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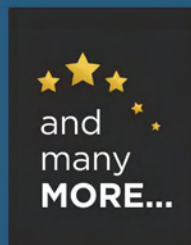
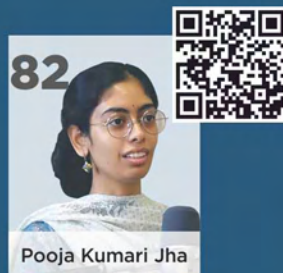
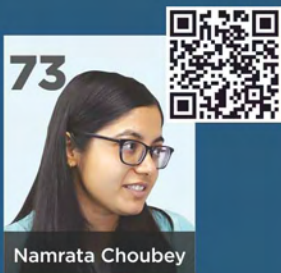
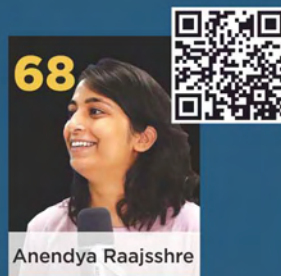
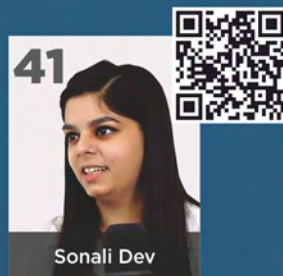
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# PREFACE

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## **Dear Aspirants,**

Social issues and social development policies forms a very important section of Paper I and Paper II of UPSC GS Mains syllabus. UPSC has been asking questions on important salient features of Indian Society, Women Issues, Issues of Globalisation, Regionalism, Secularism in GS Paper I. Themes usually touched in GS Paper II are about developments in Health, Education & Poverty. Apart from these papers, understanding social issues also gives students an edge in Essay Paper and Ethics Papers. Thus, preparing social issues topics will be very valuable for students.

Our approach in developing this book has been to follow the syllabus of UPSC. The content has been developed as per the demands of the exam in keeping with the past trends of UPSC in the Mains Examination. Students can follow the book as a one-stop solution for social issues.

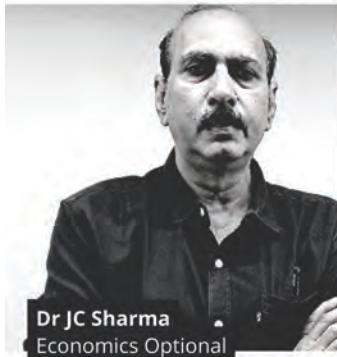
For the best students, students are advised to follow this book along with Rau's IAS Mains Test Series and Mains QIP Program.

**All the best!!!**

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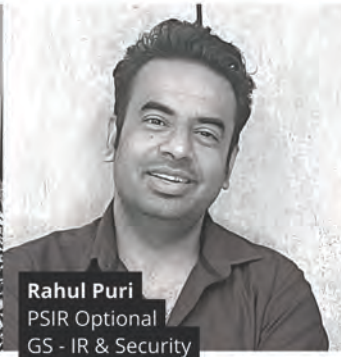
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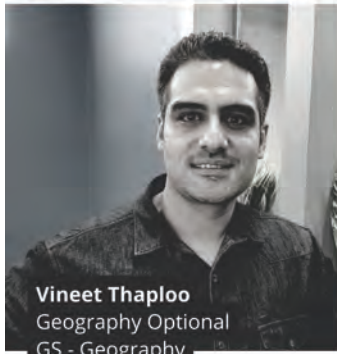
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GS - Ethics



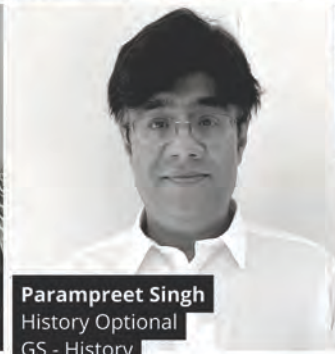
**Rahul Puri**  
PSIR Optional  
GS - IR & Security



**Indrajeet Bariar**  
Geography Optional  
GS - Geography, IR & Security



**Vineet Thaploo**  
Geography Optional  
GS - Geography



**Parampreet Singh**  
History Optional  
GS - History



**K Kirthika**  
History Optional  
GS - History



**Mathimaran Raju**  
History Optional  
GS - History



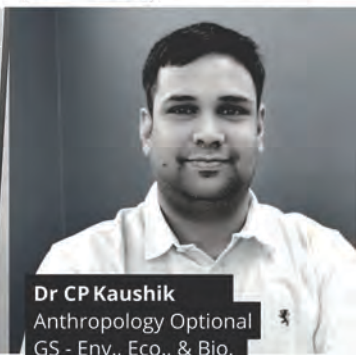
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GS - History



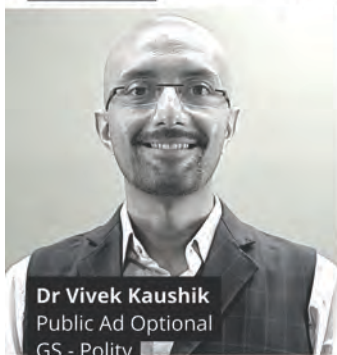
**Vikram Kaushal**  
Sociology Optional  
GS - Society & Social Justice  
& Ethics



**Dr Surendra Singh**  
Sociology Optional  
GS - Society & Social Justice



**Dr CP Kaushik**  
Anthropology Optional  
GS - Env., Eco., & Bio.



**Dr Vivek Kaushik**  
Public Ad Optional  
GS - Polity



**Anubhav Sharma**  
Public Ad. Optional  
GS - Polity



**Babu Gunasekar**  
GS Polity



**Brahma K Reddy**  
GS - Economics



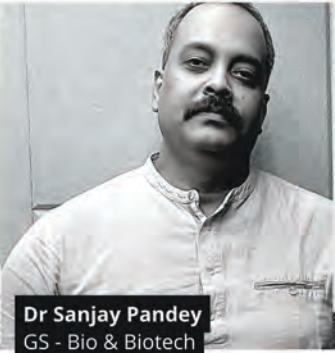
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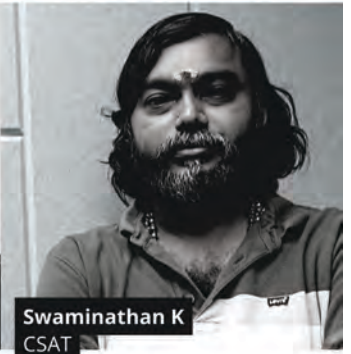
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GS - Geography



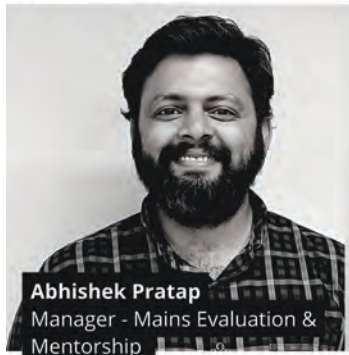
**Faizan Khan**  
QIP - Ethics & S&T



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QIP - IR & Security



**Swaminathan K**  
CSAT



**Abhishek Pratap**  
Manager - Mains Evaluation & Mentorship



**Vidushi Tyagi**  
Manager - Mains Evaluation & Mentorship



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QIP - Polity



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Manager - Mains Test Series



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## **INDIAN SOCIETY**

- Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India.
- Role of women and women's organization
- Population and associated issues
- Poverty and developmental issues
- Urbanization
- Effects of globalization on Indian society
- Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism.

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE**

- Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.
- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.
- Issues relating to poverty and hunger.

# Previous Year Questions and Theme Map

## SALIENT FEATURES OF INDIAN SOCIETY; DIVERSITY OF INDIA

YEAR	UPSC MAINS QUESTIONS	IMPORTANT THEMES FOR MAINS 2022
2021	How does Indian society maintain continuity in traditional social values? Enumerate the changes taking place in it.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unity in diversity</li> <li>2. Unity during pandemic</li> <li>3. Caste System</li> <li>4. Cultural identity</li> <li>5. Changing features of rural social and political institutions.</li> <li>6. Changing features of institution of marriage</li> <li>7. Effect of globalisation on Indian Society</li> </ol>
2020	Has caste lost its relevance in understanding the multi-cultural Indian society? Elaborate your answers with illustrations.	
2020	Customs and traditions suppress reason leading to obscurantism. Do you agree?	
2019	What makes Indian society unique in sustaining its culture? Discuss.	
2019	Do we have cultural pockets of small India all over the nation? Elaborate with examples.	
2018	"Caste system is assuming new identities and associational forms. Hence, caste system cannot be eradicated in India." Comment.	
2017	In the context of diversity of India, can it be said that the regions form cultural units rather than the States? Give reasons with examples for your viewpoint.	
2017	What are the two major legal initiatives by the State since Independence, addressing discrimination against Scheduled Tribes (STs)?	
2016	Has the formation of linguistic States strengthened the cause of Indian Unity?	
2016	Why are the tribals in India referred to as the Scheduled Tribes? Indicate the major provisions enshrined in the Constitution of India for their upliftment.	
2015	Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, despite having divergent approaches and strategies, had a common goal of amelioration of the downtrodden. Elucidate.	
2015	Describe any four cultural elements of diversity in India and rate their relative significance in building a national identity.	
2015	Debate the issue of whether and how contemporary movements for assertion of Dalit identity work towards annihilation of caste.	
2014	The life cycle of a joint family depends on economic factors rather than social values. Discuss.	



WOMEN ISSUES		
YEAR	UPSC MAINS QUESTIONS	IMPORTANT THEMES FOR MAINS 2022
2021	Examine the role of 'Gig Economy' in the process of empowerment of women in India.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Child Sex ratio</li> <li>2. Property rights of women in India</li> <li>3. Effect of COVID-19 on women</li> <li>4. Domestic violence</li> <li>5. Women participation in economy and Science</li> <li>6. Women and Panchayat</li> <li>7. Poverty eradication and role of women</li> </ol>
2021	"Though women in post-Independent India have excelled in various fields, the social attitude towards women and feminist movement has been patriarchal." Apart from women education and women empowerment schemes, what interventions can help change this milieu.	
2019	"Empowering women is the key to control population growth". Discuss.	
2019	What are the continued challenges for women in India against time and space?	
2018	'Women's movement in India has not addressed the issues of women of lower social strata. Substantiate your view.	
2015	How do you explain the statistics that show that the sex ratio in Tribes in India is more favourable to women than the sex ratio among Scheduled Castes?	
2014	How does patriarchy impact the position of a middle-class working woman in India?	
2014	Discuss the various economic and socio-cultural forces that are driving increasing feminization of agriculture in India.	
2014	Why do some of the most prosperous regions of India have an adverse sex ratio for women? Give your arguments.	
2013	Male membership needs to be encouraged in order to make women's organization free from gender bias. Comment.	

POPULATION AND ASSOCIATED ISSUES		
YEAR	UPSC MAINS QUESTIONS	IMPORTANT THEMES FOR MAINS 2022
2021	Discuss the main objectives of Population Education and point out the measures to achieve them in India in detail.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reverse Migration</li> <li>2. Opportunity gap in rural regions</li> <li>3. Poverty reduction</li> <li>4. Feminisation of Poverty</li> <li>5. Relation between population and poverty.</li> </ol>
2018	'Despite implementation of various programmes for eradication of poverty by the government in India, poverty is still existing.' Explain by giving reasons.	
2018	Mention core strategies for the transformation of aspirational districts in India and explain the nature of convergence, collaboration and competition for its success.	
2016	"An essential condition to eradicate poverty is to liberate the poor from deprivation." Substantiate this statement with suitable examples	
2015	Critically examine whether growing population is the cause of poverty OR poverty is the main cause of population	

	increase in India.	
<b>2015</b>	Discuss the changes in the trends of labour migration within and outside India in the last four decades.	

### URBANISATION

YEAR	UPSC MAINS QUESTIONS
<b>2021</b>	What are the main socio-economic implications arising out of the development of IT industries in major cities of India?

### EFFECTS OF GLOBALIZATION ON INDIAN SOCIETY

YEAR	UPSC MAINS QUESTIONS	IMPORTANT THEMES FOR MAINS 2022
<b>2021</b>	What is Cryptocurrency? How does it affect global society? Has it been affecting Indian society also?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. COVID-19 and isolationism and halt on globalisation</li> <li>2. Effect of globalisation on Youth</li> <li>3. Globalisation and Indian culture</li> <li>4. De-globalisation</li> <li>5. Glocalization</li> </ol>
<b>2020</b>	Is diversity and pluralism in India under threat due to globalisation? Justify your answer.	
<b>2019</b>	Are we losing our local identity for the global identity? Discuss.	
<b>2018</b>	'Globalization is generally said to promote cultural homogenization but due to this cultural specificities appear to be strengthened in the Indian Society. Elucidate.	
<b>2016</b>	To what extent globalization has influenced the core of cultural diversity in India? Explain.	
<b>2015</b>	Discuss the positive and negative effects of globalization on women in India. (2013, Asked about Globalization effect on Elderly)	
<b>2015</b>	Discuss the changes in the trends of labour migration within and outside India in the last four decades.	
<b>2013</b>	Critically examine the effects of globalization on the aged population in India.	

### SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT, COMMUNALISM, REGIONALISM & SECULARISM

YEAR	UPSC MAINS QUESTIONS	IMPORTANT THEMES FOR MAINS 2022
<b>2020</b>	Do you agree that regionalism in India appears to be a consequence of rising cultural assertiveness? Argue	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Spread of communalism in India</li> <li>2. Concept of secularism</li> <li>3. Spirit of tolerance in India Society</li> <li>4. Regionalism and rich culture of India.</li> </ol>
<b>2018</b>	How the Indian concept of secularism is different from the western model of secularism? Discuss.	
<b>2018</b>	'Communalism arises either due to power struggle or relative deprivation. Argue by giving suitable illustrations.	
<b>2017</b>	The spirit tolerance and love is not only an interesting feature of Indian society from very early times, but it is also	



	playing an important part at the present. Elaborate.	
<b>2017</b>	Distinguish between religiousness/religiosity and communalism giving one example of how the former has got transformed into the latter in independent India.	
<b>2016</b>	What is the basis of regionalism? Is it that unequal distribution of benefits of development on regional basis eventually promotes regionalism? Substantiate your answer.	
<b>2014</b>	How do the Indian debates on secularism differ from the debates in the West?	
<b>2013</b>	Growing feeling of regionalism is an important factor in the generation of demand for a separate state. Discuss.	

### WELFARE SCHEMES FOR VULNERABLE SECTIONS

YEAR	UPSC MAINS QUESTIONS	IMPORTANT THEMES FOR MAINS 2022
<b>2021</b>	Examine the uniqueness of tribal knowledge system when compared with mainstream knowledge and cultural systems.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Accessible India campaign</li> <li>2. Persons with disabilities (PWD)</li> <li>3. Unnat Bharat Abhiyan</li> <li>4. Mgnrega</li> <li>5. Mid-day meal scheme</li> <li>6. Pradhan mantri ujjwala yojana</li> <li>7. Pmjdy</li> <li>8. Ambedkar social innovation &amp; incubation mission</li> <li>9. Vande Bharat mission</li> <li>10. Swades</li> <li>11. Inheritance rights</li> </ol>
<b>2020</b>	In order to enhance the prospects of social development, sound and adequate health care policies are needed particularly in the fields of geriatric and maternal health care. Discuss.	
<b>2019</b>	There is a growing divergence in the relationship between poverty and hunger in India. The shrinking of social expenditure by the government is forcing the poor to spend more on Non-Food essential items squeezing their food - budget.- Elucidate.	
<b>2019</b>	'In the context of neo-liberal paradigm of development planning, multi-level planning is expected to make operations cost effective and remove many implementation blockages.'-Discuss.	
<b>2019</b>	The need for cooperation among various service sector has been an inherent component of development discourse. Partnership bridges bring the gap among the sectors. It also sets in motion a culture of 'Collaboration' and 'team spirit'. In the light of statements above examine India's Development process.	
<b>2019</b>	Performance of welfare schemes that are implemented for vulnerable sections is not so effective due to absence of their awareness and active involvement at all stages of policy process - Discuss.	
<b>2018</b>	Whether National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSCJ) can enforce the implementation of constitutional reservation for the Scheduled Castes in the religious minority institutions? Examine.	

<b>2018</b>	Multiplicity of various commissions for the vulnerable sections or the society leads to problems or overlapping jurisdiction and duplication of functions. Is it better to merge all commissions into an umbrella Human Rights Commission? Argue your case.
<b>2017</b>	Does the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 ensure effective mechanism for empowerment and inclusion of the intended beneficiaries in the society? Discuss.
<b>2014</b>	Two parallel run schemes of the Government viz. the Adhaar Card and NPR, one as voluntary and the other as compulsory, have led to debates at national levels and also litigations. On merits, discuss whether or not both schemes need run concurrently. Analyse the potential of the schemes to achieve developmental benefits and equitable growth.
<b>2014</b>	Do government's schemes for up-lifting vulnerable and backward communities by protecting required social resources for them, lead to their exclusion in establishing businesses in urban economics?
<b>2013</b>	The basis of providing urban amenities in rural areas (PURA) is rooted in establishing connectivity. Comment.
<b>2013</b>	Electronic cash transfer system for the welfare schemes is an ambitious project to minimize corruption, eliminate wastage and facilitate reforms. Comment.

### HEALTH, EDUCATION, HUMAN RESOURCES

YEAR	UPSC MAINS QUESTIONS	IMPORTANT THEMES FOR MAINS 2022
<b>2021</b>	"Earn while you learn' scheme needs to be strengthened to make vocational education and skill training meaningful." Comment.	1. The impact of covid-19 on food security
<b>2021</b>	Has digital illiteracy, particularly in rural areas, couple with lack of Information and Communication Technology(ICT) accessibility hindered socio-economic development? Examine with justification	2. Mid-day meal scheme and child nutrition
<b>2021</b>	"Earn while you learn' scheme needs to be strengthened to make vocational education and skill training meaningful." Comment.	3. Digital ID aid India's primary health ecosystem
<b>2020</b>	National Education Policy 2020 is in conformity with the Sustainable Development Goal-4 (2030). It intends to restructure and reorient education system in India. Critically examine the statement.	4. Social vaccine
<b>2020</b>	How have digital initiatives in India contributed to the functioning of the education system in the country? Elaborate your answer.	5. Vaccine hesitancy
<b>2019</b>	Despite Consistent experience of High growth, India still goes	6. India's sex ratio at birth (SRB) improves
		7. Nasha Mukh Bharat
		8. Gaps in learning
		9. Digital divide for online classes
		10. World bank targets 'learning poverty'
		11. Women lost twice as many jobs as men due to covid-19
		12. Bonded labour in india

	with the lowest indicators of human development. Examine the issues that make balanced and inclusive development elusive.	13. Gender gap index 2020 14. Compulsory rural service 15. Closing the gender gap in science
<b>2018</b>	Appropriate local community-level healthcare intervention is a prerequisite to achieve 'Health for All' in India. Explain.	
<b>2017</b>	'To ensure effective implementation of policies addressing water, sanitation and hygiene needs, the identification of beneficiary segments is to be synchronized with the anticipated outcomes' Examine the statement in the context of the WASH scheme.	
<b>2016</b>	Examine the main provisions of the National Child Policy and throw light on the status of its implementation.	
<b>2106</b>	"Demographic Dividend in India will remain only theoretical unless our manpower becomes more educated, aware, skilled and creative." What measures have been taken by the government to enhance the capacity of our population to be more productive and employable?	
<b>2016</b>	Professor Amartya Sen has advocated important reforms in the realms of primary education and primary health care. What are your suggestions to improve their status and performance?	
<b>2015</b>	The quality of higher education in India requires major improvements to make it internationally competitive. Do you think that the entry of foreign educational institutions would help improve the quality of higher and technical education in the country? Discuss.	
<b>2015</b>	Public health system has limitations in providing universal health coverage. Do you think that the private sector could help in bridging the gap? What other viable alternatives would you suggest?	
<b>2014</b>	An athlete participates in Olympics for personal triumph and nation's glory; victors are showered with cash incentives by various agencies, on their return. Discuss the merit of state sponsored talent hunt and its cultivation as against the rationale of a reward mechanism as encouragement.	
<b>2014</b>	Should the premier institutes like IITs/IIMs be allowed to retain premier status, allowed more academic independence in designing courses and also decide mode/criteria of selection of students. Discuss in light of the growing challenges.	
<b>2013</b>	The concept of Mid-Day Meal (MDM) scheme is almost a century old in India with early beginnings in Madras Presidency in pre-independent India. The scheme has again been given impetus in most states in the last two decades. Critically examine its twin objectives, latest mandates and	



	success.	
<b>2013</b>	Identify the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that are related to health. Discuss the success of the actions taken by the Government for achieving the same.	

POVERTY AND HUNGER		
YEAR	UPSC MAINS QUESTIONS	IMPORTANT THEMES FOR MAINS 2022
<b>2020</b>	The incidence and intensity of poverty are more important in determining poverty based on income alone". In this context analyse the latest United Nations Multidimensional Poverty Index Report.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The road to zero hunger by 2030</li> <li>2. India fares poorly in hunger index</li> <li>3. Malnutrition</li> <li>4. Alleviating poverty</li> <li>5. Poverty and shared prosperity 2020 report</li> <li>6. Global multidimensional poverty index</li> </ol>
<b>2020</b>	COVID-19 pandemic accelerated class inequalities and poverty in India? Comment.	
<b>2018</b>	How far do you agree with the view that the focus on lack or availability of food as the main cause of hunger takes the attention away from ineffective human development policies in India?	
<b>2017</b>	Hunger and Poverty are the biggest challenges for good governance in India still today. Evaluate how far successive governments have progressed in dealing with these humongous problems. Suggest measures for improvement.	
<b>2017</b>	'Poverty Alleviation Programmes in India remain mere show pieces until and unless they are backed by political will'. Discuss with reference to the performance of the major poverty alleviation programmes in India.	
<b>2015</b>	Though there have been several different estimates of poverty in India, all indicate reduction in poverty levels over time. Do you agree? Critically examine with reference to urban and rural poverty indicators.	
<b>2013</b>	The Central Government frequently complains on the poor performance of the State Governments in eradicating suffering of the vulnerable sections of the society. Restructuring of Centrally sponsored schemes across the sectors for ameliorating the cause of vulnerable sections of population aims at providing flexibility to the States in better implementation. Critically evaluate.	

# SALIENT FEATURES OF INDIAN SOCIETY

## Previous Year Questions

YEAR	UPSC MAINS QUESTIONS
2021	How does Indian society maintain continuity in traditional social values? Enumerate the changes taking place in it.
2020	Has caste lost its relevance in understanding the multi-cultural Indian society? Elaborate your answers with illustrations.
2020	Customs and traditions suppress reason leading to obscurantism. Do you agree?
2019	What makes Indian society unique in sustaining its culture? Discuss.
2019	Do we have cultural pockets of small India all over the nation? Elaborate with examples.
2018	"Caste system is assuming new identities and associational forms. Hence, caste system cannot be eradicated in India." Comment.
2017	In the context of diversity of India, can it be said that the regions form cultural units rather than the States? Give reasons with examples for your viewpoint.
2017	What are the two major legal initiatives by the State since Independence, addressing discrimination against Scheduled Tribes (STs)?
2016	Has the formation of linguistic States strengthened the cause of Indian Unity?
2016	Why are the tribals in India referred to as the Scheduled Tribes? Indicate the major provisions enshrined in the Constitution of India for their upliftment.
2015	Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, despite having divergent approaches and strategies, had a common goal of amelioration of the downtrodden. Elucidate.
2015	Describe any four cultural elements of diversity in India and rate their relative significance in building a national identity.
2015	Debate the issue of whether and how contemporary movements for assertion of Dalit identity work towards annihilation of caste.
2014	The life cycle of a joint family depends on economic factors rather than social values. Discuss.

► **SALIENT FEATURES OF INDIAN SOCIETY**

India is one of the oldest civilizations in the world and home to more than a billion population. Owing to its rich heritage and culture, Indian society possess distinct features.

**SALIENT FEATURES OF INDIAN SOCIETY**

- Diversity
- Value system
- Modern yet traditional
- Caste
- Joint family
- Religiosity
- Tribal

► **TRADITIONAL VALUES**

Owing to its rich heritage and cultural diversity, Indian society possess many traditional social values like tolerance, collectivism, patriarchy, respect for elders, religiosity, spiritualism, casteism, jointness of family etc.

These values have been preserved as salient features of Indian society for centuries together due to following reasons:

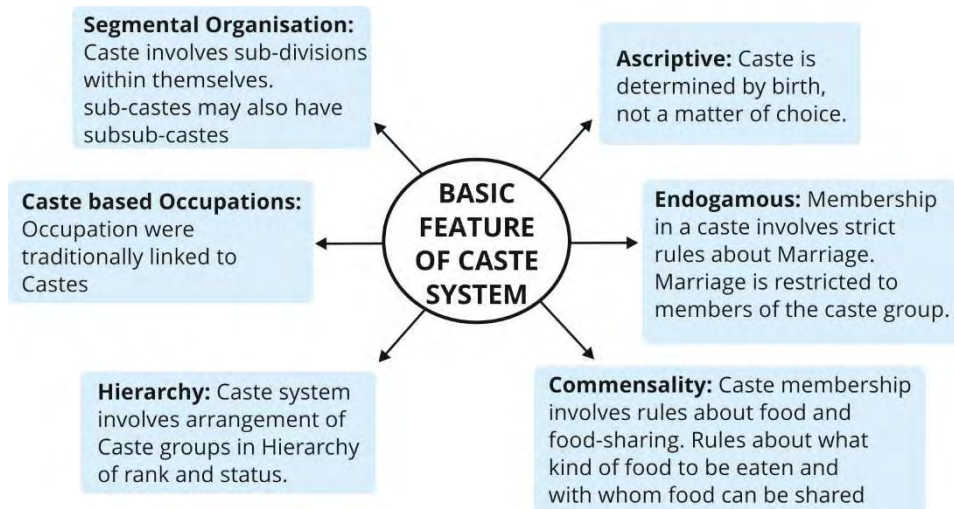
- Tolerant leaders of India from Ashoka to Akbar, syncretistic nature of Hinduism and adoption of secularism by post-independent India not only sustained religious diversity but also preserved many religious values.
- Family as an institution preserved the values of patriarchy and respect for elders through socialisation.

- Functional interdependence of communities through jajmani system of caste sustained casteism as an ideology for centuries.
- Indian civilization, traditionally being an agrarian economy, attached more value to land. Joint family values helped in preventing the disintegration of land. However, several changes have been taking place in these value systems:
- Growing tendencies of intolerance in Indian society is manifested in growing instances of hate speeches, attacks on minorities, communal violence etc.
- Increasing secular attitude among individuals reduced the authority of religion over day-to-day activities. Ex: Decreasing rituals in daily life, increasing civil marriages.
- Due to growing awareness about gender rights and some legal measures, Gender parity is being witnessed in modern day society.
- Increasing sense of individualism and decreasing collectivism is reflected in growing trend of nuclear families, increasing age of marriages and divorce rates.
- Caste identities have given way to class identities to some extent, especially in urban areas. Ex: Inter-caste marriages in urban middleclass families.

Despite these changes, salient values of Indian society couldn't be uprooted. Indian culture has a rich tradition of accommodating various new ideologies and values in its civilization and adapted from time to time.

► **CASTE**

Caste is an institution unique to Indian sub-continent. Although it is an institution characteristic of Hindu society, caste has spread to the major non-Hindu communities of Indian sub-continent like Muslims, Sikhs and Christians.



**VARNA VS CASTE**

VARNA	CASTE (JATI)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to Varna scheme, there are 4 categories: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya &amp; Shudra. This scheme excludes Untouchables.</li> <li>• Hierarchy in varna scheme is based on <u>ritual 'purity' &amp; 'pollution'</u>.</li> <li>• Brahmins are highest, then kshatriya, vaishyas and last the shudra.</li> <li>• A theoretical framework (Textual).</li> <li>• Legitimacy from Vedic texts.</li> <li>• Little or no mobility of varnas among themselves.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within each stratum of Varna, there are innumerable variations of castes throughout India.</li> <li>• A caste can be ritually high but ranked lower in caste hierarchy because this hierarchy is determined by <u>secular</u> factors like Economic, Political and Education status</li> <li>• A real phenomenon (Contextual).</li> <li>• Caste groups experience mobility with accumulation of higher status. Mobility is low is caste groups placed at the top and bottom of caste hierarchy. However, mobility is high for castes placed in the middle.</li> </ul>

**CHANGES IN CASTE SYSTEM**

Traditional nature of caste system has undergone significant changes in modern-day society. Many features of caste system have been diluted to some extent due to new developments like:

- Modern Education instilled values like rationality, justice and equality. Modern educated youth are preferring inter-caste marriages.
- Industrialisation gave equal opportunity to all individuals across castes. This destroyed traditional caste-based occupation feature of caste system.
- Urbanisation gave anonymity to caste identities of individuals and caste based dietary choices and commensality rules are no more strictly adhered to in urban areas. Ex. Restaurants, Eateries.
- Land reforms undertaken by Indian government after Independence has resulted in transfer of Land from upper castes to lower castes. This resulted in economic empowerment and improved status of lower caste groups.
- Universal adult franchise; 73<sup>rd</sup> & 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment acts together gave political power to lower castes if

they have adequate numerical strength

- Constitutional rights and Affirmative action like article 14,15, 16 and reservation policies empowered lower castes educationally and economically.

However, despite all these modern forces of changes, caste system continued to exist in Indian society performing some old and new functions

**CONTINUITY OF CASTE**

- Private realm: Though ritual aspect of Caste system continued but confined to personal sphere.
- Though Industrialisation and Modern education gave new economic opportunities. Even today, most manual scavengers are from lower castes and many entrepreneurs are from upper castes.
- According to a 2010 study on social discrimination by Oxfam India, Dalits and tribal groups are highly under-represented in better paid and higher status jobs, while they are disproportionately concentrated among those with lower wages in the informal sector.
- Caste based Political mobilization Advent of democratic political apparatus like Universal adult franchise made Caste based political mobilization possible and rendered caste-based identity relevant.
- New components of status like Education, Income and occupation led to breaking of barriers of sub-caste for the purpose of Marriage. But Marriage between Upper caste and lower caste is still an exception. Ex: Honour killings

**URBANISATION AND CASTE**

The process of urbanisation – if carried out in a planned, sustainable and inclusive manner — can potentially help India mitigate the impact of the all-pervasive caste system.

- Relative anonymity of an individual's identity in a city makes it difficult for rules of purity and pollution to be observed.
- In a city, buses and trains do not segregate people based on caste.
- Jobs are distributed based on expertise, ability & merit and not decided by caste.
- Educational institutions, irrespective of caste, seat students in the same class and on same benches.
- Opportunities of inter-mixing multiply at study, at workplace, in travel, in eating places and in cinemas



- Inter-caste marriages based on Individual choices are prevalent in Urban areas. Ex. According to a study done by Princeton University in 2011, more urbanised States displayed, a higher rate of inter-caste marriages than their predominantly rural counterparts. Ex. Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Punjab and Haryana
- Urban middle class, once a preserve of upper castes, has become more diverse with the gradual entry of backward castes and Dalits. (Access to government jobs and education due to reservation policy)
- With digital revolution, online matrimonial websites displaying personal profiles underplay caste, while new dating apps are moving away from the old practice of mentioning caste.
- Search for partners in cities shifts its focus from family and caste networks to friends and professional networks.

However, Urbanisation is not a panacea for caste issues. Rural migration to urban areas does not abruptly erase social prejudices of caste. These get carried into cities and probably metamorphose into different shapes.

- Residential segregation and identity-based discrimination are on a steady rise in urban spaces. Dalits and Adivasi are still heavily concentrated in slums. Dalits are denied by homeowners to rent out their properties in metro cities.
- Lower caste migrants, with no skills, confined to Informal sector jobs.
- Caste based networks play a key role in getting job opportunities for migrants in urban areas.
- Caste-stickers on vehicles.
- Passive discrimination at workplace.
- Caste based matrimonial sites, honour killings etc.
- Caste based political mobilization.
- Prevalence of caste associations in urban areas.

**COVID AND CASTE**

COVID Pandemic hit lower caste groups disproportionately:

- Lost their livelihoods as they confined predominantly to unorganised sector.
- Reverse migration to rural areas during lockdown pushed them back to the den of casteism.
- Benefits of employment schemes for those returning to villages failed to percolate down to the

lower castes as the programs are mostly allocated by village headman to upper caste workers.

- Lack of social security and unequal access to healthcare made lower caste groups more vulnerable.

**CASTE AND GENDER**

Women is considered key to maintain Caste system:

- **Brahmanical Patriarchy:** Controlling Women's sexuality is key to maintain the Caste purity as Endogamy (Marriage within the caste) is an important aspect of Caste system. Women's freedom to marry outside her caste ends the power wielded by upper castes to further maintain caste system. Often this control is manifested in "Honour killings".
- **Bargaining with Patriarchy:** Women are regarded as upholding patriarchal traditions by confirming to them, because compliance brings them certain benefits within the patriarchal framework.
- **Dietary Rules:** Upper caste women are required to observe strict rules of purity & pollution while preparing food.
- **Gender is not a monolithic Category:** Though such subordination of women is a universal phenomenon, the extent and nature of this subordination is conditioned by their social, economic and cultural environment. *Gender is, thus, not a monolithic category.*

UPPER CASTE WOMEN	LOWER CASTE WOMEN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditionally, mobility of upper caste women is severely restricted and they are not permitted to go out and work.</li> <li>• Upper caste women may not have the same level of advantages like upper-caste men, but they are advantageously placed over lower caste men in terms of educational and occupational opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower caste women, owing to their poverty, must work and contribute to their family income. This makes gender division of domestic labour less unequal in lower caste families.</li> <li>• Dalit women faces oppression at multiple levels--caste oppression at the hands of upper castes and patriarchal oppression at the hands of all men, including men of their own caste.</li> </ul>

**DEMAND OF DOMINANT CASTES FOR RESERVATIONS**

Recently, there has been growing demands for reservations from various middle caste groups like Marathas, Jats, Patels, Kapus etc.

**REASONS**

- **Agrarian Distress:** All these castes are agrarian based communities and are directly or indirectly affected by the Agrarian distress.
- **Unemployment crisis:** Slowdown of economic growth has not been able to absorb the increasing labour force entering the job market. Thus, only option left for them is government jobs, but their general category status is making the competition tough for them.
- **Vote bank politics:** Political mobilization of caste groups on the lines of reservation serves the vested interests of few political parties or leaders
- **Resentment against other backward communities:** Due to successful affirmative action and other policies, socio-economic gap between lower castes and Intermediary castes decreased to some extent and this resulted in resentment among dominant castes.

**CONSEQUENCES**

- Extending reservation to these castes will have a domino effect on other castes and result in proliferation of reservation demands from a greater number of castes.
- Reinforces caste identities.

Extending reservations to these intermediary castes will not solve the root cause of the issue- Agrarian crisis and Unemployment. Reservations are not employment benefit schemes but a tool to enable social and economic mobility of traditionally oppressed castes.

**INTER-CASTE MARRIAGES**

Recently, Supreme Court observed inter-caste marriages could reduce caste tensions in society.

- *Educated youth are choosing their life partners, which is a departure from earlier norms of society where caste and community play a major role. Possibly, this is the way forward where caste and community tensions will reduce by such intermarriages.*
- *B.R. Ambedkar in 'Annihilation of Caste' said, "Real remedy is intermarriage. Fusion of blood can alone create the feeling of being kith and kin, and unless this feeling of kinship, of being kindred, becomes paramount, separatist feeling—feeling of being aliens—created by caste will not vanish".*

**ARTICLE 21**

<b>Liberty</b>	Choices of faith and belief & choice in \ marriage lie within an area where individual autonomy is supreme. (Shafin Jahan Vs
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	Ashokan case)
	Ability of every person to choose a partner form the essence of personal liberty under the Constitution.
	Constitution protects personal liberty from disapproving audiences. (Navtej Singh Johar case)
<b>Privacy</b>	"Intimacies of marriage lie within a core zone of privacy"
<b>Dignity</b>	"The choice of an individual is an inextricable part of dignity, for dignity cannot be thought of where there is erosion of choice." (Aadhar Judgement)

"The social values and morals have their space, but they are not above the constitutionally guaranteed freedom". Individual freedom prevails over purported group rights. (Shabrimala Judgement).

Right of an individual to choose a life partner is an absolute right.

Most state governments are giving cash incentives to promote inter-caste marriages

**► EMERGENCE OF MIDDLE CLASS**

Unlike Western societies, Middle class did not emerge with Industrialisation in India, but it is a product of Colonization, emerged out of Britisher's demand for a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, morals and intellect to act as interpreters between British rulers and Indian subjects. Thus, English education secured entry into the middle class. But middle class was more or less homogeneous, since only upper castes with traditional access to education could exploit the opportunities and became middle class.

**EXPANSION OF THE MIDDLE CLASS**

After Independence, relatively homogenous character of middle class began to change with its expansion and addition of lower castes into the middle class. This was largely possible due to following factors:

- Affirmative action of government
- Industrialization
- Urbanisation
- Expansion of modern education

## SALIENT FEATURES OF INDIAN SOCIETY

- Universal adult franchise and 73<sup>rd</sup> & 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment act
- Economic reforms (LPG reforms)

### Emergence of the rural middle class:

Today, middle class is no more an urban phenomenon alone. Considerable population of middle-class lives in rural areas as well. Middle class expanded to rural areas over the decades largely due to the following factors:

- Land reforms resulted in transfer of land ownership to lower castes.
- Green revolution helped emergence of new class of farmers.
- With increased prosperity, rich farmers invested in education of their children in Urban areas.
- Remittances of Migrants.
- Transport and communication revolution.

### **CHARACTERISTIC OF MIDDLE CLASS IN INDIA**

- **Culture:** lifestyle and consumerism determines status in the middle-class population. They are relatively rational in outlook.
- **Family & Marriage:** Structure of family tend to be Predominantly Nuclear and Inter-caste marriages are not uncommon.
- **Economic:** Mostly belong to service sector in urban areas. The structural change in the economy changed the labour market and there is shift from manual

labour to intellectual labour and middle class rightly fit in this category.

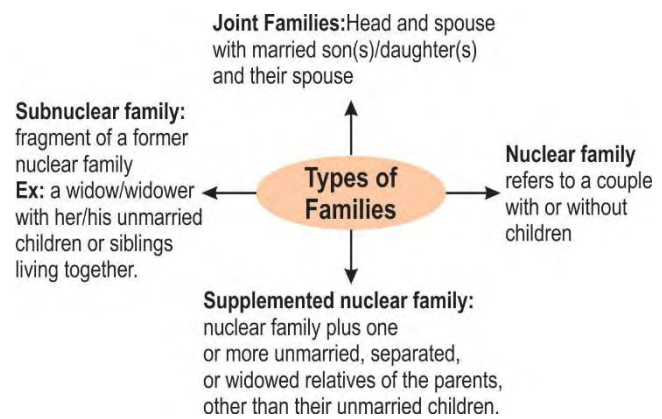
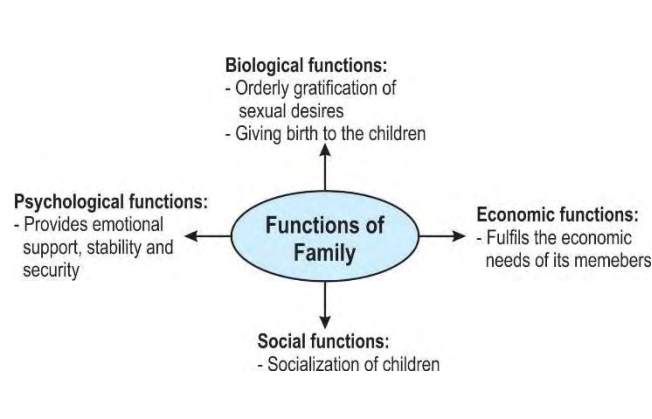
- Multinational companies have been flocking to India with rising consumer demand due to burgeoning middle-class population. The foreign investments created more employment opportunities and further facilitated the growth of Middle class

Thus, middle class in India is both the cause and effect of boom in Indian economy

- A Growing tendency of Middle-class youngsters embracing start-up culture and entrepreneurship is witnessed, which was hitherto a domain of rich capitalistic classes.
- **Globalised Middle class:** Middle class developed a wide network of Diaspora and actively benefited from the remittances of NRIs. Hence, they are most vociferous in supporting globalisation.
- **Political:** Middle class mostly supports Moderate political ideologies and prefers stable democracies. They do not subscribe to the extremist ideologies

Institutions like Bureaucracy, Judiciary and media are broadly represented by middle class and their grievances are redressed easily. This often leads to less interaction with political class. This is one of the reasons for lower voter turnout in Urban areas.

## ► FAMILY



Joint family is a salient feature of Indian society. Yet it had undergone a major shift towards nuclear families over the decades. According to 2011 census, more than half (52%) of total households in India are nuclear. It suggested disintegration of joint family. Factors responsible for this shift:

- **Economic Factors:** With availability of diversified occupational opportunities, families disintegrated

from their land and traditional occupations and migrated to urban areas. Land reforms and agrarian distress caused the youth to move out to urban setting establish their families there.

- **Modern Education:** Increasing rationality among young generation with modern education made them question orthodox customs of joint family system. They preferred new forms of family where

## SALIENT FEATURES OF INDIAN SOCIETY

individuality and equal rights for men and women are given prominence.

- **Legal factors:** Legislations regarding employment, education, marriage, and property, have affected family system in many ways.
  - Labour laws like Minimum wages act, equal remuneration acts not only reduced economic reliance of members on joint family but also helped women to participate in labour market. This forced nuclearization of joint families, since women in joint families are not free from domestic work to do paid job outside the house.
  - Hindu succession act gave equal inheritance rights to sons and daughters, which reduced the dependency of women on the joint families
- **Urban Migration:** Migration of rural families to urban areas in search of better educational, economic opportunities and amenities resulted in residential separation and disintegration of joint families.
- **Globalization:**
  - Increased mobility of younger generation across borders.
  - Diffusion of western models of family like nuclear, live-in etc. into Indian society.
- **Demographic factors:** Reduction in total fertility levels and increased life expectancy impacted size of the family in multiple ways.
- **Change in marriage system:** Restricted role of family in mate selection, freedom enjoyed by young men and women in matrimonial affairs have weakened joint family ties.

Though share of nuclear families in total households in India increased from 51% (2001 census) to 52% (2011 census), there has been a decline in proportional share of nuclear households in urban areas and increase in the share of nuclear families in rural areas. Possible reasons for this trend:

- Increasing agrarian crisis and resultant urban migration.
- Land reforms.
- Impact of globalisation on rural India.

