

# IAS MAINS 2024

## CONTEMPORARY ISSUES — of — INDIAN SOCIETY

Linkages of  
Concepts &  
Current  
Dimensions



Topic wise  
segregated  
Previous Year  
Questions



Practice  
Questions  
for High  
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P K SIDHARTH  
RAMKUMAR



AIR  
9  
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# CONTENT

## 1. MARRIAGE ..... 1

- ▶ Validity of Hindu Marriages ..... 1
- ▶ Live-in Relationship in Indian Society ..... 2
- ▶ Raising Legal Age for Marriage ..... 4

## 2. WOMEN AND RELATED ISSUES..... 7

- ▶ Hysterectomies in India ..... 7
- ▶ Equal Participation of Women in Workforce..... 8
- ▶ Impact of Non-Participation of Married Women in the Workforce in India..... 9
- ▶ Gender Disparities in Poverty ..... 10
- ▶ Women in Corporate Roles in India..... 12
- ▶ Role of the 'Gig Economy' in the Process of Empowerment of Women in India... 13
- ▶ Abortion Rights..... 14
- ▶ The History of Abortion Rights In India and the US ..... 15
- ▶ Surrogacy Rules in India ..... 16
- ▶ The Role of Male Membership ..... 17
- ▶ Gender Digital Divide in India..... 18
- ▶ Menstrual Hygiene in Indian Prisons..... 19
- ▶ Women in Waste Management Sector..... 20
- ▶ Women MPs in Lok Sabha..... 21
- ▶ Marital Rape: An Indignity to Women ..... 22
- ▶ Sexual Violence ..... 23
- ▶ Impact of India's New Legal Framework on Women's Rights and Agency ..... 24
- ▶ Issues Faced by Females in Sports ..... 25
- ▶ Promoting Girls' Education in India Challenges and Solutions ..... 26
- ▶ Ramani Judgment ..... 27

**3. POPULATION & ASSOCIATED ISSUES.....29**

- ▶ The rise of the Indian middle class..... 29
- ▶ Deaths by Suicide in India ..... 30
- ▶ Shocking effect of smartphone ..... 31
- ▶ India's Tribals ..... 31
- ▶ Great Replacement Theory ..... 32
- ▶ Population Crisis in Asian Nations: ..... 33
- ▶ World's Population Reaches 8 Billion..... 34
- ▶ Manual Scavenging, India's "dirtiest job" ..... 35
- ▶ Impact of Globalization on Indian Society..... 36
- ▶ Communalism and Its Impact on Indian Society ..... 37
- ▶ Westernisation of Societal Norms ..... 37
- ▶ Child Marriage..... 38
- ▶ Caste-based Violence ..... 38
- ▶ Social Inequalities in Disasters..... 39

**4. SECULARISM..... 41**

- ▶ Education and Secularism..... 41
- ▶ Extremism ..... 42
- ▶ Consent among Teenagers..... 42
- ▶ A Prison mapped by Caste..... 43
- ▶ Migrant Workers and Urban Housing..... 44
- ▶ Policy Action Against Drug Abuse ..... 45
- ▶ Left-Wing Extremism in India..... 45
- ▶ Care Old Age Care ..... 47
- ▶ Human Development Index ..... 48

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## 1

# MARRIAGE

## 1. VALIDITY OF HINDU MARRIAGES

**CONTEXT:** The Supreme Court recently ruled that a Hindu marriage is not valid unless the ceremonies prescribed under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, are performed.

### Key-highlights

- ▶ The court emphasized the following points:
- ▶ **Ceremonial Necessity:** Section 7 of the Hindu Marriage Act mandates that a Hindu marriage must be solemnized through customary rites and ceremonies. Without these, the marriage is not considered valid.
- ▶ **Saptapadi Requirement:** If the ceremony includes 'saptapadi' (seven steps taken together by the bride and groom), the marriage is only considered complete after the seventh step.
- ▶ **Registration Insufficiency:** Section 8 of the Act deals with marriage registration, which requires proof of performing the necessary ceremonies. A marriage certificate alone, without these rites, does not confer marital status.
- ▶ **Spiritual and Legal Importance:** The court highlighted the dual material and spiritual significance of these ceremonies, transforming the individuals spiritually and legally into husband and wife.
- ▶ **Societal Impact:** The judgment underscored marriage's role in fostering a dignified, equal, and consensual union, supporting family and societal stability.
- ▶ The court also criticized the trend of couples seeking marriage certificates without completing the required ceremonies, stressing that such certificates are invalid without adherence to traditional rites.
- ▶ The Evolving Perception of Marriage in Modern India (Shifts in Social Norms and Values)
- ▶ **Increased Individualism:** Growing emphasis on personal choice and happiness, leading to prioritization of individual goals over traditional marital expectations.
- ▶ **Alternative Living Arrangements:** Acceptance of live-in relationships, delayed marriages, and remaining single.

- ▶ **Changing Gender Roles:** Economic independence and empowerment of women have allowed for greater freedom in making personal decisions about marriage.

#### ❏ **Economic Factors:**

- ▶ **Economic Independence:** Financial independence, especially among women, has reduced the economic necessity of marriage, enabling marriages based on love and compatibility.
- ▶ **Urbanization:** Urban lifestyles promote later marriages and diverse family structures.
- ▶ **Educational and Awareness Factors:**
- ▶ **Higher Education:** Education fosters critical thinking and questioning of traditional norms, leading to more egalitarian relationships.
- ▶ **Legal Awareness:** Awareness of legal rights regarding marriage, divorce, and inheritance empowers informed decisions.

#### ❏ **Cultural and Religious Influences:**

- ▶ **Globalization:** Exposure to global cultures blends traditional and modern views on marriage.
- ▶ **Changing Attitudes towards Divorce:** Increasing acceptance of divorce as a solution to marital problems reflects a shift from viewing marriage as an unbreakable sacrament to a partnership based on mutual fulfillment.

#### ❏ **Statistical Trends:**

- ▶ **Marriage and Divorce Rates:** Declining marriage rates, increasing age at marriage, and rising divorce rates suggest changing attitudes towards marriage.
- ▶ **Legalization of Same-Sex Marriages:** Legal and social acceptance of same-sex marriages reflects the evolving understanding of marriage.

#### ❏ **Balancing Tradition and Modernity:**

- ▶ **Continued Value of Rituals:** Many still value traditional rituals and view marriage as a significant cultural and religious event.
- ▶ **Hybrid Practices:** Some couples blend traditional practices with modern values, maintaining marriage's cultural and emotional significance.

### PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

Q. Do you think marriage as a sacrament is losing its value in Modern India? (2023)

### PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. Discuss the significance of the recent Supreme Court ruling on the validity of Hindu marriages under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955. How does this judgment reinforce the importance of customary rites and ceremonies in the solemnization of a Hindu marriage?

## 2. LIVE-IN RELATIONSHIP IN INDIAN SOCIETY

**CONTEXT:** Live-in relationships, although not explicitly recognized by Indian laws, have gained prominence in contemporary society. These relationships challenge traditional notions of marriage and cohabitation, raising important questions about morality, legality, and societal acceptance.

#### ❏ **Societal Perspective:**

- ▶ **Debates and Morality:** In Indian society, the concept of live-in relationships has sparked debates and discussions regarding morality and social norms. While some view these relationships as progressive and reflective of individual freedom, others perceive them as immoral or culturally unacceptable.



- ▶ **Stigma:** Faces societal disapproval, especially in conservative communities.

#### ▢ **Growth Factors:**

- ▶ Urbanization, globalization, and Western values contribute to acceptance.

#### ▢ **Implications:**

- ▶ **Changing Norms:** Challenges traditional views of marriage and family.
- ▶ **Stigma:** Affects social standing and relationships.
- ▶ **Legal Ambiguity:** Uncertainty in property, inheritance, and child custody rights.
- ▶ **Impact on Children:** Faces societal judgment and legal issues.
- ▶ **Marriage Impact:** Alters perceptions, leading to more cohabitation and delayed marriages.
- ▶ **Positive Effects:** Offers personal freedom, compatibility testing, flexibility, emotional support, and stronger community bonds.

Arguments in Support of the Act	Arguments Against the Act
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <b>Personal Freedom:</b> Offers individuals the freedom to choose their living arrangements and test compatibility before committing to marriage.</li> <li>◦ <b>Flexibility and Emotional Support:</b> Provides flexibility in relationship dynamics and emotional support, enhancing overall well-being and relationship satisfaction.</li> <li>◦ <b>Community Bonds:</b> Can strengthen bonds within supportive communities and foster a more inclusive and accepting social environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <b>Social Disapproval:</b> Individuals in live-in relationships often face social stigma and discrimination, impacting their social relationships and community acceptance.</li> <li>◦ <b>Legal Vulnerability:</b> Without legal recognition, partners may face difficulties in accessing legal protections related to property, inheritance, and child custody in case of separation or death.</li> <li>◦ <b>Family and Community Strain:</b> Live-in relationships may strain relationships with extended family members who may not approve of or accept such arrangements.</li> <li>◦ <b>Psychological Impact:</b> Constant societal judgment and lack of acceptance can lead to stress, anxiety, and feelings of isolation for individuals in live-in relationships.</li> </ul>

#### **Fact Addition: Constitutional Provisions for Live-in Relationships**

- In India, there are **no specific laws** about live-in relationships.
- The Supreme Court (**Badri Prasad vs. Dy. Director of Consolidation (1978)**) recognizes that people have the **right to live together**, which is part of their **right to life (Article 21)**. So, living together without marriage is not against the law anymore.
- If a man and a woman live together like a married couple for a long time and even have children, the courts will treat them as **if they were married**. This means that the same laws about marriage and relationships will apply to them.
- The Allahabad High Court also recognized live-in relationships in **Payal Sharma v/s Nari Niketan**. The judges said that it's okay for a man and a woman to live together even if they're not married. They pointed out that there's a difference between what the law says and what society thinks is right.

#### **PRACTICE QUESTION**

**Q. Evaluate the positive and negative implications of live-in relationships on personal freedom, social cohesion, and community bonds in Indian society.**



### 3. RAISING LEGAL AGE FOR MARRIAGE

**CONTEXT:** The Government of India has announced plans to increase the minimum legal age of marriage for women from 18 to 21 years. This decision, which will amend the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), 2006, and other personal laws, follows recommendations from a four-member task force led by former Samata Party chief Jaya Jaitly.

#### ▣ Present Scenario in India

##### ▸ Child Marriage Statistics:

- ◉ **National Overview:** Approximately 35% of females in India are married before the age of 21 years.
- ◉ **State Variations:** In West Bengal, the average age of marriage is 20.9 years, and nearly 47% of females marry before turning 21. This rate is higher than states like Bihar and Rajasthan.
- ◉ **Rural-Urban Divide:** Child marriage prevalence is significantly higher in rural areas (14.1%) compared to urban areas (6.9%) among girls aged 15-19 years.

#### ▣ Maternal Health Concerns:

- **Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR):** India's maternal mortality ratio improved from 130 (2014-2016) to 113 (2016-18). However, it remains far above the UN Sustainable Development Goals target of 70 deaths per 100,000 live births.
- **Regional Disparities:** States like Assam (215), Uttar Pradesh (197), and Madhya Pradesh (173) have higher MMRs, indicating challenges in maternal health care.

#### ▣ Impact of Child Marriage on Maternal Health:

- **Higher Risk:** Maternal deaths disproportionately affect younger mothers, highlighting the health risks associated with early pregnancies and childbirth.
- **Need for Improvement:** Addressing child marriage is crucial for reducing maternal mortality and achieving better health outcomes for women and children in India.

Pros:	Cons:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◉ <b>Lowering Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR):</b> Higher marriage age reduces health risks associated with early childbirth.</li> <li>◉ <b>Improved Nutrition:</b> Delayed marriages allow girls more time to attain better health before pregnancy.</li> <li>◉ <b>Financial Empowerment:</b> Women can pursue higher education and careers, contributing to economic growth and gender equality.</li> <li>◉ <b>Increased Labor Force Participation:</b> Higher marriage age correlates with higher female graduation rates and workforce engagement, enhancing economic productivity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◉ <b>Difficulty in Enforcement:</b> Implementation of laws against child marriage is complex and often ineffective.</li> <li>◉ <b>Penalization of Self-Arranged Marriages:</b> Laws are sometimes used to penalize young adults in self-arranged marriages rather than preventing child marriages effectively.</li> <li>◉ <b>Limited Impact on Decline:</b> Despite legal efforts, child marriage rates have only marginally decreased, remaining prevalent in marginalized communities.</li> <li>◉ <b>Pushing Marriages Underground:</b> Stricter laws may drive child marriages underground rather than eliminating them, especially in deprived communities.</li> </ul>

Pros:	Cons:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <b>Women and Child Welfare:</b> Delayed marriages can alleviate poverty among mothers, improving nutrition and health outcomes for both mothers and children.</li> <li>◦ <b>Empowerment and Gender Parity:</b> Delayed childbearing enhances women's decision-making power, educational attainment, and overall living conditions.</li> <li>◦ <b>Tackling Child Marriage:</b> Increasing the marriage age helps curb the prevalence of child marriages, which remains a significant issue in India.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <b>Criminalization Concerns:</b> Many women marrying before the legal age would lack legal protections, potentially criminalizing their families under new laws.</li> <li>◦ <b>Education as a Barrier:</b> Lack of education among girls contributes significantly to early marriages, highlighting broader social challenges beyond legal reforms.</li> </ul>

### Legality of Minimum Age

Child marriages are not automatically illegal in India. However, a minor involved in a marriage can request for it to be declared void.

