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Class Notes

INDIAN SOCIETY

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

- ☑ **Linkages of Concepts & Current Dimensions**
- ☑ **Topic wise segregated Previous Year Questions**
- ☑ **50⁺ Practice Questions**

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CONTENT

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1

ROLE OF WOMEN & WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION

1. INCREASING CASES OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN INDIA

Context: Cases of violence against women are on the rise in India. Spine-chilling incidents of heinous violence against women (Shraddha Walkar, Nikki Yadav) make the entire nation reflect on its deep-rooted belief systems.

What is Gender based violence?

⊙ Gender based Violence (GBV) means a harmful act directed at an individual based on their gender.

⊙ It is a **serious violation of human rights and a life-threatening health** and protection issue.

⊙ This violence is not just limited to physical violence but encompasses everything from **dowry deaths, honour killing, trafficking, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, sexual and emotional abuse, online abuse, child abuse, and caste-based violence among others.**

What are the factors contributing to GBV?
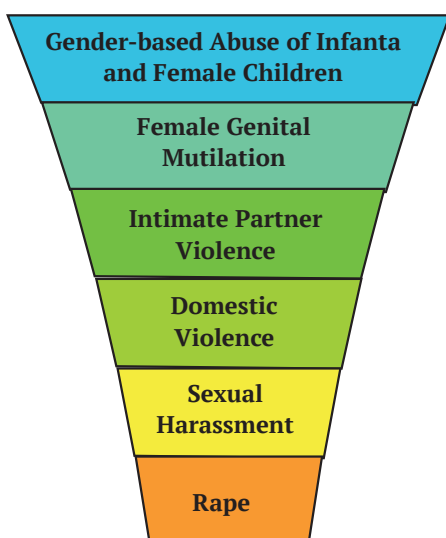
The Numbers:

⊙ The **National Crime Records Bureau** in its *Crimes in India Report 2019* has recorded a 7.3% increase in crimes against women when compared to 2018.

⊙ Under the report 30.9% cases recorded were of **domestic violence** and 7.9% were of **rape**.

⊙ It indicates that amongst the crime rate per lakh of women population, **33.2%** of women have faced by **physical/sexual intimate** and **non-intimate partner violence**.

⊙ **1 in every 3 women** is a victim of Gender-based violence (GBV).

⊙ The Coronavirus pandemic has resulted in a **two-fold increase** in GBV cases across the country.

Incidents of crimes against women highest in 6 years
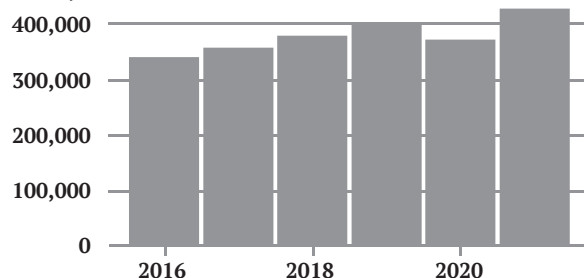
⊙ **Patriarchy:** A patriarchal social structure emphasizes male dominance and control over women and perpetuates gender stereotypes.

- **Societal Stereotypes:** Cultural norms promote that men are dominant and aggressive in nature, while women are docile, subservient, and are dependent on men.
- **Low socioeconomic status**: Less financial independence makes women vulnerable to violence.
  - ➤ **Female labour force participation rate** in India is 25.1% in 2020-21 lower than Bangladesh.
- **Psychiatric Morbidity: Regular consumption of alcohol** by the husband is key factor for GBV.
- **Lack of Education and Awareness**
- **Judicial Barriers:** Indian judiciary is overburden with plethora of cases. Consequently, Judiciary cannot act swiftly on the gender based violence cases. This promotes the culture of impunity for violence and abuse.

Constitutional provisions:
- **Article 14:** It confers on men and women equal rights and opportunities in the political, economic and social sphere.
- **Article 15:** It prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, etc.
- **Article 16:** It provides for equality of opportunities matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the state.
- **Article 39(a)(d):** It mentions policy security of state equality for both men and women the right to a means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work for both men and women.
- **Article 42:** It directs the State to make provision for ensuring just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.

Some Legal Provisions for Women:
- **Indian Penal Code:** Section 354 and 509 safeguards the interests of women.
- **Factories Act 1948:** Under this Act, a woman cannot be forced to work beyond 8 hours and it also prohibits employment of women except between 6 A.M. and 7 P.M.
- **Maternity Benefit Act 1961:** A Woman is entitled 12 weeks' maternity leave with full wages.
- **The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961:** Demand of dowry either before marriage, during marriage and or after the marriage is an offense.
- **The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1971:** It safeguards women from unnecessary and compulsory abortions.
- **The Equal Remuneration Act of 1976:** It provides equal wages for equal work to both men and women workers for the same work or work of similar nature. It also prohibits discrimination against women in the matter of recruitment.
- **The Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1976:** It raised the age for marriage of a girl to 18 years from 15 years and that of a boy to 21 years.

Measures to stop gender-based violence

- **Empowering Women** through education, economic opportunities, and leadership positions can help to address gender inequality and prevent violence.
- **Challenging patriarchal social norms** that contribute to violence can help to change the broader culture.
- **Capacity building of law enforcement Agency** to handle cases of violence.
- **Providing Support Services** such as counseling, legal assistance, and safe shelter for victims of violence.

Practice Question
Q. **Analyze the underlying factors contributing to the prevalence of gender-based violence, including patriarchal norms, cultural attitudes, and systemic inequalities.**

Q. **Evaluate the impact of gender-based violence on the physical, psychological, and socio-economic well-being of women, and its implications for gender equality and social justice.**

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2. HYBRID WORK MODEL AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Context: The Covid pandemic has ushered in wide-ranging changes to the workplace, including hybrid work culture (a combination of 'remote' and 'in-person' working). While this concept is still at a nascent stage, a new study has revealed the impact of the hybrid working model on the lives of working women.

Opportunities for women empowerment:

- **Flexibility**: Hybrid model offers women the ability to be close to their homes and families without losing their professional career. This allows women to better balance work with personal lives.
- **Greater opportunities:** It dilutes the barriers of location and geography thus empowering women with more choices and opportunities than before. Thus reducing gender inequalities in the employment.
- **Safety and security:** Staying in home does away with the need to commute thus making women safer.
- **Diluting the gender division of labour:** Traditionally there has been a division of labour based on gender with women taking greater role in the household activities and men assuming the role of breadwinner. This can be diluted by more opportunities.

Challenges:

- **Increased domestic responsibilities**
- **Gaps in technological skills**
- **Reduced recognition** of women at workplaces potentially thus reducing their career progression and empowerment.

Hybrid work model offers both opportunities and challenges for women empowerment. By offering flexibility on where women work, organisations can ensure that women employees are not left behind and adequate support at the household level can turn that opportunity into meaningful women empowerment. Thus, there is a need to prioritize gender equality, supporting environment and up skilling of women to realize the full benefits of the hybrid model.

> **Practice Question**
> **Q. Discuss the implications and effectiveness of increasing the legal marriage age for women in India in promoting gender equality and addressing child marriage.**

3. LEGAL MARRIAGE AGE FOR WOMEN IN INDIA

Context: There are rising voices to raise the legal age of marriage for women from 18 to 21 years — the same as men.

Background

- According to Child Marriage Restraint Act, the legal marriage age for women in India was first set to 14 years in 1929.
- Section 5(iii) of the **Hindu Marriage Act, 1955** sets 18 years as the minimum age for the bride and 21 for the groom.
- The **Special Marriage Act, 1954 and the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006** also prescribe 18 and 21 years as the minimum age of consent for marriage for women and men, respectively.

What are the reasons for early age marriages?

- **Socio-cultural factors**: The custom of under-age marriage originates from socio-cultural practices with patrilineal households desiring to assimilate women from other families into their households. Early marriage seems preferable due to:
  - **Ensuring bride's loyalty:** An early age at marriage may ensure a bride's loyalty to her husband's family. In turn, she would be bound by these very ties.
  - **Easy molding of character:** A broader spousal age-gap would also facilitate this "character molding" of younger brides, who are likely to be more responsive to these practices.

- ◉ **Religious affair:** Religious scriptures like **Dharmasutras and Smiritis** warned of the consequences for parents who failed to marry their daughters soon after menarche.
- ◉ **Sexual and physiological development:** Patriarchal societies reflect the social roles expected of girls, and also the timing of sexual and physiological development. These factors may also function as a "social signal" for the readiness for marriage.
- ◉ **Economic factor**

UN Report
- ◉ According to a **2017 United Nations report**, as many as 27 percent of Indian girls were married before they turned 18.

Status and Decadal Trends of Child Marriage in India (2020)
- ◉ There are 17.26 million married children and adolescents within the age group of 10-19 years in India.
- ◉ Girls between 10-19 years of age account for 75 per cent of all the married children in India.

Impact

- ◉ **Mortality:** These vulnerabilities also result in higher risks of mortality among the children of younger mothers. Many of these pregnancy- and childbirth-related morbidities carry a risk of death.
- ◉ **Childhood stunting and underweight**
- ◉ **Impact on overall childhood of girls**
- ◉ **Lack of education and empowerment**
- ◉ **Low Social Status**
- ◉ **Less awareness about rights**

Way Forward

There is need to treat the root of the problem by focusing on women education, overall family education and awareness and finally on women's empowerment. Also, bringing uniformity in the marriageable age of men and women is a progressive step to realise **Goal 5 of the SDGs** which asks nation-states to formulate policies to achieve gender equality. This would ensure gender equality in the society and promote gender justice.

Practice Question
Q. **"Lack of educational opportunities is often what drives parents into marrying their daughters at a young age." Discuss**

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4. MARITAL RAPE

Context: The topic of marital rape continues to spark debates in the Indian society.

The concept

- ◉ The concept of marital rape is the epitome of **'implied consent'**, marital relation between a man and a woman implies to have consented sexual intercourse from both the sides.
- ◉ **Section 375** of Indian Penal Code (IPC) defines the term rape as, any form of sexual assault involving non-consensual intercourse with a woman.
- ◉ However, as per the law, a wife is presumed to deliver perpetual consent to have intercourse with her husband after entering into a marital relation.
- ◉ **Exception 2 to Section 375**, provides a non-criminal status to sexual intercourse without the consent of the wife and immunizes such actions of the husband.

Why it is an issue?

- ◉ **Colonial legacy**: Non-criminalising status of marital rape emanates from British rule.

- **Violation of Right to Equality**: Article 14 of the constitution provides Right to equality, but the exception **2 to the section 375 of the IPC** creates two different classes of women on the basis of marital status of the women.
- **Violation of Article 21**: Protection of life and personal liberty includes right to life with dignity, right to health, right to privacy and right to safe environment etc., which gets violated.

Judicial interpretations

- **State of Kerala v/s Krishnappa**: Under this verdict Supreme Court held that sexual violence apart from being a dehumanizing act is unlawful intrusion of the right to privacy and sanctity of a female. Also, it held that non-consensual intercourse amounts to physical and sexual violence.
- **Suchita Srivastava v/s Chandigarh Administration: SC under this verdict equated right to make choices related to sexual activity with the right to privacy, liberty, dignity and bodily integrity under Article 21.**
- **Justice Puttuswami v/s Union of India: SC recognized right to privacy as the fundamental right to all the citizen.** Right to Privacy includes decisional privacy of intimate relations.
- **Justice Verma Committee** recommended to **include marital rape under IPC**, in light of India's obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

How is Marital Rape treated around the World?

- **Countries that have Criminalised Marital Rape: United States and United Kingdom**
- **Countries that have not Criminalised Marital Rape:** Ghana, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Lesotho, Nigeria, Oman, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Tanzania haven't expressly criminalised marital**.**

It is the need of the hour that the parliament should take cognisance of this legal lacuna and **eliminate Section 375 (Exception 2) of IPC thus bring marital rape within the purview of rape laws**. It is true that mere criminalization of marital rape in India will not be the solution, but it sure is an important step towards changing women's experience of sexual violence in marriage and providing them their say.

Practice Question

Q. "The marital rape exception is the result of moral ambiguity that comes out of uneasy relationship between law and morality." Discuss.

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5. CALL FOR GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE POLICIES IN WATER DOMAIN

Context	Achieving gender equality in the water sector would be essential to reaching both the fifth Sustainable Development Goal on gender equality and the sixth one on water and sanitation.

The issue

- Women play a central part in the provision, management and safeguarding of water, yet they make up less than 17% of the total paid workforce in the water sector and an even smaller minority in research and decision-making positions.

Link between Gender and Water:

- Gender defines the roles, responsibilities and opportunities of people in society, and very often, determines the potential they can achieve.
- Women and girls are disproportionately affected by the lack of access to essential water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and are largely responsible for household water, sanitation and hygiene management.
- Women and girls are responsible for fetching water in most households where a drinking water source is off-premises.

Impact of water crisis on Women	What needs to be done?
◉ Negative Effect on Health, hygiene and sanitation ➤ Lack of access to safe water harms women and their babies during pregnancy and after. ◉ Unpaid domestic work ◉ Less time for education	◉ **Gender-Neutral Approach**: participation of both men and women are crucial to achieve goals of sustainable development. ◉ **Gender Mainstreaming** to incorporate women's experiences in design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies. ◉ Women Leadership

There is a need to invest in developing the next generation of water leaders, by collaborating with colleges, water utilities and districts, using experiential learning, internship and interacting with experts.

> **Practice Question**
> Q. **Examine the importance and impact of gender-transformative policies in the water domain for achieving gender equality and sustainable development in India.**

6. POLICY BLIND SPOT: ISSUES OF WOMEN MIGRANTS

Context	An estimated one billion people around the world are migrants – one in every seven people. But as policymakers scramble to understand how these mass movements affect societies, economies, security and sustainability, the needs of women and girls are falling through the cracks.

Understanding the link between gender and migration

◉ Migration impacts women and men differently.

◉ Migration is entrenching a new globalized sexual division of labour, in which there is a demand for female and migrant labour in receiving countries, specifically in domestic and care work.

◉ Migration may also reinforce gender stereotypes that limit women's autonomy.

What issues are faced by women migrants?

◉ Loss of jobs and resources

◉ Burden of Unpaid labour

◉ Non-inclusion in Governmental schemes

◉ Alarmingly low and unfavourable sex ratios

◉ Sexual Harassment at Workplace

Government Measures to tackle the problem
◉ One nation one ration card
◉ Affordable rental housing complex
◉ Equal wages for equal work
◉ Registration of unorganized workers- E-shram portal
◉ NITI Ayog's draft policy on migrant workers

Recognizing that women migrants have a right to equal access to employment, adequate income and social protection is primarily needed. We need to enhance vocational training programs to improve employability of women migrants and their access to support services.

> **Practice Question**
> Q. **Discuss the unique challenges faced by women migrants, including exploitation, discrimination, and limited access to essential services.**

7. NEED TO END THE EVIL OF DOWRY

Context	Dowry is a malevolent practice which continues to mar Indian society years after the implementation of the Dowry Prohibition Act (1961).

Background

- Dowry, commonly known as '*dahej*' is any gift that the groom's side asks from bride's side directly or indirectly. If any such demand is a precondition to marriage, called Dowry.
- In India, dowry persisted despite draconian criminal law provisions introduced in the Indian Penal Code, a new law in the form of the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961 and the formation of the National Commission for Women.

