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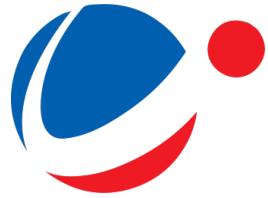
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SOCIETY PART - 1

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SALIENT FEATURES OF INDIAN SOCIETY

Student Notes:

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1. Introduction

- Indian society is an exemplification of **multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-ideological** constructs, which co-exist, at once striving to strike harmony and also to retain its individuality.
- Based on the generous concept of **Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam** (the world is one family), Indian society possess a great cultural heritage. During the course of its evolution, it has accommodated and integrated many communities and their ways of life from time to time.

2. Characteristics of Indian Society

- **Multi-ethnic society**- Indian society is multi-ethnic in nature due to co-existence of wide variety of racial groups in India. India is home to almost all the racial profiles prevalent in the world,
- **Multilingual society**- Across the length and breadth of the country, more than 1600 languages are spoken. Among them the major languages are Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Bengali etc.
- **Multi-class society**- Indian society is segmented into multiple classes. This division can be on the basis of birth as well as financial and social achievements during one's lifetime.
- **Patriarchal society**- Indian society is largely a patriarchal society where men tend to enjoy greater status than women. However, some tribal societies are matrilineal societies where women have the dominant decision-making power.
- **Unity in diversity**- This is an inherent feature of Indian society. Diversity in India exists at various levels in different forms. However, beneath this diversity, there is fundamental unity in social institutions and practices.
- **Co-existence of traditionalism and modernity**- Traditionalism is upholding or maintenance of core values. Whereas modernity refers to questioning the tradition and moving towards rational thinking, social, scientific and technological progress. Due to the spread of education and technological advances, modern thinking among Indians has increased. However, the family life is still bound by traditional value and belief systems.
- **Balance between spiritualism and materialism**- Spiritualism's main focus is to promote an individual's experience with God. Whereas materialism is a tendency to consider material possessions and physical comfort as more important than spiritual values. Indian society is largely possessing spiritual orientations. However due to increased westernisation, materialistic tendencies have also become quite visible.
- **Balance between Individualism and collectivism**- Individualism is a moral, political or social outlook that stresses human independence, self-reliance and liberty. Whereas collectivism is the practice of giving a group priority over each individual in it. There exists a fine balance between them in Indian society.
- **Blood and kinship ties**- Blood relations and kinship ties enjoy a stronghold over other social relationships. They continue to govern the political and economic spheres of life.

3. Salient Features of Indian Society

3.1. Caste System

Caste can be defined as hereditary endogamous group, having a common name, common traditional occupation, common culture, relatively rigid in matters of mobility, distinctiveness of status and forming a single homogenous community. The caste system in India is mainly associated with Hinduism and has governed the Hindu society for thousands of years.

3.1.1. Features of the Caste system

Some of the features of caste system in India include the following:

- **Segmental division of society:** It means that social stratification is largely based on caste.

Membership to a caste group is acquired by birth, on the basis of which people are ranked in relative to other caste groups.

- **Hierarchy:** It indicates that various castes are categorized according to their purity and impurity of occupations. Just like a ladder, castes are ranked from higher to lower positions. Pure caste is ranked at the top and impure is ranked at the bottom.

- **Civil and religious disabilities:** These comprise of restrictions based on contact, dress, speech, rituals etc. and are placed on every caste group. It was done in order to maintain purity of specific caste groups. Example, lower caste groups had no access to wells, they were restricted from entering temples etc.

- **Endogamy:** Members of a particular caste have to marry within their caste only. Inter-caste marriages are prohibited. However, in urban areas, the phenomenon of inter-caste marriage is increasing.

- **Untouchability:** It is the practice of ostracizing a group by segregating them from the mainstream by social custom. Untouchability was a corollary of the caste system, wherein the untouchables (those belonging to the lowest caste groups) were deemed impure and polluted.

- **Manual scavenging:** Manual scavenging eventually became a caste-based occupation, which involves the removal of untreated human excreta from bucket toilets or pit latrines. It has been officially abolished by the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act 2013.

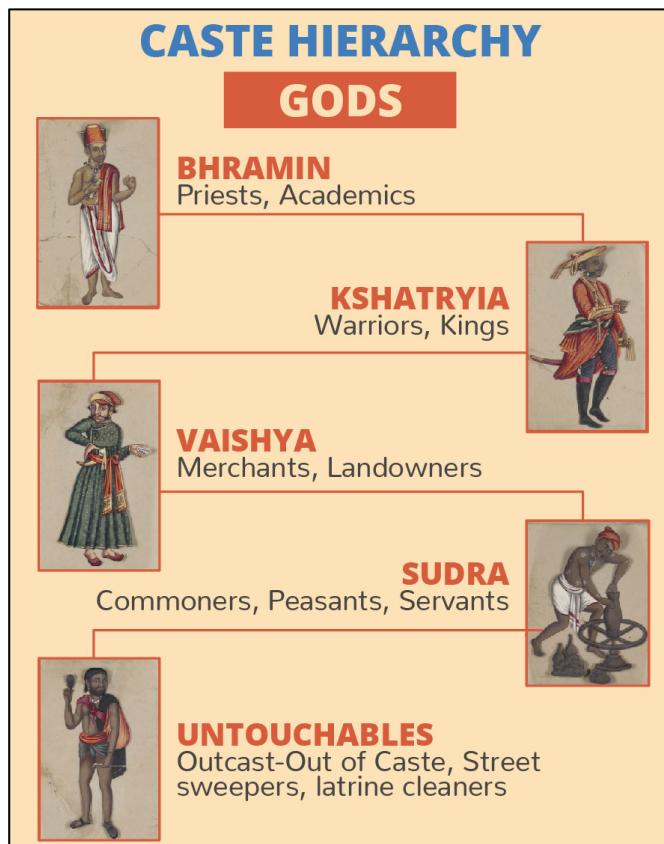
- **Caste based violence in India:** Increasing trend of caste-based violence are related to instances of inter-caste marriage and assertion of basic rights by Dalits including land rights, freedom of expression, access to justice, access to education etc. e.g. A group of Dalits were attacked in Una, Gujarat when they had participated in the movement for demand of land ownership for the Dalits.

- **Policy of caste based reservation:** The system of caste-based reservation in India comprises of a series of affirmative action measures, such as reserving access to seats in the various legislatures, to government jobs, and to enrollment in higher educational institutions. E.g. Scheduled Caste groups are given 15% reservation in government services and educational institutions.

3.1.2. Transformation of the Caste system

The traditional caste system was based on purity and pollution. It included the necessary aspects like- hierarchy, separation of contact and occupational division of labour. However, due to various factors, this traditional structure of caste system has been witnessed changes over the last few decades.

Student Notes:



- **Sanskritisation:** Sanskritisation as a process of change is the mobility concerned with positional change in the caste system. By changing the customs and rituals such as by adopting vegetarianism and teetotalism, people belonging to the low castes are claiming a 'higher' position in the caste hierarchy.
- **Westernisation:** Due to changes in the spheres of education, food habits, dressing sense, style of eating, manners etc., westernization has brought occupational changes cutting across the caste barriers.
- **Modernisation:** It is a process which primarily relies on scientific outlook, rational attitudes, high social mobility, mass mobilisation and specialisation in work. It has made caste system more flexible. For instances, in the urban areas, castes are gradually becoming classes. The emergence of middle class with a rational outlook and goal orientation is a testimony to the fact.
- **Industrialisation and urbanisation:** With the growth of industrial towns and cities, migration has spiraled up. Unlike the source regions, destination areas witness fewer adherences to caste rules.
- **Role of state-** It includes various steps taken by the state such as affirmative action, Universal Adult Franchise, land reforms and Mandal Commission.

As a result of the above factors, the **caste system** has evolved in the following ways-

- **Trends for inter-caste marriage:** Purity of blood was one of the main aims of the caste system. As a result, inter-caste marriages were socially forbidden. Due to economic and social necessities, inter-caste marriages on western lines are being performed at increased frequency
- **Challenge to orthodoxy:** Orthodox practices of the caste system such as child marriage, ban on widow re-marriage, ban on conversion, insensitiveness of superior class towards the low caste people are being challenged in the wake of urbanization.
- **New food habits:** Due to frequent mixing of the people at meetings, conferences, seminars etc., food habits have changed. Moreover, people have adapted to new social norms such as eating at the same table, accepting food prepared by low caste people without any reservations etc.
- **Changes in occupation:** Occupational mobility has become the new feature. Leaving behind their traditional roles, Brahmins have become traders whereas Vaishyas have joined teaching and so on.
- **Improvement in the position of lower caste:** Due to steps initiated by the government, position of lower castes has improved economically as well as socially.

3.1.3. Weakening and Strengthening of Caste System- A Paradox

Recent times show a paradoxical situation- as on the one hand, caste system has weakened, on the other, caste-based identities have strengthened due to political mobilization.

Factors leading to weakening of caste system

- **Change in hierarchical structure:** Caste hierarchy based on purity and pollution has weakened because of secularization. Additionally, wealth is replacing birth as the basis of social prestige.
- **Breakdown of Jajmani system:** Jajmani system involved exchange of goods and services, with each jati contributing its share based on occupational specialty. However, it is dissipating due to traditional breakdown of occupation and industrialization.
- **Disruption of traditionally ordained occupational system:** Due to globalization and rise of services sector.
- **Anonymous urban life:** With increasing migration, city life is becoming anonymous where caste identities of co-habitants is seldom known.

- **Caste and politics:** They both are closely linked to each other. In fact, the link has led to an empowerment among the lower castes since they ventilate their feelings through elections and power lobby. Dalit politics is one such example, where Dalits are trying to assert their identities and have become successful in capturing power in various states.
- **Democratic decentralisation:** The reservation provided in the Panchayati Raj system has given the opportunity for the lower castes to empower themselves.
- **Legislative measures:** A variety of social legislations have been introduced in the post-independence era which aim to safeguard the interests of the down-trodden, to eradicate untouchability and to facilitate the social and economic development of the depressed castes. For instance, Untouchability (offences) Act, 1955 provided for punishment against the practice of untouchability.
- **Caste based affirmative actions:** Provision of caste-based reservation in education and jobs has strengthened the caste identities. For example, recent demand of OBC status by some caste groups.
- **Collective mobilization:** Caste groups are also mobilizing and collectively demanding equality and non-discrimination in the wake of incidents of atrocities on Dalits.
- **“Dominant caste” phenomenon:** Landowning classes have also come to wield political power in some states due to sheer numbers, like in UP and Bihar.

Some experts have called this phenomenon as “casteism”. It is good in short term, because it links the modern democracy with the masses through caste based political mobilization and participation. However, it may threaten emergence of single national identity.

Dalit Capitalism

The term ‘Dalit capitalism’ was coined by a prominent activist and scholar, **Chandra Bhan Prasad** during the early 21st century, which led way to a new era of Dalit upsurges in corporate sectors.

Issues faced by Dalit entrepreneurs-

- Majority of business transactions in India sustain on **trust-based agreements**, due to weak contract enforcement. Thus, having same roots or lineage play an important role in scoring an agreement. Dalits being a recent introduction, find it **difficult to put their roots down**.
- Lack of access to **existing business network** on the lines of other communities like the Marwari's have strong business network.
- Lack of **funding for setting new enterprise**, as they have very low security to get loans.
- **Social discrimination** discourages dalits to do something on their own.

3.1.4. Way Forward

There should efforts to further **promote participation of people in free market**. Increased prosperity would further dilute the caste identities. Also, there is a need to **strengthen Section 123 of RPA 1951**, to prevent parties from invoking votes solely on caste grounds. The **reservation system** should be rationalized to target benefits only to deserving candidates so as to usher in egalitarian society.

3.2. Religious Pluralism

3.2.1. Different Religious Groups in India

India is a secular country comprising various religions of the world, which are further subdivided into several sects and cults. Religion in India is characterized by a diversity of religious beliefs and practices. The Indian subcontinent is the birthplace of four world religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism.

Further, variants of Hinduism such as Vaishnavism, Shaivism, etc. is practiced. Even in Islam, multiple variants such as Shia, Sunni tenets are followed. Animistic and naturistic religions are also followed by tribal groups. Thus, there is a plurality of multiple religions and each religion has individual salient tenets and associated festivals and customs.

3.2.2. Multi-culturalism and Pluralism

Student Notes:

In the light of multi-cultural society of India, we say that **multi-culturalism** and **pluralism** are the two sides of a coin of “unity in diversity”

Let us first see briefly the similarities and differences between pluralism and multiculturalism:

Pluralism		Multiculturalism
Public Sphere	Individuals are treated as equals in a common (neutral) public sphere.	The public sphere is not culturally neutral. Public sphere is an arena for cultural negotiation. No group should dominate in a way that excludes other cultural forms.
Cultural Diversity	Different cultures <i>allowed</i> in a separate cultural sphere, but society has no obligation to acknowledge or support alternative cultural forms. Thus, pluralism also allows for the dissolution of cultural formations.	Different cultures are <i>encouraged</i> . Individuals are considered part of collectivities that provide meaning to their lives. Multiculturalism seeks ways to support these collectivities.
Dominant Principles	1. equality of opportunity 2. freedom of association	1. affiliation 2. cultural recognition

A lot has been said about the success of multiculturalism in India. We have vibrant communities of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Jains, Buddhists, Parsis etc. that have blended well and enhanced the progress of India. We are one of the most diverse countries in the world in terms of cultural, religious and linguistic diversity. And this diversity owes mainly to our vast geographical extent and successive waves of migration from all over the world.

Striking a balance between unity and diversity or managing unity in such diverse socio-cultural situations, is always a challenge for a nation. Pluralism and multiculturalism are two ways to manage this conundrum simultaneously.

In India, pluralism describes the reality of cultural diversity. It attempts to create a society in which the best of all inputs continue to integrate. It allows for many different groupings but does not try to impose a uniform status on all of them.

Our multiculturalism, on the other hand, means showing respect and tolerance to other cultures and faith. It holds that all minority values must have equal status to those of the majority. It also allows assertion of different identities in every sphere of life. The Indian constitution also provides fundamental rights for the preservation of this variety.

This assertion of variety can be seen in linguistic reorganization of states, political representation, rise in demand for minority rights, indigenous rights, anti-hindi movements etc. These assertions present a new way of assimilation where all communities find their respective place in making of nation-state. No community is left out in creating a rainbow nation. Multiculturalism and pluralism provides a new paradigm for stability which increases cohesiveness and integrity of nation.

Thus, from the above discussion we can say that pluralism is the more general term for any kind of plurality while the multiculturalism is the proactive application of plurality to maintain and harmonize the diversity and heterogeneity in society in general and nation-state in particular.

3.3. Kinship, Marriage and Family

3.3.1. Kinship

Kinship system refers to a set of persons recognized as relatives either by virtue of a blood relationship or by virtue of a marriage relationship. According to the Dictionary of Anthropology, kinship system includes society recognized relationships based on supposed as well as well actual genealogical ties. These relationships are the result of social interaction and are recognized by society.

Kinship system represents one of the basic social institutions. Kinship is universal and, in most societies, plays a significant role in the socialisation of individuals and the maintenance of group solidarity. It is supremely important in the primitive societies and extends its influence on almost all their activities - social, economic, political, religious, etc.

Student Notes:

Types of Kinship

- **Affinal Kinship:** The bond of marriage is called 'affinal' kinship. When a person marries, he establishes relationship not only with the girl whom he marries but also with a number of other people in the girl's family. Moreover, it is not only the person marrying who gets bound to the family members of the girl but his family members also get bound to the family members of the girl. Thus, a host of relations are created as soon as a marriage takes place.
- **Consanguineous Kinship:** The bond of blood is called consanguineous kinship. The consanguineous kin are related through blood whereas the affinal kin are related through marriage. The bond between parents and their children and that between parents and their children and that between parents and their children and that between siblings is consanguineous kinship.

Regional differences regarding kinship systems and marriage in North and South India

- **North India:** In North India, there are mostly patrilineal groups, with descent traced in the male line from father to son. Members of a patri-lineage cooperate in ritual and economic activities. Caste endogamy is strictly practiced. Further, marriage is prohibited within the same gotra or clan and village exogamy is commonly preferred. Thus, marriage prohibitions tend to bar marriage over a wide area in terms of kinship as well as space.
- **South India:** The Southern zone presents a very complicated pattern of kinship system and family organization. While there is dominance of patrilineal and patrilocal system, but simultaneously matrilineal (descent from maternal line) and matrilocal systems also exist. Rules of marriage also vary in South India.

3.3.2. Marriage

Marriage is an important social institution. It is a relationship, which is socially approved and sanctioned by custom and law. It is also a set of cultural mechanisms which ensure the continuation of the family. It is more or less a universal social institution in India.

Structural and functional changes in the marriage system

The marriage system had undergone radical changes especially after independence. Even though the basic religious beliefs associated with marriage have not crumbled down, many of the practices, customs, and forms have changed. The recent changes in the marriage system are as follows:

- **Changes in the aim and purpose of marriage:** In traditional societies the primary objective of marriage is 'dharma' or duty; especially among Hindus. But today the modern objective of marriage is more related to 'life-long companionship' between husband and wife.
- **Changes in the form of marriage:** Traditional forms of marriages like polygamy, polygyny are legally prohibited in India. Nowadays, mostly monogamous marriages are practiced.
- **Change in the age of marriage:** According to legal standards, the marriageable age for boy and girl stands at 21 and 18 respectively. Average age of marriage has gone up and pre-puberty marriages have given place to post-puberty marriages.
- **Increase in divorce and desertion rates:** Relaxed legislative provisions for divorce have virtually affected the stability of the marriage, particularly in the urban areas. . It is mainly due to economic prosperity and internet connectivity. Internet has exposed people to the different social trends prevalent across the world and has revolutionized the institution in an otherwise conservative Indian society.

- **Live in relationships:** They are on a steady growth rate in India especially among the youth in metropolitan cities. The institution also has legal recognition as a three-judge bench of SC in 2010 observed that a man and a woman living together without marriage cannot be construed as an offence and held that living together is a Right to Life and Liberty (Article 21). SC has also acknowledged that children born out of such relations are legitimate and have property rights of their parents under Section 16 of Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.

Student Notes:

3.3.3. Family in Indian Society

The family is the basic unit of society. It is the first and the most immediate social environment to which a child is exposed. It is in the family a child learns language, the behavioral Patterns and social norms in his childhood.

In some way or the other the family is a universal group. It exists in tribal, rural and urban communities and among the followers of all religious and cultures. It provides the most enduring relationship in one form or other.

3.3.3.1. Characteristics of Family

- Family is a basic, definite and enduring group.
- Family is formed by the relatively durable companionship of husband, wife who procreate children.
- Family may be limited to husband, wife or only the father and his children or only the mother and her children.
- Family is generally smaller in size compared to other social groups, organizations and associations.
- Family can also be large in size in which persons belonging to several generations may live together.

3.3.3.2. Functions of the Family

- **Primary function-** Some of the functions of family are basic to its continued existence.
 - Production and rearing of the child
 - Provision of home
 - Instrument of culture transmission
 - Agent of socialization
 - Status ascribing function
 - Agency of social control
- **Secondary function**
 - **Economic functions:** With economic advancements, family has become more consuming unit than a producing one. Members are engaged in earning wages for ensuring socio-economic well-being of the family.
 - **Educational functions:** Family provides the basis for the child's formal learning. In spite of great changes, the family still gives the child his basic training in the social attitudes and habits important to adult participation in social life
 - **Religious functions:** Family is a center for the religious training of the children. The children learn from their parents' various religious virtues.
 - **Recreational functions:** Family provides the opportunities to parents and children for engaging in various recreational activities such as playing indoor games, dancing, singing, reading etc.

TYPES OF FAMILY



ON THE BASIS OF RESIDENCE:

- **Patrilocal family:** The family in which after marriage wife comes to reside in the family of her husband is known as patrilocal family. The patrilocal family is also patriarchal and patrilineal in nature.
- **Matrilocal family:** The family in which after marriage husband comes to reside in the family of her wife is known as matrilocal family. It is just opposite of patrilocal family. This type of family is also Matriarchal and Matrilineal in nature.
- **Bilocal family:** In this type of family after marriage the married couple change their residence alternatively. Sometimes wife joins in her husband's house while at some other times husband resides in wife's house. That is why this type of family is also known as family of changing residence.
- **Neolocal family:** After marriage when newly married couple establish a new family independent of their parents and settled at a new place this type of family is known as neo-local family.



ON THE BASIS OF AUTHORITY:

- **Patriarchal Family:** The family in which all the power remains in the hands of patriarch or father is known as patriarchal family. In other words, in this type of family power or authority is vested in the hands of eldest male member of the family who is supposed to be the father. He exercises absolute power or authority over the other members of family. He owns family property. After his death authority transferred to the eldest son of family. In this family descent is known through father line. In this type of family wife after marriage come to reside in his husband's house. Joint family system among the Hindus is a fine example of patriarchal family.
- **Matriarchal family:** This type of family is just opposite of patriarchal family. In this family power or authority rests on the eldest female member of the family especially the wife or mother. She enjoys absolute power or authority over other members of the family. She owns all the family property. In this family descent is known through the mother. Headship is transferred from mother to the eldest daughter. Husband remains subordinate to his wife in a matriarchal family. This type of family is found among the Nayars of Kerala & among the Garo and Khasi tribes of Assam.



ON THE BASIS OF MARRIAGE:

- **Polygamous families** may be described as families in which either spouse is allowed to have more than one spouse simultaneously.
- **Monogamous families** are those families in which the marriage is limited to one spouse.



ON THE BASIS OF SIZE AND STRUCTURE:

- **Nuclear Family:** A nuclear family is a family which consists of husband, wife & their unmarried children. The size of nuclear family is very small. It is an autonomous unit. There is no control of the elders because newlyweds create a separate residence for themselves which is independent of elders. It is also known as primary family.
- **Joint or Extended Family:** It includes members of three to four generations. It is an extension of parent child relationship. This family is based on close blood ties. It is like the joint family of Hindu Society. The eldest male member is the head of the family. It is characterized by common residence, common kitchen, commensality, sharing of property, performance of ritual bonds, reciprocal obligations and sentiments. Extended family consists of father, mother, their sons and their wife, unmarried daughters, grandchildren, grandfather, grandmother, uncles, aunts, their children and so on. This type of family found to exist in rural community or agrarian economy



ON THE BASIS OF DESCENT:

- **Patrilineal family:** The family in which descent or ancestry is determined through father line and continues through father it is known as patrilineal family. The property and family name is also inherited through father line. The patrilineal family is also patrilocal and patriarchal in nature.
- **Matrilineal family:** Matrilineal family is just opposite of the patrilineal family. The family in which descent is determined through mother line or continues through mother it is known as Matrilineal family. The property and family name is also inherited through mother line. This right transferred from mother to daughter. A woman is the ancestor of family. The Matrilineal family is Matrilocal and Matriarchal in nature. This type of family found among the Nayars of Kerala and among tribals like Garos and Khasis.

3.3.3.3. Dysfunctions of the Family

Student Notes:

- **Self-alienation-** In joint families, one doesn't behave as per one's own wishes. Rather, the behaviour is decided as per the expected norms of the joint family. As a result, one gets detached from one's own self.
 - **Lack of privacy-** Given the shared nature of living, privacy is usually absent in a family.
 - **Lack of individualism-** In a joint family, collective interest is pursued instead of any individual's interest.
- **Reproduction of social labour-** In a family, one can never question the authority in the family.
- **Disguised unemployment-** All the members of a family enter the same profession and business, even if there is no additional requirement.
- **Low status of women-** Age and sex are the ordering principle in a joint family.
- **High fertility rate-** Given the capacity of care and economy, a greater number of children can be reared in a joint family as compared to nuclear family.

3.3.3.4. Structural and functional changes in the Indian family system

With the advent of industrial civilization with modern technology the structure and functions of the family fatedly changed. Today most of the traditional activities of the family were transferred to outside agencies; this further weakening the bonds that in the past kept the family together. There occurred a reduction in the educational, recreational, religious and protective functions of the family which have been more or less taken over by various institutions and agencies created for that purpose.

Some of the major changes in the Indian family system are discussed below:

- **Changes in family:** Family which was a principal unit of production has been transformed in the consumption unit. Instead of all members working together in an integrated economic enterprise, a few male members go out of the home to earn the family's living. These affected family relations.
- **Factory employment:** It has freed young adults from direct dependence upon their families. This functional independence of the youngsters has weakened the authority of the head of the household over those earning members. In many cities even women too joined men in working outside the families on salary basis.
- **Influence of urbanization:** Various sociologists have revealed that the city life is more favorable to small nuclear families than to big joint families. Thus, urban living weakens joint family pattern and strengthens nuclear family patterns.
- **Legislative measures:** Prohibition of early marriage and fixing the minimum age of marriage by the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, and the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 have lengthened the period of education. Even other legislations such as the Widow Remarriage Act, 1856, Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, Hindu Succession Act, 1956, all have modified interpersonal relations within the family, the composition of the family and the stability of the joint family.
- **Changes in marriage system:** Changes in the age of marriage, freedom in mate-selection and change in the attitude towards marriage has diminished marriage is not very much considered a religious affair but only a social ceremony. Modern marriage does not symbolize the superior authority of the family head over other members.
- **Influence of western values:** Values relating to modern science, rationalism, individualism, equality, free life, democracy, freedom of women etc. have exerted a tremendous change on the joint family system in India.
- **Changes in the position of women:** Main factor causing changes in the position of women in our society lie in her changing economic role. New economic role provided a new position in society and especially with respect to men.

3.3.3.5. Current Status

Student Notes:

Over the years, various sociologists have affirmed in their studies that the rise of nuclear families — consisting of a couple and their unmarried children — is consistent with rapid urbanization.

According to the 2001 census, out of 19.31 crore households, 9.98 crore or 51.7% were nuclear households. In the 2011 census, the share grew to 52.1% — 12.97 crore nuclear out of 24.88 crore households. However, there is the decline in the proportional share of nuclear households in urban areas. From 54.3% of the urban households of 2001, nuclear families have fallen to 52.3% of all urban households. In contrast, in rural areas, the share of nuclear families has risen from 50.7% to 52.1%.

Joint families, meanwhile, fell substantially from 19.1% (3.69 crore) to 16.1% (4 crore) across India. In rural areas, the dip was sharper — from 20.1% to 16.8% — than in urban India where it fell from 16.5% to 14.6%. Thus, the declining share of urban nuclear families is attributed to increased migration as well as lack of housing.

3.4. Diversity in India

India is a plural society both in letter and spirit. It is rightly characterized by its unity and diversity. A grand synthesis of cultures, religions and languages of the people belonging to different castes and communities has upheld its unity and cohesiveness despite multiple foreign invasions.

National unity and integrity have been maintained even through sharp economic and social inequalities have obstructed the emergence of egalitarian social relations. It is this synthesis which has made India a unique mosaic of cultures. Thus, India presents seemingly multicultural situation within in the framework of a single integrated cultural whole.

The term ‘diversity’ emphasizes differences rather than inequalities. It means collective differences, that is, differences which mark off one group of people from another. These differences may be of any sort: biological, religious, linguistic etc. Thus, diversity means variety of races, of religions, of languages, of castes and of cultures.

Unity means integration. It is a social psychological condition. It connotes a sense of one-ness, a sense of we-ness. It stands for the bonds, which hold the members of a society together.

Unity in diversity essentially means “unity without uniformity” and “diversity without fragmentation”. It is based on the notion that diversity enriches human interaction.

When we say that India is a nation of great cultural diversity, we mean that there are many different types of social groups and communities living here. These are communities defined by cultural markers such as language, religion, sect, race or caste.

3.4.1. Various forms of diversity in India

- **Religious diversity:** India is a land of multiple religions. Apart from the tribal societies, many of whom still live in the pre-religious state of animism and magic, the Indian population consists of the Hindus (82.41%), Muslims (11.6%), Christians (2.32%), Sikhs (1.99%), Buddhists (0.77%) and Jains (0.41%). The Hindus themselves are divided into several sects such as Vaishnavas, Shaivites, Shaktas, Smartas etc. Similarly, the Muslims are divided into sects such as Shias, Sunnis, Ahmadis etc.
- **Linguistic diversity:** Languages spoken in India belong to several language families, the major ones being the Indo-Aryan languages spoken by 75% of Indians and the Dravidian languages spoken by 20% of Indians. Other languages belong to the Austroasiatic, Sino-Tibetan, Tai-Kadai, and a few other minor language families and isolates. India has the world's second highest number of languages, after Papua New Guinea.

- **Racial diversity:** 1931 census classified India's racial diversity in the following groups- The Negrito, The Proto-Australoid, The Mongoloid, The Mediterranean, The Western Brachycephals and the Nordic. Representatives of all the three major races of the world, namely Caucasoid, Mongoloid, and Negroid, are found in the country.
- **Caste diversity:** India is a country of castes. The term caste has been used to refer to both varna as well as jati. Varna is the four-fold division of society according to functional differentiation. Thus, the four varnas include Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras and an outcaste group. Whereas Jati refers to a hereditary endogamous status group practicing a specific traditional occupation. There are more than 3000 jatis and there is no one all India system of ranking them in order and status. The jati system is not static and there is mobility in the system, through which jatis have changed their position over years. This system of upward mobility has been termed as "Sanskritization" by M. N. Srinivas.
- **Cultural diversity:** Cultural patterns reflect regional variations. Because of population diversity, there is immense variety in Indian culture as it is a blend of various cultures. Different religion, castes, regions follow their own tradition and culture. Thus, there is variation in art, architecture, dance forms, theatre forms, music etc.
- **Geographical diversity:** Spanning across an area of 3.28 million square kilometer, India is a vast country with great diversity of physical features like dry deserts, evergreen forests, lofty mountains, perennial and non-perennial river systems, long coasts and fertile plains.



In addition to the above described major forms of diversity, India also has diversity of many other types like that of settlement patterns - tribal, rural, urban; marriage and kinship patterns along religious and regional lines and so on.

3.4.2. Factors Leading to Unity Amidst Diversity in India

Student Notes:

- **Constitutional identity:** The entire country is governed by one single Constitution. Even, most of the states follow a generalised scheme of 3-tier government structure, thus imparting uniformity in national governance framework. Further, the Constitution guarantees certain fundamental rights to all citizens regardless of their age, gender, class, caste, religion, etc.
- **Religious co-existence:** Religion tolerance is the unique feature of religions in India due to which multiple religions co-exist in India. Freedom of religion and religious practice is guaranteed by the Constitution itself. Moreover, there is no state religion and all religions are given equal preference by the state.
- **Inter-State mobility:** The Constitution guarantees freedom to move throughout the territory of India under Article 19 (1) (d), thus promoting a sense of unity and brotherhood among the masses.
 - Other factors such as uniform pattern of law, penal code, administrative works (e.g. All India services) too lead to uniformity in the criminal justice system, policy implementation etc.
- **Economic integration:** The Constitution of India secures the freedom of Trade, Commerce and Intercourse within the Territory of India under Article 301. Further, the Goods and Service Tax (GST) have paved way for 'one country, one tax, one national market', thus facilitating unity among different regions.
- **Institution of pilgrimage and religious practices:** In India, religion and spirituality have great significance. From Badrinath and Kedarnath in the north to Rameshwaram in the south, Jagannath Puri in the east to Dwaraka in the west the religious shrines and holy rivers are spread throughout the length and breadth of the country. Closely related to them is the age-old culture of pilgrimage, which has always moved people to various parts of the country and fostered in them a sense of geo-cultural unity.
- **Fairs and festivals:** They also act as integrating factors as people from all parts of the country celebrate them as per their own local customs. E.g. Diwali is celebrated throughout by Hindus in the country, similarly Id and Christmas are celebrated by Muslims and Christians, respectively. Celebration of inter-religious festivals is also seen in India.
- **Climatic integration via monsoon:** The flora and fauna in the entire Indian subcontinent, agricultural practices, life of people, including their festivities revolve around the monsoon season in India.
- **Sports and Cinema:** These are followed by millions in the country, thus, acting as a binding force across the length and breadth of India.

3.4.3. Factors that threaten India's unity

- **Regionalism:** Regionalism tends to highlight interests of a particular region/regions over national interests. It can also adversely impact national integration. Law and order situation is hampered due to regional demands and ensuing agitation.
- **Divisive politics:** Sometimes, ascriptive identities such as caste, religion etc. are evoked by politicians in order to garner votes. This type of divisive politics can result in violence, feeling of mistrust and suspicion among minorities.
- **Development imbalance:** Uneven pattern of socio-economic development, inadequate economic policies and consequent economic disparities can lead to backwardness of a region. Consequently, this can result in violence, kickstart waves of migration and even accelerate demands of separatism. For instance, due to economic backwardness of the North East region, several instances of separatist demands and secessionist tendencies have sprung up in the region.
- **Ethnic differentiation and nativism:** Ethnic differentiation has often led to clashes between different ethnic groups especially due to factors such as job competition, limited resources, threat to identity etc. E.g. frequent clashes between Bodos and Bengali speaking Muslims in

Assam. This has been accentuated by son of the soil doctrine, which ties people to their place of birth and confers some benefits, rights, roles and responsibilities on them, which may not apply to others.

- **Geographical isolation:** Geographical isolation too can lead to identity issues and separatist demands. The North-East is geographically isolated from the rest of the country as it is connected with the rest of the country by a narrow corridor i.e. the Siliguri corridor (Chicken's neck). The region has inadequate infrastructure, is more backward economically as compared to the rest of the country. As a result, it has witnessed several instances of separatism and cross-border terrorism, among others.
- **Inter-religious conflicts:** Inter-religious conflicts not only hamper relations between two communities by spreading fear and mistrust but also hinder the secular fabric of the country.
- **Inter-state conflicts:** This can lead emergence of feelings related to regionalism. It can also affect trade and communications between conflicting states. For instance, Cauvery river dispute between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.
- **Influence of external factors:** Sometimes external factors such as foreign organizations, terrorist groups, extremist groups can incite violence and sow feelings of separatism. E.g. Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has been accused of supporting and training mujahideen to fight in Jammu and Kashmir and sow separatist tendencies among resident groups.

In-spite of the challenges posed by diversity, there can be no doubt on the role played by socio-cultural diversity in sustaining and developing Indian society.

3.4.4. Way Forward

Problem is not of diversity per se, but the handling of diversity in India society. The problems of regionalism, communalism, ethnic conflicts etc. have arisen because the fruits of development haven't been distributed equally or the cultures of some groups haven't been accorded due recognition.

Hence, Constitution and its values must form guiding principles of our society. Any society which has tried to homogenize itself, has witnessed stagnation in due-course and ultimately decline. The most important example is this case is of Pakistan which tried to impose culture on East-Pakistan ultimately leading to creation of Bangladesh.