- **Hindu Marriage Act, 1955:** The Act stipulates 18 years as the minimum age for marriage for brides and 21 years for grooms among Hindus.
- **Islamic Law:** In Islam, the marriage of a minor who has reached puberty is considered legally valid.
- **Special Marriage Act, 1954:** This Act also sets the minimum age for marriage at 18 years for women and 21 years for men, regardless of religion or faith.
- **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006:**
  - **Legal Framework:** This Act reinforces the minimum age of marriage at 18 years for women and 21 years for men across all communities.
  - **Objective:** It aims to prevent and prohibit child marriages in India, ensuring marriages occur with full consent and maturity.

### Policies aimed at preventing girl child marriage in India

- Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006
- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) Scheme
- Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana
- Kishori Shakti Yojana (Adolescent Girls Scheme)
- National Plan of Action for Children, 2016

### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q. The Government of India has proposed to increase the minimum legal age of marriage for women from 18 to 21 years. Discuss the potential socio-economic benefits of this decision, particularly in terms of maternal health, education, and women's empowerment.**

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## 2

# WOMEN AND RELATED ISSUES

## 1. HYSTERECTOMIES IN INDIA

**CONTEXT:** The lack of comprehensive data on women-specific health issues, such as hysterectomies, hampers effective policymaking and awareness in India. A recent study explores the prevalence and reasons behind hysterectomies among women aged 45 and above.

### ▢ About:

- ▶ Hysterectomy, the surgical removal of the uterus, is a common procedure globally, often performed to alleviate symptoms of gynecological disorders like fibroids, uterovaginal prolapse, and ovarian cysts. While it offers health benefits, it also carries long-term implications such as early menopause and increased risks of cardiovascular disease and urinary incontinence.

### ▢ Key Findings:

- ▶ **Common Reasons:** Heavy menstrual bleeding, fibroids, and uterine prolapse are the leading causes for hysterectomies.
- ▶ **Regional Disparities:** Higher rates of hysterectomies are reported in southern and western India.
- ▶ **Associated Factors:** Higher likelihood of undergoing hysterectomy correlates with education level, socioeconomic status, and age at marriage.
- ▶ **Patriarchal Influence:** Patriarchal norms and misconceptions contribute to unnecessary hysterectomies.
- ▶ **Vulnerable Groups:** Women from marginalized communities and those with multiple children are particularly at risk.
- ▶ **Impact of patriarchal norms and misconceptions on the incidence of unnecessary hysterectomies in India:**

### ❑ Misinformation and Lack of Awareness:

- **Patriarchal norms lead to misinformation about women's health, including misconceptions about menstruation, reproductive health, and the necessity of hysterectomies.**
  - **Preference for Male Child and Family Pressure:** Strong societal preference for male children often leads to pressure on women to undergo hysterectomies after bearing sons, under the belief that further childbearing is unnecessary.
  - **Medical Exploitation and Financial Incentives:** Unethical practices by some doctors exploit patriarchal norms for financial gain, performing unnecessary hysterectomies due to women's lack of autonomy and understanding of their health rights.
  - **Healthcare Access and Empowerment:** Patriarchal norms restrict women's access to healthcare and decision-making authority, discouraging them from seeking second opinions or questioning medical advice.
  - **Legal and Policy Frameworks:** Existing legal frameworks to protect patients from medical malpractice sometimes fail to address unnecessary hysterectomies, influenced by societal stigmatization and legal barriers faced by women.
  - **Psychological Impact:** Beyond physical repercussions, unnecessary hysterectomies cause emotional distress, loss of self-esteem, and disruption of familial and social roles, exacerbated by patriarchal devaluation of women's reproductive health.

### ❑ Issues Associated with Hysterectomy:

- **Health Risks:** Hysterectomies are linked to chronic diseases such as cardiovascular events, cancers, depression, metabolic disorders, and dementia.
- **Other Conditions:** Increased risk of hypertension, high cholesterol, diabetes, and bone disease.
- **Unnecessary Surgeries:** Many women undergo hysterectomies unnecessarily, emphasizing the need for alternative treatments and informed decision-making among patients. Medical professionals highlight the importance of non-surgical options.

### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q. Analyze the impact of patriarchal norms and misconceptions on the incidence of unnecessary hysterectomies in India.**

## 2. EQUAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN WORKFORCE

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**CONTEXT:** The Supreme Court said that denying child care leave to working mothers of disabled children violated the constitutional mandate for equal participation of women in the workforce.

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### ❑ Significance of Child-Care Leaves (CCL)

- **Constitutional entitlement:** A bench of Supreme Court emphasised that the participation of women in the work force is not just a matter of privilege but constitutional entitlement by **Article 15 of the Constitution**.
- **Violation of constitutional mandate:** The provision of CCL to women subserves an important constitutional object, and denying the same to mothers of children with disabilities would **violate the constitutional duty** to ensure equal women participation in the workforce.

### ❏ **Barriers addressed by SC ruling**

- **Systematic barriers:** Women faces systematic barriers in balancing their professional careers with caregiving duties, particularly when they have children with disabilities.
- **Gender disparity and undermined children's rights:** Denying child care leave to these mothers not only perpetuates gender disparities in the workforce but also undermines the rights of children with disabilities to receive adequate care and support from their parents.
- **State's obligations:** The ruling emphasizes the obligation of the state and employers to adopt inclusive policies that promote gender equality and support the diverse needs of working parents, including those with children with disabilities.

#### **Fact Box: Supreme Court on Denying child-care leaves to mother**

- The Supreme Court said that denying child care leave to working mothers of disabled children violated the constitutional mandate for equal participation of women in the workforce.
- Significance of Child-Care Leaves (CCL)
  - **Constitutional entitlement:** A bench of Supreme Court emphasised that the participation of women in the work force is not just a matter of privilege but constitutional entitlement by **Article 15 of the Constitution**.
  - **Violation of constitutional mandate:** The court said the provision of Child-Care Leaves (CCL) to women subserves an important constitutional object, and denying the same to mothers of children with disabilities would **violate the constitutional duty** to ensure equal women participation in the workforce.

#### **PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION**

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

#### **PRACTICE QUESTION**

**Q. Discuss the significance of the Supreme Court's ruling on child care leave for mothers of disabled children in promoting gender equality in the workforce. How does this decision address systemic barriers and societal attitudes towards caregiving and gender roles in India?**

## **3. IMPACT OF NON-PARTICIPATION OF MARRIED WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE IN INDIA**

**CONTEXT:** The non-participation of married women in India's workforce has significant economic and social impacts, given their substantial representation among the working-age population.

### ❏ **Macro Impact of Low Women's Labor Force Participation**

- **Economic Impact:** Reduced female labor force participation hampers national economic growth and affects intra-household decision-making power.
- **Gender Disparities:** Persistent gender disparities exist in work roles and remuneration.
- **Global Trends in Female Labor Force Participation**
  - **Global Participation Rates:** Worldwide female labor force participation was 47.3% in 2022.
  - **Decline in Developing Nations:** Female LFPR in India declined from 28% to 24% between 1990 and 2022.



### ❑ Challenges for Married Women in the Labour Market

- **Post-Marriage Decline:** Women's LFPR declines after marriage due to limited education, family obligations, and societal disapproval.
- **Influencing Factors:** Religion, caste, geography, wealth, and societal norms significantly affect women's labor market entry.

### ❑ Professional Challenges for Married Women

- **Employment Preferences:** Post-marriage, women prefer flexible, close-to-home jobs.
- **Professional Costs:** Gender-based costs lead to disparities in career choices, income, age at marriage, and fertility decisions.
- **Socioeconomic Influence:** Women's labor market engagement is influenced by their socioeconomic status.

### ❑ Marriage's Impact on Labor Force Participation

- **Employment Rates:** Married women aged 25-49 show lower employment rates, with a 5% decrease in FLFPR from 2004-05 to 2022-23.
- **Educational Impact:** Illiterate women are more likely to participate in the labor force after marriage compared to well-educated women.

### ❑ Sectoral Trends and Promoting Women's Empowerment

- **Dominant Sector:** Agriculture is the main sector for female employment.
- **Cultural Influence:** Social and cultural factors play a significant role in women's labor market entry.
- **Day-Care Services:** Adequate day-care services are crucial for increasing female labor force participation.

### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q. Discuss the macroeconomic impacts of the low labor force participation of married women in India and suggest measures to enhance their participation in the workforce.**

## 4. GENDER DISPARITIES IN POVERTY

**CONTEXT:** The United Nations' recent gender snapshot highlights a concerning trend: women aged 55 to 59 are more likely to live in extreme poverty globally. This disparity stems from various factors, including career interruptions, lower earnings, and disproportionate unpaid care responsibilities.

### ❑ Poverty and Women:

- Many women reach old age without sufficient assets, savings, or adequate pension plans.
- Career interruptions, part-time employment, and lower earnings contribute to their economic vulnerability.
- Lack of social protection benefits exacerbates the financial insecurity faced by aging women.

### ❑ Impact:

- Without intervention, the UN predicts that 340 million women and girls could be living in extreme poverty by 2030.
- Microcredit and micro-enterprise development initiatives are hailed for empowering women and addressing poverty.
- However, the neoliberal model of microcredit, characterized by high lending costs, can perpetuate a debt trap for vulnerable borrowers.

### Breaking the Cycle:

The vicious cycle of gender inequality, poverty, and malnutrition can be broken through the microfinancing of women Self-Help Groups (SHGs). Here's an explanation with examples:

- **Empowerment through Economic Independence:**
  - **Financial Inclusion:** Microfinancing provides women with access to credit and savings, enabling them to start or expand small businesses.
  - **Decision-Making Power:** Economic independence boosts women's confidence and decision-making power within households and communities.
- **Reducing Poverty:**
  - **Income Generation:** With access to microloans, women can create sustainable sources of income, reducing household poverty.
  - **Asset Building:** Savings and profits from businesses allow women to invest in assets like livestock, land, or education, further reducing poverty.
- **Improving Nutrition:**
  - **Increased Household Income:** More income leads to better food security and dietary diversity.
  - **Health Investments:** Women with control over finances are more likely to invest in their family's health and nutrition.

### Examples:

- **SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association):**
- **Context:** In India, SEWA has been instrumental in providing microfinancing to women.
  - **Impact:** Women have used these loans to start businesses, such as street vending, embroidery, and agricultural activities. This has led to increased incomes, improved family nutrition, and better educational opportunities for children.

### Grameen Bank (Bangladesh):

- **Context:** Although based in Bangladesh, the model has been replicated in India.
  - **Impact:** Women who received microloans started small businesses like weaving, poultry farming, and retail shops. This economic empowerment has significantly reduced poverty and malnutrition rates in many communities.

### SHG-Bank Linkage Program (India):

- **Context:** This program by NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development) links SHGs to banks, providing them with access to credit.
  - **Impact:** Women have used these loans to engage in various income-generating activities such as tailoring, dairy farming, and small-scale trading. The increased household income has led to improved nutrition and educational outcomes for their children.

### Jeevika (Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society):

- **Context:** An initiative aimed at social and economic empowerment of rural poor in Bihar.
  - **Impact:** By providing microfinancing and training, Jeevika has enabled women to start businesses and engage in livelihood activities. This has reduced poverty and malnutrition and promoted gender equality in the region.
  - Microfinancing women SHGs has proven to be an effective tool in breaking the vicious cycle of gender inequality, poverty, and malnutrition. By providing women with financial resources, these programs empower them economically and socially, leading to improved household incomes, better nutrition, and greater gender equality. The success of these programs highlights the importance of financial inclusion and support for women's entrepreneurial activities as key strategies for sustainable development.

## PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

Q. Can the vicious cycle of gender inequality, poverty and malnutrition be broken through microfinancing of women SHGs? Explain with examples. (2021)

## PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. Examine the role of microcredit in empowering women and alleviating poverty. Discuss the challenges associated with the prevalent neoliberal model of microcredit and its impact on vulnerable borrowers.

## 5. WOMEN IN CORPORATE ROLES IN INDIA

**CONTEXT:** The representation of women in corporate roles in India has long been below 30% and has shown signs of stagnation or even decline in the post-pandemic years. This trend is highlighted in a report by LinkedIn titled “Women in Leadership in Corporate India.”

### ▢ Factors Contributing to Decline

- **Reduction in hybrid or work-from-home roles** has suppressed the growth of female participation in the corporate labor market.
- Women still face significant obstacles in reaching leadership roles due to **bias, societal norms, and structural barriers**.
- Structural barriers such as **lack of access to education, limited professional networks, and inadequate support systems** for working mothers also play significant roles.

### ▢ Societal Analysis

- From a societal perspective, the underrepresentation of women in corporate leadership roles in India reflects broader gender inequality issues.
- **Gender Norms and Biases:** Deep-rooted societal norms and biases against women in leadership positions need to be addressed through education and awareness programs.
- **Structural Barriers:** Policies and initiatives should focus on removing structural barriers that prevent women from advancing in their careers.
- **Support Systems:** Enhancing support systems for women, such as affordable childcare and flexible working conditions, can help increase their participation in the workforce.
- **Role Models and Mentors:** Encouraging successful women leaders to serve as role models and mentors can inspire and guide other women in their professional journeys.

## PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

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

## PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. Despite various initiatives and policies to promote gender equality, the representation of women in corporate leadership roles in India remains below 30% and has shown signs of stagnation or decline in recent years. Analyze the factors contributing to this trend and suggest measures to improve women’s participation in corporate leadership positions.



## 6. ROLE OF THE 'GIG ECONOMY' IN THE PROCESS OF EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN INDIA

**CONTEXT:** The gig economy, characterized by short-term contracts or freelance work as opposed to permanent jobs, has emerged as a significant sector in the global and Indian economy. This new mode of work offers flexibility and opportunities, making it a crucial element in the discourse on women's empowerment. In India, the gig economy holds the potential to address several barriers faced by women in traditional employment, thereby contributing to their economic and social empowerment.