> The year 2021 saw a 31% increase in the cases of the Dowry Prohibition Act as opposed to the year 2020, as recorded by the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).**

Causes of dowry system	Impact of dowry system
- **Social structure-** The patriarchal nature of society which treats women as subordinate sex dependent on men for social and economic needs, thus dowry is seen as compensation for it. - **Social security:** It is considered as security to prevent any ill treatment to the bride. - **Lack of awareness** about dowry related laws and regulations	- Financial burden increases with the status of groom. - Female infanticide and undernourishment. - Objectification of women - Labelling women as a Liability - Psychological burden and so, not able to call off marriage in case of marital issues. - Mental health issues

Challenges in ending dowry system

- **Socio-Economic challenges-**
  - ➤ Subordinate status of women vis-à-vis men
  - ➤ Social and Economic dependency of women on men.
  - ➤ Peer pressure on bride's family to spend higher to marry a better educated groom.
- **Legal challenges-**
  - ➤ Delayed and denied justice
  - ➤ Poor conviction rate
  - ➤ Misuse of anti-dowry laws by women

> **Practice Question**
> Q. **Examine the persisting social issue of dowry in India and its impact on gender equality and women's empowerment.**

8.   POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

Context   Despite the share of women legislators in the Lok Sabha peaking at 15.03% as of April 2022, India is still worse than 140 countries in the representation of women in Parliament.

State of Women in Politics and Bureaucracy

- **Politics:**
  - ➤ **According to the Election Commission of India (ECI) report,** women represent 10.5% of all Members of Parliament as of October 2021.
  - ➤ **For all the state assemblies,** female MLAs' representation stands at an average of 9%.
- **In Bureaucracy:**
  - ➤ Less than 11% of its total central government employees were women, which reached 13% in 2020.
  - ➤ Further, only 14% of Secretaries in the IAS were women in 2022.

Why we need more women in politics?

- **Reflecting the overall sex ratio-** For a country whose sex ratio is tilted towards women (**NFHS-5**), it cannot cater to the majority of its population if the ratio in Parliament is not the same.

Case studies:
- The global average for the share of women parliamentarians stood at 24.6%.
- Rwanda has the highest proportion of women in Parliament (over 60%).
- South Asia has had the largest number of women heads of state — including **Sirimavo Bandaranaike, Chandrika Kumaratunga, Indira Gandhi, Khaleda Zia, Sheikh Hasina, and Benazir Bhutto** — of any region in the world till recently.

- **Women centric policies-**More women in Parliament would mean more women-centric issues could be raised. For a country like India, where **women's safety** is one of the biggest issues, perhaps more attention and empathy at the top would have an enormous impact.
- **Doing away with the discriminatory laws-** A broad representation of women in politics would allow the reformation of discriminatory laws against the gender too.
- **Increased reporting of crimes-** It is observed that women are willing to report crime in villages with female representation in the council. Moreover, the police force is more responsive to crimes against women in areas which have gender-based affirmative action policies.

Barriers to women's participation	Ways to create an inclusive political space led by women
Patriarchal mindset: Women face problems including backlash from family members, parties ostracizing women candidates, character assault, etc. **Patriarchal Politics:** Politics is often seen as a male bastion **Gender stereotypes** in society is a discriminatory attitude in general. **Stigma attached with politics-**Even in the 21st century, politics is still considered dirty. **Social Conditioning-**Household jobs are still tilted toward women. **Less political will:** The bill to reserve 33 per cent seats for women in Parliament and state legislatures was passed in the Rajya Sabha in 2010, but it was never introduced in the Lok Sabha.	**Women inspire women:** There is need to have more prominent female personalities at the top and decision-making levels in parties. **Education –** Education, and not just literacy, would go a long way in creating an inclusive political space. **Safe political environment-** Their co-workers must be sensitive, and there has to be a level of respect at all times. **Enhancing inclusivity -**To encourage inclusivity, women must have easy access to public infrastructure and facilities.

At the macro level, there is a need for policy initiatives to empower women and tighter implementation of existing ones to reduce the gender disparity in India. Higher representation of female leaders can be a source of inspiration for others to pursue their dreams and aspirations. A concerted effort between the local and national levels can drive change.

Practice Question
Q. In the light of the evolving trends of gender-neutrality in the law making bodies in India, suggest some measures to make Indian parliament more gender neutral.

9. INDIAN WOMEN AND INNOVATION

Context: The recent appointment of a woman scientist (Dr. N Kalaiselvi) as the director general of the **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** for the first time in the history of the 80-year-old R&D organization brings to the fore the continuing challenges in getting more women into the country's science and research endeavours.

Introduction:
- The worth of a civilization can be judged by the place given to women in society. One of several factors that justify the greatness of India's ancient culture is the **right place granted to women.**
- They have several times urged for equality so that they can lead a life exactly on par with men. If talking about the **women's status** in Independent India, then it has surely improved. But the journey hasn't been a smooth ride.

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Contemporary examples of Social Change

A Case of Mewat (Nuh District):

- **Literacy as a condition for marriage**: Not only are families getting their daughters to study but are also setting female education as the first condition of marriage.
- **Reduction in demand for dowry** at the time of marriage has also made women assertive in tackling domestic violence.
- **Education as eligibility criteria**: Haryana government amended the Haryana Panchayati Raj Act, 1994 in 2015 and made education compulsory for Panchayat representatives.
- **Reservation of panchayat seats:** The Haryana government's decision to reserve half of Panchayat seats for women could accelerate the fast pace of change in the Meo-dominated Nuh district.
- According to the Economic Survey of Haryana 2021-22, **Mewat is among the 115 aspirational districts in the country.**

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Women in Science:

- **28% of participants in Research & Development projects in 2018-19** were women, up from 13% in 2000-01, as per Department of Science and Technology (DST)
- Nearly **43 percent of the total graduates** in **Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)** are women, which is considerably higher than in developed nations like the US (34 percent), UK (38 percent), Germany (27 percent), and France (32 percent).
  - But the percentage of **women engaged in STEM jobs in the country is relatively low—14 percen**t as compared to the global average of 28 percent.
- According to the **All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE)** 2019, 53% participation of women in science education at the Bachelor's and 55% at the Master's levels respectively.

Reasons for the gender gap in STEM-related fields:

- **Mindset**: Women are still considered less efficient than men when it comes to science.
- **Fewer role models:** There are fewer female role models in the fields of science, math, or engineering for young female students to follow.
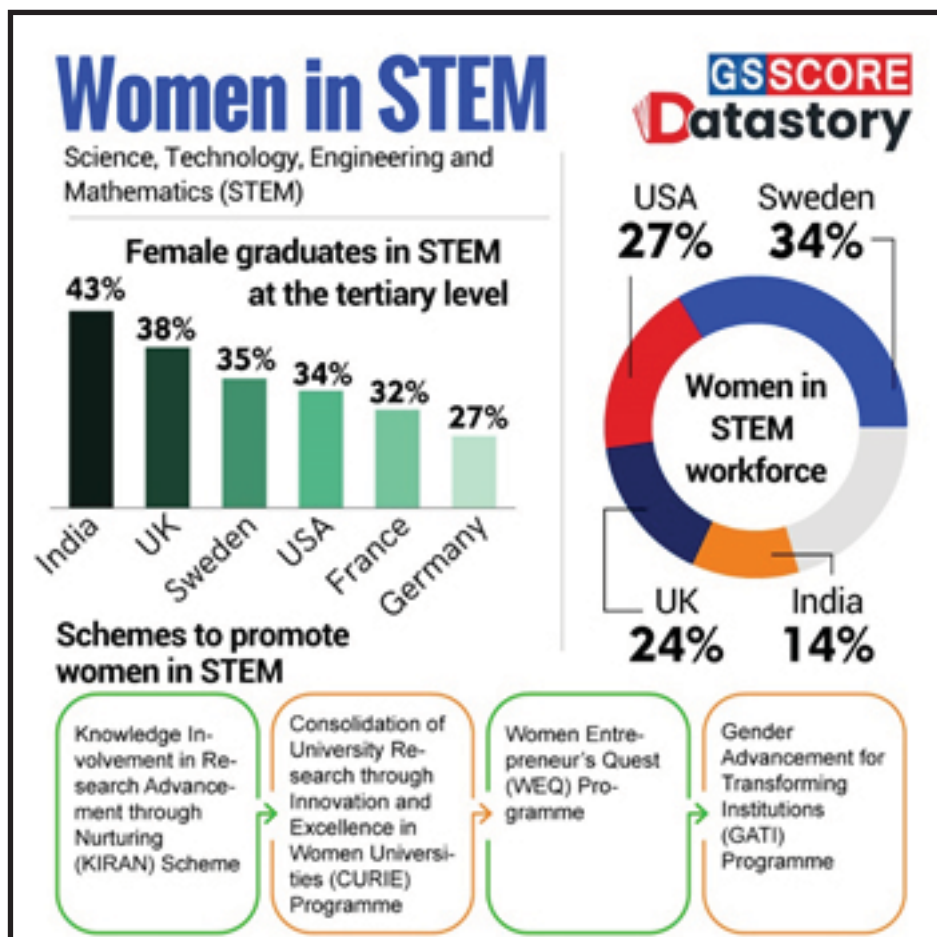
- **Fewer women-specific science institutes**: Only 11% of colleges in India which are exclusively for women, the majority of which offer arts and commerce rather than science.
- **Male dominance:** A male-dominated work environment and gender insensitivity are additional burdens for women scientists.
- **Economic factors:** Even for families with greater resources, economic considerations affect the pursuit of a science degree as a science.
- **Considered as Burden**: Many families think that a daughter's education would primarily benefit her in-laws rather than her natal family.

Government Initiatives Taken for Women in Science:

- **Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions (GATI):** Launched by the Department of Science & Technology (DST), it aims to develop a comprehensive Charter and a framework for assessing gender equality in STEM.
- **Vigyan Jyoti Scheme:** It is intended to create a level-playing field for the meritorious girls in high school to pursue STEM in their higher education.
- **Indo-US Fellowship for Women in STEMM (WISTEMM) program:** Women scientists can work in research labs in the US.
- **Consolidation of University Research for Innovation and Excellence in Women Universities (CURIE) Programme:** Improving R&D infrastructure and establishing state-of-the-art research facilities in order to create excellence in S&T in women's universities.
- **Knowledge Involvement in Research Advancement through Nurturing (KIRAN):** Department of Science & Tech. restructured all women-specific programs under one umbrella called KIRAN. The mandate of the KIRAN program is to bring gender parity to S&T through gender mainstreaming.
- **Women Scientist Scheme:** Scheme provides career opportunities to unemployed women scientists and technologists, especially those who had a break in their careers.

Conclusion:

The modern woman has now become a tool for social change in India. It requires collective efforts from educational institutions, governments, industries, and society as a whole to break down barriers and promote gender equality in STEM.

"The idea of perfect womanhood is perfect independence. There is no hope of rise for that family or country where there is no estimation of women, where they live in sadness."   *Vivekananda*

Practice Question
  Q. **Discuss the underrepresentation of women in the field of science in India and its implications for national development.**
  Q. **Evaluate the role of inclusive policies, mentorship programs, and support systems in promoting gender equality and empowering women in the field of science.**

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10.   WOMEN CONSTITUTE ONE-THIRD OF INTERNET USERS IN INDIA

Context	In a report "India Inequality Report 2022: Digital Divide", released by an NGO called Oxfam India, it has been found that **Women constitute one-third of Internet users in India.**

Key Highlights:

- Indian women are 15 per cent less likely to own a mobile phone. They are 33 per cent less likely to use mobile internet services than men.
- **In Asia-Pacific:** India fares the worst with the widest gender gap of 40.4 per cent.
- **Rural-Urban digital divide:** Only 31 per cent of the rural population uses the Internet compared to 67 percent of their urban counterparts.
- **State-wise Data:**
  - ➤ Maharashtra has the highest internet penetration, followed by Goa and Kerala.
  - ➤ Bihar has the lowest, followed by Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand.

India ranked 105 out of 193 nations in the **UN's e-participation index (2022).**

- **Debunking perception about computer devices:**
  - ➤ **Rural Areas:** The use of computer devices decreased in rural areas. Pre-pandemic, only 3 per cent of the rural population owned a computer.
  - ➤ **Urban Areas**: The number of people with computers is 8 per cent.

Why do we need women to have equal access to mobile devices?

- **Empowerment and independence**: Mobile devices can be powerful tools for women's empowerment, providing them with access to information, resources, and opportunities.
- **Financial inclusion and economic opportunities**: Women can access mobile banking services, make digital payments, and participate in e-commerce, which helps bridge the gender gap in financial access.
- **Education and skill development**: They can access educational apps, online courses, and digital learning resources, expanding their knowledge and acquiring new skills.
- **Enhanced women's safety and security**
- **E-service delivery**: Access of mobile phones with the women will help the government to directly transfer the benefits to the women's account.

Why women has poor access to mobile phones and internet:

- **Poverty**: Women, particularly those from low-income households, may face financial constraints that make it difficult for them to afford mobile phones and the associated costs of data plans and services.
- **Gender norms and cultural barriers**: In some cultures, women may be discouraged or prevented from owning mobile phones due to traditional gender roles, patriarchal norms, or concerns about perceived impropriety or loss of control.
- **Digital literacy and skills gap**: Women may face a digital literacy gap. Unequal access to education, limited exposure to technology, and societal biases that discourage girls' engagement with technology can contribute to this gap.
- **Technical barriers**: Physical access to mobile phones can be limited in certain regions, particularly in rural areas with inadequate infrastructure and connectivity.
- **Safety concerns**: Women may face safety and security concerns when using mobile phones, particularly in contexts where harassment, stalking, and privacy violations are prevalent.

Emancipation of Women- Digital India Initiatives:

- **Wireless Women for Entrepreneurship and Empowerment (W2E2):** It is a programme designed to create women's microlevel social enterprises based on Information and Communication Technology (ICT).
- **ArogyaSakhi**: The programme is crafted to help rural women develop their own personalities to provide health care to rural areas.
- **Internet Saathi**: It is a long-term vision of Ratan Tata, Former Chairman of Tata Sons. Ratan Tata joined hands with Google and Intel to help women in rural India to access the Internet in large numbers.
- **National e-Governance Plan:** The Plan provides opportunities to rural women entrepreneurs for citizen-centric services including access to land records and utility bill payments.
- **Sanchar Kranti Yojna (SKY)-Chhattisgarh:** Under SKY, college students, women residing in rural areas and every individual, who falls under the poverty line, will be offered a free mobile phone.

Practice Question

Q. To what extent does the digital gender divide impact women's participation and empowerment as Internet users in India? Analyze the socio-economic factors and cultural barriers that contribute to the underrepresentation of women in the digital space.

Q. Discuss the potential benefits and challenges associated with increasing women's access to the Internet, including opportunities for education, employment, and social empowerment.

11.   WOMEN'S RIGHT TO PROPERTY

Context: A close analysis of India's land laws and their implementation reveals the gaps that must be addressed in order to ensure women's land rights.

Women's property rights in India

A woman's property rights in the country vary as per the religion she follows.

- **Hindu Succession Act:** The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 includes the succession and inheritance rights for **Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains**. The act was amended in the year 2005 to remove gender discrimination from the **Hindu Succession Act, 1956**. Under this amendment, **daughters have the same rights as that of the son.**
- Muslim women are entitled to 1/8th share of her husband and 1/4th if the couple has children.

What's the issue?

- While there have been significant improvements in the property rights of women in India, much remains to be done
- In India, land ownership is highly skewed in favour of men, with women constituting **barely 14 per cent of all landowners in India.**

Why secure land rights are important?