4. Previous Year UPSC GS Mains Questions

1. The life cycle of a joint family depends on economic factors rather than social values. Discuss.
2. Describe any four cultural elements of diversity in India and rate their relative significance in building a national identity.
3. In the context of the diversity of India, can it be said that the regions form cultural units rather than the States? Give reasons with examples for your view point.
4. The spirit of tolerance and love is not only an interesting feature of Indian society from very early times, but it is also playing an important part at the present. Elaborate.
5. "Caste system is assuming new identities and associational forms. Hence, caste system cannot be eradicated in India." Comment.
6. Has the formation of linguistic States strengthened the cause of Indian Unity?
7. Debate the issue of whether and how contemporary movements for assertion of Dalit identity work towards annihilation of caste.

5. Vision IAS GS Mains Test Series Questions

Student Notes:

1. *Caste in India has maintained its political significance despite dilution of its social character. Discuss with relevant examples.*

Approach:

- Introduce by giving a brief account of caste and its basis in India.
- With the help of appropriate examples, explain in brief how there has been dilution of its social character.
- Also, explain how its political significance is maintained.
- Conclude on the basis of the above points.

Answer:

Caste is a social institution in India in which people are ranked in a status hierarchy, shaping their identity, experiences, relations with others, as well as their access to resources and opportunities. Several developments since independence have reduced the importance of caste as a basis of power and status in the Indian society. These include affirmative state policies and acts that diluted the social character of caste, such as:

- The **concept of purity and pollution has been diluted** due to the implementation of strict laws to punish caste discrimination.
- Further, **growing urbanisation** has undermined caste. The relative anonymity of an individual's identity in a city makes it difficult for rules of purity and pollution to be observed and enforced in the public sphere.
- There has been **more inter-mingling amongst castes** such as in dining behaviour, where unlike earlier, now people from different castes eat together in social functions such as marriages etc. The number of inter-caste marriages have also increased. **Modern modes of transportation and communication** have increased the volume of interaction between members of various caste groups.
- The **nature of economic relationships has transformed** fundamentally wherein caste association does not hold as much importance in a modern market based economy. The hereditary nature of occupation is less relevant today. Further, positive discrimination by the state has led to upward economic mobility amongst lower castes directly affecting their social status positively.

Despite the dilution of caste system in social sphere, it has **maintained its political significance** i.e.

- Caste plays a very important role in elections and voting. It is being seen that the **political parties select their candidates on the basis of caste composition** in the constituency. The voting in elections and mobilization of political support from top to bottom moves on the caste lines.
- Caste has **influenced the policy-making of the government**, for example the policy of reservation in favour of certain castes. Indian politics changed dramatically after the report of Mandal commission and since then there has been emergence of explicitly caste-based political parties.
- Caste also functions as a **pressure group** in politics. Political bargaining is also done on the caste lines. Caste organizations have emerged to organize caste members for collective bargaining with each other.

Despite the retention of the political significance of caste in India, some progressive trends are being witnessed. People have started looking beyond caste identity and are considering parameters like socio-economic development, education & criminal background of candidate etc. as criteria while voting. There seems to be a transition from an attempt to make casteless society but to end caste-based discriminations.

2. *It can be argued that caste like social stratification is a feature present across religious distinctions in India. Discuss.*

Student Notes:

Approach:

- Introduce by defining the caste system.
- Mention the features of the caste system as practiced in Hinduism.
- Cite relevant evidence of the existence of caste or caste-like features in other major religions of India.
- Conclude on the basis of the above analysis.

Answer:

The caste system is a system of hierarchically arranged endogamous social groups according to the notion of ‘purity’ and ‘pollution’ of the occupation which is hereditarily fixed in India. The key notion of caste often goes beyond the strict framework of Hinduism, in which it originated, to influence the social structures of other religious groups.

There are studies that highlight the presence of caste-like features in other religions to varying degrees.

Islam:

Caste in Islam has been seen from two viewpoints:

- One view holds that the social organization amongst Muslims exists on lines similar to Hindus. Studies among the Muslims of UP show 4 clear caste divisions namely, Ashraf, Muslim Rajputs, clean occupational castes, and unclean castes (Arzals).
- The other view is that not caste but caste-like features exist among the Muslims in India. E.g. features like endogamy and status mobility (among Siddiqui Sheikhs of Allahabad), hierarchy, purity & pollution (from the clean/unclean castes) and even gotra (among the Meo Muslims of Rajasthan and Haryana).
- Even among the converted Muslims, a two-tier hierarchy exists. The Sharif Jat Muslims (belong to higher levels in the caste hierarchy) and the Ajlaf Jats included Muslims (converts from the lower castes) don't remain in close social relations and do not inter-marry amongst each other.

Christianity:

Christians also have a hierarchy in their social organization.

- Syrian Christians in Kerala (converted Brahmin families who trace their origins to St. Thomas) also exhibit caste characteristics. They organize annual gatherings attended by prominent priests to proclaim the “artificially cultivated upper-caste identity and lineage”.
- The Indians baptized by the Christian missionaries have remained mostly in the same status they had before. Many untouchables who converted to Christianity are still treated as untouchables by other Christians.

Sikhs:

Sikhism rejected the caste system in principle.

- However, in practice, the Jats who adopted Sikhism usually act along traditional caste lines and marry within their caste boundaries. They don't give equal respect to Sikhs who belong to the lower levels of Indian hierarchy.
- The presence of castes like Arora, Khatri, Ramgarhia, Jat, Saini, Kamboh, etc. among Sikhs proves that the features of Hindu caste system have percolated Sikhism too.

- Service castes like Mazhabhi Sikhs still face discrimination based on caste within Sikhism.

Student Notes:

Buddhism

- As per the Sachar Commission report, 90% of the Buddhists in India belong to the Scheduled Caste, mostly belonging to the Mahar community in Maharashtra. While their status and standard of living have changed drastically after conversion, the practice of untouchability by other castes is still in place. For example, Bhambhi and Chambar caste of Maharashtra refuse to accept water and food from the Neo-Buddhists.
- Untouchable caste groups like Mon, Beda, and Garba among Himalayan Buddhists still faced restrictions on commensality and participation in village gatherings and ceremonies.

Jews

- The Jews of West India (called Bene Israel) had a different status from Jews of south India (Cochini Jews).
- Bene Israels practiced oil pressing and had a status similar to Hindu caste of Sonowar Telis, who were part of the Sudra status.
- The Baghdadi Jews consider themselves as the higher castes than the Bene Israels and therefore don't mingle with them and maintain minimal social relations.

While the caste groupings are less rigidly organized and there are limited rituals of purity and pollution in other religions as compared to Hinduism, caste does provide a structural basis to the Indian society. Its presence across major religions, although in varying degrees, does provide the framework in which people operate, and on which their acts and conduct depend.

- 3. *The present form of caste as an institution has been shaped both by developments during the colonial period as well as changes witnessed in independent India. Discuss.***

Approach:

- Give a brief overview of the origin of caste system and its evolution.
- Discuss the caste system prevailing during British rule and how it got shaped by it.
- Then briefly discuss the measures taken to improve upon it post-independence and how it got influenced.
- Suggest further measures that are needed.

Answer:

Caste is an institution uniquely associated with the Indian sub-continent. The English word 'caste' is actually a borrowing from the Portuguese casta, meaning pure breed. The word refers to a broad institutional arrangement that in Indian languages (beginning with the ancient Sanskrit) is referred to by two distinct terms, varna and jati. It is generally agreed , that the four Varna classification is roughly three thousand years old. However, the 'caste system' stood for different things in different time periods.,

The institution of caste as we know it today has been profoundly impacted by the British Colonial rule as well as developments since independence:

Changes during British rule/Colonial period

- The colonialists conducted methodical and, intensive **surveys and reports** on the 'customs and manners' of various tribes and castes all over the country so as to govern them effectively. The **1901 Census** sought to collect information on the

social hierarchy of caste this kind of direct attempt to count caste and to officially record caste status changed the institution itself. Before this, caste identities had been much more fluid and less rigid

- The land revenue settlements and related arrangements and laws served to give legal recognition to the customary (caste-based) rights of the upper castes.
- At the other end of the scale, towards the end of the colonial period, the administration also took an interest in the welfare of downtrodden castes, referred to as the 'depressed classes' at that time. For e.g. the Government of India Act of 1935 gave legal recognition to the lists or 'schedules' of castes and tribes marked out for special treatment by the state.

Caste considerations had inevitably played a role in the mass mobilizations of the nationalist movement. The dominant view in the nationalist movement was to treat caste as a social evil and as a colonial ploy to divide Indians.

Post-independence period

- After independence, the state was committed to the abolition of caste based inequality and explicitly enshrined this into the Constitution. The political promise of the constitution was accompanied by fast paced **economic changes**. Thus, without sufficient measures to promote equality in the economic sphere caste inequalities remained strong, caste based .
- The development activity of the state and the growth of private industry also affected caste indirectly through the speeding up and intensification of economic change. **Modern industry** created all kinds of new jobs for which there were no caste rules.
- **Urbanisation** and the conditions of collective living in the cities made it difficult for the caste-segregated patterns of social interaction
- to survive.
- Caste proved to be strongest in **cultural and domestic spheres**. Endogamy remained largely unaffected by modernization.
- The **democratic politics** in India is deeply conditioned by caste, thereby making caste considerations important in electoral politics. In fact, 1980s witnessed the emergence of caste based political parties.
- Reservation in jobs and education has contributed to caste consciousness and in fact strengthened caste based movements that seek reservation.

4. ***While democratic institutions in India have led to changes in the caste structure, these changes have at best led to only partial re-distributive outcomes for the backward castes. Discuss.***

Approach:

Introduce by defining the caste structure in brief. Then bring out the reasons which led to changes in caste structure while illustrating on the changes. Further, point out the positive and negative aspects of such changes and conclude accordingly.

Answer:

Caste as a social institution has existed historically and had been characterized by hierarchical relations between different social groups. However, this hierarchical nature of social order violates the trinity of liberty, equality and dignity enshrined in constitution and recognised in Ambedkar's words "one man one vote and one vote one value".

In Post-independence India, under the twin influence of affirmative policies for SC/ST's in legislature, government jobs and education along with the democratizing influence of universal adult franchise, it was expected to correct for historical injustices and give effect to the redistributive agenda of the state and thereby weakening the hierarchical foundation of caste on the social life of individuals.

The democratizing influence of universal adult franchise led to the rise of dominant castes in the agriculturally prosperous belts of north India which was followed by their capture of state power. It meant that some caste groups irrespective of their position in the caste hierarchy were able to wield influence and gain prominence and social recognition.

It was further followed by the rise of backward class movement in 1980's and 90's which gave rise to caste groups backed regional political parties like BSP, SP etc. in north India. These parties on the other hand were able to become vehicles of social mobilization and registering their presence in wielding power in the state.

The mandationalization of politics in India post 1990 has belied the expectation of social scientists that the developmental agenda of the state will wipe out primitive social institutions like caste, whereas others like M.N Srinivas have argued that under the aegis of a democratic state the vertical hierarchical nature of caste based social groups has been replaced by a horizontal arrangement of competing caste groups free from any stigma of purity and pollution and this has been termed as the modern avatar of caste.

However, recent studies have pointed out that the benefit of affirmative state policies have been cornered often by the dominant groups within the OBC and SC categories, which are a manifestation of the unfulfilled promises of democratic institution.

This elite capture and the introduction of class element within caste which can be seen in the need felt in recent years to create subcategories as in within the preexisting backward caste and communities. has led to the fracturing of dalit identity into categories like 'maha dalits' or 'ati dalits'.and backward class and extremely backward class in Bihar.

Also it has also been lamented that rather than weakening caste consciousness democracy has strengthened it and this has been seen by some as impeding the aim of promoting fraternity between the subjects of the state.

Perhaps these examples support the thesis that democratic institution in India though have succeeded in imparting some changes in the caste structure but it were limited to partial redistributive outcomes as far as backward caste categories has concerned.

- 5. *Exclusion, humiliation-subordination and exploitation are all equally important in defining the phenomenon of untouchability. Explain. Give an account of the provisions in the Indian Constitution and the steps taken by the government to compensate for past and present caste discriminations.***

Approach:

- Define the phenomenon of untouchability on the three dimensions of exclusion, humiliation-subordination and exploitation.
- Then bring out provisions in the Indian Constitution prohibiting the menace.
- Finally bring out steps taken by the government over a period of time and how the state has tried to compensate for past and present caste discriminations.

Untouchability is an extreme and vicious aspect of the society that prescribes stringent social sanctions against members located at the bottom of the purity-pollution scale. It is widely prevalent in all spheres of life and has evolved over time and expanded in form of exclusion, humiliation-subordination and exploitation. It has grown its dimension from caste factor to other factors like religion, poverty, ethnicity etc..

The performance of publicly visible acts of humiliation and subordination include common instances like the imposition of gestures of deference such as taking off headgear, carrying footwear in the hand, standing with bowed head, not wearing clean or ‘bright’ clothes, and so on.

Moreover, untouchability is also associated with economic exploitation of various kinds, most commonly through the imposition of forced, unpaid labor, or the confiscation of property.

In terms of exclusion, religion exclusion, exclusion of persons with disability, caste based exclusion etc. are giving new dimensions to untouchability.

Some provisions of Indian Constitution to fight against Untouchability

- Under Article 17 of the Constitution, Untouchability has been prohibited on any ground.
- Article 14 providing equality before law, article 15 providing equality and equal access to public places etc.
- Article 46 under DPSP says that the State shall promote educational and economic interest of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and exploitation.

Some of the Government Initiatives

- Parliament passed Untouchability (offences) Act in 1955 which was further amended and renamed in 1976 as Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955.
- For further expansion of Article 17 of the Constitution, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act of 1989 was passed, which was amended in 2005 to give it more teeth.
- Setting up of National Commission for SCs and STs as well as setting up of National Human Right Commission.

To **compensate** for past and current discrimination, the government has taken steps like:

- Providing reservation which involves the setting aside of some places or ‘seats’ for members of the Scheduled Castes in different spheres of public life.
- Introduction of reservation for SCs and STs in 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts to contest elections at the Panchayat level.

6. *The mixing of caste and politics resulting into ‘politicization of caste’ and ‘casteization of politics’ in contemporary India has become a grave challenge to our democracy. Comment.*

Approach:

- Briefly explain the status of caste and politics in contemporary India.
- Explain the relationship between caste and politics in reference to the terms, politicization of caste and casteization of politics.
- Describe the challenges posed by the interaction between class and politics.

Answer:

Politics and caste, in India, are highly inter-related. Although caste as an institution has eroded to a great extent, it is still almost impossible to sideline the role of caste in politics. This is primarily due to increasing significance of 'politics of number'. The given phrases are similar with some difference: politicization of caste pertains to political mobilization based on caste, while casteization of politics refers to the emergence of regional parties based on caste as a consequence.

The modern democratic political system gives every adult the right to vote. This increases the aspirations and consciousness of the depressed castes who seek proportionate share of power and hence political participation becomes an important means of social mobility. As a reaction, sometimes the higher castes also vote on caste-line for protecting their traditional position in the society.

While the relationship between caste and politics is positive in theory, in practice it has been posing several challenges to the democracy:

- People are mobilized on parochial lines through the strategy of divisive campaigns by different political parties.
- It is argued that increasing political participation of various castes allowed more political elites to be drawn from various middle and lower castes. However, the new political elites are the beneficiaries of identity politics and hence lack commitment to principled pursuit of power.
- Caste based politics is more vulnerable, as it often incites violence and hatred amongst various sections of the society and is an assault on solidarity.
- It affects ticket distribution since political parties prefer to give party tickets to the contender of caste member, which has a substantial number.

Thus, even though caste and politics are inseparable and are mutually beneficial in creating political consciousness, in contemporary times politicization of caste and casteization of politics are well within electoral democracy to the extent that such politics seeks to address the marginalization of some specific community. But defining politics solely based on caste identity is indeed posing a challenge to the democratic framework of India.

7. *What are Personal Law Boards? Are their decisions binding on citizens? How can the incongruence between the principles followed by them and those of the common law courts be reconciled? Discuss.*

Approach:

- Give a brief overview about personal laws.
- Define personal law boards.
- Bring out some measures from the past as well the problem that need to be solved to reconcile the incongruence.

Answer:

In India different religions are governed by their own personal laws. Every religion follows its own personal law in the matters pertaining to marriage, adoption, successions etc. All these matters are decided and mobilized by various personal law boards representing the religion.

Personal Law Boards are non-governmental organization constituted to adopt suitable strategies for the protection and continued applicability of Personal laws in India. The

Boards present themselves as the leading body of religious group opinion in India. These Boards work liaise with and influence the Government and guide the general public about the critical issues. They primarily defend the personal laws from any laws or legislation that they consider infringes on it.

The decisions of these Boards which are backed up by the legislations like that of the Hindu Law act (1955-56), Muslim personal law (shariat) application acts, 1937 etc. are binding on the citizens. However, those decisions which infringe upon the Fundamental rights of the citizens are not binding, although not following them can have repercussions like community boycott or personal attacks.

The incongruence between the principles followed by them and those of the common law courts can be reconciled through greater interaction between them, judges, lawmakers, religious leaders and community. This will help to iron out the differences in the legal opinion regarding matters of personal law. Hardly any forums for such interactions exist as of now. It should be done on urgency considering the divisive and sensitive nature of such issues. Some other measures can be:

- Clearly interpreting Article 25 in conjunction with Article 44.
- Addressing the fears of minorities by citing example of Hindu Law which has become part of regular law courts and proved quite progressive.
- Most vulnerable and victimized section that is women need to be brought into these Boards and codes should be made keeping their plights in minds.
- A comprehensive review of the personal laws with an aim to align them with modern progressive ethos.

8. *In recent times, there has been a clamor for implementing Article 44 of the Indian Constitution. To what extent is such a demand justified, given the socio-cultural diversity of India.*

Approach:

Introduce the answer by mentioning what Article 44 is. The answer should discuss the possibility of implementing this Article, considering the socio-cultural diversity of India.

Answer:

Article 44 of the Part IV directs the Indian State to implement Uniform Civil Code in the country. Uniform civil code means to replace the personal laws based on the scriptures and customs of each religious community with a common set governing every citizen. These laws cover marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption and maintenance.

The Indian-state is socially and culturally one of the most diverse countries in the world, in terms of religion, language etc. Historically, most states feared that, identity politics, recognition of social differences, was a threat to state unity. In such a context, time and again, there has been a repeated demand to impose uniform civil code in India. There seems to be some substance in the argument, considering the examples of some states, like in Spain, Sri Lanka, and erstwhile East Pakistan.

Further, different communities have their separate Personal laws that often go against the law of the land, apart from violating the rule of law, basic humanistic and rational law. Therefore, it may be desirable that there is a common legal system which is equally applicable to all the communities residing in India.

However, deeper analysis reveals that, it was the imposition of majoritarian culture and the corresponding neglect of the customs and social symbols of the minority that led to social unrest in the above mentioned countries. Moreover, suppressing cultural

diversity can be very costly in terms of the alienation of the minorities whose culture is treated as 'non-national.' Further, the very act of suppression can provoke the opposite effect of intensifying community identities and social unrest, as happened in few neighboring states.

Contrary to the above, case studies from around the world have demonstrated that enduring democracies can be established in polities that are multicultural. Explicit efforts are required to end the cultural exclusion of diverse groups and to build multiple and complementary identities. Such responsive policies provide incentives to build a feeling of unity in diversity. Indian Constitution rightly embodies this notion. Though, India is culturally diverse, comparative surveys of long-standing democracies show that India has been very cohesive despite its diversity.

Thus, national cohesion doesn't require the imposition of a single identity and the denunciation of diversity. Successful strategies to build state-nations can and do accommodate diversity constructively by crafting responsive policies of cultural recognition. They are the time tested solutions for ensuring the longer term objectives of political stability and social harmony. Hence, any effort to implement Article 44 should be based on popular consensus.

- 9. Even after years of independence and despite modern legislation, the antiquated practice of child marriage still persists in certain sections. What are the reasons for persistence of child marriage in India? How does it affect our society? What can be done to eradicate this practice?**

Approach:

- Give reasons encompassing social, cultural and economic issues for child marriages. These reasons should be more specific with respect to the persistence of child marriage.
- Secondly mention the impact that child marriage has on society as a whole in this modern context.
- Finally suggest some practices to eradicate this menace.

Answer:

Child marriage is a traditional practice that in many places happens simply because it has happened for generations – and straying from tradition could mean exclusion from the community. On top of this, there is limited capacity among officials and lack of willingness to go against community decisions, since officials are themselves part of the community.

In communities where a dowry or 'bride price' is paid, it is often welcome income for poor families; in those where the bride's family pay the groom a dowry, they often have to pay less money if the bride is young and uneducated.

Many parents marry off their daughters young because they feel it is in her best interest, often to ensure her safety in areas where girls are at high risk of physical or sexual assault. Limited education opportunities, low quality of education, inadequate infrastructure, lack of transport and therefore concerns about girls' safety while travelling to school significantly contribute to keeping girls out of school and therefore tend to favour child marriage.

Girls are often seen as a liability with limited economic role. Women's work is confined to the household and is not valued. Archaic laws such as those of Muslim Personal Law allows the marriage of girls aged between 15 and 18.

Child marriage ensues the vicious cycle of poverty. With little access to education and economic opportunities, they and their families are more likely to live in poverty. Child brides are often disempowered, dependent on their husbands and deprived of their fundamental rights to health, education and safety. A system that undervalues the contribution of young women limits its own possibilities. In this way, child marriage drains country of the innovation and potential that would enable them to thrive.

There is a need to implement a convergent strategy:

- **Law enforcement:** Capacity-building on laws, support mechanisms such as a child marriage telephone hotline.
- **Girls' empowerment:** Life skills, protection skills.
- **Community mobilization:** Working with influential leaders, oaths and pledges, counselling, folk and traditional media.
- **Promoting convergence** of sectors at all levels, in particular with education and social protection schemes and programmes.
- Building a social movement on the lines of Bachpan Bachao Aandolan which would emphasize on an IEC campaign and generating community support against such practices.

10. Examine the contemporary trends and reasons for change in the traditional family structure in India. Discuss the reforms needed in the existing social security protection measures in this regard.

Approach:

- Briefly explain the traditional family structure in India.
- Bring out recent changes in the existing structure and the reasons thereof.
- Enlist the reforms required in the existing social security protection measures in view of the changing family structure in India.

Answer:

The traditional family structure in India has been the joint family system, which has been witnessing a change in contemporary times, i.e. a shift towards nuclear family system, perhaps as a part of the family cycle. The 1991 Census data suggested that though nuclearisation of the family has been the dominant phenomenon, the extent of joint living is also increasing, especially in the urban areas. Also, in terms of composition of the family there has been a growth in the number of single parent families, reconstituted families (step families) and same sex couples' families.

Reasons for change in the traditional family structure in India:

- **Historical/Political**
 - **Land Reforms:** They imposed ceiling restriction on the landholdings leading to a theoretical partition, which further hastened formal partition and sowed the seeds for separate living.
- **Demographic**
 - **Migration:** The increase in the joint living in urban areas is mostly because of the migration of the rural people and their sharing of common shelter and hearth with other migrants from the same region.
- **Economic**
 - **Growing urbanisation and industrialisation:** Lack of employment opportunities in rural areas and regional imbalances fuel urbanization, putting a severe stress on the joint family structure and in many cases it has developed a tendency towards nuclearisation of families.

- **Social**
 - **Growing individualism:** Penetration of the mass media (viz., the newspapers, the T.V., the radio), formal education, a culture of consumerism and market forces have fuelled the change in traditional family structure.
 - **Gender dynamics:** More and more women have entered the paid labour force and are increasingly getting less financially dependent on their families. Since they migrate more often for jobs even before marriage, it leads to increase in the number of single person households.
- **Technological:** With advances in science and technology such as faster means of transport (airways) and communication (mobiles, internet), while there has been a growth in the number of families staying far from their hometown and parents for economic reasons, the spirit of jointness still persists.
- **Change in the institution of marriage:** Fewer people marry, they marry later, they divorce more often and sooner, and they remarry less often. Increasingly, many more are not marrying at all. Unmarried opposite-sex couple households have grown greatly in recent times.

In India, the concept of Social Security was associated with the Hindu Joint Families, which was the 'Original Cell of Security' and 'First Line of Defense' against any misfortune. But there has been a vast change in the traditional family structure in India in the 21st century.

India's social security measures include insurances such as pension, health insurance, medical benefit etc. It provides support not only to retired and disabled workers but also to their eligible dependents and survivors. The changing familial relationships affect the scope and value of social security protection. In this regard, following reforms are required in the existing social security protection measures in India:

- **Procedural reforms:** A lot of social security protection measures require a male head of family for registration purposes. This needs to change in light of growing divorce rates and single working women.
- **Geriatric care:** Increasing need for geriatric care due to growing number of elderly left without care. This need is more prominent in case of older women and widows.
- **Legal reforms:** Review the working of Unorganised Workers Social Security Act, 2008 to ensure its effective implementation, as most of the urban nuclear families find employment in the unorganised sector.
- **Universal insurance:** The state should facilitate and support micro-insurance schemes for previously uninsured families.
- **Extensive coverage:** Provide paternity benefits along with the existing maternity benefits. Also, extend the social security measures to single parent and same sex families.
- **Emotional support measures** should be included as a part of social security due to growing depression, alcoholism and drug addiction amongst youth because of weakening emotional bondage in the families.

The social protection measures should be reformed not merely to guarantee survival, but also to ensure social inclusion and preservation of human dignity within the family structure.

11. Explaining the importance of middle class in the developmental process of a country, discuss the grounds on which the Indian middle class is criticized by some.

Student Notes:

Approach:

- Briefly explain the concept of middle class in the Indian society.
- Explain the importance of middle class in the development process of a country.
- Mention the grounds on which they are criticized and conclude accordingly.

Answer:

The National Council of Applied Economic Research defines middle class as the household earning between 2 and 10 Lakh per annum based on 2001-02 prices. This class is fairly above the poverty line and has sufficient amount of discretionary income. India witnessed a rise of 'new middle class' after the economic reforms of 1991, especially due to emergence of IT and BPO industries.

The middle class is extremely important for the development process of country. For instance:

- A strong middle class, being well educated, promotes the development of human capital.
- It creates a stable source of demand and helps in the development of industries.
- Money saved by this class can be used as a source of investment, which can further the growth of Indian economy.
- It contributes significantly to tax collection, which is further used for redistribution of income and development of public goods and infrastructure.
- The quality of political institutions also increases with the rise in middle class, as it is relatively more aware and more determined to fight for their rights.
- The middle class plays a leading role in the modernization of society, thus making it more dynamic and resilient.

While the expansion of middle class in India is being witnessed in both urban and rural areas, but it is often criticised due to the following:

- Middle class in India is often accused of 'self exclusion' i.e. withdrawing themselves from the society e.g. gated communities, increased use of private sector even for essential services like health, education etc.
- Growth of middle class in India is primarily led by the lower middle class, which is still employed in occupations similar to that of poor i.e. agriculture and construction activities.
- There are deep inequalities within the middle class and between it and other social classes. The primary beneficiary of liberalisation have been those belonging to upper middle class and involved in high paying services (ICT, finance etc.)
- Upper caste Hindu's dominate the new middle class. Other social groups such as STs, as well as SCs and OBCs fare among the underprivileged and marginalized groups within the middle class.

12. Marriage and family institutions in India are marked by continuity as well as change. Discuss in the context of legislations and socio-economic changes that have been taking place over the past few decades in India.

Approach:

- First, give a brief introduction to the answer on how marriage and family institution in India are important .

- Second, highlight the reasons for change in these institutions i.e. socio- economic reasons and the impact of the legislations (preferably more recent ones) separately.
- Finally, conclude the answer by highlighting that despite changes , how the essence of marriage and familial relations are still intact.

Student Notes:

Answer:

Marriage and family institutions are the repositories of the core values of the Indian society. These institutions are still seen as a social legitimization to have children . We can see the domination of patriarchal values and feudal mindsets in these institutions. However, under the impact of socio-economic changes and legislations, they are undergoing many changes.

Factors influencing change and continuity in Marriage and family institutions

- **Economic Changes**
 - Industrialisation and Urbanisation: Growth of cities and city culture have a direct impact on the family and marriage.
 - modern industries have lessened the economic functions of the family and led to the **replacement of Joint family structure with Nuclear families**.
 - **Status of women in the family has improved** as they have become more educated and started working, thus along with other male members in the family ,they also now have a say in family issues.
 - In partner selection, job and salary are given more importance, than the family background , caste or religion. Also the online matrimonial sites have come up which has reduced the role of elders of the family.
 - To fulfil career and individual ambitions , “**delayed marriages**” and “**long – distance marriages**” have become a common feature
 - Marriage is often held in cities more as a social or a civil ceremony than a religious ceremony. The duration of marriage ceremony is also cut short in the city. Elaborate customs are either avoided or shortened; court marriages preferred.
 - In cities, the cases of divorce, desertion, separation, broken families etc alongwith pre-marital and extra-marital sex relations are seen.
- **Social Changes**
 - Modern education, values and western ideologies such as rationalism, individualism, equality of sex, democracy, individual freedom, secularism, etc have influenced the outlook of educated young men and women. Hence, they want to take their own decisions and make choices on the main events of their life such as line of education, job and marriage.
- **Influence of legislations on Marriage:**
 - **Dowry Prohibition Act, 1996, Domestic Violence Act(DVA) , 2005, etc** - have made the position of women stronger .Now the women are given justice against the "invisible violence" at home-physical and verbal abuse,etc which they used to go through either because of dowry demands or otherwise.The DVA, 2005, includes in its ambit live-in partners caters to the changing dynamics of relationships.
 - The ‘divorce’ laws have been made more flexible with the amendment of **The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955** in **1986**, by including the ground of ‘incompatibility’ and ‘mutual consent’ apart from the reasons provided earlier like adultery, conversion of religion, etc. This has led to the institution of marriage more susceptible to conflicts, fights, giving lesser scope to “compromise” and time to save marriage and family. But on the other hand, it also gave the option to both

- men and women to come out of a “bad marriage” which they otherwise used to be in just to fulfil societal obligations.
- Women are given right in the ancestral property and a legal right to share property along with male members, after **the Hindu Succession Act of 1956 was amended in 2005**. This has made the economic position of women stronger.

However, despite changes, the core values in the institutions of marriage and family are still intact. Mutual fidelity and devotion is still respected.

13. Explain India's 'diversity in unity'. Illustrate from the socio-cultural life of people.

Approach:

- Write down how India is a plural society with extensive diversity in religion, races, languages, culture, heritage etc.
- Provide some examples for each

Answer:

India's Diversity in Unity:

India's Diversity in unity refers to the existence of plural-ethnic, racial, religious and linguistic cultures together within the nation of India.

The concept heralds the geo-political unity of the nation state of India encompassing several diverse cultures within its uniform matrix.

The test examples of 'Diversity in Unity' can be highlighted through the following examples from the socio-cultural life of the Indian people.

The Indian festivals are known for their enhancement and liveliness throughout the world. The most important example, Diwali is celebrated by all. However, the meaning and methods of celebration change across various religions and regional communities.

The architectural heritage symbolizes India's historic past and glory. The Taj Mahal is famous as the symbol of love and dedication across all people. At a broader level, it is quite interesting to see people of various cultures visiting such heritage monuments; accepting them as their common heritage.

- The Multi-National corporations have brought in a new 'cosmopolitan' culture to India through globalization; these companies employ people across various ethnicities, caste and class, creating a diverse yet unified environment.
- The caste system as a system of hierarchy identifies an Indian. So much so, that it has taken within its hold, people across various caste, communities and religions.
- The 'power of patriarchy' is another common thread of value found prevalent in India. It includes the diverse sexes – men and women too.
- The Popular phenomena such as Cricket and Bollywood also represent diverse cultures celebrating together. The Indian Premier league is a good example of this.

14. “Linguistic, regional and tribal identity rather than religion has provided the most important basis for the formation of ethno-national identities in India”. Explain.

Approach:

- Briefly describe different basis like language, region, tribe and religion as the basis of identification with a community. Then examine how these identities have played a role in determining the identity discourse in the country.

- Students can agree, disagree, or take a middle path on the view that religion has not played so important role in shaping the ethno-national identity in the country.
- Cite relevant examples wherever needed.

Student Notes:

Answer:

Ethnic identity is a basis for distribution of social rewards like money, prestige and power. In most societies one or more ethnic groups dominate others in economic, political and cultural matters. Ethnic politics can, therefore, take the appearance of 'ethnic stratification', resulting in the emergence of 'ethnic nationalism'.

Nations are created when 'ethnic groups', in a multi-ethnic state are transformed into a 'self-conscious political entities'. The goals of 'sovereignty and self-determination', lead to ethno nationalism.

Often minority groups try to play the ethnic card in order to acquire a better deal for themselves in a plural society. When subjugated groups, fail to achieve success according to the norms established by the dominant group the nature of their response tends to be 'ethnic antagonism' which may take the form of

- Struggle of the indigenous people's right to their land and culture,
- competition by ethnic groups for obtaining scarce resources
- Movements for a separate nation.

India is one of the most diverse countries in the world in terms of languages, regional disparities, cultures, ethnicity and religions. When such diverse state is engaged in nation building through the construction of national identity, smaller identities move in the opposite direction, when they feel that they are about to lose their identity. Hence, Ethno-national identities in India have been shaped by the relative concentration of these factors in a region clubbed with the sense of regional deprivation.

For Example: Instances of Naga, Mizo, Manipur ethno nationalism, Khalistan movement of 1980s

In India, post-independence, major factors that contributed to the emergence of ethnic mobilization were:

- the pitfalls of nation-building process,
- the faulty modernization process, and
- the nature of the nation-state.

The most important basis for the formation of identity was language. Community aspirations vented out as the demand for linguistic states, ultimately leading to major redrawing of the internal boundaries on the basis of language.

Secondly, the postcolonial development process tried to integrate and assimilate ethnic communities towards the mainstream development process while ignoring their cultural and economic specificities. The centralized planning and the capitalist modernization further lead to the exclusion of various tribal communities from mainstream. This led to the mass displacement of tribals from their historical and traditional lands, without commensurate benefits of development being provided to them.

As a result, a combination of ethnicity based on tribal identity, language, regional deprivation and ecology provided the basis for intense regionalism resulting in the formation of states like Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand and very recently Telangana.

Similarly, the ethnic demand for homeland created a number of smaller states in the

northeast. For instance, the greater Assam was Balkanized into Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram to meet the demands of these ethnic groups. However, mere making of territorial boundary did not solve the problem; on the contrary, it further aggregated it. It is argued that the creation of separate state further fanned the fire when “various smaller and bigger communities started to demand establishment of more states; on the other hand, the state showed their inability to deliver the basic goods”

However, in the Post-independence era, there are instances of religion becoming the basis of identities especially among the Muslims and Sikhs. For example: demand for the formation of Khalistan is an evidence of religion becoming the basis of identity.

