UPSC CSE Mains: Essay Writing Course: What to Write?

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Major Themes of Philosophical Essay Writing:

→ **Gandhian Quote Based Essays**

→ **Psychological Essay Topics**

→ **Values**

→ **Attitude & Emotional Intelligence**

→ **Women/Gender Based Essay**

→ **Stereotype/Prejudice Based Essay**

→ **Virtues, Ethics and Morality Based Essay Topics:**

→ **Science/Technology Vs Morality/Ethics Based Essay**

→ **Socio-Religious & Contemporary Social Issue Based Essay**

→ **Culture Based Essay**

Gandhian Quote Based Essays:

→ **Words are sharper than the two-edged sword.**

→ **Be the change you want to see in others**

→ **With greater power comes greater responsibility.**

→ **Man is Product of his thoughts; What he thinks he becomes.**

→ **In the context of Gandhiji's views on the matter explore, on an evolutionary scale, the terms 'Swadhinata'. 'Swaraj' and 'Dharmarajya'. Critically comment on their contemporary relevance to Indian democracy.**

→ **Need brings greed, if greed increases it spoils breed.**

→ **If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change.**

→ **We cannot get a rose through planting a noxious weed.**

→ **Means are ends and Ends are means.**

→ **Gandhian Quote Based Essays**

→ **We live in a world of "guided missiles and misguided men" and misguided men are more dangerous for society than guided missiles.**

→ **Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will.**

→ **Our greatest ability as humans is not to change the world; but to change ourselves.**

→ **There is more to life than increasing its speed.**

→ A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people.

→ Non-cooperation with evil is as much a duty as is cooperation with good.

→ Distinguish between real needs and artificial wants and control the latter.

→ The spirit of democracy cannot be imposed from without. It has to come from within.

→ In reality there are as many religions as there are individuals.

Psychological Essay Topics:

Values

→ Values are not what humanity is, but what humanity ought to be

→ Value-based science and education.

→ Modern Technological Education and Human values.

→ Education without values, as useful as it is, seems rather to make a man more clever devil.

→ 'The Past' is a permanent dimension of human consciousness and values.

→ Need of socio-Cultural temporal yardstick to asses Values.

→ Value development must be backed by parallel institutional development.

→ Value development is only way to set things right in society;

→ "Values are like fingerprints. Nobodies are the same but you leave them all over everything you do."

Attitude & Emotional Intelligence

→ Courage to accept and dedication to improve are two keys to success

→ Does Indian cinema shape our popular culture or merely reflect it?

→ Is Bollywood changing Perception of Society towards women in India?

→ Attitude makes habit, habit makes character and character makes a man.

→ Independent thinking should be encouraged right from the childhood.

→ Destiny of a nation is shaped in its classrooms.

→ Is the Colonial mentality hindering India's success?

→ Quick but steady wins the race

→ All learning has an emotional base.

→Maturity is not measured by Age; it is attitude build by experience.

→ Good Civil Servant is one with Civil Service Orientation.

→ Never forget only dead fish swim with the stream.

Women/Gender Based Essay

→ Fulfillment of 'new woman' in India is a myth.

  → If development is not engendered, it is endangered
  → Managing work and home - is the Indian working women getting a fair deal?

→ If women ruled the world.

→ Whither Women's Emancipation.

→ Empowerment alone cannot help women.

→ Women is God's best creation

→ Greater political power alone will not improve women's plight.

→ "You educate a man; you educate a man. You educate a woman; you educate a generation."

Stereotype/Prejudice Based Essay

→ Bollywood and objectification and commodification of women.

→ I would be a man of Paradoxes than a man of prejudices.

→ Blue Boy & Pink Girl categorisation; is root of all Gender stereotypes.

→ Its hard to Crack a prejudice than an atom.

→ Baby doesn't judge; doesn't hate; She is not racist or prejudice. Please don't teach him to be.

→ Opinion in absence of evidence is prejudice.

→ Prejudice is a burden that confuses the past, threatens the future and renders the present inaccessible.

→ Prejudice is a chain, it can hold you. If you prejudice, you can't move.

Virtues, Character, Ethics and Morality Based Essay Topics:

→ Wisdom Finds Truth

→ Increasing Computerization would lead to the Creation of a Dehumanized Society.

→ Customary morality cannot be a guide to modern life.

→ Crisis faced in India - moral or economic.

→ A good life(EUDAIMONIA) is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge.

→ A people that values its privileges above its principles loses both.

→ Joy is the simplest form of gratitude.

→ Character of an institution is reflected in the leader.

→ Its not wisdom but authority that makes the Law.

→ Justice means Fairness.

→ We are what we repeatedly do.

Virtues, Character, Ethics and Morality Based Essay Topics:

→ Harmony should exist between Personal Ethics and Business Ethics for a better work – life balance.

→ For success of orgnisation; Ethical Infrastructure is as important as ethical competence in orgnisation.

→ Man cannot remake himself without suffering; for he is both the Marble and the Sculptor.

→ Relativism is the only practical moral philosophy for society in age of globalization.

→ There is no higher God than Truth.

→ "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied."