Secure land rights for women and girls are linked to

- increased women's leadership and autonomy
- enhanced economic opportunities
- better social security, safety and dignified societal standing
- thriving and resilient households and communities with improved incomes
- better child nutrition, greater educational attainment for girls, enhanced women's agency
- more sustainable use of natural resources

The persistent challenges for women	Need of the hour
- Despite significant advancement in inheritance laws, only a small percentage of women own land in rural landowning households. - Even though laws recognise women's right to a fair share of the property, in reality, their right is being denied due to various **social, cultural, and institutional reasons**. - No comprehensive and accurate data on land ownership - Poor access to legal services	- Stronger literacy on land rights - Improved financial and social condition - Building confidence and communication skills among women can strengthen their leadership abilities - Government needs to work to achieve gender equality and empower women

> **Practice Question**
> **Q. Examine the evolution of women's right to property in India, considering historical, legal, and socio-cultural factors.**
> **Q. Evaluate the effectiveness of legislative reforms, such as the Hindu Succession Act and the Married Women's Property Act, in enhancing women's access and control over property. Analyze the persisting challenges and discriminatory practices faced by women in asserting their property rights, including patriarchal norms, societal attitudes, and legal loopholes.**

12.   LIVES OF INDIAN WOMEN PRISONERS

Context: Lives of women prisoners are worse than male ones.

Issues faced by women prisoners

Women prisoners in India face various issues and challenges within the prison system. Some of the key issues include:

⊙ **Overcrowding and poor living conditions** exacerbates issues related to hygiene, health, and personal safety.

⊙ **Lack of gender-sensitive facilities**: This includes insufficient sanitary facilities, limited access to reproductive healthcare, and a lack of separate accommodation for women with children.

⊙ **Violence and abuse** from both prison staff and fellow inmates. Instances of sexual harassment, physical abuse, and exploitation have been reported.

⊙ **Limited access to legal aid**

⊙ **Inadequate healthcare services**

⊙ **Separation from families and children** leads to emotional distress and long-term psychological effects on both the women and their children.

⊙ **Reintegration and stigma**: After serving their sentences, women prisoners face difficulties in reintegrating into society due to the social stigma associated with incarceration.

> **Lack of sensitivity towards women**
>
> Of the 1,350 prisons in India, just 31 are reserved for women, and only 15 states and union territories have separate women's jails.

Need for Special Provisions	Consequences
⊙ **Fundamental Rights of women**: The Constitution of India guarantees the "right to equality" to women and prohibits unreasonable discrimination between persons. ⊙ India is a signatory to **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.**	⊙ Easy escape provisions for Women against Crime ⊙ Real Suspect can misuse the women for criminal activities. ⊙ Less Judged and easy bail.

Provisions for women

⊙ **Family Courts Act (1984)** provides for establishment of Family Courts for speedy settlement of family disputes.

⊙ **Indian Penal Code (1860)** contains provisions to protect Indian women from dowry death, rape, kidnapping, cruelty and other offences.

⊙ **Code of Criminal Procedure (1973)** has safeguards for women like obligation of a person to maintain his wife, arrest of woman by female police and so on.

Ways to help women prisoners

⊙ **Liberal Bail regime**: Bail is granted as it protects the right to life and liberty enshrined under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. SC in various judgements have claimed the bail as right of the citizen.

⊙ **Special Fast track court** to resolve the women cases on the faster note.

⊙ **Open prions for women** to reduce the psychological pressure.

> **Practice Question**
>
> **Q.** Discuss the challenges and opportunities faced by Indian women prisoners in the context of their lives inside correctional facilities. Analyze the impact of gender-specific issues, including the prevalence of socio-cultural biases, inadequate healthcare, and limited access to rehabilitation programs.
>
> **Q.** Examine the role of the criminal justice system in addressing these issues and suggest measures to promote holistic development and reintegration of women prisoners into society.

13. SC BANS 'TWO-FINGER TEST' OF RAPE VICTIMS

Context   The Supreme Court imposed a ban on the two-finger test in a rape case, a move that will change the historical trajectory of rape convictions in India.

Patriarchal norms in the society for medical examinations of Rape Victims:

- **The Indian Evidence Act**: In terms of **Section 53A** in the **Indian Evidence Act,** the evidence of a victim's character or her previous sexual experience with any person shall not be relevant to the issue of consent or the quality of consent in the prosecution of sexual offenses.
- **Determining the Virginity of a Woman:** Determining a women's virginity as evidence against the character of the woman is a patriarchal norm and a societal barrier for Women.

Union Health Ministry's Guidelines on 'two-finger test'

- The **Union Health Ministry** released a document titled 'GUIDELINES & PROTOCOLS Medico-legal care for survivors/victims of sexual violence' in 2014.
- On the two-finger test, the guideline states, **"Per-Vaginum examination commonly referred to by lay persons as 'two-finger test', must not be conducted for establishing rape/sexual violence and the size of the vaginal introitus [opening] has no bearing on a case of sexual violence. Per vaginum examination can be done only in adult women when medically indicated."**
- However, these guidelines are not legally binding.

Impacts:

On Rape Victim	On Society	On Family of the Victim
- Re-victimises and re-traumatises women - A personal affront to her dignity - Character assault - Harassment of the rape survivor by police officials.	- Allow people to judge the character of the women/Rape victim. - Patriarchal norms to get strengthened.	- Due to societal pressure can blame the victim for the act/ Rape happened. - Do not accept her as earlier.

> **Practice Question**
> **Q. Discuss the issues with the norms for medical examinations of Rape Victims.**

14. THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF GENDER INCLUSIVITY ON INDIA'S ECONOMY

Context   Archaic age-old practices that promote gender segregation at an early age make it increasingly difficult for women to enter the workforce.

Understanding inclusive growth and gender equality

- **Inclusive growth** means economic growth that creates jobs and helps reduce poverty.
- **Gender equality** demands the empowerment of women, with a focus on identifying and redressing power imbalances and giving women more autonomy to manage their own lives.
- When women are empowered, the whole family benefit, thus benefiting the society as a whole and these benefits often have a ripple effect on future generations.

> **Impact of gender diversity on employee productivity**
> - 30% of the employees did not interact with the opposite gender outside of their family, while in school.
> - More than 30% of the surveyed call centre employees were from rural areas.
> - It was not expensive for firms to integrate women into all-male workplaces.

Why India is lagging behind?

- **Burden of traditional practice:** Women remain subject to traditional practices that define their primary role as home.

⊙ **Lack of monetary support**: Women often do not receive the money needed to start or grow a business, as well as the necessary training in today's labour market.

⊙ **Lack of participation:** The main problem is participation. Currently, only a quarter of workers in India are women.

⊙ **Unpaid care work:** Women are burdened with unpaid care work, which is ten times the rate for men.

⊙ **Poor condition of existing legal infrastructure**

How to bring women into the paid workforce?

⊙ **Increase reach of employment:** There is need to increase reach of employment and providing special incentives to firms to hire women.

⊙ **Fiscal stimulus:** There is need to provide fiscal stimulus to boost labour demand in India's economy to promote inclusion of women.

⊙ **Incentivizing firm to hire women:** Policies which incentivise firms to hire women can bring them into the paid workforce.

⊙ **Gender-positive recovery policies**

Bangladesh has made this progress due to women empowerment initiatives geared towards strengthening social acceptance of women's work. Therefore, investments in workplace interventions involving gender equality training by firms in India might be beneficial in improving their productivity and profits.

Practice Question

Q. The legal protection given to women is another challenge in promoting of gender inclusivity of India's economy. Discuss

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15. ANALYSING INDIAN INEQUALITY FROM A GENDER LENS

Context   World Inequality Report 2022 highlighted the grave gender inequality in India, which is further accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Inequality Report 2022 (Findings)

⊙ Women represent about 50 percent of the population, they earn only about one-third of the labour income for it.

⊙ **WEF's Global Gender Gap Report 2021** placed India amongst countries with the largest Gender Gaps in Economic participation and opportunity. **Female Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)** has declined from 27 % in 2010 to 22 % in 2020.

Gender inequality is the presence of inequality between male and females in the economic sector which is caused by various economic and non-economic factors.

Recent Findings regarding gender inequality-

⊙ **More time spent on unpaid work:** As per reports, women spend almost twice as much time providing unpaid care work such as cleaning, cooking, providing care to the elderly, fetching water, childcare, etc.

⊙ **Labour Market scarring**- It is a concept used by 'Global Gender Gap Report 2021' in which temporary limitation of in-person work has caused permanent and long-lasting effects on women's chances at decent employment in future.

⊙ **"State of Working India" report**- According to the report, the imposition of lockdowns has disproportionately affected the feminised sectors, such as the care economy and the gig economy. Only 19 percent of women were able to continue their employment while a vast 47 percent faced a job loss permanently.

Impact of gender inequality-

The presence of inequality affects not only women but also other stakeholders like family, society and nation as a whole. The various impact are-

On women	On nation and society
◉ **Psychological impact**- The presence of barriers affects moral and intellectual growth of women and gains their due place in society. ◉ **Affected social mobility**- The persistent income gap affects female social mobility, and they are still treated as subordinate sex.	◉ **Low GDP**- Incomplete participation of women lead to underestimation of India's GDP (care activities are not accounted for in GDP) ◉ **Affected Happiness**: It also creates barriers to happiness in the individual and the society which is also reflected in **poor ranking of India in Global Happiness index.**

Challenges in bridging gender inequality

Social challenges-	Economic challenges	Political reasons-
◉ Gendered differentiation of labour makes it harder for women to enter and remain in the labour market. ◉ The conundrum of unpaid care work is only increasing, resulting time poverty ◉ Women are, thus, under the "double burden" of performing paid and unpaid labour.	◉ Most women are offered work in the informal sector, which categorically provides no protection of labour laws, or social benefits like pension, paid sick leave, maternity leave. ◉ Harassment and violence at public spaces	◉ Lack of political intention in bridging gender inequality. ◉ Lack of regular evaluation of laws, rules and schemes. ◉ Less awareness among women about government schemes and measures.

Steps taken by the state-

The government at various levels has taken various measures to bridge gender inequality in the society. These steps are-

◉ **Political empowerment**-

➤ Reservation for women in panchayats and municipalities.

➤ Proposed Reservation for women in state and central legislative assemblies.

➤ 'Gender budgeting' has been introduced as a separate vertical in the annual budgeting by the union government.

◉ **Social empowerment**-

➤ Legal provisions to empower women have been taken such as banning dowry, minimum age for marriage and creating awareness about constitutional provisions and legal rights.

➤ As observed in the Gender gap report (by WEF), the gender gap in primary and secondary education has been largely bridged.

◉ **Economic empowerment**-

➤ According to **Article 39 of** Indian constitution (DPSP), the State shall strive to secure Equal pay for equal work for both men and women.

➤ Entry barriers have been removed for women in many areas such as combat forces and working in night shifts etc.

➤ Schemes for education and employment have been initiated like 'Beti bachao Beti Padhao' and 'Stand up India' scheme.

More needed

Though various steps have been taken and some progress has been made, many more steps are needed in this direction. Few steps can be-

◉ **Social security mechanism**- There is a need to enhance the social security mechanisms for informal workers with a special focus on women.

◉ **Skilling and reskilling**- for 'hard professions' and adopting a 'care lens' is essential for defeminising care work and would contribute to redistributing it equally amongst family members irrespective of their gender.

◉ **Political steps**- It is also important to create gender sensitive fiscal policies and educate the masses about the criticality of rising inequalities and formulate a framework of labour laws to sustain in the neoliberal world.

◉ **Increasing awareness** about laws, regulations and government schemes so that effective utilisation of policies can be done.

Women comprise half of India's population, thus their role and contribution should be recognised and inequality should be bridged by breaking social and economic barriers. To become a developed society, it is essential that Indian society takes everyone in the direction of prosperity.

Practice Question

Q. Gender inequality is one of the oldest and most pervasive forms of inequality in the world. Comment

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16. MEDICAL TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY ACT, 2021

Context   Women in India are still unaware of abortion as a '**medical right**'. In a recent study to understand the level of awareness of the **Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 2021,** it has been revealed that 95.5% of women are unaware of the MTP Act 2021, which opens the window for safe abortion services.

Issue

◉ Abortion is a **basic human right**.

◉ The MTP Act amendment allows **greater autonomy** to women but lack of awareness among abortion seekers and healthcare service providers is causing a hindrance in bringing the needed change.

◉ For this to be successful, the government needs to deploy mass awareness activities in urban and rural areas.

Abortion rights in India

◉ Until the 1960s, abortion was illegal in India.

◉ **1971:** Based on the recommendations of the Shantilal Shah Committee, the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971 was passed to provide for the termination of certain pregnancies by registered medical practitioners. Initially the law permitted abortion up to 20 weeks.

◉ **2002:** The act was subsequently amended in 2002 to allow the use of the then-new medical abortion pills, mifepristone and misoprostol.

◉ **2021:** Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 2021 raised the ceiling for abortions to 24 weeks for special categories of pregnant women (married or unmarried) such as rape or incest survivors, with the prior approval of two registered doctors.

Assessing the cases of 'abortions' in India

◉ Around 15.6 million **abortions** take place in **India** every year, but most of these are expected to be unsafe.

◉ As per the **National Health and Family Survey (2015-16),** only 53% of abortions are performed by a registered medical doctor and the balance is conducted by a nurse, auxiliary nurse midwife (ANMs), dai, family member, or self.

◉ **Unsafe abortion** is the third largest cause of maternal mortality in India.

◉ Debate around Abortion laws in India rely essentially on

➤ Deciding after what point of pregnancy does life begins in the foetus?

➤ At what point does the foetus' life become important and it becomes the state's responsibility for its protection?

> **The dilemma of sex-selective abortions**
> ◉ The complicated relationship between abortion and the practice of selective abortion of female fetuses has been a dilemma.
> ◉ This arises from situations wherein women themselves decide to have sex-selective abortions, which then intersects with the complex understandings of ethics and agency in the context of women's control over their bodies.
> ◉ Many women undergo a sex-selective abortion under pressure from their husbands' families, and it is usually not an informed choice that they willingly make.

The amendment is a step towards the safety and well-being of women. Public health experts have welcomed the government's decision. The Bill acknowledges the abortion needs of unmarried women for the first time and is a **progressive step** in ensuring universal access to safe abortion services for women and girls.

> **Practice Question**
> **Q. Critically analyse the provisions of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 2021.**

17. MENSTRUAL HYGIENE: A CHALLENGING DEVELOPMENT ISSUE

Context: A woman's menstrual health is crucial to her well-being and also to the well-being of her family and community. But too often especially in the developing world mind-sets, customs and institutional biases prevent women from getting the menstrual health care they need. Menstrual hygiene continues to be amongst the most challenging development issues today.

The issue

◉ **Lack of protection and guidance:** India's 113 million adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable at the onset of menarche. At this time they lack a safe environment that offers protection and guidance to ensure their basic health, well-being and educational opportunity is realised.

◉ **Lack of a separate and usable girl's toilet** in schools and a toilet at home leaves adolescent girls and women to face the indignity of open defecation.

◉ **Taboo:** The taboo to talk about "periods" and lack of girls toilets in schools leads to an astounding 30 per cent drop out of girls upon reaching puberty.

◉ **Infection due to unhygienic practices:** The reproductive tract infections are 70 per cent more common among women who use unhygienic materials during menstruation.

Challenges

◉ **Infrastructural Challenges** Inadequate WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) facilities, particularly in public places, such as in schools, workplaces or health centers, pose a major obstacle to women and girls.

