its ability to attract talent should be maintained intact.