However, demands from Muslims are more concerned with their relative backwardness and poverty and a sense of security. Yet such instances of assertion of religious identities are fewer when compared to language, regional deprivation etc.

Hence, it can be said that religion has played a relatively minor though not negligible role in determining the ethno-national identities in India.

However, it must be emphasized that during recent times with the emergence of right-wing political forces in the country, religion has again come into prominence as the basis of national identity where nationalism is often misplaced with commitment to religious and cultural traditions of the majority. This may result in the right-wing forces in minorities asserting their religious identities to counter the right-wing of majority. It may lead to not a very pleasant scenario of religion becoming dominant factor in determining the identities of the communities from the minor one it currently is.

15. *Indian society in ancient, medieval and modern times always exhibited an underlying unity that created a composite culture, which is decisively pan-Indian in nature. Elucidate.*

Approach:

- Highlight how the cultural system stayed independent of the political system in India.
- Discuss the impact of the unity in creating a composite culture which is pan-Indian in nature across all three periods.
- Provide adequate examples wherever necessary.
- Conclude on the basis of the above points.

Answer:

Unity has been the main underlying character of the Indian society. Various rulers in their internal dynamics were frequently involved in wars at the regional level. However, the aspect of cultural unity largely remained untouched and the mainstream composite culture maintained its own status independent of the political system.

Ancient India saw the birth of Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism, but all these cultures and religions intermingled and interacted. Co-mingling of cultural elements also happened through language. Many Pali and Sanskrit terms developed in the Gangetic plains, appear in the Sangam literature. Similarly, many Dravidian terms are also found in the Indo-Aryan languages. The Aryans, Sakas, Kushanas with different socio-cultural practices like language dressing, coinage, etc. became Indianized and cultural exchange and assimilation further strengthened the underlying unity in Indian society.

Medieval India marked the advent of Islam into the Indian culture. Even during the period of conflict and tension, there were movements that promoted cultural

adaptation. For instance, Sufism promoted tolerance and integration of virtues of different faiths. Hence, if Ashoka tried to establish the tradition of peace and love, Akbar did not lag behind in pursuing vigorously the policy of Suleh-i-Kul (Peace with all). Similarly, in the field of art and architecture blending of Hindu and Muslim styles is evident. Eventually Mughals, though having different socio-religious contour, were also Indianized. For instance, Islam, though theoretically egalitarian, accepted hierarchy, which was central to the Indian society. Resultantly, caste system informally also affects the Muslim society in India.

The most heterogenetic process of change, both at the structural and cultural level, came with the arrival of the Europeans in India. Modern school education replaced the traditional esoteric system, English was introduced as a medium of instruction; the new legal rational system was egalitarian vis-à-vis the hierarchical system that existed erstwhile. However, revivalist movements and the struggle for independence helped revive the Indian tradition in all its glory. Emphasis on vernacular education, literature in regional languages, revival of oriental style of painting etc. contributed in retaining the essence and core of the Indian society. This core even got strengthened with incorporation of western humanistic values and outlook.

Values like Atithi Devobhava, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, tolerance etc. exhibited underlying unity in times of heterogeneous cultural intermingling. Till date, various cultures remain harmoniously connected with each other in the Indian pluralistic society. This unity remains the core strength of the Indian society which assures us the continuance of Indian culture in future also.

16. Is India's linguistic diversity a threat to national integration?

Approach:

- Briefly explain the nature of linguistic diversity
- Then explain what are the problems which are/can be faced due to this diversity
- Finally conclude on a positive note that even after such linguistic diversity, India has unity

Answer:

Nature of India's linguistic diversity:

In India, there are more than 200 languages, being spoken by different groups. There exists 'linguistic pluralism' in India, which is a state of 'mutual existence' of several languages in a contiguous space. The plurality of languages has led to 'language problems', in the past. These problems being: i) Linguistic reorganization of the states in India ii) Status of 'minority languages' in the states iii) Official language issue.

Language Problems and National Integration:

- Linguistic reorganization of states was primarily done for administrative convenience. It also helped in fulfilling the aspirations of different linguistic groups in India, without threatening national unity.
- Discriminatory practices or policies against 'linguistic minorities' in different states, can in the long term threaten national integration. Prejudiced treatment against linguistic minorities, can perpetuate 'separatism'. Example: Bengali speaking people in Assam, Kanada, Malayalam speaking people in Andhra Pradesh. There are various Constitutional Provisions, to safeguard the interests of 'linguistic minorities', enshrined in Articles: 29, 30, 347, 350.

- 'Hindi, English' are the 'official languages' of the Union. There are 'regional languages' recognized as the 'official languages' of the states. There has emerged a 'hierarchy of official status'. The 1960s witnessed 'anti-Hindi' agitations', in the southern states, speaking Dravidian family of languages. The fear of Hindi becoming the 'national language' was allayed by the continuance of English as the official language. Also the 'Three language formula' was devised to accommodate the different languages, in the educational curriculum.

Linguistic Unity and National integration:

- However, the linguistic heterogeneity has not always been disruptive for national integration. With linguistic diversity, one has also witnessed, the development of an 'all India common vocabulary.' Ex. Sanskrit, which has not only acted as bridge between different Indo Aryan languages, but also between Indo Aryan and Dravidian languages. Ex. In contemporary times, "Hinglish", which is the blending of English language with Hindi and other languages spoken in India.
- The mainstream cinema "Bollywood", has immensely contributed to the development of an all India vocabulary.
- The popularity of many 'Epics' and 'fictional non-fictional literature', has lead their translation into many different languages. This has also contribute to 'linguistic unity' in India.

17. It has been pointed out that in recent times, while the proportional share of nuclear households has dipped in urban areas it has risen in rural areas. Analyse the reasons behind this trend.

Approach:

- Distinguish between nuclear and joint families.
- Mention the relevant data to support the statement in the question.
- Elaborate on reasons for decline in nuclear families in urban areas.
- Elaborate on reasons for rise in nuclear families in rural India.

Answer:

Nuclear households are defined as consisting of a married couple or a man or a woman living alone or with unmarried children. While joint family is an extended multi-generational unit that includes parents, children, children's spouses and their offspring as well.

Comparing the data of Census 2001 and 2011 of the division of households in percentage terms it can be inferred that the share of nuclear households has declined in urban areas, while it has increased in rural areas. Further, the fall in the share of joint families has been sharper in rural areas as compared to urban areas.

TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD	RURAL AREAS		URBAN AREAS	
	Census 2001	Census 2011	Census 2001	Census 2011
Nuclear households	50.7%	52.1% (+1.4%)	54.3%	52.3% (-2%)
Joint families	20.1%	16.8% (-3.3%)	16.5%	14.6% (-1.9%)

This is inconsistent with the generally assumed trend of rise in nuclear families with rapid urbanization.

Reasons for decline in nuclear families and rise in joint families in urban areas:

- Lack of adequate housing challenged by increased migration, especially of the labour is forcing people to stay together.

- Rising expenses of urban lifestyle.
- Women taking up jobs/work and consequent need for childcare makes couples stay with the parents.
- Vulnerability of the elderly and also their support in socialization of children.
- Increased life expectancy.

Student Notes:

Reasons for rise in nuclear units and dip in joint families in rural areas:

- Fragmented land holdings.
- Out migration, in search of jobs.
- Sociologists argue that the human socialization process generally percolates from urban to rural areas - and so does nuclearization of households.

Thus, it can be said that the interplay of contemporary realities of employment, amenities, migration, cost of living and lifestyle choices determine the way families live and households are constituted.

18. *Separation, and not divorce, is the dominant form of marriage dissolution for most women in India. What could be the possible reasons behind this? Also, discuss why there are striking differences in divorce rates between the different regions in India.*

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by explaining the issue of marriage dissolution in India.
- Clarify the difference between separation and divorce.
- Highlight why separation is a dominant feature.
- Also, account for varied divorce rates in different regions in India.

Answer:

Divorce is the annulment of marriage, while separation means the couple no more lives together, however the institution of marriage remains intact legally. Separation may or may not be followed by divorce.

According to **Census 2011**, the number of people separated in India is almost three times the number of people divorced. Reasons for higher percentage of separation are:

- **Social Stigma:** Separation continues to maintain the institution of marriage, therefore it is more socially accepted.
- **Delayed judicial procedure:** As divorce requires legal procedure, people settle for separation fearing long-lasting, adversarial and costly court hearings.
- **Changing gender equations:** Many financially independent urban women who are victims of harassment tend to separate to live a life of dignity.

Census 2011 points that divorce and separation rates vary widely across States and regions. While the divorce rate for India as a whole was 0.24%, it was as high as 4.08% in Mizoram. It stands at 0.32% in Kerala, 0.34% in tribal-dominated Chhattisgarh and at 0.63% in Gujarat. These are accounted for as follows:

- North-eastern States have a higher rate than rest of the country. This might be because in North east India, tribal laws allow for informal relations and women enjoy relatively higher social status because of existing matrilineal system.
- North Indian states like UP, Bihar, Haryana and Rajasthan which are known to be deeply patriarchal have much lower divorce rates.
- Gujarat has the highest rate among larger states. The state has higher per capita income and high literacy among bigger states.

- States such as Kerala have less rigid patriarchal norms and women tend to have greater workforce participation and support from their natal family. So, the socio-economic penalty of divorce is lower.

Student Notes:

Even though the rates of separation and divorce are less than global average, nonetheless they are growing at a rapid pace. The need of the hours is to institutionalize better laws across all religious communities for separated/abandoned women.



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REGIONALISM

Student Notes:

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1. Regionalism- An Introduction

Student Notes:

A region is a homogenous area which is culturally and physically distinct from the neighbouring areas. In a region, people are aware of their similarities, however distinct they may be from others. Based on this idea, they develop an identity. And based on this identity, they start professing their political loyalties towards the region rather than to the state or the nation to which they belong.

Regionalism is rooted in India's diversity w.r.t. (with respect to) caste, religion, language, class etc. When all these factors get geographically concentrated, along with the feeling of relative deprivation (i.e. a feeling that their community is not able to have access or benefit from such access to the resources of the land), it is referred to as regionalism.

So, regionalism can be defined as a phenomenon in which people's political loyalties become focused upon a region. In other words, it implies people's **love for a particular region in preference to the country** and in certain cases **in preference to the state** of which the region is a part. Thus the phenomenon of regionalism is centered around the concept of region.

1.1. Characteristics of regionalism

Regionalism is conditioned by economic, social, political and cultural disparities:

- It is, at times, a **psychological phenomenon**. For example, India and Pakistan were divided to solve problems that were perceived and feared, rather than being actually present.
- It is built around an expression of **group identity** as well as **loyalty towards the region**. For example, the tribals in Jharkhand-Chhattisgarh area consider their land to be sacred, and trace their identity to a common ancestor of the region. They do not tolerate outside interference, especially since outsiders do not understand their ways and customs. Such outsiders may even consist of non-tribals belonging to the same state.
- It presupposes the concept of development of one's own region without taking into consideration the interest of other regions. The recurrent and ever ongoing **river water disputes** between states and nations could be traced to such factors.
- Regionalism, at times, prohibits people from other regions to be benefited by a particular region. The demand for a 'Marathwada' (Maharashtra for Marathwadas) is a case in point here.

1.2. Types of Regionalism

1. **Demand for State Autonomy:** Regional politics manifested in the form of people in certain states or regions demanding to secede from the Indian Union and become independent sovereign states. Such demands occurred soon after independence and are largely non-existent now. The important examples in this context are that of the Plebiscite Front (Kashmir), Mizo National Front (Lushei Hills of Assam), Nagaland Socialist Conference (Naga Hills District of Assam) etc.
2. **Supra-state Regionalism:** It emerges in the form of expression of group identity of some states. Some states unite to take a common stand on the issues of mutual interest. The group identity is usually in relation to certain specific issues. It does not in any way imply the total and permanent merger of identity of the states into the identity of group. Rivalries, tensions and even conflicts do take place among a few states belonging to a group.

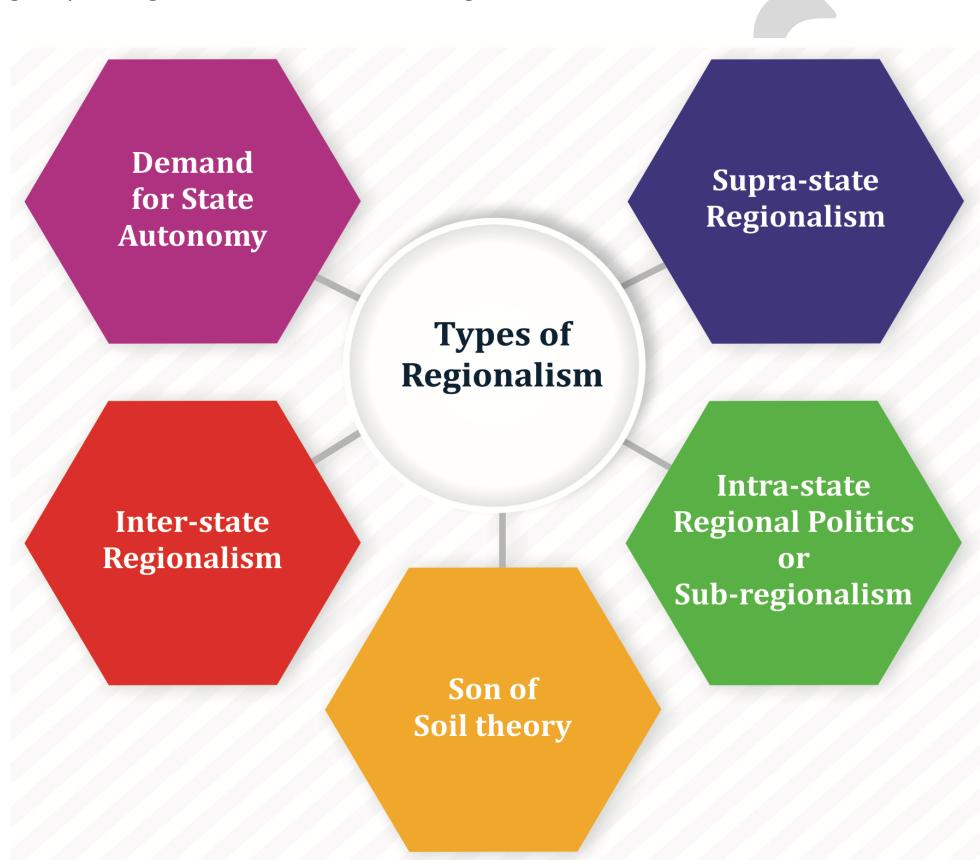
Eg: Dravida Nadu demand prior to the re-organisation of the states, 1956. Similarly, the grouping of the North Eastern States for greater access to economic development is another instance.

3. **Inter-state Regionalism:** It is related to state boundaries and involves overlapping of one or more state identities, which threaten their interests. River water disputes, in general, and other issues like the Maharashtra-Karnataka border dispute in particular can be cited as examples.

4. **Intra-state Regional Politics or Sub-regionalism:** This refers to regionalism, which exists within a state of Indian Union. It embodies the desire of a part of a state for identity and self-development. It may also reflect a notion of deprivation or exploitation of a part of the state at the expense of another. This type of regionalism can be found in many parts of India. The important examples of this kind of sub-regionalism are Vidarbha in Maharashtra, Saurashtra in Gujarat, Telangana in Andhra Pradesh, East U.P. in Uttar Pradesh etc..

Student Notes:

Son of Soil theory: It ties people to their place of birth and confers some benefits, rights, roles and responsibilities on them, which may not apply to others. It is accentuated by factors such as competition for resources, jobs, economic disparities, etc. Examples of implementation of the concept to further the cause of regionalism include campaign for safeguard of interests of Maharashtrians by the Shiv Sena, clashes among Bodos and Bengali speaking Muslims in Assam, among others.



1.3. Regionalism in Indian Politics

Although regionalism is a pre-independence phenomenon, it became predominant in the post-independence period. The politics of regionalism can be traced back to the British Raj. It commenced with the implementation of constitutional reforms under Government of India Acts of 1909, 1919 and 1935. For instance, division of Bengal for "administrative reasons" could be thought of as one example. The establishment and role of Justice Party in Chennai, and to a lesser extent, of Akali Dal in Punjab in pre-independence period were a few examples of the emerging regionalism in India at that time.

After independence, there were four major landmarks in the development of regional politics.

- A **democratic form of government** was established post-independence with objectives such as nation-building on the principles of democracy, secularism national unity and social justice. Since, all parts of the country competed with each other in their efforts at nation-building, anything short of expectations led to disenchantment and it resulted in the emergence of regional politics.

- Another factor was the **integration of the Princely States**. Despite integration of small states with the big ones, people continued to hold loyalties to old territorial units. As a consequence, Princes of erstwhile princely states continued to do well in elections.
- **Reorganization of states on linguistic basis** is another critical factor in terms of fanning regional politics. Twenty eight states were reshaped and reduced to 14 states along with centrally administered territories. Furthermore, new states continued to be created later. These states were not constituted entirely on linguistic basis. Factors like:-
 - **Ethnic-cum-economic considerations** led to the formation of Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura, Jharkhand, Haryana, Punjab and Chhattisgarh.
 - **Language-cum-cultural factors** created Maharashtra, Gujarat and Uttaranchal;
 - **Historical and political factors** are responsible for U.P. and Bihar;
 - **Integration of princely states and need for viable groupings** gave birth to M.P. and Rajasthan;
 - **Language and social distinctiveness** resulted in the creation of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Mysore, Bengal and Orissa.

Thus various factors have played a decisive role in the composition of the Indian federation.

Regardless of other factors, **language remained the most important factor** in the reorganization of states. It became such an important force in the context of regionalism that linguistic regionalism gained ground in Indian politics.

- **Personal and selfish ends of politicians** also contributed greatly towards instigating regional and parochial tendencies. To augment and strengthen their own authority and prestige at electoral politics, regional and state leaders often used means/measures to attack the authority of the center or in some cases of neighbouring states.

1.4. Basis of Regionalism

Regionalism has roots across various bases. These may range from geographical, historical, cultural, economic to politico-administrative factors:

1. **Geographical factors:** Usually people relate their regional identities to certain specific geographical boundaries. As an example, even after independence and the integration of Princely States with the Indian Union, the loyalties of citizens were torn between old territorial boundaries and new territorial structures.

However, in the present day context, geographical factors are more closely tied to factors that determine economic growth and prosperity. Geographical factors contribute to resource-competition and relative deprivation amongst states. For instance, owing to **North East India** facing problems of connectivity with the Indian mainland, its development remains sub-par. This brings in a sense of discontent amongst locals and negatively affects social solidarity. Consequently, North-East India has been a breeding ground for regional/Secessionist politics and dissent.

Similarly, **buffer-areas** is another crucial geographical factor. For example, Bundelkhand belongs to UP and MP. Neither do any of these states want to give up control, nor do they want to take up the responsibility to develop it

2. **Historical and Social Basis:** Historical and social basis together are not only important individually but also in conjunction with each other. They have contributed to Regionalism in India in various ways:

- a. **History:** History provides regionalist tendencies via some ideological bases through cultural heritage, folklore, myths and symbolism.

For example, the demand for **Dravida nadu** was supported by the theory that the Dravidian speaking area once had non-Brahminical polity, which was destroyed by

Aryan conquest and Brahminical hegemony. Also, the idea of **Tamil nationalism** was based on idealization of ancient Tamil history. Parties like the Dravida Kazhagam (DK) and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in Tamil Nadu and Shiv Sena in Maharashtra and Telugu Desham (TDP) in Andhra Pradesh gained credence.

However, history alone cannot be considered as the most important basis of regionalism. Economic and political factors have combined with history to generate regionalism. This can again be seen in the change in the stance of DMK from secession to one of autonomy within the federal framework of the Constitution.

- b. Language:** Language is arguably the most important mark of group identification. Through expression of shared life, thought structure and value patterns of people, language has the capacity to unite the people together towards achieving a common goal. In this sense, linguistic homogeneity strengthens a positive movement. However, language can also contribute to impart divisive tendencies.

Language found acceptance as a principle criterion for demarcating the territorial boundaries of provincial units. This was acknowledged in the **Nagpur Congress session(1920)**. Post-independence, the State Reorganization Commission (SRC) 1955 was established and new states were formed in 1956. Later on, new states were created by splitting up older states of Bombay (1960), Punjab (1966), and Assam (mid-sixties) into linguistically homogeneous states. Time and again, language emerges as a major bone of contention in Indian regional politics. For instance, the demand for Gorkhaland in the North-East India, imposition of Hindi in the Southern States, etc.

It must also be borne in mind that the importance of language must not be overstated. If language had been synonymous with region, the political aspiration of every linguistic group would have been satisfied by the formation of separate states. This, however, is neither a reality nor a foreseeable possibility. This is chiefly because of India's immense linguistic diversity that makes it practically impossible.

Thus regionalism is closely associated with language but is not synonymous with linguism. Regionalism can take place inside a linguistic state (for example creation of Marathi speaking Maharashtra has demands for Vidarbha statehood). In other words, **language is not the sole generator of regionalism. It is one of the several bases of regionalism in India.**

- c. Caste:** Caste serves as an important factor underlying social differentiation in India. It is also a major reason behind providing impetus to linguistic regionalism. For instance, Tamil regionalism gained ground as a result of Anti-Brahmin movement. Non-Brahmin castes of Tamil speaking region had been able to provide a powerful united thrust against Brahmins who had earlier enjoyed unquestioned dominance in economy, society and polity.
 - d. Religion:** Religion may combine with other factors like economic dominance/ linguistic homogeneity, etc., to push regionalistic tendencies. For example, the demand for Punjabi Suba had religious undertones even though it was presented under a linguistic garb. Similarly, secessionist movement in J&K also feeds off a sense of religious orthodoxy and economic deprivation.
- 3. Economic Basis:** In a developing country like India, resources are limited while the demand for resources for the development of various regions is disproportionate to resources. Economic policies have led to regional imbalances and wide economic disparities among various regions resulting in discontentment among them.

Most of the demands for constituting new states were primarily based on allegedly unfair and unequal distribution of development benefits and expenditure in multi-lingual states.

For example, movements for a separate Uttarakhand state in the hill districts of U.P.; creation of Jharkhand state out of parts of Bihar; demand for Bodoland comprising a part of Assam etc. The demand for separate states rests primarily on the sense of relative economic deprivation facing these regions.

- 4. Politico-Administrative Basis:** Politics, on its own, does not create regionalism. It only accentuates regionalism or takes advantage of already existing regional tendencies. Politicians convert regional disenchantment into movements for strengthening their individual and factional support bases. For example, it is often argued that regional political parties like TDP (Andhra Pradesh), DMK (Tamil Nadu), Akali Dal (Punjab) are surviving by keeping regional sentiments alive.

Other important facets of the politics of regionalism are the real or assumed charges of political discrimination among various regions by the central ruling elite. Actually, the economic policies of the government have been such that it has aggravated the regional imbalances and economic disparities- It was due to the unequal distribution of developmental benefits that the demand for new states emerged.

1.5. Reasons for persistence of regional disparities in India

- 1. Low rate of economic growth:** The economic growth of India has not been commensurate vis-à-vis its high population growth. Consequently, not enough opportunities could be created evenly across all regions of the Indian State, which is still developing.
- 2. Socio-economic and political organisation of states:** States have failed to undergo significant structural changes and reforms like land reforms. Besides, feudal mentality still persists. Land Ceiling and redistribution acts were not well implemented and even land under land Banks were not efficiently distributed. The political activities in the backward states were limited to vote bank politics and scams.
- 3. Lower level of infrastructural facilities in backward states:** The level of infrastructural development, such as- power distribution, irrigation facilities, roads, modern markets for agricultural produce has been at back stage. All these are state list subjects.
- 4. Low level of social expenditure by states on education, health and sanitation:** These subjects are core for human resource development. The states which have invested heavily on these subjects, fall under the developed and advanced states, for example Tamil Nadu, where health care services in Primary health centre is bench mark for other states.
- 5. Political and administration failure:** This is source of tension and gives birth to sub-regional movements for separate states. Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, Uttrakhand and recently Telangana are result of these failures. Many such demands are in pipeline such as- Vidarbha, Saurashtra, Darjeeling and Bodoland, etc. These failures also weakens the confidence of private players and do not attract investors in the states.

1.6. Impact of Regionalism

Positive Impact

- It can lead to inter-group solidarity in a particular region. People belonging to a region may feel the need to come together to protect their vested interests, setting aside their differences.
Eg: Tripura Tribal Autonomous District Council that was formed in 1985 has served to protect the otherwise endangered tribal identity in the state by providing a democratic platform for former separatists and has reduced the need for political extremism in the state.
- Given the increasing uncertainty in the contemporary globalized world, regionalism has become a source of identity among people. The accommodation of such identities is healthy for maintaining the socio-cultural fabric of India.

- It may induce competition among people of a region and propel them to do better to improve the status of their region.
Eg: Competitive federalism in India and ensuing competition among states regarding resources, setting up of industries, infrastructural facilities, etc.
- It can play an important role in nation building if it accommodates the federal elements. Not always are regional interests pitted against national interest. In fact, it helps in realizing the *salad-bowl theory* both in letter and spirit (India is referred to as a salad bowl. Just like in a bowl of salad, the individual flavours of the different individuals are retained, though put together, likewise in the case of India, along with new identities, the traditional identities are preserved as well.)
- Regional recognition in terms of state hood or state autonomy gives self-determination to the people of that particular region and they feel empowered and happy. Internal self-determination of community, whether linguistic, tribal, religious, regional, or their combinations, has remained the predominant form in which regionalism in India has sought to express itself, historically as well as in present times.

Student Notes:

Negative Impact

- It can have adverse impacts on national integration, as **loyalty to a particular region remains stronger** than loyalty to the nation. Thus, it can be seen as a threat to the progress and unity of the nation.
- It breeds contempt amongst local people as regards people from other regions. Consequently, it accentuates regional/parochial divide and augments identity politics on these bases. More often than not, it **can be exploited** and used for political leverage in order to garner votes.
- Development plans may sometimes be implemented unevenly. This can lead to **unbalanced development** and thereby regionalist and secessionist demands. When agitations to satisfy regional demands occur, law and order situation is disturbed. It can also result in **violence**. When the demand for regionalism has violent manifestations, it can be a source of internal security challenges and may even give a **leeway to external factors** (E.g. terrorist groups, extremist groups) to get involved in regional issues and create disruption by inciting the masses.

1.7. Regionalism and National Integration

Regionalism is not significant merely as a disintegrating force. Regionalism is not opposed to national integration. Both can exist together in a creative partnership. **Both are in favour of development.**

Regionalism stresses the development of a region and national integration for the development of the nation as a whole. If we want to reconcile the competing claims of regionalism and national integration, the political system of the country should remain federal and democratic.

Regionalism is not disruptive of national solidarity. The important condition for national solidarity is that **nationalism should be able to hold the different types of regional sub-nationalities together**. In other words, there should be healthy reconciliation between regionalism and nationalism.

Regionalism can make federalism a greater success. In this aspect, the accentuation of regional identities should not become problematic. It is quite natural that regional communities, who are conscious of their distinctive culture, should interact with federal government on the basis of a **more equal partnership**.

It will reduce the centralizing tendencies in a nation and power will shift from the centre to the states. Conceived in any form, regionalism and sub-regionalism are unavoidable in a country as vast and diverse as India.

1.8. Regionalism & Federalism

Student Notes:

Regionalism often poses a question with respect to the role played by Indian federalism in ensuring India's unity, stability and survival as a polity. Persistent regionalism, sometimes coming on the verge of separation, is rooted in manifold and complex cultural, economic, geographical issues as have been discussed before. The question around the role of Federalism in India assumes special significance when looked from the historical examples of Balkanisation of several large states in the past. For instance, the disintegration of the multi-ethnic and multi-national Soviet Union, and the split up of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia are some examples.

The need for federalism becomes all the more important in countries with ethnically distinct regions where the territorial accommodation of distinct groups of people is of paramount importance. Such countries may utilise a combination of shared rule (analogous to a Union Government) and some kind of self-rule (for regional/local governance) to maintain unity and integrity.

India's rich diversity sometimes looks like an obstacle to unity. But time and again, by remaining committed to democracy, India has proved its capability in terms of resolving differences peacefully and democratically, thereby transforming its diversity into a source of strength.

However, a few suggestive measures can still be followed to further strengthen the same:

- Doing away with regional imbalance
- Check on regional political parties
- Top priority to the economic development of deprived zones
- Restructuring of the society
- Acculturation
- Developed means of transport and communication
- Proper education
- Create enough growth and employment opportunities
- Special attention to backward states
- Improve National Integration

1.9. Clashes related to Regionalism in India

1. **Linguistic Reorganization of States:** Starting with the demand raised by Potti Sriramulu and creation of Andhra state(Initially in 1953, it was called Andhra State; Later in 1956 it was renamed as Andhra Pradesh), language as a basis of creation of states was accepted in principle. Sriramulu's death forced Jawaharlal Nehru to agree to the various demands from other parts of the country with similar demands. Consequently, in 1954, a States Reorganisation Committee was formed, which recommended the formation of 16 new states and 3 Union Territories based on language.
2. **Demand for Dravida Nadu:** Dravidian Movement started in Tamil Nadu in 1925. This movement, also known as 'Self-Respect Movement' initially focused on empowering Dalits, non-Brahmins, and poor people. Later it stood against imposition of Hindi as sole official language on non-Hindi speaking areas. But it was the demand of carving out their own Dravidastan or Dravida Nadu, which made it a secessionist movement. As early as 1960s the DMK and the Nan Tamil organized a joint campaign throughout Madras state demanding its secession from India and making it an independent sovereign state of Tamiland. DMK proposed that the states of Madras, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Mysore should secede from the Indian union and form an independent "Republic of Dravida Nadu".
3. **Telangana Movement:** In the years after the formation of the Andhra Pradesh, people of Telangana expressed dissatisfaction over how the agreements and guarantees were implemented. Discontent with the 1956 Gentleman's agreement intensified in January 1969, when the guarantees that had been agreed on were supposed to lapse. Student agitation for the continuation of the agreement began at Osmania University in Hyderabad

and spread to other parts of the region. Government employees and opposition members of the state legislative assembly threatened “direct action” in support of the students. This movement since then finally resulted in the creation of separate state of Telangana.

4. **Shiv Sena against Kannadigas:** In 1966, Shiv Sena, in Maharashtra, launched its agitation against Kannadigas in the name of Marathi pride. The first targets of its agitation were South Indians who were the workers of Udupi hotels in Mumbai. This agitation was labelled to be a retaliation of the lathi-charge on Marathi speaking people in the border areas.
5. **Bodoland Demand within Assam:** The Bodo agitation is led by the Assam Bodo Students Union which is demanding a separate state and has resorted to wide scale violence and series of crippling bandhs to pursue their demand. One of the basic reason for Assam agitations was due to the expansion of education, particularly higher education, but not industrialization and other job creating institutions thereby creating the army of educated youths in the backward regions. These frustrated young men are allured by the movements against the inflow of people from other countries and states. On the other hand these unemployed youths are also attracted by the caste, communal and other sectional agitations fighting for the protection of rights on sectarian lines.
6. **Khalistan Movement:** It was during the era of 1980s that Khalistan movement with its aim to create a Sikh homeland, often called Khalistan, cropped up in the Punjab region of India and Pakistan. In fact this demand also had the colours of communalism, as the demand was only for Sikhs.
7. **Attacks on Bihar Labourers by the ULFA:** ULFA continues to attempt ambushes and sporadic attacks on government security forces. In 2003, the ULFA was accused of killing labourers from Bihar in response to molestation and raping of many Assamese girls in a train in Bihar. This incident sparked off anti-Bihar sentiment in Assam, which withered away after some months though. In January 2007, the ULFA once again struck in Assam killing approximately 62 Hindi speaking migrant workers mostly from Bihar. On March 15, 2007, ULFA triggered a blast in Guwahati, injuring six persons as it celebrated its ‘army day’.
8. **MNS Targeting North Indians:** It was in 2008 that Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) workers began their violent agitation against North Indians. Bhojpuri films were not allowed to run on theatres in Maharashtra. The targets were vendors and shopkeepers from North India in various parts of Maharashtra.

2. Past Year UPSC GS Mains Questions

1. Growing feeling of regionalism is an important factor in generation of demand for a separate state. Discuss. (2013)
2. What is the basis of regionalism? Is it that unequal distribution of benefits of development on regional basis eventually promotes regionalism? Substantiate your answer. (2016)

3. Vision IAS GS Mains Test Series Questions

1. ***Regionalism is not opposed to national integration; rather both can co-exist in a creative partnership. Critically analyse this statement in the context of India.***

Approach:

The answer should attend to the following sub-questions:

- What is regionalism?
- What are the causes for the proliferation of regionalism?
- Why regionalism is considered antithetical to national integration?
- How can regionalism and national integration be reconciled?

Answer:

- **Regionalism** can be defined as “a phenomenon in which people’s political loyalties become focused upon a region, often in preference to the country or state of

which the region is a part". Demand for separate state, state autonomy, etc. are expressions of regionalism

- Regionalism is characterized by the following often in combination with each other:
 - **Geographical concentration**
 - **cultural, historical** (cultural heritage, folklore, myths and symbolism)
 - **language**
 - **caste**
 - **religion**
 - **ethnic** (tribal identity, racial identity) issues
 - **economic factors**
- Regionalism in India is **rooted in India's diversity of languages, cultures, tribes, and religions**, which is often encouraged by the **geographical concentration of these identity markers** in particular regions, and **fuelled by a sense of regional deprivation**. Indian federalism has been a means of accommodating these regional sentiments.
- Regionalism is believed to be a **threat to the nation-building efforts**. It is evident by the **separatist movements** in Punjab and the North-East; **son of soil movement** in Maharashtra; Regionalism can also breed disharmony between states as witnessed in the **river water disputes** (between Kerala and Tamil Nadu etc.).
- However, at the same time regionalism can have manifestations which is **not a threat to national Integration**. As we know, Regionalism is in sense a desire to concretize an identity based on ethnicity, language, religion, etc. so if the federal polity provides enough space for expression of regional identities, then regionalism or regional pride can be channeled to spur the development of the particular region. Secondly, formation of states based on economic under-development or demand for devolution of powers, greater financial resources, administrative authority etc. is not a threat to national integrity.
- Hence it is important to assess the degree of underlying reason for the need for representation and its consequences on unity and integrity of the nation.
- Moreover, the important condition for reconciling the competing claims of regionalism and national integration is that the political system of the country should remain federal and democratic. It is quite natural that regional communities, who are conscious of their distinctive culture, should interact with federal government on the basis of more equal partnership. It will reduce the centralizing tendencies in a nation and power will shift from the Centre to the states.

2. Post-independence India has witnessed many instances of extreme form of regionalism. Is regionalism a threat to national integrity? How can regional aspirations be addressed within the constitutional framework?