CONSEQUENCES OF NUCLEARIZATION OF FAMILIES	GOVT STEPS TAKEN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fragmentation of agricultural land and decrease in average</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To make small holdings more viable and to assist augmentation of farm incomes- GOI implemented</li> </ul>

landholding size	Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY), Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing crisis in urban areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pradhan Mantri Awas yojana (PMAY)- Urban.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing demand for Geriatric care because of nuclearization of families and increased life expectancy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana</li> <li>• Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana</li> <li>• SAGE initiative.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing demand for creche facilities and early childcare institutes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Creche Scheme</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of mental support for nuclear families from elders and extended family members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving access to mental healthcare services under Mental Health care act.</li> </ul>

### CONTINUITY OF JOINT FAMILIES

- Studies suggest that nuclear family in India has to be viewed as a stage in a developmental cycle but not to be taken as indicative of change in institution of joint family. With birth, marriage and death of its members and division of property, each family goes through a cycle of development from joint to nuclear and again to joint.
- Though structural patterns of family have been changing, nuclear family members still retain their close connection with extended family, fulfil ritual obligations, send money back home to their parents.

Thus, though modern forces of change have resulted in structural transformation of family, core functions of joint family have been retained. It suggests that we are moving towards functional joint family.

### LIVE-IN RELATIONSHIP

Live in relationship refers to a living arrangement in which an unmarried couple lives together in a long-term relationship that resembles a marriage. This concept in India is fairly new but is spreading rapidly

### REASONS FOR INCREASING LIVE-IN RELATIONS

- Modern education and ideas emanating from it-



Freedom, Equality, Autonomy, Individuality.

- Patriarchy in Institutionalised marriages:
  - Patrilocal residency (couple settles in husband's home or community)
  - Gender inequality in domestic division of labour (Domestic chores considered as wife's domain whereas earning is treated as Husband's duty)
  - Lack of agency over Reproduction (when to conceive or how many children to have etc.)

These reasons incentivising modern educated women to prefer Live-in rather than an institutionalised marriage

- Legal and financial complications involved in splitting up of Institutional marriages.
- Economic Independence and Financial security of women with increased female labour force participation.
- Career oriented and highly aspirational youngsters, especially female, treating marriage and children as an impediment to their career growth.
- Globalisation and Westernisation with increased communication revolution diffused new ideas and concepts of marriages into Indian society.
- Marriage Institution in India is deeply rooted in caste and communal ties. Inter-caste and Inter Religious marriages are still not accepted widely. This made Urban youth to prefer choice based Live-in relationships.

### POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES ON SOCIETY

- Change in the family structure.
- Delay in the childbirth and resultant change in the Demography structure of the society.
- Instances of Inter religious and Inter-caste marriages will be increased.

However Live-in relationship is not going to threaten age-old Institution of marriage in India any sooner.

### ► MODERN YET TRADITIONAL

Modernization is a process of social, political, economic and cultural change associated with a society's journey of development. It involves urbanisation, expansion of modern education, scientific developments, secularisation, increased rationality etc. The phenomenon of modernization has been influencing traditional values and institutions of Indian society:

- Weakening influence of caste: Modernisation has reduced the belief in purity and pollution, which is

central to caste practice and modern occupations are not determined by the caste status.

- Nuclear families: Industrialisation and Urbanisation eventually led to disintegration of joint families.
- Secularisation: Increasing rationality and advancement of science & technology declined influence of religion on individual behaviour & attitudes.
- Intergenerational conflict: Inculcation of modern values made generational differences more complex. Change in structure of economy and scientific revolution made traditional knowledge held by older generation irrelevant in modern era, thereby eroding respect for elders in the society.
- Gender parity: Growing awareness about gender rights and modern feminist movements contributed towards dilution of patriarchal values in Indian society.

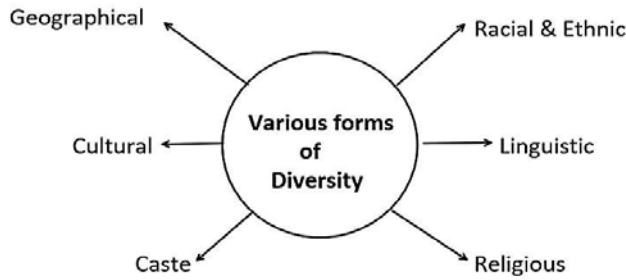
Despite impact of modernization, traditional values and institutions continued to exist in Indian society:

- Though Caste as an ideology is withering away, caste as an identity is continuing to thrive in India in form of caste associations and caste political mobilizations.
- Though structural patterns of family have been changing, nuclear family members still retain close connection with extended family to fulfil various ritual obligations.
- Traditional festivals are being celebrated with more vigour as a response to loss of culture and ethnic identity under the influence of modernisation. In fact, modern forms of communication enabled expansion of religion.
- Increased Gender parity couldn't prevent latent manifestation of traditional patriarchy in the form of Gender-stereotypes in the modern-day society.

Modernisation could only make adaptive changes to Indian traditions and didn't result in completely break away from the old traditions.

### ► DIVERSITY IN INDIAN SOCIETY

Indian nation-state is socially and culturally one of the most diverse countries.

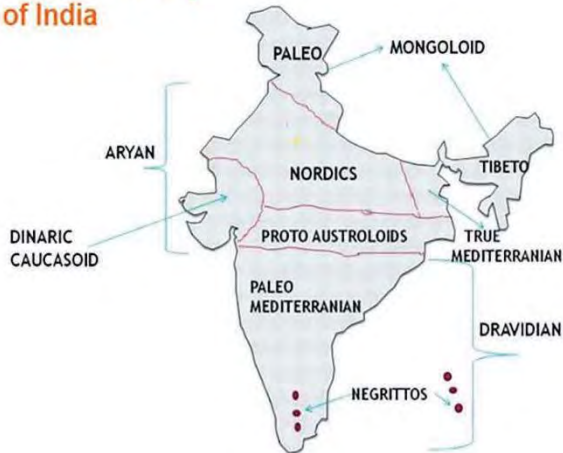


► **RACIAL DIVERSITY**

India is racially diversified country. Major racial elements of India are as follows:

1. Negrito (Kerala, Andaman & Nicobar)
2. Proto-Australoid (Central India)
3. Mongoloid (Ladakh and Northeast)
4. Paleo-Mediterranean (Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nādu)
5. Nordic (Indo-Gangetic plains)

Racial Diversity of India



► **RACE VS ETHNICITY**

RACE	ETHNICITY
A biological classification based on biological traits like skin colour, Hair colour, facial structure.	Ethnicity is an identity based upon shared identities like culture, language, religion, common past.
Race is a closed group and members from one race can't join another race	Cultural elements of an ethnic group are taught, not inherited. So, unlike race groups boundaries between ethnic groups are to some extent are fluid, allowing for individuals to move

	between groups
Ex: White/ Caucasian, black/ Afro-American, Hispanic etc.	Ex: American, Punjabi, Tamilian etc.

► **LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY**

- In India, people speak about 1,632 different languages and dialects. As many as 22 of these languages have been officially recognised and placed under 8th Schedule of Constitution, thus guaranteeing their legal status.
- The languages spoken in our country vary according to geographical areas and play a crucial role in building regional identities. These regional identities emotionally stimulated people to fight for creation of states on linguistic basis, and Andhra Pradesh is the first state formed including Telugu-speaking regions.
- In 1956, State reorganization Commission was set up and helped to create many states on linguistic basis

Linguistic Nationalism: Sense of belongingness based on a common language. It cuts across religious, regional and political boundaries.

**LINGUISTIC STATES VS NATIONAL UNITY**

- Far from undermining Indian unity, linguistic states have helped strengthen it. Formation of linguistic states prevented separatist tendencies. There would be no trade-off between linguistic identities and National identities if adequate recognition is given to all the languages.
  - Ex. Undermining Tamil language led to civil war in Sri Lanka
  - Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971, led to birth of Bangladesh, had arisen from conflict between Punjabi and Urdu speakers of west Pakistan with the Bengali speakers of the east
- Linguistic demands often have hidden agendas, which goes beyond the issue of identity.
  - Ex: Language movements in south were partly reactions to caste domination and exploitation. Similarly, Punjabi Suba movement had its roots in Sikh identity. Tribal linguistic movements are also located in ethnicity, identity, and survival debate.

**ADVANTAGES OF PRESERVING LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY**

- National integration: Providing recognition to various regional languages would contain linguistic regionalism.

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## SALIENT FEATURES OF INDIAN SOCIETY

- **Preservation of traditional knowledge:** Preserving endangered languages of ethnic tribes would help in conserving rich intangible heritage and traditional knowledge it has been carrying for generations. Tribal languages are a treasure trove of knowledge about a region's flora, fauna and medicinal plants. Usually, this information is passed on to next generations orally. When a language declines, that knowledge system will be completely gone.
- **Social inclusion:** Linguistic diversity ensures equal opportunities for various language groups in education, social life and economic development.
- **Good governance:** Conducting administration in native languages would promote people participation in governance.
- **Diaspora network:** Rich linguistic diversity of India would enhance the diaspora network across the borders and help India accumulating soft power.
- **Effective education:** Primary education in mother tongue leads to more effective learning outcomes. Multilingual abilities have been linked to cognitive abilities.

### THREATS TO LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN INDIA

According to People's Linguistic Survey of India (PSLI) report, more than half of India's languages may die out in 50 years. Around 190 languages are in various stages of endangerment in our country, more than any other country in the world. The reasons are:

- **Globalization:** Influence of transnational corporations has resulted in a central common language mainly English, which dominates regional dialects, and minority languages.
- **Nuclear family culture:** Grants less opportunities for youngsters to learn mother tongue, especially when both parents are working and grandparents are living separate.
- **Inter-culture, caste, race marriages:** Where a couple is from different cultural backgrounds, language of communication is often not mother tongue, which impacts next generation's exposure to native language.
- **Migration:** Towards metropolitans for accessing better education and employment opportunities, is preference to cosmopolitan language.
- **Increased use of Internet:** Nowadays, most communications and business is carried out online forcing people to consume digital content in English as cyber presence regional languages is negligible.

- **Lack of Education in Mother tongue** results in neglecting of many languages
- **Lack of script for tribal and languages spoken by fringe groups:** Only 6 tribal languages — Santali, Ho, Soura, Munda and Kui — have a written script. Lack of script makes it difficult to pass the language from generation to generation
- **Assimilation policies of Government:** States often try to assimilate linguistic minorities by imposing majority language upon them. Example: Compulsory Bengali in Gorkhaland.
- **Prescribing high standard of proficiency in Official language** of the state for entry into state services.

### STEPS TO CONSERVE LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

- **Constitutional provisions:** Rights to linguistic minorities (Art 29 & 30), Office of Linguistic Commissioner, Provisions of State Languages.
- **Schemes & Programs:** Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat, Bhasha Sangam, Emphasis on education in mother tongue in New Education Policy.

## ► LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

Linguistic minority has not been defined in Constitution. The term 'Minority' has been defined in Section 2 of National Commission for Minorities Act with reference to religious minorities only. However, in [TMA pai vs state of Kerala](#), SC held that unit of linguistic or religious minority should be state, not whole of India. According to report of [National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities](#), linguistic minority status of a community is determined by numerical inferiority, non-dominant status in a state, and possessing a distinct identity.

Though there is no justification for making language as basis to determine socio-economic backwardness of people, it is argued that, in a multi-lingual society like ours, exclusive adherence to a minority language, which may be mother tongue of a section of population, does affect socio-economic and educational development of that linguistic minority specially in the initial years.

### ISSUES WITH LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

- Division of States on linguistic basis resulted in gaining of prominence for regional languages which eventually became official language of the State. Other languages which are mother tongue of minority communities living in the State, naturally did not get equal prominence or status.
- States try to **assimilate linguistic minorities** by imposing majority language upon them. Ex: Compulsory Bengali in Gorkhaland.

- Lack of instruction in mother tongue for linguistic minority children in schools is reason for diminishing numbers of minority tongues. Linguistic minorities had to opt for dominant language of the area/state in which the school is located. For instance, a Gond in Telangana gets education in Telugu and a Gond in Chhattisgarh gets education in Hindi or those in Maharashtra in Marathi.

State governments set strict requirements for proficiency in state's official language for applicants to state civil services, which has unintended consequence of discriminating against linguistic minorities.

### CONSTITUTIONAL PROTECTION GIVEN TO LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

- Article 29:
  - Any section of citizens having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have right to conserve the same.
  - No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them.
- Article 30:
  - All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.
  - The state shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on ground that it is under management of a minority, whether based on religion or language.
- Article 345: Legislature of a State may by law adopt any one or more of languages in use in the State.
- Article 347: President may demand any state govt to officially recognise any language, on which popular demand is made by the language speakers.
- Article 350 A & B:
  - It shall be endeavour of every State to provide adequate facilities for instruction in mother-tongue at primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups.
  - Special officer for linguistic minorities

### DEMAND FOR OFFICIAL LANGUAGE STATUS-TULU

Tulu speakers, mainly in coastal Karnataka and Kerala, have been requesting government to give it official

language status and include it in 8th schedule of Constitution.

### BENEFITS

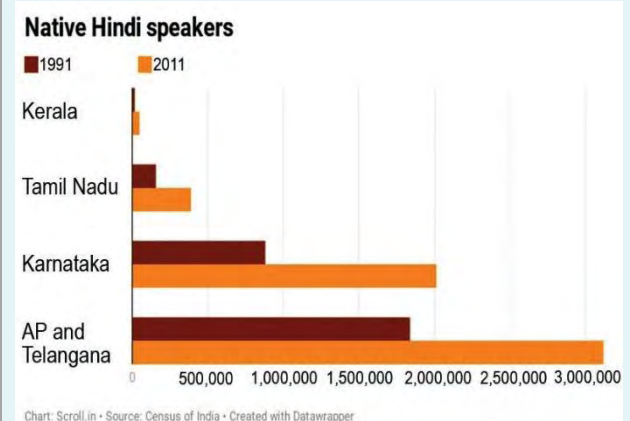
- Tulu would get recognition from Sahitya Akademi.
- Tulu books would be translated into other recognised Indian languages.
- MPs and MLAs could speak in Tulu in Parliament and State Assemblies, respectively.
- Candidates could write all-India competitive examinations like the Civil Services exam in Tulu.

### GROWTH OF HINDI

- Hindi is the most widely spoken, with 52.8 crore individuals, or 43.6% of the population, declaring it as their mother tongue. The next highest is Bengali, mother tongue for 97 lakh (8%).
- Hindi has been India's predominant mother tongue over the decades, its share in the population rising in every succeeding census. In 1971, 37% Indians had reported Hindi as their mother tongue, a share that has grown over the next four censuses to 38.7%, 39.2%, 41% and 43.6% at last count.



- Between 1991 and 2011, number of Hindi native speakers in South India has nearly doubled. This, when total population in these states has only gone up by 28%.



Explanation of this rise in Hindi speaking population:

- Population growth in native Hindi speaking states such as Uttar Pradesh (20%), Bihar (25%), Madhya



Pradesh (20%), Rajasthan (21%), Jharkhand (22%) above national average growth rate of 17%.

- Increasing migration of Hindi speaking population to other states. According to census, four states, UP, Bihar, Rajasthan & Madhya Pradesh accounted for 50% of India's total inter-state migrants.

Keeping in view needs arising from increasing inter-state migration and strengthening national integration, National Education policy 2020 suggested strict implementation of 3- language formula.

### ► THREE LANGUAGE FORMULA UNDER NEP 2020

- National Education Policy-2020 recommends that all students will learn three languages in their school under the 'formula'. At least two of the three languages should be native to India.

**Ex:** If a student in Mumbai is learning Marathi and English, he/she will have to choose to learn another Indian language.

- NEP says that three-language formula will be implemented while keeping in mind the need to promote Multilingualism as well as promote national unity.
- There will be a greater flexibility in the three-language formula, and no language will be imposed on any State. The three languages learned by children will be choices of States, regions, and of course the students themselves, so long as at least two of the three languages are native to India.

### CONCERNS WITH 3 LANGUAGE FORMULA

- **Cognitive burden on young children:** Surveys, like ASER, have shown that a vast majority of children are failing to learn to read with comprehension even in one language and script. It is completely unrealistic to expect children to acquire oral fluency and reading skills in 3 different languages.
- **Poor Implementation:** Earlier three-language formula was not implemented properly anywhere.
- **Back Door Entry for Hindi:** Tamil Nadu has two language systems. Introduction of new policy creates a fear among them that this would lead to entrance of Hindi into the state from the back door.
- **Shortage of Non-Hindi teachers:** scarcity of non-Hindi language teachers throughout the country

### ► RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

India is a land of multiple religions. Apart from tribal societies, many of whom still live in the pre-religious state of animism and magic, Indian population consists of Hindus (82.41%), Muslims (11.6%), Christians (2.32%), Sikhs (1.99%), Buddhists (0.77%) and Jains (0.41%). Then there are sects within each religion.

**Ex:** Hinduism --Shaiva, Shakta and Vaishnava.

Islam – Shia and Sunni

Sikhism – Namdhari and Nirankari.

Jainism – Digambar and Shvetambar.

Buddhism – Hinayana and Mahayana

**CASTE AND RELIGION:** Caste is a feature of Hinduism and other religions such as Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, in principle, do not recognise hierarchical systems like caste. However, in real life, none of these religions are free from existence of caste-like groups, hierarchically arranged in terms of social status and prestige.

- Muslims have caste like divisions in India. Muslims were divided into Ashrafs (meaning 'noblemen' in Arabic) and Non-Ashrafs (Ajlaf (backward Muslims) and Arzals (Dalit Muslims)). Ashrafs claim a superior status derived from their foreign ancestry and were further classified as Sayyids, Sheikhs, Pathans, and Mughals. Non-ashrafs are Teli, Faquir, Nai (Hajjam), Darzi, Dhobi, Qassab among the lower castes. Upper Muslim castes belonged to landlord families or they were in the profession of learning. Lower castes had occupations families. These castes observe Endogamy and socio-cultural distance from each other based on hierarchy. (Ex. Pasmanda Muslims is an umbrella identity used by backward, dalit and tribal muslims against caste-based discrimination against them within the community, many of them are recognised as OBC muslims).
- Christianity in India has not been able to get itself free from the caste system. Even after conversion most caste disabilities of former castes continue to persist.
- Caste distinctions can be found among Sikhs also.

Since most castes are linked with hereditary occupations, they tend to share commonalities of custom, folkways, and beliefs with members of same occupational caste in other religions. This led to inter-religious interactions.

- **Ex:** Jats (peasant community) of different religions (Hindu, Sikh and Muslim) share common culture.
- Vaisakhi, a harvesting festival, is celebrated by Hindu and Sikh peasants alike.

### LANGUAGE AND RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

India is a land of diverse languages. Religious differentiation exists within setting of these linguistic divisions.

- Traditionally religions are associated with a particular language.
- **Ex:** Sanskrit is traditional ritual language of Hinduism, Arabic for Islam and Hebrew for Judaism.
- But in Modern society, most Religions spread across different linguistic groups. People from a linguistic community share many common values, cultural style and way of life. Linguistic variations within followers of the same religion made it possible for most people

in India to take a broader and more liberal view of relationship between religion and socio-cultural life. This reinforced religious tolerance leading to peaceful co-existence.

- **Ex:** A Malayali Hindu has similar dietary habits of a Malayali Muslim rather than a Hindu of a North Indian.
- Onam, a Harvesting festival, is celebrated by all the communities of Kerala.

# WOMEN ISSUES

## Previous Year Questions

YEAR	UPSC MAINS QUESTIONS
2021	Examine the role of 'Gig Economy' in the process of empowerment of women in India.
2021	"Though women in post-Independent India have excelled in various fields, the social attitude towards women and feminist movement has been patriarchal." Apart from women education and women empowerment schemes, what interventions can help change this milieu
2019	"Empowering women is the key to control population growth". Discuss
2019	What are the continued challenges for women in India against time and space?
2018	'Women's movement in India has not addressed the issues of women of lower social strata. Substantiate your view.
2015	How do you explain the statistics that show that the sex ratio in Tribes in India is more favourable to women than the sex ratio among Scheduled Castes?
2014	How does patriarchy impact the position of a middle-class working woman in India?
2014	Discuss the various economic and socio-cultural forces that are driving increasing feminization of agriculture in India.
2014	Why do some of the most prosperous regions of India have an adverse sex ratio for women? Give your arguments.
2013	Male membership needs to be encouraged in order to make women's organization free from gender bias. Comment.

## ECONOMIC ISSUES OF WOMEN

### ► UNPAID CARE WORK

Unpaid care work, according to OECD, refers to all unpaid services provided within a household for its members, including care of persons, housework and voluntary community work. These activities are

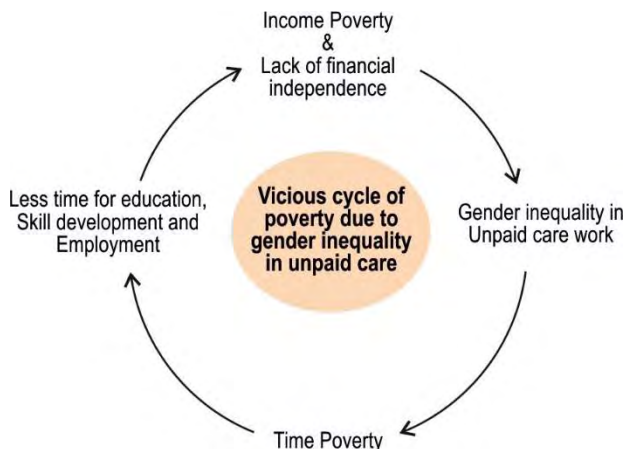
considered work because theoretically one could pay a third person to perform them.

According to a McKinsey, women do 75% of world's total unpaid care work. But much of this work is not included in GDP calculations.

### NEED FOR RECOGNITION OF UNPAID CARE WORK

Mis-estimation of Economic activity: Non-inclusion of unpaid care work in national accounting statistics like GDP grossly misestimates the level of economic activity.

**Female Labour participation:** Burden of unpaid care work on women limits their skill development and employment opportunities. This resulted in low level of female labour participation.



**Wage Gap:** often domestic care work by women is treated as unproductive and it is reflected in low wage for women in labour market when compared to men.

**CHALLENGES IN CALCULATING UNPAID LABOUR WORK**

- Care work is often not considered ‘work’ and hence respondents are less likely to report time spent on care.
- Variation and seasonality of work is also difficult to capture.

**MEASURES TO ADDRESS INEQUALITY**

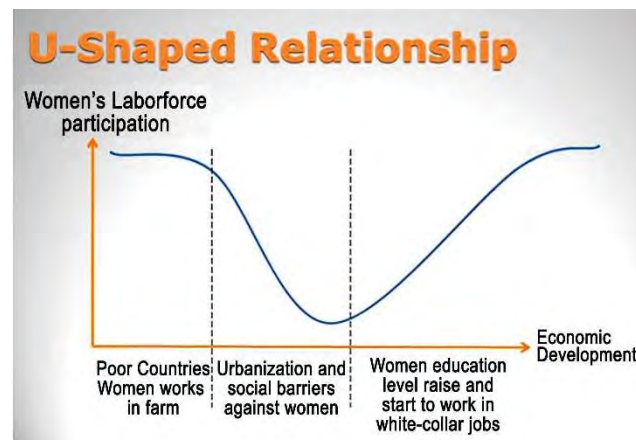
- Investment in time-saving technologies and infrastructure like electrification, improved access to water, public transport etc.
- Better access to public services like childcare and care for the elderly.
- Provision of maternity benefits to informal sector labour.
- Equal amounts of maternity and paternity leaves.
- Tackling entrenched social norms and gender stereotypes can ‘defeminise’ caregiving.

So, right combination of policy interventions and attitudinal changes will not only unleash the potential of women contribution to economy but also achieves gender justice.

**► FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION**

Studies shows that Female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) exhibits a U-shape during the process of economic development. The downward trend in ‘U’ was due to rise in Household incomes because of expansion

of markets and shift from farm activities to factory work. However, when educational level rises and as value of women’s time in the market increases further, they move back into the paid labour force.



However, despite experiencing structural changes such as decline in fertility rates and expansion of women’s education, **Indian FLFPR is on a downward track.**

NSSO found that while in 1999-2000, 25.9% of all women worked, by 2011-12 this proportion had dropped to 21.9%. This is in stark contrast to worldwide trend. According to ILO database, 114 countries have recorded an increase in the proportion of women in the workforce during the same period.

**Female participation in the labour force (in %): India languishes at the bottom**

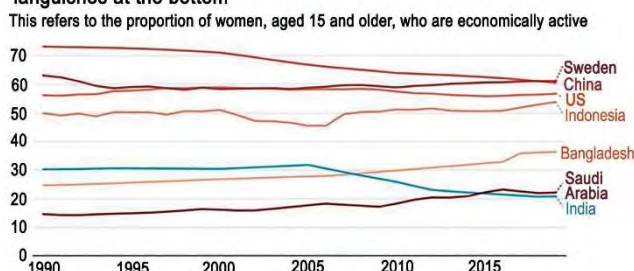


Chart: Udit Misra • Source: World Bank • Created with Datawrapper

**REASONS**

- **Rising Household Incomes:** Rising incomes allow women to escape harsh labour on farms and construction sites and focus on their families.
- **Agrarian crisis:** Declining farm sizes, rising mechanisation and agrarian crisis are pushing women out of agricultural workforce.
- **Lack of Rural connectivity:** Lack of transport network to villages may prevent women from taking non-agricultural work in Neighbouring towns. Lack of transport services effect women more than men.
- **Increased Education levels of women:** Growing enrolment of women in Higher education and lack of adequate well paid formal jobs in the market

- **Nuclear families:** Growing trend of nuclear families keeping childcare left to women with no support from elders of the family.
- **MSME crisis:** MSME sector offers significant employment opportunities to women. But Rigid labour laws and other protective policies of govt hindered the growth of MSMEs.
- **Patriarchal norms:** Patriarchal norms of society determines Domestic division of labour. Women are expected to take care of domestic chores while men go out for work.
- **Childcare:** Most education drop out of labour force due to childbirth and care.
- **Other factors:** Glass ceiling at workplace which limits work opportunities for females at senior levels, sexual harassment at workplaces inducing fear among females. Lack of access to marketable skills in an economy which is driven by service class.

- Affirmative action in favour of women in public employment.
- Mainstreaming paternity leave along with maternity leaves. Provisions of creches so that working families can easily manage responsibilities.

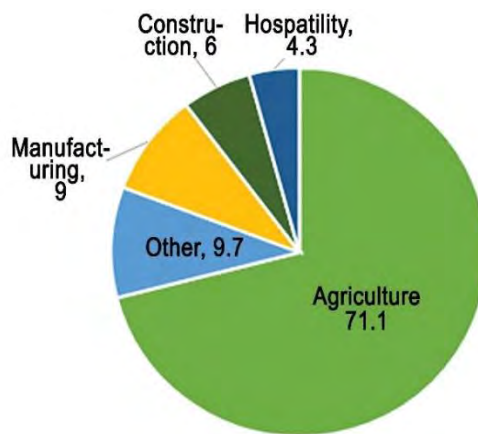
**► FEMINIZATION OF INFORMAL LABOUR**

According to Institute for Human development (2004), in India, 96% of female employment is in unorganised sector.

**(i) Feminization of Agriculture**

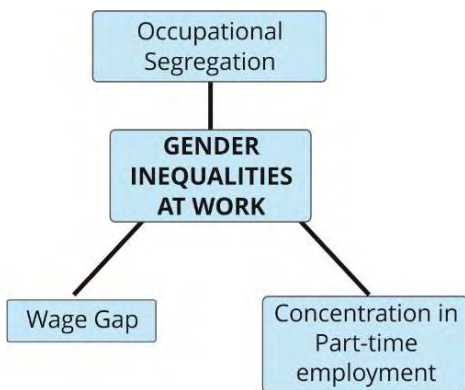
According to census (2011), there has been 24% increase in female agricultural labourers between 2001 and 2011.

Distribution of female workers by Industry

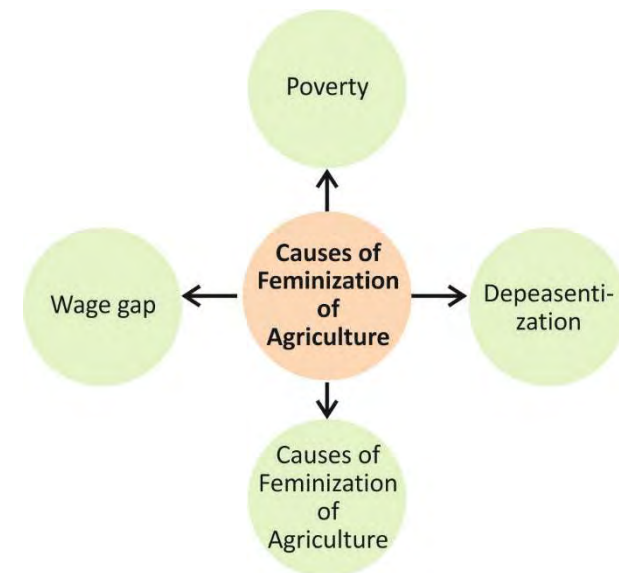


Source: PLFS 2018-19

**GENDER INEQUALITIES IN EMPLOYMENT**



- **Occupational segregation:** Men and women are concentrated in different types of jobs based on gender stereotypes. Traditionally, women are confined to informal, low paid, caring jobs like teaching, nursing, childcare etc.
- **Wage gap:** According to Monster Salary Index 2019, women in India earn 19% less than men. This wage gap is not only prevalent in Informal sector but formal sectors as well. The gender paygap spans across key industries. IT services showed a sharp pay gap of 26% in favour of men.
- **Part-time work:** Low education & skill levels and traditional domestic obligations are making the women confined to part-time work.



**SUGGESTIONS**

- Provision of skill development and education for females.
- Subsidised transport and working women hostel facilities in urban areas.

- **Poverty:** Poverty forces females to join agricultural workforce to contribute to their household income.
- **Wage gap:** Women labour are willing to work for low wages.



- **De-peasentization:** Agrarian distress forced men to shift to non-farm work.
- **Urban Migration:** Urban migration of Male also resulted in Feminization of Agriculture labour.

**CHALLENGES WITH FEMINIZATION OF AGRICULTURE**

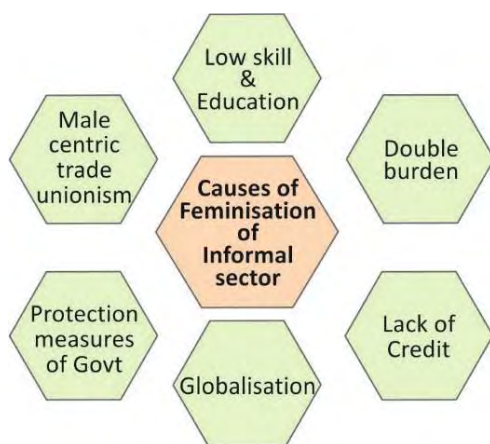
- **High concentration of Agricultural labourers:** Despite rising and high share in Agri workforce, only 37% of these women were cultivators (ones who owned land) and remainder about 63% worked as Agri-labourers (on farms owned by others).
- **No land ownership:** According to Agricultural census (2015-16), share of female operational holdings is only 13%.
- **Small landholding:** As per Agri-census 2015-16, close to 90% of women-owned landholdings fall in the category of small and marginal landholdings, where female farmers are not able to harness benefits of economies of scale.
- **Non-recognition as farmer:** Due to lack of land rights women peasants are not recognised as farmers and deprived of entitlements provided by government like PM-KISAN.
- **No access to credit:** access to credit from formal banking is hindered due to lack of collateral
- **Lack of access to technology,** skill training and extension services impacts productivity of the land.

**PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF WOMEN ACROSS SOCIO-RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN 2017-18**

	Scheduled Tribe	Scheduled	Muslim Caste	Others	Total
Informal Employment	87.1	90.4	95.1	85.7	92.1
Formal Employment	13.0	9.6	4.9	14.3	7.9

**Source:** Computed from the Periodic Labour force Survey (2017-18) unit level data.

**Note:** Usual Status of employment is considered.



- **Dual burden:** women's growing contribution of labour in agriculture adds to already heavy work burdens of most rural women, thereby further undermining their well-being.

Thus, it is suggested that feminization of agriculture may better be described as feminization of agrarian distress.

**STEPS TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT**

- **Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojan (MKSP),** a subcomponent of Deendayal Antodaya Yojana-NRLM seeks to improve status of women in Agriculture.
- Focusing on women self-help group to connect them to micro-credit.
- Earmarking at least 30% of budget allocation for women beneficiaries in all ongoing schemes/programs and development activities.
- Mainstreaming of access to land for female farmers.
- Many of the females employed in agri-sector are labourers. Special schemes in favour of women agri-labourers is required.

**(ii) Feminization of Non-farm Informal sector**

Women employment in India is overwhelmingly informal. Around 90% of all workers are employed in informal economy (PLFS-2017-18)

- Low skill set and education levels of women hinders them from having formal jobs
- Traditional gender roles lead to “Double burden” for working women. So, they confine to Homebased casual labour
- Lack of access to formal credit due to lack of collateral
- Globalisation and neo-liberal restructuring of the economy resulted in changes in production process away from large factory workers to Informal production.
- Policies intended to protect women disincentivised women employment in organised sector

- Ex: - Factories act barred night shift for women employees
  - Mines acts prevent employers from making women work underground
  - Maternity benefits Amendment act (2017)

#### **STEPS TAKEN TO INCREASE THE FLPR AND FORMALISATION OF WOMEN WORK FORCE**

- Maternity Benefit Amendment act (2017)
- Budget 2018 announced reduction of employees' contribution to 8% for first three years of the women employment to incentivize employment of more women in the formal sector
- PRAGATI (Scholarship for Girl Students) to provide encouragement and support to Girl Child to pursue technical education
- STEP Scheme (Support to Training and Employment Program for Women) aims to provide skills that give employability to women and to provide competencies and skill that enable women to become self-employed/ entrepreneurs
- Sukanya Samridhi scheme
- Women in Priority sector lending targets
- PM Ujjwala yojana to provide LPG connections to women belonging to BPL saves time to collect fodder and increases women labour participation

#### **► GIG ECONOMY AND WOMEN**

The gig economy, by its nature, offers many possibilities to facilitate the movement of more women into the workforce. The flexibility offered by gig platforms allows female workers to better manage unpaid care and paid work. However, despite these advantages, data shows that the FLPR has gone down over the last two decades. This is because, Gig work has witnessed similar gendered division as has been evident in traditional work

#### **CHALLENGES**

- Unequal access to digital technologies is a significant hurdle to women's participation in gig work. According to the GSMA Mobile Gender Gap Report 2019, only 16 percent of women in India are mobile internet users
- Gender bias of Algorithms: Technology is supposed to be Gender neutral. But data driven algorithms on which most platform's work are fully capable of reinforcing existing biases. The platform economy

can inadvertently promote gendered work

Ex: Recently, Amazon has developed an AI tool for screening resumes, but it ended up favouring male applicants since the data that was fed into making the tool was skewed in favour of male candidates

- Lack of social security and wage gap: The recently enacted labour codes on wages and social security recognised gig workers, ensured equal wages for both male and female and provided for social welfare schemes for them. However, wage gap and absence of social security benefits to women employees still prevalent in gig sector. For a lot of women workers, gig work is the primary source of income, which they cannot afford to lose. Consequently, they do not even raise disputes.
- Sexual harassment at workplace: Women employees in gig economy faces a greater risk of harassment by potential service users, in the form of verbal abuse, stalking or bullying.

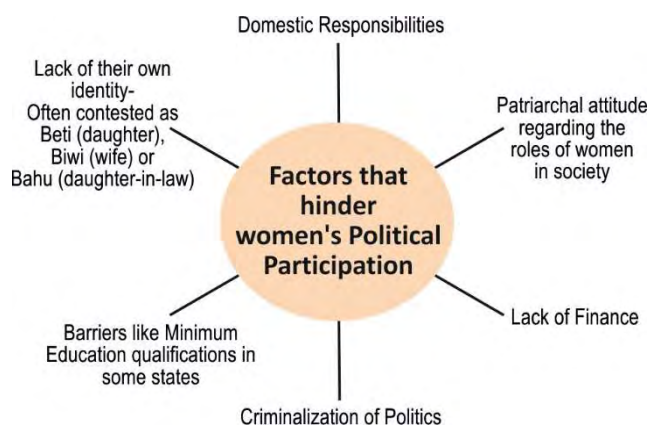
#### **STEPS TO FACILITATE WOMEN IN GIG ECONOMY**

- Bridge the gender digital divide
- online in-house transparent dispute redressal system by the platform, where women employees could complain if there is any problem that emerges during the service
- Mandatory coverage of platform workers under schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana
- Regular audit of AI based apps to remove any unintended bias against women

#### **► POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN**

Gender parity in governance and political participation is a pre-requisite to realisation of gender equality. A 33% reservation for women is ensured through Constitutional amendments (73<sup>rd</sup> & 74<sup>th</sup>) in local bodies. However, there is nothing like 'natural transition' from Panchayats to State Assemblies and Parliament, where representation of women continues to be dismal.

17<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha has only 14% of female members, whereas share is just 9% for legislative assemblies of all the states together.



### MEASURES TO IMPROVE WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

- **Reservation at all Levels:** Ensure at least 50% reservation of seats for women in Local bodies, State Legislative Assemblies, Parliament, Ministerial levels and all decision-making bodies of the government.
- **Decriminalisation of politics:** State needs to take effective steps to combat criminalisation of politics
- **State funding of elections:** State funding of elections or subsidising election expenditure of women candidates will encourage women participation in elections.
- **Gender sensitization of political parties:** Where there is nomination to any political body, the governing criterion should not only be political loyalty but also proven record in promotion of women's rights.
- **Mahila Gram Sabha:** Mahila Gram Sabha's provide women with the playing field for garnering political experience and would also help raise women's issues.

### ALTERNATIVES TO RESERVATION FOR WOMEN IN LEGISLATIVE BODIES

Women reservation Bill demanding mandatory reservation of 33% in legislative bodies didn't garner consensus among political parties. In this context, following alternatives that can be considered

- Make it mandatory for every recognized political party to nominate women candidates for election in at least one-third of the constituencies.
- Make it mandatory for recognised political parties to ensure putting of minimum agreed percentage for women in State Assembly and Parliamentary elections to allow them to retain the recognition with the Election Commission as political parties
- Increase strength of Legislatures by one-third of total number of existing seats and provide one-third (i.e., to increase seats by 33% and make reservation) seats to women.

## ► WOMEN AND HEALTH

### REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Reproductive Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to reproductive system and to its functions and processes. Reproductive health is a component of reproductive rights. These rights include rights of men and women to be informed, have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning including methods for regulation of fertility; right of access to appropriate health care services to enable women to have a safe pregnancy and childbirth and provide couples with the best chance of having a healthy infant.

### ► MENSTRUAL LEAVE

Article 42 of Constitution provides for just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief. A private company Zomato became first company to introduce a "period leave" policy for women.

### ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF MENSTRUAL LEAVES

- **Menstrual cramps/pains experienced by some women can be as intense as a sickness,** hence requiring rest for their fruitful engagement in economic activities.
- **Will lead to the reduction of stigma associated with periods,** create awareness and dilute the taboo.
- **Safeguarding equal protection of law** that calls for different to be treated differently.
- **Global best practice:** Many developed countries like Taiwan & Japan have institutionalized Period leaves.

### ARGUMENTS AGAINST MENSTRUAL LEAVES

- **Reinforces gender stereotypes.**
- **Might be used as an excuse** to justify lower salaries/opportunities to women.
- **Infringes upon the right of privacy:** As seeking leave would require female workers to inform the employee about it.
- **Liability to be misused** - As menstruation's pain and intensity varies with individuals.

Yes, it is time to introduce menstrual leave in India by passing **Menstruation Benefit Bill**.

But apart from this, we need long term measures to make our working spaces women friendly by provisions of medicine, sick rooms and sanitary pads.

## ► INCREASING AGE OF MARRIAGE

Union cabinet has increased the age of marriage for women to 21 from 18 years.

### LAWS FOR MINIMUM AGE FOR MARRIAGE

- Hindu marriage act (1955), Indian Christian marriages act (1872) and Special Marriage Act (1954) prescribed minimum age of marriage as 18 years for bride and 21 years for groom.
- Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 prohibits marriage below 18 years for women & 21 years for men.

### RATIONALE FOR RAISING MINIMUM AGE OF MARRIAGE FOR WOMEN

- **Right to Equality:** Constitution guarantees gender equality as part of fundamental rights and guarantees prohibition of discrimination on grounds of sex. The existing law do not adequately secure Constitutional mandate of gender equality in marriageable age among men and women.
- **Breaking intergenerational cycle of Malnutrition:** Incidence of early marriage and childbearing are important causes of undernutrition in India. Children born to teenage mothers are more likely to be undernourished than children of adult mothers. India is home to more stunted children than any other country and is one of the ten countries with the largest burden of teenage pregnancy.
- **Reducing MMR and IMR:** It is important to bring down incidence of teenage pregnancies, which are not only harmful for women's overall health but also result in more miscarriages and stillbirths.
- **Increases Female labour force participation:** Early marriage often reduces women labour force participation and increasing legal limit of minimum age will give more chance for women to work.
- **Early marriages reinforce patriarchy:** Early marriages reduces educational and employment opportunities for women and make them financially dependent on men, which eventually results in skewed division of labour in domestic sphere.
- **Population control:** Age of marriage of females is a key factor that influences fertility. Demographic studies have revealed the apparent link between early marriage and increasing fertility rates.

World Bank estimated that developing countries like India can save billions of dollars if marriage before age of 18 was eliminated due to reductions in fertility and consequent reductions in public health investments due to fewer births.

### ARGUMENTS AGAINST

- **Restriction on choice of marriage:** Can be used by parents to punish their daughters who marry against their wishes or elope to evade forced marriages, domestic abuse and housework.
- **Legal limits are not successful:** According to NFHS-5 (2019-2021), 23.3% of women aged 20-24 years married before the age of 18, which shows that Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), 2006, has not been successful in preventing child marriages.
- **Depriving legal protection:** Increasing legal age at marriage for girls will expand the number of persons deemed underage and render them without legal protection.
- **Declining fertility rates:** India's fertility rates have already been declining to well below replacement levels in many States, including those with higher levels of child marriage.
- **Poverty is the underlying reason:** Poverty and lack of higher education are major underlying reasons for early marriages. According to an analysis of NFHS-4 (2015-2016) data, 56% girls were married below age of 21 and this figure was as high as 75% among poorest category of population.
- **Compromises choice:** Adults (Above age 18) should have the right to choose when they want to get married. Raising minimum age of marriage above 18 compromises choice and freedom of individuals.

### WAY FORWARD

Instead of focusing on age of marriage, following steps may eventually reduce the age of marriage

- Conditional cash transfer schemes to improve attendance of girls in schools and skill training.
- Providing Increased access to contraceptives.
- Ensuring a safe environment to women free from constant threat of rape and sexual assault which is why girls are married off early.

### ► MATERNITY BENEFIT (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2017

Maternity benefit (Amendment) act increases women's leave entitlements from 12 to 26 weeks. Enterprises with 50 or more employees must also provide creches and allow the mother 4 creche visits daily.