Science/Technology Vs Morality/Ethics Based Essay
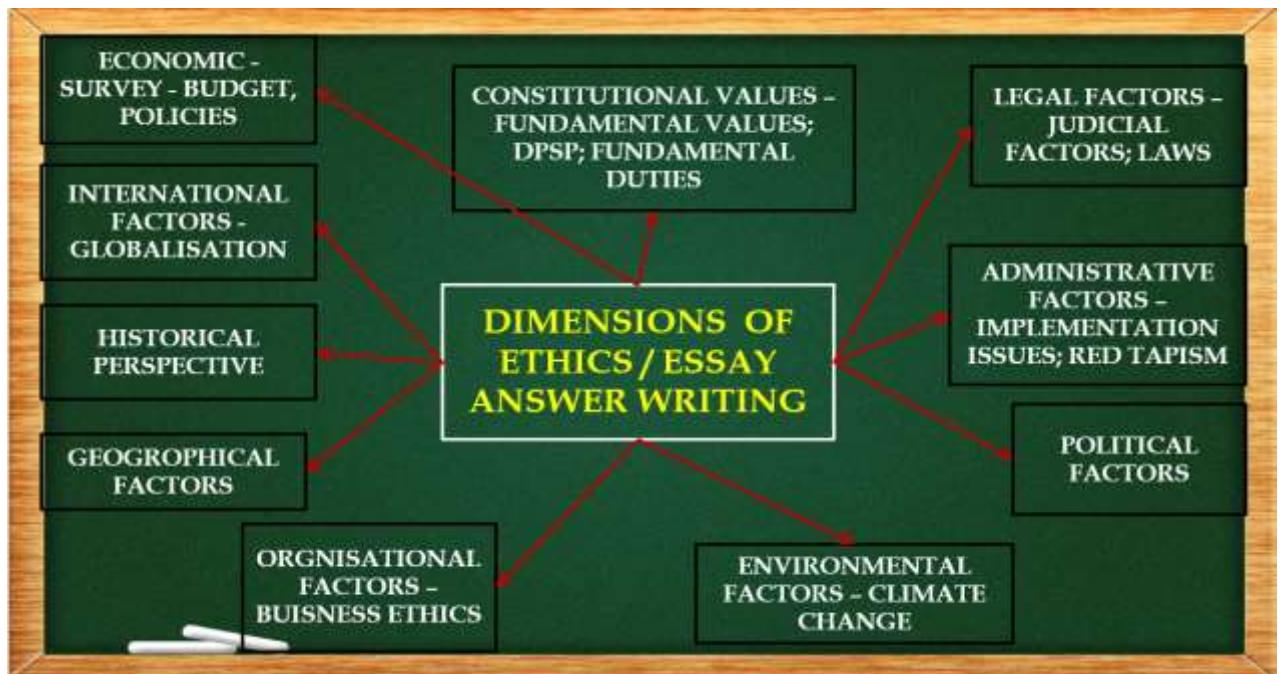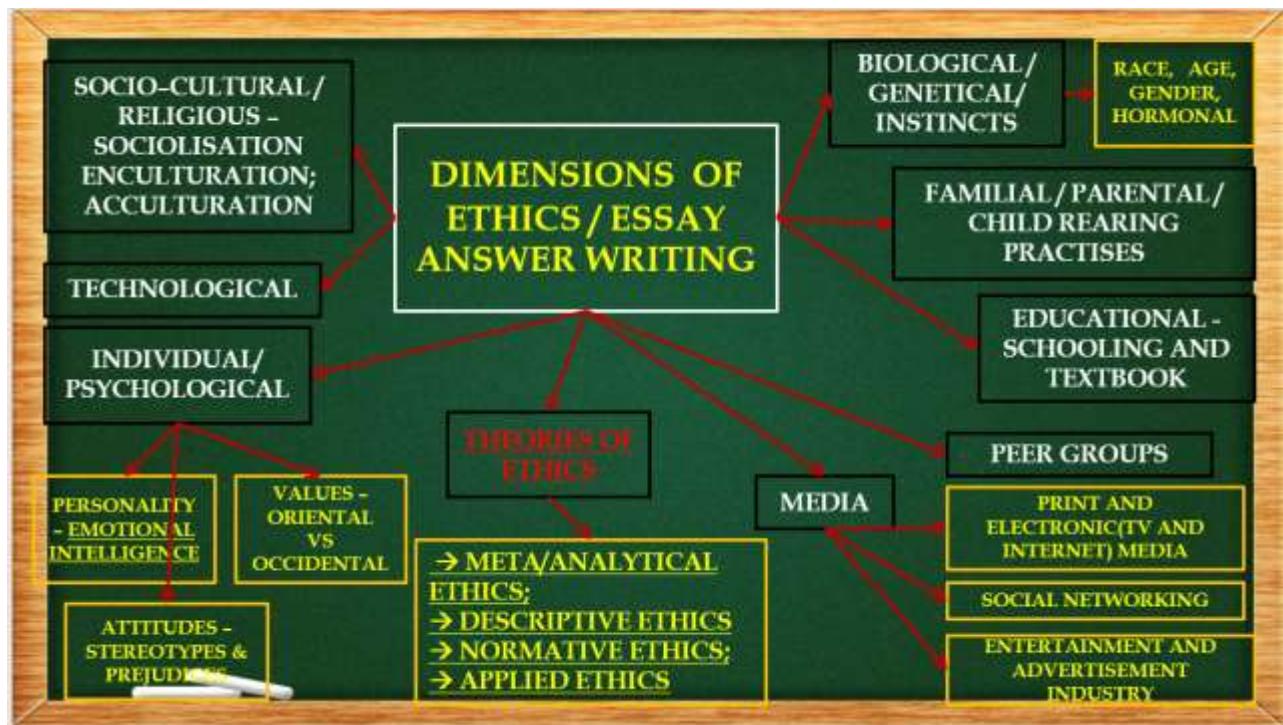
→ Science and Mysticism; Are they compatible?

→ How has satellite television brought about cultural change in the Indian mindset.

→ Mass media and cultural invasion

→ Spirituality and scientific temper

→ The march of science and the erosion of human values

→ Open your arms to change and technology; but don't let your values go.

→ Science is organized knowledge. Wisdom is organized life.

→ In questions of science, the authority of a thousand is not worth the humble reasoning of a single individual.

→ Science has made us God even before we are worthy of being man.

Socio-Religious & Contemporary Social Issue Based Essay

→ Best for an individual is not necessarily best for the society

→ Urbanization is a blessing in disguise.

→ Modernism and our traditional socio-ethical values.

→ We exist as part of society; society does not exist as part of us.

Culture Based Essay

→ **As civilization advances culture declines.**

→ **Globalisation and its impact on Indian Culture.**

DIMENSIONS OF ETHICS / ESSAY ANSWER WRITING

- SOCIO–CULTURAL / RELIGIOUS – SOCIOLISATION ENCULTURATION; ACCULTURATION
- TECHNOLOGICAL
- INDIVIDUAL / PSYCHOLOGICAL
- PERSONALITY – EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE
- VALUES – ORIENTAL VS OCCIDENTAL
- ATTITUDES – STEREOTYPES & PREJUDICES
- THEORIES OF ETHICS
  - → META/ANALYTICAL ETHICS;
  - → DESCRIPTIVE ETHICS
  - → NORMATIVE ETHICS;
  - → APPLIED ETHICS
- BIOLOGICAL / GENETICAL / INSTINCTS
- RACE, AGE, GENDER, HORMONAL
- FAMILIAL / PARENTAL / CHILD REARING PRACTISES
- EDUCATIONAL - SCHOOLING AND TEXTBOOK
- PEER GROUPS
- MEDIA
  - PRINT AND ELECTRONIC(TV AND INTERNET) MEDIA
  - SOCIAL NETWORKING
  - ENTERTAINMENT AND ADVERTISEMENT INDUSTRY

DIMENSIONS OF ETHICS / ESSAY ANSWER WRITING

- ECONOMIC - SURVEY - BUDGET, POLICIES
- INTERNATIONAL FACTORS - GLOBALISATION
- HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE
- GEOGROPHICAL FACTORS
- CONSTITUTIONAL VALUES – FUNDAMENTAL VALUES; DPSP; FUNDAMENTAL DUTIES
- ORGNISATIONAL FACTORS – BUISNESS ETHICS
- ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS – CLIMATE CHANGE
- LEGAL FACTORS – JUDICIAL FACTORS; LAWS
- ADMINISTRATIVE FACTORS – IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES; RED TAPISM
- POLITICAL FACTORS

Science Vs Mysticism; Rise of Nationalistic Pseudoscience and threat to India's scientific literacy

The religious worldview went largely unchallenged until 1543, when Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) — a Polish astronomer, mathematician, and cleric — upset the mythological apple cart. By shifting from a geocentric cosmological perspective to a heliocentric one, Copernicus literally made the earth move. All hell broke loose. The deathbed publication of Copernicus' masterpiece, *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*, launched a revolution in cosmology that dislodged humans from the center of the cosmos, exploded the boundaries of the known universe, turned a static cosmos into a dynamic one, and called into question the religious story. Moreover, Copernicanism — in the skilled hands of Galileo, Kepler, and Newton — gave rise to modern science. The Age of Reason, the industrial age, the nuclear age, the space age, and the information age all followed in rapid succession.
Before we'd fully assimilated the Copernican Revolution, Darwin's theory of evolution landed what Freud termed a "second blow to human narcissism," sending intellectual shock waves around the world.
Following Galileo, science and religion separated. After Darwin, they divorced. Perhaps divorce was necessary for science to escape the heel of religious authority and thrive. But humans, the children of that divorce, have experienced what cultural historians term "disenchantment of the universe."

What is Science?
Science is a type of knowledge system concerned with the **observation of phenomena through controlled and repeatable experiments.** Science has clear cut **cause effect relationship**. Scientists uphold values like **objectivity; Skepticism; authenticity and factual conclusions**. Scientific knowledge is not a fixed or static body of work. Instead, it's a process and, like all processes, it evolves. New fields emerge with conceptual shifts in these processes.

What is Pseudo Science?
Pseudoscience includes beliefs, theories, or practices that have been or are considered scientific, but have no basis in scientific fact. This could mean they were disproved scientifically, can't be tested scientifically, or lack evidence to support them. Even though it is difficult to exactly define pseudoscience, any claim which is not fully supported by strong scientific evidence will qualify as pseudoscience.