◉ **Social norms and beliefs:** Freedom of women continues to be in the hands of patriarchal discourse and thus there has not been any significant change in people's attitudes and mentality towards menstruation.

◉ **Social exclusion**: In many cultures, **menstruating women are considered impure** and are systematically **excluded** from participating in every-day activities, such as education, employment, and cultural and religious practices.

◉ **Limited information:** The taboos and stigmas attached to menstruation lead to an overall culture of silence around the topic, **resulting in limited information** on menstruation and menstrual hygiene.

Impacts due to inadequate menstrual hygiene management (MHM)

◉ **Low status:** A **recent World Bank Group (WBG) study** illustrated how a disregard of menstrual hygiene **needs serves to entrench the lower status of women and girls.**

◉ **Restrictions on their self-expressions:** It brings with it rules, restrictions, isolation and changed

expectations from the girls by the society. This changed attitude towards girls such as restrictions on their self-expressions, schooling, mobility and freedom has far reaching consequences on the mind-set of women.

◉ **Economic cost:** A growing body of evidence shows that girls' inability to manage their menstrual hygiene in schools, **results in school absenteeism**, which in turn, has **severe economic costs on their lives and on the country.**

Steps taken by government and civil society to address the problem

◉ Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation issued the **Menstrual Hygiene Management Guideline** to support all adolescent girls and women. It outlines what needs to be done by state governments, district administrations, engineers and technical experts in line departments; and school head teachers and teachers.

◉ **Menstrual Hygiene for Adolescent girls Schemes** is supported by Government of India under which**, funds are provided to States/UTs through National Health Mission** for decentralized procurement of sanitary napkins packs. It encompasses the following:

  ➤ Increasing awareness among adolescent girls on Menstrual Hygiene

  ➤ Improving access to and use of high quality sanitary napkins by adolescent girls in rural areas.

  ➤ Ensuring safe disposal of Sanitary Napkins in an environmentally friendly manner.

  ➤ Provision of funds to ASHAs to hold monthly meeting with adolescents to discuss issues related to menstrual hygiene.

Menstrual Waste: Another rising problem

◉ **Issue (health and environmental hazards):** Sanitary waste disposal has become an increasing problem as the **plastic used in disposable sanitary napkins** are not bio-degradable and lead to health and environmental hazards.

  ➤ **Unorganised waste management**: Unorganised ways of municipal solid waste management and poor community collection, disposal and transportation networks in the cities and villages have further enhanced the problem.

◉ **Solution:** It is important to consider safe menstrual hygiene disposal options and ensure that girls and female teachers know how to use them.

  ➤ The **Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation along with the Ministry of Environment and Forests and Climate Change, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** efforts should be directed to offer safe and appropriate waste management solutions.

Way forward

Human Rights Watch and WASH United recommend that groups that provide services to women evaluate their programs to determine whether a woman or girl has:

◉ Adequate, acceptable, and affordable menstrual management materials;

◉ Access to adequate facilities, sanitation, infrastructure, and supplies to enable women and girls to change and dispose of menstrual materials; and

◉ Knowledge of the process of menstruation and of options available for menstrual hygiene management.

> **Practice Question**
> Q. **A growing body of evidence shows that women's inability to manage their menstrual hygiene has severe economic costs on their lives and on the country. Comment**

18. GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN THE CORPORATE SECTOR

Context: The persistent **gender pay-gap** is one of the harsh realities of the 21st century and has been a grave concern worldwide for over a century now. Although industrialised nations have this problem too, but, in case of countries like India, the gender wage disparity is far more worrisome.

The issue (gender based discrimination)

- Women population constitutes almost half (48.18%) of the country's population.
- Women play a very important role in country's development yet the women population in India is characterized by low literacy rate (65.46%) and **female labour participation rate (FLPR)** of 25.51%. Only two-thirds of women graduates are employed.

Data on gender disparity:

- India was at the 135th position globally (among 146 countries) as per the **gender parity ranking** put out by the **World Economic Forum (WEF).** India was only 11 ranks above Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, where women are prohibited from attending schools.
- **Economic Participation and Opportunity:**
  - ➤ The Periodic Labour Force Survey's 2020-21 annual report says that labour force participation rate among Indian women is just 23.15 per cent, in contrast to 57.75 per cent in men.
  - ➤ According to **NFHS 2019-21**, 25.2 per cent of the women surveyed were employed, while 74.8 per cent of the surveyed men had a job at that point.

Reasons for the discrimination:

- **General factors:** Most of the women (about 94%) work in unorganized sector where the wages tend to be very low. Lack of knowledge, awareness and illiteracy among the rural women who make the majority of the female workforce. Due to these reasons they're confined to low-paying low-skilled jobs.
- **Societal factors:** Patriarchal mindset and deep-seated patriarchy which seeks to confine women to the domestic sphere and the four walls of the household only.
- **Other factors:** Religion, history, media, socialisation process, etc. are also responsible for perpetuation of discriminating mindset against women.

What studies say?
- Studies have shown that women have more patience and high emotional quotient so they are well-suited for the leadership role as they are able to better communicate and handle the work-relations. Women are also good at management and have better sense of ethics.
- There are a number of successful women corporate leaders like Ela Bhatt, Indira Nooyi, Arundhati Roy, etc. who have time and again proved the naysayers wrong when it comes to proving the mettle of women-power.

Forms of gender-based discrimination:

Direct	Indirect
Wages earned by women are generally lesser than their male counterparts. **Glass ceilings**: It's an invisible barrier to keep the females from rising beyond a certain level in a hierarchy.	**Interview questions**: Women are often put to questioning in terms of their work commitment due to their familial responsibilities and their personal choices which male candidates aren't asked about.
Diminished responsibilities: The sex differences are exaggerated to treat men and women differently as the latter are given jobs with less responsibility like house-keeping, organising events, etc. whereas men are entrusted with leadership roles.	**Conversations:** Due to the deeply seated discriminating attitude towards women, they are talked to differently than their male counterparts. **Outdated views** regarding the dressing, working, and how they must carry themselves, etc., which affect their productivity.

How to improve the situation?

Policy intervention*:*

- Better implementation of **Companies Act, 2013** to bring in more independent women corporates on board and increasing their strength with time to 35%.

◉ Better implementation of laws like **Sexual Harassment at Workplace (prevention, prohibition and redressal) Act, 2013** for maintaining a safe environment for women to work in.

◉ More legislations to bring parity in the workforce such as labour reform, Maternal Benefits, Equal pay, female quota, etc.

By Challenging social attitude:

◉ The attitudinal issue associated with patriarchy can only be tackled with the socialisation process in which education plays a major role.

◉ Increasing participation levels of women in the various arenas, like paid labour market activities which bridges the hiatus in the crucial sphere of economic involvement, is important for improving the overall status of women in society.

Practice Question

Q. **What are the issues faced by the women in the corporate sector in India? Illustrate with suitable examples.**

PYQ

Q. **"Empowering women is the key to control population growth". (2019)**

Q. **What are the continued challenges for women in India against time and space? (2019)**

Q. **Women's movement in India has not addressed the issues of women of lower social strata. Substantiate your view. (2018)**

Q. **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?
(2015)**

Q. **How does patriarchy impact the position of a middle class working woman in India?
(2014)**

Q. **Discuss the various economic and socio-cultural forces that are driving increasing feminization of agriculture in India. (2014)**

Q. **Why do some of the most prosperous regions of India have an adverse sex ratio for women? Give your arguments. (2014)**

Q. **Male membership needs to be encouraged in order to make women's organization free from gender bias. Comment.(2013)**

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2

SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT

1. SYMBOLISM OF INTER CASTE MARRIAGES

Context	Dr Ambedkar's famous quote from **Annihilation of Caste**, wherein he stated that inter-caste marriages were "**the real remedy for breaking caste**", is often cited.

Issue

- For centuries Indian society especially Hindu society has been divided on the basis of caste system and religion.
- The problem of caste system was so deep rooted that it took years for the Indians to come out of that idea. Even today also India is struggling to come out of this social menace.
- And when it comes to inter-caste and interreligious marriages, it seems like a **taboo** to most of the people.

Consequences of inter-caste marriage on society

- **Constant struggle:** The Dalit person marrying outside caste, say to an upper caste, finds himself or herself duelling between the struggle of their community, and the culture of their spouses and in-laws.
- **Honour killing:** Rising incidences of 'honour killing' paint a stark picture of the present times.
- **Continued suffering by children**: The **children of mixed-caste parents** also grow up amidst profound misunderstanding of their complicated backgrounds. They are often subjected to suffering from social elements.

How the society is changing?

- **Modern education, industrialization, urbanization**, **Indian Constitution** has led Indian multi-cultural society to start giving less consideration to the 'caste'.
- Growth of **dissociation between caste and hereditary occupations**.
- All castes have been given importance in the socio-political field.
- Indian society is inching towards tolerance.

> **Practice Question**
> Q. Examine the role of inter-caste marriages in reshaping cultural norms, challenging regressive traditions, and empowering individuals from marginalized castes.

2. CHILD LABOUR

Context:	As the world moves from global to more one-on-one trade deals, India's patchy record on child labour is likely to become an issue.

Factors for Child labour

- **Poverty**: When families struggle to meet their basic needs and lack adequate income, children may be forced to work to supplement family income.

- **Lack of Access to Education**: When children are denied to attend school or face barriers (high costs, long distances), they are more likely to engage in labor-intensive work.
- **Poor Enforcement of Labor Laws**: When laws protecting children from exploitative work poorly enforced, employers may take advantage of vulnerable children, which leads to child labour.
- **Demand for Cheap Labour**: There demand for cheap labour in various industries (agriculture, manufacturing, and informal sectors), creates opportunities for child labour.
- **Lack of awareness** of the negative consequences of child labor on children's health, education, and overall well-being.

> ### Data
> - As per the **Census 2011**, in the age group 5-14 years, 10.1 million children were involved in the Child labour. Even though there was a decline in the number of working children to 3.9% in 2011 from 5% in 2001.
> - Child labour in 5-17 age group is highest in India (5.8 million) - **ILO report titled 'Child Labour in South Asia'.**

Impact

- Child labour not only **violates the rights of children** but also remains among the **worst forms of violence against them.**
- It leads to **slavery and bondage, depriving millions of children of laughter, happy childhood and education**.

Constitutional Provisions for Child Upliftment:

- **Article 21 A: 'Right to Education':** The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the **age of 6 to 14 years** in such manner as the State, by law, may determine.
- **Article 24:** Prohibition of employment of children in factories. No child below the age of fourteen years shall be employed in work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment.
- **Article 39**: The State shall direct its policy towards securing, that the tender age of children are not abused.

> ### Annexure: Government Steps
> - **Child Labour Act (Prohibition and Regulation) 1986**: It prohibits children under the **age of 14 years** to be working in hazardous industries and processes.
> - **Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Amendment Act 2016**: It prohibits the employment of children **below 14 years** in all employment and with the provisions for the prohibition on employment of **adolescents (14-18 Years)** in scheduled hazardous occupations and processes.
> - The **Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Amendment Rules, 2017:** The Rules provide a broad and specific framework for the prevention, prohibition, rescue and rehabilitation of child and adolescent workers.
> - Policy interventions such as **MGNREGA 2005, Right to Education Act 2009 and Mid-Day Meal Scheme** have paved the way for children to be in schools along with guaranteed wage employment (unskilled) for rural families.

Way forward

- **New Policy for Child Labour:** A lot of changes have been done since the child labour policy in 1986. But a further relook of all the laws and policies is urgently needed. Consistency in the constitutional and legal provisions pertaining to children's rights is critical and required**.**
- **Social Mobilisation**: Given that eradication of child labour is not an easy task, preventive strategies are more sustainable in the long run. The role of social mobilization and community participation is crucial.
- **Role of Panchayats**: The panchayats can play a significant role in mitigating in child labour.
    - Generate awareness about the ill effects of child labour.
    - **Encourage parents** to send their children to school.
    - Create an environment where **children stop working** and get enrolled in schools.

➤ Ensure that children have **sufficient facilities available** in schools.

◉ **Coordinated efforts**: Combatting child labour requires long term co-ordinated action which involves many stakeholders like the government, educational institutions, mass media, NGOs etc.

◉ The government must act fast as only three years are remained to achieve the **Sustainable Development Goal 8.7 (to take immediate measures to eradicate forced labour)** of eliminating all forms of **child labour by 2025.**

> ### Practice Question
> **Q. Children are denied an education and forced to join the labour class. In the light of this statement, discuss the factors responsible for prevalence of child labour in India.**

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3.   SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

Context: Recently, the Supreme Court of India began hearing a series of petitions seeking solemnisation of same-sex marriage under the **Special Marriage Act.**

The issue

◉ India is known for its rich culture, traditions, and social values. However, in recent times, the country has witnessed a growing demand for same-sex marriage.

◉ While some people see it as a progressive step towards equal rights, others believe that it could erode India's social and cultural systems.

What is marriage in Indian Society?

◉ In Indian society, marriage has been considered a sacramental union and forms the basis of the family structure.

◉ Although variously defined, in its archaic form, marriage looks as the social union between a male and a female (by birth) forming a social institution for the establishment and regulation of a proper relationship between the sexes.

Arguments in favour	Arguments against
◉ **Denying benefits**: Excluding LGBTQ+ persons from marriage excludes them from full benefits of participating in family and community life. ◉ **Denial of Dignified life**: It excludes LGBTQ+ from acceptance in society. This denies them dignified right to life. ◉ **Denied policies**: Policies specific for LGBTQ+ have been challenging to implement with insurance companies as same-sex partners are not legally recognised as spouses. ◉ **Acceptance in society**: Recognition will help LGBTQ+ in gaining legitimacy and respect from society. ◉ **Global Acceptance:** Same-sex marriage is legal in many countries around the world. Nearly 32 countries have legalized same sex marriage, while 132 countries have decriminalized it.	◉ **Society Impact:** Legalizing same-sex marriage could lead to a breakdown of traditional family structures, which could have negative implications for society as a whole. This could include decreased birth rates, changes in cultural norms, and a shift in societal values. ◉ **Procreation:** Primary purpose of marriage is procreation which same sex couple could not have. ◉ **Legal issues:** Legalising same-sex marriage may create plethora of legal issues (**inheritance, tax, and property rights).** It is argued that it may be difficult to amend all such laws. ◉ **Public aspect**: Right to **privacy** exists but it **cannot be extended to marriage relations** as it has a public element in it.

Supreme Court Judgements

◉ **In Navtej Singh Johar (2018) case:** In this landmark case SC decriminalised homosexuality by reading down Section 377 of the IPC. The SC held that the community is entitled to the benefit of equal citizenship and to the equal protection of the law.

◉ **K.S. Puttaswamy's (2017) case:** In this case, SC ruled that the fundamental right to privacy (including bodily autonomy, and sexual orientation) is intrinsic to life and liberty and thus integral to Article 21.

The **right to marry** is a component of right to life under art 21 of Constitution of India which says, "No person shall be deprived of his life and personal liberty except according to procedure established by law".

Way Forward

- **Awareness:** Large scale awareness campaigns are required to o promote acceptance and understanding of heterosexuality in the society.
- **Fulfilling international commitment:** India is a signatory to various international human rights treaties and conventions, which directs India to safeguard the right of every individual including the LGBTQ+ community.
- **Legal changes**: **The Special Marriage Act** should be amended to grant same-sex couples the same legal rights and privileges as opposite-sex couples, including the ability to legally marry.

Practice Question
Q. Examine how the legalization of "same-sex marriage" would protect and promote the rights of LGBTQ community in accessing tangible and intangible benefits of society?