Although generous maternity leaves make it easier for women to combine work and family care, it can lead employers to discriminate against women in jobs because of high cost of maternity leave.



**GENDER BALANCED MEASURES TO BE TAKEN**

- Childcare shouldn't be treated as sole responsibility of women. So, it is advisable to give non-transferable paternal leaves or combined parental leave.
- Ex: Iceland gives 9 months parental leave- 3 months for mother, 3 months for father and the rest 3 can be shared between them.
- Companies are less likely to discriminate against women if the govt bears the cost of maternity leave to some extent, especially for start-ups and small firms.
- India largely lacks proper creche facilities and childcare centres. So, both govt and Private investment should be encouraged in early childcare sector.
- Flexible work timings for both sexes can additionally help with work-life balance.

**► TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY**

Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971 allows for aborting pregnancy by medical doctors (with specified specialisation) on certain grounds.

- A pregnancy maybe be terminated up to 12 weeks based on the opinion of one doctor, and up to 20 weeks based on the opinion of two doctors.
- Termination is permitted only when continuance of pregnancy would involve a risk to the life of pregnant woman, cause grave injury to her mental or physical health (including rape and failure of birth control measures), or in the case of foetal abnormalities.
- Termination is also allowed at any point during pregnancy if there is an immediate necessity to save the woman's life.

**MEDICAL TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2020**

Increases upper limit for termination from 20 to 24 weeks for certain categories of women, removes this limit in case of substantial foetal abnormalities, and constitutes Medical Boards at state-level.

Time since conception	Requirement for terminating pregnancy	
	MTP Act, 1971	MTP (Amendment) Bill, 2020
Up to 12 weeks	Advice of one doctor	Advice of one doctor
12 to 20 weeks	Advice of two doctors	Advice of one doctor

20 to 24 weeks	Not allowed	Two doctors for some categories of pregnant women
More than 24 weeks	Not allowed	<u>Medical Board in case of substantial foetal abnormality</u>
Any time during the pregnancy	One doctor, if immediately necessary to save pregnant woman's life	

**RATIONALE**

- With advancement of medical technology for safe abortion, there is a scope for increasing upper gestational limit for terminating pregnancies especially for pregnancies with substantial foetal anomalies detected late in pregnancy.
- There is a need for increasing access of women to legal and safe abortion service to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity caused by unsafe abortion.
- Several Writ Petitions have been filed before Supreme Court and High Courts seeking permission for aborting pregnancies beyond the permissible limit on grounds of foetal abnormalities or pregnancies due to sexual violence.

**► ASSISTED REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGY (REGULATION) ACT, 2021**

Parliament had passed the Act to regulate assisted reproductive technology services such as in-vitro fertilisation centres, sperm or egg banks and curb unethical practices such as sex selection.

**NEED FOR AMENDMENT**

- India has become a major centres of global fertility industry due to revolutions in Assisted reproductive technologies. Reproductive segment of Indian medical tourism market is valued at more than \$450 million.
- Assisted Reproductive Technologies have given hope to many persons suffering from infertility but introduced a plethora of legal, ethical and social issues. Despite this, there were only guidelines, but no law exists to regulate ART in India.
- Select Committee on Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2019, has recommended that ART Bill should be brought before Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2019, so that all highly technical and medical aspects could be addressed in Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2019.

**MAJOR FEATURES OF THE ACT**



- **Definition:** Defines ART to include all techniques that seek to obtain a pregnancy by handling sperm or oocyte (immature egg cell) outside human body and transferring gamete or embryo into reproductive system of a woman. *Ex:* gamete donation, in-vitro-fertilisation and gestational surrogacy.
- **Regulation of ART clinics and banks:** Every ART clinic and bank must be registered under National Registry of Banks and Clinics of India. Registration will be valid for 5 years, can be renewed for further five years and can be cancelled if the entity contravenes regulations.
- **Conditions for offering ART services:**
  - Age requirement for gamete donor- for male (21 to 55 years) and for female (23-35 years)
  - A woman can donate egg only once in her lifetime and should be a married having at least one alive child of her own.
- **Conditions for seeking ART services:**
  - Only infertile married couple or single women (Indian or foreign) can seek ART services.
  - The party seeking ART services will be required to provide insurance coverage in favour of egg donor.
  - Mandatory checking for genetic diseases before embryo implantation.
- **Offences:**
  - Selling or purchasing of gametes
  - Abandoning children born through ART

#### CONCERNS WITH THE ACT

- Excludes same-sex couples, live-in couples and individuals belonging from LGBTQ+ community from accessing ARTs.
- Eligibility criteria of egg donors is very restrictive.
- Requires ART clinics and banks to share information about commissioning parties and donors with National Registry. Sharing of this information may violate the right to privacy of parties.
- The acts, ART act and surrogacy, contain different provisions on regulation of clinics based on whether they provide surrogacy or other ART procedures. This leads to overlap in regulation of surrogacy services and other ART services.

### ► SURROGACY (REGULATION) ACT, 2021

*Parliament had passed the surrogacy (Regulation) act, 2021 to regulate unethical surrogacy practices in India.*

#### SALIENT FEATURES

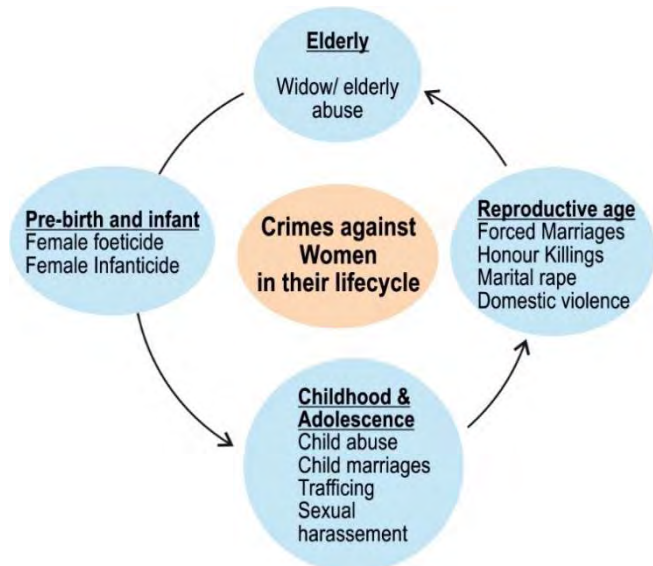
- **Definition:** Defines surrogacy as a practice where a woman gives birth to a child for an intending couple with the intention to hand over child after birth to intending couple.
- **Regulation of surrogacy:** Allows only altruistic surrogacy, which involves no monetary compensation to surrogate mother other than medical expenses and insurance coverage during pregnancy.
- **Eligibility criteria for intending couple:** Surrogacy is permitted only for those intending married Indian couples who suffer from proven infertility.
- **Eligibility criteria for surrogate mother:**
  - Surrogate mother has to be a close relative of the intending couple
  - Can surrogate only once in her lifetime
  - Surrogate mother cannot provide her own gametes for surrogacy
- **Parentage and abortion of surrogate child:**
  - A child born out of a surrogacy procedure will be deemed to be biological child of intending couple.
  - An abortion of surrogate child requires written consent of surrogate mother and authorisation of appropriate authority.
- **Regulation of surrogacy clinics:** Surrogacy clinics are mandated to get registered by appropriate authority. Central and State governments shall constitute National Surrogacy Board (NSB) and State Surrogacy Boards (SSB), respectively to advice govt on policy matters relating to surrogacy and laying down code of conduct for surrogacy clinics.

#### CONCERNS

- Deny this opportunity to LGBTQ+ persons, live-in couples and single parents.
- Altruistic surrogacy is paternalistic and doesn't respect the bodily autonomy of women. It expects a woman to go through the physical and emotional tolls of surrogacy free of cost and only out of 'compassion'.
- Blanket ban on commercial surrogacy may lead to creation of unregulated, exploitative underground/ black markets.
- The act didn't define 'close relative', which is a condition to be fulfilled by the surrogate mother.
- Restricting surrogacy option to intending couple denies reproductive liberty to them.

- Intending couple don't have final say in the consent to abort a surrogate child, even if the child being born out of surrogacy arrangement is at the risk of physical or mental abnormalities.

► **CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN**



► **MARITAL RAPE**

Delhi High Court has delivered a split judgement in a petition challenging an exception in IPC Section 375 that protects men, who have forced non-consensual intercourse with their wives, from criminal prosecution.

Marital rape refers to sexual intercourse with one's spouse without the spouse's consent. Marital rape is not a crime in Indian Jurisprudence. However, there has been growing clamour to criminalise Marital rape.

According to NHFS-4 survey, 5.4% women experienced marital rape in India.

**REASONS**

- Economic independency: Lack of economic independence often deters married women to report Marital rape
- Lack of awareness: Women often do not even realise that they are victims of marital rape, as sex without consent is taken for granted in the marriage
- Patriarchy: Sexual offence is a weapon of male domination, and it is manifestation of patriarchy.

IPC under Section 375 defines rape as follows: A man is said to commit "rape" who has sexual intercourse with a woman under following circumstances

- Against her will
- Without her consent

- With her consent, but consent has obtained because of
  - Putting her in the fear of death
  - When the man knows that he is not her husband but she believes that he is her husband
  - Unsound mind or intoxication
- With or without consent, when she is under 16 years of age

However, the same section gave an exemption: Sexual intercourse by a man with his wife, wife not being under fifteen years of age, is not rape.

**ARGUMENTS FOR CRIMINALISING MARITAL RAPE**

- Against individual rights of married women (Article 14 & 21): A Married woman should have same rights over her body as much as an unmarried woman does.
- Victims of marital rape undergoes same trauma as in case of rape by strangers. Studies show that rape victims, either married or unmarried, undergoes PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder).
- A form of domestic violence: Sexual offence against wife is a form of domestic violence.
- Inconsistent with other laws and Judgements:
  - A husband separated from his wife (though not divorced) may even be tried for rape (Section 376B)
  - Section 377 of IPC penalises carnal intercourse against order of nature by any man (including husband)
  - This exemption indirectly admits that wife is a property of Husband, which conflicts with opinion of SC in Joseph Shine v. Union of India (2018)

**ARGUMENTS AGAINST CRIMINALISING MARITAL RAPE**

- Threat to institution of marriage: Criminalisation of marital rape is often viewed as a threat to institution of marriage, in which both spouses have conjugal rights over each other.
 

*However, Marriage as an institution evolved over a period. New forms of marriage emerged like Cohabitation, Live-in, same sex marriages etc. where individual choices are given primacy. Institution of marriage is no more primitive in nature, where conjugal rights took precedence over individual choices.*
- Conjugal rights: Hindu Marriage Act gives either spouse in a marriage legal right to restitution of conjugal rights.
 

*But recognition of conjugal rights to have sex with spouse does not give a licence to rape.*

- **Misuse of law:** Laws to protect women are often misused just like section 498 A. It is also a challenge to prove the offence.

However, Misuse of a law is not a defensive argument to not to enforce it.

### ► PATRIARCHY AND RELIGION

Religion perpetuates patriarchy through

- **Sacred texts:** Gender roles and status of women in society are deeply tied to way religious texts are interpreted. In many religious teachings, women are given the role of nurturing, caring and giving birth reinforcing gender norms in society.
- **Religious organisations:** Despite widespread engagement of women in religious activities, religious leaders and those authorized to interpret religious doctrine are predominantly men. There is conspicuous absence of women in position of religious authority. Ex: Barring entry of women into places of worships.
- **Religious laws and customs:** Religion also has an influence on cultural norms that lead to unequal treatment in terms of Marriage, divorce, succession. Ex. Customs like pind-dan in Hinduism perpetuate a false need for having a son.

### ► GLOBAL GENDER GAP - 2021

World Economic Forum's report on gender gap, India's ranking has dropped 28 places to 140, amongst 156 nations, making it third-worst performer in South Asia, behind Bangladesh and Nepal.

Key Dimensions	Outcomes for India
<b>Political Empowerment</b>	India regressed 13.5% points with 9.1% decline in the number of women ministers.
<b>Economic Participation and Opportunity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Income of women in India is only one-fifth of men.</li> <li>• India's gender gap widened by 3% leading to a 32.6% gap closed till date</li> <li>• Decrease in women's labour force by 22.3%</li> </ul>
<b>Health and Survival</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discrimination - Wide sex ratio at birth gaps is due to high incidence of gender-based sex-selective practices</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More than 1 in 4 women face violence.</li> </ul>
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	One third of women are illiterate (34.2%) compared to 17.6% of men

#### GLOBAL SCENARIO

- Largest Gender Gap in Political Empowerment:
  - The gender gap in political empowerment remains the largest: women represent only 26.1% of some 35,500 parliament seats and just 22.6% of over 3,400 ministers worldwide.
  - In 81 countries, there has never been a woman head of state, as of 15th January 2021.
  - Bangladesh is the only country where more women have held head-of-state positions than men in the past 50 years.
- The countries with the largest gender gaps in economic participation include Iran, India, Pakistan, Syria, Yemen, Iraq, and Afghanistan.
- It will take South Asia 195.4 years to close the gender gap, while Western Europe will take 52.1 years.

#### COVID IMPACT

- Gender gap will now take additional time from 99.5 years to 135.6 years to bridge.
- Women continued to face economic and workplace difficulties and declining political participation.
- **Future of Jobs:**
  - Women exhibit a larger job-switching gap in fields such as Cloud Computing (58%), Engineering (42%) and Product Development (19%).
  - Trend is partially reversed in Data and AI job cluster.

### ► SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORKPLACE

Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act) is framed to provide protection to women at workplace against sexual harassment. The Act lays down rules for prevention and redressal of sexual harassment complaints by female workers.

#### IMPACT OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORKPLACE

1. Females don't feel safe at workplaces.
2. Drop in female labour force participation.
3. Makes female leave their jobs.

4. Trivialisation & normalisation of sexual harassment especially among women from poor background.
5. Most women find it difficult to report sexual harassment because of stigma, fear of retribution and lack of trust in judicial process.
6. Most organisations still don't comply with the law.
7. Lack of awareness about the provisions of this act among females.
8. Poor women make do and tacitly accept sexual harassment to protect their jobs.
9. Powerful people use legal intimidation tactics to fend off their accusers. For ex. Criminal defamation suits which can put a person behind prison for two years is often misused against victims of sexual harassment willing to come out.

**#METOO MOVEMENT:** It was a civil society movement in 2017 where women survivors of sexual harassment started on social media about their experiences of gender-based violence.

Many women in India from the media and entertainment industry, as well others who can access to social media in English, also used the social media to publicise their accounts.

This led to public scrutiny of high-profile male figures and led to some resignations and legal action. For ex. M J Akbar (Former Union Minister) and R K Pachauri, former Chairman of IPCC.

However, the movement excluded women from rural areas, informal sector and those that do not use social media.

**SALIENT FEATURES OF POSH ACT, 2013**



- Casts responsibility on employer to protect women employees for sexual harassment at the workplace.
- **Compliant mechanism:**
  - Any employer having 10 workers, or more is required to set up an internal complaints committee for redressal of sexual harassment complaints at such entity.

- Complaints Committees have powers of civil courts for gathering evidence.
- District Officer is required to constitute a Local Complaints Committee at each district, and if required at the block level.
- **Penalties:** Non-compliance with the provisions of the Act shall be punishable with a fine of up to Rs 50,000.

**OTHER STEPS TAKEN TO CHECK SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

1. **She-Box:** An online complaint management system to provide a single window access to every woman, irrespective of her work status and occupation to facilitate registration of compliant related to sexual harassment at workplace and for their speedy disposal. Women having already filed their complaints under POSH Act, are also eligible to file their complaints over SHe-Box.
2. **Amendment in Companies act, 2013** rules to make inclusion in company reports a statement about the compliance with POSH Act.

**ISSUES WITH IMPLEMENTATION OF POSH ACT**

- **Legal shortcomings in the act:**
  - Powers of civil court have been given to Internal Complaints Committee without specifying if members need to have a legal background.
  - Very modest fine of Rs 50,000 for non-compliance with the act is not enough deterrent.
  - Employer nominates members to Internal Complaints Committee (Conflict of Interest).
  - Prior internal inquiry and mandate for is misused promotes a culture of suppression of legitimate complaints to avoid the concerned establishment falling into disrepute.
  - Provision of conciliation in the act treats a criminal act as a civil dispute.
  - Law provides a punishing a woman if she is found to have filed a false or malicious complaint which is completely abusive provision intended to nullify the objective of law.
- **No data:** Government maintains no centralised data relating to cases of harassment of women at workplaces, do not publicly compile and release data on how many companies and districts comply with guidelines and have committees, number of complaints filed and outcome of these complaints.
- **Local Complaints Committee dysfunctional:** 95% of India's women workers are employed in informal sector, but Local Committees to be formed under POSH Act have either been not formed in most



districts or is not well publicised about leaving women in informal sector with no avenue to report.

- [No separate provision of budget for implementation of this act.](#)
- [Social challenges:](#) Women are discouraged to report sexual harassment incidents because of fear of being forced to withdraw from work by the family members.
- [Digital divide:](#) Women can also file complaints through Women and Child Development Ministry's SHeBox, an online complaint platform for all women workers. But most India's women workers find it difficult to access these redressal methods, especially SHeBox, given the low number of women who use the internet in India is low.

#### WAY FORWARD

1. [Focus should be on effective implementation](#) of act to ensure a safe working environment for females.
2. [Empowering National Commission of Women](#) with power to summon people and carry out independent investigations, impose fines, search and seizure in matters of sexual harassment at workplace.
3. Awareness about the act should be increased among females, added to school and college curriculums. Discussions should be organised around these issues in civil society.
4. Special attention should be given towards sectors where women are most vulnerable to sexual harassment. Ex. Garment sector, Domestic workers.
5. [Law needs to be made gender neutral](#) as sexual harassment challenges can be faced even by transgender, queer and males.
6. Nationwide audit of functioning of Internal Complaints Committee and Local Complaints Committee. Earmarking of budget for the functioning of Local Complaints Committee.
7. Publicise the recommendations of Group of Ministers report on Sexual Harassment.
8. [Changes proposed in law:](#)
  - a) Removal of penalty for false complaints.
  - b) Removal of a need for conciliation between complainant and respondent.
  - c) Formation of Local Complaints committee should be at block or tehsil level and not district level.
  - d) Justice Verma committee noted that Internal Complaints Committee system should be replaced by [Employment Tribunal](#), as dealing with such complaints in-house could discourage women from coming out.

## ► ORGANISATIONS FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

### PRE-NATIONAL MOVEMENT ERA

- 1) Advent of Modern education resulted in emergence of enlightened middle-class intelligentsia who heralded reformist movements with formal organisational structure. Ex. a) [Barhmosamaj](#) by Raja Rammohun Roy fought for abolition of sati; b) [Satyasodhak samaj](#) by Jyothiba Phule made efforts to spread education to women.
- 2) Revivalist movements aimed to remove social evils and defend Hinduism from cultural onslaught of Christianity. Ex. [Arya samaj](#) championed the cause of women empowerment

Social reform movement did not radically challenge the existing patriarchal structures or question gender relation. Women were seen as passive recipients of a more humanitarian treatment to be given by Western educated elite men and they picked up for reform only those issues which the British were pointing out as evidence of degeneration in Indian society. This phase of women empowerment was called as [Androcentric](#), which means dominated by or emphasising masculine interests or a masculine point of view.

### DURING NATIONAL MOVEMENT PHASE

- 1) Women started actively participating in National movement from early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Swadeshi period marked the formation of several women's organisations. An educated class of women had been established who were assertive about their rights. They competed with men in National Movement and in other spheres of national life. Gandhiji celebrated women and his methods lead to their politicisation.

#### Examples:

- a) Sarala Devi took steps to organise women's movement in the form of [Bharat Stri Maha Mandal](#) in Lahore in 1910. Branches of this organisation were established at Allahabad and Calcutta.
- b) Annie Besant setup Home Rule League and started Women Indian Association.
- c) [Women's Indian Association](#) was mainly concerned with influencing government policy on women's suffrage, educational and social reform issues
- d) [All India Women Conference](#) founded by Margaret Cousins to improve educational efforts for women and children and has expanded its scope to also tackle other women's rights issues.



It was primarily due to efforts of women and their role in freedom struggle that women got the right to vote and complete equality in Constitution of India. It was believed that with equal political rights, women over time will compete and gain equality with men in all spheres of social life.

**POST-INDEPENDENCE ERA**

Though women uplift movement in pre-Independence India was led by males, during post-independence era the baton was passed on to women themselves. Pre-independence movements were essentially about social reforms initiated by men. Post-independence movement demanded gender equality, questioned gender-based division of labour and highlighted the oppressive nature of the existing patriarchal structure.

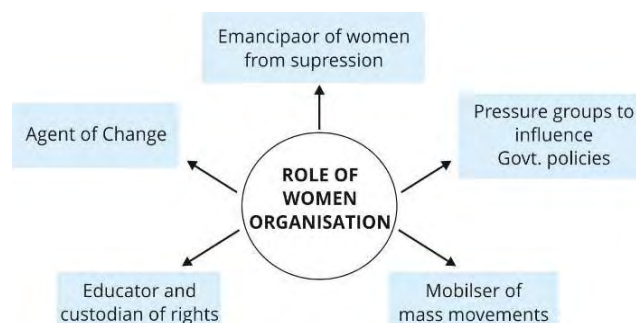
'Towards Equality' report of 1974 prepared by Committee on Status of Women in India is said to have laid foundation of women's movement in Independent India. This report highlighted the socio-cultural practices, political and economic processes that adversely affect women. It was an eye opener about women's condition and that freedom and equal political rights had failed to achieve substantial meaningful gains for women. It highlighted the issue of declining sex ratio, women's education, lack of women representation in government etc. Vina Mazumdar and Lotika Sarkar played an important role in this report.

The decade of 1970-80s witnessed emergence of many autonomous (free or independent from state or government) women's groups fighting for liberation.

1. Trade unionism: Self-Employment Women's Association (SEWA) was a female trade union, found in 1972, focused on improving the conditions of women workers
2. Legislative reforms: State had a positive relation to the cause of women. The Women's organisation campaigned with State for pursuing legislative reforms.
  - a) All India Democratic Women Association campaigned for women political right and equality.
  - b) Organisations like All Indian Muslim women personal law board (AIMWPLB) and Bhartiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA).
  - c) Provided support to women facing problems concerning marriage, divorce, maintenance, alimony, property rights, custody of child/children and guardianship rights. Ex. Shah Bano case.

3. Peace movements: Organisations like Naga mothers association tried to address problems of conflict, peace building and substance abuse in insurgency affected areas of Nagaland.
4. Cooperative organisations: Cooperative societies played a major role in not only providing employment opportunities but also improved their status in the society. Ex: Shri Mahila Griha Udyog (Lijjat Papad) cooperative society.
5. Environmental movements: Women contributed to from the front in environmental movements. Ex. Chipko movement, women encircled trees to protect them from felling. Gaura Devi played an important role in this movement. In Narmada Bachao Andolan, Medha Patkar led from front against submergence of villages. Idea of Ecofeminism that women centric development was environmentally friendly was pioneered by Vandana Shiva. Vandana Shiva also played an important role in mainstreaming idea of protecting biodiversity and protection of seeds of native varieties.

Later, a schism arrived in women's organisations in India. Sections of women, especially from Dalit and Tribal background questioned the mainstream women organisation. This underclass of female activists believed that concerns represented by mainstream women movement was concerns of elite females. Concerns of poor and marginalised Dalits, tribals, minority communities especially poor muslim females were different. Thus, there was fragmentation in women's organisations with different sections of women constituting their own movements, demands and organisations.



**PROBLEMS**

- Unorganized: Many women NGOs are not properly organised.
- Capital: Most of the women organisation face financial constraints due to lack of funding.

- **Narrow base:** Often women centric issues do not get active support from men in the society.
- **Urban centric:** Barring some community-based organisations, most of the cause-oriented women organisation mostly serve urban women and their issues.
- **Dependent on state support:** Many of these women organisations despite claiming autonomy, are closely aligned with the agenda of the state.
- Often these organisations are front organisations for pursuing vested interests.
- Fragmentation among the women organisations.

## ► CHILD MARRIAGE

A recent law passed by Rajasthan Assembly calling for mandatory registration of all marriages including child marriages has brought focus on child marriage.

Despite legal age of marriage for women being set at 18 years, it was found that in almost all States, women continued to get married before they turned 18. For ex. In Kerala, 6.3% of women married under age of 18.

### ANALYSIS

1. Child marriage is more prevalent in lower castes and in lower economic classes of society.
2. More prevalent in joint families

### REASONS FOR CHILD MARRIAGE

#### 1. Socio-cultural reasons

- Traditions and cultural mandates
- Demand for dowry
- Safety and security problems of girls
- Pressure from relatives and pressure from family members
- Cultural tradition is the most important factor.
- Caste, Customs, community and ethnic pressure
- Educational and economic backwardness
- If the children are married at an early age, they will not exercise deviant behavior of searching of their partners on their own, which can be out of the caste or community groups.

#### 2. Economic reasons

- Poverty in rural areas makes families believe that they do not need to go for family planning as more children will lead to more hands to work.
- Families think that boy will remain with them and girls will be married off in other families. So, they wish to marry them at an early age.

#### 3. Historical reasons:

There was a belief that girls should get married before the onset of puberty.

#### 4. Legal and policy related measures:

- a. The current act does not annul such marriages. It only gives the power to the bride to call off the marriage once she is an adult.
- b. Ineffective enforcement of legislation and laws
- c. Absence of females from process of lawmaking.

### IMPACT OF CHILD MARRIAGE

- Low levels of educational attainment
- Limited or even absent peer networks
- Restricted mobility and less access to mass media such as TV, newspapers and internet as compared to unmarried boys or girls.
- Early pregnancy results in adverse health outcomes for both mother and child.
- Long relationship leads to birth of many children leading to population growth.

### WAY FORWARD

- Plugging the legal loopholes.
- Creating awareness among females, families and communities at large about need to educate females and marriage at an appropriate age.
- Focused attention at locations where there is more prevalence of child marriages.
- Civil Society organizations and NGOs should be encouraged to tackle the issue.
- Strict enforcement of legal rights of children.
- Enforcement of Right to Education Act, provisions should be made for free education of girl child till the university level.
- Progressively the minimum age for marriage for girl child should be increased from 18 to 21.

# P OPULATION AND ASSOCIATED ISSUES

## Previous Year Questions

YEAR	UPSC MAINS QUESTIONS
2021	Discuss the main objectives of Population Education and point out the measures to achieve them in India in detail.
2018	'Despite implementation of various programmes for eradication of poverty by the government in India, poverty is still existing.' Explain by giving reasons.
2018	Mention core strategies for the transformation of aspirational districts in India and explain the nature of convergence, collaboration and competition for its success.
2016	"An essential condition to eradicate poverty is to liberate the poor from deprivation." Substantiate this statement with suitable examples
2015	Critically examine whether growing population is the cause of poverty OR poverty is the main cause of population increase in India.
2015	Discuss the changes in the trends of labour migration within and outside India in the last four decades.

### ► CENSUS

Census 2021 has been postponed indefinitely, due to the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### ABOUT CENSUS

- The responsibility of conducting the decennial Census rests with the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India under Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Conduct of census in India is guided by the Census Act, 1948.
- Census is conducted every 10 years.

#### IMPACT OF DELAY OF CENSUS

- Deprive people of their rightful entitlement under various government schemes – For example under National Food Security Act, 2013 67% of the population is entitled to subsidised food grains. Under the 2011 Census, India's population was about 121 crores, hence PDS covered approximately 80 crore people. However, population growth over the last decade should mean PDS coverage to around 92 crore people but the current delay in Census data is depriving these people of subsidised food entitlements.
- Impacts policy planning, budgeting and administration - For example, the Integrated Child Development Scheme is supposed to be universal, so

any pregnant woman or young child can be registered at the Anganwadis. But in practice, when States don't have an accurate idea of what is the total population of potential beneficiaries, some of them put a cap or quota per Anganwadi for funding purposes.

#### **BENEFIT OF UNDERTAKING REGULAR CENSUS**

- **Provides authentic data** on demography, economic activity, literacy and education, housing and household amenities, urbanisation, fertility and mortality, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, language, religion, migration, disability and many other socio-cultural and demographic data.
- **Provides basic data for administration, planning and policy making purpose** to Central and the State Governments, National and International Agencies, Scholars, businesspeople, industrialists etc.
- **Provides only source of primary data** in the lowest administrative unit i.e., Village/Ward level for governance purpose.
- **Provides an instantaneous photographic picture** of the population.
- **Provides trends in population characteristics** in terms of magnitude and direction of the various demographic trends.
- **Used for the purpose of delimitation of constituencies** as it is done based on population of a given area.
- **Used by Finance Commission to give grants** to the states based on population figures available from the Census data.

#### **CONCERNS RELATED TO CENSUS**

- **Delay in release of data:** Many census tables are often published 5-7 years after the census. This has important repercussions to understanding social change since data may remain un-released or released only in parts. For example, nearly a decade after the SECC, a sizeable amount of data remains unreleased.
- **Furnishing of false information:** Due to fear of losing intended benefits of various schemes (or fear of losing citizenship this time) and lack of education, people fabricate and tend to provide false information.
- **Costly exercise:** Huge expenditure (thousands of crores) is incurred by the government in conducting this exercise.
- **Security:** Census-2021 will for the first time have data collected digitally via mobile applications (installed on enumerator's phone). However, the security of the data being collected (especially on the application)

and adequate backup mechanism for such data is a concern.

- **Abuse of data:** The availability of data with regional authorities has the potential for abuse of such data, as the concerned authority has access to everything about a particular family (ownership, caste, financial aspects, occupation, lifestyle, etc.).

#### **DELAY OF CENSUS**

Due to the disruption caused by COVID-19 pandemic, GoI suspended the 16th census operations due in 2021. However, there is still lack of consensus from government regarding conducting the census.

USA, Canada and China successfully completed their census exercises in Late 2020, when the pandemic was still rampant.

Elections were conducted for several state legislatures in the period while census was not conducted.

#### **Census:**

Census is a complete enumeration of the entire population of any country.

It provides information on the size, distribution, socio-economic characteristics, demographics etc of a country's population.

Census in India is conducted at an interval of every decade. Till date, India has successfully conducted 15 successive censuses since 1872.

#### **Significance of census:**

- Provides most accurate and widely used data for a sampling frame.
- Provides denominators for computation of monitoring and evaluation indicators.
- Facilitates judicious and fair allocation of resources for constitutional mandated redistribution of taxes, electoral constituencies' delimitation and corroborative action policies.

Thus, there is a need to expedite the conduct of census at the earliest.

#### **► CASTE BASED CENSUS**

Bihar, Odisha and Maharashtra assemblies have passed a resolution demanding, 2021 Census exercise, etc. be based on caste. This demand is being made to determine population of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the country and socio-economic conditions of OBC.

#### **CASTE-BASED CENSUS TIMELINE**

- **Pre-Independence:** 1871 Census was the first attempt to measure the population and enumerate caste data

across India. 1931 Census was the last exercise to enumerate caste data.

- **Post-Independence:**
  - Union of India after Independence, decided as a matter of policy not to enumerate caste wise population other than SCs and STs.
  - Thus, India's largest caste bloc – Other Backward Classes – have not figured in the any census from 1951-2011.
  - There is no proper estimate for the population of OBCs, various groups within the OBCs, and others.
- **Aftermath of Mandal Commission:**
  - In 1979, Mandal commission (Socially and Educationally Backward Classes Commission) suggested expansion of affirmative action to include other backward classes.
  - OBCs, as per 1931 census, amounted to 52% of Indian population. Based on which a 27% reservation was given to the OBCs in 1990.
  - Later appeared demand for introduction OBC category in the decennial census to count them.
- **Socio-Economic Caste Census 2011:**
  - SECC 2011 was first caste-based census since 1931.
  - It was conducted by Ministry of rural development (MoRD) and Ministry of housing and urban poverty alleviation in rural and urban areas respectively.
  - This was first time such a comprehensive exercise has been carried out for both rural and urban India, which included caste-wise population data.
  - 2011 SECC data, excluding the caste data, was finalised and published by the government.
- **Demand being raised to enumerate castes as part of Census 2021 itself.** To make available authentic data on caste-wise population and their socio-economic conditions.

#### NEED FOR CASTE-BASED CENSUS

- **Estimate change in demography:** Present reservations and other welfare scheme entitlements to OBC are still based on the population estimates of 1931
- **Bring about social justice:** Help governments' welfare schemes reach the most backward and deprived castes that have been marginalised till date.
- **Help rationalize reservation policy as per need of a specific caste or community:** Land fragmentation and decades of agricultural stagnation have turned many upper caste landowners into marginal farmers. Whereas rising rural wage has benefitted some of the backward classes including dalits.

- **Demand for Reservations:** There has been demands to expand OBC reservation (as the present 50% cap is arbitrary) and inclusion of dominant castes like Jats, Kapus, Patidars, Marathas etc. into OBC category. Often these demands are not based on scientific evidence. Hence, a Caste based socio-economic census will bring out the real picture.
- **OBC Sub-categorisation:** OBC membership is large and heterogeneous, with vast intra-caste differences in socio-economic conditions. Some better-off groups among OBC castes have cornered a disproportionately large share of seats reserved for OBCs giving rise to demand of sub-classification of various caste groups among OBCs. Caste based socio economic census will help in such classification.
- **Assess impact of Affirmative action:** A socio economic caste census would help in assessing how far the extension of reservations to OBCs benefited them.
- **Identify relative deprivation of some castes.**

#### CONCERNS AGAINST CASTE BASED CENSUS

- **Subvert India's anti-caste struggle:** Constitution, social reform movements and forces of modernity have long aspired for annihilation of caste.
- **Reinforces Caste Identities:** Enumeration of castes might reinforce caste identities prevalent in society.
- **Vote bank politics:** caste wise data may be used as a tool for caste-based political mobilization
- **New demands for Reservation:** Numbers about OBCs might provide a new issue to the regional parties to mount pressure on the Centre for an OBC quota in central government jobs and educational institutions.
- **Federal concerns:** According to 7th schedule of the Constitution, Census is in the domain of Union. Thus, State governments conducting their own caste census is against constitutional spirit.

#### WAY FORWARD

While caste based OBC enumeration is necessary for documenting discrimination, understanding current social-economic conditions of various castes and developing policy to distribute resources in the correct proportion.

A full caste census might be little controversial and cumbersome. For Indian society is divided into roughly 3,000 castes and 25,000 sub-castes. If the state plans to use caste as a criterion for the distribution of resources, it may create confusion and anarchy in policymaking.

#### ROHINI COMMISSION

- This Commission was constituted under article 340 of Constitution with mandate is to examine issues of



sub-categorization within Other Backward Classes in Central List.

- Findings/suggestions:
  - It found that 97% of all jobs and educational seats have gone to just 25% of all sub-castes classified. And around 25% of these jobs and seats went to just 10 OBC communities.
  - 983 OBC communities, 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the total, had almost had zero representation in jobs and admissions in educational institutions.
  - Proposed to divide 27% reservation for the castes on the Central list into four sub-categories.

## ► TWO-CHILD POLICY

Assam and Uttar Pradesh are taking steps to bring in two-child policies in the states, which will limit government benefits to people with only two children.

### FACTORS THAT AFFECT POPULATION GROWTH

- Infant mortality: Empirical correlations suggest that High IMR level leads to greater desire for children. Ex: IMR is the lowest at 15 in Kerala and the highest at 73 in Uttar Pradesh.
- Early marriage increases likelihood of more children.
- Level of education: Fertility usually declines with increase in education levels of women.
- Use of contraceptives: According to NFHS III (2005-06), only 56% of currently married women use some method of family planning in India.
- Son-meta preference: Phenomena where parents continue to produce children until the desired number of sons are born is another reason for high birth rates.

### ARGUMENTS FAVOURING TWO CHILD POLICY

- Various states have framed laws that set the two-child limit as a criterion for certain government jobs and elected posts.
  - In Rajasthan, those having more than two children are not eligible for appointments in government jobs.
  - As per Madhya Pradesh civil services rules, if the third child was born on or after January 26, 2001, a person becomes ineligible for government services. The norm also applies to higher judicial services.
- Entry 20-A in the Concurrent List of the Seventh Schedule, permits both Union and state legislatures to enact laws on population control and family planning.

- India population in 2021 is estimated to be 1.39 billion (139 Crores) while China is inhabited by nearly 143 crores. Which means soon, India will overtake China.

### ARGUMENTS AGAINST TWO CHILD POLICY

- Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (UN 1994) to which India is a signatory, strongly avers that coercion, incentives and disincentives.
- Goes against India's rights-based approach to family planning: Union government has maintained that family welfare program in India is voluntary in nature and it is the prerogative of the clients to choose a family planning method best suited to them as per their reproductive right.
- Economic Survey notes that India will witness a "sharp slowdown in population growth in the next two decades". By the 2030s, some States will start transitioning to an ageing society.
- Well-studied process of "demographic transition" suggests that nations slowly move toward a stable population as fertility rates fall with an improvement in social and economic development indices over time.
- India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is declining. It is now 2.2 per woman, nearing the Replacement Rate (RR) of 2.1. Currently, as many as 23 States and Union Territories, including all the States in the south region, already have fertility below the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman.
- Might result in gender imbalance: Coercive policies in a society with high preference for male children will impact child sex ratio.
- Might lead to problems of imbalance: China one-child norm enforced in 1980s was abandoned after it resulted in skyrocketing of aged dependents, insufficient people of working age, and a huge excess of aged people needing costly medical care.
- No evidence to prove that coercive methods disincentives control population. In fact, States like Kerala that provided better healthcare services have achieved population stabilisation.
- Disempower women: Denying jobs or government benefits to women who do not meet the population norms will end up disempowering them, who often do not have reproductive agency.

### GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES TO CONTROL POPULATION GROWTH

- National Population Policy 2000 gave a focused approach to the problem of population stabilization.

The [National Commission on Population](#) was formed in the year 2000, chaired by the Prime Minister, has the mandate to review, monitor and give directions for implementation of the National Population Policy.

- [Freeze on the state-wise allocation of seats in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha](#) till 2026.
- [Jansankhya Sthirata Kosh \(National Population Stabilization Fund\)](#) was setup as an autonomous body under MoH&FW in 2005 with a mandate to undertake activities aimed at achieving population stabilization
- [Health care programs](#) like Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), NRHM, ICDS etc.
- [Addition of new contraceptive choices](#) like Injectable Contraceptive DMPA (Antara) Centchroman pill (Chhaya) and Progesterone only pill (POP) in the National family planning program.
- [Mission Parivar Vikas](#) for substantially increasing the access to contraceptives and family planning services in the 145 high fertility districts of seven High Focus States (HFS) with a TFR of 3 and above i.e., Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Assam.

#### WAY FORWARD

India thus needs to balance the two imperative of [controlling population growth](#) while at the same time [ensuring reproductive autonomy](#). India needs two different policies:

#### TRENDS IN DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION IN INDIA

As per 2011 census and International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) estimates, Population growth in India has been slowing in recent decades from an annual growth rate of 2.5% during 1971-81 to an estimated 1.3% as of 2011-16. A key driver of this trend has been the steady decline in India's total fertility rate (TFR) since the mid-1980s. However, this transition has not been uniform across the states.

- [Variation among the states](#): States like Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Kerala and Delhi achieved low TFR levels. whereas states like UP, Bihar, MP, Rajasthan are still experiencing TFR levels way above the replacement level (2.1)
- [Changing age composition](#): With low TFR levels and increased longevity, the country is expected to witness a declining share of young population (<15 years) and increasing share of elderly population (>60 years) over the next two decades
- [Variation in age composition](#): As a result of variation in their TFR levels, southern states will age faster and Northern states like UP, Bihar and MP

will have longer window of demographic dividend.

#### [Policy implications of this trend:](#)

##### [For states with High TFR \(>2.1\)](#)

- Investing in education. Educated women are health conscious and avoid frequent pregnancies and thus help in lowering birth rate.
- Improving health outcomes like reducing IMR, since the poor often are unsure of the survival of all their children beyond infancy, and this is one of the reasons for their propensity to have more children.
- Addressing the unmet need for contraceptives by providing safe, affordable and effective contraceptives.
- Avoiding coercive family planning policies like compulsory two child norms and encourage voluntary and informed choices through appropriate population education.

##### [For states with low TFR \(<2.1\)](#)

- [Expanding mass transportation infrastructure](#) for smoother Inter-state labour migration driven by Variations in the working age population demands efficient mass transportation
- [Strict implementation of 3-language formula](#) for smooth integration of migrant workforce in the destination state
- [Removing caps on local quotas](#) for jobs in certain states
- [consolidation or merging of primary schools](#) to make them viable keeping in view of declining share of young population
- [Increased expenditure on Geriatric care](#) and increasing retirement age
- [Investment in Health, education and skill development](#) in BIMARU states to make sure that demographics dividend doesn't turn into a demographic disaster.
- [Adoption of Artificial intelligence](#), especially in southern states to overcome the challenge of labour shortage in future.
- [Delimitation of constituencies](#) according to the changing demographics

Further, focus must be on promoting female education and labour force participation to grant women more autonomy over their bodies. Alongside extending women access to sexual health information and reproductive health services.

# URBANISATION

## Previous Year Questions

YEAR	UPSC MAINS QUESTIONS
2021	What are the main socio-economic implications arising out of the development of IT industries in major cities of India?

### ► URBANIZATION

Urbanization is a process that transforms the built environment, converting formerly rural into urban settlements, while also shifting the spatial distribution of a population from rural to urban areas.

Urbanization in India is mainly due to liberalization of its economy after the 1990s, which gave rise to the development of the private sector.

Presently, although urbanization is taking place at a fast rate in India, but still urban areas account for just 3% of the nation's land and 31.1% of its population (Census of India 2011). Nevertheless, it contributes a whopping 60% to the GDP.

Thus clearly, Urbanization is the key to India's future.

#### CRITERIA FOR DELINEATING URBAN SETTLEMENT (THE CENSUS OF INDIA, 2011)

Those places which have municipalities, corporations, cantonment boards or notified towns area committees. All the other places which fulfil the following criteria:

- A minimum population of 5000 persons must be there.

- >75 % of the male main working population engaged in non-agricultural pursuits
- A density of population (per square kilometer): should be at least 400 persons

#### FACTORS THAT HAVE LED TO THE URBANIZATION IN INDIA

- **Population growth** - This is a natural increase, an outcome of more births than deaths in urban areas, a direct function of the fertility rate as well as the quality of healthcare systems (lower mortality rates, particularly for infants).
- **Migration** - Rural to urban migrations due to agriculture distress, better employment opportunities, access to better education, healthcare and amenities etc. has been a strong urbanization factor.
- **Expansion of towns and cities** - Due to high economic growth that the city has witnessed over the years. Because of this, the government in India has decided to grab the opportunity to further thrust the country into urbanization, several smart cities to be put up in various locations, and other initiatives.