Science Vs Mysticism/Religion/God: Analysis of Difference

Epistemological difference, involving different notions about what constitutes Truth and how it can be known. While science boasted that scientific truths could be tested and verified through empirical experiments, religion apparently demanded that spiritual truths be accepted on blind faith.

Ontological Difference, That is, science and religion were founded on diametrically opposite views concerning the fundamental nature of reality. Religious believers insisted that, ultimately, the nature of reality was spiritual, divine creation,

manifestation of supreme soul and that, apart from this Spiritual Reality, nothing would or could exist. On the other hand, science adopted a strictly materialist position, arguing that everything could be reduced to, and explained by, the interactions of independently existing atoms and the physical forces which acted on them.

Science incorporates a well-defined methodology for testing its theories; scientific theories can be verified by observation made within the context of various kinds of physical experiments, while mystical teachings can be verified by insights gained within the context of various kinds of spiritual practices.

Science can be confirmed by repeatable scientific experiments and can be reproduced; while mystical, spiritual experiences are experienced only by contemplative individualized, personalized experience; which cant be repeated by same performer or experienced by others than mystic.

Absolutism Vs Relativism: The truths which science yields are conceptual truths, arrived at through a combination of thinking and experiencing. Mysticism is about relative truths, subject to revision and change as our thoughts & experiences change.

Objective facts Vs Subjective beliefs: Science works on facts which are generally objective; either true or false; and scientific truths are quantifiable. While mystic experiences are subjective experiences which are qualitative and cant be quantified in factual manner.

Direct perceptual Evidence(Lokayata) Vs Transcendental experience: Science strives to prove the hypothesis by generating evidences to support theory which can be verified by third impartial observer. While mystic experiences are transcendental in nature that is beyond world of phenomena & inaccessible to theoretical cognition.

Spiritualism: Science has limits:

Science cant prove everything; and we cant disprove that we cant prove. In 20th century many spiritual ideas came in to existence. Ex Planes and Mobiles. Sensory perception is necessary for survival but we have to expand our perception or sometimes have to go beyond sensory perception. Ex Scientific idea of light as visible spectrum does not apply to Owl.

Dichotomy of Mind: Duality Construct:
Brain/Reasoning – Scientific Orientation Vs Mind – Spiritual Orientation.

But the Truth to which mystics bear witness is an Absolute Truth—one which, as the Hindu sage, Shankara, says, "is beyond the grasp of the senses," and which, Ibn `Arabi writes, "cannot be arrived at by the intellect by means of any rational thought process." This Absolute Truth can only be known through a *third* mode of cognition—called variously *Enlightenment, Realization*, or *Gnosis*—which transcends both thinking and experiencing. In fact, it is precisely our ordinary ways of thinking and experiencing that veil this Truth from us, for as Buddhist master.

Problems With Spiritualism:

Gives rise to Superstitions

Tight linking with religion.

Creates rigid belief system.

Mental Dissonance: Epicurus argued for moderation in all things, even learning, culture and civilization were discouraged, as they could result in disturbing one's peace of mind, except insofar as knowledge could help rid oneself of religious fears and superstitions, such as the fear of the gods and of death.

Some Spiritual were Atheist and rejected existence of Super cosmological divine entity: **Buddhism, which similarly emphasizes a lack of divine interference** and **has aspects of [Atomism](#)**.

Bhagwad Gita is theistic in origin. But it does not encourage any form of blind faith. Bhagwad Gita's foundation is based on questioning the God. India is Land of seeker's not believers. In India we even questioned god. In Bhagwa Gita; Arjun approached Krishna with his questions and only when he was fully satisfied with Lord Krishna's answer; he resorted to his ethical duties. Gita rejects blind faith in anything; and promotes idea of seeking truth. It calls for investigating truth; instead of taking things for granted.

Even mystics recognize that faith is, indeed, a significant part of a spiritual path, they also maintain that faith alone is not enough.

Some schools of Philosophy have advocated Scientific methods of inquiry:

> Vaisheshikha: Atomic Materialism
> Buddha: Life of Contemplation
> Bhagwad-Gita: Dnyan Yoga + Karma Yoga +Bhakti Yoga
> Aristotlian Nichomachian Ethics: Analytical Reasoning
> Nyaya School: Analytical and Logical Reasoning

Sufi: who have reached the end of their path are called *al-muhaqqiqun,* which means "verifiers." They, too, have examined the teachings and verified their truth for themselves.

Presence of Conscious, Sub-conscious; Unconscious Mind(Ego, SuperEgo and Id) is recognized by Psychology; which can be the bridging gap between science and mysticism.

Neuro science has found existence of God Genes; neurotransmitters which makes us feel spiritual and mystic.

Both Search for Absolute Truths: Scientific Truth vs Mystical Truth. Both Science and Mysticism tries to find common question: Where we come From? (Nasdiya Sukta). Our ancestors found answer in Spiritualism and Religion; today we are searching for same answers in Science; by finding fundamental building blocks of

material and life. Our ancestors found answer in God – Super-cosmological entity; and we found answers in 'Standard model of Physics: 16 Fundamental Particles; String Theory' and Genetics.

As long as Science cant provide answers to all questions; Mysticism will survive. <u>Energy Can not be created and can not be destroyed: Thus energy in the universe may have required no act of creation, in which case there is no need for a creator. But this gives rise to question: Where the energy came from?</u>

Rise of Pseudo Science & Claims by Pseudo Scientists in Recent Past:

Vaimanika Shastra," which means "Aeronautical Science" in Sanskrit, and at its heart is the claim that an ancient Indian civilization had developed aeronautical technology centuries before the Wright Brothers flew their first plane.

In 2014, a department that focused on research into alternative and traditional Indian medicines — including unscientific fields like homeopathy and naturopathy — was elevated in status to the level of ministry and now operates alongside the Indian Ministry of Health.

One Minister of State called for Charles Darwin's theory of evolution to be removed from textbooks.

Mahabharata's Kauravas were born out of nearly 1,000-year-old stem cell research and a test tube fertilisation process "that this country had known thousands of years ago".

Cow exhales oxygen; and Peacock breed through tears.

Rearing cows reduces criminality. Cow milk contains gold.

Motive behind promotion of Pseudo Science:

Coordinated effort to popularize pseudoscientific theories, and to aggrandize the nation's own scientific past, have begun to gain ground. Religious conservatives in politics want to use these claims in science to mobilize people; under the umbrella of religious supremacy.
It is done to reinforce an alluring idea of an India rooted in an ancient civilization where science, technology and philosophy thrived; an India that can be restored to grandeur by linking to its past. This idea has led to a "scientized religion" and a "religionized science", creating "a vision of India as an archaic modernity".

Problems of Rise of Pseudo Science:

This not only reduces India's scientific quotient; but will also lead to a situation where such claims — propagated over and again — might eventually enter our textbooks.

It also causes real damage by medical negligence. We need to counter the spread of pseudoscience quickly, especially in the field of medicine. The fact that we now

have a whole separate Ministry of AYUSH [Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy], outside of the Ministry of Health, to focus on alternative or ancient science is concerning. A lot of times many of these medicines are not being tested properly, and are marketed as 'ancient science' and assume that our ancestors must have established its efficacy.

It can "brainwash a generation"; creating complete culture of irrational people with blind belief system. A mentality of accepting beliefs without evidence is being propagated in the country; especially in the younger generation, which 'will curtail the space for science in the future generations. Science is not a set of beliefs. It is essentially a way of thinking. That is being undermined in India. It is highly objectionable to introduce untested beliefs into academic curricula because the students will be marked on the basis of their adherence to these beliefs.