### ▢ Opportunities for Women's Empowerment through the Gig Economy

- ▶ **Flexibility and Work-Life Balance:**
  - **Time Management:** Gig work often allows women to balance professional commitments with household responsibilities, which is particularly beneficial in a society where women frequently bear the brunt of domestic duties.
  - **Remote Work:** Many gig roles can be performed remotely, enabling women to work from home and thereby bypass issues related to commuting and safety.
- ▶ **Economic Independence:**
  - **Income Generation:** Participation in the gig economy provides women with opportunities to earn their own income, fostering financial independence and reducing economic dependence on family members.
  - **Entrepreneurial Ventures:** Platforms like Etsy, UrbanClap (now Urban Company), and others enable women to monetize skills such as crafting, baking, tutoring, and other services.
- ▶ **Skill Development and Learning:**
  - **Skill Enhancement:** Gig platforms often offer training programs, upskilling opportunities, and exposure to diverse projects, allowing women to enhance their skills and employability.
  - **Access to Information:** The gig economy provides access to a wealth of online resources and communities that support learning and professional growth.
- ▶ **Inclusive Workforce:**
  - **Low Entry Barriers:** Many gig roles require minimal formal education or qualifications, allowing women from varied backgrounds to participate.
  - **Empowerment of Marginalized Groups:** Women from marginalized communities or those who have faced employment gaps due to family commitments can re-enter the workforce through gig roles.

### ▢ Challenges Faced by Women in the Gig Economy

- ▶ **Lack of Job Security:**
  - **Unstable Income:** The gig economy is characterized by irregular work and income, which can be precarious for women seeking stable financial security.
  - **Absence of Benefits:** Gig workers often lack access to traditional employment benefits such as health insurance, paid leave, and retirement plans.
- ▶ **Workplace Protections:**
  - **Safety Concerns:** Women working in gig roles, especially in services requiring travel or home visits, may face safety and harassment issues.
  - **Legal and Regulatory Gaps:** There is a lack of comprehensive legal protections for gig workers, leading to vulnerabilities related to exploitation and unfair practices.

► **Digital Divide:**

- **Access to Technology:** Women, particularly in rural areas, may face challenges related to access to technology and digital literacy, hindering their participation in the gig economy.
- **Internet Connectivity:** Reliable internet access is crucial for gig work, yet many regions in India still struggle with connectivity issues.

■ **Government and Policy Interventions**

► **Regulatory Framework:**

- **Labour Laws:** Developing a regulatory framework that provides basic protections and benefits for gig workers, including women, can enhance job security and welfare.
- **Safety Standards:** Implementing and enforcing safety standards specific to gig work environments can protect women from harassment and violence.

► **Skill Development Programs:**

- **Training Initiatives:** Government and private sector partnerships can offer targeted training programs to improve digital literacy and vocational skills for women.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** Initiatives to raise awareness about gig opportunities and how to access them can empower more women to participate.

► **Financial Inclusion:**

- **Access to Credit:** Facilitating access to microfinance and credit for women gig workers can help them invest in necessary tools and resources for their work.
- **Insurance Schemes:** Introducing affordable insurance schemes tailored to the needs of gig workers can provide financial security.

- The gig economy presents a unique and transformative opportunity for the empowerment of women in India by offering flexible, inclusive, and accessible work options. However, realizing its full potential requires addressing the inherent challenges and ensuring supportive policies and infrastructure. By fostering an environment where gig work is secure, equitable, and rewarding, India can make significant strides towards gender parity and women's empowerment.

### What is the Gig Economy?

- A gig economy is a market system where temporary positions are common, and organizations hire independent workers for short-term engagements.

### Key Facts about India's Gig Economy

- India's gig workforce includes 15 million workers across various industries, such as software, shared services, and professional services (Boston Consulting Group report).
- India is the fifth-largest in flexi-staffing globally, following the US, China, Brazil, and Japan (2019 India Staffing Federation report).

### PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

**Q. Examine the role of 'Gig Economy' in the process of empowerment of women in India. (2021)**

### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q. "Developing a regulatory framework that provides basic protections and benefits for gig workers, including women, can enhance job security and welfare" Comment**

## 7. ABORTION RIGHTS

**CONTEXT:** France includes right to abortion in its constitution, influenced by developments in the US where abortion rights were restricted.

### ❏ Provisions in India:

- The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 2021 allows all women in India (married and unmarried) to abort a foetus up to **20 weeks of pregnancy** and **24 weeks for women** under **special conditions**.
- The MTP Act allows for abortion after 24 weeks only if there is a threat to the woman's life or if there is a foetal anomaly. **"Rule 3B" of Rules** annexed to the MTP Act, which was amended in 2021, specifies seven categories of women who are eligible for termination between 20-24 weeks.
  - survivors of sexual assault or rape or incest
  - minors
  - those who have a change of marital status during the ongoing pregnancy (widowhood and divorce)
  - women with physical disabilities
  - mentally ill women
  - women carrying a malformed foetus that has a substantial risk of being incompatible with life
  - and women with pregnancy in humanitarian settings or disasters or emergencies as may be declared by the government

### ❏ Arguments in Favor of Abortion:

- **Mothers' Rights:** Prioritize mother's rights over foetus, considering her as a moral person entitled to life.
- **Unwarranted Denial:** Denying abortion when pregnancy is unintended is deemed unwarranted.
- **Self-defense:** Abortion justified to defend mother's mental or physical health, aligning with the 'Doctrine of double effect'.

### ❏ Arguments Against Abortion:

- **'Future like Ours' Argument:** Abortion deprives foetus of potential future experiences, suggesting death is inherently bad.
- **Moral Conduct:** Killing innocent human beings is morally wrong, with belief that human life begins at conception.

## PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q.** How does the balance between maternal rights and foetal rights reflect broader debates on individual autonomy and moral conduct in contemporary societies?

## 8. THE HISTORY OF ABORTION RIGHTS IN INDIA AND THE US

**CONTEXT:** Recently, the US Supreme Court voted 6-3 to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, removing abortion as a constitutional right. This decision sparked global debates on pro-life versus pro-choice stances. Amidst global discussions on abortion rights, it's essential to examine India's stance and the historical trajectory of abortion laws in the US and India.

### ❏ Abortion Rights in the US

- **Pre-Roe Era:** Abortion was illegal in 30 states before the landmark *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973.
- ***Roe v. Wade* (1973):** Legalized abortion nationwide based on the right to privacy, permitting it until fetal viability.



- ▶ **Planned Parenthood v. Casey (1992):** Upheld Roe while allowing states to impose restrictions, introducing the “undue burden” standard.
- ▶ **Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health (2022):** Overturned previous precedents, enabling states to restrict abortion before viability.

### ❑ Abortion Rights in India

- ▶ **Pre-1971:** Abortion was criminalized under section 312 of the Indian Penal Code.
- ▶ **Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act (1971):** Legalized abortion up to 20 weeks under specific conditions like threat to maternal health, fetal abnormalities, rape, and contraceptive failure.
- ▶ **MTP Amendments Act (2021):** Extended abortion limit to 24 weeks, increased accessibility for unmarried women, and ensured privacy rights.

### ❑ Conclusion

- ▶ **Legal Evolution:** Both countries have witnessed significant legal developments impacting abortion rights, reflecting changing societal norms and medical advancements.
- ▶ **Challenges and Progress:** While the US faces renewed debates and restrictions, India has expanded access and rights under progressive amendments to the MTP Act.
- ▶ **Global Discourse:** The issue remains contentious globally, affecting women’s rights and healthcare policies across borders.

### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q. Compare and contrast India’s abortion laws with those of the United States, particularly in light of recent developments in the US Supreme Court regarding Roe v. Wade.**

## 9. SURROGACY RULES IN INDIA

**CONTEXT:** The Centre has tweaked the surrogacy rules, bringing relief for married couples aspiring to become parents.

### ❑ The New Rules (Surrogacy (Regulation) Amendment Rules, 2024)

- ▶ The **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** has amended the **Surrogacy (Regulation) Rules, 2022**, allowing the use of donor gametes (eggs and sperm) if one of the intending couple has a medical condition. Previously, the Centre banned the use of **donor gametes in surrogacy**.
  - The new notification permits the use of donor gametes if the **District Medical Board** certifies a medical condition in either husband or wife, necessitating donor gametes.
  - The child must have at least one gamete from the intending couple.
  - These amendments do not apply to widowed or divorced women, and single unmarried women are barred from surrogacy.
- ▶ **Earlier Rules:** In 2023, **Rule 7** under the ‘**Consent of the Surrogate Mother and Agreement for Surrogacy**’ mandated that both gametes should come from the intending couple. This rule was challenged and amended following a Supreme Court petition allowing a woman with **Mayer-Rokitansky-Kuster-Hauser (MRKH) syndrome** to use a donor egg for surrogacy.
- ▶ **Impact of the New Rules:** The amendments bring relief to couples struggling with infertility. Surrogacy is generally considered when other methods have failed, often involving older women who have tried various pregnancy methods before considering surrogacy.

### ❑ Challenges to Surrogacy

- ▶ **Unawareness:** Surrogate mothers often lack knowledge of legal and medical procedures and associated risks.

- ▶ **No Recognition:** Surrogate mothers are not legally recognized and lack legal rights.
- ▶ **No International Recognition:** The absence of international surrogacy laws can leave parents and children vulnerable or stateless.
- ▶ **Profit-Making Profession:** Surrogacy is a lucrative USD 2.3-billion industry in India, often leading to unregulated practices.
- ▶ **Risk to Life:** Repeated pregnancies pose significant health risks to surrogate mothers.
- ▶ **Exploitation of Fundamental Rights:** Surrogate mothers receive minimal compensation, while medical professionals profit substantially. Surrogate mothers cannot refuse to give up the child, whereas intended parents can refuse to accept the child.

### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q. What are the recent amendments to surrogacy rules in India and their implications for infertile couples and surrogate mothers?**

## 10. THE ROLE OF MALE MEMBERSHIP

**CONTEXT:** Women's organizations have historically played a crucial role in advocating for gender equality, women's rights, and social justice. However, the inclusion of men in these organizations can further strengthen their mission by promoting a more inclusive approach to gender equality. Encouraging male membership can help address gender bias and foster a collaborative environment for achieving mutual goals.

### Reasons to Encourage Male Membership

- ▶ **Promoting Gender Inclusivity:**
  - **Shared Responsibility:** Gender equality is not solely a women's issue; it is a societal issue. Including men emphasizes that both genders must work together to address and solve gender-based issues.
  - **Broader Perspectives:** Male membership can bring diverse viewpoints and experiences, enriching the dialogue and strategies for addressing gender bias.
- ▶ **Challenging Stereotypes and Biases:**
  - **Breaking Stereotypes:** Involving men in women's organizations can challenge and change traditional gender roles and stereotypes, showing that men are equally invested in achieving gender equality.
  - **Bias Reduction:** Collaborative efforts can help dismantle unconscious biases that both men and women may hold, fostering a more egalitarian approach to problem-solving.
- ▶ **Enhancing Advocacy and Influence:**
  - **Increased Influence:** Men often hold significant positions of power in various sectors. Their involvement in women's organizations can amplify advocacy efforts and influence policy changes.
  - **Support from Allies:** Male allies can use their platforms to advocate for women's rights, bringing greater attention and resources to the cause.
- ▶ **Building Solidarity and Understanding:**
  - **Mutual Understanding:** Joint participation in gender equality initiatives can build empathy and understanding between genders, leading to more effective and harmonious teamwork.
  - **Unified Goals:** Working together can help align goals and create a unified front against gender discrimination, benefiting the entire society.

### Potential Challenges

- ▶ **Risk of Dominance:** There is a risk that men might dominate leadership roles or decision-making processes within women's organizations, potentially sidelining the voices and perspectives of women.

- ▶ **Maintaining Focus:** It is crucial to ensure that the primary focus on women's issues is not diluted. The core mission of advocating for women's rights must remain central, even as male membership increases.

#### ▢ Strategies for Effective Inclusion

- ▶ **Balanced Representation:** Establish clear guidelines to ensure balanced representation and participation of both genders in leadership and decision-making roles.
- ▶ **Education and Training:** Provide gender sensitivity training for all members to promote understanding and respect for different perspectives and experiences.
- ▶ **Inclusive Policies:** Develop and implement policies that promote inclusivity and prevent gender-based domination within the organization.

#### ▢ Conclusion

- ▶ Encouraging male membership in women's organizations can significantly contribute to the fight against gender bias and the promotion of gender equality. By fostering inclusivity, challenging stereotypes, and leveraging diverse perspectives, women's organizations can enhance their impact and work towards a more equitable society. However, it is essential to manage this inclusivity carefully to maintain the focus on women's issues and ensure that the voices of women remain central to the mission.

#### PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

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

#### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q. Encouraging male membership in women's organizations can significantly contribute to the fight against gender bias and the promotion of gender equality. Comment**

## 11. GENDER DIGITAL DIVIDE IN INDIA

**CONTEXT:** The "India Inequality Report 2022: Digital Divide" reveals significant gender disparities in internet usage.

#### ▢ Digital gap:

- ▶ Women make up only one-third of internet users in India, are 15% less likely to own a mobile phone, and 33% less likely to use mobile internet services compared to men.
- ▶ India has the widest gender gap in mobile phone ownership in the Asia-Pacific region at 40.4%. Rural-urban disparities are stark, with 31% of the rural population using the internet versus 67% in urban areas.
- ▶ State-wise, Maharashtra has the highest internet penetration, while Bihar has the lowest.
- ▶ Digital access also varies by religion and caste, with Sikhs and general/OBC groups having higher access than Muslims and SC/ST populations.

#### ▢ Impact:

- ▶ The digital divide exacerbates existing inequalities based on caste, religion, gender, class, and location, as reflected in India's rank of 105 out of 193 countries in the UN's e-participation index.
  - **Equal access to mobile devices** is crucial for modern civic participation, integrated e-service delivery, and accessing financial entitlements, especially post-COVID-19.