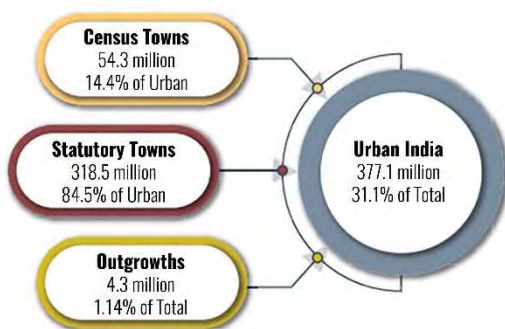
**EMERGING CHALLENGES DUE TO UNSUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION**



Urbanization is not at all problems, but unsustainable and unplanned urbanization creates the following problems:

- **Overcrowding:** Beyond the carrying capacity results in congestion, pollution and additional burden over limited natural resources of urban areas.
- **Governance status:** As per Census 2011, the urban system of India consists of 7933 settlements - statutory and census towns. While statutory towns are governed as urban local bodies, census towns are governed as villages. As a result, India is transitioning from a mostly rural to a quasi-urban country.

**Composition of Urban Population**



- **Lack of adequate town planning:** Master plans statutory instruments critical for managing urbanisation. They guide and regulate the present and future utilisation of land, expansion, and zoning of cities. But about half of our statutory towns are expanding without any master
- **Enhanced sense of relative deprivation:** Gives rise to urban crimes such as human trafficking, sexual

assault, child labour, Juvenile delinquency, prostitution, drugs and suicides.

- **Sub-Optimal Utilisation of Urban Land:** Due to fragmented and poorly recorded ownership of urban land. multiple public sector organizations/agencies— ports, railways, ULBs, etc.— own land under their jurisdictions. For a city to develop holistically, planning for each land parcel needs to fall into one comprehensive spatial strategy.
- **Pressure on basic infrastructure:** Giving rise to unsustainable land price, unaffordable rent, inadequate health and education infrastructure, solid waste management problem etc.
- **Environmental degradation:** Due to urban heat islands, rising pollution, inadequate drainage and persistent water crisis.
- **Unplanned growth of slums:** As per Census 2011, 17.3% of the total urban population was under slums in India.
- **Poor City Planning for Disaster Mitigation:** Chennai floods 2015 due to encroachment of lakes and riverbeds makes for a prime example in this regard.
- **Lack of synergy:** Between urban and rural planning and development.

These issues indicate a deep and substantial lack of adequate urban planning and governance frameworks.

**GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES**

- **100 Smart Cities Mission** is an urban renewal and retrofitting program by the Government of India with the objective to develop smart cities across the country, making them citizen friendly and sustainable
- **Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)** aimed at providing basic civic amenities like water supply, sewerage, urban transport, parks as to improve the quality of life for all especially the poor and the disadvantaged.
- **Sardar Patel National Urban Housing mission** to facilitate housing to slum dwellers, urban poor at affordable cost and providing adequate rental houses to the migrants (single or family) who came to city in search of employment or as unskilled workers by 2022.
- **National Mission on sustainable habitat** is one of the eight climate missions of the Government of India under the NAPCC mitigation strategy. It was formulated to make the cities sustainable through improvements in energy efficiency in building, management of solid waste and to shift to public transport.

- [National Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana \(HRIDAY\)](#) aimed at aim of bringing together urban planning, economic growth and heritage conservation in an inclusive manner to preserve the heritage character of each Heritage City.
- [Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban \(PMAY-U\)](#), a flagship Mission to addresses urban housing shortage among the EWS/LIG and MIG categories including the slum dwellers by ensuring a pucca house to all eligible urban households by the year 2022, when Nation completes 75 years of its Independence.

### REMEDIES FOR URBANIZATION

- [Adopt a circular economy system](#) to minimize their negative impacts on the environment.
- [Adopt global best practices](#) and learn from global city like Singapore that was raised through firm political leadership, a professional approach, and intelligently created capacities.
- [Planning interventions](#) such as bringing census towns under urban governance. As of the 7933 towns that are accounted as urban, almost half have a status of census towns. As a census town is one whose population has attained urban characteristics, but they still are governed as rural entities.
- [Foster partnership with private sector companies](#), leverage their problem-solving capacities and efficiencies to provide innovative solutions to the public sector and good quality jobs to the future urban professionals
- [Investment in new urban infrastructure](#) assets and maintenance of assets.
- [Preventing distress migration](#) to cities through Rurbanization i.e., providing urban like facilities in rural areas or make rural areas smart.

### WAY FORWARD

Urbanization is key, in achieving:

- [India's commitments to global agendas](#) such as
  - UN-Sustainable Development Goal 11 (making cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable)
  - Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
  - UN-Habitat's New Urban Agenda
- [India's National Growth Targets](#)
  - Economic growth target: USD 5 trillion economy by 2024,
  - Employment target: total workforce estimated to be 0.64 billion by 2030, of which 0.26 billion to be employed in urban areas (MoF, 2021)

- Infrastructure targets: creation of 11 large industrial corridors as part of the National Industrial Corridor Programme (Press Information Bureau, 2021), several multi-modal logistic parks, etc.
- Environmental protection targets: river rejuvenation, clean air in cities, etc.

Thus, achieving a stronger urban planning ecosystem in the country is the need of the hour.

### ► URBAN HOUSING CRISIS

According to Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs data, around 19 million households have a shortage of decent housing in cities leading to a slum population of 65.5 million living in 13.7 million slum households in million-plus cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Bangalore, etc.

### REASONS FOR URBAN HOUSING CRISIS IN INDIA

- [High population density](#)- Rural distress has led to huge out-migration towards million-plus cities causing a crunch of housing space.
- [Sub-Optimal Utilization of Urban Land](#): paradoxically land parcels of high urban densities co-exist with those which are sub-optimally utilized. Because,
  - Fragmented and poorly recorded ownership of urban land
  - Multiple public sector organizations—ports, railways, ULBs, etc.— own land under their jurisdictions
- [Restrictions on Floor Space Index](#)/Floor Area Ratio creates an artificial scarcity of land, pushing up prices.
- [Rent control regime](#): rental laws have lowered returns on rental properties and made eviction of tenants particularly difficult, it has led to the stagnation of new investment in rental housing and thereby creating shortage of affordable housing in the city.
- [Inadequate housing finance](#): Inadequate housing credit to Low Income groups (LIG) because of their weak credit worthiness and low disposable incomes, since urbanisation in India is associated with growing informal employment, which failed to provide social security or formal credit to the growing urban population.
- [Weak land records](#): Property rights are weak as land records do not guarantee ownership (In India, land titles are presumptive in nature), constraining housing supply.

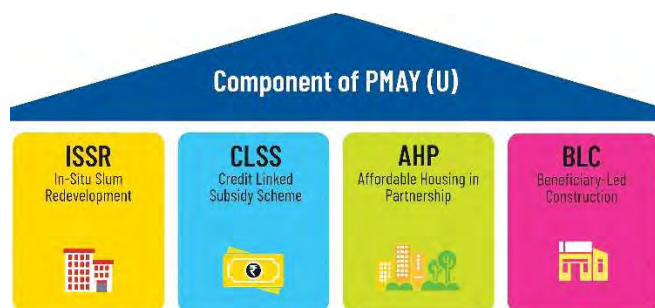
### PRADHAN MANTRI AWAS YOJANA (HOUSING FOR ALL - URBAN)



**Objective:** The Mission addresses urban housing shortage among the EWS/LIG and MIG categories



**Beneficiaries:** Economically weaker section (EWS), low-income groups (LIGs) and Middle-Income Groups (MIGs). The annual income cap is up to Rs 3 lakh for EWS, Rs 3-6 lakh for LIG and Rs 6-18 lakhs for MIG.



- **In-situ Slum Redevelopment (ISSR):** This vertical will be implemented with a concept “Land as a resource” with private sector participation for providing houses to eligible slum dwellers. Central Assistance of Rs. 1 lakh per house is admissible for all houses built.
- **Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS):** Beneficiaries of EWS, LIG and MIG seeking housing loans from Banks, are eligible for an interest subsidy of 6.5%, 4% and 3% respectively.
- **Affordable Housing in Partnership (AHP):** Central Assistance of Rs. 1.5 Lakh per EWS house is provided by the Government of India for houses built by private players. States also extend other concessions such as land at affordable cost, stamp duty exemption etc. A housing project will be eligible for Central Assistance, if at least 35% of the houses in the project are for EWS category.
- **Subsidy for Beneficiary-led individual house construction:** Central Assistance up to Rs. 1.5 lakh per EWS house is provided to eligible families belonging

to EWS categories for individual house constructed by themselves.

**CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF PMAY (URBAN)**

- **Scarcity of land:** Urban centres have become hubs of commercial and residential activity because of radial development, leaving little to no room for additional construction. Government-led housing projects were compelled to relocate to the outskirts of urban areas due to a lack of available land. Lack of accessibility to transportation and other infrastructural resources led to a lack of demand for these housing units.
- In-situ development of land pockets locked under slums through private developers, though successful in metro cities, failed in smaller cities since developers were unable to recover their construction costs in the wake of low land prices.
- **Land acquisition:** Tedious land acquisition process made it difficult to initiate affordable housing projects.
- **Insufficient subvention:** The subvention amount provided to the beneficiaries, under CLSS component, is insufficient for private housing in major urban centres, which are characterised by high housing prices.
- **Rising cost of raw materials and labour:** Appreciation in the price of raw materials and labour coupled with higher GST slab on elementary products such as cement, tiles and bricks have led to a spike in overall construction costs.

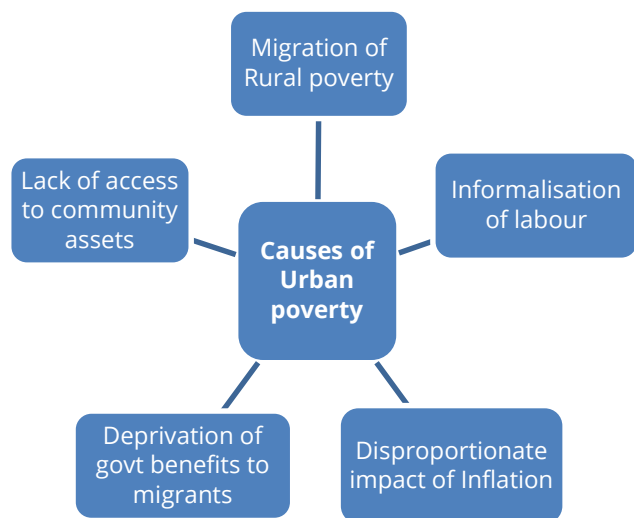
**Steps to be taken:**

- Easing land acquisition process, or government acquiring land and handing over the same to developers at a higher subsidy/incentive.
- Designating specific land parcels for real estate developers in the states’ land banks.
- Tax rebates on construction material for PMAY projects.
- Digitalisation of land records and awarding conclusive titling.
- Increasing the FSI.

**► URBAN POVERTY**

Urban poverty is a form of poverty quite visible in mega cities characterized with substandard living conditions and income along with deficient provisions of basic amenities and low quality of life. As per NSSO survey

reports, there are over 80 million urban poor. It is different from Rural poverty in its characteristics and causes.



#### MEASURES TO TACKLE URBAN POVERTY

- Formalization of jobs and extending social security benefits to urban poor
- Making government schemes inclusive of the migrant population in urban areas such as the One Nation One Ration Card Scheme.
- Urban job guarantee scheme on the lines of MGNREGA

- Designating urban poor as Priority sector lending group

#### ► SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF URBANIZATION

- **Family:** Urbanization affected the family structure and size. Joint families are replaced by nuclear families and size of the family has been shrinking. Rapid changing value system in urban areas often results in intergeneration strain.
- **Caste:** Caste identity tends to diminish with urbanization. Class ties are given more emphasis than caste ties in urban areas.
- **Status of women:** Increasing number of women in white-collar jobs because of increasing urbanization helped in enhancing their social and economic status. This enabled them to take decisions on fertility status and family size.
- **Culture:** Urban areas are melting pot of people with diverse ethnic, linguistic and religious backgrounds. Urban population express distinct culture in terms of food, dressing patterns etc.

# GLOBALISATION & INDIAN SOCIETY

## Previous Year Questions

YEAR	UPSC MAINS QUESTIONS
2021	What is Cryptocurrency? How does it affect global society? Has it been affecting Indian society also?
2020	Is diversity and pluralism in India under threat due to globalisation? Justify your answer.
2019	Are we losing our local identity for the global identity? Discuss.
2018	'Globalization is generally said to promote cultural homogenization but due to this cultural specificities appear to be strengthened in the Indian Society. Elucidate.
2016	To what extent globalization has influenced the core of cultural diversity in India? Explain.
2015	Discuss the positive and negative effects of globalization on women in India. (2013, Asked about Globalization effect on Elderly)
2015	Discuss the changes in the trends of labour migration within and outside India in the last four decades.
2013	Critically examine the effects of globalization on the aged population in India.

### ► GLOBALISATION

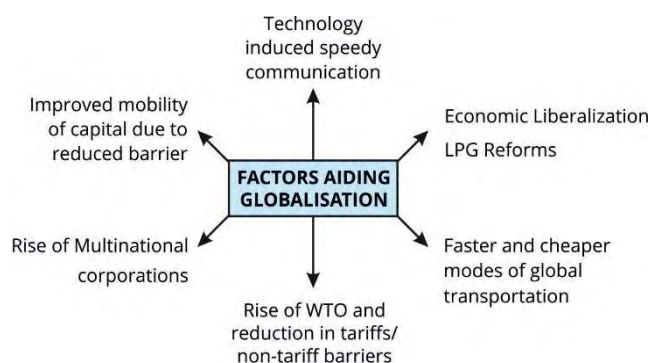
Globalization is a process of interaction and integration among the people, companies, and governments of different nations, a process driven by international trade and investment and aided by information technology.

The modern globalization originated with end of cold War and disintegration of Soviet Union in 1991. The driving factors are democracy and capitalism— Washington consensus or neo liberalism.

In India, after LPG Reform of 1991, globalization came as a revolutionary force along with liberalization and privatisation and changed the soul of Indian economy.

Globalization is primarily an economic process, but it is one that clearly has profound social implications.

There has also been opposition of globalization in certain parts of the globe. People wary about uprooting of the culture have started assertion of their identity. This has led to movements such as:



1. Rise of religious fundamentalism.
2. Rise of Cosmopolitan localism.
3. **Glocalisation:** It is a phenomenon of which is a combination of words such as 'globalisation' and 'localisation'. It points to simultaneous occurrence of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies in contemporary social, political and economic systems.

Examples of Glocalisation in Indian context:

- 1) Popularisation of Desi Chinese in India.
- 2) McDonalds selling Aaloo Tikki burger in India etc.

**► IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON INDIAN SOCIETY**

**YOUTH**

Young people are growing up in a world of globalization and inequality, taking part in a development process that is simultaneously bringing people closer together and widening the divisions between them.

- **Health and education provision** has improved in many developing countries that have been more actively involved in the globalization process.
- **Win-Win situation:** Youth getting best of both worlds. For a casual gathering they might choose to wear jeans but for formal occasions they prefer traditional dresses. Furthermore, while they may choose to marry for love, they are equally eager for their parents to accept their choice of partner and give their blessings to the marriage.
- **More aware, more independent:** Role of parents are decreasing on the various important decision of their children lives in general, and on study and job-related matters.
- **Growth of consumerism:** Youth culture today tend to be strongly associated with increasing commercialism that has permeated and changed the fabric of contemporary Indian society observable by youth's acceptance of the western foods and beverages, dress, cosmetics, ornamentations, music dance etc.

- **Traditional Indian values weakened:** For example, relationships and marriages have had a severe blow from the pornography available on internet.
- **Leads to exclusion:** Globalization is characterized by spatial segregation; in that it actively increases the disparities that already exist between global elites and the localized majority.

**CHILDREN**

While youth and adult are the main carrier of this process, children-as a passive agent has also been variedly affected.

- **Broadened access:** to goods and services e.g., childcare products.
- **Infused multiculturalism:** Increasing respect and tolerance for other cultures and ethnicities.
- **Enhanced avenues for learning:** e.g., Student exchange programs have broadened student exposure.
- **Internet as an equalizer:** has opened has window of opportunities for kids belonging to all classes of society.
- **Awareness:** due to the ease of access to internet and related technologies
- **Exploitation of environment:** e.g., dumping of e-waste by developed nations into poor developing nations has exposed kids to the problems of toxic air and water.
- **Fast food culture:** e.g., Mcdonalization has tilted children dietary preferences towards unhealthy junk food over home-cook food.
- **Enhanced unproductive time:** being spent on social networking and online gaming like Pubg.
- **Exacerbated problem of child labour:** e.g., due to huge global demand an estimated 300,000 children work in India's hand-knotted carpet industry.

Thus, although globalization has made Indian children are now more future ready. But its dark side as seen, presents a word of caution.

**CULTURE**

- **Linguistic culture:** Influence of transnational corporations dominated English language over regional languages and minority languages. For eg: Families in urban areas often use English language in their day-to-day communication. However, it has led Indians to excel in the services sector of the country.

- **Caste System:** Globalization has relaxed norms of socializing, intermingling, inter-caste marriages. There has been expansion of economic opportunities and breakdown of traditional division of labour led to social mobility.
- **Religious System:** Spread of religious ideas through migration has caused rise of spiritual affiliation in western countries. Also, globalization led to the questioning of exploitative traditions like Deva-Dasi, Triple Talaq.
- **Food Culture:** Lifestyle changes due to consumption of junk foods promoted by global food chains like McDonald, KFC is not only affecting food culture but is giving rise to sedentary lifestyle-based health disorders.
- **Clothing Culture:** Traditional dresses has become a symbol of ceremony while western clothing like denims dominate everyday life across regions, gender and demography
- **Family:** Decline in joint family pattern, dominance of nuclear families. Modern thoughts like live in culture has also been recognised as seen in the famous Kanniammal case.
- **Marriage:** There is increased in concept of love marriages. Web based marriage alliance system have also become a common phenomenon.
- **Homogenization of culture:** The process of rising global interconnectedness and interdependence has led to uniformization of culture across the world.

#### RURAL INDIA

- **Revolutionized the primary sector:** Activities like agriculture, animal husbandry, pisciculture, horticulture. by providing cheap and affordable machines, tools, hybrid and different varieties.
- **Generated employment:** Thereby elevating the standard of living of rural India.
- **Opened access to newer market:** To sell their produce globally at good prices.
- **Intensification and internal labour migration:** Labour migration to cities from rural areas in search of employment is a common phenomenon.
- **Access to better services:** ICT led to better service delivery like Common Service Centre (CSC) and better health services using e-Health.
- **Technical education:** Available on internet via tele-education has helped students from rural areas to secure employment.

#### TRIBALS

- **Exposure to global culture:** Through mass media and education has encourage rural people to abandon traditional social conservative norms and taboos.
- **Growing global demand has given boost to tribal economy:** For example, Orissa tribal culture became very popular, because of dance, handicrafts such as, wooden product stone product and some other hand made product sale in the global market.
- **Displacement of Tribals:** About 55 per cent of the country's tribal population now resides outside their traditional habitats. Development induces displacements like irrigation developments are the major causes. For eg: The Narmada Bacho Andolan.
- **Unsustainable development of Tribal regions:** Rapid technological advancement and unrivalled economic and political strength of capitalism, have created favourable conditions for the evasion and extraction of natural resources from the ecologically fragile territories of tribal people.

#### AGRICULTURE

- **Increase in farm productivity:** Globalization has enhanced farm productivity on account of new seeds, technology like drip irrigation etc. It has also led to efficient utilization of farm inputs, making farming financially viable and profitable.
- **Increase in export of agricultural goods:** The prices of agricultural goods are higher in the international market than in Indian markets. International market for the agricultural goods of India, has increased in farmer's income.
- **Research collaboration with foreign countries:** Has increased R&D in the field of agriculture and technology.
- **Contract farming:** Globalization has encouraged corporate and contract farming which have helped farmers.
- **Value addition:** Through proliferation of food processing industries has improved farmers' income.
- **Intellectual property rights:** Intellectual property rights cause unfavourable impacts on Indian agriculture. Multinational companies can easily enter the field of agriculture and it will be bad for the margin farmers.
- **International institutions:** Like WTO pressurizing to curb amber box subsidies such as Electricity, Fertilisers, Seeds, Water, MSP etc. Since it considers



nearly all domestic support measures as distortion on production as well as international trade.

- Price fluctuation in global markets: Import inflation impact local prices that affect Indian consumers e.g., Edible oil.

### INFORMAL SECTOR

Informal sector consists of units engaged in the production of goods or services with the primary objective of generating employment and income to the persons engaged in the activity. The worker work under highly exploitative, low paid and low social security conditions, owing to their low human capital capabilities, and hence are more exposed to economic upheavals.

- Heightened competition due to Globalization: Encourages sub-contracting of work to the informal sector because of low wage and lost cost of production in informal section.
- Casualization of labour: Global competition tends to encourage firms to shift formal wage workers to informal employment arrangements without minimum wages, assured work, or benefits.
- Rise of Gig economy: Presents new opportunities for unskilled worker of informal economy. Eg – new employment opportunities introduce by companies like Uber.
- Globalization benefit large companies which can move quickly and easily across borders but possess disadvantage to labour, especially lower-skilled workers that cannot migrate easily or at all.
- Women pushed to the lowest income end of the informal economy as more and more men enter the informal economy.

### ► DEGLOBALIZATION/REVERSE GLOBALIZATION

Deglobalization is defined as the process of diminishing interdependence and integration between certain units around the world, typically nation-states. It is widely used to describe the periods of history when economic trade and investment between countries decline. It

stands in contrast to Globalization in which units become increasingly integrated over time, and generally spans the time between periods of globalization.

It is marked by the outbreak of a series of "black swan" incidents such as the Brexit referendum, US-China trade war, growing trade protection, border crossing and immigration control, which has caused widespread concern.

### REASON BEHIND EMERGENCE OF DEGLOBALIZATION

- Protectionism and unilateral withdrawal from international organizations and agreements. For example – Brexit.
- Changing geopolitical equations. For example, US withdrawal from Afghanistan, aggressive rise of China.
- Rise of national consciousness and unemployment in western countries led to stricter immigration policies. For eg, the policies in Saudi Arabia against immigrant workers.
- Crisis and inflow of refugees affecting national resources. For example – Syrian refugee, Rohingya refugee.
- Fear of spread of pandemic especially the COVID -19.

### IMPACT

- Restriction of labour movements: India would be affected because it enjoys the benefit of remittance in global economy. For eg, Kerala's Remittance economy has been shaken during lockdown.
- Affected inflow of foreign investments: This will affect employment generation, forex reserves and flow of new technologies in the country.
- Reduced cooperation and coordination among countries: Will impact overall global economic growth.
- While globalization and deglobalization are antitheses, they are no mirror images. But global leaders must come together to timely mold this trend in a manner that makes reverse globalization more like a self-correcting mechanism to overcome the challenges posed by globalization while retaining its benefits.

# C COMMUNALISM, REGIONALISM & SECULARISM

## Previous Year Questions

YEAR	UPSC MAINS QUESTIONS
2020	Do you agree that regionalism in India appears to be a consequence of rising cultural assertiveness? Argue
2018	How the Indian concept of secularism is different from the western model of secularism? Discuss.
2018	'Communalism arises either due to power struggle or relative deprivation. Argue by giving suitable illustrations.
2017	The spirit tolerance and love is not only an interesting feature of Indian society from very early times, but it is also playing an important part at the present. Elaborate.
2017	Distinguish between religiousness/religiosity and communalism giving one example of how the former has got transformed into the latter in independent India.
2016	What is the basis of regionalism? Is it that unequal distribution of benefits of development on regional basis eventually promotes regionalism? Substantiate your answer.
2014	How do the Indian debates on secularism differ from the debates in the West?
2013	Growing feeling of regionalism is an important factor in the generation of demand for a separate state. Discuss.

### ► COMMUNALISM

Communalism is a belief that because a group of people follow a particular religion, they also must have a common social, political and economic interests. It

arises in a society when a particular religious group tries to promote its own interests at the expense of others. There are three stages (degrees), discernible in the development of communalism:

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## COMMUNALISM, REGIONALISM & SECULARISM

- **Mild:** People following the same religion have similar interests
- **Moderate:** Dissimilarity of interests between people of different religions
- **Extreme:** Interests of people following different religions are antagonistic to each other, based on fear and hatred of other religions.

### FACTORS FOR GROWTH OF COMMUNALISM IN INDIA

- **Historic:** British Policy of "Divide and Rule", revivalist movements etc.
- **Political:** Divisive vote bank politics that makes use of religious and cultural differences for political gains.
- **Economic:** Poverty, unemployment, lopsided development aggravates a sense of relative deprivation.
- **Legal:** Delayed justice due to poor law and order enforcement by authorities.
- **Social:** Spread of fake news and hate messages on social media platforms.
- **Administrative:** Srikrishna Commission on Mumbai riots (1992-93), held failure of state administration as primarily reason behind the situations.

### IMPACT OF COMMUNALISM ON INDIAN SOCIETY

- **Disrupts social fabric** and threatens unity and diversity of our nation.
- **Causes economic loss** due to damage to life and property during communal riots.
- **Created barrier to development** due to loss of mutual trust and social capital.
- **Hurts countries image** as reflected in U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom designation of India as a 'Country of Particular Concern'.

Thus, need of the hour exists to undertake immediate measures in terms of reforming criminal justice system, ensuring adequate representation of minority and promoting value education in the society.

### GOVERNMENT STEPS FOR COMMUNAL HARMONY

The Government has taken initiatives to promote communal harmony. These include

- **National Integration Council**, comprising of prominent members of various sections of society, besides several union ministers and chief ministers of states, has been meeting regularly, to discuss and sort out the issues of discord.
- **National Foundation for Communal Harmony** to promote communal harmony, strengthens national integration and fosters the spirit of unity in diversity

through collaborative social action, awareness programs, reaches out to the victims of violence especially children, encouraging interfaith dialogue for India's Shared Security, Peace & Prosperity.

- **Guidelines for maintenance of communal harmony:** According to it if due vigilance is maintained, careful planning done and preparatory measures put in place, many possible incidents of communal violence can be pre-empted and prevented; and, wherever, despite this, communal violence does occur, it can be contained effectively, and much human suffering avoided, if it is tackled with promptness, grit and determination.
- **Legislations**
  - **The Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1988** to maintain sanctity of religious places and to prevent their misuse for political, criminal, subversive or communal purposes.
  - **Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act 1991** to prohibit conversion of any place of worship and to provide for the maintenance of the religious character of any place of worship as it existed on the 15th August 1947.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Promote free exchange of views and opinions between the two communities. Such inter-group communication is key for preventing communal violence.
- Community policing should be encouraged, making the community the first line of defence.
- District Peace Committees/Integration Councils to identify local problems with a potential to degenerate into communal conflicts and suggest means to deal with them at the earliest.
- Sensitisation of police and administrative machinery to deal with such situations in a sensitive manner. The guilty should be brought to the law.
- Strengthening existing provisions of Indian Penal Code and Criminal Procedure Code to:
  - Enhanced punishments for communal offences.
  - Setting up of special courts for expeditious trial of cases related to communal violence.
  - Giving powers of remand to Executive Magistrates in cases of communal offences.
  - Prescription of norms for relief and rehabilitation.

### DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FUNDAMENTALISM AND COMMUNALISM

Fundamentalism is a type of conservative religious movement, characterized by strict conformity to the sacred texts. While communalism is a religious political movement which attempts to incite strife between people that identify with different communities.

FUNDAMENTALISM	COMMUNALISM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is revivalist in nature.</li> <li>E.g., Islamic State</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It may/may not focus on revival of the original text.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is more focused towards practice of religion in personal life.</li> <li>E.g., Five K's of Sikhism.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is used to fulfil social, economic and political aspirations of a community or social groups.</li> <li>E.g., Formation of Hindu Mahasabha.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It aims to dispense with "impurities" in the practice of religion which have developed in due course of time.</li> <li>E.g., Arya Samaj</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It aims to mobilize people on religious identities to capture political power.</li> <li>Muslim League during India's Independence struggle.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E.g., Current ruling dispensation in Iran.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E.g., Communal tendencies witnessed in Muzaffarpur riot.</li> </ul>

Thus, when fundamentalism becomes narrow and intolerant, communal violence may be a possible outcome.

### ► SURVEY ON RELIGIOUS ATTITUDES IN INDIA

Pew Research Centre, a non-profit organisation based in Washington DC, conducted a survey on religious attitudes in India

#### Free to choose

More than 80% of adults across all major religions in India said that they were free to practice their religion in the country

Religion	% of Indian adults who said...		
	They are very free to practice their religion	Respecting all religions is very important to being truly Indian	Respecting other religions is a very important part of their religious identity
Hindus	91	85	80
Muslims	89	78	79
Christians	89	78	78
Sikhs	82	81	75
Buddhists	93	84	86
Jains	85	83	73
General population	91	84	80

#### KEY FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY

- Religious freedom:** People in all six major religious group overwhelmingly say they are very free to practice their faiths, and most say that people of other faiths also are very free to practice their own religion
- Religious tolerance:** Most people believe that respecting all religions is not only important part of their religion but also very important to being a true Indian.
- Religious segregation:** Indians' commitment to tolerance is accompanied by a strong preference for keeping religious communities segregated. Most of them said **they do not have much in common with members of other religious groups**, and majority people in the six major groups say their close friends come mainly or entirely from their own religious community.
- National Identity:** Nearly two-thirds of Hindus (64%) say it is very important to be Hindu to be truly Indian. Among Hindus who say it is very important to be Hindu to be truly Indian, 80% also say it is very important to speak Hindi to be truly Indian
- Dietary laws are central to Indians' religious identity:** Majority of Hindus and Muslims say that following customary dietary laws (Hindus can't eat beef and muslims can't pork) are central to their religious identity
- Religion based national identity and customary dietary laws are **less prevalent in South India**,

#### POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF THESE RELIGIOUS ATTITUDES

- Communalism:** These attitudes will lead to a belief that People belonging to different religions would have different social, political and economic interests
- Ethno-Nationalism:** Linking religion with national identity results in ethnocentric nationalism. Indian nationalism is not based on common religion, language or ethnicity. This kind of ethnic nationalism may lead to development of tendencies like **Anti-globalisation, Xenophobia and discrimination of Minority religions** etc.
- Infringement of Individual rights:** Individual's choices of food and marriage (Inter-faith) will be infringed upon
- Fundamentalism:** These attitudes may result in Fundamentalism or religious revivalism. Fundamentalists believe that all other aspects of

life- social, political, cultural and economic should be governed by religious doctrines. It is against reason, rationality, humanism and secularism

## ► REGIONALISM

A region is a territorial unit with dialect, ethnic group, social and cultural institution with widely prevalent sentiment of togetherness. This creates a sense of identity, which is as dear to a people as their feeling of identity with a state or a nation or a religious group, or a linguistic group. This gives rise to the concept of regionalism.

Regionalism means excessive attachment for a particular region or state as against country as whole.

The term 'regionalism' has two connotations.

- In negative sense, it implies excessive attachment to one's region is preference to the country or the state. This can be a great threat to the unity and integrity of the country.
- In positive sense, it is a political attribute associated with people's love for their region, culture, language, etc. with a view to maintain their independent identity. Thus, it is a welcome thing, as it encourages the people to develop a sense of brotherhood and commonness based on common language, religion or historical background.

### DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONALISM IN INDIA

In the pre-independence days, it was promoted by the British imperialists, and they deliberately encouraged the people of various regions to think in terms of their region rather than the nation, with a view to maintain their hold over India during the national movement.

After Independence the leaders tried to foster a feeling among the people that they belonged to one single nation. The framers of the constitution sought to achieve this by introducing single citizenship, unified judiciary, all Indian services, and a strong Central government.

But in view of the vastness of the country and cultures regionalism soon made its appearance in India in the form of demand of formation of states based on language.

### FORMS OF REGIONALISM

Regionalism in India has assumed following forms:

- Demand for greater Autonomy: Regionalism has often led to the demand by states for greater autonomy from the center. Increasing interference by the Centre in the affairs of the states has led to regional feelings.

## COMMUNALISM, REGIONALISM & SECULARISM

Demand for autonomy has also been raised by regions within some states of the Indian federation.

- Demand for separate statehood like the demand for Bodoland, Gorkhaland, Vidarbha, Telangana.
- Demand for full-fledged statehood like the case of Delhi.
- Demand for autonomy like in Kashmir by National conference, West Bengal by Forward Bloc for a larger share of powers for the states.
- Secession from the Union: This is a dangerous form of regionalism. It emerges when states demand separation from the Centre and try to establish an independent identity of their own. Its prime example includes states like Kashmir, Manipur, Mizoram, and Tripura.



### CAUSES OF GROWTH OF REGIONALISM

- Historical Factors:
  - During Ancient phase of history, it was only during time of Ashoka's rule, India became a single political entity. In other phases, India was largely ruled by regional kingdoms Ex. Cholas and Pandyas of South India and Satavahanas of Andhra.
  - During Medieval India, India was ruled by kings who belonged to Islam. It was only during Akbar's rule, India again became united. Even though his rule had a central government like character, there were numerous governors who ruled smaller provinces and had their own autonomy and culture. Ex. Rajputs.



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## COMMUNALISM, REGIONALISM & SECULARISM

- India again becomes politically united during British rule. British however due to their policy of divide and rule, encouraged regional differences. They gave autonomy and concessions to numerous princely states. They fought wars by using one king against another. Ex. Carnatic wars. This prevented the formation of a unified country.
- **Geographical Factors:** India has a very diverse geographical landmass. Thus, there is a huge variation in climate. These differences in climate causes changes in lifestyle and food habits. Ex.
  - North India is very cold during winter and very hot during summer. This is not the case in South India which is hot and humid year-round, people's clothing and lifestyle are varied due to this fact.
  - People belonging to hilly region of Himalayas have adopted themselves with high altitude and cold conditions vis-à-vis people living in plains.
  - People living in forests (Tribes) depend on it for food, shelter and other needs. Thus, they have a lifestyle that is significantly different from the rest of the population.
- **Linguistic factors:** India has 22 official languages that is recognised by Constitution. But there are around 1635 mother tongues as per 2001 census. It is an important factor of integrating people and emotional attachments are developed, consequently, demand of linguistic states started.
- **Religion:** It is also one of major factors of regionalism. Ex. Demand of three autonomous states in Jammu & Kashmir is based on religion. The bases for their demands are- Kashmir for Muslim dominated, Jammu for Hindu dominated and Ladakh for Buddhism dominated region. Violent demand for an independent country of Khalistan in 1980s was based on Sikh religion.
- **Regional Culture/Ethnicity:** India is home to as many as 645 STs as recognised by Constitution. These ethnic differences formed base for demands for political autonomy and secession. Ex. Nagas of Nagaland are demanding a nation based on their ethnic identity.
- **Economic backwardness:** Ex. Formation of states like Jharkhand & Telangana were based on lack of development.
  - **Lower level of infrastructural facilities** in backward states: Level of infrastructural development, such as power distribution, irrigation facilities, roads, modern markets for agricultural produce has been at backstage. All these are state list subjects.
- **Low level of social expenditure by states** on education, health and sanitation: These subjects are core for human resource development.
- **Political and administration failure:** This is source of tension and gives birth to sub-regional movements for separate states. Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand and recently Telangana. Many such demands are in pipeline such as:
  - **Vidarbha water deprivation:** 36% of country's dams are in Maharashtra, but Vidarbha faces drought almost every year, leading to farmers committing suicide. Politically and financially powerful groups almost always grab lion's share of water in state.
  - **Disunited states of Uttar Pradesh:** The demand for Purvanchal and Harit Pradesh in UP are primarily based on demand for development. Purvanchal, eastern part of UP, falls in Gangetic plains and is rich with fertile soil, but it is not as developed as western part of state proposed as Harit Pradesh.
- **"Son of the soil" mentality:** A state specifically belongs to main linguistic group inhabiting it or that state constitutes exclusive homeland of its main language speakers, who are sons of the soil or residents. This feeling together with lack of adequate employment opportunity and economic well-being, a competition for job and limited resources occurs between migrant and local educated middle-class youth.
- **Rise of Political Parties with a regionalist agenda:** Elitist character of national leadership and unwarranted intervention by center in the affairs of state gives rise regional forces aimed at securing interest of region and promoting minority interest. Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, TYC etc. belong to this category of the regional political parties.

### IMPACT OF REGIONALISM

#### POSITIVE IMPACTS

- **Positive role in nation building:** If demands of regions are accommodated by political system of country, people of that region feel empowered and closer to the larger nation.
- **Strengthened representative democracy:** Regionalism has a democratising effect as it helps people feel more involved in institutions of local and regional governance.
- **Balanced regional development:** By raising voices and by working towards together towards upliftment of their region, thereby overcoming development imbalances.

- Socio-cultural diversity is given due respect as it promotes development of regional culture, language, art and craft, tradition etc.

**NEGATIVE IMPACTS**

- Internal security challenges: Secessionist form of regionalism like Khalistan movement is a serious threat to development, progress and unity of nation.
- Politics of vote bank based on language, culture, this is certainly against healthy democratic procedures.
- Hurdles in international diplomacy, as in 2013 when Tamil Nadu regional parties were against Prime Minister, attending Commonwealth heads meeting (CHOGM) in Sri Lanka.
- Negatively impacts economic growth: Regionalism induced violence disturbs society, people are killed, students cannot attend schools/colleges, tourism cannot be promoted, governments need to deploy extra forces to control the situation. All this has direct implication on the economy of the nation.

**MEASURES TO ADDRESS NEGATIVE REGIONALISM**

It is hard to curb regionalism in a nation as vast and diverse as India. But following steps can be taken to mitigate some of its worst effects.

- Political parties should try to avoid partisanship. Appeals made to electorate based on regional identity must be stopped. They should aim at bringing a national unity besides all sectarian interests.
- Doing away with regional imbalance: Ensure uniform economic development, especially of underdeveloped, backward and Naxal hit areas must become a priority to avoid discontent of people.
- Cultural sensitization programs must be taken up in colleges to avoid hatred based on regions and promote friendship among students. Ex. Ek Bharat Shresth Bharat.
- Promote national identity: Through use of sporting events like Cricket, Hockey to bolster the sense of unity and brotherhood in the country.
- Role of National Integration council must be revamped to solve conflicting regional aspirations.
- Promoting domestic tourism and intermixing of people.

**► HARYANA'S LOCAL RESERVATION LAW**

Haryana government passed a law reserving 75% of private sector jobs for residents of the state. This raised

a debate on such sons of soil policies undertaken by state governments like Haryana and Andhra Pradesh.

Haryana Employment of Local Candidates Act 2020:

The Act requires private sector employers to reserve 75% of job posts that offer a salary of less than Rs 30,000 for individuals who are domiciled in Haryana. It is applicable to all private companies, societies, partnership firms, trusts, any person employing ten or more persons in Haryana, or any other entity as may be notified by the Government.

**POTENTIAL BENEFITS**

- Provides employment opportunities to the locals and reduces regional inequalities.
- Reduces the friction between local and Migrant labour and helps in managing labour unrest.
- Since migration of labour is more often seasonal, the law can lower the dependence on migrant labour and reduces absenteeism.

**DRAWBACKS**

- Drive away investments: Mandatory quotas for jobs and powers for officials to slap penalties on companies for violations may drive away competitive firms who will be wary of new inspector raj and the impact on productivity.
- Barrier to migration: Poses risk of obstructing free flow of labour from labour surplus states to labour shortage states, which is essential to reap the benefits of Demographic dividend.
- Increased Automation: Such affirmative actions in private industry might encourage firms to increase automation in production process which reduces employment generation potential of private firms.
- Social Implications: In a multilinguistic society such as India, restricted work-related migration stifles interaction of different languages and cultures and helps in thriving regionalist tendencies.
- Unsustainable solution: Though such reservations provide temporary benefits to the local community in terms of assured employment, it will not help in addressing the basic issues that are responsible for low employment growth.

Hence, States need to abstain from such inward-oriented and parochial policies, adopt spirit of cooperative federalism and work in a coordinated and synergistic manner to address the root cause- Lack of employment opportunities.

► **SECULARISM**

Secularism is a normative doctrine which seeks to realise a secular society, i.e., one devoid of either religious or intra religious domination. It promotes freedom and equality between, as well as within, religions.

It maintains a clear distinction of religion from such spheres of life as political and economic systems such that each religion is to be respected and practiced in private.

**FEATURES OF SECULAR STATE**

The salient characteristics are:

- a) State must not be run by religious group: To prevent domination of by any religious group and have harmony, freedom and equality amongst different religious groups. A State must not be run by the heads of any religion. Religious institutions and state institutions must be separated.
- b) State should protect both believers and non-believers: Secularism seeks to ensure and protect freedom of religious belief and practice for all citizens.
- c) State should maintain democracy and fairness: In a secular democracy all citizens are treated be equal before the law and parliament. All people irrespective of their religious affiliation are treated as citizens with the same rights and obligations.

Hence a secular state must be committed to peace, religious freedom and freedom from religiously grounded oppressions, discrimination and exclusions and inter-religious and intra-religious equality.