Its creepy spread **worries as most of the time it is** government-backed**.** Sometimes, unscientific ideas are patronised by persons in high positions. This promotion of blind belief system has led to murder of four rationalists namely Dabholkar, Pansare, Gauri Lankesh and Kalburgi as 'prominent advocates of rationality' who campaigned against superstition and promoted science.

Over the past few years we've seen the anti-science attitude bleed into and corrupt the country's scientific institutions, either as a result of political pressure to validate claims about 'Vedic science' or because of the unscientific temper of a portion of the scientific community.

Further, these pseudoscientific claims also belittle and camouflage the true contributions of both ancient and modern Indian scientists.

Why we Need Scientific Temper?

Rationality is by product of Evolution. Rational mind makes us human. Dissociating from it is dangerous. According to Aristotle, **nature works toward a *telos*, or end goal.** He **classifies humans as "rational animals," meaning that our *telos* is rational**. In other words, our function in life is to realize our full potential as rational beings. If we are not fully rational, we are falling short of our true nature.

Our goal in life is to achieve our true nature, and this true nature consists essentially of rationality. **The purpose of a moral education**, then, is to **teach us how we may become perfectly rational.**

Aristotle, with whom Virtue Ethics is largely identified, categorized the virtues as moral virtues (including prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance) and **intellectual virtues (including "sophia" or theoretical wisdom, and "phronesis" or practical wisdom**). By accquiring these virtues can only achieve state of Eudaimonia.

How to Promote Scientific Temper and Scientific Culture?

The term scientific temper was coined by the first prime minister of India Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his book the discovery of India. In this he suggested that scientific temper is the attitude to :-

(1) search for new bodies of knowledge,

(2) not to accept anything without a proof or a test,

(3) Have the ability to change one's stand in light of new evidences and

(4) not to rely on pre -conceived notions in lieu of observational evidence.
He believed that such an attitude was not merely for the application of science but also for being able to make more rational and informed choices in life.

The idea of evolving India into a society where all citizens have a scientific temper and rational approach had been fundamental to the vision of independent India. The Article 51A of the Indian Constitution that lists the fundamental duties, clearly states that,

"it is the fundamental duty of every citizen of India to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform."

Promotion of Scientific literacy includes the following elements:
1) Knowledge of basic facts of science. 2) An understanding of methods of science i.e. keen observations, questioning, reasoning, experimental design, drawing conclusions and understanding. 3) An appreciation of the positive outcomes of science and technology. 4) The rejection of unfounded beliefs and obscurantism.

Establish countervailing events like National Scientific Temper Day.

Promoting **"Why" Man Culture**: The ability to ask the right questions is the heart of democracy. Developing inquisitive and critical attitude is necessary for dealing with this rise of Pseudo-Sciences. Indian constitution mandates that Indian citizens abide by and uphold reason and scientific temper.

Separating mythologies and fables from spiritual message before telling to the kids.

Having healthy logical discussion with Kids on socio-religious issues.

Encouraging critical and disruptive, inquisitive mindset in children.

Educational curriculum should focus on divergent – out of box thinking development instead of Overdependence on texts and its atonement as a supreme body of knowledge, which is unquestionable is the greatest threat to Scientific Temper.

Few psychological traits like Obsessive Compulsion Disorder prevent people from having a scientific temper in life. Attitudinal traits like 'Need for structure'; 'Low on Uncertainty avoidance' or fastidious people lack scientific temper. At times such traits forces them to take decision which they know are against their own best interest; are irrational and illogical.

A new alarming trend is evolving in our country where people who claim to be godmen or mystics, manipulate people to not have a scientific temper and believe whatever they say to be true by quoting discoveries in science, and misrepresenting them as per their own personal propaganda.

A major challenge is to align the functioning and the objectives of the education system in the country. The system needs to be revamped so that it does not come into cross-hairs with scientific temperamental tendencies of the pupils. The entire process from teaching to examination has to embrace scientific temper.

The onus lies on the people in science to not only make decisions based on a rational and scientific approach in their professional life but also in their daily and public life. People who understand science must develop themselves as the role models general society looks forward to.

It's very important to realize that scientific temper is not an automatic product of studying science. Otherwise, highly qualified scientists would not be in denial about human-caused global warming. Or insist that Indians invented the nuclear bomb and flying machines thousands of years ago.

Finally, the media plays a very important role in controlling pseudoscience. In my opinion, the media should follow **a name and shame policy** without pity in identifying the torch-bearers of pseudoscience.
Change in Value System and Child rearing practices: Instead of promoting Conformist mindset and developing mindset that obeys to authority in our kids; we need to develop questioning, inquisitive, open mindset; which is skeptical and takes nothing for granted unless factually verified.

A good way to begin would be by talking about science, academic research and knowledge production in languages other than English to kickstart healthier debates at all levels of society.

Conclusion: To claim the development of airplanes and automobiles in ancient times is ridiculous. India's future development is not just dependent on massive infrastructure build-outs. If we are to develop as a knowledge society, we have to revel in our ancient knowledge as well, including Yoga and Ayurveda. But the promotion of dubious science is not the way to go forward. **Humanity has made some remarkable achievements in the past century, from gas turbine engines that brought the world closer, to the internet. Yet, it appears that of late we are seeing the rise of, what can best be described, as stupidity**

Science and technology are the means to drive India out of poverty into development, we cannot become an ambivalent nation that regresses into imagined past glories but actually one that glorifies the relevant aspects of the past.

Women/Gender Based Essay: Multiple Dimensions Of Gender!

→ Mental Health: 'Global Burden of Disease Study 1990-2016', published in The Lancet Public Health journal

→ Causal Factors for High Suicide rate in Indian Females:

→ Psychological Factors: Blue Boy Pink Girl Categorisation; Gender biased CRP's; Son Meta Preference

→ Son Meta Preference: Skewed Sex ratios of the last child (SRLC).

→ Social Factors – Dowry & Domestic Violence: Laws Against Dowry System in India; Causal Factors For Dowry Deaths; Solutions To Curb Dowry Deaths

→ Social Networking – MeeToo Campaign

→ Racial Factors – Fair Skin Racism in India: Causal Factors and Solutions

→ Technological Factor – Feminization of Agriculture

→ Constitutional and Legal - Legalisation of Marital Rape; Verma Comitte Recommendations; Arguments in Support and Against;

→ Gender Equality & Disaster Risk Reduction: Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

→ Literacy: Educational achievements and analysis

→ Economic participation of women: Important statistics

→ Workforce Participation: Decline In Labor Force Participation Rate of Women; World Bank world development Indicator report finding

→ Reasons for declining Women Participation Rate despite high educational achievements.

→ Gender Pay Gap: Oxfam Report

→ India ranked world's most dangerous place for women: Thomson Reuters Foundation Report

→ Gender In-Equality Index: How it is measured? What's India's rank?

→ Gender Inequality Index of UNDP; Inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI) of UNDP; Global Gender Equality Index: The Sustainable Development Goals Gender Index by UK-based Equal Measures 2030

→ Use of female controlled reversible contraception & Women Empowerment: Findings from Economic Survey

→ Glass Ceiling: Myth Or Reality in India? Causal Factors & Solutions; NITI Aayog Initiatives.

→ Bollywood's portrayal of women changing the perception of society towards women in India: Ban On ITEM Songs

→ Political Participation of Women: Issue of "Sarpanch Pati"

Mental Health: 'Global Burden of Disease Study 1990-2016', published in The Lancet Public Health journal; has pointed out worrying aspects of the growing problem of suicides in India. Nearly **37 per cent** of women who commit suicide around the world are Indians. The suicide rate among Indian women was **three times higher than** what might be predicted for a country with similar geography and socio-economic indicators.