- **Patriarchal norms and societal barriers** limit women's mobile phone use, compounded by issues like dependency on men for phone ownership, poorer phone functionality, limited digital skills, and social norms restricting phone use.
- **Initiatives like Wireless Women for Entrepreneurship and Empowerment (W2E2), Internet Saathi, and the National e-Governance Plan** aim to empower women digitally.
- **Suggestive Measures:** Ensuring universal internet access, conducting digital literacy camps, establishing grievance redressal mechanisms, and addressing income inequality through improved wages and access to health and education services.

### **Fact Addition: India Inequality Report 2022: Digital Divide**

Recently, Oxfam India released the **"India Inequality Report 2022: Digital Divide."**

- **Data Source:** The report uses data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy's (CMIE) household survey from January 2018 to December 2021.
- **Internet Use Among Indian Women:**
  - Women in India are 15% less likely to own a mobile phone and 33% less likely to use mobile internet services than men.
  - Women make up only one-third of internet users in India.
  - India has the largest gender gap in mobile and internet use in the Asia-Pacific region at 40.4%.
- **Rural-Urban Digital Divide:** Only 31% of the rural population uses the Internet, compared to 67% in urban areas, despite a 13% annual growth in digital usage.

### **PRACTICE QUESTION**

**Q. Discuss the gender digital divide in India. What are the socio-economic and cultural factors contributing to this divide and suggest measures to bridge the gap and empower women digitally.**

## **12. MENSTRUAL HYGIENE IN INDIAN PRISONS**

**CONTEXT:** In 2023, India made significant progress by drafting the 'National Menstrual Hygiene Policy,' recognizing menstruation as a natural process that requires serious attention. The policy identifies prisoners as a key group with limited access to menstrual hygiene facilities, marking a positive step. However, it lacks a concrete action plan to improve menstrual hygiene management in prisons and fails to involve the Ministry of Home Affairs, a crucial stakeholder in prison management.

### **Need to ensure menstrual hygiene in prisons:**

- Ensuring menstrual hygiene in prisons is not just a matter of public health; it is also a societal issue reflecting on the broader aspects of **equity, dignity, and human rights**.
- **Gender Equality and Human Rights:** Access to menstrual hygiene is a fundamental human right. Denying this access in prisons **perpetuates gender inequality** and violates the **dignity of incarcerated women**.
- **Health and Well-being:** Poor menstrual hygiene can lead to various health issues, including infections and mental health problems.
- **Reducing Stigma:** Addressing menstrual hygiene openly helps in reducing the stigma associated with menstruation. It promotes a more inclusive and understanding society where natural biological processes are recognized and respected.



► **Issues/Challenges**

- Lack of **availability of sanitary napkins**, unsatisfactory **quality of sanitary napkins**
- **Many States have not implemented provisions** (supplying adequate water and washroom facilities for female prisoners).
- **Overcrowding and poor socio-economic conditions** further exacerbate the struggle of incarcerated women to secure basic necessities (water, sanitary napkins, detergent, and soap).

► **Required Measures**

- **Adherence to Standards:** The government must ensure **basic menstrual hygiene standards** for women in prisons. The uneven implementation of the **Model Prison Manual 2016** across states needs immediate attention.
- **Collaboration:** Health authorities and prison administrators should work together to develop a comprehensive strategy to ensure access to adequate menstrual hygiene facilities.

### Government Initiatives Related to Menstrual Hygiene

- **National Menstrual Hygiene Policy (2023):** Emphasizes safe and dignified MHM for all, including prisoners, but lacks a specific action plan for prisons.
- **Menstrual Hygiene Scheme (MHS):** Promotes menstrual hygiene among rural adolescent girls aged 10-19 through subsidized sanitary napkin packs.
- **Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP):** Provides oxo-biodegradable sanitary napkins at Jan Aushadhi Kendras for Rs 1 each.
- **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) (Mission Shakti):** Raises awareness about menstrual hygiene and the use of sanitary napkins.
- **Samagra Shiksha:** Includes state-specific projects for menstrual health and hygiene, such as installing sanitary pad vending machines and incinerators in schools.
- **Zero-Napkin Mission:** In Kerala, promotes menstrual cups over synthetic napkins due to environmental and health concerns.

### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q. Evaluate the challenges faced in implementing effective menstrual hygiene practices in prisons and propose measures to address these issues.**

## 13. WOMEN IN WASTE MANAGEMENT SECTOR

**CONTEXT:** Women play a crucial yet often overlooked role in the global waste management sector, as revealed by a survey conducted by Women of Waste (WOW) and supported by the International Solid Waste Association.

### ▣ Engagement:

- Women are engaged in a variety of roles within the waste management hierarchy, from local government positions to private companies and consulting firms.
  - Women have been instrumental in waste prevention, reuse, recycling, and recovery activities, particularly in developing economies where informal waste picking is prevalent.
  - In India, women's participation is dominant at the **grassroots level**, with notable examples from Pune and Bengaluru where women perform crucial tasks in collection and segregation.
- **Challenges:** Despite their significant contributions, especially in low- and lower-middle-income countries, women in the sector **remain largely invisible**.
  - Women often face challenges such as **lower wages** and **repetitive tasks** compared to their male counterparts.

### Required Measures:

- ▶ Integrating a gender perspective into waste management policies can lead to more inclusive and effective solutions. It is essential to address gender-specific needs, create opportunities for women at various levels, and promote their leadership roles.
- ▶ Women's participation in decision-making not only promotes gender equality but also leverages their perspectives for better environmental management and sustainable development.

### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q. Discuss the role of women in the waste management sector and the challenges they face. How can integrating a gender perspective into waste management policies contribute to sustainable development?**

## 14. WOMEN MPS IN LOK SABHA

**CONTEXT:** In the 18th Lok Sabha, 74 women have been elected as Members of Parliament (MPs), a slight reduction from the 78 women elected in 2019.

### Status of Women in Legislatures:

- ▶ **Representation Percentage:** Women constitute 13.6% of the new Lok Sabha, down from 14.3% previously.
- ▶ **Global Comparison:** India's representation of women in the Lok Sabha (13.63%) lags behind countries like South Africa, the UK, and the US.
- ▶ **Party Representation:** In the 2024 elections, women MPs were elected from 14 parties, with BJP leading with 31 MPs, followed by Congress with 13 and TMC with 11.
- ▶ **Demographics:** Among the 74 women MPs, 43 are first-time MPs, with an average age of 50 years. Approximately 10% of candidates in 2024 were women, showing a modest increase.
- ▶ **Global Perspective:** India's women representation in legislatures remains relatively low compared to countries like Rwanda and Cuba.

### Reasons for Low Women Representation:

- ▶ **Gender Conditioning:** Factors include lack of encouragement, self-doubt, reluctance to compete, fear of politics' demands, and family responsibilities.
- ▶ **Patriarchal Society:** Gender disparities, cultural expectations, and literacy barriers hinder women's political participation.
- ▶ **Gatekeepers:** Bias in candidate selection by party leaders favors male candidates, impacting women's electoral prospects.
- ▶ **Political Environment:** Challenges such as campaign costs, criminalization, corruption, and gender-based harassment deter women from entering politics.
- ▶ **Structural Disadvantages:** Issues like hate speech and misuse of power disproportionately affect women candidates.

### Benefits of High Representation of Women in Legislature:

- ▶ **Focus on Gender Issues:** Ensures stronger attention and implementation of policies addressing women's concerns.
- ▶ **Gender Equality:** Crucial for inclusive democracy and advancing women's interests in governance.
- ▶ **Accountability:** Direct representation fosters better accountability towards women constituents.
- ▶ **Gender-Sensitive Governance:** Promotes reforms to achieve gender parity in public policies.

- ▶ **Inclusive Initiatives:** Supports initiatives and subsidies enhancing women's decision-making roles.
- ▶ **Challenging Stereotypes:** Collaboration with media to portray women as effective leaders in politics, challenging societal stereotypes.

### Fact Addition: Steps Taken for Increasing Women's Political Representation

- **Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023:** Proposes one-third reservation of seats in Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies for women.
- **Constitutional Amendments:** Reservations in Panchayats and Municipalities under the 73rd and 74th Amendments.
- **SDG Target 5.5:** India's commitment to achieve women's full participation in political decision-making.
- **Constitutional Measures:** Articles ensuring equality and reservations in Panchayati Raj Institutions.
- **Legislative Initiatives:** Establishment of parliamentary committees and gender-neutral rules in the Lok Sabha.
- **International Commitments:** Aligning with global frameworks like CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action.

### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q.** Discuss the challenges hindering women's representation in the Lok Sabha. Evaluate the effectiveness of current measures and propose strategies to achieve gender parity in India's legislative bodies.

## 15. MARITAL RAPE: AN INDIGNITY TO WOMEN

**CONTEXT:** Recent case in Chhattisgarh High Court highlighted the absence of criminalisation of marital rape in India, despite legal reforms aimed at protecting women's rights.

- ▢ **Recent Case:** Chhattisgarh High Court ruled on a criminal petition where charges under IPC Sections 498A (cruelty towards wife) and 377 (carnal intercourse against the order of nature) were upheld, but the husband was acquitted of rape under Section 376 due to marital rape exception.
- ▢ **Issues with Marital Rape Exception:**
  - ▶ **Inconsistent:** Marital rape is not treated similarly to other sexual offences like harassment or molestation, creating legal inconsistencies.
  - ▶ **Patriarchal Beliefs:** Exception reflects outdated views of marital relations, denying women autonomy and dignity.
  - ▶ **Destroys Institution of Marriage:** Misconception that criminalizing marital rape would harm marriage contradicts modern understanding of marital partnership.
  - ▶ **Doctrine of Coverture:** Derived from Victorian-era norms where wives were considered property of husbands, influencing marital laws in India.
- ▢ **Against International Obligations:**
  - ▶ Contravenes international standards on women's rights, including CEDAW, despite India's progress in other areas like protection of minor wives from marital rape.
- ▢ **Impacts of Marital Rape:**
  - ▶ **Mental Health:** Victims suffer from depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts.

- ▶ **Physical Health:** Often severe injuries comparable to those from stranger rape.
- ▶ **Societal Impact:** Affects children's well-being and perpetuates cycle of abuse within families.

#### ▢ **Way Forward:**

- ▶ **Clarify Marriage as Personal:** Supreme Court rulings emphasize marriage as a personal relationship, not an institution that should protect marital rape.
- ▶ **Criminalization:** Align with global recommendations and domestic proposals like those by the Justice Verma Committee to criminalize marital rape.
- ▶ **Women's Rights Awareness:** Promote educational programs and legal support to increase awareness and prevent marital rape.

### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q. Examine the discrepancy between the marital rape exception in Indian legislation and fundamental principles of women's dignity, equality, and autonomy. Suggest reforms aimed at rectifying this legal and social injustice.**

## 16. SEXUAL VIOLENCE

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**CONTEXT:** Sexual violence against women in India is a critical issue with deep-rooted social, cultural, and legal implications. Despite advancements in legal frameworks and increased awareness, significant challenges remain. Here is a detailed overview specific to India:

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#### ▢ **Forms of Sexual Violence in India**

- ▶ **Rape and Sexual Assault:** High-profile cases have brought attention to this issue, yet many incidents remain unreported due to stigma and fear.
- ▶ **Domestic Violence:** Includes marital rape and other forms of sexual abuse within the household.
- ▶ **Sexual Harassment:** Common in public places, workplaces, and educational institutions.
- ▶ **Human Trafficking:** Forcing women and girls into sexual exploitation.
- ▶ **Child Sexual Abuse:** Alarming rates of sexual violence against minors.

#### ▢ **Contributing Factors in India**

- ▶ **Cultural Norms:** Patriarchal attitudes and norms that perpetuate gender inequality and violence.
- ▶ **Legal and Judicial Systems:** Despite laws against sexual violence, enforcement is often weak, and the judicial process can be slow and biased.
- ▶ **Economic Inequality:** Financial dependency on male family members can trap women in abusive situations.
- ▶ **Lack of Education and Awareness:** Limited understanding of rights and available support systems.
- ▶ **Stigma and Shame:** Victims often face societal stigma and ostracism, which discourages reporting.

#### ▢ **Consequences in India**

- ▶ **Physical Health:** Injuries, sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancies, and long-term health issues.
- ▶ **Mental Health:** Trauma, depression, anxiety, PTSD, and even suicide.
- ▶ **Social Consequences:** Victims often face stigma, ostracization, and loss of social standing.
- ▶ **Economic Impact:** Affected women may lose their jobs or educational opportunities, worsening financial dependence.



**Fact Addition: High-Profile Cases and Movements**

- **Nirbhaya Case (2012):** The brutal gang rape and murder of a young woman in Delhi led to nationwide protests and significant legal reforms.
- **Me Too Movement:** The global movement gained momentum in India, encouraging women to speak out against sexual harassment and assault.
- **Campaigns Against Female Genital Mutilation:** Efforts to ban and criminalize FGM among certain communities.

Addressing sexual violence in India requires a multi-faceted approach involving legal reforms, education, social change, and robust support systems for victims. Collaboration between the government, NGOs, and the community is essential to create a safer environment for women.

**PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION**

**Q. We are witnessing increasing instances of sexual violence against women in the country. Despite existing legal provisions against it, the number of such incidences is on the rise. Suggest some innovative measures to tackle this menace. (2014)**

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

**PRACTICE QUESTION**

**Q. "Incidents of sexual offence remain unreported due to stigma and fear." Comment**

## 17. IMPACT OF INDIA'S NEW LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND AGENCY

**CONTEXT:** Recently, India has witnessed significant legal reforms with the introduction of three new laws - Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and Bharatiya Sakshya Act - replacing the Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure, and Evidence Act respectively. These changes have sparked varied reactions nationwide, particularly concerning their implications for women's rights and autonomy.