**INDIA SECULARISM VS. WESTERN SECULARISM**

WESTERN MODEL OF SECULARISM	INDIAN MODEL OF SECULARISM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Separation of religion and state is understood as mutual exclusion</u>: State will not intervene in affairs of religion and religion will not interfere in affairs of state.</li> <li>• Politics and religion has</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It does not erect a wall of separation between state and religion. This allows state to intervene in religions, to help or hinder them without impulse to control or destroy them.</li> </ul>

<p>a separate sphere of its own with independent jurisdiction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals' religion is a private matter, not a matter of state policy or law.</li> <li>• State cannot aid any religious institution. It cannot give financial support to educational institutions run by religious communities.</li> <li>• State cannot hinder the activities of religious communities, if they are within the broad limits set by the law of the land. For example, if a religious institution forbids a woman from becoming a priest, then the state can do little about it. If a religious community excommunicates its dissenters, the state can only be a silent witness. If a particular religion forbids the entry of some of its members in the sanctum of its temple, then the state has no option but to let the matter rest exactly where it is.</li> <li>• There is little scope for community-based rights or minority rights.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is not entirely averse to public character of religion.</li> <li>• Although state is not identified with a particular religion, but there is official public recognition granted to religious communities.</li> <li>• It is concerned with inter-religious domination as it is with intra-religious domination. It also ushered ideas of inter-community equality to replace the notion of hierarchy. Indian secularism equally opposed the oppression of dalits and women within Hinduism, the discrimination against women within Indian Islam or Christianity, and the possible threats that a majority community might pose to the rights of the minority religious communities.</li> <li>• It has a place not only for the right of individuals to profess their religious beliefs but also for the right of religious communities to establish and maintain educational institution.</li> </ul>
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# VULNERABLE SECTIONS

## Previous Year Questions

YEAR	UPSC MAINS QUESTIONS
2021	Examine the uniqueness of tribal knowledge system when compared with mainstream knowledge and cultural systems.
2020	In order to enhance the prospects of social development, sound and adequate health care policies are needed particularly in the fields of geriatric and maternal health care. Discuss.
2019	There is a growing divergence in the relationship between poverty and hunger in India. The shrinking of social expenditure by the government is forcing the poor to spend more on non-Food essential items squeezing their food – budget.- Elucidate.
2019	'In the context of neo-liberal paradigm of development planning, multi-level planning is expected to make operations cost effective and remove many implementation blockages.'-Discuss.
2019	The need for cooperation among various service sector has been an inherent component of development discourse. Partnership bridges bring the gap among the sectors. It also sets in motion a culture of 'Collaboration' and 'team spirit'. In the light of statements above examine India's Development process.
2019	Performance of welfare schemes that are implemented for vulnerable sections is not so effective due to absence of their awareness and active involvement at all stages of policy process – Discuss.
2018	Whether National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSCJ) can enforce the implementation of constitutional reservation for the Scheduled Castes in the religious minority institutions? Examine.
2018	Multiplicity of various commissions for the vulnerable sections or the society leads to problems or overlapping jurisdiction and duplication of functions. Is it better to merge all commissions into an umbrella Human Rights Commission? Argue your case.
2017	Does the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 ensure effective mechanism for empowerment and inclusion of the intended beneficiaries in the society? Discuss.
2016	Examine the main provisions of the National Child Policy and throw light on the status of its implementation.
2014	Two parallel run schemes of the Government viz. the Adhaar Card and NPR, one as voluntary and the other as compulsory, have led to debates at national levels and also litigations. On merits, discuss whether or not both schemes need run concurrently. Analyse the potential of the schemes to achieve

	developmental benefits and equitable growth.
<b>2014</b>	Do government's schemes for up-lifting vulnerable and backward communities by protecting required social resources for them, lead to their exclusion in establishing businesses in urban economics?
<b>2013</b>	The basis of providing urban amenities in rural areas (PURA) is rooted in establishing connectivity. Comment.
<b>2013</b>	Electronic cash transfer system for the welfare schemes is an ambitious project to minimize corruption, eliminate wastage and facilitate reforms. Comment.

## ► WELFARE SCHEMES FOR VULNERABLE SECTIONS

India, being a welfare state, plays a key role in the protection and promotion of the economic and social well-being of its citizens.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF WELFARE SCHEMES

- Significantly contributes to reduction of poverty, vulnerability, inequality and supports social cohesion.
- Economic enabler contributing to strong, sustainable and inclusive economic growth. By raising household incomes, it enhances consumption and savings, boosting aggregate demand.
- Increases productivity, skills and employability by enhancing human capabilities. Helps in realising potential of Demographic dividend.
- Provision of public goods which leads to equity and justice in society. Ex. Education & Health for all.
- Welfare schemes help in enhancing people's resilience in the face of shocks like natural disasters, pandemics or economic crisis. Ex: Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan package (PMGKP) and MGNREGA during COVID pandemic.

### LIMITATIONS OF WELFARE SCHEMES

- Identification of beneficiaries: Welfare schemes often fail to target the intended beneficiaries due to several inclusion and exclusion errors. Ex: in PDS, there are prevalence of ghost BPL cards. Some States have issued more ration cards than number of households, while some have problem of unidentified households.
- Status of beneficiary is dynamic. Aim of social protection is to ensure that person comes out of below poverty at some point of time. But absence of continuous evaluation of schemes and their beneficiaries results in providing benefits to unintended beneficiaries perpetually.
- Corruption and leakages: Corruption and leakages lead to inefficiency in implementation of schemes and fail to reach benefits to intended beneficiaries.

- Emphasis on outputs rather than outcomes: Output refers to direct and measurable product of program activities, often expressed in physical terms or units. whereas Outcomes are collective results or qualitative improvements brought about in delivery of these services. Ex: Construction of a school is 'output', while increase in literacy rate is outcome or impact.
- Lack of awareness and participation of beneficiaries: Demand driven and rights-based welfare schemes like PDS under NFSA or MGNREGA, can't be implemented efficiently without awareness and participation of beneficiaries. This lack of awareness reduces vulnerable sections to mere beneficiaries rather than partners in development process.
- Doesn't address the structural issues: some welfare schemes are supposed to be temporary in nature till structural issues are resolved. But often populist welfare schemes become an end in themselves. Ex: MGNREGA was introduced to arrest distress migration of rural people by assuring livelihood to them. However, MGNREGA scheme provides majorly unskilled manual work, it would neither result in Skill development of rural labour nor provide sustainable employment opportunity to them.
- Hinders capacity building: Unlimited welfare schemes may disincentivize the beneficiaries to improve their capabilities and make them reliant upon govt benefits perpetually.
- Burden on the exchequer: A multitude of social welfare schemes, however, leads to a heavy burden on the exchequer and limits investments and job creation. Often, the private sector bears the brunt, owing to higher borrowing costs created by government spending on welfare measures.
- Infrastructural challenges: last mile delivery challenges in DBT schemes due to inadequate digital infrastructure.

### STEPS TO OVERCOME THESE LIMITATIONS

- Better targeting of beneficiaries:



- SECC was conducted to replace old below-poverty-line (BPL) lists to identify potential beneficiaries of government schemes better.
- Aadhaar provided unique identity and useful in targeting the intended beneficiaries.
- Direct beneficiary transfers (DBT): DBTs are introduced to ensure correct funds are transferred to correct beneficiaries, reducing corruption & leakages in system. Ex: JAM trinity is used to provide LPG subsidy
- Use of technology in the implementation of welfare programs. Ex: GeoMGNREGA uses space technology to develop a database of assets created under MGNREGS using technological interventions like mobile based photo geo-tagging and a GIS based information system for online recording and monitoring. The entire data is in public domain and ensures transparency and public disclosure.
- Social audit: Social auditing has been mandated for implementation of schemes like MGNREGA to increase transparency and people's participation.
- Involving SHGs: SHGs are roped in to implement and monitor schemes like NRLM to increase transparency and awareness of beneficiaries about their entitlements.
- Introduction of Outcome-based budgeting: Outcome-based budgeting (OBB) is a method of budgeting that measures progress of each department and ministry and what they have done with its allocated budget. Outcome budgeting makes government programmes more result oriented, instead of outlay oriented.

## ► TRANSGENDER

Transgender community is among the most marginalized communities because they don't fit into the stereotypical categories of gender of 'men' or 'women'. Consequently, they face problems ranging from social exclusion to discrimination, lack of education facilities, unemployment, lack of medical facilities and so on.

### SOCIAL EXCLUSION OF TRANSGENDERS

- Experience estrangement from family and friendship networks
- Dropping out of school earlier
- Unable to find regular jobs, have less options than others
- Discrimination in access to Health Care
- Experience stigma and discrimination across their life spans, and are targets of sexual and physical assault, harassment and hate crimes.

- Many transgender children are placed in foster care, or end up in juvenile detention or on the streets, because of family conflict related to their identity
- Unlikely to get access to rented house

### TRANSGENDER PERSONS (PROTECTION OF RIGHTS) ACT, 2019

- Definition of a transgender person: The act defines a transgender person as one whose gender does not match the gender assigned at birth. It includes trans-men and trans-women, persons with intersex variations, genderqueers, and persons with socio-cultural identities, such as kinnar and hijra.
- Self-identification: A transgender person may make an application to District Magistrate for a certificate of identity, indicating gender as 'transgender'.
- Prohibition against discrimination: Prohibits discrimination against a transgender person in
  - (i) Education, employment and healthcare.
  - (ii) Access to goods, facilities, opportunities available to the public.
  - (iii) Right to movement, reside, rent, or otherwise occupy property.
  - (iv) Opportunity to hold public or private office.
- Welfare measures by government: Mandated government to undertake measures to ensure full inclusion, participation of transgender persons in society and steps for their rescue and rehabilitation, vocational training and self-employment, create schemes that are transgender sensitive, and promote their participation in cultural activities.
- Offences and penalties: Recognize offences against transgender persons like forced or bonded labour; denial of use of public places; physical, sexual, verbal, emotional or economic abuse. Penalties for these offences vary between 6 months & 2 years, and a fine.
- National Council for Transgender persons (NCT): consisting of
  - ✓ Union Minister for Social Justice (Chairperson).
  - ✓ Minister of State for Social Justice (Vice- Chairperson)
  - ✓ Representative from ministries including Health, Home Affairs, and Human Resources Development. Other members include representatives of the NITI Aayog, and the National Human Rights Commission.
  - ✓ Representatives from transgender community and five experts from non-governmental organisations.

The Council will advise central government as well as monitor impact of policies, legislation and projects with

respect to transgender persons. It will also redress the grievances of transgender persons.

## ► PERSONS WITH DISABILITY

About 4-8% of population are differently abled. One in every 10 children is born with or acquires a physical, mental or sensory disability. These translate into 40-90 million children'. Only 35.29% of all people living with disabilities have access to schools.

Despite improvement in health care system, the situation of differently abled children remains deplorable, particularly in rural areas and among lower socio-economic population. Differently abled children in India are subject to multiple deprivations and limited opportunities in several dimensions of their lives. Some these include, not being enrolled to schools, lower employment rates, limited awareness of entitlements and services available and lack of social welfare support.

### COMMON CHALLENGES

- Differently abled children are subjected to ugly forms of discrimination: Due to stigma associated with disabilities, families become victims of discrimination and human rights abuse. When poverty, physical neglect and social marginalization intersect, the impact on the disabled can be devastating. Differently abled children are kept hidden away at their home, denied basic rights of mobility, education, and employment. They are viewed as dependent persons. Such discrimination in some cases starts from the family members and spreads right up to the policy makers and state authorities. As a result of such discrimination the differently abled children face chronic ill health, socio-economic burden, and destitution. Sometimes it is so difficult to define the marginalization — they are outside the margin or within the community meaning, locked in the rooms, institutionalized, families isolating themselves.
  - Denial of disability: Predominantly in the cases of mental or intellectual disability, the family members are reluctant to accept the disability or refer to it as a physical illness and treatable condition. The pseudo-stigma attached to such disabilities, makes them hide the fact of having a disabled or challenged member at home ultimately leading to social isolation and restrictive behaviors. There is a fear that they would be victims of disgrace and indignity and thereby family members lose the status or acceptance they enjoy in the community.
- This denial becomes a hurdle for early identification and treatment.
- Physical restraints: Superstitions prevailing in the communities also play a big role in subjecting the people with disabilities to various harmful treatments. The black-magicians and quacks physically hurt people, subject them to food restrictions etc. Claiming to cure the “disability” leading to acquiring disability. Families often lock or chain their children with intellectual disability having behavioral issues, due to helplessness, ignorance and/or under social pressure.
  - Social boycott: Preventing of CWDs participating in any social events. Even the family members of the differently abled often tend to avoid such social gatherings in shame or fear that someone would ask about their family member with disability. Differently abled children's are not exposed to any social gathering, nor does our community recognize the need for children's participation. CWDs are not given opportunities in the areas of education, training, and employment. Under these circumstances it is natural that the CWDs feel rejected or unwanted in the society.
  - Denial of property rights: As per the Indian laws, all kith and kin in the family are eligible to get their share of inherited property, but persons with disabilities are denied these rights. The siblings take responsibility of providing care and they would enjoy the property meant for the person with disability. Families perceive that CWD are incapable of managing their property, they are denied of their property rights and made dependent on the able-bodied siblings. Worst of all would be when family members ensure the chronic condition of the disability by denying treatment or other aids, so that the siblings enjoy the property.
  - Decreased marital life prospects: In India the elders arrange majority of the marriages. If a family has person with disability, eligible boys and girls finding a prospective spouse is almost next to impossible because of the stigma and the disability being seen as a family illness. There are occasions where they hide the information and after marriage the problems erupts. It is also common a close relative getting pressurized to marry such a person.
  - Implications on sexuality of a person with disability: Sexual identity is a critical component of overall personality development and self-esteem, which matures during adolescence. CWDs are at a particular disadvantage in this regard as well. There is a strong attitude of overprotection toward the

disabled child. Parents infantilize disabled children and imply that sex is only for the able-bodied and of no relevance to the disabled. These parental attitudes are transmitted to the child in subtle ways making him/her feel that she/he is inferior and unworthy of love. Parents of CWDs encourage dependence and share the general societal perception of disabled persons as essentially child-like, innocent, and asexual.

- **Women with disabilities:** Due to differential gender-based role expectations, education is not considered a priority for disabled girls. Dropout rates for disabled girls are higher than for disabled boys. There is an over-representation of disabled boys in education, both in special and mainstream schools. Parents become more protective and restrictive, especially after a disabled girl reaches puberty. Travelling to school is a huge problem, since, besides transport difficulties, the danger of sexual abuse and violation looms large. There is also the reasoning that there's little point investing in a disabled girl's education as they will anyhow never be able to earn. Unfortunately, a girl child with disability is seen as a lifelong burden on the natal family because marriage is not a realistic option. Hence, it is concluded to be economically unsound to invest in her education or vocational training.
- Lack of investment in developing alternative schools for disabled; Disabilities lack easy access to correctional and support devices especially in rural areas. Most public spaces are not disabled friendly.

#### CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS ON DISABILITY

- **Article 41** of Constitution of India declares that the State shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to work to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement and in other cases of undeserved want.
- **Article 46** lays down an obligation on the State to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

#### RIGHT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT 2016

- **Defines "Person with disability"** means a person with long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with barriers, hinders his full and effective participation in society equally with others.

- **Disabilities covered:**
  - **Physical Disability:** Locomotor Disability, Leprosy Cured Person, Cerebral Palsy, Dwarfism, Muscular Dystrophy, Acid Attack Victims, Visual Impairment, Blindness, Low Vision, Hearing Impairment, Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Speech and Language Disability.
  - **Intellectual Disability:** Specific Learning Disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder
  - Mental Behaviour (Mental Illness)
  - Disability caused due to-
    - Chronic Neurological Conditions such as Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's Disease
    - Blood Disorder
    - Haemophilia
    - Thalassemia
    - Sickle Cell Disease
- **Rights and entitlements**
  - Responsibility has been cast upon the appropriate governments to take effective measures to ensure that the persons with disabilities enjoy their rights equally with others.
  - **Reservations:** Additional benefits such as reservation in higher education (not less than 5%), government jobs (not less than 4 %), reservation in allocation of land, poverty alleviation schemes (5% allotment) etc. have been provided for persons with benchmark disabilities and those with high support needs.
  - **Education:**
    - Every child with benchmark disability between the age group of 6 and 18 years shall have the right to free education.
    - Government funded educational institutions as well as the government recognized institutions will have to provide inclusive education to the children with disabilities
  - **Accessibility in Public places:** For strengthening the Prime Minister's Accessible India Campaign, stress has been given to ensure accessibility in public buildings (both Government and private) in a prescribed time-frame.
  - **Central & State Advisory Boards on Disability** are to be set up to serve as apex policy making bodies at the Central and State level.
  - **Penalties for offences:** Provides for penalties for offences committed against persons with disabilities and violation of provisions of new law.

**INITIATIVES TAKEN FOR DIFFERENTLY ABLED**

- **Accessible India Campaign: Creation of Accessible Environment for PwDs:** A nation-wide flagship campaign for achieving universal accessibility that will enable persons with disabilities to gain access for equal opportunity and live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life in an inclusive society.
- **DeenDayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme:** Financial assistance is provided to NGOs for providing various services to Persons with Disabilities, like special schools, vocational training centres, community-based rehabilitation, pre-school and early intervention etc.
- **Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase / fitting of Aids and Appliances (ADIP):** Aims at helping disabled persons by bringing suitable, durable, scientifically manufactured, modern, standard aids and appliances within their reach.

But Poor implementation of policies and schemes hinders inclusion of disabled persons. Though various acts and schemes have been laid down with an aim to empower the disabled, their enforcement face many challenges. So, in essence we can say that the disabled people must go through everyday pain of being excluded from a whole host of normal life activities.

**WAY FORWARD**

There are several unmet challenges, which need to be addressed among disability sector in India.

1. Need for dignified life for children and people with disabilities.
2. Need to remove attitudinal barriers among communities and provide rehabilitation of CWDs.
3. Need to improve infrastructures in mainstream schools to make them disabled friendly and train teachers for optimal support.
4. Need to converge between various departments providing services for CWDs.
5. Need for national harmonization of disability welfare program.
6. Need to give executive powers and necessary resources to the commissioner of disabilities for effective implementation and safeguarding rights of PWD.
7. Need for promoting and monitoring mechanisms for service outreach below district level.
8. Need to improve effective collaborations between Government and NGO to avoid duplications.

9. Need to adopt to a down to top approach in policy design.
10. Need to improve community participation programs.

**► CHILDREN**

Children forms one of the most vulnerable sections in any society. The true measure of any nation's standing is how well it attends to its children with respect to their health and safety, their material security, their education and socialisation.

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, child refers to "a human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier"

India is a young nation children constitute 39 per cent of the country's population (Census2011).

**ISSUES FACED BY CHILDREN IN INDIA**Malnutrition:

- Despite decades of investment to tackle this malaise, India's child malnutrition rates are still one of the most alarming in the world. The Global Hunger Index (2020) — which is calculated based on total undernourishment of the population, child stunting, wasting and child mortality — places India at the 94th spot among 107 countries.
- The fourth round of NFHS, conducted in 2015-2016, found that the prevalence of underweight, stunted and wasted children under five was at 35.7, 38.4 and 21.0 per cent.
- According to E&Y, India loses around 4% of its GDP annually due to malnourishment
- The lack of proper nutrition for pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers and young children, especially before their second birthday can impair the child's brain development, cognitive abilities and physical development, leading to stunting or reduced growth.

Education:

- **Learning gap** -Malnutrition and lack of access to quality early childcare and education results in learning gaps in primary and secondary education. ASER shows the prevalence of learning deficit and the poverty of basic reading and arithmetic skills among students in Indian schools. school closures due to COVID pandemic has further widened the existing learning gaps.
- **Drop out**- Distress migration of rural population due to agrarian crisis cut off the children from education and results in dropping out of formal education.



**Child abuse:** affects the healthy development of the child physically and psychologically. NCRB stated that as many as 1,48,185 crimes against children were reported in 2019 in India.

**Child marriages:** poverty and patriarchal norms force the parents to undertake child marriages. It results in early pregnancy and social isolation, with little education and poor vocational training reinforcing the gendered nature of poverty.

**Demography:** As per Census 2011, the Child Sex Ratio (CSR), an indicator of gender discrimination, stands at 918 girls per 1000 boys in the age group of 0-6 years.

**Natural disasters and climate change:** India is among the countries which are at high risk of damage from natural disasters including climate change. According to estimates from the Centre for Research on Epidemiology of Disaster, between 2013 and 2015; more than 20 million people in India were affected by various natural disasters in India, such as flood, drought, cyclone and earthquake, causing a damage of approximately 25 million US dollars. children who are the worst-affected population in emergency situations as they face multiple protection and health risks.

<i>promote lifelong learning opportunities for all</i>	<p>outcomes.</p> <p><b>4.2</b> By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.</p> <p><b>4.4</b> By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.</p> <p><b>4.5</b> By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.</p> <p><b>4.a.</b> Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all</p>
<b>GOAL 5:</b> <i>Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</i>	<p><b>5.2</b> Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.</p> <p><b>5.3</b> Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.</p>
<b>GOAL 6.</b> <i>Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all</i>	<p><b>6.2</b> By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.</p>
<b>GOAL 8.</b> <i>Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent</i>	<p><b>8.7</b> 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.</p>

SDG	TARGETS RELATED TO CHILDREN
<b>GOAL 1:</b> <i>End poverty in all its forms everywhere</i>	<b>1.2</b> By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definition.
<b>GOAL 2:</b> <i>End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture</i>	<b>2.2</b> By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under five years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons.
<b>GOAL 3:</b> <i>Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all</i>	<b>3.2</b> By 2030, end preventable deaths of new-borns and children under five years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births.
<b>GOAL 4:</b> <i>Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and</i>	<b>4.1</b> By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning



<i>work for all</i>	
<b>GOAL 16.</b> <i>Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</i>	<b>16.2</b> End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children. <b>16.9</b> By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration

**ARTICLE 39 (F) OF THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA**

“Children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.”

**GOVERNMENT STEPS TAKEN**

Important legislations:

- National food security act 2013
- Right to Education act
- Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act, 2019
- Juvenile justice (care and protection of children) act, 2015
- Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016
- Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP)

**CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS FOR CHILDREN**

- Article 21A provides free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of 6 and 14.
- Article 24 prohibits employment of children under the age of 14 years in hazardous industries.
- Article 39 (e) directs the State to make policy to ensure that the tender age of children is not abused.
- Article 45 provides that State shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education to children below the age of six years.

**IMPORTANT SCHEMES**

- Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) for holistic development of children up to 6 years of age
- National Nutrition Mission (NNM) to address the malnutrition in children
- Mid-day meal scheme to enhance enrolment, retention, attendance and simultaneously improve nutritional levels among school going children.
- Samagra siksha abhiyan to enhance learning outcomes and narrow down social & Gender gaps in school education.
- PENCiL portal to engage Government and civil society public in eradicating child labour to achieve the target of child labour free society

**► CHILD LABOUR DURING PANDEMIC**

Census 2011 reported that there are 10.1 million working children in the age group of 5-14 years. UNESCO estimates based on 2011 Census record 38.1 million children as “out of school”.

However, Child labour in India decreased in decade 2001 to 2011 due to multiple policy interventions of government like:

- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005
- Right to Education Act 2009
- Mid-day Meal scheme
- National Child Labour project
- Platform for Effective Enforcement for No Child Labour (PENCIL) portal
- Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016 Of India

**NATIONAL CHILD LABOUR PROJECT (NCLP) SCHEME**

- Children in the age group of 9-14 years are withdrawn from work and put into NCLP Special Training Centres, where they are provided with bridge education, vocational training, mid-day meal, stipend, health care etc. before being mainstreamed into formal education system.
- A dedicated online portal named PENCiL (Platform for Effective Enforcement for No Child Labour) is developed to make the NCLP successful.

**CHILD LABOUR (PROHIBITION AND REGULATION) AMENDMENT ACT, 2016**

Enacted to ratify International Labour Organization

(ILO) Conventions concerning minimum age for employment and concerning prohibition and elimination of worst forms of child labour.

- Prohibited employment of children below 14 years in all occupations except
  - where child helps his family after school hours
  - where child works as an artist in an audio-visual entertainment industry
- Added a new category of persons called “adolescent” (14 and 18 years of age) and prohibited employment of adolescents in hazardous occupations as specified (mines, inflammable substance and hazardous processes).
- Central government may add or omit any hazardous occupation from the list included in the Act
- Provides for stricter punishment and cognizable offence for employing any child or adolescent in contravention of the Act

**PENCiL** portal is an online platform that aims at engaging the Central Government, State Government, District, civil society and the public in eradicating child labour to achieve the target of child labour free society.

However, economic contraction and lockdowns ensuing from the pandemic pose a risk of back tracking the gains made in eliminating child labour

- Reduced household income, children from poor households are being pushed to contribute to family income with the risk of exposure to exploitative work.
- Absence of Mid-day meals children of marginal sections are seeking menial jobs to feed their families and themselves.
- Closure of school challenges distance learning due to Digital divide, resulting in increasing dropout rate.

#### **MEASURES TO ARREST DROPOUT RATE IN PANDEMIC**

- Government must increase rate of wages offered under MGNREGA Scheme, especially in rural areas.
- Vulnerable families should be covered under comprehensive social protection schemes to ensure a decent living.
- Cash supplements should be given to the families to compensate the absence of Mid-day meals
- Improve Internet connectivity, especially in rural areas, to enable children belonging to Rural areas and vulnerable sections access online classes.

## ► ORPHAN ADOPTION IN PANDEMIC

Expressing concern over illegal adoption of children whose parents died of Covid-19, SC has directed state governments and UTs to prevent any NGO from collecting funds in the names of the affected children by disclosing their identity and inviting interested persons to adopt them.

The bench pointed out that invitation to persons for adoption of orphans is contrary to [Juvenile Justice Act, 2015](#), as no adoption of a child can be permitted without involvement of [CARA \(Central Adoption Resource Authority\)](#).

According to ‘Bal Swaraj’ portal of [National Commission for Protection of Child Rights \(NCPCR\)](#) around 3,621 children were orphaned during last one year. These deaths, Commission said, were not related just to Covid-19 and could have been due to other reasons as well.

#### **JUVENILE JUSTICE ACT, 2015**

**Objective:** Seeks to achieve objectives of UN Convention on the Rights of Children as ratified by India in 1992.

- Change in nomenclature from ‘juvenile’ to ‘child’ or ‘child in conflict with law’, to remove the negative connotation associated with the word “juvenile”
- 2 categories of children are protected under JJ act- [Children in conflict with the law](#) and [children in need of care and protection](#)
- Mandates setting up [Juvenile Justice Boards](#) and [Child Welfare Committees](#) in every district. Both must have at least one-woman member each.
- Special provisions have been made to tackle child offenders committing heinous offences in age group of 16-18 years. Juvenile Justice Board is given the option to transfer cases of heinous offences by such children to a Children’s Court (Court of Session) after conducting preliminary assessment.
- Streamline adoption procedures for orphan, abandoned and surrendered children, the existing Central Adoption
- [Central Adoption Resource Authority \(CARA\)](#) is given the [status of a statutory body](#) to enable it to perform its function more effectively
- Mandatory registration of Child Care Institutions

#### **CARA**

- Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) is a statutory body of Ministry of Women & Child Development.

- CARA attained the status of a Statutory Body in 2016 under JJ Act, 2015.
- Functions as nodal body for adoption of Indian children and is mandated to monitor and regulate in-country and inter-country adoptions in accordance with the provisions of Hague Convention on Inter-country Adoption, 1993, ratified by India in 2003.
- Mandated to frame regulations on adoption-related matters from time to time under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.
- In 2018, CARA has allowed individuals in a live-in relationship to adopt children from and within India.

- [National Commission for Protection of Child Rights \(NCPCR\)](#) is a statutory body under the [Commissions for Protection of Child Rights \(CPCR\) Act, 2005](#)
- It works under aegis of Ministry of Women and Child Development, GOI.
- The body is mandated to ensure that all Laws, Policies, Programmes, and Administrative Mechanisms are in consonance with the Child Rights perspective as enshrined in the Constitution of India and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

NCPCR devises online portal '[Bal Swaraj](#)' for children affected by Covid-19.

The initiative aims at tracking affected children right from presenting them before the [Child Welfare Committee](#) to the restoration of the children to their parent, guardian, or relative.

**BENEFITS OF ADOPTION**

- Adoption can provide a child with the critical resource needed for a healthy and stable living
- Allows mother to continue pursuing their goals without putting their education or career on hold.
- Relieves the financial and emotional stress of unplanned pregnancy and single parenting
- Gives an opportunity to help hopeful parents who would not be able to have a child otherwise

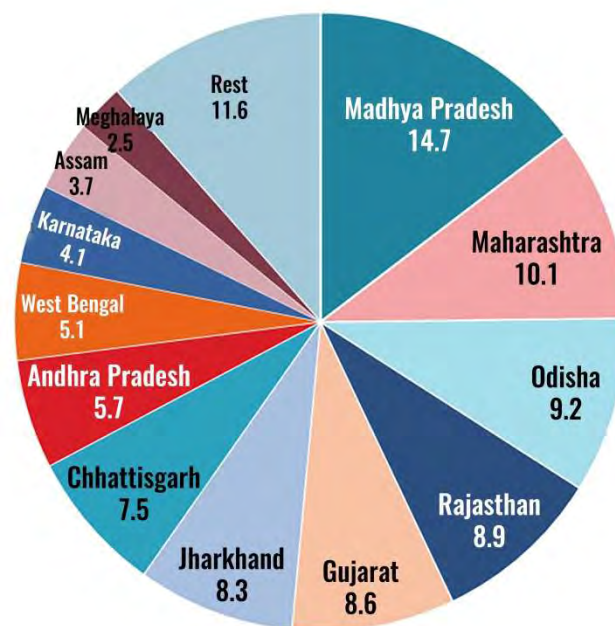
**RISK OF ADOPTION DURING DISASTER**

- Disasters may bring out innate generosity of people, but sometimes even well-intentioned initiatives may go wrong. Adoption should be allowed only when the child's safety and welfare can be ensured
- Danger of children falling victim to traffickers under the guise of adoption.
- Possibility that children will be uprooted from their socio-cultural milieu through inter-country adoptions.

**► SCHEDULE TRIBES**

**Article – 342** Provides for specification of tribes or tribal communities which are deemed to be for purposes of Constitution, Scheduled Tribes in relation to that State or UT. In pursuance of these provisions, list of STs is notified for each State or UT and are valid only within jurisdiction of that State or UT and not outside.

There are over 700 ethnic groups notified as STs across States/UTs. According to 2011 census, STs consist of around 8.6% of the total population of India.



States' share of ST population out of India's ST population

Top 5 States/UTs	
Lakshadweep	94.8%
Mizoram	94.4%
Nagaland	86.5%
Meghalaya	86.1%
Ladakh	79.5%

States/UTs ranked by proportion of STs

The criteria followed for specification of a community as a Scheduled Tribe are:

- Indications of primitive traits,
- Distinctive culture,
- Geographical isolation,
- Shyness of contact with the community at large, and
- Backwardness.

These criteria are not spelt out in the Constitution but have become well established and accepted.

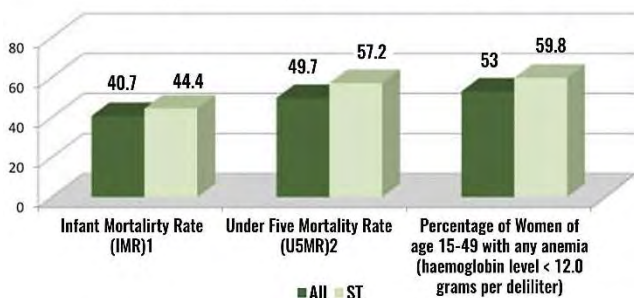
**SALIENT FEATURES OF TRIBES IN INDIA**

- The tribes have segmentary but egalitarian system
- They are not mutually inter-dependent, as are castes in a system of organic solidarity
- They have direct access to land and no intermediary is involved between them and land.
- Sustained by relatively primitive subsistence technology such as shifting cultivation and hunting and gathering
- Many tribes follow Animism as a form of religion
- Both Monogamy and polygamy are prevalent in many tribal societies. Some tribes like Toda and Khasa practice polyandry
- Most of the tribes are patrilineal but Matriliney is also prevalent among few tribes like Khasi, Jaintia and Garo

**PROBLEMS FACED BY TRIBES IN INDIA**

- **Loss of communal rights over forest:** Forest policies and regulations have snatched away traditional community rights of STs over forest produce. This has impacted the economic activities of tribes like food gathering, hunting, shifting cultivation.
- **Land alienation:** Acquisition of tribal lands for extraction of minerals and expansion of infrastructure projects alienated tribes of their lands
- **Indebtedness and Bonded labour:** with the loss of communal rights over forest & agricultural land and lack of skill, they are forced to work as bonded labour.
- **Health and Nutrition:** According to NFHS-4, Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Under Five Mortality Rate (U5MR) and anemia in women for STs higher than other social groups.

Graph : Health Indicators: NFHS-4 (2015-16)



- **Literacy:** According to 2011 census, literacy rate of STs is around 59% which is way below the literacy rate of total population (73%)

- **Poverty:** As per NSSO estimates, ST people living below the poverty line in 2011-12 were 45.3% in the rural areas and 24.1% in the urban areas as compared to 25.7% persons in rural areas and 13.7% persons in urban areas below poverty line for all population.
- **Loss of tribal culture and identity:** conversion of tribes into other religions; Industrialisation; urbanisation; Migration etc. resulted in loss of tribal way of life and their identity.

**PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TRIBAL GROUP**

Tribal communities are often identified by some specific signs such as primitive traits, distinctive culture, geographical isolation, shyness to contact with the community at large and backwardness. There are some tribes who are more vulnerable because of their extreme backwardness and low literacy. They are categorized as particularly vulnerable tribal groups.

(In 1973, the Dhebar Commission created Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) as a separate category, who are less developed among the tribal groups. In 2006, the Government of India renamed the PTGs as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs))

**Criteria for identification of PVTGs**

- Pre-agricultural level of technology
- Low level of literacy
- Economic backwardness
- A declining or stagnant population

Accordingly, 75 PVTGs have been identified across the country, spread over 18 states and 1 Union territory (Andaman & Nicobar)

Among the 75 listed PVTG's the highest number are found in Odisha (13), followed by Andhra Pradesh (12).

**► FOREST RIGHTS ACT, 2006**

- **Beneficiaries:** Scheduled Tribes living in forest area and other traditional forest dwellers who have been residing for generations but whose rights could not be recorded.

**RIGHTS GRANTED UNDER FRA, 2006**

- **Title rights** - ownership to land that is being farmed by tribals or forest dwellers subject to a maximum of 4 hectares; ownership is only for land that is being cultivated by the concerned family, meaning that no new lands are granted.
- **Use rights** - to minor forest produce (also including ownership), to grazing areas, to pastoralist routes, etc.



- Relief and development rights – to rehabilitation in case of illegal eviction or forced displacement, and to basic amenities, subject to restrictions for forest protection.
- Forest management rights – to protect forests and wildlife.
- Section 6 of FRA - Authorities to vest forest rights in forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers and procedure thereof:
- The Gram Sabha shall be the authority to initiate the process for determining the nature and extent of individual or community forest rights
- Gram Sabha shall, then, pass a resolution to that effect and thereafter forward a copy of the same to the Sub Divisional Level Committee.
- Sub-Divisional Level Committee constituted by State Government shall examine resolution passed by Gram Sabha and prepare the record of forest rights and forward it through the Sub-Divisional Officer to the District Level Committee for their decision.
- Provides for a Procedure for Appeal: Any person aggrieved by the resolution of the Gram Sabha may prefer a petition to the Sub-Divisional Level Committee. Any person aggrieved by the decision of the Sub-Divisional Level Committee may prefer a petition to the District Level Committee

District Level Committee considers and finally approves the record of forest rights prepared by the Sub-Divisional Level Committee. The decision of the District Level Committee on the record of forest rights shall be final and binding.

### ► PESA ACT, 1996

- This is a legislation which extends the provisions of Panchayats to the Fifth Schedule Areas. These areas have preponderance of tribal population (Total 10 States are covered under PESA. These States are Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan and Telangana.)

#### POWERS GRANTED TO GRAM SABHA UNDER PESA

- Developmental: consultation before land acquisition, prevent land alienation, power to enforce prohibition, prior approval of all developmental projects, selection of beneficiaries of poverty alleviation and other schemes of individual benefits, control over money lending activities etc.

- Dispute resolution as per traditional laws and customs: collective resolution of disputes based on customs, traditional laws and religious beliefs of tribal areas.
- Ownership and management of natural resources: maintaining ownership of local tribal community over water resources, common lands, minor forest produce, minor minerals, etc.

#### CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PESA

- 40% of the scheduled area states have not been able to frame their rules for its implementation even after 25 years of its existence.
- States were supposed to amend their law incorporating the provisions of PESA. But most of the state panchayat laws circumvented the PESA provisions and gave more powers to panchayat raj representatives instead of Gram Sabha.
- States legislations govern the control of NTFP and states agencies have monopoly over their marketing limiting the scope of tribal control over forest resources.
- Government departments are involved in deciding the identification of beneficiaries under the schemes instead of Gram Sabha.
- Panchayats are upgraded to municipalities to bypass PESA.
- Gram sabhas are convened at the panchayat level instead of village level (often without quorum) and are not consulted for the planning and implementation of government programmes.

#### MEASURES FOR STRENGTHENING OF PESA

- Provision of the power of the union government to formulate rules to PESA which at present does not have and its adoption in case the State governments fail to formulate rules within a time.
- A contentious issue is what 'consultation' with or 'recommendations' of the Gram Sabha mean and require. This term may either be defined or replaced with the more acceptable term 'free and prior informed consent'.
- Jurisdiction of "village" should be well defined.
- There must be explicit provision that the Gram Sabha shall oversee and control Gram Panchayats and any committees that it may create for any purpose.
- Provision for conduct of social audits by Gram Sabhas of all programmes implemented within its jurisdiction.
- Clarification that all laws and rules inconsistent with PESA are null and void.



- Introduction of provision for appeal against the decision of the Gram Sabha or grievance redressal to ensure the principles of checks and balance.

There is an urgent need to develop Gram Sabhas of tribal villages as institutions of self-government to restore their rights over fair share of community resources and preserves their unique identity.

#### TRIBAL LAND ALIENATION

Tribal people inhabit lands that are highly rich in minerals, water and other resources that the state and private corporations need for “development” of the country. “Development” has emerged as the biggest threat to tribal’s survival. They constitute around 9% of the total population of India (2011 census) but make up over 50% of the total displaced people due to development projects. Supreme court from time to time upheld the rights of the indigenous people.

- Samatha Judgement:
  - Under the 73rd Amendment Act, 1992, “each Gram Sabha shall have jurisdiction to safeguard in accordance with clause (m) (ii), the power to prevent land alienation in the Scheduled Areas and to take effective action to restore any unlawful alienation of a scheduled tribe’s property.”
  - Transfer of land in Scheduled Areas by way of lease to non-Tribals, aggregate companies, etc. is prohibited in any manner to avoid their exploitation.
  - Minerals to be mined by tribals themselves or by cooperative societies with state’s financial assistance.
- Niyamgiri tribal issue: In 2013, referring to the PESA, the Supreme Court of India, in a landmark case, had asked the Odisha government to go to the Gram Sabha to get permission for bauxite mining in Kalahandi and Rayagada district of Odisha. Local forest dwellers were asked whether bauxite mining will affect their religious and cultural rights and they decided against the mining on Niyamgiri hills which led to the cancellation of a huge project.

#### PROGRAMS FOR TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT

- Tribal subplan
- Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS)
- Scheme for the Development of PVTGs
- Setting up of National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC)

- Mechanism for Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support Price (MSP) and Development of Value Chain for MFP
- Van Dhan Scheme
- Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana

#### VIRGINIUS XAXA COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS ON TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT

##### Livelihood:

- Establish agro-based training institutions and related labour-intensive processing industries in tribal regions.
- To make use of land available with the tribal farmers, they should be motivated to undertake organic farming and eco-forestry.
- micro watershed should be given top-most priority in tribal areas to enhance agricultural productivity
- There should be monitoring agencies at the National and State levels to prevent alienation of tribal land and its restoration

##### Education:

- Keeping in view the difficulties of adjusting to a new cultural environment, teachers for schools in the tribal regions should be recruited locally. There should be a separate cadre of teaching and administrative staff, who will serve among the tribal schools over the long run.
- Inclusion of local culture, folklore and history in the curriculum can help in building confidence of tribal children and enhance the relevance of education in their lives.
- Residential schools should be set up specifically for Nomadic Tribes

##### Health:

- Social determinants of health – literacy, income, water, sanitation, fuel, food security and dietary diversity, gender sensitivity, transport and connectivity –play very important role in determining the health outcomes. Hence, intersectoral coordination for improvement in other sectors is as important.
- Health and income available for family will show improvement by controlling alcohol and tobacco.
- Traditional herbal medicines should be protected through community ownership. The ownership and intellectual property rights of tribal community over their own herbal medicines and practices should be ensured.

- Difficulties in deploying doctors, nurses and other technical personnel from outside, into Scheduled Areas have made the problem of human resources the Achilles' heel of health care in Scheduled Areas. the most feasible and effective long-term solution will be to select, train and deploy local Scheduled Tribe candidates.

#### Land alienation:

- In pursuance of the PESA, 1996, Land Transfer Regulations/Tenancy laws of all Schedule V Areas should be suitably amended to ensure Gram Sabha participation in the identification, investigation and restoration of lands to tribal people.
- Legal loopholes and ambiguities in all Scheduled Area Land Regulations and Tenancy laws should be removed. For example, such a removal must ensure that tribal land is not transferred for purposes such as settlement of refugees, housing, etc.

The Gram Sabha should be empowered to restore the alienated land on detection, pending the long legal battle, to potentially discourage a prospective non-tribal buyer of land in Scheduled Areas.

### ► MIGRANTS

The Population census of India estimates that there were 450 mn internal migrants in India in 2011. This had risen by 139 million from 315 million in 2001 in Census 2011 and 220 million in 1991, a

doubling over 1991-2011. India's transformation away from agriculture into a rapidly growing economy based on competitive manufacturing and services was facilitated by migration.

The foundational principles of free migration are enshrined in clauses (d) and (e) of Article 19(1) of the Constitution, which guarantee all citizens the right to move freely throughout

the territory of India and reside and settle in any part of the territory of India. However, such migration is not without its challenges.

#### **CASTE AND MIGRATION**

- According to NSS data, Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) are over-represented in short-term migration streams and under-represented in long-term migration streams.
- While a substantial portion of migration for all social categories is because of marriage, a high share of the both the SC and non-SC/ST categories report migrating for employment

- Apart from economic reasons, Lower caste groups migrate from rural to urban areas to escape from the caste-based discrimination in their source regions.
- SC and ST migrants largely confined to construction sector due to poor skills and lack of social networking.

#### **CHALLENGES OF MIGRANT WORKERS**

1. Political exclusion of migrants: Migrants do not usually have voting rights in their destination states, which leaves migrants unable to make political demands for entitlements and seek reforms.
2. Fragmented labour markets and adverse working conditions of migrant workers:
  - a. Fragmented labour market obscures supply chains and relationships between business owners and workers.
  - b. Existing gap in the unionisation of migrant workers leads to precarious nature of their employment.
3. Reasons for distress migration:
  - a. Low economic activities and low minimum wages in Source States.
  - b. Absence of community building organisations and administrative staff in source states has hindered access to development programs, pushing people towards migration.
4. Exploitation of migrant workers:
  - a. Lack of administrative capacity to handle issues of exploitation. State labour department have little engagement with migration issues.
  - b. Women from tribal areas are usually trafficked for inhuman activities such as prostitution.
  - c. Lack of access to safeguards and access to government scheme in destination states.
  - d. Lack of access to education of children of migrants.

Migration should be acknowledged as an integral part of development and government policies should not hinder but seek to facilitate internal migration.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS OF NITI AAYOG IN DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY ON MIGRANTS**

1. Rights based approach: This approach towards Migrant workers will lead to enhancing the agency and capability of the community.
2. Enabling the political inclusion of migrant workers so they can demand their entitlements. This will enhance accountability of political leadership towards welfare of migrant workers of their respective states.

**3. Setting up of inter-state coordination mechanisms.**

- a. A forum should be created between source states and destination states to work with each other.
- b. Inter-state migration management bodies to cover the nation's key migration corridors: Uttar Pradesh and Mumbai, Bihar and Delhi, Western Odisha and Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat, Odisha and Gujarat.

**4. Special focus on migrant workers:**

- a. Ministry of Labour and Employment should set up a special unit on migrant workers.
- b. This special unit manage migration resource centres in high migration zones.
- c. A national labour helpline should be established.
- d. Embedding a migration wing in each state's labour department.
- e. Creation of night shelters, short-stay homes and seasonal accommodation for migrants in cities.
- f. NALSA should establish grievance handling cells for migrants, fast-track legal responses for trafficking, minimum wage violations and workplace abuses for migrant workers.