Approach:

- Give a brief definition of regionalism.
- Give an account of rise of sense of regionalism in India.
- Describe how it becomes a threat to national integrity.
- Bring out some Constitutional provisions which try to deal with regional aspirations.

Answer:

Regionalism, as an ideology and political movement, seeks to advance the causes of regions. If the interest of one region or a state is asserted against the country as a whole or against another region or state in a hostile way, and if a conflict is promoted by such alleged interests, then it is called regionalism.

Post independence, India has witnessed many instances of regionalism manifested in: the demand of Dravida Nadu, Telangana movement, Bodoland movement in Assam, Khalistan movement. Interstate disputes also carried regionalist undertones. The underlying causes range from regional disparity to the son of soil concept as well as diversity of languages, cultures, ethnic groups etc.

Regionalism is often seen as a serious threat to the development, progress and unity of the nation. Internal security challenges by the insurgent groups, who propagate and are motivated by the feelings of regionalism pose grave challenge to the internal security of the country.. Regionalism at times transforms into secessionism, especially in border areas often getting support from neighboring countries.

The Constitution of India has adequate provisions to address the issue of regional aspirations.

- Indian federalism provides a mechanism for addressing regionalism and reconciling of regional identities within the democratic framework.
 - The 73rd and 74th Amendment acts further addressed the regional aspiration by devolving power and resources to be used as per regional needs.
- The regions under 5th and 6th Schedule enjoys certain autonomy which give them scope to maintain their own culture and develop according to their own need.
- The provision of PESA Act, 1996 is a step towards bringing reconciliation with the regional aspirations.
- Art 371 has special provisions helpful in addressing concerns of some states.

These provisions need to be implemented in true spirit and with adequate political will to address the issues engendering regionalism.

3. *The roots of regionalism in India lie not only in the diversity of languages, cultures, tribes and religions, but also in the sense of regional deprivation. Explain.*

Approach:

- Explain the concept of regionalism.
- State the causes of regional deprivation.
- Link the roots of regionalism to regional deprivation. Explain with examples.
- Then give a way forward.

Answer:

Regionalism is the expression of a common sense of identity and purpose combined with the creation and implementation of institutions that express a particular identity and shape collective action within a geographical region.

Regionalism in India is rooted in its manifold diversity of languages, cultures, tribes, religions, communities, etc. It originates from the feeling of regional concentration, which can often be fuelled by a sense of regional deprivation.

- Uneven development, marginalization, continued poverty, apathy of concerned authorities, apparent rich-poor divide were some of the main factors that led to the Naxalite Movement in India. The Naxalites are primarily active in relatively backward states such as West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha.
- Similarly, states in the North- East have witnessed secessionist tendencies and violent outbursts as there is regional imbalance in matters of industrial, agricultural and above all, economic development. Lack of employment opportunities and industrial initiatives remain persistent problems.

- Disparity has caused the feeling of relative deprivation and has thereby led to protectionist demands by many.
- The demand of Inner Line Permit by the Meitei Manipuris is also a manifestation of regionalism in order to protect their vested interests as they are increasingly facing problems of outsider invasion, unemployment, increased competition, encroachment of land etc.

Student Notes:

In situations like this, sons of soil theory is put forward to give an impetus to regional demands.

- Relative deprivation in and around Darjeeling region with regard to employment, development, culture led to the demand of a separate state in West Bengal i.e. Gorkhaland wherein interests of certain communities will be preserved.
- The demand of statehood for Vidarbha and Marathwada regions in Maharashtra too is an illustration of regionalism due to relative deprivation. The case for statehood for the two regions is built on backwardness — the lack of socio-economic development resulting from six decades of political neglect.

Regionalism can pose a serious threat to internal security, development, progress and unity of a nation. Hence, development plans should be evenly implemented, regional differences should be ameliorated and the demands of the deprived communities should be efficiently dealt with, in order to preserve peace and unity.

4. *Regionalism in India is based on multifold diversity of the country. Substantiate with suitable examples. What are the prominent means employed to address issues emerging out of regionalism since independence?*

Approach:

- Briefly explain regionalism.
- Discuss the multi-fold diversity in India and how regionalism in India is based on this diversity with suitable examples.
- Mention the prominent means employed to address issues emerging out of regionalism.

Answer:

Regionalism is an ideology and political movement that seeks to advance the causes of regions. It has both positive and negative connotation. Positive regionalism means love towards one's culture, region, language etc. whereas Negative regionalism is an excessive attachment to one's regions in preference to the Nation.

India is a diverse country where different religions, cultures, tribes, and languages co-exist. This multi-fold diversity leads to regionalism due to:

- **Geographical factors:** The distribution along geographical boundaries, topographic and climatic variations along with differences in the settlement pattern induce in people the concept of regionalism. For example, Bodo speaking people in North Bank of Brahmaputra river demand for Bodoland. Similarly, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, etc. were formed on linguistic basis.
- **Historical and cultural factors:** People of a particular cultural & linguistic group also derive inspirations from the cultural heritage, folklore, myths, historical traditions, noble deeds and glorious achievements of the local heroes. For e.g. rise of Shiv Sena in Maharashtra.

- **Caste and religion:** When caste is combined with language, conflicts or religious fundamentalism, it breeds regional feeling, dogmatism, orthodoxy and obscurantism.

Apart from this multi-fold diversity, there are politico-administrative and economic factors as well which breed feelings of regionalism. Uneven development in many parts of the country causes a feeling of relative deprivation among the inhabitants of economically neglected regions. It has manifested itself in the formation of states such as Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Telangana etc.

Prominent means employed in India to address issues emerging out of regionalism:

- Indian Constitution lays down that India “a Union of States”, not a federation. It also empowers the Union Parliament to reorganize the states for territorial adjustment.
- The constitution of India contains a number of special provisions under the schedules five to seven for the self-governance of various tribal groups living in various parts of India. It also provides for the distribution of legislative powers between Centre and State within Schedule seven.
- Government accepted the reorganization of states based on linguistic lines.
- The right to language forms part of the fundamental ‘cultural and educational rights of minorities’ under Art. 30 of the Indian Constitution.
- Three language formula: Other than Hindi and English, states can recognize their own official language under Articles 345 & 347 (providing for 8th Schedule of the Constitution).

Other than these, recommendations of Finance commissions, grant of Special Category status to some states on the basis of deprivation and backwardness, several central schemes initiated to remove regional imbalances such as Backward Regions Grant Fund, and cooperative federalism is also being encouraged. Recently NITI Aayog has been formed to provide voice to each state.

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SECULARISM

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1. Meaning of Secularism

The concept of secularism emerged in the context of the European societies. Often, one of the earliest manifestations of secularism can be seen in the **French Revolution**, 1789, where the people were inspired by **Voltaire's 'Treatise on Tolerance'** (1763). The legal foundation of French Secularism (modern western secularism) can be found in a French law passed in 1905, separating the church and the state (**laïcité**).

The rationale was to curtail the authority of the church and domesticate religion. Secularisation, in the west was related to the arrival of modernity and the rise of science and rationality as alternatives to religious ways of understanding the world.

Thus, secularism is a principle which advocates the separation of religion from politics. It is the principle of separation of government institutions and persons mandated to represent the state from religious institutions and religious dignitaries. Thus, religion should be separate from aspects of state and governance.

Secularism seeks to realize a society that is devoid of either inter-religious domination or intra-religious domination. It promotes freedom within religions and equality between, as well as, within religions.

1.1. Manifestations of Secularism

The term secularism includes a separation between the state and religion. In fact, the nature and extent of separation may take different forms, depending upon the specific values it is meant to promote and the way in which these values are spelt out.

Thus, it has 3 manifestations:-

1. **Differentiation:** Religion will no longer be all encompassing and its presence will only be restricted to the cultural domain.
2. **Privatisation:** Since religion is a matter of faith, it will be confined to the domestic space.
3. **Decline in the social significance of Religion:** The presence of religion in public space will be prohibited and hence its social significance will decline.

Furthermore there can be forms in which Secularism emerges. For instance:

Soft & hard secularism:

1. **Soft secularism** argues for a **legal separation of Religion & the State**. It is tolerant of religion and religious differences, and favours political accommodation of the religion while rejecting the state interference that may undermine religious freedom. Seen in **USA**.
Eg: No school prayer, No Government funds to religious bodies, etc.
2. **Hard secularism** militates for **complete separation of Religion and the State**. It may even be seen as hostility towards organized religion in general. Seen in **France**.
Eg: Banning of face covering niqabs and burqas in France.
 - **Positive and Negative secularism:** Positive secularism means mutual and equal recognition of all the religions whereas negative secularism connotes non recognition of any religion.

2. Difference between Western Concept of Secularism and Indian Secularism

There exists a fundamental difference between the Western concept of secularism and the Indian concept, in that the complete separation of religion and state is not applicable in the Indian interpretation of the term. In our polity, the state seeks to protect all religions equally. For example, the secular Indian state declares public holidays to mark the festivals of all religions.

In context of India, it is sometimes argued that the concept of secularism has been imported from the west. But it is clear from the above differences that in the west, strict church and state separation is the main area of focus; while in India peaceful co-existence of all religions is the focus. The '**Sarva Dharma Samabhava**' concept is deeply entrenched in the Indian mindset which embody the equality of the destination of the paths followed by all the religions.(i.e., equal treatment of all religions)

Student Notes:

Indian Secularism	Western Secularism
Equal protection by the state to all religions. It reflects certain meanings. First secular state to be one that protects all religions, but does not favor one at the cost of other and does not adopt any religion as state religion.	Separation of state and religion as mutual exclusion it means both are mutually exclusive in their own spheres of operation.
The idea of inter-religious equality is at the core of Indian secularism. Equal focus has been given on the inter-religious and the intra-religious equality. It not only deals with the religious freedom of the individuals but with the minority communities also.	Interpreted liberty as liberty of individual and freedom as freedom of the individual and equality as equality between individuals. There is little scope for community based rights or minority based rights.
It promotes state sponsored reforms in the religious sphere on equal footing.	There is a mechanism for the intra-religion equality in the western notion of secularism, not of inter-religion equality thus state maintains an arm's length distance from religion in all matters.
Indian secularism allows for principled state intervention in all religions. Such intervention betrays disrespect to some aspects of every religion. The secular state does not have to treat each aspect of every religion with equal respect. It allows equal disrespect for some aspects of organized religions. Example practicing social evils as essential part of religion.	The West adopted this model due to the two reasons that it was more or less a homogenous society in comparison to India, so they naturally focused on the intra-religious domination and strict separation of the state from the church was emphasized to realize the individual freedom.



Constitutional Provisions Regarding Secularism in India

In India, freedom of religion is a Fundamental Right and is guaranteed through the following provisions:

- **Article 25:** guarantees freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion.
- **Article 26:** every religious denomination has the freedom to manage its religious affairs.
- **Article 27:** Freedom from payment of taxes for promotion of any particular religion.
- **Article 28:** Freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in certain educational institutions.

Other Constitutional safeguards regarding religion include the following:

- **Article 15:** Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.
- **Article 16:** Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment and no citizens shall be ineligible for employment on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth.
- **Article 29:** Protection of distinct language, script or culture of minorities
- **Article 30:** Rights of all minorities, whether based on religion or language, to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.
- The **Preamble** of India states that India is a secular country (added after **42nd Amendment Act, 1976**).

Student Notes:

3. Distinctive Features of Indian Secularism

The Indian idea and practice of secularism, though was inspired by its western origins yet, was firmly rooted in India's own unique socio-historical circumstances- i.e. the remarkable religious diversity in contrast to the mono-religious nature of western societies, the freedom struggle which advocated an equal support & equal respect for all religions, the fact that the practice of one's religion was not seen as antithetical to practice of democracy but as one which would strengthen it in the long run.

The Indian conception of secularism thus recognized the deeply religious nature of Indian society & infused the principle of equality within the practice of religion. Secularism was turned into an non-negotiable basic feature of constitution & the term itself was reinvented to allow intervention of state into religious matters when it was being done to promote not only **inter religious equality** (i.e., equal rights for all citizens irrespective of their religious preferences, along with added protection for religious minorities) but also **intra religious equality** (by ensuring that one sect of a religion does not dominate over other).

The desirability of state intervention into religious matters has been upheld under the Indian conception of secularism to give space to progressive voices within every religion and to allow disagreement with some aspects of religions. For example, the abolition of untouchability, sati, dowry, the amendment of Hindu marriage & inheritance laws & the demand for establishing the uniform civil code etc. can be seen as an application of this concept.

At the same time, the Indian ideal of secularism clearly cautions against allowing religion to interfere in state matters, thereby disallowing mobilizing the electorate on religious lines for winning elections on one hand while strictly spelling out that the Indian nation-state shall have no state religion.

Some Judicial Pronouncements Regarding Secularism & Religious aspects in India

- In the **Shirur Mutt case, 1954**, the '*Doctrine of essentiality*' was coined by the Supreme Court. Here the court opined that only the religious practices which were essential and integral to the religion shall be protected.

This doctrine was also applied in the **Ayodhya case, 1994**, whereby the court opined that mosque is not integral to Islam and that the 'namaz' can be offered anywhere. This doctrine was also applied in the recent **Sabarimala case, 2018**.

This doctrine has been criticized on the fact that the court is entering into a domain that is beyond its competence and gives power to the judges to decide purely religious questions.

- Secularism has been deemed as one of the pillars of “*Basic Structure* of the Indian Constitution”. The Supreme Court in the **Keshavananda Bharati case (1973)** held that the basic structure of the Constitution cannot be altered by the Parliament.
- In the **S. R Bommai vs Union of India case (1994)**, the Supreme Court observed the following, “Notwithstanding the fact that the words ‘Socialist’ and ‘Secular’ were added in the Preamble of the Constitution in 1976 by the 42nd Amendment, the concept of Secularism was very much embedded in our constitutional philosophy”. Thus, the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act only *made secularism explicit* which was already implicit in the Constitution.
- In **Stanislaus vs State of Madhya Pradesh case (1977)**, The Supreme Court held that the right to propagate religion (under Article 25) does not include right to forcible conversion as it may disturb public order.
- In **Ratilal vs State of Bombay (1954)**, it was held that regulations by the state should not interfere with essentials of religion.
- In the **Church of God (Full Gospel) in India vs K. K. R. Majestic Colony Welfare Association (2000)**, it was held that as the right to religion is subject to public order, no prayers (through voice amplifiers or beating of drums) should be performed by disturbing the peace of others.
- In **St. Stephen’s College vs University of Delhi (1992)**, the court held that autonomy of a minority institution cannot be taken away as it will defeat the purpose of right to establish and administer educational institutions by minorities.

4. Secularisation versus Secularism

The terms secularism and secularization are closely related. Secularism is a system or ideology based on the principle that there should be a sphere of knowledge, values, and action that is independent of religious authority, but it does not necessarily exclude religion from having any role in political and social affairs. Secularization, however, is a process which does lead to exclusion. Therefore, the two terms differ in advocating the role of religion in the society.

During the process of secularization, institutions throughout society- economic, political, and social - are removed from the control of religion. Therefore, it leads to the separation of the state and religion. However, still, the former is not the same as the latter. While the separation of church and state is simply a description of what occurs in the political sphere, secularization is a process that occurs all across the society.

In the separation of religion and state, political institutions i.e., those associated with varying levels of public government and administration, are removed from both direct and indirect religious control. While religious organizations can air their opinions about public and political issues, those views cannot be imposed upon the public, or be used as the sole basis for public policy. Therefore, while secularization is a state policy, secularism is largely a social process.

Also, secularisation is not just the increase or decrease in visible markers of religiosity or in the attendance count of religious places, but also a fundamental shift in religious belief towards rationalisation and objectification.

5. Contemporary Issues

In contemporary times, various issues regarding secularism and freedom to practice and administer religion have come to the forefront. These include the following:

5.1. Uniform Civil Code (UCC)

Article 44 of the Constitution states that *the State shall endeavour to secure for citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India*. It essentially means a common set of laws governing personal matters for all citizens of the country, irrespective of religion.

5.1.1. Rationale behind implementing Uniform Civil Code in India

- It will divest religion from social relations and personal laws and will ensure **equality in terms of justice** to both men and women regardless of the faith they practice.

- There will be uniform laws for all Indians with regard to marriage, inheritance, divorce etc.
- It will help in **improving the condition of women** in India as Indian society is mostly patriarchal whereby old religious rules continue to govern the family life and subjugate women.
- Various personal laws have several **loopholes, which are exploited** by those who have the power to do so. Due to uniformity, such loopholes will cease to exist or will be minimised.
- Informal bodies like **caste panchayats** give judgements based on traditional laws. UCC will ensure that legal laws are followed rather than traditional laws.
- It can help in reducing instances of vote bank politics. If all religions are covered under same laws, politicians will have less to offer to communities in exchange for their votes.
- It will help in integration of India as a lot of animosity is caused by **preferential treatment** by the law in favour of certain religious communities.

5.1.2. Challenges in Implementing Uniform Civil Code

Family laws or personal laws of certain minority communities are quite divergent from the majority belief systems. Any attempt at bringing about a common law would lead to the curbing of or putting an end to either of the community's practices.

They fear that any attempt at homogenization would result in their customs getting overshadowed by the majority customs or beliefs that are advocated as progressive, but violative of their sacred faith.

For example, the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956, upholds the superior right of a father as the natural guardian for both boys and unmarried girls. The prior right of the mother is recognised only for the custody of children below five. However, Muslim law recognises the absolute right of a mother to the custody of her minor children (Hizanat). Even the father cannot deprive her of it.

Also, certain dominant religious organisations have further aggravated the issue by issuing statements such as UCC would not allow minorities to retain practices as per their faiths. They will, instead, have to abide by one common law across the country, which Hindus already abide by.

Therefore, some challenges being anticipated and also advocated are:-

- Implementation of UCC might interfere with the principle of secularism, particularly with the provisions of **Articles 25 and 26**, which guarantee freedom relating to religious practices.
- **Conservatism** by religious groups, which resist such changes as it interferes with their religious practices.
- It is **difficult** for the government to come up with a **uniform law that is accepted by all** religious communities. All religious groups- whether majority or minority have to support the change in personal laws.
- Drafting of UCC is another obstacle. There is **no consensus** regarding whether it should be a blend of personal laws or should be a new law adhering to the constitutional mandate.



5.2. Issue of Instant Triple Talaq

Instant triple talaq is a form of Islamic divorce practiced in India, whereby a Muslim man can legally divorce his wife by stating the word talaq three times in oral, written or more recently

electronic form. The practice has raised several controversies and discussions regarding issues of justice, gender equality, human rights and secularism.

Student Notes:

In **Shayara Bano vs Union of India case (2017)**, the Supreme Court declared the practice of triple talaq as unconstitutional by a 3:2 majority.

5.2.1. Positive Outcomes of the Judgement

- It ensures equality by upholding fundamental rights guaranteed by **Articles 14 and 21** of the Constitution.
- It ensures **gender equality** especially for Muslim women as the provision of triple talaq resulted in feelings of insecurity among them. Arbitrary talaq also impacted their social status and dignity.
- It upholds core constitutional provisions, as fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution override the provisions of personal laws

5.2.2. Negative outcomes of the judgement

- It goes against Article 26 of the Indian Constitution, which guarantees freedom in matters of religion; every religious denomination and sect (including Hanafi school, which was followed by Shayara Bano).
- Opponents contend that it is not the court's role to "determine the true intricacies of faith". Also, there is contention that Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Act 1937, has not codified talaq-e-bidat (triple talaq) into a statutory law, thus, it does not fall under Article 13.
- The challenge is to inform the Muslim masses that the abolition of the practice does not go against the Shariah, but it is closer to the original tenets of Islam.

5.3. Entry Movements to Places of Religious Worship Led by Women's Organizations

Shani Shignapur Temple: A group of women called the Bhumata Rangaragini Brigade led a movement to break the 400 year old tradition of the Temple barring women from entering its inner sanctum. Eventually, the Bombay High Court stated that "No law prevents women from entering a place of worship and if men are allowed, then women too should be permitted."

5.3.1. Sabarimala Temple

In Sabarimala temple, Kerala, women between the age of 10 and 50 are not allowed to enter the temple, since they are in the menstrual age group. A 1991 Kerala High Court judgement supported the ban on women **entry**. However, the case was referred to a three judge bench of the Supreme Court to deem whether excluding menstruating women constitutes "**essential religious practice**."

The Supreme Court in a 4:1 judgment gave the verdict that women were to be allowed entry to the temple and that there should be no discrimination on grounds of religion. The court, further, found such a ban on women entry to the temple to be a **violation of Article 17** (form of untouchability)

In Sep 2019, the SC re-considered its judgment on grounds of "**constitutional morality**", and has referred the case to a higher bench. It will now, not only consider this case, but all cases allowing women's entry into temples, etc.

5.3.2. Haji Ali Dargah

In 2012, the Dargah Trust barred women from entering the sanctum sanctorum of the Haji Ali Dargah. The trust cited verses from the Quran and Prophet Mohammed to claim that Islam does not permit women to enter dargahs/mosques. The trust also claimed the fundamental right "to manage its own affairs" under Article 26 of the Indian Constitution. This was opposed by several women's organizations. Eventually, the Bombay High Court lifted the ban saying it

contravenes the Constitution and women should be allowed entry "at par with men". It also held that the Trust cannot enforce a ban "contrary to the fundamental rights" (i.e. Art 14, 15 and 25) enshrined in the Constitution.

Student Notes:

5.3.3. Santhara

It refers to a Jain practice, where followers voluntarily **face death** by gradually reducing food & liquid intake. This practice was challenged in the **Nikhil Soni Versus Rajasthan** High Court Case, on two grounds:-

1. *The right to life does not include the right to die.* Hence, it is not protected under Article 21.
2. It does not constitute an *essential practice*, and hence, is not protected under Article 25.

The judgment was challenged in the Supreme Court, which lifted the stay on Santhara based upon the arguments that the HC judgment was based on an incorrect observation on Jainism. Also, they have criminalized the philosophy, and they do not have the right to determine which practice is essential and which is not. Also, the court argued that equating santhara with suicide was not logical as santhara was not impulsive, but an act of spiritual purification. The SC, further, said that Jain scholars were not consulted by the HC.

6. Previous Year UPSC GS Mains Questions

1. How do the Indian debates on secularism differ from the debates in the West? (2014)
2. How the Indian concept of secularism different from the western model of secularism? Discuss. (2018)
3. What are the challenges to our cultural practices in the name of secularism? (2019)

7. Vision IAS GS Mains Test Series Questions

1. **"Secularism cannot exist as a positive value in society without equality, social justice and democracy". Examine in the context of India.**

Approach:

- First explain briefly what secularism means.
- Next analyze the Indian conception of secularism – secularism equated with religious harmony. Argue how secularism is a pre-requisite for harmony, not the other way around. Also examine whether secularism should be seen exclusively through the prism of religion or is it a much wider concept.
- While doing so, consider the three keywords mentioned in the question – equality, social justice and democracy. Analyze how these are a prerequisite if secularism is to be conceived as a positive value.

Answer:

Secularism implies not only the separation of religion and state but also religious freedom, the autonomy of religious groups, withdrawal of state sanction for religious norms and a minimization of religious groups as categories of public policy and as actors in public life.

The debate on secularism in India has been mainly political: relationship between state and religion, interrelationship between different communities, and interdependence of secularism and democracy. A common quest connecting these three issues has been the quest for religious harmony, which in the course of time came to be identified with secularism.

However, it has been argued that secularism is not a product of religious harmony. In fact, religious harmony is achievable only if secularism is in place. This is particularly true for a multi-religious society like India. The answer to what constitutes secularism in

such a society lies in the ability of the state and society to internalize values and ethics, informed by reason and humanism. It is also important to ensure that secularism is not posited exclusively within the realm of religion, but other areas of human existence, such as culture and economy are also incorporated into the secular conception.

This is important to ensure that religious differences recede to the background and a common bond unites different groups. This is why some like Pt. Nehru had also argued that secularism could be a reality only within the rubric of social justice. He had emphasized the role of economy in the construction of a secular society. According to him the real thing was the economic factor. He had argued that if were to lay stress on the economic factor, religious differences would automatically recede to the background and a common bond would unite different groups. This opinion of Nehru has been interpreted to mean that secularism could be a reality only within the rubric of social justice. Others like Dr. Ambedkar also considered secularism not only a political issue but also a moral issue.

Further, the basic aim of secularism being to ensure equality of all religious denominations, it implies, the concept of secularism is derived from the principle of democratic equality. In fact, it has been argued that secularism gains meaning and substance only when it refers to the principle of democratic equality. Logically, a prior commitment to the principles of democracy is a condition for equality of all religious groups.

Still further, the conception of secularism as only religious harmony is based on a monolithic view of religion. Such a view does not take into account the differentiation within it. The fact is that within each culture there are several cultural and social groups between whom contradictions and complementarities exist. Due to the prevalence of the cultural and social hierarchies that exist within religion, attempts to bring about religious harmony cannot cover all followers of any religion.

Thus realizing communal harmony without creating material and ideological foundations to generate and sustain it seems extremely difficult. The importance attributed to religious harmony is indeed logical, given the reality of a multi-religious society. But it is not sufficiently inclusive to reconcile the cultural differences. For realizing inclusiveness, cultural plurality is not sufficient; what is essential is cultural equality. Integral to the concept of secularism, therefore, is cultural equality; so also are democracy and social justice. Without these three interrelated factors – equality, democracy and social justice – secularism cannot exist as a positive value in society.

2. How are minorities defined in India? Does the commitment to ensure special rights for minorities contradict the idea of secularism? Discuss in the context of India.

Approach:

- Explain how minorities are defined in India.
- Discuss the special rights given to minorities in India and whether it contradicts secularism.

Answer:

The Constitution of India uses the word 'minority' (in Article 29 to 30 and 350 A to 350 B) but does not define the word 'minority' as such. The minorities in India include:

- **Religious minority-** As per National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992 it includes Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Zoroastrians (Parsis) and Jains. Sects within a religion are not considered a religious minority.

- **Linguistic minority** -They pertain mainly to a State and not at the National level. The linguistic minority must have a separate spoken language. It is not necessary that the language must have a distinct script.

It is to be noted that, a group which constitutes a 'statistical minority' at national level may not enjoy minority status in all State/UTs. Supreme Court in **TMA Pai Foundation case** considered the question of the unit for the purpose of determining the definition of 'minority' within the meaning of Article 30(1).

It held that 'a minority either linguistic or religious is determinable only by reference to demography of the State and not by taking into consideration the population of the country as a whole'. Thus, religious and linguistic minorities, have to be considered State-wise for the application of central and state laws.

Special rights to minorities and secularism

In India, the safeguards for minorities under the constitution of India are firstly in the form of fundamental rights (Article 25 to 30). Article 29 talks about preserving the distinct language, script or culture of any citizen, while Article 30 is more specific and talks about right of religious and linguistic minorities to administer educational institutions and non-discrimination by State in granting aids to such institutions.

However, at times these safeguards invites the accusations of favouritism or 'appeasement' and of being anti-secular (a secular state being one that doesn't favour any particular religion over others). In reality, the Protection of minorities requires that they be given special consideration especially in a context where the normal working of the political system places them at a disadvantage vis-à-vis majority community.

In India, even economically strong minorities like Sikhs and Parsis may be disadvantaged in a cultural sense because of their small numbers relative to overwhelming majority of Hindus. Without special protection, secularism can turn into an excuse for imposing the majority community's values and norms on the minorities.

The idea of giving some special right to the minorities is not to treat them as a privileged section of the population but to give to the minorities a sense of security. Special rights for minorities were designed not to create inequalities but to bring about equality by ensuring the preservation of the minority institutions and by guaranteeing autonomy in the matter of administration of these institutions.

Hence, deeming these special rights as contradiction will be to take a lop-sided understanding of secularism without attending to the needs of all sections of society. Counter-views and debate on this arrangement should be seen as the trait of a healthy democracy.

3. The framing of a uniform civil code is an acid test of India's commitment to secularism and modernisation. Critically analyse the statement in the light of post-independent developments in India.

Approach:

The answer should provide a balanced perspective and refrain from making politically incorrect assertions.

- The answer should define what a uniform civil code means and its necessity
- It should specify the constitutional basis of uniform civil code and discuss the post-independence developments in the direction of a uniform civil code and the impediments to it

- The answer should discuss the arguments against a uniform civil code
- The answer should suitably conclude with a balanced perspective

Student Notes:

Answer:

- A Uniform civil code seeks to replace the personal laws based on the scriptures and customs of a religious community with a common set governing every citizen.
- At its core, Uniform Civil Code (UCC) deals with issues of secularism, equality and women's rights. The secular argument is that the laws of the state should not be religion, caste or community specific. Further, a modern state should treat all citizens equally and should not discriminate against women.
- In the Constituent Assembly, a UCC was supported by leaders such as Nehru, Ambedkar and women members but due to stringent opposition from orthodox members, it was included only in the form of Directive Principles as a compromise.
- Later a Hindu Code Bill to provide for a uniform civil code for Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists also met with opposition but was eventually passed in a diluted form through 4 separate acts.
- The Muslim Personal Law continued to exist and is considered as discriminatory towards Muslim women as it permits unilateral divorce and polygamy.
- However, the demand to include the Muslim community under a UCC was resisted by India's leaders as there was a feeling that partition had left Indian Muslims feeling vulnerable and any tampering with their traditions at that stage would have made them feel even less secure. Hence, it was decided to delay such a move to a more apt time.
- However, the controversial case of Shah Bano once again led to demands for a UCC.
- At the same time, there is another perspective that the state should not unilaterally change personal laws, based on religion. Support for such changes should come from the community itself. For instance, the demand for uniform personal laws for all Hindus was the result of a vigorous social-reform movement among them. Despite opposition from some orthodox sections, there was widespread support for such a move. On the other hand, such a demand did not emanate from the Muslim community.
- Hence, in conclusion a UCC is a worthy goal to seek but it should be arrived at through a process of debate and consensus and not through top-down law making.

4. *Is the Indian notion of secularism, based on uniform respect for all religions by the state and separation of religion from public institutional practices, adequate to ensure a secular state? Discuss.*

Approach:

- Briefly explain Indian secularism as per given statement.
- Discuss with appropriate arguments if it has lead to a secular state. Cite the challenges.
- Give suggestions, if any.

Answer:

India being a secular state there is no preferred state religion and all religious groups enjoy the same constitutional protection without any favour or discrimination. Secularism in India unlike the western notion does not mean separate state from religion. It means equal respect for all faiths and religions. The same has been elaborated as:

- Articles 25 to 28 of the Indian Constitution offer rights relating to freedom of religion to all. However, the State has power to regulate socioeconomic matters.
- Articles 14, 15, 16, 17, 44 and 51A, by implication prohibit the establishment of a theocratic state.
- In the *Kesavananda Bharati* case the Supreme Court (SC) had declared secularism as a part of the basic structure of the Constitution. This was reiterated in the *Bommai* case. Alongside, the Court upheld the right of the State to make laws regulating the secular affairs of temples, mosques and other places of worship as also power of the parliament to form and rationalize personal laws.
- Section 123(3) of Representation of Peoples Act 1951 prohibits political parties from fighting elections on the basis of religion. This is a check to contain communal forces from polarizing voters.
- In *Ismail Faruqui v. Union of India*, SC held secularism to be one facet of right to equality.

Student Notes:

Challenges:

- Despite a secular Constitution there exists, mutual misunderstanding and intolerance between sections of people of different religions, faiths and beliefs.
- Frequent recourse to revivalist events such as Ghar Wapsi etc. breeds fear amongst the minorities against majoritarianism.
- Incidents of communal clashes, hatred, and violence are a blot to a multi-religious and multi-cultural Indian society.
- Scope for religious organization(s) to influence State and political decision making.
- Religious hate speech, falsification of history and dissemination of wrong information amongst the masses.

In spite of the above challenges, Secularism as practiced in India has proved effective in the realization of a democratic polity. Present challenges may be overcome by adhering to the principles of humanism, rationalism and universal religion, which have provided an intellectual base to Indian secularism since ages.

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URBANIZATION

Student Notes:

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1. Introduction

Urbanization (or the growth of urban settlement), is the process of becoming urban, moving to cities, changing from agriculture to other pursuits common to cities, such as trade, manufacturing, industry and management, and corresponding changes of behavior patterns.

An increase in the size of towns and cities leading to growth of urban population is the most significant dimension of urbanization. In ancient times there have been great many cities such as Rome or Baghdad, but ever since industrialization and increasing industrial production, cities have grown phenomenally and now urbanization is very much part of our contemporary life.

Urbanization in India was mainly a post-independence phenomenon, due to adoption of mixed system of economy by the country, which gave rise to the development of private sector. It has been taking place at an increasingly fast rate in India. The following table shows the increase in urban population from Pre independence till date:

Census year	1901	1951	2001	2011	2018
Percentage of population residing in urban centres	11.4	17.29	28.53	31.16	34

According to a survey done by UN state of World Population Report, by 2030, 41% of the Indian population will reside in urban areas and also as per "World Cities Report 2016 – Urbanisation and Development: Emerging Futures", India's urban population is expected to become 55 percent of the total population by 2050.

GLOBAL URBAN POPULATION

As per World Urbanization Prospects, 2018 revised : The urban population of the world has grown rapidly from 751 million in 1950 to 4.2 billion in 2018. The report notes that future increase in the size of World's urban population is expected to be highly concentrated in just a few countries. India, China and Nigeria will account for 35% of the projected growth of world's urban population between 2018 and 2050. Today, the most urbanized regions include Northern America (with 82% of its population living in urban areas in 2018), Latin America and the Caribbean (81%), Europe (74%) and Oceania (68%). The level of urbanization in Asia is now approximating 50%. In contrast, Africa remains mostly rural, with 43% of its population living in urban areas.

2. Urbanization and Associated phenomenon

There is no common definition of what constitutes an urban settlement. As a result, the definition employed by national statistical offices varies widely across countries, and in some cases has changed over time within a country. The criteria for classifying an area as urban may be based on one or a combination of characteristics, such as: a minimum population threshold; population density; proportion employed in non-agricultural sectors; the presence of infrastructure such as paved roads, electricity, piped water or sewers; and the presence of education or health services.

In this section, we will discuss different definitions and phenomenon associated with the urban areas. It includes Census definition of urban areas, Urban Agglomeration, Over-Urbanization, Sub Urbanization, Counter Urbanization and Census towns.

In 1961 census, 'town' was defined and determined on the basis of number of empirical tests:

Student Notes:

- a minimum population of 5000
- a density of not less than 1,000 per square mile,
- three-fourth of the occupations of the working population should be outside of agriculture.
- the place should have a few characteristics and amenities such as newly founded industrial areas, large housing settlements and places of tourist importance and civic amenities.