### ▢ State-Level Reforms: Uttarakhand's Uniform Civil Code:

- Uttarakhand implemented a Uniform Civil Code after Goa, aiming to standardize personal laws across religions. This includes a provision for registering live-in relationships, overseen by a state-appointed registrar.
  - Despite protections under existing laws like the **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005**, concerns arise regarding the state's oversight in intimate matters.
  - The code mandates informing parents if either partner in a live-in relationship is under 21, irrespective of the legal marriage age being 18 for girls. This raises questions about young women's autonomy and the state's role in private relationships.

### ▢ Central-Level Legislative Changes: Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita 2023

- **Marital Rape Exception and Women's Bodily Autonomy:** The new law reaffirms the exception of marital rape, maintaining that sexual acts by a husband with his wife, above 18 years, are not considered rape. This stance is concerning in light of statistics revealing high instances of sexual violence against married women. Critics argue this perpetuates control over women's bodies in the name of preserving marital sanctity.

- ▶ **Impact on Trans Persons:** Moreover, the law removes earlier protections against sexual violence for trans persons, impacting their safety and legal rights.
- ▶ **Self-Managed Abortions and Legal Risks:** Under the new legal framework, self-managed abortions are equated with criminal abortion, punishable by law. The **Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Act, 2021** offers limited exceptions, subject to stringent conditions like gestational limits and medical board approvals. This restrictive approach poses challenges to women's reproductive autonomy and access to safe abortion.

### ❏ **Public vs. Private: State Regulation and Women's Agency**

- ▶ **Control Over Intimate Decisions:** State intervention in private matters such as marriage, relationships, and reproductive choices raises concerns about infringement on personal autonomy. Issues like marital rape and restrictions on abortion highlight how legal frameworks can disproportionately impact women, often prioritizing societal norms over individual rights.
- ▶ **Gendered Power Dynamics:** The interplay between public policy and private autonomy underscores the gendered power dynamics within families and society. Privacy, when upheld as a tool for women's rights, can safeguard dignity and autonomy. However, conflicting societal structures can undermine these rights, necessitating a delicate balance between regulation and respecting agency.

### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q. "State intervention in private matters such as marriage, relationships, and reproductive choices raises concerns about infringement on personal autonomy". Comment**

## 18. ISSUES FACED BY FEMALES IN SPORTS

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**CONTEXT:** Recently, allegations of sexual harassment were leveled against Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, president of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI). The Sports Ministry has demanded an explanation within 72 hours, threatening action under the National Sports Development Code, 2011 if unsatisfied with the response.

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- ▶ According to RTI data spanning from 2010 to 2020, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) received 45 complaints of sexual harassment, with 29 involving coaches. Many accused received lenient punishments like transfers or minor pay cuts, while cases often languished unresolved for years.

### ❏ **Challenges Faced by Sportswomen**

- ▶ **Funding and Budget:** Sportswomen often encounter unequal funding compared to men, hindering consistent training and participation.
- ▶ **Sexism in Sports:** Persistent sexism subjects women to scrutiny based on appearance and speech, affecting their professional environment.
- ▶ **Gender Disparity:** Despite advocacy efforts, women in sports still struggle for equal respect and recognition, particularly compared to male athletes.
- ▶ **Limited Access and Higher Costs :** Schools and colleges often lack adequate sports facilities, forcing girls to seek costly alternatives or face transportation hurdles.
- ▶ **Safety and Transportation Issues:** Girls may face unsafe journeys to distant sports facilities, affecting their participation, as seen in Manipur where many travel over 10 km for practice.
- ▶ **Social Attitudes and Stereotyping:** Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity remains a barrier, impacting girls' confidence and participation in sports.
- ▶ **Quality Training Disparities:** Facility quality and coaching standards for girls often lag behind boys', impacting their enjoyment and skill development in sports.
- ▶ **Lack of Role Models:** Absence of prominent female athletic role models may deter girls from pursuing sports, influenced instead by societal beauty standards.

- ▶ **Media Underrepresentation:** Women's sports receive less media coverage, limiting exposure and sponsorship opportunities for female athletes.
- ▶ **Challenges During Pregnancy and Maternity:** Balancing motherhood with sports careers poses unique challenges, affecting training and competition opportunities.

### ❑ Importance of Increasing Women's Participation in Sports

- ▶ **Health Benefits:** Sports offer significant physical and mental health benefits, potentially reducing long-term health risks like breast cancer.
- ▶ **Promoting Gender Equality:** Equal opportunities in sports break down stereotypes and empower women economically and socially, aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 5.
- ▶ **Changing Societal Perceptions:** Women excelling in sports challenge societal norms and inspire others to pursue their aspirations beyond stereotypes.
- ▶ **Representation and Leadership:** Increased female sports participation enhances representation in leadership roles, fostering community inclusivity and respect.

### Legal Frameworks and Support Systems:

- Measures like the POSH Act, SHe-Box, NCW, and POCSO Act aim to protect women in sports and workplaces from harassment.

### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q.** Explores the main challenges that impede female participation and achievements in Indian sports today.

## 19. PROMOTING GIRLS' EDUCATION IN INDIA: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

**CONTEXT:** Enhancing educational opportunities and retention. Over the past decades, Indian women have made significant strides across various domains, yet challenges persist, particularly in education. Addressing these issues is crucial for leveraging the full potential of India's female workforce and fostering social transformation.

### ❑ Challenges in Girls' Education

- ▶ **Dropout Rates**
  - **Reasons:** Many girls drop out due to domestic responsibilities (31.9%), financial constraints (18.4%), lack of interest (15.3%), and early marriage (12.4%).
  - **Impact of Gender Biases:** Poverty, inadequate school quality, and prevailing gender biases contribute to higher dropout rates, especially in states where child marriage rates are high.
- ▶ **Financial Constraints and Education Choices:** On average, households spend Rs 2,860 less annually on girls' education compared to boys. Higher costs for professional courses (Rs 50,000 vs Rs 8,000 for graduation) limit girls' access to specialized education.
- ▶ **Educational Choices:** Fewer girls pursue professional courses like engineering (28.5%), preferring fields such as pharmacy (58.7%) or general graduation (52%).

### ❑ Importance of Education for Social Development

- ▶ **Economic Returns:** Education offers substantial private (11-17%) and social returns (above 10%), essential for women's empowerment and broader societal benefits.

- ▶ **Leadership Opportunities:** Educated women can play pivotal leadership roles, influencing policy and fostering inclusive governance.
- ▶ **Poverty Alleviation:** Empowering women through education can significantly contribute to reducing poverty and achieving sustainable development goals.

#### ▢ **Strategies for Improvement**

- ▶ **Existing Programs:** Programs like NSIGSE, supernumerary seats in IITs, and PRAGATI scholarships have been beneficial but need enhancement.
- ▶ **Reforms:** Revise incentives and scholarships, linking them to educational milestones to support girls throughout their academic journey.
- ▶ **Local Learning Programs:** Establish community schools or learning centers following COVID-19 safety protocols to prevent dropouts.
- ▶ **Role of NGOs:** Partner with civil society to implement programs like "Saksham Bitiya" for socio-emotional learning in aspirational districts.
- ▶ **Behavioral Insights Units:** Establish BIUs to combat cultural biases hindering girls' education, collaborating with NGOs to ensure localized interventions.

### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q. Examine the disparities in female enrollment in education compared to males in India. What are the primary reasons behind these gaps, and what measures can be implemented to bridge them effectively?**

## 20. RAMANI JUDGMENT

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**CONTEXT:** Recently, the Delhi High Court delivered a landmark judgment in the MJ Akbar vs Priya Ramani case, acquitting journalist Priya Ramani in a criminal defamation suit filed against her by former Union minister MJ Akbar. This judgment has significant implications for India's #MeToo movement and the rights of women.

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#### ▢ **Key Points of the Judgment**

- ▶ **Upholding the Right to Speak Out**
  - The court emphasized that a woman's right to dignity and life cannot be overshadowed by protecting the reputation of the accused. This is crucial in a society where women are often disbelieved or silenced when speaking out against sexual harassment.
  - It recognized the long-standing mental trauma that victims may endure, which can delay their speaking out and emphasized that such delays do not invalidate their claims.
- ▶ **Validity of Testimonies**
  - Addressing the skepticism often faced by women, the judgment asserted that testimonies of harassment victims, especially in private settings, should not be dismissed solely for lack of corroborative evidence.
  - It acknowledged that survivors resort to social or media platforms due to institutional failures in providing justice, highlighting these as legitimate avenues for seeking redressal.
- ▶ **Balancing Rights**
  - The judgment struck a balance between the right of a woman to raise her voice against abuse and the right of the accused to protect their reputation. It clarified that defamation claims should not be misused to silence survivors.



### ❏ Impact of the Judgment

- ▶ The Ramani verdict represents a significant moral victory for the #MeToo movement in India and is expected to deter powerful individuals from using defamation laws to suppress survivors. However, it also underscores the deeper societal issues related to sexual harassment:
- ▶ **Institutional Failures:** It points out the failure of institutional mechanisms to address sexual harassment effectively, pushing victims to seek alternative means for justice.
- ▶ **Social and Economic Vulnerabilities:** Many sectors like garment factories and informal workspaces face rampant sexual harassment, where legal protections often remain theoretical rather than practical.
- ▶ **Challenges Under New Labor Codes:** Recent labor reforms potentially undermine workers' rights to unionize, posing new challenges for women fighting against workplace harassment.

### PRACTICE QUESTION

- Q. Examine the significance of the Delhi High Court's judgment in MJ Akbar vs Priya Ramani case for India's #MeToo movement and women's rights. Analyze the implications of this judgment on addressing sexual harassment and the challenges that remain in achieving gender justice in India.**

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## 3

# POPULATION & ASSOCIATED ISSUES

## 1. THE RISE OF THE INDIAN MIDDLE CLASS

**CONTEXT:** India's middle class is expanding rapidly, driving economic and political change. The number of registered car users has increased dramatically in India, reaching an estimated 40 million, suggesting a middle class of around 400–500 million people. This demographic is the fastest-growing segment of the population, and it has outpaced the growth rate of the global middle class.

### ▣ Features of India's middle class:

- ▶ It is the youngest globally, which typically translates to greater dynamism economically and politically compared to counterparts in China and the United States.
- ▶ It is also a driving force behind the rising domestic market, with growth in the purchase of homes, cars, refrigerators, motorcycles, and digital goods and services.

### ▣ Responsible factors:

- ▶ **Service Sector:** India's IT outsourcing industry is still considered one of the largest exporters of IT and business process outsourcing services.
- ▶ India's growth pattern in the 21st century is remarkable because it contradicts a seemingly iron law of development that has held true for almost two centuries since the start of the Industrial Revolution.
- ▶ **Technological advancements** in Internet access, cloud computing, and state-of-the-art data centres have significantly contributed to propelling India's middle class into prominence in the global technology landscape.
- ▶ **India will continue to have a thriving startup ecosystem** that ranks third globally. India's ranking in the **Global Innovation Index** has also surged from 81 to an impressive 40th position during the last decade.

## PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. “The rise of the middle class in India is associated with more inclusive growth”. Comment

## 2. DEATHS BY SUICIDE IN INDIA

**CONTEXT:** Rajasthan's Kota, India's coaching capital, is grappling with a surge in student suicides, driven by the immense pressure to excel in professional entrance exams. According to the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB), in 2020, a student took their own life every 42 minutes; that is, every day, more than 34 students died by suicide. Suicides among young people continue to be a serious problem.

### ■ How is Suicide a Social Problem?

- ▶ The problem with only viewing suicide as an individual problem is that we neglect the importance of social forces contributing to suicide.
- ▶ Suicide is a serious social problem whose incidence varies between genders, age groups, geographical distribution, and with the influence of the socio-political structure of society.
- ▶ The risk of suicide in a population increases when the social context fails to provide a healthy sense of purpose and belonging, contributing to an individual's sense of contribution and connection.
- ▶ Furthermore, suicide should be viewed as a multidimensional public and mental health issue, having complex interactions with the economic, social, cultural, psychological, and biological realms of individual and collective existence.

### ■ What are the challenges?

- ▶ **Under-reporting of such 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.

### ■ Related Initiatives:

- ▶ **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.

## PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

Q. Explain why suicide among young women is increasing in Indian society. (2023)

## PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. “Suicide is a multidimensional public and mental health issue”. Comment



### 3. SHOCKING EFFECT OF SMARTPHONE

**CONTEXT:** A recent study has revealed how smartphones affect the relationship between parents and children. As per the study on the impact of the devices on parent-child relationships, parents spend an average 7.7 hours per day on their phones, with social media contributing the highest usage.

#### ▢ Impact of Mobile technology

- Mobile technology has drastically changed cultural norms and individual behaviors.
- Impact on children: Anxiety, inferiority, loneliness, depression
- 87% feel inferiority complex if they don't own a smartphone
- 90% feel lonely even though they have a lot of friends on social media
- 84% spend long periods of time in silence on their smartphones, while spending time together as a family.
- 87% talk to their parents rudely while you are using smartphone because they get annoyed
- 90% agreed that excessive smartphone usage takes a toll on their mental health
- 89% compare themselves to people online and feel unhappy/depressed with their existing lifestyle in comparison to online influencers.

#### PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

**Q. Child cuddling is now being replaced by mobile phones. Discuss its impact on the socialization of children. (2023)**

#### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q. "Spending too much time on mobile phone(s) results in a sedentary lifestyle". Comment**

### 4. INDIA'S TRIBALS

**CONTEXT:** India has the second-largest tribal population in the world. As per the Census 2011, the tribal population constitutes about 8.9% of the total population in India. The tribal people throughout the country have rich traditions, cultures and heritage with unique lifestyles and customs.