In fact, **married women account for the highest proportion of suicide deaths among** Indian women. 76% as per NCRB.

Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, West Bengal and Tripura had high SDRs for men and women, while in Kerala and Chhattisgarh, the figure was high for men.

→ The suicide death rate (number of suicides per one lakh persons) in 2016 for women in India was 15, which is **2.1 times the global SDR for women**; while for men it was 1.4 times the world average.

→ **Causal Factors for Suicides in Females:**

→ 1) Toxic gender roles: Strict gender norms keep women and girls under high levels of surveillance, restrict their mobility, leave them with high burdens of domestic labour as well as lead to gender-based violence.

→ 2) Absence Of Dissonance Reducing mechanisms: Lack of recreational facilities and entertainment avenues especially in Rural areas.

→ 3) Indian Marriage is not a Protective Measure:

→ 4) Compounded Gender Roles or Duality of Gender Roles For married women:

→ 6) Restriction On Reproductive Agency: Lack of information on contraception leading to women have little control over their own bodies or choices around child bearing. In the use of female contraception: nearly 47 percent of women do not use any contraception, and of those who do, less than a third use female controlled reversible contraception.

→ 7) Disproportionate burden of household labour and lack of companionship:
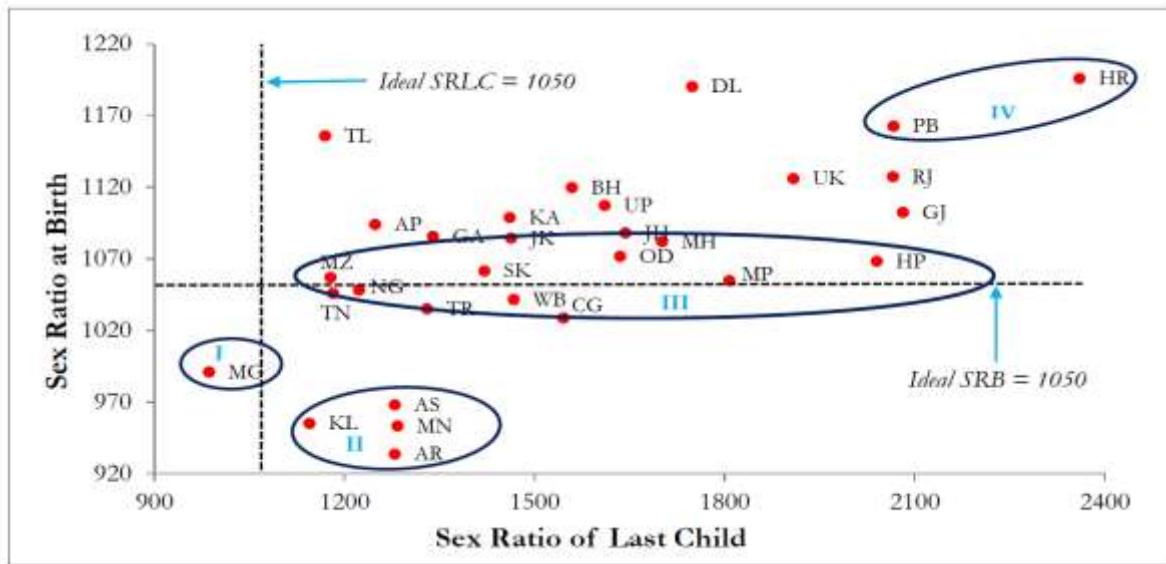
→ **Psychological Factors:**
   Blue Boy Pink Girl Categorisation;
   Gender biased CRP's;
   Son Meta Preference

→ **Family & Son Meta-Preference:**

→ Parents continue to have children until they get the desired number of sons. This kind of **fertility-stopping rule leads to skewed sex ratios.** But in different directions: skewed in favour of males if it is the last child, but in favour of females if it is not the last. Where there are no such fertility-stopping rules, ratios remain balanced regardless of whether the child is the last or not. But there is another phenomenon of son meta-preference which involves parents adopting fertility "stopping rules" – **having children until the desired number of sons are born.** Which leads to the notional category of **"unwanted" girls** which is estimated at **over 21 million**.

→ The Natural sex ratio at birth is 1.05 males for every female. Any deviation from this is on account of human intervention: sex-selective abortion. In China, the one-child policy interacted with the underlying son-preference to worsen the sex ratio from 1070 in 1970 to 1156 in 2014.

→ India's sex ratio during this period also increased substantially even **without the one-child policy from 1060 to 1108** whereas if development acted as an antidote, it should have led to improvements in the sex ratio.

→ For Ex Punjab and Haryana the richest states have the sex ratio (0-6 years) approaching 1200 males per 1000 females.

→ Fertility Stopping Rules form of sex selection alone will not skew the sex ratio – either at birth or overall. A different measure is required to detect son "meta" preference that is the sex ratio of the last child (SRLC).

→ A preference for sons will manifest itself in the SRLC being heavily skewed in favour of boys. On the other hand, an SRLC of close to 1.05:1 would imply that parents' decisions to continue having children is uncorrelated with previous birth being a son or a daughter.

Families continue to have children until they get the desired number of sons; will lead to skewed sex ratios but in different directions: **Skewed in favour of males if it is the last child, but in favour of females if it is not.**

Figure 7. Sex Preference – "Malign" and "Meta" (Male Per Thousand Females)

Meghalaya stands out as an ideal state because both sex ratio at birth and sex ratio of last child are close to the benchmark.

States in circle II and circle III, such as Kerala, do not seem to practice sex selective abortions (since their sex ratios at birth are close to the biological benchmark) but indicate some son "meta"preference (skewed SRLC).

Punjab and Haryana, on the other hand, exhibit extremely high son preference and meta preference – the overall sex ratios are significantly above the biological benchmark, and the sex ratio of the last child is heavily male skewed, implying parents are unlikely to stop after having a daughter.

Figure 8a. Sex Ratio by Birth when Child is not the Last
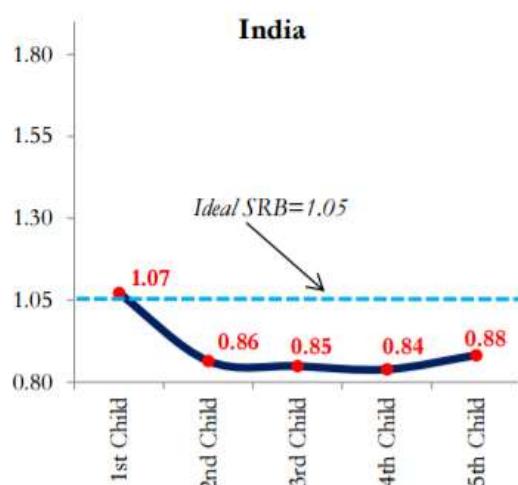
Figure 8b. Sex Ratio by Birth when Child is the Last

In India Figure 8b, the sex ratio of the first child for households that have strictly more than 1 child is 1.07. Similarly, 0.86 is the sex ratio of the second child among families that had strictly more than 2 children.

In contrast Figure 8b shows the sex ratio of the last child by birth order. The sex ratio of the last child for first-borns is 1.82, heavily skewed in favour of boys compared with the ideal sex ratio of 1.05.This ratio drops to 1.55 for the second child for families that have exactly two children. The striking contrast between the two panels conveys a sense of son meta preference.

A son "meta" preference –even though it does not lead to sex-selective abortion – may nevertheless be detrimental to female children because it may lead to fewer resources devoted to them.