5. Employers to be transparent about their value chains and formalise work contracts with migrant workers.

**6. Strategies to check distress migration:**

- a. Raising minimum wages in source states to bring major shift in local livelihood particularly of tribals.
- b. Community based organizations and local bodies should focus on more pro-poor development strategy in the source areas that can strengthen livelihood in source areas.
- c. Promoting the role of local bodies to aid migrant workers by maintaining a database of migrant workers, issue identity cards, provide migration management and governance through training, placement and social-security benefit assurance.
- d. Focus on skill development at migration source areas.
- e. Measures should be taken to mainstream education of migrant children under Right to Education Act.

**PORTABILITY OF GOVERNMENT BENEFITS TO MIGRANT WORKERS**

One of the major challenges faced by the migrants (especially short-term migrants) is that they are often denied entitlements and other benefits from the governments after their migration to new places. To

overcome this challenge and achieve inclusivity in coverage of government benefits following steps were taken:

- **One nation one ration card:** an option to all eligible ration card holders/beneficiaries covered under NFSA to access their entitlements from anywhere in the country.
- **PM-JAY:** the ability of patients to seek care at any empanelled hospital across the country regardless of their home state – is a key feature of PM-JAY.
- **Social security code (2020):** The code provides following benefits to the interstate migrants
  - (i) option to avail the benefits of the public distribution system either in the native state or the state of employment,
  - (ii) availability of benefits available under the building and other construction cess fund in the state of employment, and
  - (iii) insurance and provident fund benefit available to other workers in the same establishment.

**► SENIOR CITIZENS**

**Population explosion of elderly:** India is currently witnessing an explosion of elderly population due to increase in the longevity of old population and advances in medical technology. According to estimates, the share of old age persons in India's population is expected to reach by 12% of population by 2030 and 19% of population by 2050. According to projections, there will be increasing feminization of old age population.

**CHALLENGES FACED BY SENIOR CITIZENS**

1. **Ageism:** It refers to stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination towards others or oneself based on age. It is generally believed that old age people lack on productivity.
2. **Change in family structure and social milieu:**
  - a. Traditional in India, the family took care of elderly. However, with increasing nuclearisation, many children do not prefer to take care of their parents.
  - b. Higher level of unemployment and search for better economic opportunities have forced family members to move to urban centers away from their parents.
  - c. Increased level of skilling and education among girls and higher share of women employed in urban areas has made it difficult for families to take care of elderly.

### 3. Challenges of oldest old (80+):

- a. This population faces chronic inability and physical disability.
- b. Increased burden of healthcare costs especially non-communicable diseases such as Cancer, Hypertension and Diabetes. Often, they do not get benefits of health insurance schemes due to age caps in existing health insurance policies. This leads to increased out of pocket expenditures.
- c. There is dependency. They need for constant care and attention.

### 4. Challenges of elderly women:

- a. Elderly women have faced a lifetime of gender-based discrimination, lack access to property, have been burdened by household chores and often do not indulge in recreational activities.
- b. Women experience proportionately higher rates of chronic illness and disability in later life as compared to men.
- c. More than 50% of women over 80 years of age are widows.

### 5. Lack of access to pension and economic security:

- a. There is a high level of destitution among the elderly with many living below poverty line.
- b. Senior citizens will have no option but to never retire and continue to work if physically possible when their ability to produce and earn has declined.
- c. Sharp decline in living standards that for many can mean destitution.
- d. Access to pension and pension products is very low in India.

### 6. Emotional challenges:

- a. They are often widowed and often miss the companionship of their life-partner. They experience loneliness.
- b. Retirement brings lack of identity which old age people often find difficult to adjust to.
- c. Generation Gap between the elderly and the millennials often leads to conflict of values which leads to emotional challenges for the elderly.

### 7. Technology:

- a. They fail to adapt to modern technologies and feel alienated. For ex. Often they are not adept with social media sites, using smartphones and accessing internet.

### **WAY FORWARD**

The Draft National Policy for Senior Citizens 2020 has made the following suggestions:

#### 1. Promoting productive ageing:

- a. Age of retirement should be increased from 60 to 65.
- b. Second life career: Finding suitable places where old age can contribute with their experience. These careers can be teaching in schools, acting as consultants in government departments and businesses.
- c. Need to better create awareness in people in younger age groups about old-age planning, look after health and engage in Yoga etc to have a healthy old age life.

#### 2. Promoting multigenerational and inter-generational bonding

- a. The Maintenance of Senior Citizens act should be amended to make it compulsory for next generation of old age persons to take care of them if they want inheritance.
- b. Promotion of NGOs, community-based organizations to work for old age population.

#### 3. Economic security and pension:

- a. Senior friendly tax structures
- b. Promoting and expanding the existing pension programs to ensure income security for senior citizens. The old age pension scheme under the Ministry of Rural Development should be reviewed from time to time to cover all seniors living with disability or those below poverty line.
- c. Development of the concept of 'Silver Economy' which focuses on developing financial products for the old age needs.

#### 4. Healthcare:

- a. Universalisation of healthcare especially for old age population. All old age persons should be covered under the Ayushman Bharat Scheme.
- b. Upper age limit for coverage of health insurance should be increased.
- c. Greater attention on addressing non-communicable diseases with which old age people suffer disproportionately.
- d. Increased research and investment in setting up old age homes, geriatric care and specialized professionals who can address the needs to elderly.

### 5. Special focus on elderly females:

- a. Increasing pension for widows.
- b. Mass drives for ensuring they have access to government schemes.

### 6. Innovations in Old age:

- a. Startups working in developing tools for elderly need to be promoted. Special tools such as hearing aids and other prosthetics need to be much more accessible.
- b. Applications for old age population can be developed.

Elderly have cared for the current generation. It is our duty to care for them. This will lay the foundation of sustainable society based on ethics of care.

#### **RASHTRIYA VAYOSHRI YOJANA**

As per the Census figures of 2011, the population of senior citizens in India is 10.38 crore. More than 70% of the population of senior citizens live in rural areas of the country. A sizeable percentage (5.2%) of the senior citizens suffers from some sort of disabilities related to old age. Projections indicate that the number of elderly populations will increase to around 173 million by 2026.

The Government has hence devised the Central Sector Scheme- "Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana" to provide Physical aids and Assisted Living Devices for such senior citizens suffering from age related disabilities/ infirmities, who belong to BPL category.

#### **SAGE (SENIOR CARE AGEING GROWTH ENGINE) INITIATIVE**

SAGE portal is a "one-stop access" of elderly care products and services by credible start-ups. The start-ups will be selected based on innovative products and services, which they should be able to provide across sectors such as health, housing, care centres, apart from

technological access linked to finances, food and wealth management, and legal guidance.

#### **SENIOR CITIZENS' WELFARE FUND**

- A "Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund (SCWF)" has been established under the Finance Act, 2015, to be utilized for such schemes for the promotion of the welfare of senior citizens, in line with the National Policy on Older Persons.
- The unclaimed money lying under Small Savings Schemes, Employees Provident Fund, Public Provident Fund schemes, Life and non-life insurance schemes or policies maintained by insurance companies and accounts of Coal Mines Provident Fund is transferred into Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund.

#### **DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY ON SENIOR CITIZENS, 2020**

The draft policy aims to address the challenges faced by elderly by providing for –

- Tax exemptions on senior care solutions like care homes.
- Support to find second career options like teaching, consulting for income support.
- Integrated insurance products to help seniors to embrace a lifestyle of their choice.
- Microfinancing assistance to self-help groups of senior citizens.
- Subsidized medical support to below poverty line elderly people.
- Setting up of national and regional ageing institutions for geriatric healthcare.
- Creation of a welfare fund through welfare cess.
- Separate ministry dedicated to the elderly.
- Mechanism to prevent abuse of elderly people.



# P OVERTY AND RELATED ISSUES

## *Previous Year Questions*

YEAR	UPSC MAINS QUESTIONS
2020	The incidence and intensity of poverty are more important in determining poverty based on income alone". In this context analyse the latest United Nations Multidimensional Poverty Index Report.
2020	COVID-19 pandemic accelerated class inequalities and poverty in India? Comment.
2019	Despite Consistent experience of High growth, India still goes with the lowest indicators of human development. Examine the issues that make balanced and inclusive development elusive.
2017	Hunger and Poverty are the biggest challenges for good governance in India still today. Evaluate how far successive governments have progressed in dealing with these humongous problems. Suggest measures for improvement.
2017	'Poverty Alleviation Programmes in India remain mere show pieces until and unless they are backed by political will'. Discuss with reference to the performance of the major poverty alleviation programmes in India.
2015	Though there have been several different estimates of poverty in India, all indicate reduction in poverty levels over time. Do you agree? Critically examine with reference to urban and rural poverty indicators.
2013	The Central Government frequently complains on the poor performance of the State Governments in eradicating suffering of the vulnerable sections of the society. Restructuring of Centrally sponsored schemes across the sectors for ameliorating the cause of vulnerable sections of population aims at providing flexibility to the States in better implementation. Critically evaluate.

► **ISSUES RELATED TO POVERTY**

**POVERTY AND ITS ASSOCIATED ISSUES**

**Poverty:** Poverty is a social condition that is characterised by the lack of resources necessary for basic survival or necessary to meet a certain minimum level of living standards. Poverty is not only a condition of economic insufficiency; it is also social and political exclusion.

**TYPES OF POVERTY**

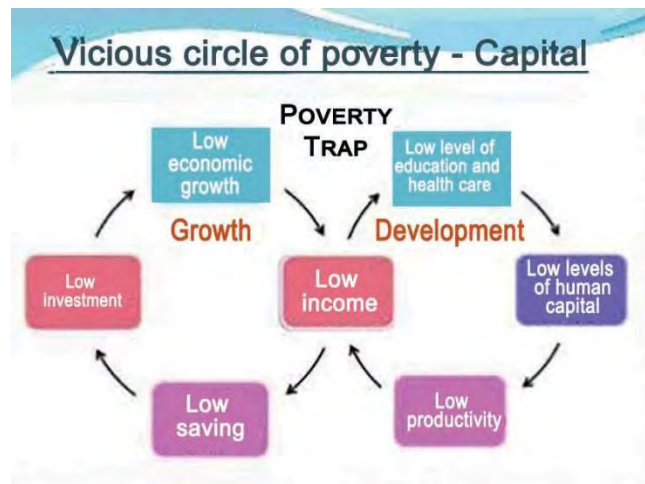
- **Absolute poverty:** It refers to the inability of a person or a household to provide even the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing and shelter. It is also known as “subsistence poverty”.
- **Relative Poverty:** - it is the condition in which people lack the minimum amount of income needed to maintain the average standard of living in the society in which they live. Relative poverty is measured in terms of judgements by members of a particular society of what is considered as a reasonable and acceptable standard of living according to the conventions of the day.
- **Situational poverty:** It is generally caused by a crisis or loss and is often temporary. Events causing situational poverty include environmental disasters, divorce, or severe health problems.

**CAUSES OF POVERTY:** The causes of poverty lie in the institutional and social factors that mark the life of the poor. The poor are deprived of quality education and unable to acquire skills which fetch better incomes. Also access to health care is denied to the poor. The main victims of caste, religious and other discriminatory practices are poor. These can be caused because of:

- **Economic causes of poverty**
  - Slow Economic growth and development
  - Increasing unemployment
  - Decreased Agricultural Output
  - Under-developed infrastructure
  - Inadequate industrialization in certain areas
  - Inadequate production of essential items
  - Deprivation of resources
  - Uneven concentration of wealth and resources
  - Economic inflation
  - Population Pressure
- **Social causes of Poverty:**
  - Social evils like untouchability, caste system
  - Lack of proper education and illiteracy

- Lack of social mobility of disadvantaged caste and communities
- Discrimination or lack of civil and political freedoms
- Lack of access to resource, nutrition etc.
- Ill health
- High divorce rates and Feminization of Poverty
- Inequality of available opportunities
- Poverty Trap
- **Geographical Factors:**
  - Density of population
  - Selective fertility of land
  - Uneven distribution of fertile land
  - Variable farm output
  - Differential rural and urban poverty
  - Environmental and climatic factors

**VICIOUS CYCLE OF POVERTY**



‘Vicious circle’ theory of poverty argues that the various circumstances of the poor combine to maintain them in poverty. The poor are trapped in the situation with little chance of escaping.

- Poor nutrition during pregnancy can hinder foetal brain development and increase the possibility of premature birth. Protein deficiency during early childhood can retard brain development. Inadequate diet can lead to low energy levels which can hinder progress at school and work.
- Over-crowded and unsanitary conditions, in which poor live, constitute a health hazard and reinforces the danger to health caused by inadequate diet.
- **Poverty is expensive-** Poor pays more because
  - Poor tends to buy smaller quantity and this raises the per unit price of goods

- High rate of interest is charged on the credit due to high risk of default
- Poor tends to do high risk jobs which makes them vulnerable to health hazards and pay more to healthcare than non-poor.

This is how various circumstances in the life of poor combine to maintain poverty.

## ► POVERTY ESTIMATION IN INDIA

Poverty line or poverty threshold is the monetary value of some normative expenditure that is essential for satisfying basic needs. It is the minimum level of income a person or a family needs to live on. A minimum income level used as an official standard for determining the proportion of a population living in poverty.

### PRE-INDEPENDENCE POVERTY ESTIMATION

- [Poverty and Unbritish Rule in India \(1901\)](#): Dadabhai Naoroji' in his book 'Poverty and Un-British Rule in India,' made the earliest estimate of poverty line at 1867-68 prices based on the cost of a subsistence diet for the emigrant coolies during their voyage.
- [National Planning Committee's \(1938\)](#): In 1938, the National Planning Committee set up under the chairmanship of Jawaharlal Nehru suggested a poverty line based on a minimum standard of living.
- [The Bombay Plan \(1944\)](#): Bombay Plan proponents suggested a poverty line which was much more modest than that of the NPC.

### POST- INDEPENDENCE POVERTY ESTIMATION

Various expert groups constituted by the Planning Commission have estimated the number of people living in poverty in India:

- [Working Group \(1962\)](#):
  - The poverty line in India was quantified for the first time by this Group in terms of a minimum requirement (food and non-food) of individuals for healthy living.
  - Separate poverty lines for rural and urban areas.
  - The poverty line excluded expenditure on health and education, both of which, it was assumed, were to be provided by the State.
- [Y.K. Alagh committee \(1979\)](#):
  - Official poverty counts began for the first time in India based on the approach of this Task Force.
  - Poverty line was defined as the per capita consumption expenditure level to meet average per capita daily calorie requirement of 2400 kcal

per capita per day in rural areas and 2100 kcal per capita per day in urban areas.

- different poverty line baskets (PLBs) for rural and urban consumption.

Until the 1990s, no attempt was made to capture differences in prices or differences in consumption patterns across states or over time. Poverty estimates were revised with each quinquennial NSS survey and price indices were used to adjust for price changes over time. So, it was regarded by some as inappropriate in giving true picture of poverty in the country.

- [Lakdawala Expert Group \(1993\)](#):
  - It did not redefine the poverty line and retained the poverty lines recommended by the Alagh Committee at the national level based on minimum nutritional requirements.
  - However, it disaggregated them into state-specific poverty lines to reflect the inter-state price differentials.
  - It also suggested updating of poverty line using the CPI-IW in urban areas and CPI-AL in rural areas rather than using National Accounts Statistics if the basket of goods and services used to calculate CPI-IW and CPI-AL reflect the consumption patterns of the poor.
- [Tendulkar Expert Group \(2009\)](#):
  - It recommended incorporation of private expenditure on health and education while estimating poverty.
  - It also recommended a shift away from basing the poverty lines based on intake norms to targeted outcomes.
 

E.g. Shift from basing the poverty lines from calorie norms used in all poverty estimations since 1979 and towards targeting nutritional, educational and health outcomes respectively.
  - Instead of two separate PLBs for rural and urban poverty lines, it recommended a uniform all-India urban PLB across rural and urban India.
  - It recommended using Mixed Reference Period (MRP) based estimates, as opposed to Uniform Reference Period (URP) based estimates used in earlier methods for estimating poverty.
- [Rangarajan Committee \(2014\)](#):
  - It reverted to the practice of having separate all-India rural and urban poverty estimates.
  - Recommended separate consumption baskets for rural and urban areas which include food items that ensure recommended calorie, protein & fat

intake and non-food items like clothing, education, health, housing and transport.

The government did not take a call on the report of the Rangarajan Committee. In July 2013, based on the Tendulkar poverty line, Planning Commission released poverty data for 2011-12. The number of poor in the country was pegged at 269.8 million or 21.9% of the population. After this, no official poverty estimates in India have been released.

**Uniform Resource Period (URP):** Till 1993-94, the poverty line was based on URP data, which involved asking people about their consumption expenditure across a 30-day recall period, i.e., information was based on the recall of consumption expenditure in the previous 30 days.

**Mixed Reference Period (MRP):** From 1999-2000 onwards, the NSSO switched to an MRP method which measures consumption of five low-frequency items (clothing, footwear, durables, education and institutional health expenditure) over the previous year, and all other items over the previous 30 days.

The existing poverty line approach has its inherent limitations. The criteria / approach recommended by various expert groups set up from time to time for determining “poverty line” have failed in capturing the actual incidence of poverty in the country. Important aspects such as ill health, low educational attainments, geographical isolation, powerlessness or disempowerment in civil society, caste or gender based inherent disadvantages etc. remain to be conclusively captured in identifying and enumerating the poor. Government programmes can be more effectively delivered if the multiple dimensions of poverty are recognized and the criteria nuanced accordingly.

**MULTI-DIMENSIONAL POVERTY**

Most countries around the world define poverty as the lack of money. However, the poor themselves consider their experience of poverty much more broadly. A person who is poor can suffer multiple disadvantages at the same time – like poor health or malnutrition, lack of clean water or electricity, poor quality of work or little schooling. Focusing on one factor alone, such as income, is not enough to capture the true reality of poverty. Multidimensional poverty measures can be used to

create a more comprehensive picture. They not only reveal who is poor but also how they are poor. MPI serves as a complementary measure to the more traditional measures that are based on income or consumption.

MPI is the product of the incidence of multidimensional poverty (proportion of multidimensionally poor people) and the intensity of multidimensional poverty.

**► GLOBAL MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDEX**

The global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), released by UNDP annually, measures acute multidimensional poverty across more than 100 developing countries. It does so by measuring each person’s deprivations across 10 indicators in three equally weighted dimensions: *Health, Education* and *Standard of living*. In the global MPI, people are counted as multidimensionally poor if they are deprived in one-third or more of 10 indicators.

Dimensions	Indices and Weightage
Health	Nutrition (1/6 <sup>th</sup> )
	Child mortality (1/6 <sup>th</sup> )
Education	Years of Schooling (1/6 <sup>th</sup> )
	School attendance (1/6 <sup>th</sup> )
Standard of Living	Cooking fuel (1/18 <sup>th</sup> )
	Sanitation(1/18 <sup>th</sup> )
	Drinking water (1/18 <sup>th</sup> )
	Electricity (1/18 <sup>th</sup> )
	Housing (1/18 <sup>th</sup> )
	Assets(1/18 <sup>th</sup> )

**INDIA'S MPI**

NITI Aayog was identified as the nodal agency for the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). It is responsible for constructing an indigenised index for monitoring the performance of States and Union Territories and ranking them. India’s MPI is comprehensive than the index prepared by UNDP.

Dimension	Indicator and Weightage	Deprivation
Health	Nutrition (1/12 <sup>th</sup> )	A household is considered deprived if any child between the ages of 0 to 59 months, or woman between the ages of 15 to 49 years, or man between the ages of 15 to 54 years -for whom nutritional information is available - is found to be undernourished.

	Child & Adolescent mortality (1/12 <sup>th</sup> )	A child/adolescent under 18 years of age has died in the family in the five-year period preceding the survey.
	Antenatal care (1/12 <sup>th</sup> )	A household is deprived if any woman in the household who has given birth in the 5 years preceding the survey, has not received at least 4 antenatal care visits for the most recent birth, or has not received assistance from trained skilled medical personnel during the most recent childbirth.
<b>Education</b>	Years of schooling (1/6 <sup>th</sup> )	Not even one member of the household aged 10 years or older has completed six years of schooling.
	School attendance (1/6 <sup>th</sup> )	Any school-aged child is not attending school up to the age at which he/she would complete class 8.
<b>Standard of living</b>	Cooking fuel (1/21)	A household cooks with dung, agricultural crops, shrubs, wood, charcoal or coal.
	Sanitation (1/21)	The household has unimproved or no sanitation facility or it is improved but shared with other households.
	Drinking water (1/21)	The household does not have access to improved drinking water or safe drinking water is at least a 30-minute walk from home.
	Electricity (1/21)	The household has no electricity.
	Housing (1/21)	The household has inadequate housing: the floor is made of natural materials, or the roof or wall are made of rudimentary materials.
	Assets (1/21)	The household does not own more than one of these assets: radio, TV, telephone, computer, animal cart, bicycle, motorbike, or refrigerator; and does not own a car or truck.
	Bank account (1/21)	No household member has a bank account or a post office account.

**BPL CENSUS FOR IDENTIFICATION OF POOR HOUSEHOLDS**

Identification of poor households is a prerequisite for proper targeting of beneficiaries under pro-poor programmes. While the erstwhile Planning Commission estimated poverty, actual identification of the “Below the Poverty Line (BPL)” households in rural areas were done by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD). Whereas for identification of BPL families in urban areas, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs is the nodal agency.

**► SOCIO-ECONOMIC CASTE CENSUS SURVEY (SECC) 2011**

The SECC 2011 ranked households in three categories:

- **Automatically Excluded:** Households meeting exclusion criteria - any of the 13 assets and income-based parameters are automatically excluded from welfare benefits.
- **Automatically Included:** Households satisfying inclusion criteria - any one of the 5 acute social

destitution parameters are automatically included for welfare benefits.

- **Others:** “Others” are ranked based on 7 indicators of deprivation and would, resources permitting be eligible for welfare benefits.



SECC-2011 allows for the first time to track the deprivation of households and address gaps effectively with focus on multi-dimensionality of poverty. The Government has used SECC data for identification of beneficiary households while implementing its social



welfare programmes including PMAY-G, DAY-NRLM, PMJAY-Ayushman Bharat etc.

**Limitations of SECC:**

- It does not collect information on the overall income or expenditure of the household.
- Over time, there is also high risk of household responses getting biased since the households know that their responses determine whether they receive benefits.
- After many years, all that is still available are the rural SECC results; no urban SECC results have yet been made public.

**An Alternative: Track the Progress of the Bottom 30%**

- If we did not want to commit to a poverty line, an alternative would be to track the economic progress of the bottom 30% of the population over time. Rising incomes of this group would imply declining poverty.
- The World Bank has recently adopted this approach (it tracks the incomes of the bottom 40%)
- The main limitation of this approach is that it will not allow us to answer questions such as how far we from are eliminating poverty or by how much have we reduced it.

Dr. Amartya Sen's capability approach to understanding poverty goes beyond income and stresses the whole range of means, available to achieve human capabilities such as literacy, longevity and access to income.

**► POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMMES IN INDIA**

**EMPLOYMENT AND SKILL-BUILDING PROGRAMMES**

- (i) Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana: The JRY was meant to generate meaningful employment opportunities for the unemployed and underemployed in rural areas through the creation of economic infrastructure and community and social assets.
- (ii) Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) 2005: The Act provides 100 days assured employment every year to every rural household. One-third of the proposed jobs would be reserved for women. Under the program, if an applicant is not provided employment within 15 days s/he will be entitled to a daily unemployment allowance.

- (iii) Ajeevika - National Rural Livelihood Mission (2011): It evolves out the need to diversify the needs of the rural poor and provide them jobs with regular income on monthly basis. Self Help Groups are formed at the village level to help the needy.
- (iv) National Urban Livelihood Mission: Focuses on organizing urban poor in Self Help Groups, creating opportunities for skill development leading to market-based employment and helping them to set up self-employment ventures by ensuring easy access to credit.
- (v) Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana: It will focus on the fresh entrant to the labour market, especially the labour market and class X and XII dropouts.

**FOOD AND SHELTER**

- (i) Food for Work Programme: It aims at enhancing food security through wage employment. Food grains are supplied to states free of cost, however, the supply of food grains from the Food Corporation of India (FCI) godowns has been slow.
- (ii) Annapurna: This scheme was started by the government in 1999–2000 to provide food to senior citizens who cannot take care of themselves and are not under the National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS). This scheme would provide 10 kg of free food grains a month for the eligible senior citizens. They mostly target groups of 'poorest of the poor' and 'indigent senior citizens'.
- (iii) Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana: It has two components: Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana (Grameen) and Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana (Urban). It was launched in 2015. It unites schemes like Ujjwala yojana (provides LPG to BPL), access to toilets, water, drinking water facilities and Saubhagya Yojana (electricity).
- (iv) Other schemes like Integrated Child Development Program, Midday Meal scheme etc. are also providing food to the needy sections like children and women.

**ACCESS TO CREDIT**

- (i) Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi: This scheme aims to provide financial assistance to provide working capital support to all the landholding farmers. This brings in the idea of universal basic income for the farmers in India.
- (ii) Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana: It aimed at direct benefit transfer of subsidy, pension, insurance etc. and attained the target of opening 1.5 crore bank

accounts. The scheme particularly targets the unbanked poor.

- (iii) Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP): It was introduced in 1978-79 aimed at aiding the rural poor in the form of subsidy and bank credit for productive employment opportunities through successive plan periods.

## ► CHALLENGES IN ERADICATING POVERTY IN INDIA

Many programmes and schemes have been implemented to directly attack poverty through generating work, providing healthcare, education, nutrition and support to backward areas and vulnerable groups. Although the poverty rate has declined, a large proportion of our population still lives in poverty.

- i. While many poverty alleviation programmes have been initiated, they function in silos.
- ii. No systematic attempt to identify people who are in poverty, determine their needs, address them and enable them to move above the poverty line.
- iii. No commitment by government to support an individual or a household for getting minimum level of subsistence through any programme or group of programmes.
- iv. Resources allocated to anti-poverty programmes are inadequate and there is a tacit understanding that targets will be curtailed according to fund availability. For instance, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (Mgnrega) does not provide the guaranteed 100 days of work in many states.
- v. No method to ensure that programmes reach everybody they are meant for. While our plans have taken cognisance of the literature on chronic poverty and dynamics of poverty, alleviation programmes and schemes have not used this understanding to address this issue.

### WAY FORWARD

- i. To address poverty effectively, people who formulate alleviation programmes need to understand and address chronic poverty and the dynamics of poverty. We know, for instance, that poverty is especially prevalent among certain occupational groups. Casual agricultural labour is the largest group that is stuck in poverty, as per data from the socioeconomic caste census. These are the “working poor”, for whom the State has not been

able to secure the right to an adequate means of livelihood. This must be addressed.

- ii. Geographical dimension to poverty: Concentration of poverty in certain parts of the country. So, there should be renewed focus on the poorest districts: to universalise access in these areas and applying indicators that assess performance-based improvement of the most vulnerable.
- iii. Poverty has persisted among certain marginalised groups, especially among the Scheduled Tribes. Hence, the inclusion of tribal girls or women in programmes in the poorest blocks and villages should be used as an indicator of performance.
- iv. Employment-intensive Sustained Rapid Growth: First, by creating jobs that pay steadily rising real wages, it directly dents poverty and, second, it leads to growth in government revenues which in turn allow the expansion of social expenditures at faster pace.
- v. The poor predominantly reside in rural areas where incomes critically depend on agricultural growth. Agricultural Development by raising productivity in agriculture, helping small & marginal farmers by reforming tenancy laws etc. must be taken care off.
- vi. Making anti-poverty programs such as the Public Distribution System (PDS), Midday Meal Scheme, MGNREGA and Housing for All more effective.
- vii. Healthcare costs are huge, particularly for the poor or who are on margins. It is important by way of policy to make sure that people taken out of poverty do not slip back into poverty. There should be enough state capacity to provide health care, especially at rural level.
- viii. As land is the major means of production in rural areas, a suggested remedy to the problem of poverty is to provide land rights to all those who depend upon it.

**Conclusion:** The alleviation of poverty cannot be effective through anti-poverty programmes alone but will require democratic participation on the one hand and changes in economic structures on the other to ensure access to all the resources, opportunities and basic services.

## ► IMPACT OF COVID ON POVERTY IN INDIA

The outbreak of the novel coronavirus last year led to mass havoc, fueling a global health and economic crisis, the death of millions, lockdown of industries, large-scale

job cuts, and catastrophic income shocks. It pushed the world into a deep recession, which for the first time after the Great Depression, is creating economic downturns in terms of job, income and consumption loss. Across the globe, around 3.9 million people have died, and millions have been pushed into poverty. India is no exception to this.

Initially, the only means available to deal with this situation was a state of isolation or instituting restricted access called lockdown as an absolute security measure, whose long shadows imply that:

- i. Over 400 million people risk sliding into poverty, as they are forced to depend on informal work. (ILO)
- ii. The Indian economy contracted by 7.3% in 2020, the greatest contraction since independence.
- iii. This pandemic will push an additional 88 million to 115 million people into extreme poverty with the total rising to about 150 million by 2021 where the new poor would be in countries already having high poverty rates. (World Bank)
- iv. 218 million additional people (168 million in rural and 50 million in urban areas) would have been pushed into poverty at 12 % contraction in their monthly per capita consumption in the year 2020-21.
- v. Even not a third of total school goers could access online education. The class inequality reveals the deep digital divide.
- vi. As well as a public health crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on poverty levels and inequality.
- vii. Women, alongside the poor, elderly, disabled and migrant populations, have borne the brunt of the fallout from the pandemic.
- viii. Women negatively influenced by class are facing increasing violence and struggling against inequalities.
- ix. Across social categories, a higher percentage of people from marginalised groups are expected to fall into poverty than the other groups. For instance, at an all-India level, around 13-20 per cent of additional SC/ST people are expected to fall into

poverty as compared to 12-16 per cent of upper caste people. The Covid-19 induced poverty, therefore, leads to widening disparity between SC/ST and non-SC/ST groups.

- x. The loss of life and reduced capabilities among working-age adults can have strong spill-over effects within households, who may be forced to pull children out of school and reduce their investments in other health inputs. The result is a poverty trap where low human capital investment perpetuates diminished capabilities for the next generation.
- xi. The pandemic has induced even greater levels of automation, a change in demand for skills, and limited the growth of low-wage occupations. For those who are economically vulnerable to begin with, the opportunities to rebuild are complicated. These pressures are particularly salient in the informal sector that currently employs more than 90 per cent of India's female workers and 86 per cent of male workers.
- xii. Across major occupations, self-employed agriculture, non-agriculture, and casual labourers bear the highest impact in rural areas. In urban areas, casual labourers disproportionately bear the brunt of the crises.
- xiii. As class inequalities widen, the differential classes with the lowest access to financial strengthening inputs get added to extreme poverty.

#### **WAY FORWARD**

A rising number of poor can lead to demand shocks in the economy, which will further lead to the contractions in GDP growth worsening the socio-economic conditions of the country. Therefore, the identification of poor and vulnerable groups is need of the hour so that directed interventions like national food security, direct cash transfer and other social security programmes prevent these groups from further falling deeper into penury and impoverishment. A large fiscal stimulus along with intermediate informal employment insurgency through MGNREGA and other employment generation programmes are urgent to rein the adverse impact of covid-19 on the welfare of the masses.

# H HEALTH ISSUES

## Previous Year Questions

YEAR	UPSC MAINS QUESTIONS
2021	“Earn while you learn’ scheme needs to be strengthened to make vocational education and skill training meaningful.” Comment.
2018	Appropriate local community-level healthcare intervention is a prerequisite to achieve ‘Health for All’ in India. Explain.
2017	‘To ensure effective implementation of policies addressing water, sanitation and hygiene needs, the identification of beneficiary segments is to be synchronized with the anticipated outcomes’ Examine the statement in the context of the WASH scheme.
2016	Professor Amartya Sen has advocated important reforms in the realms of primary education and primary health care. What are your suggestions to improve their status and performance?
2015	Public health system has limitations in providing universal health coverage. Do you think that the private sector could help in bridging the gap? What other viable alternatives would you suggest?
2013	Identify the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that are related to health. Discuss the success of the actions taken by the Government for achieving the same.

### ► HEALTH STATUS OF INDIA

With the second-largest population in the world, India is home to over 1.3 billion people.

- At an average of two children born per woman in 2018, the country’s birth rate stood at 18.6 for every thousand inhabitants. In 2019, the average fertility rate for Indian women stood at around 2.2, that is, there were close to two children born per woman in the country that year. Despite a decreasing fertility rate, the total population of India is expected to increase over the next few years.
- The average life expectancy has seen a consistent increase since the 1920s and was around 69 years in 2017. However, this was still lower than the global average of around 72 years.
- In 2019, the crude birth rate in India amounted to 17.64 live births per 1,000 inhabitants.
- In 2017, the country’s death rate was recorded at about 7.2 deaths for every thousand inhabitants.
- Infant mortality has also been on a steady decline over the years. In 2019, the infant mortality rate in India was at about 28.3 deaths per 1,000 live births, a significant decrease from previous years.
- India has the highest rate of excess female deaths, 13.5 per 1,000 female births, which suggests that an estimated one in nine deaths of females below the

age of 5 may be attributed to postnatal sex selection. (UN Report, 2020)

- India had the highest number of undernourished people in the Asia Pacific region. In 2018, there were approximately 189.2 million people who were undernourished in India.
- 70 percent of Indian women and 59 percent Indian men were unhealthy based on their diet and lifestyle. Heart disease has been one of the leading causes of death in India for over two decades, along with an increasing propensity for cancer and diabetes. (2019)
- India has made significant progress in reducing the number of vector-borne disease fatalities, but it remains a problem in many regions of the country. In 2017, the country recorded the highest number of malaria cases throughout the Asia Pacific region. Other life-threatening diseases that were prevalent in the country were dengue, typhoid, tuberculosis, and HIV-AIDS.
- The share of mental health disorders among adults stood at around 14.3 percent in 2017.

## ► UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

Universal Health Coverage is a means to promote human right to health. UHC has been included in new Sustainable Development Goals adopted by UN. UN SDGs states that all UN Member States have agreed to try to achieve Universal Health Coverage by 2030. This includes financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.

It is obligation of the state to provide free and universal access to quality health-care services to its citizens.

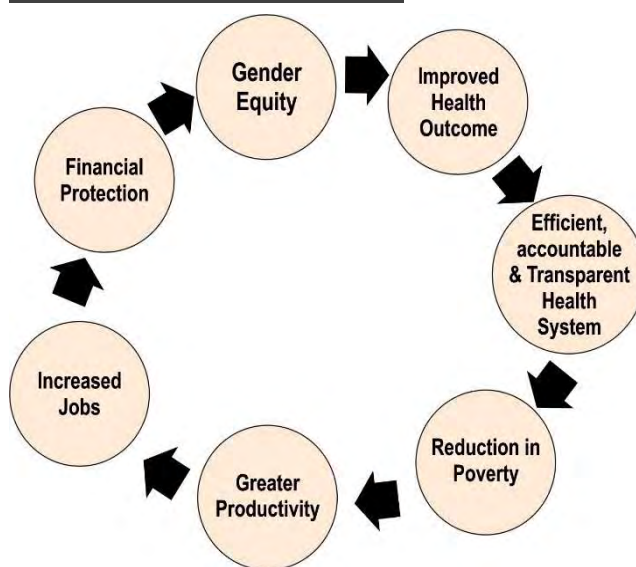
**Definition:** World Health Organization defines universal healthcare as “all people and communities can use the promotive, preventive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative health services they need, of sufficient quality to be effective, while also ensuring that the use of these services does not expose the user to financial hardship.”

### CHALLENGES IN ACHIEVING UHC IN INDIA

- Largest disease burden in the world
- Reproductive and child health problems, malnutrition
- Issues of gender equality
- Poor availability of trained human resources in health
- Inadequate research to achieve healthcare for all

- Commercialized, fragmented, and unregulated health-care delivery systems
- Inequalities in access to healthcare
- Imbalance in resource allocation, high out of pocket health expenditures
- Rising ageing population, social determinants of health such as poverty, illiteracy, alcoholism etc.
- Too frequent and too severe natural disasters
- Lack of inter-sectoral co-ordination
- Political pull and push of different forces and interests

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES FROM UHC



### STEPS TO ACHIEVE UHC IN INDIA

It is possible for India, even within the financial resources available to it, to devise an effective architecture of health financing and financial protection that can offer UHC to every citizen.

- Health Financing and Financial Protection:** Government (Central and states combined) should increase public expenditures on health
- Health Service Norms:** Develop a National Health Package that offers, as part of the entitlement of every citizen, essential health services at different levels of the health care delivery system.
- Human Resources for Health:** Ensure adequate numbers of trained health care providers and technical health care workers at different levels by:
  - giving primacy to the provision of primary health care
  - increasing HRH density to achieve WHO norms of at least 23 health workers per 10,000 populations (doctors, nurses, and midwives).



- (iv) Community Participation and Citizen Engagement: Organise regular Health Assemblies.
- (v) Access to Medicines, Vaccines and Technology: Strengthen the public sector to protect the capacity of domestic drug and vaccines industry to meet national needs.
- (vi) Management and Institutional Reforms: Introduce All India and state level Public Health Service Cadres and a specialized state level Health Systems Management Cadre to give greater attention to public health and strengthen the management of the UHC system.

#### GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES FOR UHC IN INDIA

- National Health Policy 2017 envisages the attainment of the highest possible level of health without anyone having to face financial hardship consequently.
- Mission Indradhanush, one of largest global public health initiatives launched in 2014. In its four phases till date, MI has successfully reached over 25 million children in over 528 districts.
- Pradhan Mantri Dialysis Program has been launched to provide free services through Dialysis Units under Free Drugs and Diagnostics Program.
- AMRIT outlets have been established to provide subsidised medicines
- To provide comprehensive primary care, Government has announced transforming 1.5 lakh sub health centres to Health and Wellness centres in the country.
- Universal screening of common NCDs such as diabetes, hypertension and common cancers at the sub-centre and Primary Health Centre has been initiated.
- Through two wings of Ayushman Bharat, Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) and Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana (PMJAY), government has been making quality healthcare affordable and accessible for crores of people in the country.
- National Health Protection Scheme which aims to reach over 10 crore poor and vulnerable families.
- Ayushman Bharat is a flagship scheme of Government of India, was launched as recommended by National Health Policy 2017, to achieve the vision of Universal Health Coverage

The transformation of India's health system to become an effective platform for UHC is an evolutionary process. The design and delivery of the UHC system requires the active engagement of multiple stakeholders and calls for constructive contributions from diverse sectors. The need to create an efficient and equitable health system

is so urgent (with outbreak of Pandemics) that the task cannot be deferred any longer. We must rise to this challenge and usher in UHC, which the Indian people deserve, desire and demand.

#### ► AYUSHMAN BHARAT

Ayushman Bharat is a flagship scheme of Government of India, was launched as recommended by the National Health Policy 2017, to achieve the vision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC). This initiative has been designed to meet Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its underlining commitment, which is to "leave no one behind."

Ayushman Bharat is an attempt to move from sectoral and segmented approach of health service delivery to a comprehensive need-based health care service. This scheme aims to undertake path breaking interventions to holistically address the healthcare system (covering prevention, promotion and ambulatory care) at the primary, secondary and tertiary level. Ayushman Bharat adopts a continuum of care approach, comprising of two inter-related components, which are –

1. Health and Wellness Centers (HWCs): In February 2018, the Government of India announced the creation of 1,50,000 Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) by transforming the existing Sub Centres and Primary Health Centres. These centres are to deliver Comprehensive Primary Health Care (CPHC) bringing healthcare closer to the homes of people. They cover both, maternal and child health services and non-communicable diseases, including free essential drugs and diagnostic services.
2. Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY): The second component under Ayushman Bharat is PM-JAY, the largest health assurance scheme in the world, which aims at providing a health cover of Rs. 5 lakhs per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization across public and private empanelled hospitals in India.

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF AYUSHMAN BHARAT

- (i) The increasing life expectancy rate over 68.3 years has improved the quality of health care in India.
- (ii) Health care is an essential factor, along with other variants like income, hygiene, and nutrition.
- (iii) According to the World Health Organization, every country must invest at least 4% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on their health.
- (iv) The out-of-pocket expenditure on healthcare is 40% in India.

- (v) The Government Scheme not only covers for expensive treatments but also provides quality services to all the people eligible under the plan.

### CHALLENGES

- i. **Exclusion Error:** Various issues with SECC data have been pointed out by experts such as a non-transparent method of data collection, and several contradictions in the data. Similarly, Census data are outdated, and population numbers have changed over time. Hence, more reliable estimates should be used.
- ii. **Asymmetric Federalism:** Several states have increased the coverage of the scheme via state schemes. This entails increased expenditure by states which choose to expand coverage, such as Kerala. However, this may be particularly hard for cash-strapped states like Bihar who depend on Union government funding more than their own resources.
- iii. **Ghost Beneficiaries:** Unrelated ineligible beneficiaries are admitted based on forging a relationship with the head of the beneficiary family. The challenge that lies ahead for National Health Authority is to strengthen artificial intelligence to pick up all such instances of fraud.
- iv. **Cost:** PM-JAY rates remained a mere guideline, which has either kept big hospitals at bay or have not been followed by states.
- v. **Connectivity:** Ensuring seamless connectivity in regions of turmoil like Kashmir.
- vi. **Empanelment:** Empaneling hospitals in remote areas like the north-east and Leh remains a challenge.
- vii. **Inequity in access:** It is a serious issue, especially for the poor who suffer from serious ailments as their illness is not "listed" among the medical packages AB PM-JAY provides for.
- viii. **Implementation:**
  - a. Even in the previous public health insurance schemes of some states, the private healthcare providers have been facing huge challenges.
  - b. Particularly, improper procedure for empanelment, cost fixing mechanisms and inordinate delay in reimbursement to hospitals are some issues.
  - c. Also, a proper mechanism for standardisation of services across the spectrum is absent and the current 'National Accreditation Board for

Hospitals' (NABH) certification covers only some hospitals.

### ► COVID-19 AND LEARNINGS FOR HEALTHCARE

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought rare attention to science, particularly aspects related to healthcare, and India's response has underlined its existing scientific capabilities.