#### ▢ Scheduled Tribes in India

- The term 'Scheduled Tribes' first appeared in the Constitution of India. Article 366 (25) defined scheduled tribes as "such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of this constitution".
- Article 342, which is reproduced below, prescribes procedure to be followed in the matter of specification of scheduled tribes.
- The tribal population of the country, as per 2011 census, is 10.43 crore, constituting 8.6% of the total population.
  - 89.97% of them live in rural areas and 10.03% in urban areas.
  - The decadal population growth of the tribal's from Census 2001 to 2011 has been 23.66% against the 17.69% of the entire population.
  - The sex ratio for the overall population is 940 females per 1000 males and that of Scheduled Tribes 990 females per thousand males.

- ▶ Broadly the STs inhabit two distinct geographical area – the Central India and the North- Eastern Area.
  - More than half of the Scheduled Tribe population is concentrated in Central India, i.e., Madhya Pradesh (14.69%), Chhattisgarh (7.5%), Jharkhand (8.29%), Andhra Pradesh (5.7%), Maharashtra (10.08%), Orissa (9.2%), Gujarat (8.55%) and Rajasthan (8.86%).
- ▶ The other distinct area is the North East (Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh).
- ▶ More than two-third of the ST population is concentrated only in the seven States of the country, viz. Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.
- ▶ There is no ST population in 3 States (Delhi NCR, Punjab and Haryana) and 2 UTs (Puducherry and Chandigarh), as no Scheduled Tribe is notified.

#### ■ Government Schemes for Tribals

- ▶ Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM JANMAN), aims for the overall development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).
- ▶ **Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)** have been set up to provide quality education to ST students (Class VI-XII) in remote areas through residential schooling facilities.
- ▶ Under the **Pradhan Mantri Vanbandhu Vikas Yojana**, a venture capital fund has been set up to promote entrepreneurship/start-up projects by ST youth.
- ▶ **TRIFED**, (Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India) supports retail marketing for livelihood development among tribal communities of India.
- ▶ **The Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAAGY)** aims to provide basic infrastructure in villages with a significant tribal population.
- ▶ **Health Schemes:** Mission Indradhanush, Nikshay Mitra initiative, Support to Tribal Research Institute (TRI) scheme.

#### National Commission for STs

- The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (STs) is also a constitutional body in the sense that it is directly established by Article 338-A of the Constitution.
- The Commission was established under Article 338 of the Constitution with the objective of monitoring all the safeguards provided for the SCs and STs under the Constitution or other laws.
- It consists of a chairperson, a vice-chairperson and three other members.
  - ▶ They are appointed by the President by warrant.
  - ▶ Their conditions of service and tenure of office are also determined by the President.
  - ▶ The Commission presents an annual report to the President.

#### PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

**Q. What are the two major legal initiatives by the State since Independence addressing discrimination against Scheduled Tribes (STs)? (2017)**

#### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q. Discuss measures taken by the government to bring the tribal communities into the mainstream.**

## 5. GREAT REPLACEMENT THEORY

**CONTEXT:** The “Great Replacement Theory” has resurfaced in discussions after Vlaardingerbroek, in a speech at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Hungary, claimed that white Europeans are being replaced in their own countries, posing a threat to civilization.

### ▢ The Theory:

- **Definition:** A conspiracy theory suggesting that Jews and Western elites aim to replace white Americans and Europeans with non-European immigrants, particularly Asians and Africans.
- **Origins:** Linked to the eugenics movement and racial superiority ideologies.
- **Impact:** Fuels white supremacist, xenophobic, and anti-immigration sentiments, fostering fear of demographic change and loss of white dominance.
- **Scholarly View:** Mainstream scholars reject the theory, attributing demographic changes to misunderstandings of statistics and inherent racism.

### ▢ Issue of Low Birth Rates:

- **Global Decline:** Low birth rates are causing population declines worldwide, notably in Europe and Asia. **Example** - Japan: In 2023, Japan recorded its lowest number of births and marriages in decades, highlighting the demographic crisis.
- **Civilizational Threat:** Population collapse is identified as a significant threat to civilization, emphasizing the need to address declining birth rates rather than demographic conspiracies.

### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q. Evaluate the demographic trends of declining birth rates in Europe and Asia. What are the potential long-term effects on these regions' social structures and economic stability, and what policy interventions could mitigate these impacts?**

## 6. POPULATION CRISIS IN ASIAN NATIONS

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**CONTEXT:** Many countries in East and Southeast Asia are in the midst of a population crisis, with fewer births every year and record-low fertility rates.

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### ▢ Declining Fertility Rates in Asian Nations:

- **Population Crisis:** East and Southeast Asian countries facing severe decline in birth rates and fertility rates.
- **Historical context:** Shift from higher fertility rates in mid-20th century to current record lows.
- **Current Situation:** Countries like South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan experiencing fertility rates below replacement level, leading to cessation of newborn delivery services in some Chinese hospitals.

### ▢ Factors Contributing to Declining Fertility:

- **Changing Societal Trends:** Couples choosing to remain childless, increasing number of individuals staying single, and rising costs of raising children.
- **Policy Impact:** Historical family planning measures influencing societal norms and fertility rates.
- **Economic Considerations:** Opportunities for women in workforce, declining marriage rates, and financial burden of raising children.

### ▢ Implications of Declining Fertility Rates:

- **Population Imbalance:** Aging population leading to demographic imbalance.
- **Socio-economic Challenges:** Increased dependency ratios, strains on healthcare and pension systems.
- **Financial Burden:** Governments implementing costly programs to encourage childbirth, effectiveness uncertain.

- ▶ **Addressing the Population Crisis:** Prioritize investments in childcare facilities, parental leave policies, and financial assistance programs. Create environments supporting work-life balance, flexible employment, and gender equality.

#### ▢ Case Studies:

- ▶ **South Korea:** Faces challenges such as gender inequality, high child-rearing costs, and societal pressures, highlighting trade-offs between career and family.
- ▶ **Singapore:** Financial costs, pandemic disruptions, and work-life balance issues contribute to declining birth rates.

### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q. Discuss the implications of declining fertility rates on the socio-economic fabric of societies. Suggest measures to address the population crisis in East and Southeast Asian countries.**

## 7. WORLD'S POPULATION REACHES 8 BILLION

**CONTEXT:** The global population has reached 8 billion, as reported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), highlighting significant demographic milestones and trends worldwide.

#### ▢ Trends of Population Growth

- ▶ **Overall Decrease in Population Growth Rate:**
  - The global population grew from 7 billion to 8 billion in 12 years and is projected to reach 9 billion by 2037, indicating a slowing growth rate.
  - Global population growth fell below 1% in 2020, the slowest since 1950.
  - Projections suggest the population may peak at 10.4 billion by the 2080s and stabilize thereafter.
  - 60% of the global population lives where fertility rates are below replacement level, up from 40% in 1990.
- ▶ **High-Fertility Levels in Poor Countries:** Countries with the highest fertility levels are often those with lower income per capita. Sub-Saharan Africa is expected to contribute more than half of the global population increase by 2050.
- ▶ **International Migration:** International migration is a significant driver of population growth in many countries, with 281 million people living outside their country of birth in 2020.

#### ▢ Findings about India's Population

- ▶ India's fertility rate has reached replacement level at 2.1 births per woman and is declining.
- ▶ The country's population growth rate is 0.7% annually, projected to surpass China as the world's most populous nation in 2023.
- ▶ India's population was estimated at 1.412 billion in 2022, nearing China's 1.426 billion.
- ▶ Projections suggest India may peak at 1.7 billion by 2048, declining to 1.1 billion by the end of the century.
- ▶ In 2022, 68% of India's population was aged 15-64, with 7% aged 65 and above.
- ▶ Over 27% of India's population is aged 15-29.
- ▶ India hosts the world's largest adolescent population of 253 million (10-19 years).

#### ▢ Way Forward

- ▶ **Maximizing Demographic Potential:** Countries should invest in human capital through healthcare, education, productive employment, and decent work opportunities.
- ▶ **Empowering Women:** Empowering women is crucial for controlling population growth by enabling informed family planning decisions.



## PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

Q. Discuss the objectives of Population Education and outline measures to achieve them in India. (2021)

Q. "Empowering women is key to controlling population growth." Discuss. (2019)

## PRACTICE QUESTION

Q. "Countries with the highest fertility levels are often those with lower income per capital". Comment

## 8. MANUAL SCAVENGING, INDIA'S "DIRTIEST JOB"

**CONTEXT:** Manual scavenging, the practice of manually cleaning, carrying, and disposing of human excreta, continues to persist in India despite legislative measures aimed at eradicating it. This practice is deeply intertwined with social, economic, and caste-based complexities.

### ❑ Persistence:

- At present, as per official figures, 58,098 "eligible manual scavengers" across the country, who manually clean sewers and septic tanks and handle human excreta.

### ❑ Who's engaged?

- Predominantly Dalits, who face social exclusion and violence across the country owing to their caste identity. There is a **close relationship between the caste system and manual scavenging**, where the social hierarchies of the *varna dharma* are to be kept intact as per the cultural practises endorsed by civil society and the state.

### ❑ Challenges and Associated Issues

- **Degrading Dignity:** Manual scavenging strips individuals of their dignity and exposes them to health hazards, humiliation, and societal exclusion.
- **Social Stigma:** The association of manual scavenging with specific castes perpetuates social stigma, hindering upward mobility and reinforcing discrimination.
- **Lack of Awareness** resulting in limited advocacy for change.

### ❑ Reasons for Persistence

- Although legally abolished, the practice persists due to implementation loopholes and inadequate enforcement.
- **Caste-based discrimination** continues to marginalize certain communities, limiting their access to education, employment, and social mobility.
- **Generational occupation and societal conditioning** normalize manual scavenging within certain communities.
- Comprehensive policy implementation, backed by political will, is often lacking, perpetuating systemic injustices.

### ❑ Government Interventions:

- The practice was banned through the **Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993**. In 2013, the government enacted a stronger law, the **Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act**.
- Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan (Clean India initiative), Safaimitra Suraksha Challenge

### ❑ Who is to be blamed?

- Poor governance
- Unequal social structure based on caste hierarchy and patriarchy
- The rich segment who have been so engulfed in their own lives that they do not care about the issue or question the government and ensure accountability.

### ❑ The Way Forward

- Ensure strict enforcement of existing laws.
- Provide alternative livelihood opportunities and economic empowerment for affected communities.
- Combat caste-based discrimination through robust social and educational initiatives.
- Raise public awareness to foster a collective resolve against manual scavenging.
- The eradication of manual scavenging requires a multi-faceted approach, combining stringent law enforcement, economic empowerment, eradication of caste-based discrimination, and heightened public awareness to address this deeply entrenched social evil.

### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q. Discuss the reasons for the persistence of manual scavenging in India despite legislative measures to eradicate it. Suggest a multi-faceted approach to effectively address this issue.**

## 9. IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON INDIAN SOCIETY

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**CONTEXT:** Globalization has profoundly influenced various aspects of Indian society, presenting both positive and negative consequences.

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### ❑ Positive Consequences:

- Foreign investment brings in currency through purchases of local products and services.
- Cultural exchange fosters diversity, enriching society with new ideas and lifestyles.
- Greater consumer choice and affordability, along with opportunities for travel and migration, enhance quality of life.

### ❑ Negative Consequences:

- Globalization often favors wealthy nations, perpetuating disparities in world trade.
- Multinational companies may overshadow local businesses, impacting economic autonomy.
- Cultural homogenization threatens local traditions and languages, eroding diversity.
- Concerns over loss of sovereignty and decision-making power among nations arise.
- Migration can lead to social tensions and ideological conflicts, posing challenges for integration.

### PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

**Q. 'Globalisation is generally said to promote cultural homogenisation but due to this cultural specificities appear to be strengthened in the Indian society. Elucidate (2018)**

### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q. Discuss the impact of globalization on Indian society, highlighting its effects on economic development, cultural diversity, and national sovereignty.**

## 10. COMMUNALISM AND ITS IMPACT ON INDIAN SOCIETY

**CONTEXT:** Communalism refers to the tendency of individuals to identify primarily with their religious or ethnic group, often leading to conflicts and tensions within society. It has become increasingly prominent in recent years (Nuh Violence).

### ▢ Impact on Indian Society:

- ▶ Communalism breeds division and mistrust among different religious communities, undermining social cohesion.
- ▶ Incidents of communal violence disrupt peace and harmony, resulting in loss of lives and property damage.
- ▶ Political exploitation of communal sentiments exacerbates tensions, leading to polarization and marginalization of minority groups.
- ▶ Communalism impedes economic progress and development by fostering a climate of fear and insecurity.
- ▶ It undermines the principles of secularism and pluralism, which are foundational to India's democratic fabric.

### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q.** Examine the causes and consequences of communalism in Indian society. Discuss measures to address communal tensions and promote social harmony.

## 11. WESTERNISATION OF SOCIETAL NORMS

**CONTEXT:** Modernization in India has often been equated with westernization, leading to a clash between traditional values and evolving societal norms. The rapid pace of modernization has raised concerns about its impact on indigenous cultures and cherished traditions.

### ▢ Impact on Indian Society:

- ▶ Westernization of societal norms and values can erode traditional cultural practices and values that hold significance for Indians.
- ▶ The influx of western ideals may lead to a disconnect between generations, as younger individuals adopt modern lifestyles while elders uphold traditional values.
- ▶ Economic modernization may exacerbate social inequalities, marginalizing vulnerable communities and widening the gap between rich and poor.
- ▶ The dominance of western media and consumer culture can influence perceptions of beauty, success, and lifestyle choices, shaping societal aspirations and priorities.

### PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

**Q.** How does Indian society maintain continuity in traditional social values? Enumerate the changes taking place in it. (2021)

### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q.** Evaluate the impact of modernization on traditional values and cultural identity in Indian society. Discuss strategies to preserve cultural heritage while embracing socio-economic progress.