2.1. Urban Agglomeration

This term was introduced in 1971 census. Often large railway colonies, university campuses, port areas, military camps etc come up outside the statutory limits of the city or town but adjoining it. Such areas may not themselves qualify to be treated as towns but if they form a continuous spread with the adjoining town, it would be realistic to treat them as urban. Such settlement has been termed as outgrowths, and may cover a whole village, or part of a village. Such towns together with their outgrowths have been treated as one urban unit and called 'urban agglomeration'.

According to Census of India, 2001, an urban agglomeration is a continuous urban spread constituting a town and its adjoining outgrowths (OGs), or two or more physically contiguous towns together with or without outgrowths of such towns. An Urban Agglomeration must consist of at least a statutory town and its total population should not be less than 20,000 as per the 2001 Census.

2.2. Outgrowth

According to Census 2001, an Out Growth (OG) is has been defined as a viable unit such as a village or a hamlet or an enumeration block made up of such village or hamlet and clearly identifiable in terms of its boundaries and location. Some of the examples are railway colony, university campus, port area, military camps, etc., which have come up near a statutory town outside its statutory limits but within the revenue limits of a village or villages contiguous to the town.

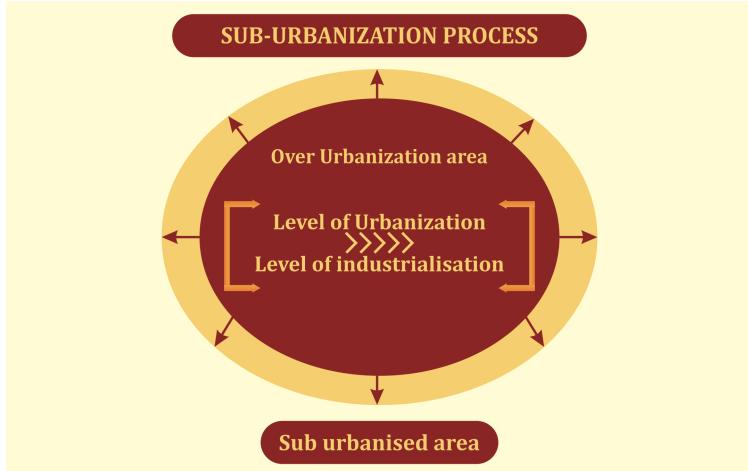
An outgrowth possesses urban features like infrastructure and amenities such as pucca roads, electricity, taps, drainage system for disposal of waste water etc. educational institutions, post offices, medical facilities, banks etc. and is physically contiguous with the core town of the Urban Agglomeration. In the 2011 Census, 475 places with 981 outgrowths have been identified as Urban Agglomerations as against 384 Urban Agglomerations with 962 outgrowths in 2001 Census.

2.3. Over-Urbanization

Over-urbanization is a phenomenon wherein the level of urbanization surpasses the level of industrialization. In an over urbanized area, population growth outstrips its job market and the capacity of its infrastructure. This phenomenon can also be referred as Urbanisation without Industrialisation. E.g. Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi are some of the over urbanized cities.

2.4. Sub-Urbanization

It is closely related to over-urbanization of a city. Over a period of time, people from the Over-Urbanized area start moving towards the fringe area around the cities. Such areas around the cities gradually start developing as an urban area. This phenomenon is known as Sub Urbanisation.



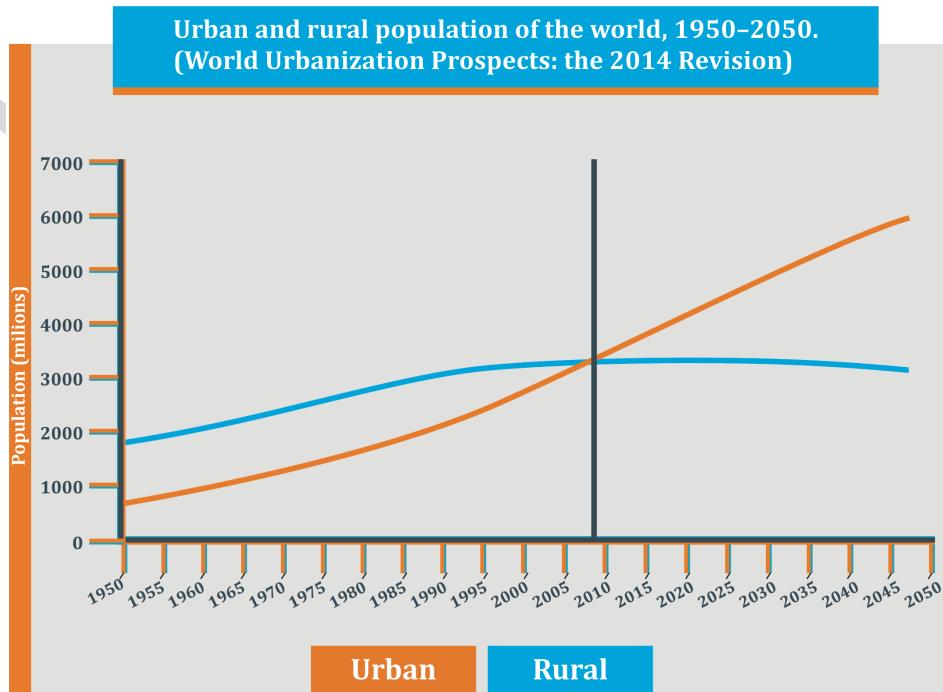
There are several factors which leads to the process of Sub-urbanisation such as :

1. High cost of living in over urbanized area,
2. Development of transport facility around the horizons of over urbanized area,
3. New Work culture that does not necessitate the physical presence on every day.
4. inclusion of surrounding areas of towns within its municipal limits

Delhi is a typical example; wherein the all the above mentioned factors have led to the development of sub urbanized area. E.g. Ghaziabad, Faridabad, Meerut etc.

GLOBAL TRENDS IN URBANIZATION

Globally, **more people live in urban areas than in rural areas**. In 2007, for the first time in history, the global urban population exceeded the global rural population, and the world population has remained predominantly urban thereafter. The planet has gone through a process of rapid urbanization over the past six decades. The urban population is expected to continue to grow, so that by 2050, the world will be one third rural (34 per cent) and two-thirds urban (66 per cent).



2.5. Counter-Urbanization

Student Notes:

It is a demographic and social process whereby people move from urban areas to rural areas. It first took place as a reaction to inner-city deprivation and overcrowding. Counter urbanization occurs when some large cities reach a point where they stop growing further or actually begin to decrease in size as their population start moving into suburban areas or smaller cities thereby leapfrogging the rural-urban fringe. There are instances which show that the phenomenon of counter urbanization is occurring in India.

2.6. Census Towns

In 2011, a new definition of census town has been developed. This urban classification of 'census towns' helps differentiate between India's small farming communities and the larger market town-type settlements that are experiencing rapid and haphazard growth.

To be classified as a census town, a village must fulfil three criteria;

- it need at least 5,000 inhabitants,
- a density of 400 people per sq. km, and

at least three quarters of its male working population must be "engaged in non-agricultural pursuits".

3. Process of Urbanization

Urbanization as a structural process of change is generally related to industrialization but it is not always the result of industrialization. Urbanization results due to the concentration of large-scale and small scale industrial ,commercial, financial and administrative set up in the cities; technological development in transport and communication, cultural and recreational activities. The excess of urbanization over industrialization that makes it possible to provide employment for all persons coming to urban areas is, in fact, what sometimes leads to over urbanization.

In India, a peculiar phenomenon is seen: industrial growth without a significant shift of population from agriculture to industry and growth of urban population without a significant rise in the ratio of the urban to the total population. While in terms of ratio, there may not be a great shift from rural to urban activities, but there is still a large migration of population from rural areas to urban areas. This makes urban areas choked; while at the same time there is lack of infrastructural facilities to cope with this rising population.

In context of India, the process of urbanization is seen as a socio-cultural process, economic process and a geographical process.

- As a **socio-cultural phenomenon**, it is a melting pot of people with diverse ethnic, linguistic and religious backgrounds.
- As an **economic process**, the city is a focal point of productive activities. It exists and grows on the strength of the economic activities existing within itself.
- Under the **geographical process**, it deals with migration or change of location of residence of people and involves the movement of people from one place to another.

The process of urbanization has thus been associated with important economic and social transformations, which have brought greater geographic mobility, lower fertility, longer life expectancy and population ageing.

4. Social effects of Urbanization

Urbanization has far reaching effects on larger societal process and structures. Following are some of the sections-

4.1. Family and kinship

Urbanization affects not only the family structure but also intra and inter-family relations, as well as the functions the family performs. With urbanization, there is a disruption of the bonds of community and the migrant faces the problem to replace old relationships with new ones. The relationships of community living tend to become impersonal, formal and goal oriented.

I.P. Desai (1964) showed that though the structure of urban family is changing, the spirit of individualism is not growing in the families. He found that 74 percent families were residentially nuclear but functionally and in property joint, and 21 percent were joint in residence and functioning as well as in property and 5 percent families were nuclear.

Aileen Ross (1962) in her study of 157 Hindu families belonging to middle and upper classes in Bangalore found that

- about 60 percent of the families are nuclear
- the trend today is towards a break with the traditional joint family form into the nuclear family form into the nuclear family unit.
- Small joint family is now the most typical form of family life in urban India.
- Relations with one's distant kin are weakening or breaking.

4.2. Urbanization and Caste

- It is generally held that caste is a rural phenomenon whereas class is urban and that with urbanization, caste transforms itself into class. But it is necessary to note that the caste system exists in cities as much as it does in villages although there are significant organizational differences.
- Caste identity tends to diminish with urbanization, education and the development of an orientation towards individual achievement and modern status symbols. **It has been pointed out that among the westernized elite, class ties are much more important than caste ties.**
- However, caste system continues to persist and exert its influence in some sectors of urban social life while it has changed its form in some other sectors. Caste solidarity is not as strong in urban areas as in the rural areas. Caste panchayats are very weak in cities. There exists a dichotomy between workplace and domestic situation and both caste and class situations co-exist.

4.3. Urbanization and the Status of Women

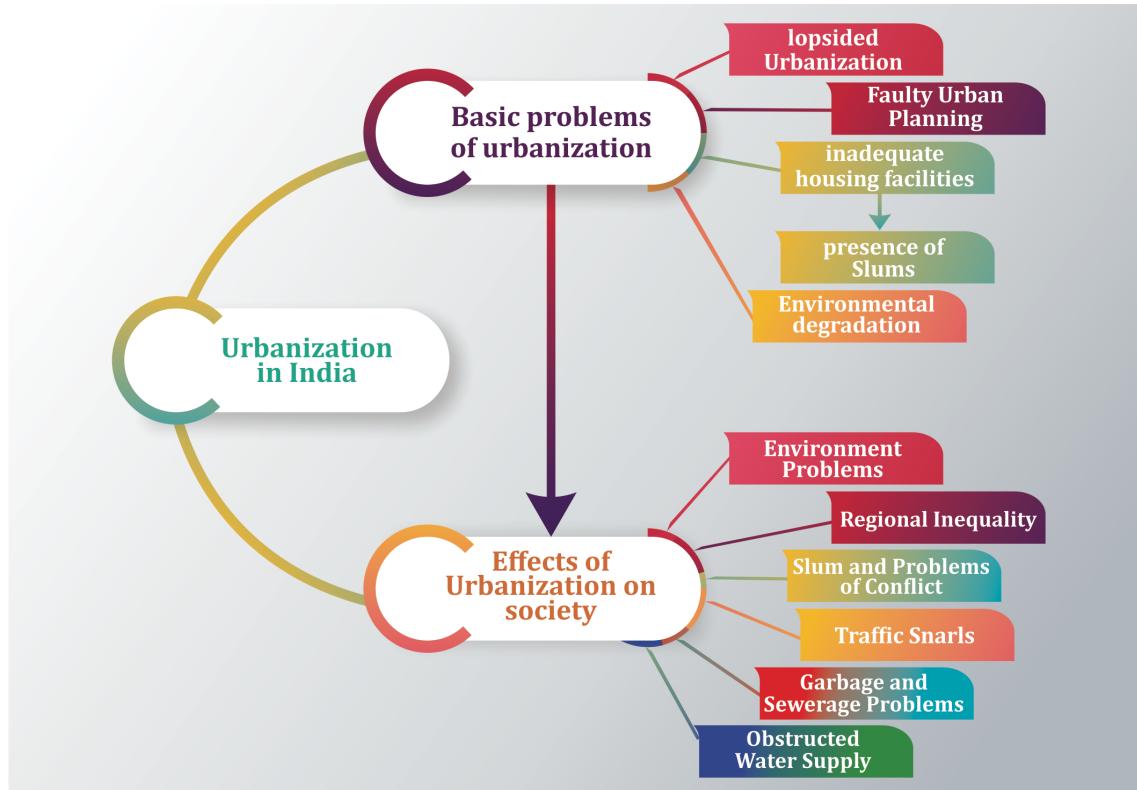
- Women constitute an important section of rural urban migrants. They migrate at the time of marriage and also when they are potential workers in the place of destination. While middle class women get employed in white collar jobs and professions, lower class women find jobs in the informal sector. Women are also found in the formal sector as industrial workers.
- Many positive developments took place in the socio economic lives of women as a result of increasing urbanization. Increasing number of women have taken to white-collar jobs and entered different professions. These professions were instrumental in enhancing the social and economic status of women, thereby meaning increased and rigorous hours of work, professional loyalty along with increased autonomy. Average age of marriage of girls is higher in urban areas.
- However, the traditional and cultural institutions remaining the same, crises of values and a confusion of norms have finally resulted. The personally and socially enlightened woman is forced to perform dual roles - social and professional. Also, Urbanisation has not brought about any radical change in the traditional pattern of arranged marriage with dowry. Urban women want new opportunities but old securities as well.

- The status of urban women, because of being comparatively educated and liberal, is higher than that of rural women. However in the labour market, women continue to be in a disadvantaged situation.

Student Notes:

5. Problems of Urbanization in India

The patterns of urbanization in India has been marked by regional and interstate diversities, large scale rural to urban migration, insufficient infrastructural facilities, growth of slums and other allied problems. Some of the major problems of urbanization faced in different parts of India are as follows:



5.1. Unplanned urbanization

Various factors responsible for the process of urbanization like migration, better economic opportunities led to settling down of people either in already densely populated cities or the fringe areas around the cities. This rapid urbanization leads to the development of cities without any urban planning and eventually that becomes unsuitable for living. It poses a serious threat to the development in terms of delivery of services and living conditions. Also, rapid urbanization forces government to build cities which actually lacks proper infrastructure, public facilities and employment opportunities.

5.2. Housing and Inflated Land Prices

It is one of the most intense problems which have emerged due to increased urbanization. Overpopulation puts a lot of pressure on limited urban land area. This problem is particularly more severe in those urban areas where there is large invasion of jobless or underemployed immigrants. The major factors for housing problems are lack of building materials and financial resources, insufficient expansion of public utilities into sub-urban areas, and lack of enough transportation to sub-urban areas where most of the available land for new construction is to be found.

5.3. Creation of Slums

There is acute shortage of housing in urban areas and much of the available accommodation is of sub-standard quality. This problem has worsened over the years due to rapid increase in population, fast rate of urbanization and proportionately inadequate addition to the housing stock.

With large scale migration to urban areas many find that the only option they have is substandard conditions of slums. Slums are characterized by sub-standard housing, overcrowding, lack of electrification, ventilation, sanitation, roads and drinking water facilities. They have been the breeding ground of diseases, environmental pollution, demoralization and many social tensions.

As per the census 2011, 17% of the urban population in India lives in slum which is expected to increase rapidly considering the huge migration from rural to urban area. Notably, this percentage is even higher in some of the cities. For e.g., the ratio is more than 50% in Greater Mumbai.

5.4. Over Crowding

In major cities in India like Mumbai, Kolkata, Pune and Kanpur, somewhere between 85% and 90% of households live in one or two rooms. In some households, five to six persons live in one room. Over-crowding encourages deviant behavior, spreads diseases and creates conditions for mental illness, alcoholism etc. One effect of dense urban living is people's apathy and indifference.

5.5. Water supply, Drainage and Sanitation

No city has round the clock water supply in India. Intermittent supply results in a vacuum being created in empty water lines which often suck in pollutants through leaking joints. Many small towns have no main water supply at all and are dependent on the wells. Drainage situation is equally bad. Because of the non-existence of a drainage system, large pools of stagnant water can be seen in city even in summer months.

Removing garbage, cleaning drains and unclogging sewers are the main jobs of municipalities and municipal corporations in Indian cities. There is a total lack of motivation to tackle the basic sanitation needs of the cities. The spread of slums in congested urban areas and lack of civic sense among the settlers in these slums further adds to the growing mound of filth and diseases. Diseases like dengue, malaria, typhoid, flu and respiratory ailments are on the rise in most of the urban centres.

5.6. Transportation and Traffic

Absence of planned and adequate arrangements for traffic and transport is another problem in urban centres in India. Majority of people use buses and tempos, while a few use rail as transit system. The increasing number of two-wheelers and cars make the traffic problem worse. They cause air pollution as well. Moreover, the number of buses plying the metropolitan cities is not adequate and commuters have to spend long hours to travel.

The design and maintenance of city roads is a major challenge in Indian cities. The roads are notorious for being pedestrian-unfriendly, poorly surfaced, congested, and constantly dug up. An important and urgent transformational reform is to draw up national design standards and contracting standards for city roads to address these challenges.

The flow of traffic also needs special attention in Indian cities. Unlike western cities, motorized vehicles in India change lanes with high frequency and in unpredictable ways. This creates unnecessary traffic jams and delays.

Metro rails can be an efficient source of public transportation in many cities. The success of some initial metro projects has led to demands for the same in other cities.

5.7. Pollution

Our towns and cities are major polluters of the environment. Several cities discharge 40 to 60 percent of their entire sewage and industrial effluents untreated into the nearby rivers. Urban industry pollutes the atmosphere with smoke and toxic gases from its chimneys. All these, increase the chances of disease among the people living in the urban centres. According to UNICEF, lakhs of urban children die or suffer from diarrhea, tetanus, measles etc. because of poor sanitary conditions and water contamination. As a long-term remedy, what is needed is using new techniques of waste collection, new technology for garbage-disposal and fundamental change in the municipal infrastructure and land-use planning.

5.8. Decreased Group Solidarity

Residential areas in cities all over the world are segregated on the basis of primordial identities. This segregation causes tension and gives rise to spatial pattern of communal violence. Cities have seen increased incidences of crime due to inadequate social infrastructure like education, employment, skill development etc.

Unplanned urbanization has led to rise of slums which are socially isolated from the society and as a result there are increased incidences of pathological behavior. This isolation impacts the cognitive development of children. Feeling of relative deprivation in the absence of basic amenities increases the crime rates.

Also, resource rich states attract more migrants and eventually this gives rise to regionalism. In recent times this has become a major reason of social conflicts.

5.9. Rural urban divide

As skilled population move to cities and considering the trend of the increased urbanization, government focus has also shifted from rural to urban area. Consequently, rural areas have started witnessing social changes like transformation of workforce (feminization), changes in land relations, absence of leadership etc.

The above is not an exhaustive list of the problems of urbanization. A whole lot of other problems including increasing rate of crime in the cities, increasing old age population and absence of social security for them, enhanced role and sphere of market has led to the poor and marginalized suffering the most. Studies have also shown that stress levels are found high in cities, which in turn has deleterious impact on the health of the people.

5.10. Urban Crimes

Urbanization in India has not only been fast but also unplanned. This leads to an imbalance in resource availability that manifests itself in dearth of space, shelter, food and basic amenities for the rising population leading to competition, rivalry, insecurity and crimes. As per National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), in 19 selected Metropolitan cities with population more than 2 million, the Crimes under IPC (Indian Penal Code) and SLL (Special and Local Laws), witnessed an increase of 7.3% and 5.2% respectively in 2016 over 2015. These include heinous crimes such as murder, rape, kidnapping and abduction, and robbery.

5.11. Waste Generation & Waste Management Issues

Urbanization directly leads to waste generation, and its unscientific waste handling causes health hazards and urban environment degradation. Increase in urbanization, changing lifestyles and consumerism is going to further complicate Solid Waste Management which is already a mammoth task in India. Financial constraints, institutional weaknesses, improper choice of technology and public apathy towards Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) have made this situation worse.

6. Major Programmes Currently in the Area of Urban Development

Student Notes:

- **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana** - Housing for All (HFA) (Urban Mission) was launched in June 2015 to provide housing to all in urban areas by 2022.
- **Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)**- launched with the objective to provide hard infrastructure for universal coverage of piped drinking water, sewerage and green spaces and parks. AMRUT also incentivizes governance reforms in the cities.
- **Developing Smart Cities**-Launched in June 2015, Smart Cities Mission aims at driving economic growth and improving the quality of life through area based development and city-level smart solutions. The mission would convert 100 existing cities into smart cities
- **Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban)**-Launched on 2nd October 2014, Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) (Urban) is the key mission driving the campaign to make our cities clean. The mission aims to eliminate open defecation in all statutory towns by 2nd October 2019. It also proposes to eradicate manual scavenging, introduce modern and scientific solid waste management, induce behavioural change with respect to healthy sanitation practices and generate awareness for sanitation and its link to public health, augment the capacity of ULBs and create an enabling environment for the private sector in waste management.
- **Deen Dayal Antodaya Yojana– National Urban Livelihood Mission (DAY – NULM)**-aims at creating opportunities for skill development leading to market based employment and helping the poor to set up self-employment ventures. This Mission's interventions are implemented through five key components:
 1. Social Mobilization and Institutional Development (SMID);
 2. Self-Employment Programmes (SEPs);
 3. Employment through Skill, Training & Placement (EST&P);
 4. Shelter for Urban Homeless (SUH); and
 5. Support to Urban Street Vendors (SUSV).
- **National Heritage City Development & Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY) Mission** was launched in January 2015 with an aim to rejuvenate the heritage cities, with special attention to others issues such as sanitation, tourism, and livelihood. The Mission is targeted for completion by November 2018. The HRIDAY mission will be concluded in 12 heritage cities as per the Detailed Project Reports.
- **Urban transport** - All the interventions in the urban transport by the Ministry of Urban Development such as Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS), urban transit infrastructure or financing of metro rail projects etc, are carried out as per the provisions of National Urban Transport Policy, 2006.
- **Pooled Finance Development Fund Scheme**: The Central Government launched the Pooled Finance Development Fund (PFDF) Scheme to provide credit enhancement to ULBs to access market borrowings based on their credit worthiness through State-Level-Pooled Finance Mechanism. The broad objectives of this scheme are to facilitate development of bankable urban infrastructure projects; to facilitate Urban Local Bodies to access capital and financial markets for investment in critical municipal infrastructure , to reduce the cost of borrowing to local bodies and to facilitate development of Municipal Bond Market.
- **North Eastern Region Urban Development Programme (NERUDP)** - The North Eastern Region Urban Development Programme (NERUDP) Phase-I is being implemented by the Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD) with the financial assistance from Asian Development Bank (ADB). It covers capital cities of 5 North Eastern States viz. Agartala (Tripura), Aizawl (Mizoram), Gangtok (Sikkim), and Kohima (Nagaland). The project covers priority urban services viz.
(a) Water Supply, (b) Sewerage and Sanitation, and (c) Solid Waste Management.

7. Way Forward

Student Notes:

India needs to work on several areas to manage its unplanned urbanization: Inclusive cities, funding, planning, capacity building and low-income housing. A political process must also be started where the urban issues are debated with evolution of meaningful solutions:

7.1. Improved Governance

Governance forms an integral part of Urbanization. Governance is the weakest and most crucial link which needs to be repaired to bring about the urban transformation so urgently needed in India. Financing the large sums required to meet the investment needs of urban infrastructure is crucially dependent on the reform of institutions and the capacity of those who run the institutions for service delivery and revenue generation. It is seen that large expenditures on Indian cities and towns have to be combined with better governance structures, strong political and administrative will to collect taxes and user charges, and improved capacity to deliver. Cities must be empowered, financially strengthened, and efficiently governed to respond to the needs of their citizens and to contribute to the growth momentum. Following are the areas where governance needs to be improved further:

1. **Strengthening Municipalities:** The municipal entities need to be strengthened as local governments with 'own' sources of revenue, predictable formula-based transfers from state governments, and other transfers from the Government of India and state governments to help them discharge the larger responsibilities assigned to them by the 74th Constitutional Amendment. Improved tax revenues combined with rational user charges will enable cities to leverage their own resources to incur debt and also access new forms of financing through public private partnership (PPP). NITI Aayog's suggestions are also on the same line, A well-run ULBs should have the power to raise financial resources including through municipal bonds. Indian cities also need to overhaul their municipal staffing and introduce appropriate skills to achieve administrative efficiency
2. **Creation of Waste to Energy plants:** To speed up the process of cleaning up municipal solid waste, NITI Aayog suggests the creation of an authority at the Centre to spread the use of Waste to Energy plants. Such an authority may be called Waste to Energy Corporation of India (WECl) and placed under the Ministry of Urban Development. WECl may set up world class Waste to Energy plants through PPP across the country. It can play a key role in fast-tracking coverage of waste to energy plants across 100 smart cities by 2019.
3. **Strict enforcement of traffic rules:** It can be done through fines in case of violations. It will induce behavioural change and could greatly reduce both the travel time and pollution. Facilitating new age technology cab aggregators: Incentives may be created to encourage vehicle-sharing systems such as Ola and Uber. This will reduce the number of vehicles on the road reducing both congestion and pollution.
4. **National metro rail policy:** It will ensure that metro projects are not considered in isolation, but as part of a comprehensive plan of overall public transportation. Further, the policy should provide clear guidelines on various aspects of metro projects, such as planning, financing, PPP, etc.

7.2. Inclusive Cities

The poor and lower income groups must be brought into the mainstream in cities. Regulations intended to manage densities and discourage migration both limit the supply of land **and** require many households to consume more land than they would choose. This drives urban sprawl and pushes up the price of land and the cost of service delivery for all. High standards for parking, coverage limits, setbacks, elevators, road widths, reservations for health centres, schools etc. (often not used) prevent the poor from choosing how much to consume of the costliest resource (urban land) to put a roof over their heads, and comply with legal requirements.

7.3. Financing

Student Notes:

Devolution has to be supported by more reforms in urban financing that will reduce cities' dependence on the Centre and the states and unleash internal revenue sources. Consistent with most international examples, there are several sources of funding that Indian cities could tap into, to a far greater extent than today: Monetizing land assets; higher collection of property taxes, user charges that reflect costs; debt and public-private partnerships (PPPs); and central/state government funding. However, internal funding alone will not be enough, even in large cities. A portion has to come from the central and state governments.

7.4. Planning

India needs to make urban planning a central, respected function, investing in skilled people, rigorous fact base and innovative urban form. This can be done through a "cascaded" planning structure in which large cities have 40-year and 20-year plans at the metropolitan level that are binding on municipal development plans. Central to planning in any city is the optimal allocation of space, especially land use and Floor Area Ratio (FAR) planning. Both should focus on linking public transportation with zoning for affordable houses for low-income groups. These plans need to be detailed, comprehensive, and enforceable.

7.5. Local capacity building

A real step-up in the capabilities and expertise of urban local bodies will be critical to devolution and improvement of service delivery. Reforms will have to address the development of professional managers for urban management functions, who are in short supply and will be required in large numbers. New innovative approaches will have to be explored to tap into the expertise available in the private and social sectors.

Over the longer term, India needs to introduce more fundamental changes to turn our cities into 21st century spaces. We need to introduce spatial planning that simultaneously addresses developmental needs of metropolitan, municipal and ward-level areas. We need to genuinely devolve power to urban local bodies and financially empower them.

The outcome of the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, "The future we want", recognized both the plight of the urban poor and the need for sustainable cities as matters of great urgency for the United Nations development agenda. Time has come to forge a new model of urban development that integrates all facets of sustainable development, to promote equity, welfare and shared prosperity in an urbanizing world.

9. Previous Year UPSC GS Mains Questions

1. Discuss the various social problems which originated out of the speedy process of urbanization in India. (2013)
2. Smart cities in India cannot sustain without smart villages. Discuss this statement in the backdrop of rural urban integration. (2015)
3. With a brief background of quality of urban life in India, introduce the objectives and strategy of the 'Smart City Programme.' (2016)

10. Vision IAS GS Mains Test Series Questions

Student Notes:

1. *Give an account of the factors driving people to migrate from the countryside to urban areas even if it entails living in slums. Highlight some important facts about slums unique to India. Also discuss some strategies which can be adopted for transforming India's slums.*

Approach:

- Introduce upon Rural-Urban migration in India and resultant growth of slums.
- Discuss the factors that drive people to migrate to cities and even live in slums.
- Discuss the important facts about slums unique to India.
- Discuss strategies to transform India's slums.

Answer:

Urbanization accompanied by large scale migration leads to mushrooming slums. India's slum population will constitute roughly 9% of the total projected national population of 1.28 billion in 2017.

Driving factors

- **A Higher and More Stable Income:** Productive employment opportunities in an urban centre likely generate a higher and more consistent personal disposable income than in the place of origin – likely a rural, farming centre.
- **Social Mobility for the Next Generation:** Raising children in an urban environment creates a higher “option value” for the next generation. Typically, cities offer a wider choice of education and employment opportunities.
- **Distress Migration:** Political disturbances and inter-ethnic conflicts force people away from their homes. People also migrate to urban areas in the aftermath of major natural disasters.
- **No other option except slums:** Poor migrant families are unable to afford decent housing and transportation cost which forces them to settle in slum areas in the city near to their work place.

Unique Facts

- **Unprecedented Scale:** No country has or is facing the issue of slums on the scale at which India is. By 2017, India is expected to have over 100 million people living in slums and another 10 million migrants moving to the cities each year.
- **Political Clout Cuts Both Ways:** India's slum-dwellers are fully enfranchised and actively vote for national and local leaders who they feel will protect their interests. Slum-dwellers' today know they represent a strong and highly influential vote and politicians know that delivering things of value to this constituency plays an important part in their ability to win their vote.
- **No Control:** Some other developing countries have more effective political tools to control urban migration. However, India's democracy which assures the free movement of people throughout the country prevents any such controls from being even remotely feasible.

Strategies for Transformation

A viable solution to transform the slums would have to take a holistic view dealing with India's larger macro challenges. Such a solution should include the following strategies:

- **Rural Re-Visioning and Investment:** There is need to create other cities as counter-magnets so that the migration to major cities like Mumbai can be arrested.

Infrastructure, employment opportunities and the overall quality of life in India's small towns and rural areas should be improved.

- **Industrial Revolution and Continued Development:** The solution to slums is not to reverse industrialisation or to try and contain urbanisation, but indeed to press forward with it more aggressively so that businesses can afford to provide jobs to slum-dwellers and pay them a proper wage.
- **Slum Architecture:** Building high-quality, low-cost, multi-storied, diverse formats in the current slum areas such that these become integrated with the rest of the city.
- **Sustainable Continuous Dynamic Infrastructure Provisioning:** The government needs to create a framework for gradual and continuous upgrading of slum infrastructure.

2. *Whereas the UN Habitat report calls cities "the highest pinnacles of human creation", the moot question is what form the cities of developing world should take. In context of this statement, examine the contending strategies of urbanisation, with respect to India.*

Approach:

- In the introduction briefly explain the context in the statement and provide the reason for a careful consideration of the shape cities would take in developing world.
- Further delineate the strategies involving large and small cities as models of urbanisation.
- Conclude by underlining the optimal combination required for future urban growth.

Answer:

Cities have been termed as pinnacles of human creation owing to their historic role and future potential as sites of human collaboration, engines of growth and vehicles of social mobility. The UN habitat estimates that by 2050 2/3rd of the global population would reside in cities. According to the World Bank 90 % of the urban growth would occur in the developing world. Thus, the inevitability of urbanization and concerns of sustainability call for greater attention to cities in the developing world.

In this context cities in India have largely grown organically and in an unplanned manner, this has led to pressure on the resources at disposal. Similarly the tier two cities would be expanding in the future. Thus, India requires strategies suited to both traditional urban centers as well as future ones:

- **Megacities and Concentrated Urbanisation:** Cities like Mumbai or Delhi are examples of megacities (10 million or more population) and Concentrated Urbanisation. They have attracted large number of immigrants and over the years have proven to be engines of growth. However, these cities have increasingly become dependent on resources from outside and face pressure of density over land resources, housing and public amenities. As such they would require strategies of urban renewal and rejuvenation.
- **Smaller Cities and Distributed Urbanisation:** The growth of a number of tier two cities is a future trend for India. This would require Distributed urbanization where a large number of cities are developed simultaneously. United States which has many medium-sized cities with population in the range 1.5-5 million. These are easily manageable, minus the problems of large cities, and provide services to surrounding countryside as well. By functioning in a typical 'hub-and-spoke' model these cities can complement each other in terms of services and resources. With the right resources, they can provide better services and environment for its

inhabitants. The 12th plan also leaned towards this trend which is reflective of India's federal structure as well.

Student Notes:

Learning from international experience, models such as Transport Oriented Development (TOD) with dense core district of high rises such as in Hong Kong can be adopted. Similarly, many argue that the Houston or Atlanta Models i.e. population spreading further away from the core should be avoided.

There are strategies suited for both small and large cities. A rapidly urbanising India needs cities that are planned and inclusive hubs with enough fiscal resources and institutional decentralisation.

3. ***Rather than being a transitory phenomenon of fast-growing economies, today's slums pose deeper, persistent structural problems and represent major policy challenges. Discuss in the context of India.***

Approach:

- Discuss how slums have become a persistent issue.
- Enumerate policy challenges in this context.
- Conclude with government efforts, SDG 11 and other recommendations.

Answer:

Slums have often been defined by developmental theories as a transitional phenomenon characteristic of fast-growing economies. But these theories are being proven wrong as slums have become a persistent problem. Millions of households find themselves trapped in slums for generations. According to 2011 census, around 17.4 % urban Indian households live in slums. (Slum population is projected to increase from 93.1 million in 2001 to 104.7 million in 2017).

Today's slums pose a deeper, persistent structural problem caused by multiple market and policy failures, poor governance and management hindering investment, and poor and unsanitary living conditions. Issues include:

- The slum region is marked by lack of adequate living space, insufficient provision of public goods, and the poor quality of basic amenities like clean drinking water and sanitation. All of which lead to extremely poor health and diminishing human capital not only for the slum dwellers but for the vicinity as well.
- Congestion, environmental mismanagement, degradation of natural resources.
- Poor education and opportunities, increased incidence of crime, vulnerability of women, substance abuse, crowding and depersonalisation and other social and humanitarian problems.
- Other issues relate to displacement of population from settlements, unregulated encroachment cases such as Kathputli Colony in Delhi.