4. PATERNITY LEAVE

Context: Companies including **Meesho, Twilio, Flipkart, Razorpay** and **Okcredit** have been taking the lead in terms of giving more time off to new fathers, sometimes as much **as 30 weeks.**

What is Paternity Leave?
The paternity leave is about giving fathers the right to take paid time off work following the birth (or adoption) of a child. It is mentioned period of time, where a father working as an employee under the sector is granted leave from work to take care of the new born child.

Why Paternity Leave is Important?

- **For reducing Gender Gap in Labour Laws:** Gender defined roles in the society will be reduced and gender equality will be seen in labour laws in offices and workplaces.
- **Patriarchal Society**: Indian society continues to see men as the 'breadwinner' and women as the 'homemaker'. Hence, the culture of toxic masculinity that prevails in Indian society results in hesitancy and some amount of ridicule in doing what Indian men think is **'women's work'.**

Paternity Leave Policy Associated Benefits

- **Debunk the Patriarchy** – A proper rule or law for Paternity leaves will be the first steps towards achieving a more egalitarian view in society and debunking patriarchy.
- **Improve father's role in child's life**: Paternity leave can promote parent-child bonding, improve outcomes for children, and even increase gender equity at home.
- **Reducing burden on men**: The paternity benefit bill will bring great comfort to male employees across all sectors, the organised sector, the unorganized sector as well as the self-employed, reducing the percentile of unemployment.

Consequences

- **Dual Burden on Women**: The indirect implications are that women are supposed to not only juggle both work and home life but also return to home life for fulfilling the '**nurturing'** role.
- **Can lead to family conflicts**: Indian society is based on patriarchal norms and hence working fathers at home is seen as a bad thing for men.

Conclusion

Rules for Paternity leave in India and the enactment of the bill will be one of the better welfare legislation of recent times. It will align India with global employment regulations and best practices. Also, the idea

of official paternity leave in India if endorsed by governments and private companies will be a minimum first step enabling society to acknowledge that parenting and childcare is the shared responsibility of both men and women.

Practice Question

Q. Discuss the significance of paternity leave as a social issue and its impact on gender equality and work-life balance in India.

Q. Analyze the current state of paternity leave policies in the country, considering legal frameworks, workplace practices, and societal attitudes.

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3

SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT

1. INTERNAL MIGRANTS

Context   India has the highest level of disaster displacement in South Asia in absolute terms and one of the World's highest.

Facts
- Around **3.6 million people a year** were displaced between **2008 and 2019**, most during monsoons.
- A recent study by **Action Aid and Climate Action Network South Asia** projects that even if the global community acts on their greenhouse gas (GHG) mitigation pledges and targets, about 37.5 million people will still be displaced by 2030 and an estimated 62.9 million by 2050 within the five South Asian countries.
- India alone will see **45 million people** being forced to migrate from their homes by 2050 due to climate disasters, three times more than the present figures.
- **The International Organization for Migration** defines a migrant as "any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a state away from his/her habitual place of residence."

Factors

- **Unavailability of resources for livelihood**: The geographical migration leads to unavailability of source for livelihood in the destination places and leads to poverty and Unemployment.
- **Life uncertainty**: The Natural disasters like cyclones and earthquakes make human life uncertain in those prone regions.
  - ▸ **For example**, in coastal districts of Odisha many people have to displace from their original place of residence due to calamity of nature.
- **Lack of state intervention**: Governments of both states and centre gives less attention to these issues arising from internal migration which has led to decline people's standard of living and sustainable development of a region.
- **Environmental crisis**: The on-going environmental crisis is further detoriating the conditions for humans populations both geographically and economically.

CASE STUDIES

The Joshimath landslide:
- Though the town of Joshimath has been witnessing cracks emerging for the past two decades, things have escalated over the last few days.
- There is always a **risk of landslide** in Joshimath. Due to this, every year, people of Joshimath notice cracks in their buildings and fields.
- Hence, the people who are native to the region and are dependent on the region for their livelihood has to shift from there to some other place permanently.

Issues faced by migrant workers:

- **Economic Challenges**: Internal migrants may face difficulties in finding employment opportunities that match their skills and qualifications in their new location.
- **Housing and Living Conditions**: Internal migrants often encounter challenges in securing affordable and adequate housing in their destination cities or regions. They may have to live in informal settlements, slums, or overcrowded accommodations with inadequate sanitation
- **Education and Healthcare**: Internal migrant children often face challenges in accessing quality education due to administrative barriers, lack of proper documentation, language barriers, and a disrupted academic journey.
- **Exploitation of workers: Illiterate and Under-skilled Migrants** are not only unfit for most jobs, because of a lack of basic knowledge and life skills but are also prone to the victimization of **exploitation, trafficking, psychological abuse.**
- **Political exclusion**: The political class ignores them because they don't count as votes, especially in the case of inter-state migrants.

Impact

- **Demographic Profile:** Migration in large numbers can alter demographic profiles of communities, as most of the young men move out, leaving only the women and elderly to work on the land.
- **Pressure on Natural resources: Population Explosion and the Influx** of workers in the place of destination increases competition for the job, houses, school facilities etc. and a large population puts too much pressure on natural resources, amenities, and services.
- **Increased Slum:** Mass Migration results into an increase in slum areas, compromising quality of infrastructure and life at the destination, which further translates into many other problems such as unhygienic conditions, crime, pollution, etc.

Government steps

- Ramping up of **One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) project**
- **Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHC)**: This will provide ease of living to urban migrants/poor in Industrial Sector as well as in non-formal urban economy to get access to dignified affordable rental housing close to their workplace.
- **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PM-GKAY)** is a scheme as part of Atmanirbhar Bharat to supply free food grains to migrants and poor.
- **e-Shram portal**: It is used for enrolment, registration, collection and identification of the required data of all the unorganised workers.
- **Interstate Migrant Policy Index (IMPEX)** is developed by the Mumbai-based research non-profit India Migration Now (IMN). It sought to measure the integration of interstate migrants.

Way forward

- **Access to Basic Services**: Efforts should be made to improve access to essential services like education and healthcare for internal migrants by establishing migrant-friendly schools and ensuring healthcare facilities are accessible and affordable.
- **Skill Development**: Governments and organizations should invest in skill development programs tailored to the needs of internal migrants. This can enhance their employability and enable them to secure better-paying jobs.
- **Data Collection**: Collecting comprehensive data on internal migration patterns, socio-economic conditions, and challenges faced by migrants is crucial for evidence-based policymaking.
- There is a need of state and local governments to create favourable legislative and policy frameworks with respect to all internal migrants, including inter-state migrants. Thus thereby train the local community and people for disaster mitigation and preparedness.

PYQ

Q. **Discuss the changes in the trends of labour migration within and outside India in the last four decades. (2015)**

Practice Question

Q. **Discuss the issues faced by the internal migrants of India. Also, suggest some logical measures to solve the issues.**

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2. ELDERLY IN INDIA: ASSET OR LIABILITY?

Context   The data from the **NFHS-5 shows that Life expectancy in India** has increased **from 50 (1970-75) to 70 years (2014-18).** Thus, there is a need to **relook at problems** of the elderly, and their contribution to the society.

Why Elderly should be considered assets?

- **Economic aspects-** As government retain civil servants to serve beyond retirement age, many companies retain retires person to harness their knowledge and experience.
- **Personal life experience- The experiences of** elder people benefits adults to understand the social change, making them more emotionally intelligent to tackle problems of life.
- **Traditional knowledge-** Technology has brought many socio-economic benefits. But it is also important to realise the importance the traditional and cultural values that elderly possess.
- **Focus on balanced and sustainable life-** Industrialisation has neglected the environmental aspects leading to loss of biodiversity. Elderly has measures to make it sustainable.

Challenges in utilising the full potential of elderly

- **Economic problems**- It includes problems such as loss of employment, income deficiency and economic insecurity.
- **Psychological problems**- It includes problems related with their psychological and social maladjustment as well as the problem of elder abuse.
- **Physical and physiological problems**- It includes health and medical problems, nutritional deficiency, and the problem of adequate housing etc.
- **Poor Health infrastructure-** The challenge is to provide a quality, affordable and accessible health care facility. They need at home services like tele or home counselling, physiotherapy and rehabilitation services as well as mental health counselling.
- **Change in social value system-** The changing institution of family, rise in nuclear families has made them more vulnerable, dependent on themselves and government.

Suggestive measures

- **Strengthened pension system** through better funding and coverage.
- **Holistic health infrastructure**- Affordable and accessible health care with special health facilities for elderly at district level. Use of technology in preventive healthcare and counselling through telemedicine facilities can be of great use.
- **Inclusion in economic development**- There can be increase in retirement age based of performance and willingness can make them economically dependent and productive. It will also remove social isolation and alienation for the elderly.
- **Social inclusion**: Social inclusion through recognising their contribution in their respective fields and the society in general, can result in moral boosting and psychological **benefits to** the elderly.
- **Awareness:** Increasing awareness about laws, regulations and government schemes.

Practice Question
Q. **Analyze the social challenges faced by the elderly population in India and the implications for their well-being and social integration.**

Q. **Examine the factors contributing to the neglect and marginalization of older adults, including changing family structures, socio-economic disparities, and inadequate social support systems.**

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3. MANUAL SCAVENGING

Context: Budget 2023 reiterated promise to end manual scavenging, however promising results cannot be expected.

The issue

- **Intro:** Manual scavenging in India is officially defined as 'lifting and removal of human excreta manually', at private homes and toilets maintained by municipal authorities.
- Despite laws banning manual scavenging, it continues unabated.
- As per data, there were **1,870 sewer deaths reported in India from 1993- 2019** with maximum sewer death occurring in Tamil Nadu.

Issues

- **Human Rights Violations**: It violates human rights, as it perpetuates caste-based discrimination and leads to the exploitation and marginalization of certain communities, primarily **Dalits.**
- **Health and Safety Hazards**: Scavengers are exposed to health risks due to the handling of human waste without proper protective gear or sanitation equipment. They face the threat of diseases which even leads to their **death.**
- **Social Stigma and Discrimination**: They face social ostracization and discrimination. They are often considered "unclean" and treated as outcasts, leading to their exclusion from mainstream society.
- **Lack of Dignified Livelihoods**: The practice is often passed down through generations, trapping individuals and communities in a cycle of generational poverty.

Legal Framework

- **Prevention of Atrocities Act**: In 1989, the Prevention of Atrocities Act became an integrated security guard for sanitation workers; more than 90% of the people employed as handicraftsmen belong to Organized Caste.
- **Manual Scavengers and the Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act**: The Act prohibits the hiring of hand-operated scavengers to clean dry toilets and the construction of flush toilets.
- **The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013**: It prohibits the construction or maintenance of unhygienic toilets, and the hiring of any person by hand cleaning or hazardous cleaning of sewer pipes and swimming pools.

Civil Society/other Initiatives

- **Safai Karmachari Andolan (SKA), 1995**, currently spearheaded by **Wilson Bezwada**, is a nationwide movement to completely eradicate the caste-based occupation, and rallies for the rehabilitation of scavengers towards dignified livelihoods.
- In 2002, **Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan**—a coalition of 30 community based organizations from 13 states—started a campaign to encourage manual scavengers to voluntarily leave the practice.

Dry Latrines in India
- Dry latrines are not connected to large sewerage systems, which means that they have to be cleaned by individuals.
- The 2011 census recorded 2,607,612 dry latrines in India.
- Even after the PEMSR Act, 2013, at present, there are more than 1.4 million dry latrines in India.
- This means that only around 1.2 crore dry latrines have been demolished so far.

Key Recommendations of NHRC

- **Broaden the definition of manual scavenging** to cover other types of hazardous cleaning or enact a new law for it. A penal section may be put in law to prevent the discrimination and harassment faced by the children of manual scavengers and women manual scavengers.
- **Compensation:** The amount of compensation paid as one-time financial assistance for renewal of equipment suppliers can be added to Rs. 40,000 /- to Rs. 1 Lakh.
- **Be sure to remove the role of intermediaries** by making arrangements such as direct transfer of benefits or in collaboration with NGOs.
- **The Union Treasury may set up a National Bank** so that each State can take the responsibility of extending the loan to Manual Scavengers and their sponsors up to Rs.10.00 lakhs to do business.
- **Any individual or group insurance** must be provided to Manual Scavengers and the advance payment will be paid by the Local Bodies concerned.

⊚ **The National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC)** can provide financial assistance to hand guards to help them get started in the field of sanitation and training for them.

Thus, protecting manual scavengers is not just **matter of right and dignity** of workers but also key to ensuring large protected workforce to deliver sanitation services with dignity, as has been called for under **SDGs**.

> ### Practice Question
> **Q. Manual scavenging is a flagrant violation of human rights and perpetuates caste-based discrimination in society. Comment**

4. HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN INDIA

Context	Human trafficking is one of the most distressing problems faced by many countries in the world. Currently, India is facing a huge challenge in curbing the menace of trafficking.

Introduction

⊚ According to the UNODC, Human Trafficking is "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of people through force, fraud or deception, to exploit them for profit.

⊚ Human trafficking involves recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, for exploitation.

> ### Gravity of the problem across the globe
> ⊚ The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) report, 2019 shows that 60% of the trafficking occurs internally in a country. As per the UNODC report,
>
> ➤ 90% of the sexual victims are women and girls.
>
> ➤ In the South Asia region, 85% of the victims are exploited for forced labor.
>
> ⊚ Human trafficking is the third most challenging crime in the world in terms of turnover and human misery. The first is drugs and the second is weapons.
>
> ### Human Trafficking in India:
> ⊚ It is considered as the **second largest organised crime** in India. Human trafficking is a major issue in India, despite the fact that it is banned under the Indian law.
>
> ⊚ As per the **National Crime Records Bureau's** 2016 crime statistics, there were 1,100 cases of trafficking. These numbers stood at 2278 in 2018. There were 2208 cases in 2019 and 1714 in 2020.

Causes of trafficking

⊚ **Poverty:** People living in impoverished conditions may be more vulnerable to exploitation and coerced into trafficking due to the promise of better living conditions or economic prospects.

⊚ **Unemployment and Joblessness**: Lack of job opportunities can lead individuals to seek employment elsewhere, making them susceptible to false promises and deceptive recruitment tactics used by traffickers.

⊚ **Gender Inequality and Discrimination**: Discrimination, limited access to education, and lack of economic opportunities can make women and girls more vulnerable to trafficking for purposes such as sexual exploitation and forced labor.

⊚ **Globalization and Migration**: Migrants, particularly undocumented or irregular migrants, may face a higher risk of exploitation and trafficking due to their precarious legal status, limited support systems, and lack of awareness about their rights.

⊚ **Corruption and Organized Crime**: Corruption within law enforcement agencies, judiciary systems, or immigration authorities can facilitate human trafficking by allowing traffickers to operate with impunity.

Constitutional provisions

- Article 23 **prohibits human trafficking and beggar** (forced labor without payment).
- Article 24 **forbids the employment of children** below the age of 14 years in dangerous jobs like factories and mines.

Legal Provisions

- **Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, 1986**: The purpose of this Act is to give effect to the Trafficking Convention and to prohibit immoral human trafficking.
- **Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2013:** It has come into force wherein Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code has been substituted with Section 370 and 370A IPC which provide for comprehensive measures to counter the menace of human trafficking.