## 12. CHILD MARRIAGE

**CONTEXT:** Child marriage has seen an increase in states like Maharashtra and West Bengal over the past five years. Data from the Ministry of Women and Child Development and various NGOs highlight this disturbing trend, with socio-economic factors such as poverty, fear of sexual violation, and ingrained social norms driving the practice.

### ▢ Factors driving the practice

- Economic hardship and ingrained social norms
- **Migration and Security Concerns:** Families marry off daughters early due to security concerns before migrating for work.
- **Policy Implementation Gaps:** There is a substantial gap in enforcing child marriage laws, with only 105 cases registered in West Bengal in 2021.

### ▢ Impact:

- **Health Risks:** Higher infant mortality rates, low birth weight, and heightened risks during pregnancy and childbirth for young mothers.
- **Education Disruption:** Early marriages curtail girls' education, limiting future prospects and economic independence.

### ▢ Way Forward

- **Robust awareness campaigns** to change societal attitudes towards child marriage.
- **Encourage community participation** to challenge norms and promote education.
- **Stricter Law Enforcement** through political will and public pressure.
- **Comprehensive Policies:** Develop policies encompassing education, healthcare, and socio-economic empowerment to address the root causes of child marriage.

### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q.** Discuss the factors contributing to the persistence of child marriage in India despite legal prohibitions. Suggest measures to effectively combat this social issue.

## 13. CASTE-BASED VIOLENCE

**CONTEXT:** Discrimination and violence against Dalits are common with the caste hierarchy condemning them to the bottom of the social ladder. Despite laws to protect the Scheduled Castes (SC), abuse is frequently reported from across the country.

### ▢ Discrimination:

- Shunned by many in society who call them 'untouchable', Dalits, particularly in villages, are discriminated against, denied access to land, forced to work in degrading conditions like in scavenging, and routinely abused, even killed, sometimes at the hands of the police and at times by people of upper castes.
- **Understanding the reasons behind such violence:** The prevalence of caste-based violence in Indian society is a complex issue rooted in historical, social, and economic factors.
- **Historical Legacy:** The caste system, deeply ingrained in Indian history, has assigned social roles based on birth. This hierarchical structure has led to discrimination and oppression of certain castes.



- **Untouchability:** The practice of untouchability, where certain castes were considered impure and socially ostracized, has contributed to a sense of hierarchy and discrimination.
- **Social Inequality:** Certain castes face social stigma, affecting their self-esteem and societal standing. This can lead to frustration and, in some cases, violence.
- **Economic Disparities:** Caste-based economic disparities have created imbalances in access to resources, education, and opportunities. Certain castes have historically been marginalized and economically disadvantaged.
- **Education Gap:** Limited access to quality education for marginalized castes has perpetuated social inequality, hindering upward mobility and reinforcing stereotypes.
- **Political Exploitation (Vote Bank Politics):** Some politicians exploit caste identities to consolidate vote banks. This not only perpetuates divisions but also creates a political environment where caste-based issues are used for electoral gains.
- **Ignorance and Stereotypes:** Lack of awareness and perpetuation of stereotypes about different castes contribute to prejudice and discrimination. Educational and awareness campaigns are essential to challenge these biases.
- **Lack of enforcement:** While India has laws against caste-based discrimination, the enforcement of these laws faces challenges. Cases often take a long time to be resolved, and the legal process itself can be intimidating for victims.

## 14. SOCIAL INEQUALITIES IN DISASTERS

**Context:** In India, natural disasters (for ex-Pettimudi landslide, Kozhikode Air India Express crash), highlights stark disparities in the state's response based on the socio-economic status of the victims.

### ▣ Disparity:

- In Pettimudi, 65 workers, predominantly Tamil migrant laborers living in vulnerable conditions provided by estate owners, perished in the landslide. The government's solatium for these victims was Rs. 5 lakhs, while it was Rs. 10 lakhs for victims of the air crash. This disparity underscores spatial inequality and social discrimination.
- The media and state responses to the Pettimudi landslide failed to address the socio-economic complexities and systemic issues, such as the placement of layams in landslide-prone areas with poor maintenance and lack of socio-political power among the workers.
- The company involved delayed informing authorities, exacerbating the situation.

### ▣ Vulnerability of poor communities:

- The concept of vulnerability, defined as the inability to resist or respond to hazards, varies based on economic, physical, and social factors.
- Poor communities, often living in high-risk areas, are more vulnerable due to economic constraints.
- Standard procedures for disaster-prone areas include early alerts, temporary shelters, and rehabilitation plans that often overlook the socio-economic impact.
- **Cause:** The root causes of such vulnerabilities, rooted in unequal development and resource exploitation, are frequently ignored in administrative responses, leading to increased disaster risks for impoverished communities.

### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q. Discuss how socio-economic status influences the state's response to disasters, with reference to the Pettimudi landslide and the Kozhikode Air India Express crash.**

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## 4

# SECULARISM

## 1. EDUCATION AND SECULARISM

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**CONTEXT:** In a significant ruling, the Allahabad High Court has struck down the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madarsa Education Act, 2004 (Madarsa Act, 2004) enacted by the state government.

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### ▣ Key-points highlighted by the High Court

- ▶ The Act found to be a violation of secularism. Any portion of the Act is of any relevance and maintained.
- ▶ The state has no power to create a board for religious education or to establish board for school education only for a particular religion and philosophy associated with it.
- ▶ It was the duty of the state to provide education, which is secular in nature, more particularly for minors.
- ▶ It cannot discriminate and provide different types of education to children belonging to different religions. Any such action would be **violative of secularism**.

### ▣ Secularism and Education in India:

- ▶ Secularism is part of the basic structure of the Constitution.
- ▶ The value of Secularism is deeply ingrained all through, and particularly in Articles 14, 19, 22, and 25.
- ▶ Education, being a fundamental right under Article 21-A of the Constitution, holds immense significance in fostering a democratic society and promoting social cohesion.
- ▶ It entails offering a curriculum that is inclusive of diverse perspectives, cultures, and beliefs, fostering a spirit of tolerance, pluralism, and respect for individual autonomy.
- ▶ **Impact of Denial:** Denying certain groups access to quality education based on religious grounds not only perpetuates social inequality but also undermines the foundational principles of democracy and secularism.

## PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

- Q. Are tolerance, assimilation and pluralism the key elements in the making of an Indian form of secularism? Justify your answer. (2022)
- Q. What are the challenges to our cultural practices in the name of secularism? (2019)

## PRACTICE QUESTION

- Q. "The intersection of secularism and education in India highlights the imperative of ensuring that educational institutions uphold secular values and provide equal opportunities for all students". Comment

## 2. EXTREMISM

**CONTEXT:** Britain unveiled a new definition of extremism in response to an eruption of hate crimes against Jews and Muslims.

▢ **The new definition of 'Extremism':**

- ▶ Extremism is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance that aims to:
- ▶ negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; or
- ▶ undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or
- ▶ intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results in (1) or (2)
- ▶ **Drivers of Extremism:** Religious/communal tension, Revenge and retaliation against perceived or real, discrimination/dis-affection/rights violations, unemployment and economic despair and poor governance and breakdown of social networks/social marginalisation
- ▶ **Threats from extremism:** It leads to radicalisation of individuals, deny people their full rights and opportunities, suppress freedom of expression, incite hatred, erode our democratic institutions, social capital and cohesion, and can lead to acts of terrorism.

## PRACTICE QUESTION

- Q. Discuss the implications of Britain's new definition of extremism on social cohesion and democratic values. How can societies effectively address the drivers of extremism to promote inclusivity and prevent radicalization?

## 3. CONSENT AMONG TEENAGERS

**CONTEXT:** Increasing rape case involving teenagers raises concerns about consent and sexual relationships among minors.

▢ **Changes Required:**

- ▶ **Awareness about Consequences:** Children need to understand the legal implications of sexual intimacy, including consensual relationships, under IPC and POCSO Act.
- ▶ **Amendment in POCSO:** POCSO Act requires amendments to differentiate cases of "tacit approval" from severe offenses and allow discretion in sentencing.
- ▶ **Society's Intervention:** Increased awareness and support systems are needed to educate adolescents about legal ramifications and provide necessary guidance.



- ▶ **Comprehensive Education:** Life skill education should include comprehensive discussions on sex and sexuality.
- ▶ **Issues with Current Age of Consent:** India's age of sexual consent at 18 criminalizes consensual relationships between teenagers aged 16 or 17. India's age of consent is higher than the global average.
- ▶ **Arguments in Favor of Lowering Age of Consent:**
  - Alignment with teenagers' biological and emotional development.
  - Reduction in criminalization of consensual sexual activity.
  - Consistency with international norms.
- ▶ **Counterarguments and Concerns:** Potential exploitation, especially with significant age gaps.

### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q. Discuss the implications of India's age of consent on adolescent sexual relationships and legal frameworks.**

## 4. A PRISON MAPPED BY CASTE

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**CONTEXT:** The Centre has asked states and Union Territories not to segregate prisoners on the basis of their caste and religion and to stop assigning duties like managing prison kitchens according to the discriminatory approach.

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### ■ **How caste is an “endless battle” in Indian society?**

- ▶ Discrimination and violence against Dalits are common with the caste hierarchy condemning them to the bottom of the social ladder.
- ▶ Despite laws to protect the Scheduled Castes (SC), abuse is frequently reported from across the country.
  - In Andhra Pradesh alone, 2,014 crimes against SCs were recorded in 2021, of which 33 were murders and 49 were cases of rape of minor girls.
- ▶ Shunned by many in society who call them ‘untouchable’, Dalits, particularly in villages, are discriminated against, denied access to land, forced to work in degrading conditions like in scavenging, and routinely abused, even killed, sometimes at the hands of the police and at times by people of upper castes.
- ▶ This entrenched form of societal segregation, often described as hidden apartheid, has led to the complete isolation of many villages along caste lines.
- ▶ The prevalence of caste-based violence in Indian society is a complex issue rooted in historical, social, and economic factors.

### ■ **The in-discriminatory approach and required measures**

- ▶ The jail manuals of some states provide for segregation of prisoners based on their caste and religion and they are being assigned duties in the prisons accordingly.
  - **Composition:** Two-third of prisoners in Indian jails are Dalits, tribals and from Other Backward Classes (OBCs), 19% are Muslims and 66% of 4.66 lakh inmates are either illiterate or have not studied beyond Class X
  - **Worse for women:** Unlike the male prisoners, women are fewer in number and so are the provisions made available to them.
- ▶ **Upholding Constitutional Principles:** There is constitutional imperative to ensure equality and non-discrimination within prison facilities.
- ▶ **Compliance with Model Prison Manual:** The Model Prison Manual, 2016 serves as a guiding framework for prison administration, explicitly prohibiting any form of caste or religion-based discrimination. States and Union Territories are urged to act as per these guidelines.

### ❏ When the rules themselves are casteist?

- Caste-based labour, in fact, is sanctioned in the prison manuals of many states.
- The colonial texts of the late 19th century have barely seen any amendments, and caste-based labour remains an untouched part of these manuals.
- While every state has its own unique prison manual, they are mostly based on The Prisons Act, 1894.
- These jail manuals mention every activity in detail – from the measurement of food and space per prisoner to punishments for the “disorderly ones”.

### PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

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

### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q. Critically examine the caste-based labour, sanctioned in the prison manuals of many states in the country.**

## 5. MIGRANT WORKERS AND URBAN HOUSING

**CONTEXT:** Urbanization and the growth of cities in India have been accompanied by significant pressure on basic infrastructure and services like housing, sanitation, and health. Migrant workers, in particular, are the worst affected by the unavailability of these basic needs.

### ❏ Urban Housing and Migrant Workers

- **2011 Census Data:** The urban population of India was 31.16%, with about 4.5 lakh homeless families and a total of 17.73 lakh people living without any roof.
- **States with Acute Housing Crisis:** Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh have significant housing shortages.

### ❏ Migrants and Urban Housing

- **Poor Shelter Conditions:** Many urban households, particularly those of migrants, live in highly congested and inadequate housing conditions.
  - **Occupancy Statistics:** Over half of urban households occupy a single room with an average of 4.4 persons per room.
  - **Living Conditions:** Migrants working in small units, hotels, and homes often stay in unhygienic, poorly ventilated places. Construction workers usually live in makeshift arrangements, while casual workers sleep under bridges and on pavements.

### ❏ Initiatives for Urban Housing

- **Smart Cities Mission:** Targeted 100 cities for transformation, focusing on core infrastructure elements like proper water supply, sanitation, and affordable housing for the poor.
- **AMRUT Mission:** Aimed to ensure every household has access to a water tap and sewerage connection. The mission's second phase focuses on making cities water-secure and improving amenities for the marginalized.
- **ARHCs in Atma Nirbhar Bharat Package:** Proposed converting government-funded urban housing into Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHC) for migrant workers/urban poor through Public-Private Partnerships.

**PRACTICE QUESTION**

Q. "Analyze how the lack of adequate and affordable urban housing impedes effective urbanization."

## 6. POLICY ACTION AGAINST DRUG ABUSE

**CONTEXT:** Drug abuse is a serious problem ruining the health and well-being of millions of young adults every year.

### ▣ Causes of Drug Addiction in India

- **Socioeconomic Status:** Low income, unemployment, income inequality, lower educational levels, limited opportunities for advancement, and lack of health services.
- **Social Capital:** Low social support and reduced community involvement.
- **Environmental Events:** Natural disasters, war, conflict, climate change, environmental degradation, and migration.
- **Social Change:** Associated with changes in income, urbanization, and environmental degradation.
- **Stress Relief:** Students may resort to drugs due to academic or work pressure. Unemployed youth often turn to drugs out of frustration.
- **Peer Pressure and Psychological Factors:** Teens may engage in risky behaviors, including substance abuse, due to peer pressure and other psychological factors.
- **Suffering and Deprivation:** People in lower income groups may use drugs to cope with lack of adequate food, leading to sleep or relaxation.
- **Flaws in the Legal System:**
  - Drug cartels, crime syndicates, and international suppliers like ISI.
  - Rave parties and social media facilitate drug distribution.
  - Smuggling of drugs through border states like Punjab, Assam, and Uttar Pradesh.
  - Drug-laced food products targeting school and college students.