Social– Matriarchal vs Patriarchal Society; Dowry & Domestic Violence
National Crime Records Bureau: In 2010, 8391 dowry death cases were reported across India, meaning a bride was burned every 90 minutes. **Increasing Trend:** A decade earlier this number was 6995, but climbed to 8093 dowry deaths in 2007 and touched 8,233 in 2012. The **higher socio-economic strata is equally involved** in such practices.
State wise break-up: Highest incidence of dowry deaths was in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The conviction rate was always in the vicinity of 50 per cent in U.P. and in the vicinity of less than 30 per cent in Bihar.

Nagaland is the only State and Lakshadweep the only Union Territory where no dowry deaths were reported during the period.
Although in theory the Hindu Succession Act gives Hindu women equal inheritance, "in practice, married daughters are seldom given a share in parental property."

Laws Against Dowry System in India:
The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961:
Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005:
Cruelty by the husband or his family against the wife have been addressed in the Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code and Section 198A in the Criminal Procedure Code.

Causal Factors For Dowry Deaths:

1) Rising consumerism and greed for material possessions In India:

2) Religious Sanction:

3) Society Structure – Dowry is largely the manifestation of the patriarchal nature of the Indian society.

4) Greed Factor
5) Propulsion Towards Adhering to Customs

6) Ineffective statutory laws with Vague Statutory Language:

7) Non enforcement of Existing Laws:

8) Economic Discrimination against Women:

Solutions To Curb Dowry Deaths:

1. Law:

2. Enforcement – A zero-tolerance policy for offenders and ensure enforcement of the law through systemic changes.

3. Social Awareness Campaigns – Campaigns should be designed to reach the deepest strata of the society and aim to spread knowledge about the legal provisions against dowry.

4. Education and self-dependence of women – Knowledge of their rights will enable them to speak up against practice of dowry and ongoing marginalization. They will also be able to strive for self-dependence and not view marriage as their only salvation.

5. Overhaul of mindsets –India as a country requires major overhaul of its existing mindsets that in today's society women are perfectly capable of doing anything that men can.

6. Initiating Mass Media Campaigning:

<u>Social Networking</u> – MeeToo Campaign

Racial Factors – Fair Skin Racism in India,
Being subject to a succession of white(ish) overlords has long associated light skin with power, status and desirability among Indians. Dasyus and aryas, (it is said that indigenous dark skinned communities were forced into 4th varna and category of untouchables). Muslim invaders and rulers who ruled India for over millennium were largely white skinned; thus power and status came to be associated with white skin. British in their 200 year rule propagated idea of white man's burden and created racial inferiority in minds of Indians which still propagates.

Social prejudice of equating fairness with beauty and better prospects of marriage for fair girls in a patriarchal society has aggravated the problem.

Depiction of goddesses and mythological heroins (role models for women in ancient times) as fair skinned beauties: sita, parvati, laxmi, radha (many songs about fair radha and dark skinned shyam) give cultural sanction to fair skin racism. With few culture exception like draupadi.

Bias in Bollywood and interestingly in Tollywood industry too; which promotes fair girls even they lack good acting skills.

Aggressive marketing by manufacturers of beauty products which rest on creating inferiority complex to sell product affects self esteem and confidence of young girls

for ex advertise showing girl getting job after getting fair skin. This further strengthens stereotypical belief.

Stereotypical belief in Indian society that skin color determines a person's worth.

Constant exposure to comparative negative skin remarks and judgments aggravates the problem.

Solutions To Curb Fair Skin Racism:

#Dark is Beautiful Campaign.,

#ColourMeRight campaign;

Celebrities should promote "RAINBOW" culture in India.

The Advertising Standards Council of India attempted to address skin-based discrimination in 2014 by banning ads that depict people with darker skin as inferior.

Technological – Feminisation of Agriculture: Notably, as per Census 2011, out of total female main workers, 55% were agricultural labourers and 24% cultivators. However, only 12.8% of the operational holdings were owned by women, which reflected the gender disparity in ownership of landholdings in agriculture. This requires that women farmers should have enhanced access to resources like land, water, credit, technology and training which warrants critical analysis in the context of India. To ensure main-streaming of women in the agriculture sector, the government is earmarking at least 30% of the budget allocation for women beneficiaries in all ongoing schemes-programmes and development activities.

Constitutional and Legal - Legalisation of Marital Rape: Section 375 of IPC defines rape as a sexual intercourse with a woman against her will or without her consent but a sexual intercourse by the husband with his wife is not rape. Exception 2 to Section 375 of IPC grants immunity to the husband for the act of raping his own wife. **JS Verma committee, constituted after the Nirbhaya gang rape in 2013, recommended criminalization of marital rape.** Verma committee report quoted study stating 60% of married women reported rape by intimate partners. NCRB data shows in 85-90% rape cases accused is known person. So analogically it can be assumed that trusted can rape; hence husbands can rape. **We first need to agree to its existence.** The UN Population Fund has found that more than two-thirds of married women in India between the ages of 15 and 49 have been raped by their husbands.

The Supreme Court of India already in the case of Independent Thought versus Union of India has made sexual intercourse with the wife under the age of 18 an offence.

Legalisation of Marital Rape arguments in Support:
Essentials of rape is absence of consent**.**
A graver offence as it is committed on a woman within the confines of the pious

and sacred institution of marriage.

Exception 2 is a regressive approach not keeping in tune with the changing times wherein the institution of marriage is being seen from the prism of companionship and equality between two partners.

The development of law on this subject all over the world has been in favour of criminalization of martial rape.

Violence should not be sanctified through institution of marriage.

Legalisation of Marital Rape arguments against:

It will create absolute anarchy in families.

This will amount to excessive interference in the marital relationships.

Will result in grave misuse of law against the husbands.

Issue of Evidence:

Illiterate, uneducated orthodox women wont be using this provision even if it is legalized in India to protect their marriage.

Existing laws are sufficient and capable of dealing with cases of sexual abuse of woman.

a) Protection of woman from domestic violence acts covers physical, emotional, sexual cruelty and the wife is entitled to protection provisions, interim, financial and monetary orders and non-compliance of orders by husband entails imprisonment.

b) Sec 498A of IPC covers all kinds of cruelty on wife including mental, physical and sexual cruelty and a person can be jailed up to 3 years upon conviction.

C) If a wife and husband are living in separation due to matrimonial separation and if in such a circumstance, the husband indulges with sexual intercourse forcibly with the wife, then it amounts to rape and punishment up to 7 years in jail.

D) In case of unnatural sexual act with the wife by the husband, the husband can be jailed for up to 10 years.

Gender Equality & Disaster Risk Reduction: The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 supports an inclusive approach to disaster risk reduction. It recognizes the indispensable role of women in risk reduction efforts. Natural disasters affect women, men, girls and boys differently. In fact, in many contexts, due to socio-economic conditions as well cultural beliefs and traditional practices, women and girls are more likely to be disproportionately affected by disasters, including through loss of life during and in the aftermath of disasters, loss of livelihoods and productive assets, and increased gender-based violence.

Literacy Statistics among Women In India:

Among graduates in 2018-2019, women represented: Undergraduate degrees: 53%; Phil. degrees: 69.6%; PhDs: 41.8% The female literacy rate is 65.46%. A survey titled "Household Social Consumption:Education" and published by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), has pegged Kerala as having

the highest age specific attendance ratio (ASAR) for women, in both urban and rural areas, starting from the pre-primary level to pre-university education. ASAR is the percentage of people in that age-group currently attending educational institutions, irrespective of the level or class in which they are studying. The survey has also listed Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Telangana and Tamil Nadu as having high ASARs.