Way Forward

Foresight and preparedness amid the current lockdown can save the lives of crores of women, men, and children and avoid an impending humanitarian crisis

- **Collaboration is key**: A lot of work needs to be done collaboratively, between key stakeholders such as the government and civil society organizations, for any substantial change to be seen.
- **Review of legal framework:** The central government must assess the existing criminal law on trafficking and its ability to counter the crime and meet the needs of the victim. The lapsed anti-trafficking bill needs to be amended and passed in Parliament urgently.
- **Curbing the rise of online Child Sexual Abuse material**: The upsurge of child sexual abuse material and its easy access can only be controlled by placing greater accountability on Internet Service Providers and digital platforms that host this content.

Practice Question

Q. **People living in impoverished conditions may be more vulnerable to human trafficking. In the light of the statement discuss the factors responsible for human trafficking in India.**

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5. DIGITAL DIVIDE IN EDUCATION SECTOR

Context: The Supreme Court has flagged the consequences of **growing digital divide.** It observed that the digital divide caused by online classes is affecting the fundamental right of **every child to education**.

What is digital divide?

- It means discrepancy between people who have access to and the resources to use new information and communication tools, such as the Internet, and people who do not have the resources and access to the technology.

How have online classes impacted children?

- Little children whose parents are too poor to afford laptops, tablets or an "optimum" Internet package at home for online classes during the pandemic have dropped out of school and even run the danger of being drawn into child labour or worse, child trafficking.
- Even, the right to education has now hinged on who could afford "gadgets" for online classes and who could not.

Impacts of digital divide

- **Low female representation**: Due to huge digital divide in gender, thousands of Indian girls in these far-flung areas are refused access to Information and Communications Technology (ICTs), which is a primary cause of low female representation in jobs.
- **Denial to information/knowledge:** This lack of equal opportunities to access online services and information deprive people of higher/quality education and skill training that could help them contribute to the economy and become leaders on a global level.
- **Non delivery of welfare schemes**: As many schemes have started using ICT in their delivery, at the same time due to digital divide it will create more problems.

Challenges

- **Lack of Infrastructure:** Being a densely populated country, India needs well established infrastructure to deliver e-services. But still there are some rural disconnected regions which are not connected to Internet.
- **Population:** It is a challenge for a developing country to serve a population of 1.30 billion uniformly.
- **Geographical Diversity**: Rural India is still deprived of the facilities of urban India because of its geographical location. It is poorly connected in terms of roads and infrastructural facilities.
- **Illiteracy & Poverty:** A large part of population is fighting for its daily basic needs. They do not bother about high speed devices and digitization. They are more worried about food and shelter.
- **Gender Discrimination:** In India, there is huge discrimination among male and female.
- **Corruption:** Corruption is a termite for government. At each tier of government structure, politicians and stakeholders try to draw illegal benefits for themselves.
- **Lack of Participation**: The rural people are often not very much attracted towards the web-based E-Governance services for various reasons.

Suggestive measures

- The government must employ strong measures to arrange for free and affordable internet to maximize participation in digital India.
- What India needs is a contextually relevant digital education system that integrates the knowledge of digital into all aspects of life.
- For education, last-mile connectivity is the need of the hour in rural India.
- India needs a public institution system that leverages the opportunities provided by digital technology.

> **PYQ**
> **Q. How have digital initiatives in India contributed to the functioning of the educational system in the country? Elaborate your answer. (2020)**
>
> **Practice Question**
> **Q. Examine the digital divide in the education sector in India and its implications for inclusive and equitable education.**
> **Q. Analyze the socio-economic factors and geographical disparities that contribute to unequal access to digital resources among students.**

6. DRUG ABUSE IN INDIA

Context: The rising incidence **of drug abuse** in India has come to the limelight. A recent Punjab government forensic lab report revealed that the number of deaths caused by drug overdose is rising.

Background

- India is sandwiched between the **golden triangle** (**Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar)** and **golden crescent** (**Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan**), which makes India vulnerable to the **drugs menace.**
- An **AIIMS study** in February 2019 found that around **5 crore Indians** reported to have used cannabis and opioids at the time of the survey.

> **Gravity of Drugs abuse**
> - About 60 lakh people are estimated to need help for their opioid use problems and nationally, it is estimated that there are about 8.5 lakh people who inject drugs.
> - Of the total cases estimated by the report, more than half of them are contributed by states like Assam, Delhi, Haryana, Manipur, Mizoram, Sikkim and Uttar Pradesh.
> - Punjab ranks consistently at the top or in the top five in many of the surveys conducted.

(India is sandwiched between the golden triangle and golden crescent)

Why drug is a social issue?

There are many other adverse effects of drug abuse on families:

- **Family conflict** that might include physical and/or mental abuse and neglect
- **Loss of employment and income**
- **Increased likelihood of emotional and mental disorders** (like anxiety and depression) among family members
- **Family separations and divorces**, and even the removal of children from homes
- **Social and Relationship Problems**
- **Other effects:**
  - ➤ **Long-term health issues:** Liver damage, cardiovascular problems, respiratory issues, and increased risk of infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS and hepatitis.
  - ➤ **Impaired Cognitive and Mental Functioning**: Drug abuse can have detrimental effects on cognitive abilities, memory, attention, and decision-making. Prolonged drug use can lead to mental health disorders like anxiety, depression, psychosis, and increased risk of suicide.
  - ➤ **Increased Crime and Violence**: Individuals struggling with addiction may resort to illegal activities such as theft, drug trafficking, or prostitution to fund their habits.

Reasons for drug abuse

- **Increasing Stress:** Using drugs may be an attempt to lessen these feelings of distress.
- **Glorification in media:** Quite often it so happens that consuming drugs is romanticized and some fictional positive aspects of the same are shown.
- **Neurotic pleasure:** Abused drugs interact with the neurochemistry of the brain to produce feelings of pleasure.
- **To boost performance:** Some sports person may turn to certain drugs like illegal or prescription stimulants because they think those substances will enhance or improve their performance.
- **Changing traditional societal values:** The processes of industrialization, urbanization and migration have led to loosening of the traditional methods of social control rendering an individual vulnerable to the stresses and strains of modern life.
- **Peer pressure:** Many people use drugs "because others are doing it"—or they think others are doing it—and they fear not being accepted in a social circle that includes drug-using peers
- **Lack of effective policing & implementations**

Government steps

- **The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, (NDPS) 1985**: It prohibits a person from producing, possessing, selling, purchasing, transporting, storing, and/or consuming any narcotic drug or psychotropic substance.
- **'Nasha Mukt Bharat'**: Government has launched the Nasha Mukt Bharat or Drug-Free India Campaign which focuses on community outreach programs.
- **International Treaties and Conventions to Combat Drug Menace**: India is signatory of the following International treaties and conventions to combat the menace of Drug Abuse:
  - United Nations (UN) Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961)
  - UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971).
  - UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988)
  - UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) 2000

Way forward

- **Society based Solutions:** Prevention programmes involving entities such as families, schools and the immediate communities are important in this regard.
- **Role of Media:** Media also needs to understand its role and should stop glorification of consumption of drug.
- **Effective implementation of laws** like The **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985**, is critical for the prevention of drugs abuse in India.
- **Time bound judicial process** should be carried out to prevent drugs abuse.

Practice Question

Q. **The rising incidence of drug abuse in India has come to the limelight. What are the causes of increasing cases of drug addiction in India? Also, ventilate various solutions to the drug problem in India.**

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7. FIGHT AGAINST UNTOUCHABILITY

Context: Though the Indian constitution envisages the abolition of 'untouchability' and an end to discrimination, untouchability continues to even after the 75 years of independence.

The issue

- Untouchability has been a social evil in India for centuries and it still prevails.
- According to **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data**, over 130,000 anti-Dalit crimes were registered between 2018 and 2020.
  - The highest number of anti-Dalit crimes was reported from Uttar Pradesh (36,467), followed by Bihar (20,973), Rajasthan (18,418), and Madhya Pradesh (16,952).
- **It left us to think**-
  - In a society that continues to be ordered by a caste-based system, would it be possible to eradicate the practice of untouchability?
  - Despite it being more than half a century since the anti-untouchability law came into existence, how is the practice still prevalent?

How is it a social issue?

- Untouchability is a direct product of the caste system.
- It is not merely the inability to touch a human being of a certain caste or sub-caste.
- It is an attitude on the part of a whole group of people that relates to a deeper psychological process of thought and belief, invisible to the naked eye, translated into various physical acts and behaviours, norms and practices.

Measures to eradicate untouchability

- **Article 17** of the Constitution of India has abolished the practice of untouchability; its practice in any form is forbidden and it is an offence punishable in accordance with law.
- **Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955**: An Act of Parliament, namely, the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, prescribes punishment for the enforcement of any disability arising from preaching and practice of untouchability.
- **Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989**: This legislation provides legal protection to SCs and STs against various forms of discrimination, violence, and atrocities
- **Reservation Policies:** The Indian government has implemented reservation policies in educational institutions, government jobs, and political representation to provide opportunities and representation for SCs and STs.
- **National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) and National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)**: These Constitutional bodies monitor the implementation of safeguards and policies for SCs and STs. They investigate complaints, provide recommendations, and promote their welfare and rights.
- **Special Component Plan (SCP) and Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP)**: The SCP and TSP are financial planning mechanisms that allocate funds in proportion to the population of SCs and STs.

How to eradicate untouchability?

- **Education and Awareness**: Promote education and awareness about the inherent dignity and equality of all individuals, irrespective of their caste or social background.
- **Strict enforcement of laws** that prohibit discrimination based on caste or social status.
- **Encourage social and cultural reform** by promoting fostering inclusive social gatherings, and challenging discriminatory practices within communities.
- **Support economic empowerment** initiatives that provide equal opportunities for marginalized communities.

Practice Question

Q. **Discuss the social and environmental implications of overpopulation in India. Analyze the factors contributing to the rapid population growth, including socio-cultural norms, lack of awareness, and inadequate access to family planning services.**

8.   LANDSLIDES IN PETTIMUDI: SOCIAL INEQUALITIES IN DISASTERS

Context: The study of a landslide that hit Pettimudi highlights the discrimination shown to victims of the Pettimudi landslide when compared to victims of the Kozhikode Air India Express crash.

Background

- In 2020, a total of **65 workers** got killed in a landslide caused by relentless rainfall in Pettimudi, a tea plantation estate in the Idukki district. In another unfortunate incident, the Air India Express plane crashed in Kozhikode on August 7, 2020.
- The workers lived in a **'layam',** a line of 10 residential spaces in a building provided by the company as accommodation.
- Most of the workers are part of the **second and third generations** of Tamil migrant workers who were provided with accommodation by the **estate owners**.
- The workers have continued to live in the accommodation (layam) provided by the estate owners in an **ecologically vulnerable landscape**.

Discrimination:

- For the incidents that occurred, the government had announced a solatium of Rs.5 lakhs for victims of the Pettimudi landslide whereas the solatium for the airplane crash was Rs.10 lakhs. Both announcements were made on the same day.

- The **spatial inequality** that impacted the disaster vulnerability of the community due to their social position was ignored.

> **Standard procedures to be adopted in a disaster-prone area:**
> - Alert the residents of the area in case there is a weather forecast.
> - Provide a temporary space for shelter, and if a disaster occurs.
> - Plan to rehabilitate the community with rarely any consideration of the socio-economic impact of such a shift of space.

Space and vulnerability:

- Social theorists have theorized how "**space**" becomes a **social product** and a **place for practicing discrimination.**
- The **land is symbolic of the economic vulnerability of the labourer** which has its roots in the history of slave labour. This vulnerability forces them to continue living and working in such deplorable conditions. This is how **space becomes a social produc**t and **a place for practicing discrimination.**
- It was the '**space' of Pettimudi** and the air crash which determined the different treatments it received.
- These victims had **no say** in their rehabilitation process and were forced to accept government funds. It is a kind of **social exclusion** of a community that got translated into discriminatory solatium.

Conclusion

For the sake of convenience at the administrative level, the '**Vulnerability to a disaster** is often dissociated from the '**people's socio-economic status**.

It must be noted that, while doing so the **root cause of the issue gets ignored**. Such a dissociated approach has led to more **disaster vulnerabilities** among poor communities as disaster-prone areas in India are a result of unequal development or overexploitation of resources.

> **Practice Question**
> **Q. Discuss the socio-economic disparity created by the Disasters.**

9. BEGGING IN INDIA: A MENACE TO THE SOCIETY

Context: The Supreme Court has asked the Centre and four States to file their response on a plea seeking a direction to repeal the provisions criminalising begging.

The issue

- Beggary is an age old social phenomenon in India. This system of begging and alms-giving to mendicants and the poor is still widely practiced in India.
- India has huge number of beggars and West Bengal has top the list of beggars among the states.

Factors promoting Begging

The act of begging can be influenced by various factors, including individual circumstances, societal factors, and systemic issues. Here are some factors that can contribute to begging:

- **Poverty**: One of the most common reasons people resort to begging is extreme poverty. Lack of basic necessities such as food, shelter, and healthcare can push individuals to beg in order to survive.

> **Constitutional parameters**
> - Article 23 of the Constitution ensures right to life free from exploitation. It is designed to mean to stop beggar and other forms of human trafficking.
> - **Article 23(1) is** to be read with **Articles 39(e) and 39(f)** which impose obligation on the state for protection of persons against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.

- **Unemployment**: The absence of employment opportunities or the inability to find stable work can lead individuals to resort to begging as a means of generating income.
- **Lack of education**: Limited access to education or a lack of skills can contribute to unemployment and make it harder for individuals to find sustainable sources of income. This can increase the likelihood of turning to begging.
- **Homelessness**: People experiencing homelessness often resort to begging as a way to meet their basic needs. The lack of stable housing and support systems can leave them with few alternatives.
- **Substance abuse**: Drug addiction or substance abuse problems can lead individuals to beg in order to finance their addiction and acquire drugs.

Social attitude towards beggars

- Beggars are not treated well in the society. There is negative attitude towards beggars, because they are poor and lazy people rely on the others sympathy.
- There are very few person in the society those treat beggars with compassion and sympathy.
- They are treated as drug trafficker and chid lifter etc.
- There are many instances in which the states have shown negative attitude towards beggars and taken special drive to punish the beggars.
- It is believed that, beggars are obstacle to tourism and a scar on highly developed cities.

Ram Lakhan v State (Case dealing with anti-Begging law)

- The Delhi High Court moved away from the judicial practice of castigating begging and upheld its legitimacy through a comparative discourse on the common law doctrines of necessity and duress, as well as on the principles of equality and liberty embodied in the Constitution.
- One significant aspect of Ram Lakhan is that it addresses the issue of begging from the touchstone of **Article 19(1)(a),** read with **Article 21** of the Constitution, and asserts that unreasonable prohibitions on begging are unconstitutional in that they invariably deprive beggars of two fundamental rights.

Government Interventions

- **The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 provides for an imprisonment for a convict of beggary (10 years). The Act prescribes following provision:**
  - ➤ Beggars may be arrested without warrant.
  - ➤ They can be sentenced to jail without trial or may be sent to shelter homes/certified institutions.
  - ➤ The punishment for beggary ranges from 3-10 years imprisonment.
  - ➤ Court may pass detention of persons if totally dependent on beggar.
  - ➤ Prescribes Penalty for employing persons to beg or using them for purposes of begging.
  - ➤ If any beggar detained in a certified institution, found to be of unsound mind or a leper, he/ she can be removed to a mental hospital or leper asylum as per provisions of the Indian Lunacy Act, 1912 and of the Lepers Act, 1898.
- **SMILE:** Government formulated 'Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise (SMILE)'- a comprehensive scheme meant for beggars. This scheme covers identification, rehabilitation, provision of medical facilities, counselling, education, skill development for decent job and self-employment or entrepreneurship.