The dreadful aspect of the pandemic is that it might not be the last one. Hence, the lessons that should be considered are:

- (i) **Atmanirbhar Bharat:** If anything, the experience of this pandemic has made the government more convinced of the need for self-reliance, at least in the strategic sectors especially the science and technology. The fact that India was not even producing relatively simple things like ventilators had come as a shock to the government at the start of the outbreak. Going forward, there is likely to be greater encouragement for laboratories and industry to support domestic manufacturing of components and instruments.
- (ii) **Promoting Start-Up Culture:** During the pandemic there were many start-ups that filled the supply gaps in medical equipment and instruments. The most reliable information management systems, providing crucial data about the epidemic, were set up and run by young entrepreneurs, students and researchers. A push from the GOI is expected for start-ups in the health sector in the line of other sectors.
- (iii) **Strengthening Collaboration:** Pandemic had made government's belief that there is need to give a 'direction' to scientific research, at least to the scientific output, that comes out of our laboratories and industry. The space for institutionalised collaboration between the government, industry and the scientific community is already being created in several new missions, or technology hubs, that are being set up. In most of these missions, or hubs, it is the industry or the academia that is playing the lead role, while the government tries to facilitate an enabling environment.
- (iv) **Stronger Health System:**
  - a) **Infrastructure:** The current pandemic should prompt a strengthening of the public health infrastructure.

- b) Dedicated surveillance workforce: A few states are already working on creating, or augmenting, a dedicated surveillance workforce that can detect similar outbreaks in future and help contain it at an early stage.
- c) Primary Healthcare: Greater empowerment of primary healthcare staff is required.
- d) Integrated Disease Surveillance Program (IDSP), set up in 2004: Scientists argue it would be more effective to empower the IDSP, rather than burden ICMR with a job that is not its core expertise.
- (v) Vaccine Research: Though the existing vaccine manufacturing capacity is coming in handy, India has been found wanting in development of its own vaccine. A country the size, and scientific capability of India should have been one of the front-runners in vaccine research.
- (vi) New Science Policy: A new Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy is in the final stages of preparation. It is expected to do to reform the science sector, heavily influenced by the lessons learnt during the pandemic.

It is the lessons learnt from this crisis that we could see guiding our science and technology policy in the coming years, not just in the realm of health sector, but science in general. An event as disruptive as the Covid-19 pandemic invariably turns out to be a blessing in disguise for making systemic improvements, if those in command are willing to imbibe the lessons that have emerged.

## ► PRADHAN MANTRI BHARTIYA JANAUSHADHI PARIYOJANA (PMBJP)

PMBJP is a campaign launched by Department of Pharmaceuticals to provide quality medicines at affordable prices to the masses. PMBJP stores have been set up to provide generic drugs, which are available at lesser prices but are equivalent in quality and efficacy as expensive branded drugs.

### ACHIEVEMENT

Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana has reached its 50% goal of opening generic medicine stores in all districts and union territories. Over 6000 plus stores are now opened in India as per the report released in 2020.

### SALIENT FEATURE

- (i) Ensure access to quality medicines
- (ii) Extend coverage of quality generic medicines to reduce the out-of-pocket expenditure on medicines and thereby redefine the unit cost of treatment per person
- (iii) Create awareness about generic medicines through education and publicity so that quality is not synonymous with only high price
- (iv) A public program involving Government, PSUs, Private Sector, NGO, Societies, Co-operative Bodies and other Institutions
- (v) Create demand for generic medicines by improving access to better healthcare through low treatment cost and easy availability wherever needed in all therapeutic categories.

### BENEFITS OF JAN AUSHADHI CAMPAIGN

Jan Aushadhi initiative will make available quality drugs at affordable prices through dedicated stores selling generic medicines which are available at lesser prices but are equivalent in quality and efficacy as expensive branded drugs.

- (i) Promote greater awareness about cost effective drugs and their prescription.
- (ii) Make available unbranded quality generic medicines at affordable prices through public-private partnership.
- (iii) Encourage doctors, more specifically in government hospital to prescribe generic medicines.
- (iv) Enable substantial savings in health care more particularly in the case of poor patients and those suffering from chronic ailments requiring long periods of drug use.
- (v) Increased employment opportunities for a lot of individuals.
- (vi) Credit facilities and other amenities have helped even economically poor people to earn a living. The most benefitted of the scheme are the ones in the unorganized work sector and ones suffering from ailments requiring long term medication.
- (vii) Kendras were opened only in government hospitals whereas now it may be opened outside the premises of the hospital also.
- (viii) Product basket includes surgical and consumables apart from therapeutic medicines. Private suppliers were included to provide generic medicines.
- (ix) Grant-in-aid is provided to stores run other than government and assistance is also provided to SC/ST and differently abled persons.

**CHALLENGES**

- i. Major constraints faced by the Jan Aushadhi scheme is the misconception among the people that cheap medicines are not original and not effective.
- ii. Due to lack of campaign and awareness among the poor people, the scheme did not reach each citizen.
- iii. Doctors are not prescribing generic medicines. Doctors in collaboration with the pharma industry, prescribe branded medicines so that they can make a profit from those industries.
- iv. Research shows that the lack of generic medicines in stores is also a reason for the failure of the scheme.

**CONCLUSION**

Jan Aushadhi scheme was a major step in encouraging the sale of generic medicines and enabling poor people to procure medicines. Effective implementation will curb the practice of prescribing branded medicines. The government needs to take better awareness campaigns to popularize the scheme which will increase the sale of generic medicines.

**► ONE HEALTH APPROACH**

The term 'One Health' was first used in 2003–2004, and was associated with the emergence of severe acute respiratory disease (SARS) in early 2003 and subsequently by the spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1, and by the series of strategic goals known as the 'Manhattan Principles' derived at a meeting of the Wildlife Conservation Society in 2004, which clearly recognised the link between human and animal health and the threats that diseases pose to food supplies and economies.

**DEFINITION:** 'One Health' is an approach to designing and implementing programs, policies, legislation and research in which multiple sectors communicate and work together to achieve better public health outcomes. The areas of work in which a One Health approach is particularly relevant include food safety, the control of zoonoses, and combatting antibiotic resistance. (WHO)

India's 'One Health' vision derives its blueprint from the agreement between the tripartite-plus alliance comprising the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) — a global initiative supported by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank under the

overarching goal of contributing to 'One World, One Health'.

**NEED FOR 'ONE HEALTH' APPROACH IN INDIA**

- (i) Many of the same microbes infect animals and humans, as they share the eco-systems, they live in.
- (ii) Efforts by just one sector cannot prevent or eliminate the problem. For instance, rabies in humans is effectively prevented only by targeting the animal source of the virus (for example, by vaccinating dogs).
- (iii) Information on influenza viruses circulating in animals is crucial to the selection of viruses for human vaccines for potential influenza pandemics.
- (iv) Drug-resistant microbes can be transmitted between animals and humans through various sources, so to effectively contain it, a well-coordinated approach in humans and in animals is required.
- (v) Scientists have observed that there are more than 1.7 million viruses circulating in wildlife, and many of them are likely to be zoonotic, which implies that unless there is timely detection, India risks facing many more pandemics in times to come.

To achieve targets under the 'One Health' vision, efforts are ongoing to address challenges pertaining to:

- (i) Veterinary manpower shortages
- (ii) Lack of information sharing between human and animal health institutions
- (iii) Inadequate coordination on food safety at slaughter, distribution, and retail facilities.

**INDIA'S INITIATIVES**

- (i) In keeping with the long-term objectives, India established a National Standing Committee on Zoonoses as far back as the 1980s.
- (ii) This year, funds were sanctioned for setting up a 'Centre for One Health' at Nagpur.
- (iii) The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD) has launched several schemes to mitigate the prevalence of animal diseases since 2015.
- (iv) DAHD will soon establish a 'One Health' unit within the Ministry.
- (v) The government is working to revamp programs that focus on capacity building for veterinarians and upgrading the animal health diagnostic system such as Assistance to States for Control of Animal Diseases (ASCAD).

- (vi) In the revised component of assistance to States/Union Territories, there is increased focus on vaccination against livestock diseases and backyard poultry.
- (vii) DAHD has partnered with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in the National Action Plan for Eliminating Dog Mediated Rabies.

#### WAY FORWARD

- (i) Consolidating existing animal health and disease surveillance systems — e.g., the Information Network for Animal Productivity and Health, and the National Animal Disease Reporting System
- (ii) Developing best-practice guidelines for informal market and slaughterhouse operation (e.g., inspections, disease prevalence assessments)
- (iii) Creating mechanisms to operationalise 'One Health' at every stage down to the village level.
- (iv) Awareness generation
- (v) Increased investments toward meeting 'One Health' targets

#### CONCLUSION

Today's health problems are frequently complex, transboundary, multifactorial, and across species, and if approached from a purely medical, veterinary, or ecological standpoint, it is unlikely that sustainable mitigation strategies will be produced. 'One Health' is ever more salient as the world continues to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic.

### ► NATIONAL POLICY FOR RARE DISEASES, 2021

Aims at lowering the incidence and prevalence of rare diseases based on an integrated and comprehensive preventive strategy encompassing awareness generation, premarital, post-marital, pre-conception and post-conception screening and counselling programs to prevent births of children with rare diseases, and within the constraints on resources and competing health care priorities, enable access to affordable health care to patients of rare diseases.

WHO defines rare disease as a debilitating lifelong disease or disorder with a prevalence of 1 or less, per 1000 population.

#### ISSUES & CHALLENGES

- (i) Varying definitions: The use of varying definitions and diverse terminology can result in confusion and

inconsistencies and has implications for access to treatment and for research and development.

- (ii) Diagnosis: Early diagnosis of rare diseases is a challenge owing to multiple factors that include lack of awareness among primary care physicians, lack of adequate screening and diagnostic facilities.
- (iii) Research and development: Relatively little known about the pathophysiology or the natural history of rare diseases making R&D for most rare diseases a challenge.
- (iv) Challenges in Treatment:
  - a) Unavailability of treatment also about 95% rare diseases have no approved treatment
  - b) Prohibitive cost of treatment, as the number of persons suffering from rare diseases is small, making insignificant market for drug manufacturers.

#### WAY FORWARD

- (i) The Central Government will work with the State governments to develop manpower and build capacity of health professionals at various levels.
- (ii) Develop Standard Operating Protocols to be used at various levels of care for patients with rare diseases to improve early diagnosis, better care coordination and quality of life.
- (iii) Prevention at different levels i.e., from screening of rare diseases to provision of better care and medical rehabilitation.
- (iv) Centers of Excellence (under Rare Disease Policy and Nidan Kendras) with facilities for diagnosis, prevention and treatment of rare diseases.
- (v) Increasing affordability of drug related to rare diseases

The field of rare diseases is complex and heterogeneous also the field is still at a nascent stage posing varied challenges. Nevertheless, it is important to take steps, in the short as well as long term, with the objective of tackling rare diseases in a holistic and comprehensive manner.

### ► VACCINE HESITANCY

India launched the world's largest Covid-19 vaccination program in 2021. Despite logistical hiccups, India surpassed the USA in administering the maximum number of doses in the world. However, only 4 per cent of India's population is fully vaccinated compared to 45 per cent in the US and 48 per cent in the UK. The abysmal low percent of vaccinated is much attributed to the demand-side barriers like vaccine hesitancy which is



less debated. Even before the emergence of Covid-19, WHO recognised vaccine hesitancy as one of the 10 leading threats to global health. WHO defines 'Vaccine Hesitancy' as a "delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccination despite the availability of vaccination services."

#### CHALLENGES LEADING TO VACCINE HESITANCY

- (i) Lack of trust in safety and efficacy of the newly developed vaccines
- (ii) Fear of side-effects
- (iii) Rumours about infertility and death after taking the vaccine
- (iv) Inconvenience of registration/booking slots,
- (v) Low-risk perception from Covid-19
- (vi) Absence of incentives for rural and urban poor
- (vii) High Price of vaccination
- (viii) Religious beliefs
- (ix) Reluctant to take vaccination highest being in Tamil Nadu (40 %)

#### STEPS TO BE TAKEN

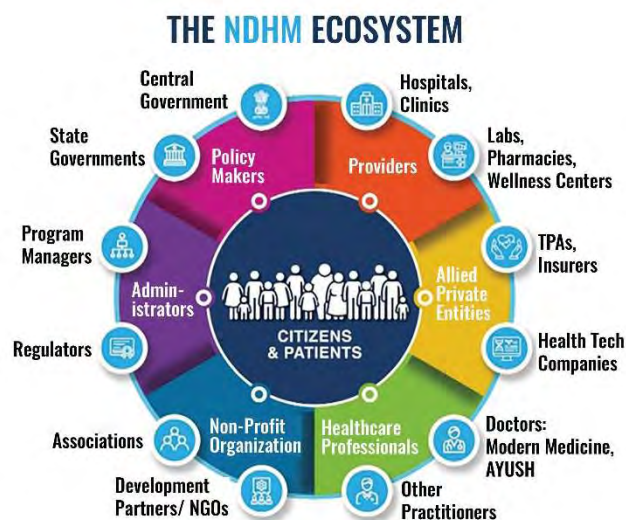
- (i) Target-based approach focusing on the needs and concerns of individuals, groups, and communities.
- (ii) Pro -Vaccine campaigns to curb misinformation through social media, newspaper, TV etc.
- (iii) Improving accessibility
- (iv) Active involvement of local influencers, religious leaders, traditional healers, local NGOs, local doctors, panchayat heads, etc., may encourage vaccine uptake.
- (v) Indelible ink, generally used in elections, can be applied on the fingers of vaccinated people. Such a campaign will create a sense of nation-building and can encourage participation.
- (vi) Given that a large proportion of the rural population works as daily wagers and fears losing a day's income due to vaccination, workers may be given one-day MGNREGA wage for taking the shot.
- (vii) Small incentives, (1kg rice and pulses, 1 liter of cooking oil, etc.) can be given to compensate people for the time and money they spend to get the vaccine.
- (viii) Behaviour innovations like announcing prize money (lucky draw) amongst the people vaccinated in selected centres with low uptake can boost vaccination rate.

Achieving the ambitious target to vaccinate 300 million individuals by September 2021, requires a collaborative

effort from relevant stakeholders to prevent the potential third wave. Going forward, India's ability to achieve its objectives of vaccination campaigns will depend on health care capacity, overcoming vaccine hesitancy and misinformation, and ensuring an equitable distribution of vaccines.

#### ► NATIONAL DIGITAL HEALTH MISSION (NDMH)

The National Digital Health Mission (NDHM) aims to develop the backbone necessary to support the integrated digital health infrastructure of the country. It will bridge the existing gap amongst different stakeholders of healthcare ecosystem through digital highways.



#### VISION: UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

NDHM shall create a seamless online platform "through the provision of a wide-range of data, information and infrastructure services, duly leveraging open, interoperable, standards-based digital systems" while ensuring the security, confidentiality and privacy of health-related personal information.

**INTRODUCTION:** PM's announcement of National Digital Health Mission (NDMH) on Independence Day has raised hopes of accessible medical services for all citizens of the country.

#### BENEFITS

- (i) A good database for diseases and healthcare monitoring.
- (ii) Revolutionize healthcare provision and public health research in India.
- (iii) Help to understand disease and treatment history, its hotspots, and social and demographic correlates.

- (iv) Mapping the follow-up of patients and healthcare-seeking behaviour is critical for treatment of many chronic diseases.
- (v) The health ID will give a much-needed technological impetus to the sector that has long been found wanting, more so amid the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.
- (vi) With telemedicine also being brought within the ambit, the program ensures that doctors will be able to provide direct access to remote areas across the country.

#### CHALLENGES IN DIGITAL HEALTH MISSION:

- (i) Meagre health budget of India.
- (ii) Most villages do not have the required digital infra to support doctor consultations via telemedicine platforms.
- (iii) Challenge to bring the private health care sector under the NDHM.
- (iv) Given that private sector involvement under the Ayushman Bharat Yojana is not so impressive, handling the private sector will be a greater challenge under NDHM.
- (v) Data can be highly misused by the private healthcare sector, diagnostic labs, pharmaceutical and insurance sectors to exploit people in the absence of access to a quality public healthcare system.
- (vi) Dealing with ethical issues, breach of privacy, and dealing with social stigma are significant challenges for the NDHM.
- (vii) Experience from Aadhaar and Health Management Information Systems (HMIS) raises doubts on ensuring the quality of registration and maintenance of records and their completeness.
- (viii) To bring undiagnosed or untreated ailments into account.
- (ix) Raising the demand for healthcare and treatment-seeking behavior especially in rural areas.
- (x) Absence of a clear framework.
- (xi) Additional burden of record keeping on physical and human resources.

#### SUGGESTIONS

- (i) Enhancing health literacy and knowledge is the key for reporting, diagnosis and treatment of ailments.
- (ii) Revamp health care system to increase health infrastructure and healthcare human resources and make healthcare affordable to the poor

- (iii) Raising demand by enhancing public health provision from bottom-to-top approach, access to affordable and quality healthcare in rural areas.
- (iv) Develop a clear framework and pathway on ways to bring its private sector into confidence under NDHM-adhering confidentiality and ensuring quality of information.

#### ► GOVERNMENT NOTIFIES MEDICAL EQUIPMENT AS 'DRUGS'

The Health Ministry has notified that medical equipment would qualify as "drugs" under Section 3 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, with effect from April 1, 2020. Medical equipment's under this definition include implantable medical devices such as knee implants, CT scan, MRI equipment etc. This, the ministry hopes, will ensure quality standards for these equipment's. [The move comes in the wake of years of controversy about faulty hip implants of J&J.](#)

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF NOTIFYING THE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT'S AS 'DRUGS':

- (i) Primary importance to safeguard the people against sub-standard or defective medical devices which might have proved to be extremely lethal.
- (ii) Ensures that all medical devices meet certain standards of quality and efficacy.
- (iii) Make medical device companies accountable for quality and safety of their products.
- (iv) Manufacturing companies shall ensure and invest in a proper mechanism to meet with all the compliances under the Rules to avoid any adverse action.
- (v) Specific procedural compliances of the Rules to be met with by importers of Medical Devices further enhance the quality medical products.
- (vi) Attract FDI in Indian medical device manufacturing industry.
- (vii) Boost the 'Ease of doing Business' initiative of the Government of India especially in the current pandemic times.
- (viii) Would help Indian companies to raise up to the international standards and integrate with global standards.

#### ISSUES THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED

- (i) Medical devices need to be regulated as medical devices or as engineering products and not as drugs/medicines.

- (ii) The low-risk medical device manufacturers should have some flexibility if they are not producing devices that have cost lives.
- (iii) The law needs to be appropriate and specific to the medical devices and their uses.
- (iv) The manufacturers coming under the ambit of the law should be trained for capacity building, as the changes shouldn't be disruptive.

### CONCLUSION

The Government should look forward towards a fully working model to classify and regulate the vast gamut of the medical devices" under the Rules and at the same time ensure proper compliance therewith. If a proper regulatory framework can be established and put into motion within a short span of time, the Rules can prove to be an extremely beneficial legislation for the health care as well as the economy of the nation, in a whole.

### ► MENTAL HEALTH IN INDIA

Mental health is an integral part of health; it is more than the absence of mental illnesses. It is the foundation for well-being and effective functioning of individuals. It includes mental well-being, prevention of mental disorders, treatment and rehabilitation.

WHO estimates that the burden of mental health problems in India is 2443 disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) per 10000 populations; the age-adjusted suicide rate per 100000 population is 21.1. The economic loss due to mental health conditions, between 2012-2030, is estimated at USD 1.03 trillion. WHO has labelled India as the world's 'most depressing country'.

### ISSUES RELATED TO MENTAL HEALTHCARE

- i. Lack of sensitivity: People with any kind of mental health issues are often tagged as 'lunatics' by the society.
  - ii. Lack of access, affordability, and awareness:
    - a) The National Mental Health Survey (NMHS), 2015-16 found that nearly 80% of those suffering from mental disorders did not receive treatment for over a year.
    - b) This survey also identified large treatment gaps in mental healthcare, ranging from 28% to 83% across different mental disorders (National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), 2016).
  - iii. Stigma around mental health issues: This leads to a vicious cycle of shame, suffering and isolation of the patients.
- iv. Shortage of mental healthcare workforce: In 2011, there were 0.301 psychiatrists and 0.047 psychologists for every 100,000 patients suffering from a mental health disorder in India. (WHO)
  - v. Lack of State services and insurance coverage: Results in most expenses on treatment – when sought – being out-of-pocket expenses, thus worsening the economic strain on the poor and vulnerable.
  - vi. Minimal State Intervention:
    - a) As of 2021, only a few states included a separate line item in their budgets towards mental health infrastructure. Rs. 5 million in 2018-19 was reduced to Rs. 4 million in 2019-20 and has remained at the same level in subsequent years – even 2021-22 where several reports have indicated the worsening of mental health issues during the Covid-19 pandemic.
    - b) Developed countries allocate 5-18% of their annual healthcare budget on mental health, while India allocates roughly 0.05% (OECD, 2014)
  - vii. Economic Burden:
    - a) NMHS (2015-16) revealed that the median out-of-pocket expenditure by families on treatment and travel to access care was Rs. 1,000-1,500 per month.
    - b) WHO estimates the economic loss to India on account of mental health disorders to be US\$ 1.03 trillion.

### MENTAL HEALTH SITUATION IN INDIA DEMANDS

- i. Active policy interventions and resource allocation by the government.
- ii. Measures to train and sensitize the community/society to reduce the stigma around mental health.
- iii. Awareness through persistent nationwide effort to educate the society about mental diseases as done by Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) by the ministry of health and family welfare.
- iv. Steps to connect the patients with each other by forming a peer network, so that they could listen and support each other.
- v. People experiencing mental health problems should get the same access to safe and effective care as those with physical health problems.
- vi. Mental illness must mandatorily be put under the ambit of life insurance. This will help people to see

mental illness with the same lens as they use for physical diseases.

#### **GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES**

- i. The Mental Health Policy, 2014 upholds a participatory and rights-based approach for quality service provisions.
- ii. The Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 provides the legal framework for providing services to protect, promote and fulfil the rights of people with mental illnesses. These are in line with the United Nations Convention on Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD).
- iii. To address the burden of mental disorders, the Government of India is implementing the National Mental Health Program (NMHP) since 1982.
- iv. With the objective to address the shortage of qualified mental health professionals in the country, the Government, under NMHP is implementing Manpower Development Schemes for establishment of Centres of Excellence and strengthening/ establishment of Postgraduate (PG) Departments in mental health specialties.

v. To generate awareness among masses about mental illnesses Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities are an integral part of the NMHP.

vi. The National Mental Health Program and Health and Wellness Centres are efforts to provide quality care at the primary health care level. Deaddiction centres and rehabilitation services are also available.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Acknowledging the extent of the issue would be the first step towards addressing the mental health crisis in the country. The next and most pertinent step – given the socioeconomic groups largely affected by the crisis – would be to take initiative towards making mental healthcare more accessible, with targeted interventions for vulnerable groups. Treatment of mental health disorders is of utmost importance. It calls for comprehensive strategies for promotion, prevention, treatment and recovery through a whole-of-government approach.

# E EDUCATION ISSUES

## Previous Year Questions

YEAR	UPSC MAINS QUESTIONS
2021	"Earn while you learn' scheme needs to be strengthened to make vocational education and skill training meaningful." Comment.
2021	Has digital illiteracy, particularly in rural areas, couple with lack of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) accessibility hindered socio-economic development? Examine with justification
2020	National Education Policy 2020 is in conformity with the Sustainable Development Goal-4 (2030). It intends to restructure and reorient education system in India. Critically examine the statement.
2020	How have digital initiatives in India contributed to the functioning of the education system in the country? Elaborate your answer.
2019	Despite Consistent experience of High growth, India still goes with the lowest indicators of human development. Examine the issues that make balanced and inclusive development elusive.
2106	"Demographic Dividend in India will remain only theoretical unless our manpower becomes more educated, aware, skilled and creative." What measures have been taken by the government to enhance the capacity of our population to be more productive and employable?
2016	Professor Amartya Sen has advocated important reforms in the realms of primary education and primary health care. What are your suggestions to improve their status and performance?
2015	The quality of higher education in India requires major improvements to make it internationally competitive. Do you think that the entry of foreign educational institutions would help improve the quality of higher and technical education in the country? Discuss.
2014	An athlete participates in Olympics for personal triumph and nation's glory; victors are showered with cash incentives by various agencies, on their return. Discuss the merit of state sponsored talent hunt and its cultivation as against the rationale of a reward mechanism as encouragement.
2014	Should the premier institutes like IITs/IIMs be allowed to retain premier status, allowed more academic independence in designing courses and decide mode/criteria of selection of students. Discuss in light of the growing challenges.
2013	The concept of Mid-Day Meal (MDM) scheme is almost a century old in India with early beginnings in



<p>Madras Presidency in pre-independent India. The scheme has again been given impetus in most states in the last two decades. Critically examine its twin objectives, latest mandates and success.</p>
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Education is the most important lever for social, economic and political transformation. A well-educated population, equipped with the relevant knowledge, attitudes and skills is essential for economic and social development in the twenty-first century. Education is the most potent tool for socio-economic mobility and a key instrument for building an equitable and just society. Education provides skills and competencies for economic well-being. Education strengthens democracy by imparting to citizens the tools needed to fully participate in the governance process. Education also acts as an integrative force in society, imparting values that foster social cohesion and national identity.

### ► NEW EDUCATION POLICY 2020

The Union Cabinet has approved the new National Education Policy. The NEP 2020 aims at making "[India a global knowledge superpower](#)". The policy draft has been prepared by a panel headed by former ISRO chief [K. Kasturirangan](#). This is the first new education policy in 34 years (earlier in [1968 and 1986](#))

New Education Policy lays particular emphasis on the development of the creative potential of each individual. It is based on the principle that education must develop not only cognitive capacities - both the 'foundational capacities' of literacy and numeracy and 'higher-order' cognitive capacities, such as critical thinking and problem solving - but also social, ethical, and emotional capacities and dispositions.

The new policy aims to pave way for transformational reforms in school and higher education systems in the country.

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF NEP 2020

##### (i) [Inclusive Education](#)

- Inclusion is a theme of the Policy beyond technology as well.
- The provisions of Special funds for special education, Gender Inclusion Fund, aspirational district as 'special education zone', emphasises on universal access to schools etc. seeks to provide inclusive and equitable quality education to all.
- Recognition for online education would enable an increase in the GER and increase inclusivity in higher education.

- Provision of an energy-filled breakfast will look beyond education in addressing the nutrition quotient.
- It also aims to double the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education, including vocational education, from 26.3% in 2018 to 50% by 2035.
- Achieve universal literacy and numeracy by 2025 would lead to considerable progress at higher levels too.

##### (ii) [Improving Learning Outcome](#)

- By recognizing the primacy of the formative years from ages 3 to 8 in shaping the child's future.
- Importance of learning in the child's mother tongue until at least Class 5 can play a critical role in helping improve learning outcomes.
- Eliminate problems of pedagogy by allowing the students to take up courses of their choice with assessment reforms like 360-degree Holistic Progress Card, tracking Student Progress for achieving Learning Outcomes

##### (iii) [Research and Development](#): Impetus through the Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities at the apex of the higher education system supported by a [new National Research Foundation](#).

##### (iv) [Holistic Higher Education](#):

- Flexibility to students to aspire according to their needs by means of a multi-disciplinary higher education framework with portable credits, and multiple exits with certificates, diplomas and degrees.
- Addressing issues like the skill development and employment to an extent by introduction of vocational training

##### (v) [Regulation](#): Creation of a Higher Education Commission of India is a welcome move

##### (vi) [Technology](#): There is a new focus on technology in education in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the policy recommends expansion of digital offerings for both schools and universities.

#### [Concerns with the New Educational Policy](#)

- [Overly optimistic expectations](#): Due to over optimism there is and under estimation of cost and time for a policy to be implemented.

2. Implementation in dispersed governance: When the policy is tailor made to fit all irrespective of their constraints.
3. Inadequate collaborative policymaking: Lack of collaboration with all the stakeholders
4. Vagaries of the political cycle: The policy makers concentrate on the short-term results as they don't want to be tagged for the failure and take credit of the legislation that is passed rather than its implementation.

Therefore, to implement the NEP 2020 few major challenges can be:

- (i) Content, Curriculum & Pedagogy: The new system will have 12 years of schooling with three years of Anganwadi or pre-schooling. To implement the changes at each level a thorough restructuring of the curriculum, pedagogy and the content needs to be done as per the NCF (National Curriculum Framework) and content rubrics needs to be revisited to modify the textbooks.
- (ii) Blending of technology with the teaching and learning process: National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT) a regulatory body will be created to use technology for better learning outcomes. But a big challenge here is establishing a robust digital infrastructure that even caters to the remote areas.
- (iii) Assessment: Shifting the focus of assessments from marks based to competency based will require to change the questions which will be complex.
- (iv) Teachers training and availability: Creating higher performance standards for teachers and to be digitally trained them will be a herculean task.
- (v) Funding: Public spending for the educational sector at 6% of GDP may fall short for implementation of NEP 2020
- (vi) Language Issue: Provision for education in mother tongue till class 5 could pose challenges to the mobility of students in a large and diverse country like India and problematic for teacher to student ratio.
- (vii) Discontent State: National Higher Education Regulatory Council as an apex control organization may face resentment from the states.
- (viii) Vocational Training: Lack of popularity of vocational training and social status hierarchy associated
- (ix) Globalisation thrust in education policy to compete with global higher education institutes is missing

#### WAY FORWARD

- (i) Create stakeholder incentives for smooth and uniform implementation.
- (ii) Formulate instruments in the form of legal, policy, regulatory and institutional mechanisms
- (iii) Build reliable information repositories
- (iv) Develop adaptability across HEIs, regulatory bodies and government agencies
- (v) Develop credibility through transparent actions and participation of all stakeholders
- (vi) Develop sound principles of management
- (vii) Private investment to complement the public expenditure in the sector
- (viii) Set achievable targets and necessary funds for the same
- (ix) Strong Political will and public support
- (x) Schools will actually need to redefine the teaching and learning process for a proper implementation.

#### ► SCHOOL EDUCATION

India has made great strides in improving access to quality education, increasing elementary school enrolment and reducing the number of out-of-school children. An estimated 6.1 million children out of school in 2014 reduced from 13.46 million in 2006.

These achievements have been bolstered by key laws, policies and programs such as the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act (2009), the National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy (2013).

#### CHALLENGES IN THE SCHOOL EDUCATION SECTOR

- (i) Out of 100 students, 29 per cent of girls and boys drop out of school before completing the full cycle of elementary education, and often they are the most marginalised children. (SRI-IMRB Surveys)
- (ii) Around 50 per cent of adolescents do not complete secondary education, while approximately 20 million children not attending pre-school. (Rapid Survey of Children 2013-2014 MWCD)
- (iii) Half of primary school-going children – which constitutes nearly 50 million children – not achieving grade appropriate learning levels. (National Achievement Survey, NCERT 2017)
- (iv) Children's school readiness at age 5 has been far below expected levels.
- (v) visible challenge: Inadequate inputs
  - a) Some schools continue to lack adequate infrastructure

- b) Several states still face a severe shortage of teachers
- c) Poor quality of institutional support for teachers' professional development
- (vi) **The invisible challenge: Children falling behind**
  - a) A typical Indian school focuses on completing the curriculum and is not structured to provide extra help to children who are not moving ahead at the expected pace or to those who are falling behind ("Low learning trap").

#### **GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES FOR ELEMENTARY EDUCATION**

With the formulation of National Policy on Education, India initiated a wide range of programs for achieving the goal of UEE through several schematic and Program interventions, such as

- (i) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
- (ii) Mid-Day Meal
- (iii) Mahila Samakhya
- (iv) Strengthening for providing quality Education in Madrasahs (SPQEM)

**NOTE:** Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is implemented as India's main Program for universalizing elementary education. Its overall goals include universal access and retention, bridging of gender and social category gaps in education and enhancement of learning levels of children.

#### **GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES IN SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Secondary Education is the most significant stage in the educational hierarchy as it prepares the students for higher education and the world of work. The policy at present is to make secondary education of good quality available, accessible and affordable to all young persons in the age group of 14-18. At present, the following schemes targeted at secondary stage (i.e., class IX to XII) are being implemented in the form of Centrally Sponsored Schemes:

- (i) Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan
- (ii) Girls Hostel Scheme
- (iii) National Scheme of Incentives to Girls for Secondary Education
- (iv) Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage
- (v) Scheme of Vocational Education
- (vi) National Merit-cum-Means Scholarship Scheme
- (vii) Scheme for construction and running of Girls' Hostel for students of secondary and higher secondary schools

- (viii) Scholarship schemes for Minority students
- (ix) National Scholarships

The National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) promotes educational development both in quantitative and qualitative terms and makes special efforts to remove disparities and equalize educational opportunities for all students. NCERT acknowledges and appreciates educational brilliance in students through the National Talent Search Scheme. It also seeks to applaud artistic distinction through the Chacha Nehru Scholarships - for artistic and innovative excellence. The National Bal Bhawan has instituted a system of honouring talented children in different age groups in the year 1995 through the Bal Shree scheme.

#### **WAY FORWARD**

- (i) Ensuring maximum enrollment of children in the 6-14 age group
- (ii) Each state must publicly declare their learning goals and articulate concretely their plans for achieving higher learning outcomes.
- (iii) Placing children's learning outcomes at the center of the stage (Education: 12th Five-Year Plan).
- (iv) Increasing inputs, improving infrastructure and "tightening education systems"
- (v) Grouping children by ability instead of age/grade
- (vi) Supporting teachers through regular training and monitoring
- (vii) Conducting systematic basic assessment
- (viii) Using the principle of "teaching by level" (as being implemented by many states)
- (ix) Promoting gender equality through education at an early age
- (x) Optimization of technology which should be cost-effective with maximum coverage.

#### **CONCLUSION**

It is urgent that we face our realities squarely to fulfil children's hopes for the coming school year and enable India to reach its national goals for growth and equity.

### **► STATE OF FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY IN INDIA**

*The Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) released the report on the State of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy in India. The report prepared by the Institute for Competitiveness highlights the importance of early education years in the overall*

*development of a child.*

The Index includes 5 pillars comprising of 41 indicators. The five pillars are:

- Educational infrastructure
- Access to education
- Basic Health
- Learning outcomes
- Governance

**KEY HIGHLIGHTS**

1. Some states may serve as role models for others in certain aspects, but they too need to learn from other states while addressing their challenges. This holds true not only for high performers but also for low performing states. For instance, while Kerala has the best performance in the small state, it can also learn from some lower-scoring regions, such as Andhra Pradesh (38.50), which outperforms Kerala (36.55) with respect to access to education.
2. States have performed particularly worse in the Governance pillar because over half of the states have a score that is below the national average, i.e., 28.05, the lowest across all pillars. These pillar-wise analyses help states assess the state of the budgetary measures and steps needed to improve the state of education and identify existing gaps that obstruct their growth.
3. The issue of Access to Education is one that demands prompt action on the part of the States. The performance of Large States such as Rajasthan (25.67), Gujarat (22.28), and Bihar (18.23) is noticeably below average. Whereas the North-eastern states have the highest scores because of their superior performance.

**FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY**

Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) refers to basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. It is the ability to read and understand a basic text and perform simple mathematical calculations by end of grade 3. Strong literacy and numeracy help children to learn, experiment, reason and create, to be active and informed citizens, and to contribute socially, culturally and economically. National Education Policy (2020) accords the highest importance to the achievement of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy.

**CHALLENGES IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY**

- Lack of Early childcare and education:  
Over 85% of a child's cumulative brain

development occurs prior to the age of 6. Presently, quality ECCE is not available to crores of young children, particularly children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

- Poor status of Anganwadis:  
The Anganwadi workers (AWW) are overworked, with duties and responsibilities that centre around her being a teacher, a nurse and a social service provider. AWW are not equipped with the necessary tools to be able to engage children in learning experiences.
- Nutritional deficiencies among children:  
The relationship between nutrition, health and learning is undeniably strong. But, as per GHI 2020, India has the highest child wasting rate (17.3%) of all the countries.
- Inadequate budget: The National Education Policy of 1968 recommended that India spend 6% of its GDP on education. However, even today, as per the Economic Survey (2019--20), India 20, India spends only 3.1% of its GDP on education.
- Inadequate infrastructure: Though RTE act (2009) mandated basic infrastructure in schools like toilets, safe drinking water, playground etc, data shows that the basics are yet to be ensured in all the schools.
- Low pupil to teacher ratio: As per the Right to Education Act (RTE, 2009) the desired Teacher Pupil ratio (TPR) has been set to 1:35. But, according to NEUPA report, around 42% of government elementary schools have only one or two teachers for all the elementary grades.
- Poor pedagogic skills:
- Linguistic issues: The medium of instruction is often different from the mother tongue of children. It negatively impacts the child's motivation to engage in classroom processes.

**WAY FORWARD**

- Increase budget allocation, with focused investment on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy.
- Alignment of synergies between MWCD and MoE.
- Since nutrition and education are both equally important and require significant time and effort, it may be worthwhile to consider having two AWWs per anganwadi.
- Provision of Primary education in Mother tongue
- Ensure minimum instruction time in schools and

learning at home. The Right to Education Act (2009) requires that children from grade I-V spend 200 days involving 800 instruction hours in school. Currently, different states are seen allocating the different amount of time for literacy instruction, which ranges from 35 min in some states to about 90 minutes in some others. There needs to be a standard block of time across all the states.

#### Nipun Bharat Program

Ministry of Education has launched a National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN Bharat), for ensuring that every child in the country necessarily attains foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) by the end of Grade 3, by 2026-27.

*Following outcomes have been envisaged from implementation of the goals and objectives of NIPUN Bharat Mission:*

- Foundational skills enable to keep children in class thereby reducing the dropouts and improve transition rate from primary to upper primary and secondary stages.
- Activity based learning and conducive learning environment will improve quality of education.
- Innovative pedagogies such as toy-based and experiential learning will be used in classroom transaction thereby making learning a joyful and engaging activity.
- Intensive capacity building of teachers will make them empowered and provide greater autonomy for choosing the pedagogy.
- Holistic development of the child by focusing on different domains of development like physical and motor development, socio-emotional development, literacy and numeracy development, cognitive development, life skills etc. which are interrelated and interdependent, which will be reflected in a Holistic Progress Card.
- Children to achieve steeper learning trajectory which may have positive impacts on later life outcomes and employment.
- Since almost every child attends early grades, therefore, focus at that stage will also benefit the socio-economic disadvantaged group thus ensuring access to equitable and inclusive quality education.

## ► HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

Higher education system plays an important role for the country's overall development which includes industrial, social, economic etc. Indian higher education system is third largest in the world.

The HRD ministry faces the challenge of ensuring that the "younger workforce" is well educated and trained to help boost India's economy over the next decade as has been the case in China. China had posted a GER of 25.65 in 2011 while India was at 22.76 during the same period. However, by 2018, China's GER was at 50.6 and India's was at 28.06.

### CHALLENGES OF HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN INDIA

- (i) Gap between the Supply and demand: In higher education, India has a gross enrolment ratio (GER) of 28.06%, which is lower than the world average (36.7%) and much lower than most of the developed countries.
- (ii) Lack of Quality Research work: Due to the limited focus on Research and Internationalization, very few Indian higher educational institutes are globally recognized. Against 111 Chinese researchers per lakh population, India cuts a sorry figure of 15 per lakh population (Economic Survey of India 2016-17). Only 46,582 patents were filed by India as compared to the 13,81,583 by China (WIPO).
- (iii) Poor quality of Curriculum: In most of the higher educational institute's curriculum is outdated and irrelevant.
- (iv) Shortage of Faculty and High Student-Faculty Ratio: In most of the state and central universities more than 30% of faculty positions are lying vacant. The Indian higher education system has a student teacher ratio of 29, while the same for the United States was 12.35 and Brazil's was 19.4 (AISHE 2018-19)
- (v) Inadequate Infrastructure and Facilities: Apart from the highly recognized higher educational institutes most of the colleges and universities lack in the basic and high-end research facilities. Many institutes are running without proper infrastructure and basic facilities like library, hostels, transport, sports facility etc. which is desirable to rank the quality institution.
- (vi) Less collaboration of higher educational institutes with industries.
- (vii) Demographic Dividend Challenge: Employability across disciplines is at 45% (India Skills Report 2018)



- (viii) Social disparity: Against a GER of 26.3 for the general category, it is 23 for SCs and 17.2 for STs (AISHE 2018-19).
- (ix) Poor Governance Structure: Management of Indian education faces challenges of over-centralization, bureaucratic structures and lack of accountability, transparency, and professionalism.
- (x) Political Interference: Increasing interference of politicians in the management of higher education jeopardises the autonomy of HEIs.
- (xi) Dismal Performance of state public universities that produce over 90% of the graduates in India is more dismal especially due to shortage of funding.

#### GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher Education is the shared responsibility of both the Centre and the States. Following are some significant fellowship schemes/scholarships awarded by the various institutions:

- Institutes of Eminence: Increasing capability and freedom to best academic institutions in the country.
- RUSA for upgrading state universities.
- HEFA for financing of higher education institutions.
- National institutional ranking framework for fostering competition among higher educational institutions.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA (HEI)

- (i) Expand capacity in postgraduate education: Increase postgraduate enrolment and reduce teacher shortages
- (ii) Incentivise postgraduate education: Make research and teaching a more attractive career choice
- (iii) Diversify course offerings: Prepare students for the job market
- (iv) Promote linkages between HEIs and Industry: Improve employability of graduates
- (v) Create more pathways to employment in the organised sector: Reduce unemployment rate among graduates
- (vi) Upgrade accreditation capacity: Monitor the quality of all HEIs in India
- (vii) Cluster colleges: Improve the quality of colleges and make them easier to manage
- (viii) Establish standard accreditation framework: To bring transparency and consistency in accreditation
- (ix) Offer greater incentives to faculty members: Attract and retain well-qualified teaching staff

- (x) Revamp funding: Measurable and equitable outcome-based funding for Central and State universities.
- (xi) Linkage research centers (National and International): Quality and collaborative research
- (xii) Industrial co-operation: Development of curriculum, organizing expert lectures, internships, live projects, career counseling and placements.
- (xiii) Set up National Research Foundation: Distinguish between development and operational funding, and catalyse research in HEIs
- (xiv) Improve access to financial support: Make higher education more affordable
- (xv) Promote research collaborations: Apprise Indian scholars of global standards of conducting research and expose them to improved infrastructure

#### CONCLUSION

There is a need to implement innovative and transformational approach from primary to higher education level to make Indian educational system globally more relevant and competitive. This is necessary not only to take care of economic growth, but it is also essential for social cohesion and to empower the country's youth.

#### ► HOLISTIC AND MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATION

##### Need for a Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education in India:

India has a long tradition of holistic and multidisciplinary learning, from universities such as Takshashila and Nalanda, to the extensive literatures of India combining subjects across fields. Integrating the humanities and arts with Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) improves learning outcomes, creativity, innovation, critical thinking, social awareness and responsibility among the students. National Education policy (2020) also suggested the need for Holistic and multi-disciplinary education to lead India into 21<sup>st</sup> century and 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial revolution.

However, not every Higher education institution in India can provide such a multidisciplinary education due to shortage of faculty, limited financial resources and lack of institutional autonomy in setting curriculum.

To overcome these challenges, National education policy suggested Academic Bank of credits (ABC)

scheme. UGC has recently notified the scheme.