### ▣ Impacts of Drug Addiction

- Higher risk of unintentional injuries, accidents, domestic violence, medical problems, and death.
- Economic potential wasted, impacting demographic dividend.
- Strained relationships with family and friends, leading to emotional and social problems.
- Increased financial burden due to diversion of resources to police and rehabilitation.
- Health, security, peace, and development are severely affected, including a rise in diseases like Hepatitis B and C, and Tuberculosis.
- Drug dependence can lead to criminal actions and suicidal tendencies.

**PRACTICE QUESTION**

Q. Discuss the comprehensive measures needed to tackle the issue of drug abuse in India.

## 7. LEFT-WING EXTREMISM IN INDIA

**CONTEXT:** Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) has been identified as a significant internal security threat by the Union Home Minister, despite a notable decrease in violent incidents from 2009 to 2018.

- ▶ LWE groups advocate violent revolution, rejecting democratic institutions and hindering developmental processes in underdeveloped regions. They propagate misinformation to keep communities ignorant and resistant to government initiatives.

### ▣ Declining Numbers

- ▶ The reduction in LWE incidents, deaths, and affected districts over the past decade is attributed to persistent efforts by security forces.

Parameters	2009	2018
No. of incidents	2258	833
Deaths (Civilians & Security Forces)	1005	240
Number of affected districts	96	60

### ▣ Government Strategy to Curb LWE

- ▶ **SAMADHAN Doctrine:** A comprehensive strategy focusing on:
  - Smart Leadership
  - Aggressive Strategy
  - Motivation and Training
  - Actionable Intelligence
  - Dashboard Based KPIs and KRAs
  - Harnessing Technology
  - Action plan for each Theatre
  - No access to Financing
- ▶ **National Strategy:** Initiated in 2015, emphasizing participatory governance and tribal rights protection.
- ▶ **Security Measures:** Including intelligence sharing and formation of 66 Indian Reserved Battalions (IRBs).

### ▣ Development of LWE Affected Areas

- ▶ **Government Schemes:** Implemented to foster development in LWE affected areas:
  - **Special Central Assistance (SCA):** Filling critical infrastructure gaps.
  - **Road Connectivity Project:** Constructing 5,412 km of roads.
  - **Skill Development:** Establishing ITIs and Skill Development Centers.
  - **Education Initiatives:** Setting up new Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs) and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs).
  - **Telecom Connectivity:** Installing mobile towers.
  - **Financial Inclusion:** Ensuring banking facilities within 5 km radius.

### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q. Discuss the multifaceted approach required to address the complexities of Left-Wing Extremism in India, emphasizing both security measures and socio-economic development initiatives.**



## 8. CARE OLD AGE CARE

**CONTEXT:** The emergence of Old Age Homes (OAHs) in India, largely in urban and semi-urban areas, reflects shifting family structures and societal changes. However, the lack of regulatory oversight and standardized procedures poses significant challenges to the physical and mental well-being of elderly residents, necessitating a formal policy framework.

### ▣ Share of Elderly in the Population

- ▶ According to the UN World Population Ageing Report, India's elderly population (aged 60 and above) is projected to reach nearly 20% by 2050 from the current 8%.
- ▶ The rapid growth in the elderly population is attributed to increased life expectancy and improved healthcare access, presenting a pressing need for quality care services.

### ▣ Rise of Old Age Homes (OAHs)

- ▶ OAHs have become prevalent due to the breakdown of the joint family system and migration of younger generations.
- ▶ Factors such as familial neglect and societal disintegration compel many elderly individuals to seek solace and companionship in OAHs.

### ▣ Challenges in Old Age Homes

- Facilities in OAHs often fall short of adequate standards, with reports of substandard food, poor maintenance of living quarters, and financial mismanagement.
- The absence of effective regulatory mechanisms exacerbates issues of abuse and neglect, undermining the well-being of elderly residents.

### ▣ Policy Interventions

- ▶ **Basic Health Screening Facilities:** Implement regular health screenings within OAHs for early detection of health issues such as diabetes, hypertension, and mental health disorders.
- ▶ **Role of Health Institutions:** Collaborate with public, private, and NGO-run hospitals to provide comprehensive geriatric care tailored to the needs of elderly residents.
- ▶ **Policy Framework:** Develop robust policies ensuring elderly-friendly infrastructure and services in OAHs, promoting inclusive and supportive environments.
- ▶ **Geriatric Healthcare:** Introduce specialized training in geriatrics across medical institutions and integrate geriatric healthcare into primary health services nationwide.
- ▶ **Building Inclusive Society:** Encourage community integration initiatives to reduce dependency on OAHs and foster elderly inclusion within mainstream society.

### PRACTICE QUESTION

**Q.** Examine the factors contributing to the rising prevalence of Old Age Homes (OAHs) for the elderly in India. Suggest policy measures and strategies to improve the conditions of these care homes, emphasizing inclusivity within societal frameworks.

## 9. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX

**CONTEXT:** According to the 2023-24 Human Development Report (HDR), titled 'Breaking the Gridlock: Reimagining Cooperation in a Polarised World,' India ranks 134 on the global Human Development Index (HDI). Switzerland has been ranked number one. The report has been released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

### ▣ Key Highlights of the Report

- **Top Three Countries:** Switzerland (0.967), Norway (0.966), Iceland (0.959).
- **Bottom Three Countries:** Somalia (0.380), South Sudan (0.381), Central African Republic (0.387).
- **Notable Economies:** USA (0.927), UK (0.889), Japan (0.878), Russia (0.821).
- **Countries Not Ranked:** The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) and Monaco.
- **Unprecedented Levels of Growth Disparity:**
  - Rich countries experienced unprecedented development, while half of the world's poorest nations continued to languish below their pre-Covid-19 crisis levels.
  - The two-decade trend of reducing inequalities between wealthy and poor nations is reversing.
  - While HDI is projected to reach record highs in 2023 after declines in 2020 and 2021, stark contrasts in development levels between rich and poor nations remain.

### ▣ Democracy Paradox:

- An emerging "democracy paradox" is observed, with most people supporting democracy but also endorsing leaders who may undermine democratic principles.
- This paradox, along with a sense of powerlessness and lack of control over government decisions, fuels political polarisation and inward-looking policies.

### ▣ Global Inequalities and Widening Human Development Gap:

- Global inequalities are compounded by substantial economic concentration, with almost 40% of global trade in goods concentrated in three or fewer countries.
- In 2021, the market capitalisation of each of the three largest tech companies surpassed the GDP of more than 90% of countries.

### ▣ Indian Overview:

- India's average life expectancy reached 67.7 years in 2022, up from 62.7 years the previous year.
- India's GNI per capita surged to USD 6951, marking a 6.3% increase over 12 months.
- There is a rise in expected years of schooling, reaching 12.6 years per individual.

### ▣ HDI Score:

- India attained an HDI score of 0.644 in 2022, positioning it at 134 out of 193 countries in the UN's 2023-24 report.
- This categorises India under 'medium human development.'
- With India's HDI in 1990 standing at 0.434, the 2022 score reflects a positive change of 48.4%.

### ▣ Notable Achievements:

- A 9.1-year increase in life expectancy at birth, a rise of 4.6 years in expected years of schooling, and an increase of 3.8 years in mean years of schooling.
- India's strides in reducing gender inequality, with a Gender Inequality Index (GII) of 0.437, surpassing the global average.
- On the GII 2022 list, India ranks 108 out of 166 nations.

**What is the Human Development Report?**

- Human Development Reports (HDRs) have been released since 1990, exploring various themes through the human development approach.
- These reports are produced by the Human Development Report Office for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- The HDI is a composite index that measures average achievement in human development, considering three key indicators:
  - Life expectancy at birth (Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3)
  - Expected years of schooling (SDG 4.3)
  - Mean years of schooling (SDG 4.4)
  - Gross national income (GNI) per capita (SDG 8.5)

**PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION**

**Q. Why did human development fail to keep pace with economic development in India? (2023)**

**PRACTICE QUESTION**

**Q. Discuss the implications of the growing population on human development in India.**

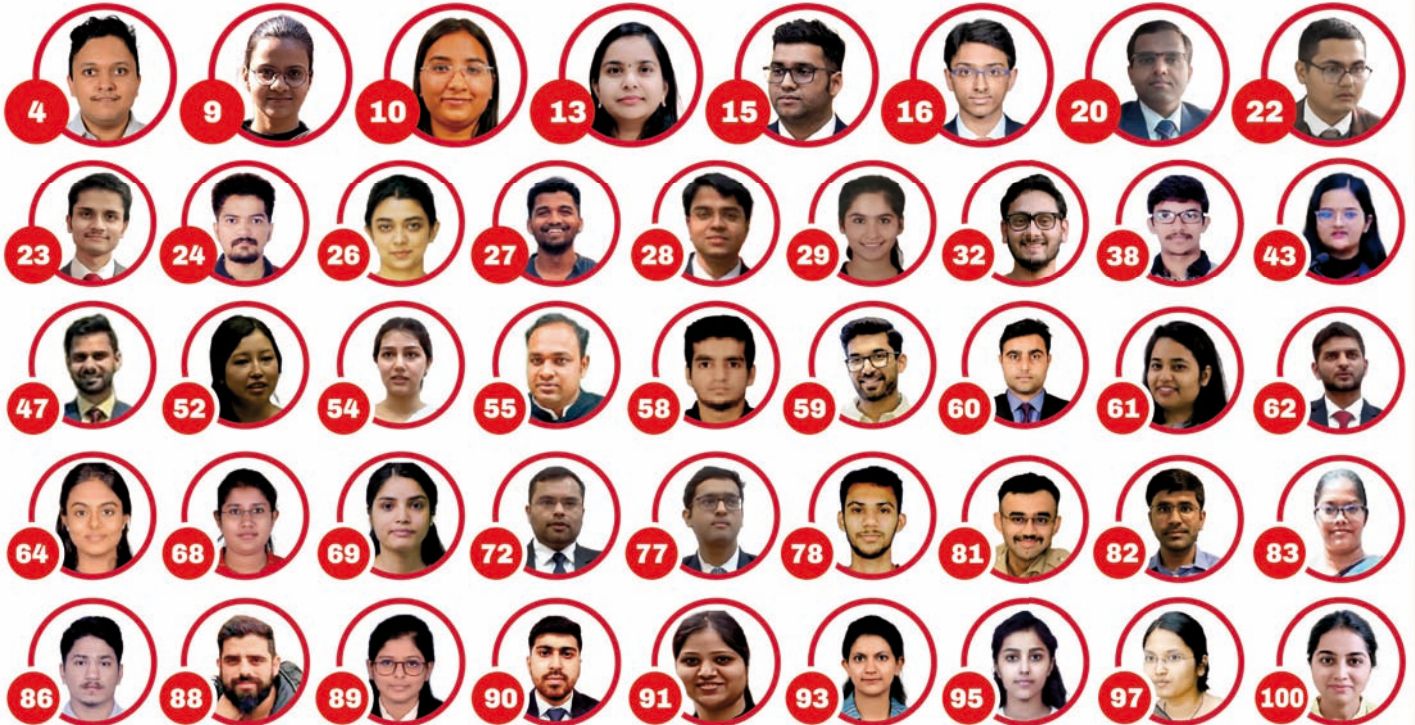
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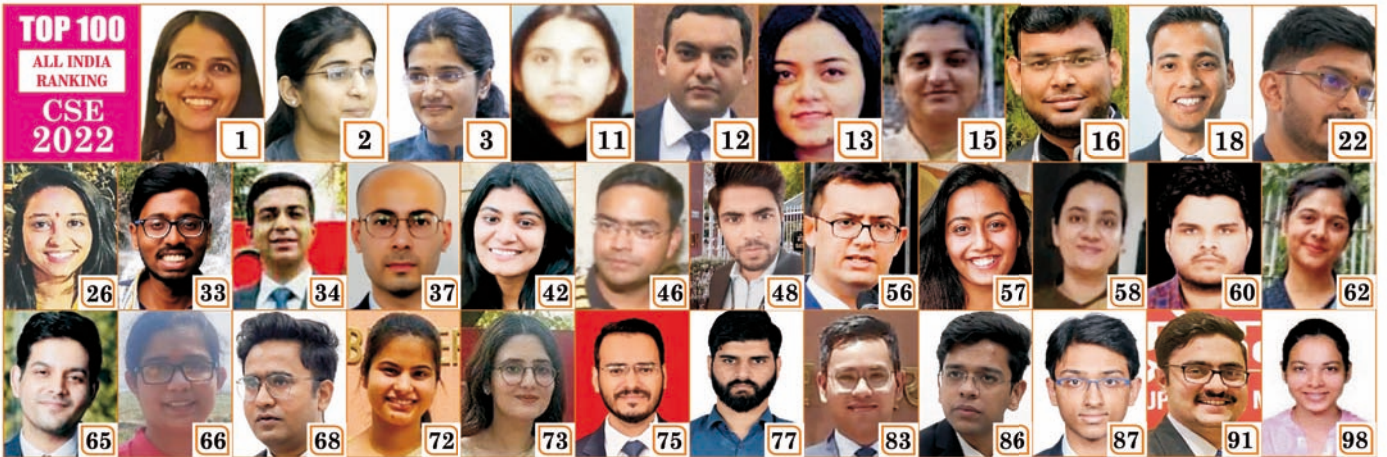


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