Conclusion

It's important to approach the issue of begging with empathy and understanding, as it often stems from complex and challenging circumstances. Providing support through social welfare programs, education, job training, and mental health services can help address the root causes of begging and offer individuals a pathway out of their challenging situations.

Practice Question
Q. Lack of basic necessities such as food, shelter, and healthcare can push individuals to beg in order to survive. Do you agree? Justify your views.

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10.   MENTAL HEALTH

Context: 10th of October every year is observed as World Mental Health Day. The purpose of which is to spread awareness about mental health issues around the world and mobilize efforts in support of mental health.

The issue

- ◉ Mental health is an integral and essential component of health. It is fundamental to our collective and individual ability as humans to think, emote, interact with each other, earn a living and at the same time, enjoy life.

- ◉ As per WHO data, every 40 seconds, someone loses their life to suicide. In fact, suicide is the principal cause of death among people in the age group of 15 to 29.

- ◉ In India, according to **NIMHANS data**, more than **80 per cent of people do not access care services** for a multitude of reasons, ranging from lack of knowledge, stigma and high cost of care.

- ◉ Mental disorders are now among the top leading causes of health burden worldwide, with no evidence of global reduction since 1990.

Different types of mental disorders:

- ◉ **Depression:** Depression is characterized by sadness, loss of interest or pleasure, feelings of guilt or low self-worth, disturbed sleep or appetite, tiredness, and poor concentration.

- ◉ **Bipolar affective disorder:** It typically consists of both manic and depressive episodes separated by periods of normal mood.

- ◉ **Schizophrenia and other psychoses:** Schizophrenia is a severe mental disorder. Psychoses, including schizophrenia, are characterized by distortions in thinking, perception, emotions, language, sense of self and behaviour.

- ◉ **Dementia:** Dementia is usually of a chronic or progressive nature in which there is deterioration in cognitive function (i.e. the ability to process thought) beyond what might be expected from normal ageing.

How mental issue is a social problem?

Mental illness is not only in itself considered a major social problem, it also often results from the diverse social problems individuals have to face. Mental health issues can be considered as a social issue as these disorders often occur in response to:

- ◉ Abuse or neglect
- ◉ Witnessing or being a victim of violence
- ◉ Lack of consistency or support in childhood
- ◉ Poverty, lack of resources
- ◉ Housing insecurity

Other reasons for increasing cases of mental health:

- ◉ **Changing lifestyle patterns:** Due to changes in lifestyle, there have been advances in information technology; the global virtual mobility has become much easier.

- ◉ **Social stigma and discrimination:** People do not accept the fact that that they are suffering from mental illness. This mind set helps aggravate the health issues related to mental distress.

- ◉ **Career driven mindset of parents:** Parents see unfulfilled dreams of them into the eyes of their children. Hence they push children to achieve the desired goals of them without taking in to the consideration the will of their children.

- ◉ **Extensive use of smartphones** affects the sleep pattern of person which indirectly leads to the mental stress. Younger generation is mostly the victim of this.

- ◉ **Demographic Determinants:** Gender inequality, racial, regional and ethnic discrimination etc. could lead to the mental health problems.

- ◉ **Environmental Determinants:** Natural hazards, industrial disasters, armed conflict, displacement, and disasters triggered by ecosystem hazards due to climate change or increased population.

> **Government initiatives to tackle mental health problem:**
> - **National Mental Health Programme:** The Government of India launched the National Mental Health Programme (NMHP) in 1982, keeping in view the heavy burden of mental illness in the community, and the absolute inadequacy of mental health care infrastructure in the country to deal with it.
> - **District Mental Health Program:** It envisages provision of basic mental health care services at the community level.
> - **The Mental Health Care Act 2017:** It is an act to provide for mental healthcare and services for persons with mental illness and to protect, promote and fulfil the rights of such persons during delivery of mental healthcare and services and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
> - **The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH):** It is the lead federal agency for research on mental disorders. NIMH is one of the 27 Institutes and Centres that make up the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the largest biomedical research agency in the world.

The biggest problem today is the discovery of mental illness is often followed by denial and hesitations to seek help. Despite its enormous social burden, mental health today remains a taboo, stigma, prejudice and fears. So there is a need to educate people about the reality that the mental illness is more common than the people realises. It is the society's responsibility to make people aware of the mental illness and get people more talking about it.

> **Practice Quesion**
> Q. Changes in last few decades have witnessed so many changes in lifestyle which ultimately have implications on the mental health. Discuss.

11. DEATHS BY SUICIDE IN INDIA-AN EMERGING SOCIETAL ISSUE

Context: According to the NCRB report for 2021, **an increase of 7.2% from the previous year has been reported in the number of people who died by suicide.**

The issue

- According to the WHO report, 2019 suicide is one of the top four causes of death worldwide, after road injury, tuberculosis, and interpersonal injury.
- Around 64 lakh persons in India died by suicide, an increase of 7.2% from the year 2021. This makes suicides a major concern in India.

Factors for high suicides

- **Mental Health Issues:** Mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, and other psychiatric disorders, are significant contributors to suicide. Limited access to mental healthcare exacerbate the problem of suicides.
- **Socioeconomic Factors:** Socioeconomic factors, such as **poverty, unemployment, financial difficulties**, and lack of social support, can increase the risk of suicide. Economic stressors, particularly in rural areas, may lead individuals to feel overwhelmed and without hope.
- **Marital and Relationship Issues:** Marital and relationship problems, including conflict, abuse, dowry-related issues, and forced marriages, can contribute to suicides, especially among women.
- **Academic Pressure:** Academic stress, intense competition, and the pressure to perform well in examinations can take a toll on **students'** mental health. The fear of failure or disappointing parents can lead some students to contemplate suicide.
- **Family Issues:** Family conflicts, domestic violence, substance abuse within the family, dysfunctional relationships, and a lack of support can contribute to feelings of despair and hopelessness, increasing the risk of suicide.
- **Farmer Suicides:** The agricultural sector in India faces numerous challenges, including crop failures, debt burdens, and inadequate support systems. Farmer suicides have been a significant concern, particularly in regions with agrarian distress like Marathwada.

Challenges

- **Under-reporting**: Under-reporting of suicide cases due to fear of social stigma and sometimes to rescue from judicial procedures.
- **Fear of legal action**: Section 309 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) makes suicide a punishable offense. The fear of punitive action and added hassle of having to deal with police and courts often results in a refusal to seek help.
- **Social stigma**: The social stigma associated with suicide results in the NCRB grossly under-reporting the true numbers of suicide.

Government steps

- **Mental Healthcare Act, 2017**: It aims to provide mental healthcare services for persons with mental illness.
- **KIRAN**: The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has launched a 24/7 toll-free helpline to provide support to people facing anxiety, stress, depression, suicidal thoughts, and other mental health concerns.
- **Manodarpan Initiative**: It is an initiative of the Ministry of Education under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan. It is aimed to provide psychosocial support to students, family members, and teachers for their mental health and well-being during the times of Covid-19.
- **Tele Mental Health Assistance and Networking Across States (Tele-MANAS) initiative** is a comprehensive mental health care service.

Way forward

- **Mental Health Awareness and Education**: Promote mental health awareness and education at all levels of society, including schools, colleges, workplaces, and community settings. Educate the public about the signs and symptoms of mental health issues.
- **Improve Access to Mental Healthcare**: Increase the availability, affordability, and accessibility of mental healthcare services, particularly in rural and underserved areas. This includes establishing more mental health clinics and integrating mental health services into primary healthcare settings.
- **Implement mental health programs in schools** that promote emotional well-being, build resilience, and provide early identification and intervention for students at risk.

It's crucial to approach suicide prevention with empathy, sensitivity, and a long-term commitment to building a mentally healthy society. By implementing the aforementioned initiatives we can defeat the problem of suicides in India.

Practice Question
Q. **Discuss the multifaceted nature of deaths by suicide in India as a critical social issue.**

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SALIENT FEATURES OF INDIAN SOCIETY

1. CASTE CENSUS IN THE TIMES OF CHANGING SOCIAL EQUATIONS

Context	The growing demands for a **caste census** from various **sections of society** have once again surfaced the issue. The 2021 Census of India, the **16th Indian Census**, will be taken.

Why do we need a census to be done?

- The origin of the Census in India goes back to the colonial exercise of 1881.
- Census has evolved and been used to-
  - ➤ capture the Indian population
  - ➤ access resources
  - ➤ map social change
  - ➤ delimitation exercise

Arguments in favour	Arguments against
- Bringing the marginalized to the table - Data for Policymaking - Backing by the judiciary - Caste does not marginalize further	- It is the only way to make a case to breach the 50% cap on the reservation. **It** can lead to friction amongst various classes and can result in an increased caste enmity. **Partial benefits**: The way reservation is practised in the country; it has invariably led to elites among castes and communities.

Conclusion

The most important thing is improving existing databases and accurate and timely data is central to India's effort to tackle poverty. Poor data diminishes the efforts to design welfare programmes.
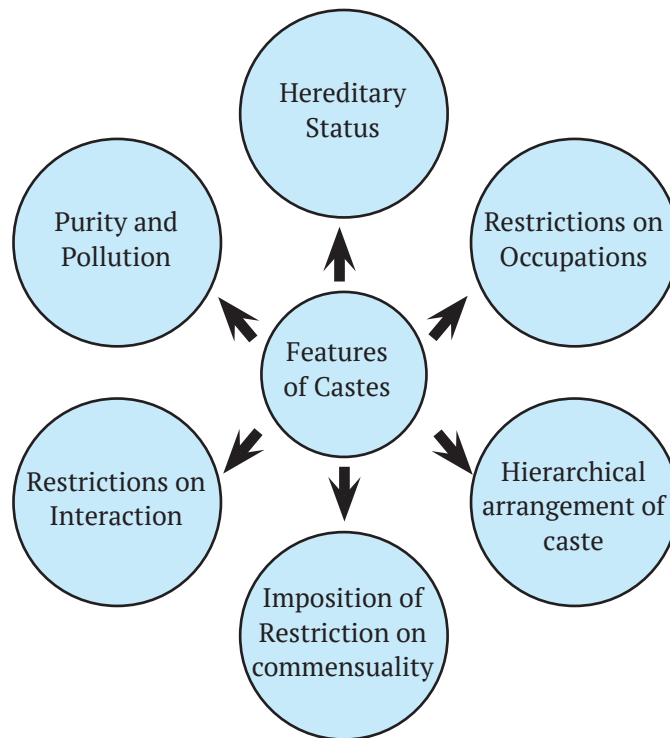
> **Practice Question**
> **Q. Examine the significance and implications of conducting a caste-based census in India.**

2. CASTEISM IN INDIA'S SOCIETY

Context:	Despite attempts to create an egalitarian and modern society, the caste system remains a prominent feature of Indian society.

The issue

- Historically, castes were arranged in a hierarchy, with some castes considered superior to others and thus accorded more power and privileges than others.
- This system of social stratification and power relations has been a major problem in India as it has led to discrimination and inequality for those belonging to lower castes.
  - ► In a recent case, a Dalit student was mercilessly beaten by a teacher for drinking water from a pot meant for people from the upper caste.

Significance of castes system	Limitations of caste system
Job security: Caste system set hierarchy and fixed hereditary based occupation. This ensures security of jobs **Social recognition**: It gives social recognition to the individual indicating their utility in society. **Socialization tool**: It imparts the societal culture and values to the individual. **Work Specialization**: It ensures specialization in occupations as occupations are inherited by their respective caste. **Interdependent interaction**: It creates sense of fraternity and cooperation within the society. **Pressure group**: It raises the voice against the exploitation by the upper castes.	**Against meritocracy**: This can limit social and economic progress, as those who are most qualified may not be given the opportunities they deserve. **Against the idea of equality**: Caste is responsible for evolution of untouchability. **Restricts social mobility**: Caste system restricts the social mobility in the society. Caste System discourages social change due to rigid caste rules. **Disrupts the progress of development**: The tension created by caste hatred or caste appeasement by political parties hinders the progress of the nation.

While the classification of caste provides a sense of identity and belonging, it also perpetuates social inequality, discrimination, and violence against marginalized communities. Therefore, there is a need for greater efforts to promote social equality and inclusivity, and to break down the barriers created by the caste system. This can be achieved through education, awareness, and affirmative action policies that promote equal access to opportunities and resources for all members of society.

UPSC PYQ

Q. Has caste lost its relevance in understanding the multi-cultural Indian Society? Elaborate your answer with illustrations (2020)

Q. "Caste system is assuming new identities and associational forms. Hence, caste system cannot be eradicated in India." Comment. (2018)

Q. Debate the issue of whether and how contemporary movements for assertion of Dalit identity work towards annihilation of caste. (2015)

Sample question

Q. Caste system perpetuates social inequality and discrimination in the society. Comment

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EFFECTS OF GLOBALIZATION ON INDIAN SOCIETY

1. GLOBALIZATION 4.0 AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

Context: With the ups and downs in the global economy after the Ukraine war, the importance of Globalization 4.0 has become more relevant

Introduction

- Globalization is a phenomenon driven by technology and the movement of ideas, people, and goods.
- The most recent stage of globalisation, known as "globalisation 4.0," is characterised by innovative technologies like artificial intelligence that advance with the boom of information technology.
- These innovations shorten distances, dissolve barriers, and unite minds, bringing people from all corners of the world.

Assessing the social impacts of Globalization

Positive Socio-Economic impact	Negative socio-economic implication
Economic Growth: Globalization 4.0 have boosted productivity, innovation, and competitiveness across various industries. **Education**: Emerging Technologies like AI can be personalised for specific age groups, regional areas, tribal or for persons with disabilities. **Agricultural development**: Emerging Technologies can help develop **smart agricultural prediction models** like which pests are affecting the crops, when to irrigate the field, which crops to sow in a certain time by integrating soil health cards data, weather data from IMD, past agricultural records, etc. **Healthcare**: Globalization 4.0 and emerging technologies like AI can help in **early detection** and prevention of disease.	**Income Inequality:** Emerging technologies have further amplified this gap, as those who possess the necessary skills and knowledge have benefitted the most. **Digital Divide**: The rapid adoption of emerging technologies has led to a digital divide in India, with urban areas having better access to technology and internet connectivity compared to rural areas. **Echo chambers:** The algorithms reduce the exposure to varied viewpoints and thus reducing the tolerance in the society. The recent rise of Mob lynching is result of same echo chambers. **Climate change**: Emerging technologies requires massive computational capacity which means more power hungry data centers and more **carbon footprint**.

More collaboration is needed between the government and the academia and think how we to involve local entities in solving local problems through Globalization 4.0 and new emerging technologies. The government should try to involve other countries like the Global Partnership in AI that was organised recently and actually looking at the socio-economic dimensional issues to solve the problems.

> **Practice Question**
> **Q. Critically analyse the socio-economic impact of the Globalization 4.0.**

2. PERSISTENT INDIAN CHALLENGES OF INDIAN SOCIETY

Context: India materialised itself as an independent nation-state, after a long freedom struggle against the British colonial rule and gave itself a constitution which made India a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, the Democratic Republic with a parliamentary system of government. Since then, the Indian society has earned monumental growth in all spheres, yet there are numerous challenges that India faces today in its everyday social life, which are intertwined in a way.

Here are some key persistent challenges faced by Indian society:

- **Gender Inequality**: Women face discrimination, limited access to education and healthcare, restricted opportunities for economic participation, and pervasive gender-based violence. **The NFHS-5 shows** that married women, between the ages of 18-49, who have ever experienced spousal violence, has more than doubled from 20.6 in 2014-15 to 44.5%.