Economic Participation For Women:

- Women form 63% of the lowest paid labour but only 15% of the highest paid workers

- 95% of the Indian female workforce works in the informal economy

- India ranks 136th worldwide in women's economic participation

- Gender pay gap in corporate India stands at 27%

- According to the Deloitte report titled 'Empowering Women & Girls in India' for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, 95% or 195 million women are employed in the unorganised sector or are in unpaid work.
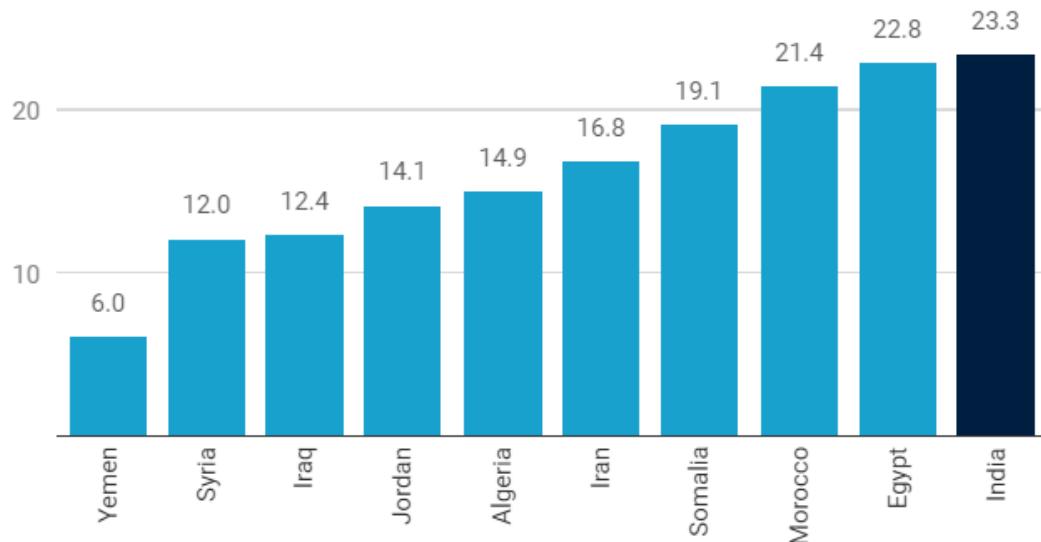
Workforce Participation: The Labor Force Participation Rate for Women Is Declining:

- Despite rapid economic growth, as against a 45.4 per cent median female share of the workforce in 144 countries; less than a quarter (23.6%) of women aged 15 and above participated in the labor force in 2018 (compared to 78.6% of men). NSSO data on youth (15-29 years) shows that their participation has dropped from 37.1 per cent in 2004-05 and 24.4 per cent in 2011-12 to just 16.4 per cent in 2017-18.

- Rural women are leaving India's workforce at a faster rate than urban women.

- **Increasing women's labor force participation by 10 percentage points could add $770 billion to India's GDP by 2025.**

→ Just nine countries around the world, including Syria and Iraq, now have a fewer proportion of working women than India. India's female Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)—the share of working-age women who report either being employed, or being available for work—has fallen to a historic low of 23.3% in 2017-18, meaning that over three out of four women over the age of 15 in India are neither working nor seeking work.

## Only nine countries have a lower labour female participation rate than India
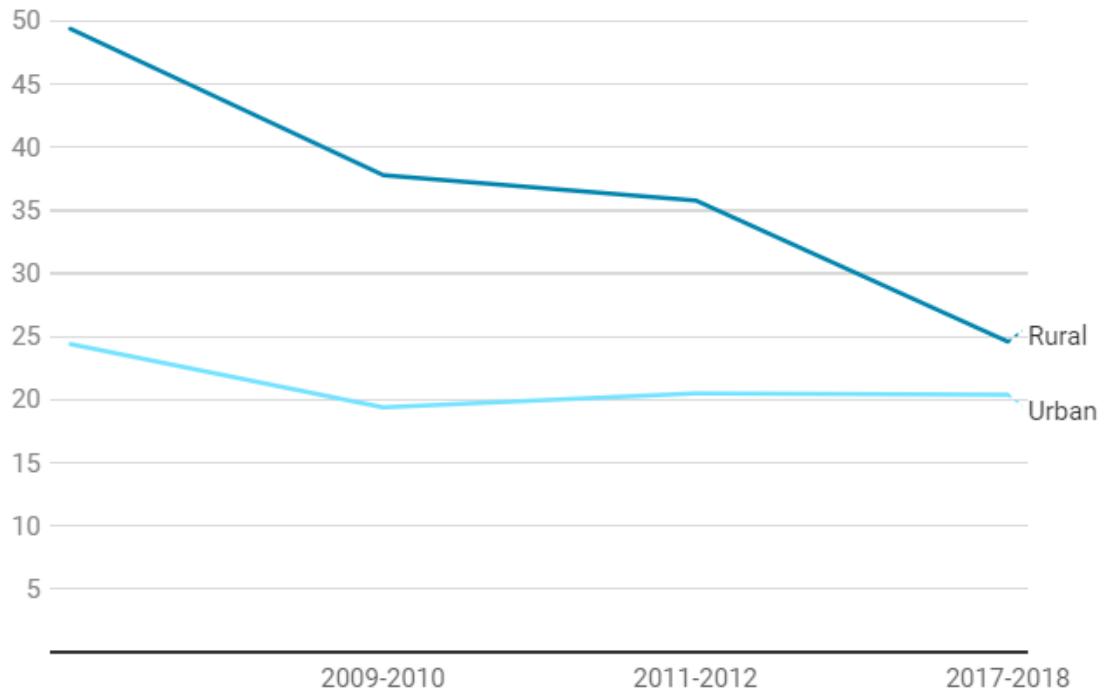
Ten countries with the lowest female labour force participation rate (%)

Yemen 6.0
Syria 12.0
Iraq 12.4
Jordan 14.1
Algeria 14.9
Iran 16.8
Somalia 19.1
Morocco 21.4
Egypt 22.8
India 23.3

India's falling female labour force participation

Female labour force participation rate (%)

Rural
Urban

2009-2010   2011-2012   2017-2018

Among men, caste and religion make no real difference to workforce participation rates. But among women, Muslim women have the lowest LFPR while among Hindu

women, forward caste women have the lowest LFPR, implying that social norms and religious conservatism might play a role in women being "allowed" to work. Among those in the workforce, rural women work overwhelmingly in agriculture. The most common jobs for urban women are of garment workers, domestic cleaners; salesperson.

Why women are not participating in the workforce when in most examinations for higher studies or even competitive jobs they seem to outscore male counterparts?

→ Maternity leave of 26 weeks has created competitive disadvantage.
→ Issues with Job Profile.
→ Withdrawal from agriculture due to mechanisation, fall in farm incomes.
→ Lack of Family support: Changing family structures, from joint families to nuclear families.

→ Persistent gender inequality in the labour market and women are often relegated to poor value add work and disparity in Payment.
→ Option not to work, or tend not to work in slightly better off families.
→ Re-entry into the workforce after a break is often difficult
→ Digital divide, which limits them from gaining employable skill sets and entering the workforce or establishing an enterprise.
→ Advent of technology, digitisation and automation that women employed in low skills and low paying jobs will lose their place in the workforce.

The education ecosystem needs to go through a set of system strengthening initiatives, including the introduction of digital and STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education in schools, which in turn will introduce girls to various career choices.

Gender inclusive work cultures.

Mentoring adolescent girls on vocational training and apprenticeship avenues can build a strong linkage towards considering technology linked training and employment options.

Gender Pay Gap: The Gender Pay Gap Is Slowly Shrinking in India: An [Oxfam report](#) on inequality published in January revealed that in the workplace, women still receive 34% less wages than their male counterparts for the same work. **Women earn 65% of what their male colleagues earn** for performing the same work. Further up the social ladder, the inequality still persists. "There are only nine women billionaires in the list, constituting just 7.5% of the Indian billionaires".