Policy challenges

- **Tackling rural urban migration**—It is closely related to factors like globalisation and lack of income opportunities in rural areas. Experts estimate that by 2050 approx. 60 % of the population shall live in cities. This invariably requires complimentary schemes to develop smart villages on the lines of smart cities.
- **Developing social security nets** for slum dwellers in cities.
- **Sustainable urban development**—Making cities safe and sustainable means ensuring access to safe and affordable housing, upgrading slum settlements, ensuring basic necessities like clean drinking water, health clinics and toilets. It also includes reducing vulnerability of women and elderly.

- **Employment generation**-need to create opportunities for migrants and avenues for skill development.
- **Capacity building in urban local bodies**- This will include devolution of authority, ensuring availability of funds (for example through Municipal bonds, devolving taxes like entertainment tax etc.) and developing human resources.
- **Affordable housing**- With rising cost of land there exist an urgent need to develop affordable housing for slum dwellers. One of the major components of "Housing for All by 2022" is to utilize in-situ slum rehabilitation, through which the government has devised a strategy to incentivize private developers to use land as a resource. The policy also includes a slum upgradation component.

As SDG-11 talks about making cities sustainable, it is imperative that Government initiatives such as AMRUT, SMART cities etc. must extend the benefits of these initiatives to slum dwellers who are currently excluded from the benefits of social and economic security.

- 4. While suburbanisation is a common phenomenon in most urbanising countries, it is occurring at a relatively early stage of India's urban development. Enumerating the reasons behind this development, highlight the challenges it is creating for Indian cities.**

Approach:

- Give a brief introduction about suburbanisation phenomenon in most urbanising countries.
- Enumerate the reasons as to why it is occurring at a relatively early stage of India's urban development.
- Highlight the challenges it is creating for Indian cities and ways to tackle them.

Answer:

A 2013 World Bank report, "**Urbanization beyond Municipal Boundaries**", found that suburban areas are generating higher economic growth and employment than the city. Although "suburbanization" is a worldwide phenomenon, it usually occurs in middle to advanced stages of development. In India, it's happening much more quickly than expected.

Reasons:

- Suburbs are seen as safer and cheaper place to live and raise a family due to lower population density, lower crime, and a more stable population.
- Increasing land prices and office rents have pushed companies to suburban areas.
- With increased incomes, people have the ability to pay more for travel and commute longer distances to work and back home.
- Indian cities impose quite draconian land use regulations, rent control system and building height restrictions on their cities leading to excessive suburbanization.
- Suburban municipalities offer tax breaks and regulatory incentives to attract industrial land users to their area.
- The development of robust and sophisticated infrastructure is possible only in the peripheries of the city where land is available in plenty and the cost of acquisition is low.

Growth of urban agglomerations poses many **economic, ecological and institutional challenges** which are as follows:

- Access to – and the quality of – water, sanitation, and electricity is much worse in the urban periphery than at the core.

- Access to quality and affordable health and education services.
- With commercialization of agricultural land and encroachment on forest areas ecosystem of the region is threatened.
- Unplanned urbanisation and uncontrolled encroachment of natural water storage and drainage systems has spelt disaster.
- The fiscal deficit grows as a result of suburbanization, mainly because in less densely populated areas, property taxes tend to be lower.
- Proponents of containing suburbanization argue that it leads to urban decay and a concentration of lower income residents in the inner city.

Student Notes:

Third and fifth five year plans advised urban planning to adopt regional approach and to create metropolitan planning regions to take care of the growing areas outside administrative city limits.

Way Forward:

- Address the lacunae in the current rural-urban categorization system. This would ensure that new areas come under municipality limits and enjoy municipal services.
- Affordable and modern housing within already developed area with intelligent use of space.
- Provide efficient services and reform governance structures to boost overall economic development.
- Use zoning and other land use regulations to create development patterns that make active transportation, in the form of walking and cycling, practical for shortest of trips.
- Assuring that development is spread out fairly city-wide so that issues of accessibility to housing and work don't arise.
- Ensuring that tax incentives given by one suburb do not penalize other suburbs or the central city.

Inadequacy of cities to provide affordable and quality options has resulted in suburbanization. We need to improve existing urban amenities while simultaneously addressing the problems of suburban sprawls.

5. *Magnitude of India's urbanisation is not unusual but the pattern is. In this context, examine the issues in the governance of cities in India. Also suggest the reforms required to make Indian cities dynamos of competitive sub-federalism.*

Approach:

- Briefly, explain the magnitude and pattern of urbanisation in India.
- List the issues in the governance of cities in India and elaborate them.
- Suggest the reformative steps required to make Indian cities dynamos of competitive sub-federalism.
- Conclude your answer.

Answer:

Urbanization defines the trajectory of development. In India, urbanisation is rapidly on the rise as 31.16 percent of population lives in urban areas. According to United Nations report, India is expected to add an extra 300 million new urban residents by 2050. The magnitude of urbanization in India is usual and in line with transition phase seen in a developing country. However, the pattern of urbanization is haphazard and lopsided marked with severe governance deficit.

Issues in governance

Student Notes:

- Poor governance capacities
 - The involvement of multiple authorities leading to overlapping of functions.
 - Fragmentation of responsibility and service delivery across a large number of institutions.
 - Lack of uniformity in the implementation of e-governance initiatives leading to unavailability of basic information.
- Infrastructure deficits
 - Productive urbanisation requires efficient public services delivery. But every Indian city lacks basic facilities. For e.g. lack of water and power supply, public transport, education, healthcare etc.
 - Development of infrastructure requires funds but ULB's have a poor record in raising sufficient resources.
- Inadequate finances
 - ULBs are responsible for the development of urban areas, but there is lack of devolution of functional and financial powers. Some states have not even allowed the municipalities to levy property taxes.
 - Due to poor property tax collection, the property tax potential remained unexploited across ULB's.
 - Then there are problems of low coverage, low tax rates, low collection efficiency and lack of indexation of property values, making property tax a non-buoyant source of revenue.
- ULBs in India are not equipped to generate reliable data which will enable monitoring at the micro level — the basis for arriving at relevant macro-level policy choices.
- Lack of accountability measures by which the ULBs can be held accountable for their performance.
- Lack of adequate quantity and quality of capable functionaries available to ULBs.
- Lack of planned development leads to haphazard growth, which in turns leads to proliferation of slums and associated problems.

Suggested reforms

- State government needs to cede power and share resources with local bodies. Here, State Finance Commissions should also play a vital role by allocating more resources.
- Ensure efficient collection of existing tax base by adopting the latest satellite based techniques to map urban properties in order to tap the full potential of property tax.
- Regular and reliable fiscal and economic performance database linked with grants to local bodies could help in ensuring transparency.
- NITI Aayog should also compile actual comparative indices of municipalities' performance annually.
- The ULBs should be provided with capable manpower in adequate numbers, by creating an independent specialised cadre.
- There should be an annual audit of the performance of ULBs, along with regular organisation of Ward Sabhas for increasing accountability.
- Any development plan should include all aspects of infrastructure development to make it viable providing services to every section and sector.
- Initiatives like Swachhta Dashboards: platform that show information on cities across the country based on their cleanliness.
- Promoting financing options like municipality bonds.

The government should devolve more powers and provide sufficient resources to local bodies; also put proper checks and balances to ensure transparency and accountability, thereby, enabling cities to become an effective instrument for competitive federalism and competitive sub-federalism.

6. ***Rapid urbanization not only requires addressing the deficits in urban areas but also addressing those that are created because of it in rural areas. Comment. Also, evaluate the success of government programmes to reduce the stress on rural population because of urbanization.***

Approach:

- Give a brief account of urbanization and its resultant impact.
- Discuss its outcomes for rural areas.
- Mentioning few schemes evaluate the success of these programmes.
- Conclude by briefly mentioning remedial suggestions.

Answer:

As per census data, 31% of Indian population lived in urban areas in 2011. It is expected to reach 50% in the next decade or so. This is the result of both rural push & urban pull factors. But, this has brought along several problems like growth of slums, homelessness, unemployment, poverty, pollution, shortage of resources, crimes, drug trafficking, prostitution, beggary and psychological problems like alcoholism, depression and stress.

While the focus has been to remedy these urban malaises, what is often neglected is the resultant negative impact of urbanization on rural areas. Some of these are:

- Out-migration of youth and consequent decline in economic productivity of these regions.
- Declining investment in agriculture and allied activities, reducing employment avenues and aggravating rural poverty.
- Breakdown of rural families and separation of spouses and children resulting in psychological problems.
- Feminization of agriculture and increase in vulnerability of females to caste based and sexual crimes.
- Increasing urban-rural gap in per capita income and living standards.
- Exacerbation of rural-urban differential due to urban bias of planners & policy makers.
- Decline in traditional arts and crafts of rural areas.
- Adoption of urban culture in rural areas leading to erosion of unique local cultural traits.

To address these deficits, government launched several programmes including:

- RURBAN mission to provide urban facilities and infrastructure in rural areas such as roads, hospitals, electricity and digital infrastructure.
- Schemes to boost agriculture and allied activities like those of irrigation, insurance, institutional credit and agricultural extension.
- Employment schemes like MGNREGA and promoting rural entrepreneurship through PMEGP.
- Promotion of agro industries through Mega Food Parks, Agricultural Export Zone and SAMPADA.

Such programmes are helping in bridging the rural-urban gap and providing for socio-economic betterment of rural masses. For instance, the share of rural 18-year-olds in schools and colleges had gone up to 70% from 25% between 2016 and 2001. Though, rural programmes have been the focus of every government since independence, yet it has not been able to address the problem of poverty, unemployment and poor status of physical and social infrastructure. Even now, a very large proportion of the BPL population of India lives in villages and rural India.

Student Notes:

In this regard, the need of the hour is employment decentralization, stemming of migration etc. via suitable industrial policies, strengthening of PRIs and legal frameworks for land titling, farm-based activities' promotion and access to credit and also reliable and affordable energy. These will help bridge the rural-urban deficit.



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COMMUNALISM

Student Notes:

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1. Introduction

Student Notes:

The origins of communalism can be traced back to history, particularly the British Raj. After the Revolt of 1857, the British started to follow the ‘divide and rule’ policy consciously and deliberately. The antagonistic feelings got strengthened during their rule and ultimately led to the partition of British India on the basis of religious identity. This did not steam out post-independence, and time and again we witness communal clashes in various parts of the country. For example, the 2020 Bangalore riots, Delhi riots.

2. Definition of Communalism

In English, the word “communal” means **something related to a community** or collectivity as different from an individual. In common parlance, the word ‘communalism’ refers to aggressive chauvinism based on religious identity.

Chauvinism is an attitude that sees one’s own group as the only legitimate or worthy group, with other groups seen as inferior, illegitimate and to be opposed.

Thus, communalism is an aggressive political ideology linked to religion. This is a peculiarly Indian, or perhaps South Asian, meaning that is different from the sense of the ordinary English word. The English meaning is neutral, whereas the South Asian meaning is strongly charged. The charge may be seen as positive – if one is sympathetic to communalism – or negative, if one is opposed to it.

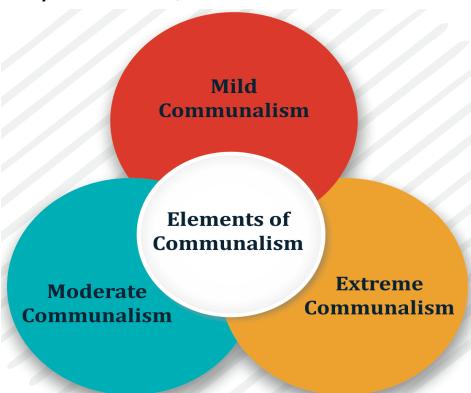
Therefore, **communalism, in the Indian context, is most commonly perceived as a phenomenon of religious differences** between groups that often lead to tension, and even rioting between them. In its not so violent manifestation, communalism amounts to discrimination against a religious group in matters such as employment or education

The causes of communal clashes as such are **rarely religious** in its fundamental character. In India, communalism arises when religion is used as a marker to highlight **socio-economic disequilibrium** between communities and as a force multiplier to demand concessions.

3. Elements of Communalism

Communalism or communal ideology consists of three basic elements or stages- one following the other:

- **Mild Communalism:** It is the belief that people who follow the same religion have common secular interests i.e., common political, social and cultural interests.
For example, nobles of different communities (Hindustani, Turani, Afghan, Irani etc.) co-existed (largely) peacefully in the courts of the Mughal kings.
- **Moderate Communalism:** In a multi-religious society like India, the secular interests of followers of one religion are dissimilar and divergent from the interests of the followers of another religion. For example, the Muslim League was initially founded upon the realization of such differences in interests.
- **Extreme Communalism:** Interests of different religious communities are seen to be mutually incompatible, antagonistic and hostile.
For example, groups advocating partition of the country as the only solution for safeguarding the interests of the religious communities.



4. Features of Communalism in India

Student Notes:

Communalism is more about politics rather than religion. Although communalists are intensely involved with religion, there is no necessary relationship between personal faith and communalism. A communal person may or may not be a devout religious person, and devout believers may or may not be communal beings.

However, all communalists believe in a political identity based on religion. The key factor is the attitude towards those who believe in other kinds of identities, including other religion-based identities. Communalism claims that religious identity overrides everything else- such as poverty, occupation, caste or political beliefs.

It rules out the possibility that Hindus, Muslims and Christians who belong to Kerala, for example, may have as much or more in common with each other than with their co-religionists from Kashmir, Gujarat or Nagaland. It also denies the possibility that, for instance, landless agricultural labourers (or industrialists) may have a lot in common even if they belong to different religions and regions

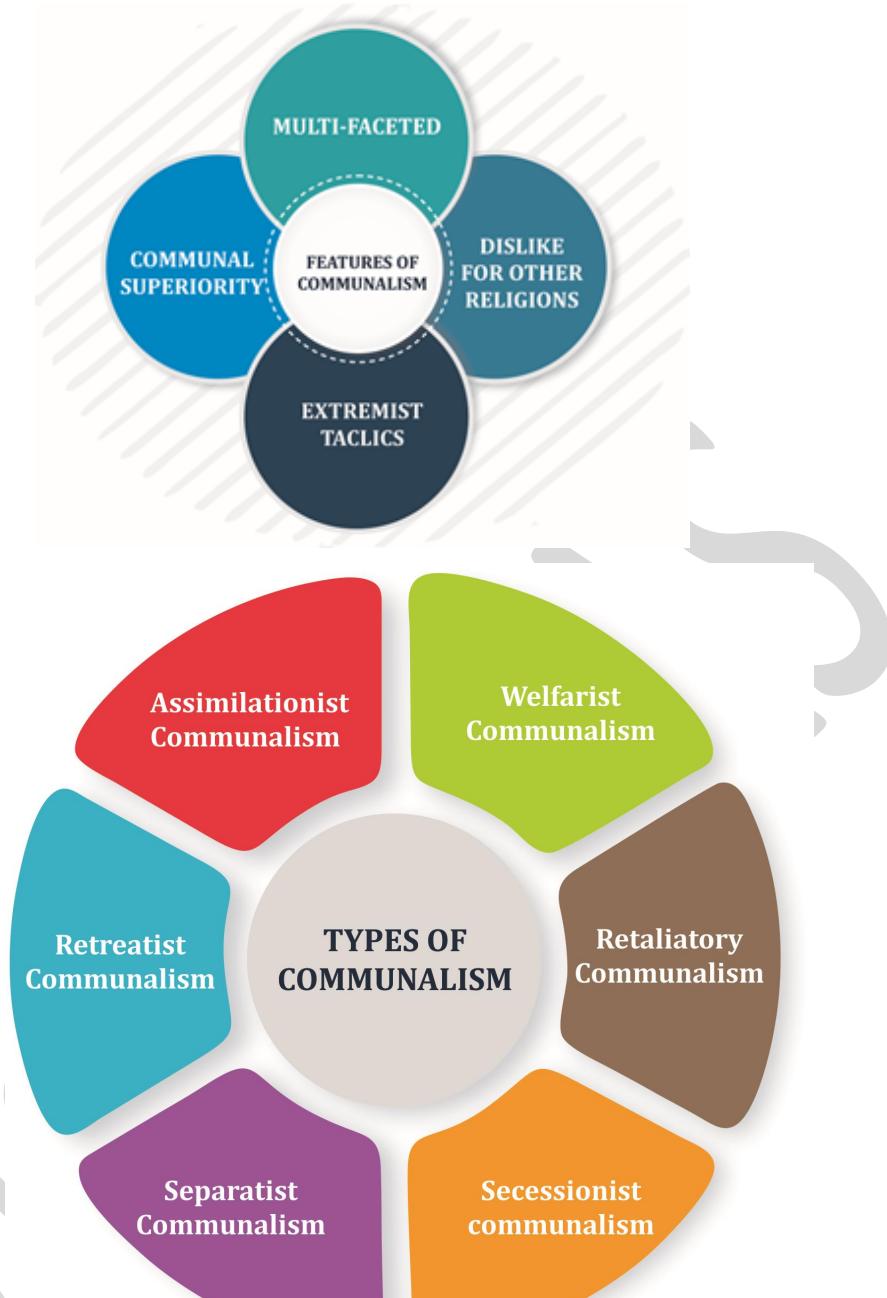
So, communalists cultivate an aggressive political identity, and are prepared to condemn or attack everyone who does not share their identity

Thus, some of the features of communalism are:-

- It is a multifaceted process based on orthodoxy and intolerance.
- It also propagates intense dislike for other religions
- It stands for elimination of other religions and its values.
- It adopts extremist tactics including use of violence against other people. For example, the ISIS blasted and brought down the famous Bamiyan temple, the last remnant of the Gandhara style architecture
- It is exclusive in outlook. A communalist considers his own religion to be superior to other religions.

5. Types of Communalism

- **Assimilationist Communalism:** When a larger religious community tries to assimilate the smaller ones such that the latter's culture gets subdued. For example, the Hindu Code Bill is applicable to Sikh, Buddhists and Jains as well. Tribals were considered as backward Hindus by GS Ghure (Father of Indian Sociology)
- **Welfarist Communalism:** Working for the welfare of one's own community. Example- establishing hostels, scholarships, employment opportunities etc.
- **Retreatist Communalism:** The members of the Bahai community (Bahaism religion) proscribe/ forbid their members from participating in political processes as it is based on the ideology of unity of God, religion, mankind etc.
- **Retaliatory Communalism:** Communities have relatively hostile interests and often it is manifested in the form of communal violence
- **Separatist Communalism:** The demand for autonomy based on religion, however, within the Indian union. Example- the demand for Punjab state
- **Secessionist communalism:** Demand for a separate nation based on religion. Example- the demands for Khalistan, Azad Kashmir.



6. Factors aiding Communalism in India



- (a) **Historical factors:** British policy of divide and rule led them to focus on using religion to divide India. A prominent reason why this policy gained currency was that the Muslim middle class lagged behind the Hindus in terms of education, which contributed to their

low representation in government jobs. Due to lack of enough economic opportunities at that time, a government job was highly coveted by the middle classes.

Student Notes:

The demand for a separate nation of Pakistan gained fervour due to marked inequalities in socio-economic indicators including representation in the seats of power. Even the **Mappila Rebellion**, the first so-called communal clash, was more of a proletarian strike against the landed gentry than a communal riot. It only so happened that the landed gentry were Hindus and the peasants were Muslims. Such factors culminated in separate electorates for Muslims, which was later extended to the Sikhs and Anglo Indians.

Further, even British historians further advocated the cause of the British by projecting ancient India as being ruled by Hindus and Medieval period as the period of Muslim rule, when Hindus were exploited and threatened. Some influential Indians too supported this projection.

(b) **Political factors:** The political factors include religion-based politics, **identity politics**, partiality of political leaders towards their communities, communal speeches and hate speech by party leaders and politicians during elections (though steps have been taken against the same recently, still they continue unabated) etc. The **Mandir-Masjid politics**, Babri masjid demolition, etc., can be considered an outcome of this process.

In India, the **politics of opportunism**, is the biggest cause of communalism driven by the middle/ upper class for secular gains and trusted by the lower sections that identify with the cause

(c) **Social factors:** Minority Concentration Areas, as identified by the government, are relatively backward and falling behind the national average in terms of socioeconomic and basic amenities indicators. This has also been systematically documented even in 2006 report by the **Sachar Committee**. These vulnerabilities and unfortunate realities are commonly misused to fan communalism and attain political ends. Also, issues like beef consumption, Hindi/Urdu imposition, conversion efforts by religious groups etc., further created a wedge between the Hindus and Muslims.

(d) **Economic Factors:** The stagnant economy of India followed by its structural transformation including creation of a job-seeking middle class, shift from agriculture, industrialization etc., also pitted various religious communities against each other. Communalist elements exploited these circumstances. In fact, the main social base for communalism was & continues to be middle class people.

7. Evolution of Communalism in India:

7.1. Communalism in Pre-Independence India

The communal ideology went through the below-mentioned **three stages and two phases (Liberal and Extremist)** during the Indian National Movement and ultimately resulted in the bifurcation of India and the creation of Pakistan.

Liberal Phase:

- Post 1857 revolt, the British preferred Hindus over Muslims in matters of employment, education etc. Muslim intellectuals too realized that Muslims lagged behind their Hindu counterparts in terms of education, government jobs etc. Eventually, **Sir Syed Ahmed Khan**, a Muslim intellectual founded Aligarh College to fight the bias against modern education among Muslims. He also started numerous scientific societies in the 1860s, in which both Hindus and Muslims participated.
- Communalism in India got its initial start in the 1880s when Syed Ahmed Khan opposed the national movement initiated by the Indian National Congress. He decided to support British causes and opposed the functioning of the Indian National Congress and deemed it a pro-Hindu party, which was against Muslim interests.

- Eventually, prominent Muslims like **Aga Khan**, **Nawab Moshin-ul-Mulk** etc., founded the **All India Muslim League**, to consolidate Muslim interests. One of its major objectives was to keep the emerging intelligentsia among Muslims from joining the Congress.
- Simultaneously, Hindu communalism was also being born. It manifested in Hindu leaders disseminating notions of tyrannical Muslim rule, espousing the **language issue** and giving it a communal twist. They declared Urdu to be the language of the Muslims and Hindi of Hindus. Further, **anti-cow slaughter propagation was undertaken in the 1890s** and it was primarily directed against Muslims.
- Eventually organizations like the Punjab Hindu Sabha (1909), All India Hindu Mahasabha (1st session in 1915), etc. were founded.
- Revivalist movements** like Arya Samaj, Shuddhi Movement (among Hindus), Wahabi Movement , Tanzeem and Tabligh movements(among Muslims) etc., gave further impetus to communalist tendencies.
- This phase saw eventual communalization of leaders like Syed Ahmed Khan, Lala Lajpat Rai, M.A. Jinnah, Madan Mohan Malaviya etc.
- The British gave a momentum to the communalist divide through their administrative decisions and policies such as **division of Bengal**, **Morley- Minto reforms (1909- Separate electorates)**, **Communal Award (1932)** etc.

Extremist Phase:

- Post 1937, India witnessed extreme communalism based on the politics of fear, psychosis and irrationality. During this phase, the interests of Hindus and Muslims were deemed to be permanently in conflict.
- Communalism acquired a popular base among urban lower middle class groups and mass movements around aggressive, extremist communal politics emerged.
- Communalism also became the only political recourse of colonial authorities and their policy of divide and rule.
- During the period, **M.A. Jinnah** declared that 'Muslims should organize themselves, stand united and should press every reasonable point for the protection of their community.' He eventually stated that Muslims would be suppressed under the Hindu dominated Congress after the British left India and thus, the only recourse would be a separate state for Muslims i.e. creation of Pakistan.
- Hindu communalism too did not lag behind. The Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), began propagating extreme communalism. They demanded that the non-Hindu groups of India adopt the Hindu culture and language and hold Hindu religion in reverence. They too espoused that Hindus and Muslims are two separate social and political entities with opposing interests.

7.2. Communalism in Post-Independence India

Colonialism is perceived as a prominent factor for emergence of communalism in India. However, overthrowing of colonial rule proved to be only a necessary condition for fighting communalism, not sufficient. Because even post-independence, communalism persisted owing to various factors as have been discussed before. Communalism has been the biggest threat to the secular fabric of our nation.

Post-independence major communal violence outbreaks include the following

- Nellie Massacre (1983):** About a thousand Assamese people surrounded the Nellie village with deadly weapons. The minority people living in the village were attacked resulting in the death of 1800 people officially. The conflicts were majorly directed to eject "outsiders" by the "original inhabitants" of Assam to protect their **land, language and ethnicity**. The aggression groups were different in many areas, like Bengali Hindus & Muslims against Assamese people, Hindus against Muslims, Muslims against Hindus, etc.

- **Anti-Sikh riots (1984):** Sikhs in large numbers were murdered by mobs post assassination of the then Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi.
- **Issue of Kashmiri Hindu pundits (1989):** Spread of Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism in the Kashmir valley led to mass killings and large-scale exodus of Kashmiri pundits during 1989-90. The region continues to be threatened by communal violence.
- **Babri Masjid incident (1992):** On December 1992, a large crowd of Hindu kar sevaks demolished the 16th century Babri masjid (mosque) in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh claiming the site to be Ram Janmabhoomi (birthplace of Ram). This led to months of inter-communal rioting between the Hindus and Muslims resulting in deaths of hundreds of people.
- **Godhra Riots (2002):** In February 2002, four coaches of the Sabarmati Express were set on fire. The passengers, mostly Hindu pilgrims were returning from Ayodhya after a religious ceremony at the site of the demolished Babri Masjid. Following the attacks, several Hindu groups declared state-wide bandh in Gujarat and started brutally attacking Muslim colonies. This went on for months post Godhra incident, resulting in the death and displacement of thousands of Muslims.
- **Assam violence (2012):** There were frequent clashes between the Bodos and Bengali speaking Muslims due to increased competition for livelihood, land and political power. In 2012, one such outbreak escalated into a riot in Kokrajhar, when unidentified miscreants killed four Bodo youths at Joypur. This was followed by retaliatory attacks on local Muslims killing two and injuring several of them. Almost 80 people were killed, most of whom were Bengali Muslims and some Bodos. Approximately, 400,000 people were displaced to makeshift camps.
- **Muzaffarnagar Riots (2013):** The clashes between the Hindu Jats and Muslim communities in Muzaffarnagar, UP resulted in at least 62 deaths, injured 93 people and left more than 50,000 displaced. The riot had been described as "the worst violence in Uttar Pradesh in recent history", with the army being deployed in the state for the first time in the last 20 years.
- **Beef consumption, lynching and ensuing deaths:** The issue of beef consumption and transportation has been a contentious issue in India and has triggered communal outbreaks in various parts of the country. Muslims were the target of 51% of violence centred on bovine issues over nearly eight years (2010 to 2017) and comprised 86% of 28 Indians killed in 63 incidents, according to an IndiaSpend content analysis.
- **Ghar Wapsi programmes:** It is a series of religious conversion activities, facilitated by Indian Hindu organizations such as the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), to facilitate conversion of non-Hindus to Hinduism. While the organizing groups claimed that people voluntarily came forward to convert to Hinduism, some participants claimed that they were forced to do so. Also, raising the fear of 'Love Jihad' for inter-faith marriages.
- **Delhi Riots 2020:** In the year 2020, Delhi witnessed its first major riot since 1984 between Hindu-Muslim communities. In a series of bloodshed, property destruction, and rioting in North East Delhi, 53 people were killed.

The slow development of the economy, improper cultural synthesis, perceived or relative deprivation, regional or social imbalance in development and political mobilization in the age of democracy has led to the consolidation of communal sentiments and the persistence of communalism in the post-independence period.

8. Communalism in Contemporary India: An analysis of Communal Outbreaks in 2019

In 2019, attitudinal violence and structural violence continued to contribute immensely to physical violence in the forms of communal riots and mob lynching. There were 25 incidents of communal riots in India in 2019 and 108 incidents of mob lynching. Though the number of

communal riots has declined, the discourse of communal violence driven by competing religious ideologies remains the same.

Student Notes:

Thus, though it appears that the number of communal riots has declined, that in no way can be construed as decline in communal discourse leading to communal violence itself. While the number of communal riots is declining, the number of mob lynching is increasing. Mob lynching is an instrument to achieve the objective of sustained communal polarization by involving communal symbols like cow, the issue of love jihad, etc., targeting minority religious communities.

Newer issues are being used to heighten the discourse of communal violence- for instance the discriminatory legislation of **Citizenship Amendment** Bill which excludes Muslims linked with NRC, the abrogation of article 370 in Kashmir and the clamp down on communication subsequently, the demand for construction of Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

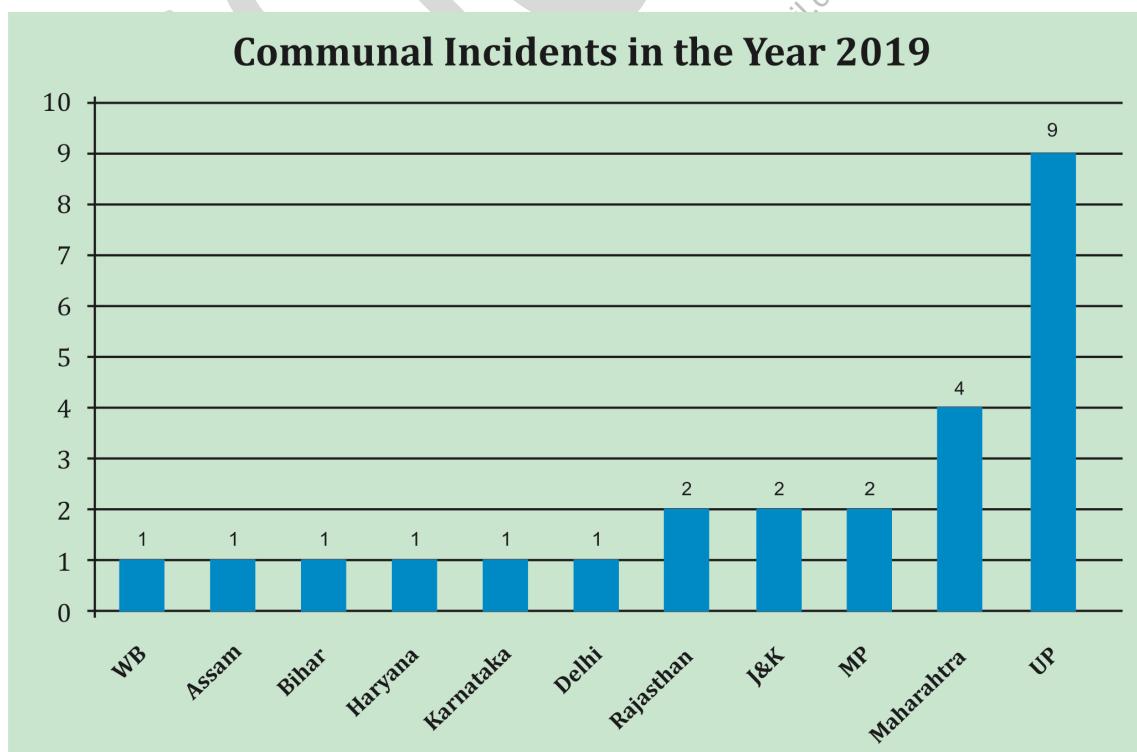
If at all, through discriminatory legislations and increasing dismantling of democratic institutions which were expected to safeguard democracy, communal violence is taking deeper roots in our society.

Region wise break up of communal riots:

Uttar Pradesh topped the list of states which had the most number of communal riots. Out of 25 communal riots, 9 took place in UP. It was followed by the state of Maharashtra where 4 communal riots were reported in 2019. Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Jammu and Kashmir each had two communal riots in 2019. In the states of Karnataka, Haryana, Assam, Delhi, Bihar and West Bengal reported one communal riot each.

These figures indicate that communal riots have mostly been reported in the northern zone of the country and the north has been the theatre of violence with deep fault lines. The western zone of the country has been prone to communal violence traditionally.

However it will be misleading to believe that there is little or no menace of communal violence in the South and Eastern parts of the country only because of the low number of communal riots reported from these regions. The communal discourse replete with hatred and hate speeches is very much prevalent in the east and south.



9. Institutional Communalism

Student Notes:

Institutional communalism can be defined as the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people belonging to minority religions. In particular Institutional communalism in India goes beyond the 'extremist' political, social and cultural organisations promoting it. It has come to pervade all the major institutions of the country.

This is to mean that the majority has accumulated social and cultural capital, and hence economic and political capital, by the simple fact of being socially and culturally positioned as a majority. Institutional communalism is, therefore, the exercise of accumulated power – the power of its social/cultural/political/economic capital – by the majority.

(Social capital has been defined as the sum of the resources that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition, which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital, a "credential" which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word. For example, financial credit, trust etc.)

Further, the work of psychologists suggests that biases in favour of the dominant groups/against the minorities affects judgments and decision making. Even in selection processes, the decision makers tend to favour those who are "like them".

Institutional communalism in India, that is to say Hindu majoritarian bias, pervades the Indian constitution, bureaucracy, security forces, parliamentary institutions, judiciary, prisons, academic institutions, health services, media, and the cultural and art organisations. There is a reasonable amount of evidence and research already in circulation, which indicates the pervasiveness of Hindu-communalist bias in a range of institutions in India

In India with nearly 81% share of the population being Hindu and most institutions of power being dominated by upper caste Hindus, there is an inbuilt bias towards privileging of Hindus but almost non-existent institutional mechanisms to counteract this inbuilt bias.

Even the **National Minorities Commission** remains a mere paper tiger without the power and institutional infrastructure to track systematic inbuilt bias against religious minorities. The **Sachar Committee**(gave report in 2006) which was formed to study the socio-economic and educational conditions of Muslims in India also highlighted institutional factors hindering Muslims.

The challenge is, therefore, bigger than just inflicting electoral defeats on communal parties and organisations. Even if such parties are defeated electorally, institutional communalism remains pervasive in varying degrees in India's Constitution, judiciary, civil services, electoral and parliamentary institutions, security forces, prisons, academia, media, corporate business, and even non-governmental organisations. It will continue as a social, cultural and politico-economic force to disadvantage the lives of minority communities in India.

10. Measures to address the problem of communalism:

The problem of communalism in India is grave and can have far-reaching consequences. Thus, persuasive as well as punitive measures are required to curb its spread.

Short Term Measures

- Building solidarity and assimilation of various religious groups at different levels in society-workplace, neighborhood etc. by fostering a secular culture eg. celebrating each other's religious festivals.
- Swift and prompt response to radicalization by a militant group on social media through police action, counselling sessions for those radicalized especially adolescents etc.
- Ensuring that political parties refrain from using religion, religious ideologies in order to garner votes through strict vigilance by institutional mechanisms such as the Election Commission, media, civil society etc.

- Instances of an inter-religious marriage of two consenting adults should not be construed as “love jihad issue” and highlighted in the media. Thus, media persons should be sensitized regarding the issue.
- Mobs leading communal riots should be controlled and strict action should be taken against them as a combative measure.
- Religious heads can play an important role in dissemination of ideas of diversity of religion, ideas, etc. which can help in spreading peace among different communities.
- The government should not ban minority practices in order to appease the majority group. E.g. the state should not show a preference for vegetarianism.
- Media, movies and other influential instruments should be used in promoting religious harmony and peace. The rise of **Social Media** and real time dissemination of **fake news** should also be dealt with in a time bound manner.