- **Caste System**: The caste system, a hierarchical social structure based on birth, continues to influence social interactions and opportunities in India. Discrimination, exclusion, and prejudice against lower castes and marginalized communities persist.

- **Poverty**: Poverty remains a significant challenge in India, with a large population living below the poverty line. Limited access to basic services, inadequate healthcare, and disparities in education opportunities contribute to the persistence of poverty and inequality.

- **Malnutrition**: Malnutrition has been the major challenge for Indian society. **Over 33 lakh children in India are malnourished** and more than half of them fall in the severely malnourished category.

- **Unemployment**: Unemployment is high and the informal sector is in a shambles state. The global downturn of the last two or three years, aggravated by the pandemic, has added to the existing problem of unemployment.

Way forward

- **Gender Equality**: Efforts must be made by every stake holder to promote Gender equality in India. Government should Implement and enforce gender equality laws and policies effectively on the ground.

- **Caste Equality**: Government should Implement policies and programs to promote social inclusion and uplift marginalized communities. Also, awareness campagins about the negative impact of the caste system and promote inter-caste harmony should organised.

- **Social equality**: Efforts must be made to promote inclusive economic growth by providing skill training, microfinance, and entrepreneurial support to marginalized groups. Enhance access to quality education and healthcare for marginalized communities.

- **Religious Amity**: Foster interfaith dialogue and promote communal harmony through community engagement and awareness campaigns.

Addressing these persistent challenges requires a multi-faceted approach, involving government policies, social reforms, community engagement, and public awareness campaigns. Efforts to promote inclusive development, gender equality, poverty alleviation, education reforms, and sustainable practices are crucial for creating a more equitable and prosperous society in India.

PYQ
Q. Globalization is generally said to promote cultural homogenization but due to this cultural specificities appear to be strengthened in the Indian Society. Elucidate. (2018)

Q. Discuss the positive and negative effects of globalization on women in India. (2015)

Practice Question
Q. Identify and critically analyze persistent challenges faced by Indian society that hinder its progress and development. Examine the impact of these challenges on various dimensions of society, such as education, healthcare, gender equality, poverty alleviation, and social harmony.

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6

POVERTY & DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES

1. MALNUTRITION CHALLENGE IN INDIA

Context: Under Malnutrition, the body becomes deficient in **vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients required** to maintain healthy tissues and organs.

Status of Malnutrition

◉ As per NFHS-5, Stunting has reduced from 38.4% to 35.5%, wasting from 21.0% to 19.3% and underweight prevalence is down from 35.8% to 32.1%.

◉ Women (15-49 years) whose BMI (Body Mass Index) is below normal has reduced from 22.9% in NFHS-4 to 18.7% in NFHS-5.

◉ Meghalaya has the highest number of stunted children (46.5%), followed by Bihar (42.9%).

Issues in tackling Malnutrition in India

◉ **Access to Nutritious Food**: One of the primary issues is the lack of access to nutritious food, especially among vulnerable populations. Poverty, income inequality, and limited availability of diverse and nutritious food options contribute to inadequate diets.

◉ **Child Feeding Practices**: Inadequate breastfeeding practices and inappropriate complementary feeding contribute to malnutrition among infants and young children.

◉ **Micronutrient Deficiencies:** Micronutrient deficiencies, such as iron, vitamin A, zinc, and iodine deficiencies, are widespread in many populations. These deficiencies can lead to a range of health issues, including impaired cognitive development, weakened immune systems, and increased susceptibility to diseases. Strategies like food fortification, micronutrient supplementation, and biofortification can help combat these deficiencies.

◉ **Sanitation and Hygiene**: Lack of access to clean water, inadequate sanitation facilities, and improper hygiene practices increase the risk of diarrheal diseases and other infections contribute to malnutrition.

◉ **Socioeconomic Factors**: Malnutrition is often linked to socio-economic factors such as poverty, inadequate healthcare, lack of education, and gender inequalities.

◉ **Agricultural and Food Systems**: Agricultural practices, food production, and food processing play a significant role in determining the availability and quality of nutritious food.

Government Steps

◉ **National Nutrition Mission (NNM):** The government of India has launched the National Nutrition Mission (NNM), also known as **POSHAN Abhiyaan**, to **eradicate malnutrition by the year 2022.**

◉ **Anemia Mukt Bharat Abhiyan:** The mission was launched in 2018 with the **aim of accelerating anemia decline by one to three percentage points annually.**

◉ **Mid-day Meal (MDM) scheme:** It aims to **improve nutrition levels among school children** in addition to increasing **enrolment, retention, and attendance.**

◉ **The National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013:** Assuring **food and nutrition security** for the most vulnerable is the aim of this law, which makes **access to food a legal entitlement.**

- **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme:** It was launched in 1975 and the programme aims to provide food, preschool education, primary healthcare, immunization, health checkups and referral services to **children under 6 years old and their mothers.**

Addressing these issues requires a multi-sectoral approach involving collaboration among government agencies, civil society organizations, healthcare providers, educators, and communities. It involves a combination of nutrition-specific interventions (directly targeting nutrition) and nutrition-sensitive interventions (addressing underlying determinants of malnutrition) to create sustainable and long-term solutions.

Practice Question

Q. **Malnutrition continues to be a major problem for India despite the fact that it has a number of programmes in place to combat it. Discuss.**

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2. POVERTY IN INDIA

Context: National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has removed the issues like, Poverty, Inequality Topics from the NCERT Textbooks.

According to World Bank, Poverty is pronounced deprivation in well-being, and comprises many dimensions. It includes low incomes and the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity. In India, **21.9% of the population lives below the national poverty** line in 2011.

Factors

- **Lack of Education**: Limited access to quality education and educational opportunities can hinder individuals' ability to acquire the necessary skills for employment and economic mobility.
- **Unemployment and Underemployment**: Unemployment and underemployment mean individuals and families struggle to meet their basic needs and lack the means to improve their living conditions.
- **Low Wages**: Inadequate wages, particularly in the informal sector, can keep individuals and households trapped in poverty.
- **Income Inequality:** Income inequality, where a small portion of the population holds a significant share of wealth, can exacerbate poverty rates by limiting access to resources and opportunities for marginalized groups.
- **Discrimination and Social Exclusion**: Social discrimination based on factors such as gender, caste, ethnicity, or religion can restrict individuals' access to education, employment, and public services and often face higher poverty rates.
- **Environmental Factors**: Loss of livelihoods, reduced crop yields, and increased vulnerability to Environmental disasters can contribute to poverty.
- **Inadequate Healthcare and Sanitation**: Lack of access to quality healthcare services, sanitation facilities can lead to poor health outcomes, increased medical expenses, and can push individuals and families into poverty.

Government steps

- **Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP):** It was aimed at providing assistance to the rural poor in the form of subsidy and bank credit for productive employment opportunities through successive plan periods.
- **Annapurna Scheme:** Scheme aimed to provide food to senior citizens who cannot take care of themselves and are not under the National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS), and who have no one to take care of them in their village.
- **National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS):** The amount of old age pension is ₹200 per month for applicants aged 60–79. This pension is given by the central government.
- **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.

- According to the UN's Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2018, 271 million Indians rose out of poverty between 2005–06 and 2015–16. Over a ten-year period, the country's poverty rate decreased by almost half, from 55% to 28%. However, still a sizable portion of the population continues to live in poverty in India.
- Addressing poverty comprehensively requires a multi-faceted approach that tackles these interconnected factors. It involves implementing policies and programs that promote inclusive economic growth, ensure access to quality education and healthcare, address discrimination and social exclusion.

Practice Question

Q. Describe the underlying causes of the prevalence of poverty in India and suggest a plan of action to hasten the sustainable eradication of poverty.

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7

URBANIZATION

1. URBANISATION

Context: As the world is becoming more Urban than ever, it Is crucial to place cities at the centre of the development agenda to try to enhance their liveability and mobility.

About Urbanization

Urbanization refers to the population shift from rural areas to urban areas, the gradual increase in the proportion of people living in urban areas, and the ways in which each society adapts to this change. Total urban population of India in 2011 is estimated at 377 million which is estimated at 31.16 per cent of the total population of the country.

Positive Socio-economic implications of urbanization

⊙ **Economic growth**: Urbanization can stimulate economic growth by providing job opportunities, attracting investments, and increasing consumer demand. Cities and towns are centers of economic activity, with a concentration of industries, businesses, and markets that create new jobs and contribute to the overall GDP of the country.

⊙ **Easier Access to Facilities**: Urban living is associated with higher levels of education and literacy, better health, a longer life expectancy, easier access to social services, and enhanced opportunities for cultural and political participation.

⊙ **Access to Information**: Cities has easier access to sources of information such as radio and television which may be used to communicate information about health to the general public.

  ‣ For example, person living in cities is more like to be aware about the family planning which results in reduction in family size and less frequent childbirth.

⊙ **Individualism**: Lack of familial and social control over decision making promotes individualism in the urban people. This facilitates autonomous decision-making by an individual and choosing one's career and actions by oneself.

Negative Socio-economic implications of urbanization

⊙ **Urban sprawl** - It refers to **expansion of cities**, both in population a geographical area, massive irrigation from rural to urban area and inclusion of new area into urban area is cause of urban sprawl. Also there are issues of urban decay and underutilisation of land spaces.

⊙ **Overcrowding** - It is situation in which too many people live in too little space. This is logical consequence of over population. E.g. **Delhi has a Population density = 11, 297 person/ km2** while that of **Mumbai** is 20000 person/ km2

⊙ **Housing** - Overcrowding lead to chronic shortage of houses in urban areas. The major reason for this shortage are inadequate expansion of public utilities into sub-urban area, rising real estate prices etc.

⊙ **Unemployment** - urban unemployment in India is estimated to very high (15 - 25% of labour force). Lack of employability, rising populations, lower wages, corruption etc. are some of the causes. (The unemployment rate is 3.4% in urban areas as per Ministry of statistics - NSSO data 2016 - 68th round)

⊙ **Slum of Squatter settlements** - Due to rising rent and real estate princes with shortage of housing, there is proliferation of slums.

➤ As per the **census 2011, 17% of the urban population** in India lives in slum; while ratio is more than 50% in Greater Mumbai.

◉ **Urban crimes** - Urban areas register higher rate of crime. Growing materialism, socioeconomic disparities, rising unemployment and competition in every day (killing on parking issue) are some of the primary causes responsible for urban crime.

➤ As per National Crime Records Bureau (**NCRB**), in 19 selected Metropolitan cities witnessed an increase of 7.3% and 5.2% respectively in 2016 over 2015.

◉ **Problem of urban pollution** - with rapid growth of industries and transport system, urban pollution is also rising. There is increase in concentration of pollutant in air like sulphur dioxide oxide of nitrogen, contamination of ground water, discharge of effluent in water body resulting into water and solid pollution. Increase vehicle are creating noise pollution etc.

➤ **For Example**, recent WHO study has fourteen Indian cities featuring in the top fifteen most polluted cities in the world.

◉ **URBANISATION OF PANDEMICS:** COVID-19 dominantly is urban-centric. Urban centres like Mumbai, Delhi were its 1st victim. They further dominated the virus to the rural areas.

➤ For Example, the top 10 cities affected worldwide accounted for 15% of the total cases
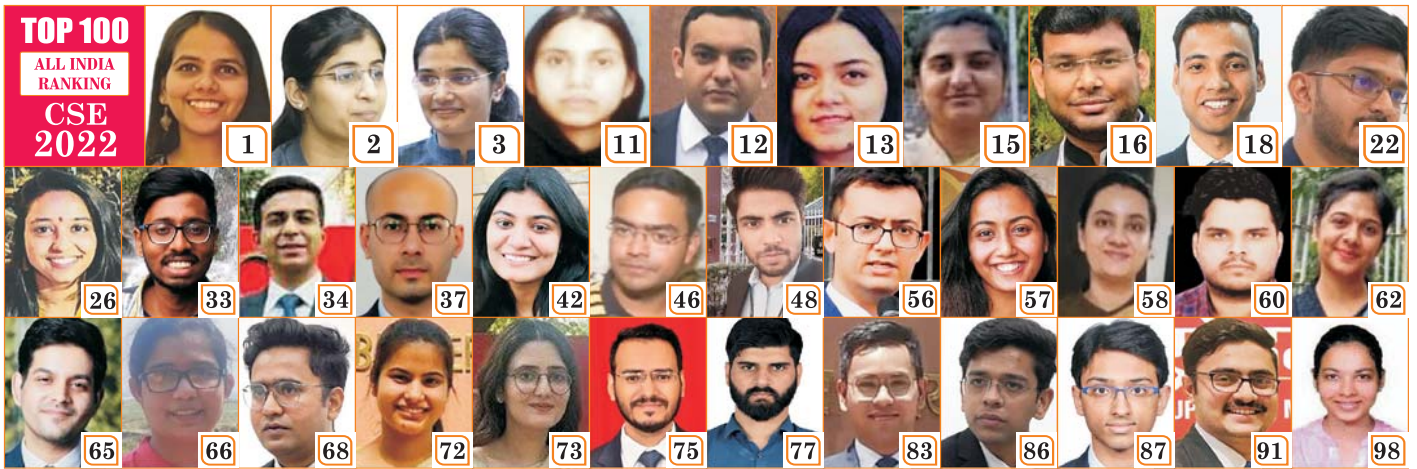
How to make resilient cities?

◉ **Strengthening Municipalities**: urban local bodies(ULB) should be strengthened. Well-run ULBs should have the power to raise financial resources including through municipal bonds.

➤ Also, Mayor should be given real power which will make governance more effective.

◉ **Sub-Regional development**: small town should be given attention and link them to bigger cities using transport (no need for amalgamation). This will prevent the migration to urban areas and prevent the problems of slums and urban sprawl.

◉ **Creation of Waste to Energy plants**: NITI Aayog suggests the creation of an authority at the Centre to spread the use of Waste to Energy plants. This will address the problem of trash and create new surplus energy.

◉ **Better physical infrastructure**: Government should invest heavily in the physical infrastructure like road, rail connectivity with in the city. Increased use of public transport will reduce the issue of pollution and congestion.

◉ **Use of Technology**: Technology should be leveraged for making a resilient cities. New technique of construction like 3D printing, pre-fabricated sandwich panel system, monolithic concrete technology should be utilised for better quality and speedy construction.

Thus, Urbanization can have significant socio-economic implications, both positive and negative. By promoting sustainable urban development, use of technology, and building community resilience, cities can become more resilient and sustainable for the future. Such steps will help us achieving the **goal 11 of SDG** i.e. making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Practice Question

Q. **Describe the socio-economic effects of the process of urbanisation. How can urban resilience be increased further to ensure a sustainable future?**

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

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CSE RESULTS

TOP 100 ALL INDIA RANKING — CSE 2022

1	2	3	11	12	13	15	16	18	22
26	33	34	37	42	46	48	56	57	58	60	62
65	66	68	72	73	75	77	83	86	87	91	98

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TOP 100 ALL INDIA RANKING — CSE 2021

02	04	07	12	24	25	29	31
32	43	44	45	46	49	52	53	54
66	67	68	80	83	89	92	93	95

TOP 100 ALL INDIA RANKING — CSE 2020

8	9	12	13	14	16	17	19	20
24	26	28	30	31	36	38	41	45	50
51	52	55	56	58	59	67	68	70	71	73
74	76	78	83	84	85	86	89	93	98	100