India ranked world's most dangerous place for women: Thomson Reuters Foundation — the philanthropic arm of Reuters media company — released a study that ranked India as the most dangerous place because of its high incidences of sexual violence, lack of access to justice in rape cases, child marriage, female

feticide and human trafficking. India outranked such countries as Syria and Afghanistan — second and third — that are currently at war. Reported cases of crimes against women rose 83 percent between 2007 and 2016, where there were four cases of rape every hour. Reported rapes in India — 38,947 in 2016 — are on the rise, but its rate of rape per 100,000 people remains far lower than some Western countries, including the United States, which experts believe is in part due to years of fear and underreporting. India has the most child brides in the world — around a third of all girls are married before their 18th birthday.

Gender equality is an inherently multidimensional issue. Assessments Gender Equality are generally on three specific dimensions of gender: **Agency; Attitudes and Outcomes.**

Agency relate to women's ability to make decisions Ex spending on herself, health.

Attitudes relate violence against women/wives; Gender Stereotypes etc

Outcomes relate to son preference (measured by sex ratio of last child), female employment, choice of contraception, education levels, age at marriage, age at first childbirth, and physical or sexual violence experienced by women.

Gender Inequality Index of UNDP
Inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI) of UNDP

Global Gender Equality Index: The Sustainable Development Goals Gender Index by UK-based Equal Measures 2030

India ranks 129 out of 189 countries on the 2019 Human Development Index (HDI) — up one slot from the 130th position last year. However, for inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI), India's position drops by one position to 130, losing nearly half the progress (.647 to .477) made in the past 30 years. The IHDI indicates percentage loss in HDI due to inequalities.
In the Gender Inequality Index (GII), India is at 122 out of 162 countries. It forecasts that it may take 202 years to close the gender gap in economic opportunity worldwide.

The Sustainable Development Goals Gender Index has been developed by UK-based Equal Measures 2030, a joint effort of regional and global organisations including African Women's Development and Communication Network, Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and International Women's Health Coalition.

India ranked 95th out of 129 countries in a new index that measures global gender equality looking at aspects such as poverty, health, education, literacy, political representation and equality at the workplace.

India ranks toward the bottom of the Asia and the Pacific region, ranking 17th out of the 23 Asia and the Pacific countries covered by the index.

The index has ranked India at 95 among 129 countries with India's highest goal scores are on SDG 3 of health (79.9), SDG 2 of hunger and nutrition (76.2) and SDG 7 of energy (71.8).

India's lowest goal scores are on SDG 17 of partnerships (18.3, in the bottom 10 countries worldwide on the goal), SDG 9 of industry, infrastructure and innovation (38.1) and SDG 13 of climate (43.4).

Use of female controlled reversible contraception & Women Empowerment: As per the Survey, nearly 47 per cent of women do not use any contraception, and of those who do, less than a third use female-controlled reversible contraception. **Long-acting reversible contraceptives** (**LARC**) are methods of birth control that provide effective contraception for an extended period without requiring user action. They include injections, intrauterine devices (IUDs) and subdermal contraceptive implants. They are the most effective reversible methods of contraception because their efficacy is not reliant on patient compliance. Their 'typical use' failure rates, at less than 1% per year, are about the same as 'perfect use' failure rates.

Glass Ceiling: Myth Or Reality in India?

→ A "glass ceiling" means an invisible barrier which is beyond the thoughts of the women; which let them stop to achieve heights of success. **Women are perceived as being more emotional and family-oriented. Women are stereotyped as not being shrewd or aggressive enough; qualities expected out of top management personnel.**

→ SEBI norm that mandates organisations have at least one female director on the company's board.

→ Back in 2015 IMF chief Christine Lagarde predicted that higher participation of women in the labour force could result in a 27% surge in the country's GDP.

→ Women directors make better quality decisions due to a wider diversity of views. **There have been studies that have shown that the financial performance of a company is better with a higher percentage of women at top levels**

→ **"Women in the Changing World of Work: Planet 50-50 by 2030":** Government of India's commitment to ensure Gender Parity in India, with special focus on women's economic empowerment.

→ In corporate world in India, the percentage of women and men 60% and 40% or may be 70% and 30% but when it grow to the higher level like CEO and board of directors it become approximately 85% male and 15% female or may be less than this.

→ In 2015 females made up 11.2% of board members on Indian firms, double the 5.5% in 2010, according to a report by Credit Suisse.

→ As of October 31, 2017, women still accounted for only 15% of directorship positions in NSE-quoted companies.

→ Proportion of women occupying top leadership positions in domestic companies increased from 17% in 2017 to 20% in 2018.

→ **Glass ceiling is sector-centric:** Women gain social acceptance as doctors or in education fields.

Causes For Glass Ceiling:

→ Patriarchal Society and Gender biased Work Culture.

→ Job descriptions include competencies that we traditionally associate with the masculine, some women are deterred and don't feel motivated or encouraged to aspire for these positions.

→ Work-life equation for women remains significantly unbalanced.

→ Some of India's richest businessmen have appointed their wives as company directors to comply with a new law.

Solutions For Glass Ceiling:

→ Corporates should develop a defined succession management framework for future women leaders.

→ Gender-neutral parental leave policy and other tailored training and development programmes — focused at the middle and senior management level.

→ Work environment with gender equitable policies and family-friendly practices including flexible schedules and child care.

→ Senior management should set targets for the proportion of women in top positions, invest in unconscious bias training, anchor mentoring initiatives to bolster a pipeline of female leaders.

Women Transforming India, 2017 - Breaking The Glass Ceiling: Initiatives by NITI Aayog

→ Women in the Changing World of Work: Planet 50-50 by 2030: Ensure Gender Parity in India, with special focus on women's economic empowerment. Creating new opportunities of job creation, entrepreneurship, skill building and access to new industries particularly ICT, through its national initiatives like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Skill India, Make In India and Digital India.

→ In 2016, NITI Aayog, in partnership with the United Nations India and MyGov, launched the first-ever Women Transforming India, an online contest to crowd source stories of women making a difference, in form of essays.

→ This year, NITI Aayog, along with the UN in India and MyGov, launches the campaign to award inspiring women from across India through entries in two categories:

Short video and photo contest on Women Breaking Gender Stereotypes:

Bollywood's portrayal of women changing the perception of society towards women in India

Negative changes that have happened in film industry that influence society's mindset

→ Change in orientation from film industry to entertainment industry.

→ Objectification and commercialization of female body

→ Item Songs and its effect on societal mindset

  →Choice of Clothing

  → Effect of derogatory references used for female characters

  → Effect of lyrics

  → Effect of choreography

→ Objectification of Women and Rise in Crimes against Women.

Bringing ITEM Songs under Section 509 of the penal code (using words or gestures to "insult the modesty" of a woman, punishable by one year in jail or a fine) or Section 294 (committing an obscene act or singing an obscene song or ballad in a public place, punishable with three months in prison or a fine).

Political Representation Of Women:

→ Lok Sabha had 67 and Rajya Sabha 25 women MPs. In a country like India with around 49 per cent of women in the population, the political participation of women has been low.

→ **Sarpanch-Pati:** The Roadblock To Women's Political Participation

→ Twenty-five years after women were given 33% reservation in local self-governance bodies, many women sarpanchs remain faceless wives and daughters-in-law.

→ Need to change people's perception of women being incapable of going out and managing public affairs.
Promoting role models India's most celebrated woman sarpanch, **Chhavi Rajawat**.

Historical – Women position in Ancient Medieval and Modern India

Cultural – Concept of Masculinity and feminity; Gender roles in Cultures