Student Notes:

Long Term Measures

- Stern laws should be framed by the Parliament against communal violence. The weaknesses of laws have resulted in escape of politicians and other influential persons who have openly indulged in inciting communal violence.
- The CBI or a special investigative body should investigate communal riots within a stipulated time frame. Further, special courts should hear such cases for quick delivery of justice to victims.
- Police and other bodies upholding law and order should be held accountable as sometimes the police bow down to pressure from politicians and remain inactive during communal violence and in the course of its follow up eg. while filing FIRs, arresting the accused, producing charge sheets etc. Thus, **legal reforms** must be introduced which hold them accountable for swift action
- Pluralistic settlement where members of different communities live together should be encouraged by removing existing barriers as religious segregation strengthens communal identities and reinforces negative stereotypes of other religious groups. Eg. taking action during instances of intolerance where Muslims, Dalits, North-Eastern citizens etc. are denied housing owing to their identities. **Sachar Committee report** on the status of Indian Muslims recommended the creation of an **Equal Opportunities Commission** to deal with complaints of intolerance and exclusion.
- Secular education should be taught in all educational institutions, which will lead to development of harmony and co-operation among members of different communities.
- History education should be de-communalized as the present categorization of Indian history into ancient, medieval and modern has contributed to communal thinking as it has effectively divided history into the Hindu period, Muslim period and Christian period respectively. This has given rise to notions that India was a Hindu country which was ‘invaded’ by Muslims and Christians.
- Increased employment opportunities for minorities can lead to decrease in communal discord. Thus, there should be focus on skilling members of minority communities through various programmes and initiatives.
- Uniform Civil Code** should be formulated and implemented with the consensus of all religious communities so that there is uniformity in personal laws.

11. Previous Year UPSC GS Mains Questions

- Distinguish between religiousness/religiosity and communalism giving one example of how the former has got transformed into the latter in independent India. (2017)
- ‘Communalism arises either due to power struggle or relative deprivation. Argue by giving suitable illustrations.’ (2018)

12. Vision IAS GS Mains Test Series Questions

Student Notes:

1. *The persistence of Communalism as a significant internal security threat is rooted in the deadly cocktail of identity politics, developmental deficit and systemic deficiency in state capacity to handle such threats. Comment.*

Approach:

Answer can begin with a brief introduction of the kind of problems communalism brings with itself. Students should bring out how communalism is rooted in three ills ID politics, developmental deficit and systemic deficiency. Credit must be given to those students who are able to identify that of the three, ID politics is the core of communalism. Without it, the other two factors don't give rise to communalism. No marks would be awarded for digressing towards naxalism and such other issues.

Answer:

Communalism in a broad sense implies blind allegiance to one's own communal group – religious, linguistic or ethnic – rather than to the larger society or to the nation as a whole. In its extreme form, a communalist sees her own communities' interests being jeopardised by the interests of other communities. Hence it manifests itself in hatred towards groups perceived as hostile, ultimately leading to violent attacks on other communities. (*Just for understanding*)

Communalism is a major internal security threat that our country is facing. It ruptures social bonhomie, creates social tensions, mutual distrust, alienates certain social groups, and creates breeding ground for further violence and harnessing of disgruntlement by forces inimical to India's interest. The root causes of communalism are following -

Systemic Problems

- Conflict resolution mechanisms are ineffective;
- Intelligence gathered is not accurate, timely and actionable and
- Bad personnel policies - poor choice of officials and short tenures - lead to inadequate grasp of local conditions.
- The administration and the police fail to anticipate and read indicators which precipitated violence earlier;
- Even after the appearance of first signals, the administration and police are slow to react;
- Field functionaries tend to seek and wait for instructions from superiors and superiors tend to interfere in local matters undermining local initiative and authority;
- The administration and police at times act in a partisan manner and
- At times there is failure of leadership, even total abdication on the part of those entrusted with maintenance of public order.
- Rehabilitation is often neglected, breeding resentment and residual anger and
- Officials are not held to account for their failures, thus perpetuating slackness and incompetence.

Developmental Deficit

- In most cases, inadequate development creates genuine grievance in a community. Their grievance can then be harnessed by opportunistic communal element to breed animosity towards other groups.

Identity Politics

It refers to mobilization of masses on the communal lines. While the other factors could be present in many places in our country. They succeed in communalising the situation only when there is political mobilisation on communal lines.

Thus while addressing systemic flaws and developmental deficiencies, we need to address political undercurrents as well. Institutions like National Integration Councils must be better utilized in this context.

2. ***The growth of communalism after 1857 in India was a result of societal differences, communal politics and divisive British policies. Discuss.***

Approach:

- Elaborate on the growth of communalism after 1857.
- Focus on how it was result of societal differences, communal politics and divisive British policies.

Answer:

The Revolt of 1857 gave a severe jolt to the British administration in India and made its reorganization inevitable. Consequently, after the revolt, the British followed the policy of divide and rule. Such policies led to societal differences which fuelled communal politics in India.

Societal differences

- Role of socio-religious reform movements: Reform movements such as Wahabi movements among Muslims and Shuddhi movements among Hindus made the role of religion more vulnerable to communalism.
- Role of socio-economic differences: There was rivalry for jobs, trade and industry between Hindus and Muslims and bourgeoisie class used the lower middle classes of the Hindus and Muslims against each other to further their class interest. For example, the case in Western Punjab where the Muslim landlords opposed the Hindu moneylenders and in East Bengal where the Muslim jotedars (small landlords) opposed the Hindu zamindars.

Communal Politics

Formation of Muslim league in 1905 and of Hindu Mahashabha in 1915 further fuelled the religious divide among communities.

Some historians had communal interpretation of Indian History with depiction of ancient India as the Hindu phase and the medieval phase as Muslim phase. The conflicts of ruling classes during the medieval phase were distorted and exaggerated the Hindu-Muslim conflict. This interpretation was used by the political class to mobilize popular support of their co-religionists in their mutual struggles.

Divisive British policies

- After the 1857 revolt, organization of the Indian section of the army was based on the policy of 'balance and counterpoise'. Soldiers from Avadh, Bihar, Central India, and South India, had taken part in the Revolt of 1857, were declared to be non-martial. On the other hand, the Sikhs, Gurkhas and Pathans, who had assisted in the suppression of the Revolt, were declared martial and were recruited in large numbers.
- After the 1870s, with signs of emergence of India nationalism and growing politicization of the educated middle class government decided to rally Muslims

behind it through concessions, favours and reservations and used them against nationalist forces. For example, division of Bengal in 1905, communal representation in Morley Minto reforms of 1909. Government also used persons like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan to counter the influence of Congress.

All these factors led to Communalism becoming a popular movement after 1939 and in particular during 1945-47 leading to widespread riots across India and culminated into formation of Pakistan on religious lines.

3. *Communalism in India is fuelled by socio-economic disparities and politicization of identities. Discuss.*

Approach:

- Briefly define Communalism.
- Discuss how the socio-economic disparities and the politicization of identities have been the reasons for communalism.
- Give appropriate examples, wherever necessary.

Answer:

Communalism is basically an ideology which consists of following **three elements**:

- A belief that people who follow the same religion have common secular interests i.e. they have same political, economic and social interests.
- A notion that, in a multi-religious society like India, these common secular interests of one religion are dissimilar and divergent from the interests of the follower of another religion.
- The interests of the follower of the different religion or of different 'communities' are seen to be completely incompatible, antagonist and hostile.

Politicization of identities fuelling Communalism:

- Communalism in India has spread as a by-product of colonialism, which has its roots in partition of Bengal of 1905, provisions of separate electorate under Government of India Act, 1909 and later the Communal award of 1932, etc. These factors caused competition and short term benefits from communalism.
- Politicians have also played a role in creating serious communal situations in India by treating communities as vote banks. It has led to politicization of identities of the people through activities such as selection of candidates on the basis of community and caste, flaring up religious sentiments at the time of elections etc. The communities thus have become different watertight compartments leading to conflicts such as Anti-Sikh riots, 1984, Ethnic cleansing of Kashmiri Hindu Pundits in 1989, Babri masjid demolition in Ayodhya, 1992, Gujarat riots, 2002, Muzaffarnagar violence, 2013, etc.
- Political appeasement, prompted by political considerations as seen in Shah Bano case wherein the Central government overturned SC judgement extending maintenance to Muslim divorcee in protraction of Shari'ah law also fuels communalism.

Socio-economic disparities fuelling Communalism

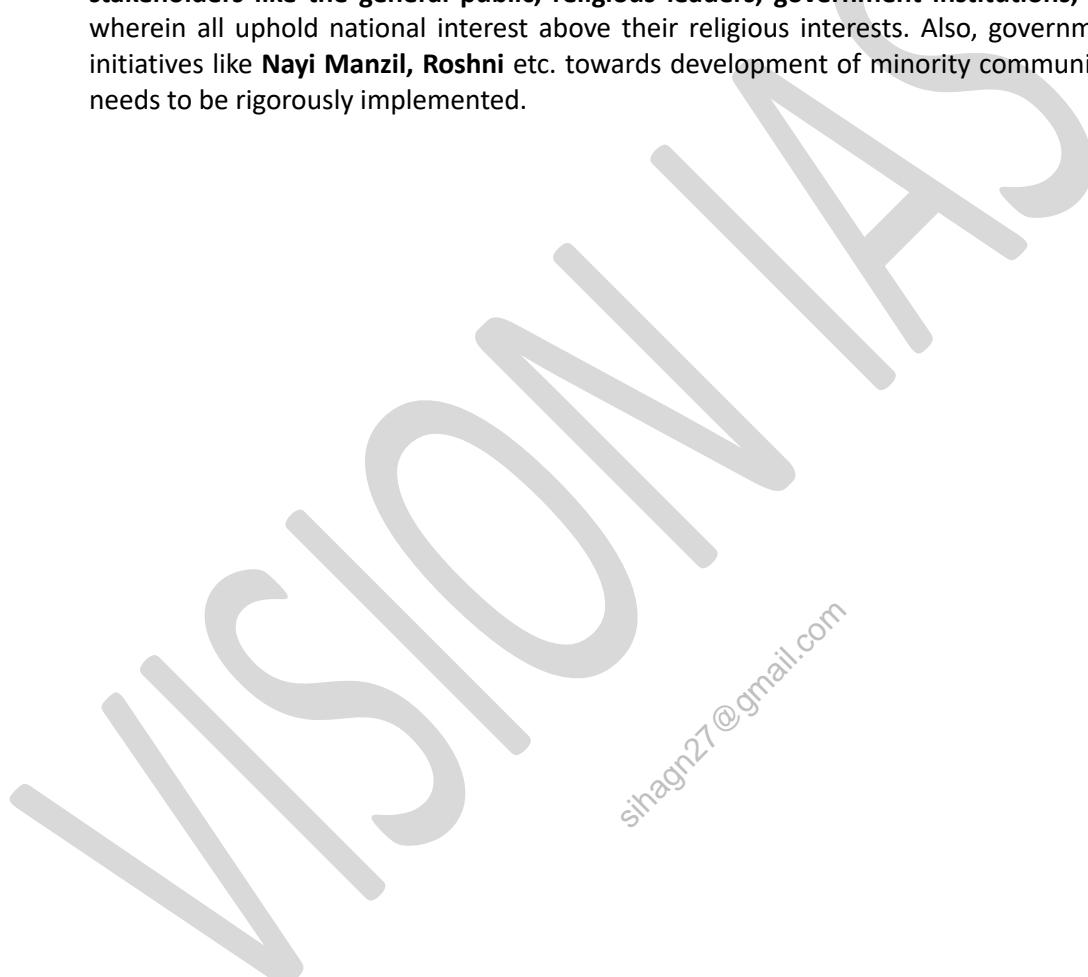
- The stagnant economy of India during the British rule led to the growth of communalism in India. It was deeply rooted in and was an expression of the interests and aspirations of the middle classes in a social set up in which opportunities for them were inadequate.
- Muslim disadvantage in terms of few policies in place to protect them as well as lack of effective political mobilization in their interest, has been widely noted by the

Sachar Report as well. The National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) labour force survey reports that the economic condition of Muslims does not show any signs of improvement despite India being the fastest-growing large economy. They are facing a vicious circle of poverty. Further, the educational attainment of Muslims is the least among all these communities affecting their job prospects as well. This situation fuels competition over the resources as well as make younger generation easy targets towards communal ends.

Student Notes:

- In present time, issues such as banning cow slaughter, triple talaq, ghar wapasi has further increased the perception of alienation among the minority population. They have been frequent targets of discrimination and even violence.

Solution to this problem requires a multi-dimensional approach involving all the stakeholders like the general public, religious leaders, government institutions, etc. wherein all uphold national interest above their religious interests. Also, government initiatives like **Nayi Manzil, Roshni** etc. towards development of minority communities needs to be rigorously implemented.



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ROLE OF WOMEN AND WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION

Student Notes:

Women are the largest untapped reservoir of talent in the world

— Hillary Clinton

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1. Introduction

Student Notes:

Imagine the following scenarios:

- You are waiting for a bus at the bus stop and a young man takes out a knitting needle and wool and starts knitting. A school girl who is also waiting for a bus climbs a tamarind tree to look for a raw tamarind.
- A couple lives in your neighbourhood. The husband stays at home and takes care of their two-year-old daughter and manages other household chores while the wife works in a bank as a manager.

Do these events surprise you? What reactions do you expect to hear from people with respect to these incidents? What is so unique about these scenes / events that people have to express their surprise or pass such comments? Why cannot a man knit or a girl climb a tree? What is wrong if a man stays at home and takes responsibility for child care and housework? Why cannot a woman give full time attention to her career? These images surprise people because they are contrary to the existing practices, which they usually see in society. We have perpetuated images of mother as the ‘housewife’, father as the ‘breadwinner’; boys playing with guns and trucks and girls playing with toys and dolls. **Role stereotyping** is a process of reinforcing some specific role for some member of the society. For example, men and women are often socialised in stereotypical roles, as breadwinner and homemaker respectively. **Many stereotypes have been built around men and women, and over a period of time most people have come to accept it as the right image.**

Women play various roles in their lifetime ranging from a mother to that of a breadwinner but are almost always subordinated to male authority; largely excluded from high status occupation and decision making both at work and at home. Paradoxically, in Indian society where women goddesses are worshipped, women are denied an independent identity and status.

In recent years, particularly with the rise of Women’s Liberation Movement, this discrimination against women has been widely debated. Two main positions have emerged from this debate.

- One maintains that this inequality between the two sexes is determined to some degree by the **biologically or genetically based differences** between men and women.
- As against this, the second position argues that they result from **socially constructed power relations and are culturally determined**.

This brings us to the notion of **gender**.

1.1. Social Construction of Gender

Sex is the biological trait that societies use to assign people into the category of either **male** or **female**, through physical ascription. Differences between men and women are often drawing on sex – on rigid ideas of biology – rather than gender.

Gender is more fluid – it may or may not depend upon biological traits. More specifically, it is a **concept** that describes:

- how **societies determine and manage sex categories**;
- the **cultural meanings** attached to men and women’s roles;
- how individuals understand their **identities**.

Gender involves social norms, attitudes and activities that society deems more appropriate for one sex over another.

The sociology of gender examines how society influences our understanding and perception of differences between **masculinity** (what society deems appropriate behaviour for a “man”) and **femininity** (what society deems appropriate behaviour for a “woman”). This, in turn, influences **identity** and **social practices, power relationships** that follow from the established **gender order** in a given society, as well as how these changes over time.

Gender is not just a personal identity but also a social identity. It arises from our relationships to other people, constructed and maintained through daily interaction, and depends upon social interaction and social recognition.

Student Notes:

The women's movement brought about the idea of women's groups and organisations. A social group refers to a collection of continuously interacting persons who share common interests, roles, culture, values and norms within a given society. **Women can thus be described as a social category.**

2. Status and Role of Women

Status refers to the **social position** with defined rights and duties assigned to positions in society. To illustrate, mother occupies a status, which has many norms of conduct as well as certain responsibilities and prerogatives. A **role** is the dynamic or the behavioural aspect of status. Status is occupied, but roles are played. We may say that a **status is an institutionalised role**. It is a role that has become regularised, standardised and formalised in the society at large or in any of the specific associations of society.

Women perform their roles according to **social expectations**, i.e., role taking and role playing. A girl child learns to behave in accordance with how her behaviour will be seen and judged by her parents, relatives, friends. Or this specialisation of roles within the nuclear family involves the husband adopting the 'instrumental' role as breadwinner, and the wife assuming the 'affective', emotional role in domestic settings.

Role conflict is the incompatibility among roles corresponding to one or more status. It occurs when contrary expectations arise from two or more roles. A common example is that of the middle-class working woman who has to juggle her role as mother and wife at home and that of a professional at work. Roles and status are not given and fixed. Women are continuously making efforts to fight against discrimination roles and status based on their gender.

2.1. The Profile of Women in India

As per World Economic Forum survey, India's Global Gender Gap Index, 2020 ranking is 112th among 153 countries, countries like China (106th), Sri Lanka (102nd), Nepal (101st), Brazil (92nd), Indonesia (85th) and Bangladesh (50th).

- India is the only country where the economic gender gap (0.354) is larger than the political gender gap (0.411).
- India is among the countries with very low women representation on company boards (13.8%), while it was even worse in China (9.7%).

1) **Sex Ratio, Mortality Rate, and Life Expectancy Rate** – Sex ratio is used to describe the number of females per 1000 of males. As per census 2011, sex ratio for India is 940 females per 1000 of males, i.e., females form a meager 47% of the total population. The State of Haryana has the lowest sex ratio in India with 877 females to that of 1000 males while Kerala has the highest of 1084 females per 1000 males.

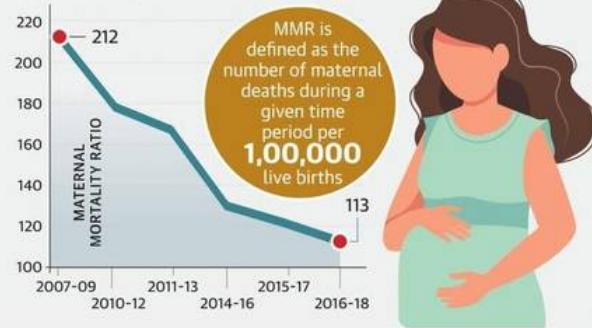
Mortality rate or the death rate measures the frequency of deaths. This is an annual rate and is calculated for different age groups as the number of deaths for 1000 live births. The age-specific death rate data indicates a high rate of **female infant mortality** (0-4 years) and **maternal mortality** (5-24 years), **adult mortality** (15-60 years).

- Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) in India has declined to 113 in 2016-18 from 122 in 2015-17 and 130 in 2014-2016
- In 2018, the mortality rate for women was at 147.16 per 1,000 female adults, while the mortality rate for men was at 203.62 per 1,000 male adults in India.

Life expectancy rate represents the mean life length an individual is expected to survive given the prevailing mortality conditions. It has been observed that the chances of longer life expectancy are higher among women during older years, whereas women in the younger years continue to have relatively higher death rates.

Healthy trend

The maternal mortality ratio (MMR) between 2016 and 2018 dropped to 113 in India, almost 100 deaths lesser than in the 2007-2009 period



Declining Child Sex Ratio

- As per the Census 2011 child sex ratio (0-6 years) has shown a decline from 927 females per thousand males in 2001 to 919 females per thousand males in 2011.
- Some of the reasons for neglect of girl child and low child sex ratio are son preference and the belief that it is only the son who can perform the last rites, that lineage and inheritance run through the male line, sons will look after parents in old age, men are the bread winners etc.
- Exorbitant dowry demand is another reason for female foeticide/infanticide.
- Small family norm coupled with easy availability of sex determination tests may be a catalyst in the declining child sex ratio, further facilitated by easy availability of Pre-conception sex selection facilities.

Consequences of declining child sex ratio:

- It has led to a sharp increase in violence against women.
- Increased violence against women has led to more son preference, as parents feel it is difficult to keep women safe.
- In a study conducted by the Centre for Social Research, Haryana, fear of violence against women is a major cause of female foeticide.
- Apart from this, there have been increasing cases of polygamy due to shortage of women. There are cases of forcible marriage of widows.
- There has been commodification of women as well, with practices of purchasing of brides from poor areas.
- Economic consequences are that there is a huge proportion of the productive population which is missing. Lack of women impairs the ability of men to work, and has led to increased work pressure on the men.

The government has tried to counter the declining sex ratio through initiatives like **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhai; Sukanya Samridhi Yojana** etc.

- 2) **Women's Health** - Studies on hospital admissions and records show that males get more medical care compared to girls. More than half the women of reproductive age (15-49 years) in India are anaemic. The prevalence of anaemia among women has consistently been high over the last 20 years. 12% of the female population of the country suffers from repeated pregnancy (80% of their productive life is spent in pregnancy) & lack of nutrition.

Reproductive Health

- Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) in India has declined to 113 in 2016-18 from 122 in 2015-17 and 130 in 2014-2016.
- The number of contraceptives has increased, but is far from reaching the 100% mark
- According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4), institutional deliveries have increased from 39% in 2005-06 to 79% in 2015-16.
 - Deliveries in government hospitals rose by 22%, and it fell by 8% in private hospitals

- Home births dropped by 16%
- But healthcare has not been able to cater to the lowest rung of the society. This is primarily due to lack of facilities in rural areas, and lack of doctors there
- Also, quality of antenatal care is vital to reduce the risk of stillbirths and pregnancy complications, and that is not in a very good position in India.

How marriage age and women's health are linked

In 2020, Government special task force suggests the minimum age of marriage for girls may be raised from 18 at present to 21. Data show that the majority of women in India marry after the age of 21. The **National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4)** found that about 26.8% of women aged 20-24 were married before adulthood (age 18).

- Young mothers are more susceptible to anaemia.
- Poverty, limited access to education and economic prospects, and security concerns are the known reasons for early marriage. Women in the poorest 20% of the population married much younger than their peers from the wealthiest 20%.

Preventing early marriage can reduce the maternal mortality ratio and infant mortality ratio. At present, MMR is 145 for every 100,000 children born. India's infant mortality ratio is 30 of every 1,000 children born. Both these indicators in India are the highest among the BRICS economies.

COVID-19 and Womens' Health

India has made significant progress in recent years on a number of health and socio-economic indicators, including increase in institutional deliveries, reduction in total fertility rate, reduction in maternal mortality ratio, and a sharp decline in child marriage. COVID-19 could potentially disrupt the pace of progress as it has exacerbated existing structural, economic and socio-cultural inequalities. This impacts particular disadvantaged groups more adversely than the general population. These disadvantaged groups include women and girls.

- With the entire health machinery singularly focused on dealing with the emergency, women's access to **sexual and reproductive health (SRH)** services is challenged.
- Women have little access to family planning services, to institutional support for deliveries, natal and neonatal support or adequate and regular access to hygiene and sanitary items.
- Increase in unwanted pregnancies, maternal mortality and neonatal mortality are expected to emerge as major concern areas.
- According to UNFPA's projections, because of mobility restrictions related to COVID-19, 47 million women in 114 low-and middle-income countries may lack access to modern contraceptives, resulting in 7 million unintended pregnancies worldwide.
- Restricted mobility, confinement within the household and lack of social connectivity is increasing the risk of violence faced by women and girls who are already vulnerable to abuse.
- Continued access to SRH services is critical for a woman or a girl to prevent an unintended pregnancy, and to have control over her fertility and life trajectory.

3) Literacy - According to **Periodic Labour Force Survey 2018-19**, literacy rate in both rural and urban areas was higher among males than females: In rural areas, literacy rate was 81.9% among males compared to 65.7% among females and in urban areas, literacy rate was 91.9% among males compared to 82.6% among females.

4) Education - Female participation as per the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) report show that:

- a. Women's enrolment in higher education has risen to 48.6% in 2018-19 from 10% in 1950-51. The total enrolment in higher education is at 18.2 million females out of 37.4 million. Females per 100 male students have also increased significantly in central universities, deemed universities, and government-aided institutions.
- b. However, the share of male students enrolled in engineering and technology is 71.1% compared to female enrolment, which is just 28.9%.

- c. In 2018-19, 43.82% of women were enrolled at the PhD level as opposed 40% in 2013-14.

5) **Employment** – Of the total female population, only 21.9% are a part of the workforce. According to **Periodic Labour Force Survey 2018-19**, only 19.7% of the rural females and 16.1% of the urban females were in the labour force. Worker Population Ratio (WPR) is 19.0% for rural females and 14.5% for urban females.

- In rural areas, during 2018-19, 71.1% of the female workers were engaged in the agricultural sector, 6% in construction sector, 9% in manufacturing sector.
- Among female workers in the urban, ‘other services’ sector (other than ‘trade, hotel & restaurant’ and ‘transport, storage & communications’) shared the highest proportion of workers (45.6%), followed by manufacturing (24.5%) and trade, hotel and restaurant (13.8%).

6) **Political status** – With only around 9% women in the upper house and around 11% in the lower house of parliament, India ranks 99th in the world in terms of female representation among MPs. In the matter of women’s actual political representation in Parliament, India ranks 151 globally among 190 countries in 2019.

However, 73rd & 74th amendments to the constitution have ensured the participation of women in PRIs with a reservation of 1/3rd for women. Today more than 30 million women are actively participating in the political decision-making process at the grass root. In 2019, women constitute around 44% of the total grassroots elected representatives and 43% of the elected heads of villages in India are women

Student Notes:

Political Status of Women

- Women have a very low status in the political scenario in the country.
- Women candidates tend to receive less funds from donors when contesting against male candidates. Due to the entrenched patriarchy, women candidates are also considered to be less capable than their male counterparts by the voters.
- The number of women in the Parliament has never crossed the 20% mark till now. 50% of the population is represented by less than 20% participation is a clear indication of the poor political status of women.
- The government had proposed a reservation for women in the Parliament, but the bill has still not been passed. The **Women's Reservation Bill** proposes that 33% of the seats would be reserved for women in Parliament and legislative assemblies.
- In the Panchayats, 33% of the seats are reserved for women. This has led to development of many women leaders, but in many places the concept of **sarpanch pati** has emerged where woman is just the nominal sarpanch, whereas her husband is the real decision-making authority.
- Such practices need to be discouraged, and women should be provided with more political empowerment.
- Political empowerment to women can have the following impacts:
 - More focus on women related issues.
 - Political parties nurturing women leadership.
 - More sensitive handling of women related issues at the top level can have an immense impact on the status of women.
 - It would help in inspiring other women to take up such roles, and thus it can help create multiple women leaders.

Citizen activism like Shakti – Political Power to Women, National Association of Women’s Organisations (NAWO) and others, exert public pressure towards policies requiring half the election tickets to be accorded to women.

What are the reasons behind such a low status being accorded to women in India?

Because of the biological and physical differences between men and women, gender inequality is often treated as natural. However, despite appearances, scholars have shown that the inequalities between men and women are social rather than natural. For example, there are no

biological reasons that can explain why so few women are found in positions of public power. Nor can nature explain why women generally receive a smaller or no share in family property in most societies. Women are biologically unfit to be inheritors and heads of families, as is evident from matrilineal societies like the Nairs of Kerala, and the Khasis of Meghalaya.

Student Notes:

2.2. Social Structure, Social Institutions and Women

Social structure i.e. the caste and class structures, along with existing social patterns, gender relations, mores, customs and important social institutions create secondary status of women and perpetuate the discrimination through various social processes.

2.2.1. Social Structure

i) The Caste Structure

The subordination of women was crucial to the development of caste hierarchy. The higher the caste the greater were the constraints on women. It might be relevant to ask: What was the need to control women? What was it that women's power would endanger? How was it linked to material resources? Caste boundaries are maintained through strict purity – pollution principles, rules of commensality and endogamy, commitment to caste occupation and ascribed life-style. Three of the major signs of purity: vegetarianism, teetotalism and tight constraints on women, indicate that a significant degree of ritual purity comes through domestic activities. The control on women comes from two major aspects-

1. Women's disinheritance from immovable property, removing them from the public sphere and limiting them to the domestic sphere in the form of seclusion.
2. Far greater control is exercised by men over women's sexuality through arranged marriage, child marriage, prohibition on divorce, and strict monogamy for women, leading to sati and a ban on widow remarriage, including infant or child widows.

These were enforced most strictly by the upper castes to maintain ritual purity, biological purity, caste supremacy and economic power. Lower caste groups attempting to achieve upward status mobility with improvement in economic power, also imbibed upper caste norms of constraining women's freedom.

ii) The Class Structure and Women's Work

The constraints on women that vary from upper to the lower castes are reinforced by the class structure as well. The class structure appears to build upon the existing gender hierarchy in the caste structure.

1. Women of upper castes/classes are secluded, and participate mostly in activities within the domestic sphere.
2. Women from middle castes with medium and small holdings are more likely to work on their own fields and in certain cases work for wages.
3. Women from artisan castes/classes contribute to the home-based production They belong to the bottom of the hierarchy where seclusion and restriction on social mobility are not practiced.

In the urban context, where there is a transition to non-agricultural occupations, the upper castes form the predominant group among middle classes. Women of this class emerged from seclusion during the century to acquire education and employment. The important aspect is that the economic dependence on men is broken. However, this did not drastically change the subordination of women. Women's subordination is entrenched in the caste and class hierarchies which have to be understood. Otherwise, women's issues will be misunderstood as mere cultural accidents and violence on women as stray incidents.

2.2.2. Social Institutions

Student Notes:

i) The Institution of Family and Marriage

Family is the most important social unit in which members live in a network of mutual ties, roles and obligations, that it is a unit of procreation, it nurtures the young and socializes them (i.e. transmits tradition, culture, religious and social values) to enable them to perform various roles in the society. Family is also an informal agency of **social control** - regulating behaviour, enforcing of values and patterns for maintaining order in society.

Indian family is largely **patriarchal** in structure, where descent is **patrilineal** (property of the family is transmitted through the male offspring for example, father to son), when residence is **patrilocal** (transfer of residence of women to the village/residence/family of the husband, after marriage), and when authority is concentrated in the hands of senior males. Among the patrilineal Hindus, some movable property is given to the daughters at the time of marriage as *stridhana*. With the passing of the Hindu Succession Act of 1956, a uniform system of inheritance has been established.

Marriage is defined as a relation between man and woman which is recognized by custom or law, involves certain rights and duties both in the case of parties entering the union and the children born of it. By and large girls are brought up to believe that marriage is a woman's destiny, married state is desirable and motherhood is a cherished achievement. Only a very small percentage of women remain unmarried by choice.

Marriage is supposed to provide settlement, security, respect, completeness and confidence to a woman in the society. This belief sometime generates lack of confidence among unmarried women. They often face insecurity and seldom get due respect in the society. Similarly, widow, divorcee and separated women rarely get respect in the society. This indicates that the status of women largely spins around her marital status in India.

In a patriarchal family setup, a married woman would do household work with her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law, while the male members do the earning. The equation in the marriage also largely is in favour of the male partner, and are seldom considered as equals. However, with rapid urbanisation and industrialisation family relations are changing.

How gendered is the family?

The belief is that the male child will support the parents in old age and the female child will leave on marriage resulting in families investing more in a male child. Despite the biological fact that a female baby has better chances of survival than a male baby the rate of infant mortality among female children is higher in comparison to male children in lower age groups in India.

Socialization within the Family

Socialization performs the function of transmitting culture, tradition, social values and norms. Apart from parental socialization in the family, various agencies like the schools, peer groups, literature and films play a role in early socialization and adult socialization. Girls and boys receive differential socialization, which further perpetuate asymmetric roles and relationships. Boys are equipped with higher education and skills in order to perform the 'breadwinner's' role and the girls are initiated into domestic chores at an early age, given lesser education, trained to work hard and to develop low self-esteem. Boys receive a status of permanence as against girls who are seen as temporary members of the family. Very few families enable their daughters to develop an independent identity and dignity. The family ideology which determines 'suitability' and 'unsuitability' of certain jobs for women is also reflected in job stereotyping in the labor market.

ii) Religion and Women

Religious scriptures, especially the Hindu religion place a high preference for sons. According to the code of Manu, a man could achieve merit only by protecting the purity of his wife and through her, of his sons. A son is necessary for lighting the funeral pyre of the father,

propitiating the souls of agnatic ascendants through ‘*shradha*’ and thereby enabling the father and agnatic ascendants to attain moksha (to be relieved from rebirth). The role of the women is to beget sons, perpetuate the male descent and facilitate the performance of rituals. This hierarchy of male and female roles create differential evaluation of children with a strong son preference on the one hand and daughter neglect on the other, in terms of access to food, health care, education, freedom, rights and justice.

In India, personal law falls under the purview of religion, though individuals can choose secular alternatives. This choice is, however, circumscribed; a woman married under Muslim or Hindu law, for example, cannot seek divorce or alimony under secular law, she has to abide by what is offered by the religious laws by which she is/was married. Neither Muslim nor Hindu personal law entitles a woman to alimony.

Student Notes:

Triple Talaq in India

The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019, was passed by the Parliament last year which criminalises ‘instant triple talaq’ among Muslims. The Act makes all declarations of instant triple talaq void, illegal and punishable with imprisonment of up to three years for the husband.

What is instant triple talaq?

Instant triple talaq or talaq-e-bidat is a practice under which a Muslim man can divorce his wife by uttering “talaq” three times. It is prevalent among India’s Muslim community majority of whom follow the Hanafi Islamic school of jurisprudence. Many predominantly Muslim countries, such as Egypt, Bangladesh, Pakistan, have banned triple talaq.

Shah Bano Case:

In 1978, a Muslim woman, Shah Bano, filed a petition in Supreme Court demanding maintenance from her divorced husband which gave her divorce through instant triple talaq. She filed a claim for maintenance for herself and her children under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. The Supreme Court provided her relief but it was reversed by the Rajiv Gandhi government under the pressure of Muslim fundamentalists, an act that earned much criticism.

Shayara Bano Case:

Shayara Bano was married for 15 years. In 2016, her husband divorced her through talaq-e-bidat. Ms Bano argued before the Supreme Court of India that three practices – triple talaq, polygamy, and nikah halala (the practice requiring women to marry and divorce another man so that her previous husband can re-marry her after triple talaq) – were unconstitutional. Specifically, she claimed that they violated several fundamental rights under the Constitution of India namely,

- Article 14 (equality before the law),
- Article 15(1) (prohibition of discrimination including on the ground of gender),
- Article 21 (right to life) and 25 (freedom of religion).

In 2017, the Court, by a majority set aside the practice of triple talaq. This judgment became the foundation of the present Act passed by Parliament.

Why the government criminalized the Triple Talaq?