#### Academic Bank of credit scheme:

- Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) is a virtual/digital storehouse that contains the information of the credits earned by individual students throughout their academic journey.
- Academic Bank of Credits shall provide to every student the facility to open unique or individual Academic Bank Account in digital form. When a student pursues any course and clears exams, credits will be automatically awarded to them. Institutions need to fill out the details and upload the deposits in the students' Academic Credit Bank's account on the digital portal.
- ABC will allow students of undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses to exit the course and enter within a stipulated period. The student can earn up to 50 per cent credits from outside the college/university where she/he is enrolled for the degree/diploma program.

#### Advantages:

- Option to exit and enter: If any student needs to get back to education after a break or must relocate to another city, they can easily 'carry' forward their completed credits.
- Wider choice to students:
  - As multiple institutes are connected to the ABC portal, one can be formally enrolled in university 'A' but can choose to do some courses from university 'B', some more from university 'C' and so on and all of these would count towards the student's degree.
  - Students also can join online courses offered by MOOCs like SWAYAM or NPTEL (National Program on Technology Enhanced Learning) and add these credits to my ABC.
- Reduces the burden on institutions: It reduces the burden on any single institute to float an unmanageable number of courses and increases the competition among institutes.

#### Problems:

- Grade inflation: Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) platforms such as SWAYAM and NPTEL are 'supposedly designed' for large enrolments. one of the metrics for success of these courses is student performance in the final assessment. Thus, it would be in the interest of course coordinators to award scores liberally and paint a rosy picture.
- Dilution of Quality of degrees: An average student

from premier institute like IIT/IISER may find it tempting to opt out of a challenging course in my institute and use the ABC scheme to replace it with an equivalent course from another university where it would be far easier to obtain good grades.

- Contraction of teaching posts in small institutes: The ABC scheme specifies that students can avail up to 50% of credits from other institutes. students avail these credits outside the parent college, they need not enroll for the corresponding in-house courses. As the number of teaching posts in any higher education institute are calculated based on student enrolment numbers, when a large fraction of students do not enroll for the courses offered by them it might result in contraction of teaching posts in those institutes.
- This scheme has all the right and laudable intentions and would probably work well in a society with a more equitable distribution of resources. But in India, where the quality of education varies drastically from one institute to the next, this can lead to unmanageable academic and administrative issues in higher education institutes with brand names, and lead to a contraction in the number of teaching posts in smaller higher education institutes. The UGC must rethink expeditiously how to implement this scheme.

## ► SKILL DEVELOPMENT & VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

### SKILL DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO IN INDIA

- More than half of Indian workers will require skill development by 2022 - The Future of Jobs 2018 (World Economic Forum's)
- According to most estimates, India continues to be a country that faces one of the highest shortages of skilled workforce.
- In India only about 2% of the workforce had formal vocational training, and only 9% had non-formal, vocational training - National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) Report (2018)

The stake here is, if the skilling issue is not resolved, India risks forfeiting its so-called "demographic dividend".

### GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT

- In 2014, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship was created to harmonise training processes, assessments, certification and outcomes and, crucially, to develop Industrial Training

Institutions (ITIs) — the building blocks of this endeavour.

- (ii) Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP)
- (iii) **“Skill India” program**, that aims to train a minimum of 300 million skilled people by the year 2022.
  - a) Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)
  - b) Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra (PMKK)
  - c) Rozgar Melas
  - d) India International Skill Centre (IISC)
- (iv) Standard Training Assessment and Reward Scheme (STAR)
- (v) Polytechnic Scheme
- (vi) Vocationalization of Education
- (vii) UDAAN for J&K

#### SHORTCOMINGS IN THE DESIRED OUTCOME

- (i) The target of Skill India was to reach out to 300 million young people by 2022, but only 25 million had been trained under this scheme by the end of 2018.
- (ii) Even those who have been trained under Skill India and PMKVY are unable to find jobs.
- (iii) Under PMKVY, only 15% of those trained got a job.

#### CHALLENGES IN SKILL DEVELOPMENT

- (i) **Informal Workforce (90%)**: Greater workforce informality leads to lower incentives to acquire new skills. Faced with inadequately skilled workers, businesses often choose replacing labour with machinery. This, in turn, leads to still fewer formal jobs.
- (ii) **Agriculture Workforce (56%)**: Indians who work in agriculture continue to subsist because they do not have the skills to take up industrial or services sector jobs.
- (iii) **Insufficient capacity**: Current infrastructure facilities available in the educational institutions throughout the country are inadequate considering the huge demand for skilled labour. There are not many trained and highly skilled trainers available.
- (iv) **Low student Mobilisation**: Owing to the traditional outlook of people associated with skill development the enrolment of the students for vocational education and training is abysmally low.
- (v) **Market failure in skill development**: Firms themselves do not have an incentive to spend on developing the skills of their workers, because a skilled worker may quit and join a new firm.

- (vi) **Information asymmetries**: A skilled person knows his/her skills, but a potential employer does not; if employers had all the information, their willingness to pay for a skilled person would rise.
- (vii) **Accreditation**: There is a vast segment of informal workers in India, many of whom possess skills that have not been formally recognized.
- (viii) **Scalability**: Any model to be successful needs a lot of support from different stakeholders. Since there is limited buy-in from the corporate sector, the progress of such initiatives is slow.
- (ix) **Skill Mismatch**: Lack of conformity between what is taught in classrooms and what is required by the industry. As a result, though the people may be skilled, but they do not get employment.
- (x) **Low female participation in the labour force**: Out of the country's labour force of 395.2 million Only 91.6 million are women.

- (xi) **Lack of awareness of international mobility**

#### OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIA

- (i) Job markets across the world including India are undergoing a tectonic shift.
- (ii) Higher wages and morale in these firms help in attaining global competitiveness.
- (iii) Initiating vocational training at the school level will make young people employment-ready and boost India's competitiveness
- (iv) India has a huge 'demographic dividend' which means that it has very high scope of providing skilled manpower to the labour market.
- (v) The future of work in India: Inclusion, Growth and Transformation Report by the Observer Research Foundation and the World Economic Forum sheds light on the future of transformative technology and its impacts on work in India. Some key insights from this report are:
  - a) Companies expect technological change to lead to job creation, not job loss. They recognise the potential of new technologies in the coming years.
  - b) The whole focus is expected to be on automation of repetitive tasks, time optimisation, maximising productivity, creation of digital platforms for online access to job opportunities and formalising informal operations.
  - c) It is critical for people to keep picking up new tricks of their trade and keep themselves updated with new technological changes in their sphere of work.

**WAY FORWARD**

- (i) Creating avenues for private sector engagement.
- (ii) Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an example of an intervention to address information asymmetry.
- (iii) Collaboration with industry has been fundamental to ensure the relevance and quality of skills training and for building the institutional structures required to achieve the desired outcomes.
- (iv) Student depending on aptitude and performance in school goes either into the higher education stream or the vocational stream (Germany Model).
- (v) Mainstreaming of vocational education and skill development within the school system
- (vi) The knowledge and skill levels in subjects should be globally competitive
- (vii) Public investment in skill development and vocational education must be increased
- (viii) A new set of vocational teachers for specific trades and skills would need to be trained and appointed.
- (ix) Getting good teachers for vocational training would be difficult. Using retirees, even from overseas, for designing the curricula and training teachers would be worthwhile.
- (x) State-of-the-art facilities, including equipment, for such vocational education would need to be put in place.
- (xi) Skilling initiatives – complemented by a wider push towards empowerment through gender sensitization, creation of economic opportunities and economic and social support for bridging the gender gap.
- (xii) The NEP 2020 aims to integrate vocational education into mainstream education in a phased manner by creation of a National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF), which will be coordinated with the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) for ease of mobility between streams; is a welcome move.

**CONCLUSION**

Skill development is the most important aspect for the development of our country. The foundations for an effective, efficient and sustainable skill development ecosystem had been laid over the course of the last few years, however, it is time now to build upon it. The distance between a probable future and a possible future is always shortened by resilience and determination. Making our youth future ready is a call that we can't miss!

## ► IMPACT OF COVID ON EDUCATION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

India has been one of the hardest-hit countries by COVID-19. Beyond the staggering impact on human life, COVID-19 has greatly disrupted access to education in India, with 247 million primary and secondary school students out of school (UNICEF).

**IMPACT**

- i. Online education reinforcing digital divide and learning inequality: Students in private schools and those from households with high socioeconomic status (SES) have more access to digital devices and are more engaged in regular educational activities than their peers in government schools and from low-SES households.
- ii. Rural-urban divide: The sudden outbreak of pandemic in 2020 did not give time for the development of technology and the internet. As a result, education in 2020-21 has been far out of reach of rural India.
- iii. Gender Disparity: The school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic could lead to a million more girls and transgender children dropping out before they complete their education. This particularly holds true for children living in poverty, those with a disability or the ones living in rural isolated places. Economic hardships caused by the crisis will have spill-over effects as consider the financial and opportunity costs of educating their daughters.
- iv. Disproportionate impact of school closures on marginalised children: The dropout rates among children from the Scheduled Castes (SCs)/ Scheduled Tribes (STs)/ Other Backward Classes (OBCs) is high, especially for secondary education.
- v. Poverty and Inequality: Most families with illiteracy are unable to guide children's learning which will affect the next generation's ability to get educated and escape poverty.
- vi. Teaching becomes more challenging during school closures: Distance learning has affected the teachers since most of them are teaching remotely for the first time and have limited or no training to do so. Hence, the quality of teaching is likely to be affected. Adopting to new technology from the traditional method a challenging task. Many teachers are looking for an alternative job to support their families.



- vii. **Nutrition:** Disruption in school (midday) meal services affecting nutrition of children between 6-17 years of age. Also, many students were suffering from not having enough food for their survival.
- viii. **Increase in out-of-school children (OOSC) during and over the post COVID-19 period:** The discontinuation of children's education in 62 per cent of the surveyed households with 67 per cent in rural and 55 per cent in urban areas, respectively (Save the Children, 2020)
- ix. **Child Labour:** Widespread unemployment and income loss will hinder the ability of households to pay to keep students in schools. This impact will be greater for poorer households who might face budget constraints. This will cause children to drop out of schools and be pulled into economic activities to support their parents in earning. (Child labour among school-going children has increased by 105 per cent during the pandemic in West Bengal)
- x. **Children lose out on early childhood care and education (ECCE):** Disruption of ICDS services (Anganwadi Centers) due to the lockdown during COVID-19 would have had huge consequences on the health, nutrition, and learning of these children.
- xi. **Inadequate infrastructure facilities to maintain physical distancing in school:** In 19 per cent schools, the student classroom ratio (SCR) is 35 and above and in 8.3 per cent schools, i.e., around 1.3 lakh schools, more than 50 students sit in one classroom (NIEPA, 2017).

**WAY FORWARD**

- i. The Centre and States together to increase the percent of GDP on school education especially on schemes like Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SMSA) with Specific interventions for mainstreaming OOSC.
- ii. Broaden access to continuous and equitable learning opportunities across the student population through steps such as distribution of textbooks, provision for the supply of free smartphones/laptops/tablets etc.
- iii. Ensuring students have access to even low-tech interventions, such as SMS text messages and phone calls, can help mitigate the potential learning losses.
- iv. Devise new ways to deliver meals while schools are closed; Take Home Ration (THR) should be fortified with eggs, milk, nutrient-rich vegetables, fruits, etc. to enhance diet quality.
- v. Provisions for serving breakfast along with the mid-day meals to improve foundational learning as

- recommended by the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020.
- vi. Ensure gender responsive education budgeting is enforced to reduce girls' absenteeism and dropping out.
- vii. Prioritise the distribution of learning materials, accessible and inclusive for all children, particularly disabled girls and girls without access to devices and internet.
- viii. Inclusive learning solutions to be developed, especially for the most vulnerable and marginalised sections of the society.
- ix. Measures to support the well-being, payment and retention of teachers.
- x. Filling the vacant posts of teachers, their trainings and the recruitment of non-teaching staff; increase investment on school infrastructure as it is necessary for physical distancing norms post covid.

**► DIGITAL EDUCATION IN INDIA**

The COVID-19 pandemic has no doubt disrupted education and learning as much as any other sector of the economy and civic life. Per UNESCO in April 2020, over 1.5 billion students worldwide were affected by school closures – with over half of those students facing economic and technical barriers to access education via other means. In India, over 250 million students faced the prospect of learning recession due to school closures across the country. Research, across time horizons and geographies, indicates that learning outcomes drop even with short breaks in learning. One can only imagine the impact of the extended lockdowns of the last year. Expectedly, remote and digital learning saw an unprecedented uptake as students, teachers, school systems and policy makers adapted quickly to online classes, content, and learning amidst the shutdowns. Despite inadequate infrastructure and limited connectivity posing challenges, teachers adapted to available digital tools for communication, lesson delivery and student assessments.

**The growing popularity of digital education has been propelled by some significant trends in India:**

- i. Availability of high-speed internet and affordable smartphone devices have increasingly made it possible for 'live' streaming.
- ii. A sizeable young population in India, which is quick to adopt new technologies.
- iii. Push by many companies towards digital learning for their millennial workforce.



- iv. Increasing willingness by teachers including executive education coaches to teach online with similar levels of effectiveness.

### **BENEFITS OF DIGITAL EDUCATION**

- i. Easy access to information that is customized and suited to the learning needs of students.
- ii. Increased mobility and flexibility that gives learners the opportunity to choose their time and place of learning.
- iii. Use of technology tools helps to make the learning process more interactive and collaborative where all learners converge to create a learning experience that transcends geographical boundaries.
- iv. Increased collaboration among teachers and educators in real-time results in 'Connected Classrooms' that make way for better coordination and sharing of insights.
- v. A personalized learning experience made possible by use of technology, helps students to learn at a pace that is best suited to their needs.
- vi. Interactive digital tools are way more impactful than printed textbooks. As a result, learners are more actively involved, leading to higher retention and recall of learning material.
- vii. Digital learning creates 'smarter' students with greater accountability for their learning process stemming from immediate feedback and performance analytics, customized learning paths, peer-benchmarking opportunities and more.
- viii. Direct and favourable impact on the environment, owing to the need for less paper, thereby helping to cut costs and maximize resources.
- ix. For strengthening digital education in India, the govt. eased regulations on online education and finally allowed universities and colleges to extend >20% of a degree online from 2020 onwards. This initiative has enabled Indian institutes to further improve their portfolio of higher education internationally.
- x. Rising adoption of digital education in India is also attracting global key players to offer online courses to students and extend opportunities to learn new skills. For example, 'Amazon Academy'.

### **LEVERAGING DIGITAL SOLUTIONS IN EDUCATION IS A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL CHALLENGE**

- i. Digital access divide
  - a) Device access: Urban areas and higher socio-economic groups are over-indexed on device access, even as public schools and rural

communities lack access to basic ICT infrastructure such as projectors.

- b) Internet penetration: Low internet access in rural areas, with only 32% of people aged 12+ having access to internet versus 54% in urban areas, further hampers the ability to adopt digital in education.
- ii. Access to relevant content
  - a) Quality of content: Access to high-quality, reliable, context-specific, curated content is a key barrier to adopting digital in education for both teaching and lesson-planning as well as for delivering relevant materials for practice and self-assessment.
  - b) Coverage: Available content on various competencies is often spread out across disparate channels further complicating access and use; especially true for underserved subjects and languages such as Home Science, Urdu and Oriya, etc.
- iii. Digital literacy among teachers and students
  - a) Digital use cases: According to a BCG survey, only 8.3% of Indian youth and adults reported that they have created electronic presentations, and only 9.1% of Indian youth and adults have transferred files between computers and other devices.
- iv. Wide range of application requirements
  - a) Range of activities: Wide range of activities in teaching and education - online worksheets, testing and assessments, video-based lesson delivery, multi-modal communication, administration and record-keeping etc. - require several tools and applications.
  - b) Integration of tools: Severe lack of interoperability and integrated usage needs pose challenges to adopting cohesive digital methods.
- v. Organizational and bureaucratic engagement
  - a) Scalability of solutions: Successful digital education efforts at the small-scale have struggled to scale due to the size of India's public education system with varying contexts even within states.
  - b) Organizational coordination: Many levers of organizational and bureaucratic coordination and buy-in required to migrate to digital solutions.

**DIGITAL EDUCATION INITIATIVES**

Key initiatives taken by the Indian government to boost digital education activities are as follows:

i. [National Education Policy 2020 \(NEP\)](#):

It puts emphasis on digitisation besides the use of technology in education. It also focuses on EdTech for furthering education, particularly in the rural areas. This was mainly done to take quality education to all parts of the country, especially the Tier-2 and 3 cities and villages.

ii. [National Digital Educational Architecture \(NDEAR\)](#)

In the Union Budget 2021-22, the Indian government established the National Digital Educational Architecture (NDEAR) to strengthen digital infrastructure and support activities related to education planning. The NDEAR aims to offer distinct education ecosystem architecture for advancement of digital infrastructure in the country and guarantee autonomy of stakeholders, especially states and UTs.

iii. [PM eVIDYA Program](#)

PM eVIDYA program introduced in 2020 to make e-learning more accessible for Indian students and teachers and promote & strengthen digital education in India. The program aims to converge all activities related to online/digital education and is expected to benefit ~25 crore school students.

The program will also encompass designing unique e-content for hearing and visually impaired students and offering radio/podcasts and QR-coded digital textbooks to school students (Classes 1 to 12) on the DIKSHA portal.

Under this, top 100 universities were permitted to begin online courses, provide better learning prospects to 3.7 crore higher education students and enhance e-learning by relaxing regulatory framework for distance/open/online education.

iv. [DIKSHA](#)

In 2017, the government introduced DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing), a national portal for school education, to offer school curriculum-based engaging learning materials to students, teachers, and parents. The portal supports >18 Indian languages and has been implemented by 35 states/UTs.

v. [SWAYAM](#)

In 2017, the government launched Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM) to offer an integrated platform for online courses at

affordable costs to all citizens, especially the underprivileged section in the country.

The portal hosts Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) to offer quality education on various subjects for students (from Class 9-12 to Under Graduates and Postgraduates).

vi. [SWAYAM PRABHA](#)

In 2017, SWAYAM PRABHA, a group of 34 DTH (Direct-to-Home) channels dedicated to broadcasting educational programs 24x7, was introduced.

The channels broadcast new content for a minimum of four hours every day, and this is repeated five times in the same day for students to select a convenient slot.

vii. [ePathshala Portal](#)

In 2015, the government launched the ePathshala portal to build a resource store for educational videos, audios, flipbooks, etc. Resources on the portal are available in Indian languages such as Hindi, English and Urdu and can be accessed via smartphones, laptops, desktops and tablets.

viii. [NISHTHA](#)

In FY21, the National Initiative for School Heads and Teachers' Holistic Advancement (NISHTHA) - Phase II was launched at the secondary level to tailor modules for online education. As per the Union Budget 2021-22, ~5.6 million teachers will be trained under the NISHTHA training program in FY22.

ix. [OLabs](#)

To offer students lab learning experience via the internet, the government introduced OLabs in 2014 for those who do not have access to physical labs.

x. [Virtual Labs](#)

The Government of India introduced a pilot virtual lab in 2010 to enable undergraduate and post-graduate students (pursuing science and engineering courses) remotely access the labs and enhance their study experience.

The virtual labs offer students a Learning Management System and various study aides such as video lectures, web resources, self-evaluation and animated demonstrations.

Along with these, other digital initiatives taken by the government include Shiksha Vani for widespread use of radio, the Central Board of Secondary Education's (CBSE) podcast, sign language content on the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) website/YouTube and Digitally

Accessible Information System (DAISY) for accessing special e-content for hearing and visually impaired learners, and Free Open-source Software for Education (FOSSEE).

### WAY FORWARD

Given the challenges digital education ought to be carefully thought of and implemented in a phased manner to give desired outcomes.

#### i. Digital Divide:

- a) Swayam Prabha channels, which are part of the eVidya program, could be the solution for reaching students who do not have the necessary devices to receive online education. However, their content needs major overhaul. For one, the number of dedicated channels should be increased. Also, more and more content should be in local languages so that students are able to understand better.
- b) Rural students may be provided connected digital devices in groups, at Panchayat, Anganwadi or womens' SHGs levels. Many corporates would be willing to donate such devices under their CSR scheme, if a proper system is in place.

#### ii. Capacity building, a necessity:

- a) Mere availability of equipment, gadgets and broadband connectivity will not bring the desired results. The most important aspect is to provide adequate training to professors and students on the use of online education and to familiarise them with the apps and nuances of the available material. Strong Internet connectivity, either through cables or Wi-Fi, is fundamental.
- b) In future, colleges should embark on a system wherein one-third of the syllabus content will be handled online. This approach should be made mandatory so that there will be a smooth transition from offline to online teaching models. Teachers, now, do not have sufficient exposure and training to handle online classes, and the approach to this endeavour should be serious as its impact will have far-reaching consequences.

- iii. Pilot study is a prerequisite: At least in most autonomous colleges across the country, experts should conduct regular pilot studies to assess the efficiency of digital learning so that there are no major hiccups during implementation. Based on such studies, online procedures can be tweaked

appropriately by the teachers and students. Feedback can also be obtained from those concerned to refine the platform.

- iv. Stakeholders Engagement: Institution-industry connect could be established with well-known agencies, who have commercialised online education templates, besides seeking support from government organisations who have specialised in these areas.
- v. Employability: The key priorities for higher educational institutions should be to make the students industry-ready by assessing their competencies and aligning them to what is needed by the industry. This can be achieved by bringing research and innovation into the core of education and making it affordable for everyone across the nation.

### CONCLUSION

According to the UNESCO, India is expected to join eight other countries (including Brazil, China, Bangladesh, Egypt, Mexico, Pakistan, Nigeria and Indonesia) in a drive to accelerate digital learning and benefit from the global digital education initiative. Together, the countries are expected to drive shift from a traditional education approach towards digital and create more opportunities in the digital education sector globally. In the days to come, digital education will further witness significant changes in the way universities and colleges provide education. This accelerated shift towards adoption of digital means in both access to education as well as its assessment isn't a temporary trend but will have long-term consequences that will shape the new normal future. We will soon experience a myriad of possibilities emerging out of digital education to empower the youth of India.

### ► EdTech SECTOR IN INDIA

Status of EdTech in India: The Indian EdTech industry was valued at US\$ 750 million in 2020 and is expected to reach US\$ 4 billion by 2025. This growth is due to growing internet penetration in India. As per the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2020, smartphone ownership among government school student families increased from 30% in 2018 to 56% in 2020, whereas smartphone ownership among private school student families rose from 50% to 74%. The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of technology in India's education sector.

**Self-regulation:**

The EdTech companies have formed a collective — India EdTech Consortium — under the aegis of the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI). This consortium has adopted a code of conduct for their businesses.

However, the Government has already hinted at formulating a policy to regulate the EdTech sector

**Need for Regulation:**

- **Monopoly:** Being heavily venture capital funded, EdTech platforms can offer their services at low or no charges (predatory pricing) and heading towards forming monopolies.
- **Exploitation of students:** There are reports that some education technology companies are exploiting students with loans for fee-based courses.
- **Data safety concerns:** The EdTech companies aggregate data to get a 360° view not only of the child's academic context but also of the psycho-social-economic behaviour of households to make personalised products to the customers. But the safety of this immense data is a huge concern.

**Ex:** In May 2020, firewalls of one of the biggest EdTech companies of India was breached by cyber threat groups and put up personally identifiable information of the users for sale on the dark web.

- **Algorithmic bias:** As most of these platforms run on AI based tools, there are chances of Algorithmic biases which will have long-term consequences for a child's academic career.

**Ex:** Recently, students in the United Kingdom (UK) were graded by an algorithm. This caused an uproar when students from disadvantaged backgrounds received lower scores than White students, reflecting the implicit bias in the process.

In Indian context, reliance on AI tools can create a situation where students from traditionally marginalised castes are driven towards vocational training, as the data will suggest that they are better off here, while their upper caste/class peers are directed towards professional courses.

- **Lack of emphasis on social skills:** EdTech platforms can't replace traditional school system. Beyond classroom instruction, the school environment serves a variety of developmental functions in the life of a young individual like important life skills, such as the ability to collaborate, play, deliberate, and disagree with their peers.

**Measures to be taken:**

- Data about students and teachers and their learning

transactions must belong to the school and the parent community, although these may be hosted by data platforms. As per the Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019, the data fiduciary (EdTech company) shall, before processing any personal data of a student, verify their age and obtain the consent of their parent or guardian.

- Regular auditing of Artificial intelligence tools that are used by these platforms to avoid any bias.
- Platform businesses must have no say in the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.
- Setting up a separate institution to investigate grievances of victims.
- Expansion of free educational services via existing platform like Swayam MOOC.

# MALNUTRITION & HUNGER

## Previous Year Questions

YEAR	UPSC MAINS QUESTIONS
2020	The incidence and intensity of poverty are more important in determining poverty based on income alone". In this context analyse the latest United Nations Multidimensional Poverty Index Report.
2020	COVID-19 pandemic accelerated class inequalities and poverty in India? Comment.
2018	How far do you agree with the view that the focus on lack or availability of food as the main cause of hunger takes the attention away from ineffective human development policies in India?
2017	Hunger and Poverty are the biggest challenges for good governance in India still today. Evaluate how far successive governments have progressed in dealing with these humongous problems. Suggest measures for improvement.

### ► FOOD SECURITY

Food security means availability, accessibility and affordability of food to all people always. The poor households are more vulnerable to food insecurity whenever there is a problem of production or distribution of food crops. Food security depends on the Public Distribution System (PDS) and government vigilance and action at times when this security is threatened.

India achieved self-sufficiency in food grains in the 1970s. Since the mid-1990s it has consistently been able to ensure that there is enough food (in terms of calories) available to feed its entire population. It is the world's largest producer of milk, pulses and millets, and the second-largest producer of rice, wheat, sugarcane,

groundnuts, vegetables, fruit and cotton. Annual grain production has also remained relatively stable, with a decline in production between 2014 and 2016 caused by drought.

India is self-sufficient in several food crops including rice and wheat, which are among the national staples, and there is enough food to meet demand. Despite this, hundreds of millions of Indians have poor nutritional health.

### DIMENSIONS OF FOOD SECURITY

- (i) **Availability of food** means food production within the country, food imports and the previous year's stock stored in government granaries.
- (ii) **Accessibility**: means food is within reach of every person.



- (iii) **Affordability:** implies that an individual has enough money to buy sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet one's dietary needs.

#### WHO IS FOOD-INSECURE?

- (i) Landless people with little or no land to depend upon, traditional artisans, providers of traditional services, petty self-employed workers and destitute including beggars.
- (ii) In the urban areas, families whose working members are generally employed in ill-paid occupations and casual labour market.
- (iii) The social composition along with the inability to buy food also plays a role in food insecurity. The SCs, STs and some sections of the OBCs (lower castes among them) who have either poor land-base or very low land productivity are prone to food insecurity.
- (iv) The people affected by natural disasters, who must migrate to other areas in search of work
- (v) A large proportion of pregnant and nursing mothers and children under the age of 5 years constitute an important segment of the food insecure population.
- (vi) The food insecure people are disproportionately large in some regions of the country, such as economically backward states with high incidence of poverty, tribal and remote areas, regions more prone to natural disasters etc.

#### CONCERNS

- 36% of children under the age of five are underweight (too light for their age) and 21 % are wasted (too light for their height).
- Vitamin deficiencies are common in India, with 75 % of the population not getting enough from their food intake.
- Rates of anaemia are also high, as 51 % of women of reproductive age have low levels of iron.
- 14.8% of the population is undernourished in India (FAO)
- India ranked 76th in 113 countries - The Global Food Security Index (GFSI), 2018
- India was ranked 103rd out of 119 - Global Hunger Index, 2018
- Starvation deaths are also common in some parts of Jharkhand and Bihar

#### CHALLENGES TO FOOD SECURITY IN INDIA

- (i) **Lack of dietary diversity:** India has been successful in ensuring that its population has access to food,

but it has failed to ensure that it includes the necessary diversity in the types of food available.

- (ii) **Micronutrient deficiencies:** Micronutrient deficiencies are common in India, mainly because of a focus on calorie availability and not dietary diversity.
- (iii) **Poor Storage:** It is estimated that about 62,000 tonnes of stored grain, mainly rice and wheat, were damaged between 2011 and 2017 due to pest infestations and exposure to rain.
- (iv) **Water mismanagement:** Poor water management and subsidies that encourage wasteful practices in agricultural production could come to present a threat to Indian food security. Together the lowest performing states on the Composite Water Management Index (Niti Aayog) are home to about half of the Indian population (some 600 million people) and are the country's breadbaskets.
- (v) **Low Agriculture Productivity:** Attention was drawn to this "yield gap" in the Indian Ministry of Finance's 2015-16 Economic Survey.
- (vi) **Disproportionate Subsidies:** Subsidies disproportionately benefit owners of large landholdings also adversely impacting the environment. According to the Indian National Sample Survey Office, most Indian farmers possess less than one hectare of land, which is not enough to achieve food security through subsistence farming.
- (vii) **High levels of hunger:** Declining relative incomes, low produce of small and marginal farmers, which does not last year long, and the absence of a universal public distribution system (PDS)
- (viii) **Ecological crisis:** Can cause irreversible damage to natural resources and a loss in productivity, if left unchecked.
- (ix) **Other:** Rapidly growing population, resource constraints agrarian distress and continued agitation by farmers accompanied by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

#### GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES FOR FOOD SECURITY

- (i) **Food and Nutrition Security:** National cooked Mid-day Meal Program, ICDS, Kishori Shakti Yojana, Nutrition program for Adolescent Girls and Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana.
- (ii) **Mid-Day Meal Program:** It is the world's largest school feeding program reaching out to about 12 crore children across the country. The program aims at enhancing enrolment, retention and attendance

and simultaneously improving nutritional levels among children.

- (iii) National Food Security Act, 2013: With the objective to provide for food and nutritional security in human life cycle approach, by ensuring access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices to people to live a life with dignity. The Act also has a special focus on the nutritional support to women and children.
- (iv) Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA 2005): Provides a legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment to enhance livelihood security.
- (v) Public Distribution System (PDS): It plays an important role in the provision of food security, the PDS in India is perhaps the largest distribution network of its type in the world.
- (vi) Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY): It contemplates identification of one crore poorest of the poor families from amongst the BPL families covered under TPDS within the States and providing them food grains at a highly subsidized rate

#### WAY FORWARD

- (i) Universal PDS and supplementary programs for nutrition
- (ii) Sustainable agricultural practices, resource use and rethinking subsidies
- (iii) Enhance social security
- (iv) India must take a key role in designing new trade disciplines in the WTO that take advantage of imports and new market access opportunities for its agriculture sector in the developed world to increase its food security and the welfare of its farmers.
- (v) Increased budget, technology, and research and development

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the weakness of the global food system, with hunger becoming a critical issue in most countries. With slowing agricultural growth, expanding populations and resource constraints, achieving food and nutrition security will remain a major challenge long beyond the pandemic. However, India can take a leadership role in ensuring global food security through technology partnerships with developing countries in Asia and Africa, and by providing food aid. India must rethink its policy towards subsidies and its stand at the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which could help make it food secure and a net provider in the Indian Ocean region.

## ► MALNUTRITION (UNDERNUTRITION, OVERNUTRITION, MICRO- NUTRIENT DEFICIENCY)

Malnutrition includes both undernutrition as well as over-nutrition and refers to deficiencies, excesses or imbalances in the intake of energy, protein and/or other nutrients.

Child malnutrition is a chronic problem and a longstanding challenge for the public administration of India. Despite decades of investment to tackle this malaise, India's child malnutrition rates are still one of the most alarming in the world.

#### DATA RELATED TO MALNUTRITION

- The Global Hunger Index (2020) — which is calculated based on total undernourishment of the population, child stunting, wasting and child mortality — places India at the 94th spot among 107 countries.
- The bane of child and maternal malnutrition is responsible for 15 per cent of India's total disease burden.
- Fifth round of NFHS (2019-2021) from the 22 states surveyed so far, only nine showed a decline in the number of stunted children, 10 in wasted children and six in underweight children. The percentage of stunted, wasted and underweight children increased or remained unchanged in the remaining states.

#### CONCERNS/EFFECTS

- (i) Malnutrition costs India at least \$10 billion annually in terms of lost productivity, illness, and death and is seriously retarding improvements in human development and further reduction of childhood mortality (World Bank)
- (ii) While mortality has declined by half and fertility by two-fifths, malnutrition has only come down by about one-fifth in the last 40 years. The inescapable conclusion is that further progress in human development in India will be difficult to achieve.
- (iii) Malnourishment can also significantly lower cognitive development and learning achievement during the preschool and school years, and subsequently result in lower productivity.
- (iv) Nutritional anemia is implicated in low physical and mental performance.
- (v) Malnutrition not only blights the lives of individuals and families, but also reduces the returns on investment in education and acts as a major barrier to social and economic progress.

- (vi) According to [UNICEF](#), one in three malnourished children in the world is Indian. It is estimated that reducing malnutrition could add some 3% to India's GDP.
- (vii) This inter-generational cycle of undernutrition transmitted from mothers to children greatly impacts on India's present and future.
- (viii) Widespread child undernutrition greatly impedes India's socio-economic development and potential to reduce poverty.

#### **REASONS FOR HIGH CHILD MALNUTRITION IN INDIA**

- (i) [Historical antecedents](#) such as poverty, illiteracy, inequality, poor sanitation and food shortage.
- (ii) [Inadequate political focus on budgetary allocation](#) made to tackle this issue. The contemporary trends in budgetary allocations to nutrition appear to be counterintuitive (allocation towards child nutrition dropped by 18.5 per cent compared to 2020-21).
- (iii) Malnutrition rates in some parts of the country are highest among children and women, due primarily to inadequate food intake, illness, and such harmful childcare practices as delayed complementary feeding. Underlying these are [household food insecurity, inadequate preventative and curative health services, and insufficient knowledge](#) of proper care.
- (iv) [Coverage](#): While the PDS, for example, absorbs 0.5 percent of GDP, it fails to reach the segments of the population that need it most.
- (v) [Exclusion](#): While migration creates geographical exclusion, bureaucracy and its need for documentation creates a form of social and economic exclusion.
- (vi) [Poor status of women](#) and mother's lack of education
- (vii) [Social and cultural factors](#) may also affect malnutrition
  - a) Beneficiaries refused to consume food because lower caste people prepared food under *Hausla Poshan Yojana, 2016 (UP)*.
  - b) Prevalent child marriage is acting as limiting factor in improving health of children. (India has the highest absolute number of child brides in the world - UNICEF)
- (viii) [Ineffective Targeting](#)
- (ix) Most Indian women are anaemic and poor and since undernourished mothers give birth to undernourished babies, the worsening rate of

malnutrition could be a result of women struggling to access nutrition benefits.

- (x) Evidence points to [numerous shortcomings in comprehensive policy implementation structure](#):
  - a) The 2020 Comptroller and Auditor General of India audit of ICDS revealed that out of Rs 1,042 crore allocated, only Rs 908 crore was disbursed to state governments
  - b) Shortcomings in implementation have also been found in the case of Common Application Software (CAS).

#### **WAY FORWARD**

- (i) Systemic overhaul of the [public administration and service delivery systems](#), as well as engagement from the community.
- (ii) Need to [invest in the infrastructure](#) of ICDS and the Anganwadi centres as well as improving their coverage.
- (iii) Need to [better target nutritional programs](#) and substantially increase their quality and impact.
  - a) Inclusion of all vulnerable groups (children, adolescent girls, mothers, expectant women) under the safety cover of ICDS.
  - b) Fortification of essential food items with legal provisions (e.g., twin fortification of salt with both iodine and iron).
  - c) Popularize low-cost nutritious food.
  - d) Control of micro-nutrient deficiencies with special focus on vulnerable groups.
- (iv) Some [district-level interventions](#) have aimed to address this issue. For instance, [Angul district in Odisha](#), which has a large geographically isolated tribal population, has periodic grievance redressal camps are set up in areas far from the Anganwadi centers to provide ICDS services.
- (v) Need to [address gaps and inefficiencies](#) in the present setup through public awareness, community engagement and empowerment, while such an intervention would assist the community in realising their rights and entitlements, and then act as a deterrent to inefficiencies and gaps, it would also help in [developing community-based solutions](#) to malnutrition, unburdening the stressed public healthcare and ICDS infrastructure.
- (vi) [Strengthen inter-departmental convergence and resource allocation](#) based on real-time data. In this regard, the [approach undertaken by Bangladesh](#) has been successful and replicable in India.

**CONCLUSION**

Despite enormous challenges, India has made considerable progress in tackling hunger and undernutrition in the past two decades, yet this pace of change has been unacceptably slow, uneven and many have been left behind. But with sustained prioritization, increased resource allocation, adopting comprehensive, coordinated and holistic approach with good governance and help of civil society, India has the potential to end malnutrition in all its forms and turn the ambition of the Sustainable Development Goals into a reality for everyone.

**► POSHAN ABHIYAAN**

Child and maternal undernutrition is the single largest health risk factor in India, responsible for 15 percent of India's total disease burden. Malnutrition in children manifests either in the form of 'stunting' (low height in relation to age) or 'wasting' (low weight in relation to height) or both. India is home to almost one-third of all the world's stunted children (46.6 million out of 149 million) and half the world's wasted children (25.5 million out of 51 million).

While India's malnutrition rates have improved over the recent years, the country is still home to the largest number of stunted and wasted children in the world. To combat the dismal state of nutrition in the country, the government in 2018 launched the Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment (POSHAN) Abhiyaan.

POSHAN Abhiyaan aims to reduce malnutrition, through a life-cycle concept, adopting a synergised and result-oriented approach. Implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), the target of the mission is to bring down stunting in children 0-6 years of age from 38.4% to 25% by 2022. It also aims to reduce anaemia among women and adolescent girls in the age group of 15-49 years and reduce low birth weight.

**POSHAN ABHIYAAN INTENDS TO ACHIEVE ITS GOALS BY FOCUSING ON**

- (i) Mobile-based [ICDS- Common Application Software \(CAS\)](#) that acts as a job aid for field functionaries, while strengthening service delivery and program monitoring from the Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) to the state and to the national level.
- (ii) [Convergence Nutrition Action Plan](#), a multi-sectoral planning and monitoring actions from the state to block level for improved nutrition outcomes.

- (iii) [Capacity building of Integrated Child Development Services \(ICDS\)](#) functionaries on nutrition counselling of pregnant women and mothers of children up to two years of age
- (iv) [Community mobilisation and behaviour change communication](#) (Jan Andolan)
- (v) Providing [performance-based incentives](#) for community nutrition and health workers, and states.

**CHALLENGES IN ADDRESSING MALNUTRITION IN INDIA**

- (i) [Micronutrient deficiencies](#): India's Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS 2016-18) has highlighted the role of micronutrient malnutrition - anaemia and other micronutrient deficiencies.
- (ii) [Implementation](#): Lack of data, Lack of real-time data monitoring, sustainability and accountability may impact the National Nutrition Mission (NNM), Thus there is a need to strengthen monitoring and delivery systems.
- (iii) [Lack of coordination](#): Various ministries and departments related to healthcare often operate in isolation.
- (iv) [Under-utilisation of funds](#): The scheme also suffers from underutilization of allocated funds (only 16% of allocated resources for 2018-19).
- (v) [Human Resources](#): NNM requires a huge human resource input. In a low-and-middle-income-country with challenges around power supply, literacy, handling technology sensitively and sensibly may require a long period of handholding and capacity building.
- (vi) [Intra-state variation](#): Misuse of funds under the MP Local Area Development Scheme has been one of the factors which brought out differences between states and, sometimes, within states across parliamentary constituencies (PCs). For e.g., Across parliamentary constituencies stunting ranged from 13.7 to 61.7 per cent etc.
- (vii) The cross-cutting challenges of [urbanization and of growing overweight and obesity](#).

**WAY FORWARD (NITI AAYOG)**

- (i) The [program must be stepped up](#) to meet the targets set by the Centre to reduce stunting, wasting and anaemia by 2022.
- (ii) Graduate to [a POSHAN-plus strategy](#) for continued strengthening of the pillars of the Abhiyaan while also addressing the governance challenges of NHM/ICDS delivery mechanisms.

- (iii) Lay as much emphasis on complementary feeding as it does on breastfeeding. This can help avert 60% of the total stunting cases in India.
- (iv) Concentrated effort of various stakeholders in terms of ownership of a common vision, capable and well supported administration and technical partners, adequate and flexible financing, strengthening implementation systems to enable intervention delivery, working with a range of partners and civil society, and finally, using data and evidence to track progress and learn.
- (v) POSHAN Abhiyaan actions to address social determinants other than sanitation, which is well covered under national priorities, need to gain momentum.
- (vi) Deeply investing in improving dietary quality – through a primary focus on dietary diversity and diet quality – will help achieve multiple nutrition goals. In addition, following the path already laid out on fortification of key staples will help mitigate, at least partially, some micronutrient deficiencies.
- (vii) The focus of work on urban nutrition must go well beyond catering to the challenges of the urban poor and must engage stakeholders across the board to address issues of overweight and obesity as well.

### CONCLUSION

For solving the malnutrition challenge in India requires the nutrition policy and program having lasting and old challenges, as well as on keeping pace with new and emerging challenges. Mission Poshan 2.0 (Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0) has been announced in the Budget 2021-2022 as an integrated nutrition support program is a right step in this direction.

### ► MALNUTRITION AND COVID19: NO TIME TO WASTE

Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted that the vulnerability of Indian citizens against the pandemic is much more because of the high incidence of malnutrition in the country.

### VULNERABILITY OF MALNOURISHED

- 1) India has already one of the highest burden of malnutrition in the country. This risk increased by the

fact that there is a simmering obesity pandemic in India.

- 2) Population i.e., malnourished is at greater risk of morbidity due to the infection.
- 3) High incidence of diseases such as Tuberculosis, HIV and other non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension etc.
- 4) Very high incidence of Anaemia in women.
- 5) High incidence of poverty and lack of proper healthcare access among the needy.

### VULNERABILITY OF CHILDREN

- 1) Children are more vulnerable to infection if they are malnourished.
- 2) India has high burden of pneumonia deaths among children U5MR which is attributed to high incidence of malnutrition.
- 3) Schools were closed denying children of access to Mid-day meal scheme.
- 4) Anganwadi centres were shut which denied children access to supplementary nutrition.
- 5) The economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic was high in the districts which have higher rates of population engaged in informal economy. Thus, these parents often overlooked nutrition of their children.
- 6) Girl child would have worst suffered as they usually ignored first.

### WAY FORWARD

- 1) Government took a variety of steps such as distribution of free ration during the period of pandemic, running of community kitchens etc.
- 2) Securing good nutrition should be part of response to avert a crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3) Door-step delivery of ration and other supplements such as in ICDS and IFA tablets to women.
- 4) Increasing and expanding cash transfers to women under PM Vaya Vandana Yojana.
- 5) Counselling and support for breastfeeding and complementary feeding may need to be delivered at distance or via telephone.
- 6) Ensuring that government benefits reach the poor and vulnerable in an effective and hassle-free manner.



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