The Government held that 473 cases of Triple Talaq have taken place even after two years of judgement pronounced by the Supreme Court. The law has been placed as a deterrent to eradicate social evils. To eliminate atrocities faced by women in domestic space parliament enacted:

- The Dowry Prohibition Act in 1961
- Prevention of domestic violence Act 2005

In 2020, one year has passed since the law against triple talaq was passed and there is a decline of about 82% in triple talaq cases thereafter. According to Ministry of Minority Affairs.

Terming Triple Talaq as unconstitutional as a step towards establishing **Uniform Civil Code** (Enshrined in Article 44 of directive principle of state policy), but criminalising it goes against the ethos of Fundamental rights i.e. article 25 and 26 the freedom of religion. Triple Talaq has led to the subjugation of Muslim women even after 72 years of independence but its solution must come through coexistence rather than coercion.

3. Nature, Range and Patterns of Women's Work

Student Notes:

Women were the major producer of food, textiles and handicrafts throughout human history and continue to provide a major labour input where production is still in the small -scale subsistence sector. It is essential to categorise various types of work done by women in terms of paid and unpaid work. This will give us a broad idea to understand the significance of women's work both in the family and in society.

3.1. What is Women's Work?

Defining the exact nature, scope and magnitude of women's work remains a problem area because a good deal of women's work is either **invisible** or is **only partially accounted** for in the data on workforce participation. Components of women's work include housework, paid and unpaid work related to home-based craft activities, family enterprise or business and paid work outside home. The kind of work women do is determined by women's position in the society and family's location in the social hierarchy.

3.2. Unpaid Work in Household, Home-Based Production and Family Farms

There is differential work participation of men, women and children within the family both in quantitative and qualitative terms. The basic elements of women's work within the home are related to the division of labour between men and women. Activities included under 'housework' broadly differ according to age, gender, income, occupational group, location (rural/urban), size and structure of the family.

In the last such National Sample Survey (NSS) for 2011-2012, over 90% of women who did not work were primarily engaged in domestic duties. **ILO 2018** shows on an average women in India spent 297 minutes per day on unpaid care work as against 31 minutes by men (in paid work, women spend only 160 minutes compared to 360 minutes by men). **WEF Global Gender Gap Report 2018**, on an average 66% of women's work in India is unpaid, compared to 12% of men.

In rural areas the women from the poorer households engage in various activities such as cooking, processing of food for household consumption, storing grains, childcare, fetching fuelwood, fodder and water, collection of forest produce, preparation of cow dung cakes, care of livestock and cattle and house repair and maintenance. Much of this work, which is important for the maintenance of families, is largely done by women. However, this work is unpaid and is not accounted for as productive work as it is meant for self-consumption. Much of the work that women do in household industries and processing of agricultural products, if unpaid, is not recognised as 'work' in the data systems. Activities like dairying, small animal husbandry, fisheries, handloom weaving, handicrafts, pottery etc. are family activities and a major part of the work is done within the home and yet a woman is not accorded the status of a worker. Non-valuation of women's unpaid work within the home results in non-recognition of women's crucial economic contribution.

India's amended **Maternity Benefit Act 2017** stipulates that employers must provide women with 26 weeks of paid time off. Given the absence of a corresponding benefit for new fathers, it perpetuates the gender stereotype of women being the primary caregivers. The law also covers only formal and large-sized firms which, overall, employ only a small proportion of the country's female workers.

Quantifying Women's Work in GDP

Overwhelming presence of unpaid work of women act as barrier for women to freely access labour markets, reduce income-earning potential and also lead to persistent inequalities. Unpaid work of women forms the core of 'double burden' that women workers experience over a lifetime. Unpaid work imposes costs in terms of missed opportunities for education, skill acquisition or improvement and public participation.

Quantifying women's work in GDP:

- Women play a very important role in households, but their contribution is not a part of the GDP calculation and hence goes unnoticed or rather not quantified
- This is because it is very difficult to quantify the work done by women.
- In contemporary society, working women are facing double exploitation because they are forced to do the household work even after working at homes.
- This quantification of women's work is important for them to gain recognition, and for their roles to be given more importance.
- If this cannot be quantified, then at least there needs to be more value given to their work.

Student Notes:

3.3. Female Child Labour

Girls continue to provide free labour in home-based production systems. Studies on rural girl child labour show that she works nine hours a day providing goods and services, which keep her out of school. She works on an average 318 days a year in the fields and at home providing free labour.

More girls are being inducted into work while more boys are sent to school thus widening the gap between boy's and girl's opportunities. They are employed in agricultural and related industries in large numbers. Girls are also employed in large numbers in carpet industry of Kashmir, in lock making in Aligarh, in gem polishing in Jaipur, in match industry in Sivakasi and in bidi rolling. In fact, in the match industry of Sivakasi, ninety% child workers are girls under the age of fourteen, working under hazardous conditions.

Female children working in home-based industries are beyond the purview of child labour laws. These laws are not enforced even in factory-based industries. Even in a piece-rate system, her labour is seen as an extension of her mother's labour and is not given an independent value. Such work cuts them off from schooling, literacy, learning technical skills and improving their job prospects. These handicaps remain insurmountable throughout life.

Female Education

- As per Right to Education (RTE), all children (both girls and boys) are entitled to free primary school education till the age of 14. But still, primary education in India is not universal. The most disadvantaged of the lot include the girls, for whom education is not seen as necessary.
- Reason for this:
 - Parents consider teaching household chores to girls are more important than education, and this is due to the ingraining of patriarchy and the confinement of girls inside the house.
 - Another reason which keeps girls away from school is the concern for their safety and sexuality.
 - Also, schools are generally located at a distance, with zero or very few number of female teachers.
 - Lack of toilet facilities inside school premises or lack of separate toilets for girls and boys is another disincentive
- Literacy Rate of women is 65%, whereas it is 82% for men according to Census 2011. This difference reflects how far women are behind men in terms of education.
- Illiteracy of women has far reaching consequences, and it has an impact on their children also. Also, low schooling leads to poor quality of care for their children, leading to higher infant and child mortality, and it sometimes leads to malnutrition because lack of education makes it difficult for women to adopt appropriate health promoting behavior such as immunization of children.
- Government measures: '**Sarva Siksha Abhiyan**' and '**Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao**' are initiatives to promote the education of girl child.

3.4. Paid Work

Women's access to decent paid work is an undisputed ethical and economic imperative as well as a primary human right and aspiration. It is clear that the current under-participation of women in paid employment in India is not due to their lack of will. More than a third of Indian

women (both urban and rural) primarily engaged in housework report wanting to work for pay if a job were available. Indeed, the participation of educated, capable women in the workforce makes for a strong economic argument: **International Monetary Fund (IMF) finds that India's GDP will increase by as much as 27% if women participated in the economy at the same rate as men.**

i) Education, Paid Employment and Household Responsibilities

The spread of education among the middle- and upper-class women has opened up new avenues of employment. However, education does not necessarily lead to employment. On one hand, illiteracy among the majority of women in the lower socio-economic group constitutes a major barrier to increasing and diversifying work and training opportunities. On the other hand, pre-defined roles, ideology and labour market forces in a labour surplus economy effectively restrict women's work opportunity among educated women of certain sectors.

In middle class families, women work for improving or maintaining the standard of living of the family or to provide a cushion against rising cost of living. Working outside home on the same terms and conditions, as men, does not absolve them from their domestic responsibilities. As a result, the dual burden of work exerts physical, mental and emotional strain on them. One of the consequences of double burden may be delayed promotions or sacrificing new job opportunities due to family responsibilities.

ii) Agricultural and Industrial Sectors

Inequalities are reflected in distribution of women workers in different sectors, across job hierarchies and in wages and earnings between men and women.

The wave of Industrialisation has created more work opportunities for a small section of educated women but at the same time reduced work opportunities for unskilled women workers working in textiles, jute industries etc. As a result, women workers got concentrated in plantations, food products, tobacco and textiles, cane and bamboo work, silk worm, rearing coir products, domestic services, education and health services. The high concentration of women in household industries rather than factory-based production affects their status as workers with no control on their labour and earnings.

iii) Women in Services and Professions

As far as women in services and professions are concerned, they are concentrated in certain types of soft skill jobs like teachers, nurses, typists and stenographers and very few occupy higher positions in administration, business and technical jobs.

Despite the impressive increase in the number of educated women in urban areas the gap between men and women in the services and professions is large. It can be attributed to the following factors-

- Girls are generally socialised for their domestic roles.
- Less investment in the vocational and technical training of women
- Male stereotypes determine attitude to work and differential expectations from girls education, which is rarely seen as an investment for the future.
- Higher concentration of girls is found in humanities and social sciences rather than vocational and technical courses.
- There is less physical mobility among women after marriage.

Women in Leadership Role

- Many reports have pointed out that the number of women in leadership roles in India is very low. Women comprise only 12% of the members of the national parliament.
- But this number is gradually increasing, which is a very positive sign.

- Many big corporations are headed by women, for example Pepsi by Indra Nooyi, Axis Bank by Shikha Sharma, ICICI Bank by Chanda Kochhar (who just quit) etc.
- Many argue that there is a glass ceiling, which restricts the promotion of women to the top most positions. This glass ceiling exists due to the persistence of patriarchy in the society, and also due to the fact that the present leadership consists of men who promote the interests of men only
- But it is very inspiring to see that many women have been successful in breaking this glass ceiling.
- More focus on social, economic and political empowerment, and better education facilities for women can help more women in reaching the leadership roles in the society.

Student Notes:

iv) Earning Differentials

An expression of discrimination against women in labour market is wage differential. They not only get **unequal pay for equal work** but many jobs that women do are categorised as low skilled jobs for which lower wages are paid. For example, men usually do weaving which is better paid while spinning, usually done by women, is low paid. In construction also men are supposed to do skilled jobs and women do unskilled work and get lower wages. **Sexual divisions of labour** and lower duration of women's work are reflected into lower wages for women. Earning differentials also reflect differences in skill acquisition, education and training.

India has a gender wage gap of 34% despite the existence of **India's Equal Remuneration Act 1976** which mandates equal pay for the same or similar work and bars discrimination in hiring. Further, the pay gap increases with age, work experience, and rise in occupational hierarchy – thus disincentivising the women to stay on.

Women Left Behind: India's Falling Female Labor Participation

Gender Dimension of Employment

Gender equality in the labour market is considered to be smart economics to achieve faster economic growth and wealth creation. In an era of globalization, no country can develop and achieve its full potential if half of its population is locked in non-remunerative, less productive and non-economic activities.

Female Participation in Labour Market

According to Employment-Unemployment Survey (EUS) of the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) and **Periodic Labour Force Surveys (PLFS)** estimates, female labour force participation rate (LFPR) for productive age-group (15- 59 years) declined by 7.8 % from 33.1 % in 2011-12 to 25.3 % in 2017-18 and rate of decline is sharper in rural areas as compared to urban areas. As a result of this, **gender disparity in India's labour market has increased**.

Factors Influencing Female Labour Force Participation

The arguments advanced in support of the declining and low female LFPR are from both supply and demand side.

On the supply side:

- More women in rural areas are now pursuing higher education has delayed their entry into the labour market.
- Household incomes have risen in rural areas on account of higher wage levels.
- Cultural factors, social constraints and patriarchal norms restricting mobility and freedom of women.
- Relatively higher responsibilities of unpaid work and unpaid care work.

On the demand side:

- Absence of job opportunities and quality jobs and significant gender wage gap
- Lack of attainment of appropriate education level/skill set.
- Fall in international demand for products of labour-intensive industries in urban areas.
- Low female wages in agriculture sector

- Fall in employment in agriculture has not shown a concomitant increase in opportunities for women in the manufacturing sector where most women with middle to secondary levels of education and from middle income groups are likely to look for employment.
- Structural shift away from agricultural employment, and increased mechanization of agriculture along with decline in animal husbandry in rural areas
- Withdrawal of men from agriculture and shift to the construction sector in urban areas, led to loss of jobs for rural women who were engaged as unpaid labour along with the men.

Student Notes:

In the coming years, India is expected to gain significantly from its '**demographic dividend**' as the share of its potential productive workforce will increase in numbers as compared to the aging population of other countries. To what extent the country can seize this dividend and benefit from it will largely depend on how women exercise their rights and entitlements and contribute to the development process.

3.5. Women Workers and the Growth of Unorganized Sector

The women's access to labour market, resources and health education are largely affected due to their socio-cultural backgrounds. In a country like India, there is a preponderance of the informal sector absorbing a large section of women engaged in casual work, piece rated work and working largely in the confines of the household which remains invisible in the statistical sources. Such constraints deprive women from the social protection and social security provisions of the country. In fact, women are subjected to a life-cycle of risks and vulnerabilities emanating largely from gendered divisions of household tasks, poverty and deprivation in the household, customary laws and social practices restricting women's mobility

PLFS 2018-19 on Informal Sector and Women Employment shows that 54% of female workers are in non-agriculture sector. Out of the regular wage/salaried employees in the non-agriculture sector, 66.5% females have no written job contract, 50% are not eligible for paid leave, 55% are not eligible for social security benefits.

How COVID-19 is amplifying gender inequality in employment India

COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated the trend of declining female participation in the labour force. This period has witnessed a disproportionate economic exclusion of women, both in rural and urban economies. With reverse migration, demand for work has increased in rural areas, and employment has shifted from women to men.

Moreover, for women in the lower-income strata in rural areas, opportunities in non-farm employment are few, and those in traditional sectors like agriculture and handicrafts have declined. In sectors like construction, jobs have become increasingly masculinised. In urban conglomerations, women are largely engaged as informal workers and have little reserves. A majority of the jobs in cities are unavailable or inaccessible to women.

With unpaid work increasing, and livelihood opportunities decreasing, many women are likely to find it difficult to sustain or rebuild their livelihoods. If women's employment continues to drop post-COVID, it will only magnify the damage to their position in families and society, given that employment is one of the strongest predictors of women's empowerment, not to mention important for boosting GDP.

Women's employment must become a priority in recovery efforts. Initiatives to enhance digital access and skills should be scaled up and targeted specifically to low-income women. Direct employment programmes to provide necessary supplies should be expanded; for example, the government in the state of Andhra Pradesh is employing thousands of women to stitch masks.

4. Women's Issues and Responses

4.1. Women's Movements

The roots of the Indian women's movement go back to the 19th century male social reformers who took up issues concerning women and started women's organizations. Women started

forming their own organization from the end of the nineteenth century first at the local and then at the national level. In the years before independence, the two main issues they took up were political rights and reform of personal laws. Women's participation in the freedom struggle broadened the base of the women's movement. In post-independence India, large number of women's autonomous groups have sprung up challenging patriarchy and taking up a variety of issues such as violence against women, greater share for women in political decision making, etc. both at the activist and academic level.

4.1.1. Timeline of Women's Movements in India

Unlike the women's movement in the West, the Indian women's movement began in the shadow of colonial rule and the commitment to attain freedom from colonial rule. Questions of independence and freedom from the colonial power were inextricably linked with the consciousness of the Indian women's movement, a consciousness of women in relation to the larger society, not only to men.

The early attempts of 19th century at reforming the conditions under which Indian women lived were mainly carried out by western educated middle and high-class men. Soon they were joined by the women of their families. These women along with the men began organized movements fighting against the oppressive social practices such as female infanticide, sati, child marriage, laws prohibiting widow remarriage, etc.

The public participation of women of middle and high caste and class background led to the birth of women's organizations in the early 20th century. They began fighting for the status and rights of women but this task was unambiguously located within the agenda of the freedom struggle as a whole. Another strand in the women's movement developed roughly around this time. The Left-radical tendency was shaped in women's movement by their activities among women of the working class. Women with Left political leanings were involved in working class and revolutionary peasant struggles, such as the struggle in Telangana.

Late 1960s and early 1970s witnessed the resurgence of women's movement, mainly due to the repercussion of the problems that cropped up at the national front (such as price rise) and the women's active mobilizations at the international front. The struggle against the Emergency saw the rise of many new women's groups, which rejected the politics of earlier women's organizations. These groups sprang up as part of the movement for democracy and against gender discrimination and later emerged as autonomous organizations without any explicit party affiliations though many of them were drawn from political parties. They mainly intended to raise feminist issues in mass organizations such as trade unions or kisan samitis. Many autonomous groups, which were mostly women-only groups, without party affiliations and conventional hierarchical organizational structures, were also formed mainly dealing with domestic issues such as domestic violence.

Women's movements of the late 1970s and early 1980s were dominated by such autonomous women's groups, which were mostly city based. At the same time feminist consciousness had taken place in some of the rural movements too.

4.1.2. Pre-Independence Women's Movements

The roots of the Indian women's movement go back to the early 19th century when social reformers, beginning with Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833), began to focus on issues concerning women. Following them, improving the condition of women became the first tenet of the Indian social reform movement. Women's inferior status, enforced seclusion, early marriage, condition of widows and lack of education were the main facts documented by reformers throughout the country. However, women's movement is linked to both social reform movements & the nationalist movement.

4.1.2.1. Socio-Religious Reform Movements

Student Notes:

Women's Organizations Started by Men

Men who belonged to the socio religious reform associations began the first organization for women. They are as follows:

1. **Brahmo Samaj:** Founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 1825, it attempted to abolish restrictions and prejudices against women, which included child marriage, polygamy, limited rights to inherit property. Education was seen as the major factor to improve the position of women. Raja Ram Mohan Roy played an important role in getting Sati abolished.
2. **Prarthana Samaj:** Founded by MG Ranade & RG Bhandarkar in 1867, its objectives were more or less similar to that of Brahmo Samaj but remained confined to western India. Justice Ranade criticized child marriage, polygamy, restriction on remarriage of widows and non-access to education.
3. **Arya Samaj:** Founded by Dayanand Saraswati in 1875, it advocated reform in the caste system, compulsory education for men and women, prohibition of child marriage by law, remarriage of child widows.
4. Social reformers like **Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, Jyotibha Phule and Lokhitwadi Gopal Hari Deshmukh** played key roles in women's education and widow remarriage.
5. **Syed Ahmad Khan & Sheikh Abdullah** in Aligarh and **Karmat Hussain** in Lucknow spearheaded a movement to improve women's education.
6. Attempts to uplift the status of **Parsi** women through removal of *purdah* system, raising age of marriage and education were led by visionaries such as **Dadabhai Naroji, K.R. Cama, etc.**

The male-guided organizations for women did valuable work in educating women and giving them their first experience with public work. However, gender equality was not an agenda for any of the movements mentioned above. They had a very limited perspective of changing the position of women within the family through education.

Women's Organization Started by Women

By the end of the 19th century, a few women emerged from within the reformed families who formed organizations of their own.

1. One of the first to do so was Swarnakumari Devi, daughter of Devendranath Tagore, a Brahmo leader, and sister of the poet Rabindranath Tagore, who formed the **Ladies Society in Calcutta** in 1882 for educating and imparting skills to widows and other poor women to make them economically self-reliant. She edited a women journal, Bharati, thus earning herself the distinction of being the first Indian woman editor.
2. In 1882, **Ramabai Saraswati** formed the **Arya Mahila Samaj** in Pune and a few years later started the Sharda Sadan in Bombay.
3. The early women's organizations were confined to a particular locality or city. In 1910, **Sarala Devi Chaudhurani**, daughter of Swarnakumari Devi formed the **Bharat Stree Mandal** (Great Circle of India Women) with the object of bringing together "women of all castes, creeds, classes and parties... on the basis of their common interest in the moral and material progress of the women of India."

4.1.2.2. National Freedom Movement

At the time when women's organizations were fighting for women's political and economic rights and trying to improve their position by education and social reform, women's struggle entered a new phase with the arrival of Mahatma Gandhi on the Indian political scene. Women had been associated with the freedom struggle before that too. The **National Conference** was formed at the third session of the Indian National Congress in 1887 to provide a forum for the discussion of social issues. The **Bharat Mahila Parishad** was the women's wing of this and was inaugurated in 1905. It focused on child marriage, condition of widows, dowry and other "evil"

customs. They had attended sessions of the Indian National Congress and taken part in the Swadeshi movement in Bengal, 1905-11 and in the Home Rule Movement.

Student Notes:

But the involvement of a really large number of women in the national movement began when Gandhiji launched the first **Non-Cooperation Movement** and gave a special role to women. Peasant women played an important role in the rural satyagrahas of Borsad and Bardoli. Women participated in the **Salt satyagraha**, in the **Civil Disobedience Movement**, in the **Quit India Movement** and in all the Gandhian satyagrahas. They held meetings, organized processions, picketed shops selling foreign cloth and liquor and went to jail. Gandhiji took interest in collective mobilization of women to fight for political freedom as well as for their social and political rights. He felt that women were most suited for Satyagraha as they have great qualities appropriate for non-violent struggle.

Women's participation in the national movement helped in breaking several of the old barriers of tradition and custom. Women's organization side by side raised their voices for removal of social injustice meted to them, which resulted in passing of the **Resolution on Fundamental Right** of equal rights for both the sexes at the **Karachi session** of the Indian National Congress in 1930. The declaration reads as follows:

1. All citizens are equal before the law, irrespective of religion, caste, creed or sex.
2. No disability attaches to any citizen, by reason of his or her religion, caste, creed or sex, in regard to public employment, office of power or honour, and in the exercise of any trade or calling.
3. The franchise shall be on the basis of universal adult suffrage.
4. Women shall have the right to vote, to represent and the right to hold public offices.

Women won respect for their courage and the large numbers in which they participated in the freedom struggle. It transformed the lives of many women such as **Durgabai Deshmukh**, **Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya**. The first woman to participate in the nationalist movement during the Dandi March was **Sarojini Naidu** who later became the first Indian woman president of the Congress. However, women's participation in the freedom movement did not lead to a separate autonomous women's movement since it was part of the anti-colonial movement.

AGRARIAN STRUGGLES AND REVOLTS

Women participated along with men in agrarian struggles and revolts originating in tribal and rural areas in the colonial period. **Tebhaga movement** in Bengal, **Telangana armed struggle** from the erstwhile Nizam's rule, and the **Warli tribal revolt** against bondage in Maharashtra are some examples.

WOMEN IN LABOUR MOVEMENT

In 1917 **Anasuya Sarabhai** led the Ahmedabad textile workers' strike and in 1920 under her leadership the Majdoor Mahajan, the Ahmedabad Textile Mill Workers Union was established. By the late 1920s, the presence of women in the workers' movement was noticeable. There were several prominent women unionists and women workers were consciously organized and a special role was given to them in the workers' movement.

Bombay was the center of this development and **Maniben Kara** emerged as the socialist leader of railway workers and **Ushabai Dange** and **Parvati Bhore** as Communist leaders of textile workers. In the 1928-29 Bombay textile mill workers' strike, women played a leading role, as they did in the Calcutta strike during the same years.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

The early 20th century saw the growth of women's organisations at a national and local level.

- 1) The **Women's India Association** (WIA) was formed in 1917 by Margaret Cousins, an Irish and an Indian nationalist. This was followed by the formation of the **National Council of Indian Women** (NCIW) in 1926 and **All India Women's Conference** (AIWC) in 1927.

- 2) The first all India women's organisation came into existence in 1926, with the setting up of the National Council for Women in India (NCWI). The NCWI aimed at securing women's rights through social reforms and women's and children's welfare.
- 3) **All India Women's Conference** (AIWC) was set up in 1927 in Poona. Its members were primarily women from the upper and upper-middle classes and princely families, women members of the Indian National Congress Party, the Communist Party, professional women like doctors and educationalists, and social workers.
- AIWC took up the questions of women's education, and it was at its initiative that the **Lady Harding College** for women was set up in Delhi in 1932. It also organized a large number of literacy schools and handicraft centres, which helped women from poor families learn basic skills in order to earn and be relatively independent economically.
 - In the 1930's the AIWC directed its energies towards fighting for women's equal rights in inheritance and marriage, and reforms in the personal laws of different communities.
- 4) A significant concern for women's group in this period was the campaign against **child marriage**. As a result of this struggle the **Sarada Act** was passed in 1929, fixing the age of marriage at fourteen for girls and eighteen for boys.

Student Notes:

4.1.3. Post-Independence Women's Movements

Women organizations such as **National Federation of Indian Women** (1954) and the **Samajwadi Mahila Sabha** (1959) were formed to work for supporting the cause of Indian women. One of the weaknesses in the strategies of women's organisations in the 1950s and 1960s was their inability to mobilise ordinary women and failed to address the issues that concerned them. The lack of efforts to reach to the masses and expand the base of the women's movement limited its effectiveness and agenda for action. The position of peasant and working-class women deteriorated and only a small minority of women benefited.

4.1.3.1. Resurgence of Women's Movements in the 70s

After their participation in the nation's independence struggle women again withdrew from public life and the debate on women's issues also faded out from the public arena. The late 1970s and 1980s was marked by a resurgence of women's struggle and emergence of new women's groups and organisations.

The growing economic hardships of rural poor and urban women and failure to take up women's issues by the general agrarian and industrial workers' movements led to the emergence of separate women's organisations in various parts of the country which seriously attempted to organise poor women for a positive change. In Ahmedabad, the first attempt at a women's trade union was made with the establishment of the **Self-Employed Women's Association** (SEWA) at the initiative of Ela Bhat in 1972.

EMERGENCE OF NEW ORGANIZATIONS AND APPROACHES

New organisations such as SEWA (Gujarat), **Working Women's Forum** (Tamil Nadu), **Sramik Mahila Sangathna** (Maharashtra) concerned themselves with the plight of women workers in the unorganised sector. Organising women labour and taking up the issues of their wages, working conditions, exploitation and health hazards became an important task for these women's organisations.

During the same time women's organisations emerged which were not affiliated to political parties or to trade unions. They were called 'autonomous women's organisations'. They rejected the 'welfarist' approach adopted by the previous women's organisations, many of which were set up during the pre-independence period, and adopted '**protest politics**' for mobilising women on specific issues. The Nav Nirman movement, initially a student's movement in Gujarat against rising prices, black marketing and dishonesty launched in 1974 was soon joined by huge number of middle-class women. **Anti-price rise movement** in 1973-74 was a united front of women's organisations belonging to several parties.

SHGs and Women

- SHGs have been successful in fulfilling their aim of empowering women, and to help eradicate poverty in rural areas.
- Impact of SHGs on women are as follows:
 - It has led to their social and economic empowerment
 - It has helped women gain more control over decision making in households
 - It has been helpful in providing women with financial autonomy, in participation in community driven program, self-employment autonomy
 - It has helped instill a saving spirit among the members
- Though SHGs have had an immense impact on the status of women, but they can be made more effective in the following ways:
 - Through proper capacity building, training and skill upgradation of women
 - Motivating SHG women to participate in government sponsored community driven programs
 - Proper rating and categorization of SHGs
 - Providing technical help to SHGs so that they can also utilize the ongoing ICT revolution and grow further

4.1.3.2. Issue Based Movements in the 1970s and 1980s

The autonomous women's organisations' took up issues related to women's oppression like dowry, violence within the family, alcoholism among men and wife-beating, discrimination at the work place etc. to mobilise women for collective action. For the first time some groups in Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Patna etc. raised issues such as sexual exploitation of poor scheduled castes and scheduled tribe women by upper caste landlords. Some of the earliest self-governing women's groups were the Progressive Organization of Women (POW, Hyderabad), the Forum Against Rape (now redefined as Forum Against Oppression of Women), Stree Sangharsh and Samata (Delhi).

Issues of rape, dowry murders, crime and violence against women were taken up. All India anti-dowry and anti-rape movements were launched by women's organisations and civil liberties and democratic rights organisations also joined them.

i) Anti-dowry Movements

Dowry murders have witnessed a sustained campaign by several women's organisations and civil rights groups. In the 1980s several women's and other progressive organisations formed a joint front in Delhi called "**Dahej Virodh Chetna Manch**". Organisations in other major cities also campaigned through protest, demonstrations, discussions, street theatre, posters etc. against the ghastly murders of young brides for dowry. After much deliberation, the Dowry Prohibition (Amendment) Act, 1984 was passed. The Act sets a limit to the amount given in dowry but does not ban dowry. Cruelty by the husband and his relatives leading to suicide or death has become an offence, punishable with imprisonment.

ii) Ecological Movement

- a. Economic hardships faced by women in the Himalayan region due to cutting down of forests resulted in spontaneous mobilisation of women. They hugged the trees to prevent the contractors from felling them. This is popularly known as the **Chipko movement**. The disappearance of forests means acute hardships to women who are primarily responsible for the collection of fuel, fodder, fruits, herbs for medicine and other forest produce which give them income and employment. This is why we find that women are even now in the forefront of these ecological agitations.
- b. **Narmada Bachao Andolan** (NBA) led by Medha Patkar first started as a protest for not providing proper rehabilitation and resettlement for the people who have been displaced by the construction of Sardar Sarovar Dam. Later on, the movement turned its focus on the preservation of the environment and the ecosystems of the valley.

iii) Anti-rape Movement

Student Notes:

An anti-rape movement was launched in the last decade demanding review of the Supreme Court judgment in a rape case, which acquitted the culprit. Women activists forced the government to review Rape Laws. Several women's organisations and legal and social activists held discussions with the Law Commission to amend the law and in 1983 Criminal Law (Amendment) Act was passed.

4.1.3.3. Other Prominent Women's Organisations

- 1) Some women organizations such as the **Banga Mahila Samaj**, and the **Ladies Theosophical Society** functioned at local levels to promote contemporary ideas for women. These organizations deal with issues like women's education, abolition of social evils like purdah and child marriage, Hindu law reform, moral and material progress of women, equality of rights and opportunities.
- 2) Some other prominent women organizations are **All India Federation of Women Lawyers**, **All India Women's Conference**, and **Confederation of Women Entrepreneurs**.
- 3) **National Alliance of Women** (NAWO) is a national web of women. It is affiliation or membership is open to all liberal minded women's groups and institutions, non-governmental organizations, women workers, women's unions, individuals and others.
- 4) **Annapurna Mahila Mandal** (AMM) works for welfare of women and the girl child. It conducts various activities that include educating women on health, nutrition, mother and childcare, family planning, literacy and environmental sanitation. It works for the empowerment of women and enables them to take their own decisions and fight for security and rights. The organization also promotes individual and group leadership.
- 5) **Swadhina** (Self-esteemed Women) was formed in 1986. It is principally a civil society organization focused on empowerment of women and child development based on sustainable development and right livelihood.
- 6) **All India Democratic Women's Association** is also dominant woman organization which is an independent left oriented women's organisation committed to achieving democracy, equality and women's emancipation. It is the women's wing of the Communist Party of India (Marxist).
- 7) **Kasturba Memorial Trust** and **Bharatiya Grameen Mahila Sangh** (Indian Rural Women's Organisation) with the objective to assist the rural women in developing leadership potential.

4.1.3.4. Feminism & Impact of Feminist ideas on Women's Movements in India

Feminism consists of social, economic and political movements and theories that are concerned with gender inequalities and gaining equal rights for women.

FOUNDATION OF INDIAN FEMINISM & EVOLUTION

First Wave: The foundation of Indian feminism i.e. the first wave was laid by the reform and anti-colonial movements of the 19th century. The aims of the movement centred around including women in public life with better political rights, access to education and employment in the context of the colonial state.³ Various social reformers took up specific issues to improve the status of women. Reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, for instance, argued against the ideas of sati, polygamy, early marriage and permanent widowhood. Further, the Brahmo Samaj gave impetus to mass education of girls and women. The movement for education and social reform was largely led by upper-caste Bengali Women. The reformist movement, as a result, led to various social gains such as the legalisation of widow remarriage in 1856 and the abolition of sati. The later part of the struggle remained preoccupied with the issues on property and inheritance, limiting the composition of the movement to uppercaste and elite class women.

Second Wave: After independence, India began to look inward to resolve social issues and create a systematic development plan for women. In the second wave of feminism in India, the movement entered the private sphere to claim equal rights pertaining to marriage, divorce, succession, justice for dowry and sexual violence, and economic opportunities. For example, passing of Hindu code bills in 1950s, which provided equal rights to women through laws on divorce, marriage, adoption and inheritance.

Third Wave: In 1980, the Five-Year Plan decided to focus on the health, employment and education of women, marking the beginning of the third wave of Indian feminism. There was a rise in women-led non-government organisations to provide support to other women. The movement also took up the rights of Dalit and marginalised women. Principally, women's groups sought the empowerment of women to integrate them into the mainstream.

Fourth Wave: With the effects of economic liberalisation and the advent of modern technology, by the 2000s, women in India witnessed a cultural shift that stressed on rights such as women's freedom, choice and independence. Although the term 'fourth-wave feminism' originated in the West, it emerged in India almost synchronously due to the widespread use of social media. The most recent manifestation of the same in India was the "Me Too" campaign.

JUSTICE VERMA COMMITTEE REPORT

Justice Verma Committee was constituted to recommend amendments to the Criminal Law so as to provide for quicker trial and enhanced punishment for criminals accused of committing sexual assault against women. It was formed in the aftermath of the Nirbhaya rape case of 2012 and submitted its report on January 23, 2013.

It made recommendations on laws related to rape, sexual harassment, trafficking, child sexual abuse, medical examination of victims, police, electoral and educational reforms.

Some of the recommendations of the committee are:

1. It sought comprehensive amendments to the criminal laws, seeking 20 years imprisonment for gang rape and life term for rape and murder.
2. To implement police reforms to provide them with better autonomy, and for better functioning of the police force
3. An officer who doesn't report a FIR or delays it for a rape case should be punished
4. It had framed a protocol for medical examination of a rape victim
5. The government should tackle the issue of trafficking of children and it should also maintain data on the same
6. All marriages in India should be registered mandatorily in the presence of a magistrate who would ensure that no dowry has been taken for the marriage
7. It also argued to make marital rape a punishable offence.
8. The offence of sexual assault should be defined so as to include all forms of non-consensual non-penetrative touching of a sexual nature.

4.2. Approach for Women Development Since Independence

In post-independent period, a series of institutional initiatives have been introduced for the emancipation of women in the society. The most important of these pertain to the **constitutional provisions** and **social legislation** for women and **planned economic development**. Women's movement has been widely influenced by these broad socio-economic and political processes of this period.

In the post-Independence period, it was assumed that economic development policies i.e., agriculture development and modernization, industrialization, technological development etc., will bring about better life for everyone including women. However, the overall growth strategies failed to take note of the existing class, caste and gender inequalities. Planned development in India increased socio-economic inequalities.

FYP	APPROACH REGARDING WOMEN DEVELOPMENT
First to Fifth Five Year Plans (1951-79)	Welfare Approach
Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85)	Shift from Welfare to Development
Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90)	Women and Development
Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97)	Shift from Development to Women Empowerment
Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)	Women as agents of change
10th and 11th Five Year Plan (2002-2012)	Human Development and Inclusive Growth
12 th Five Year Plan (2012-2017)	Gender Equity

Over the years the planning strategies (line of action) for women have shifted from Welfare to Development and to Empowerment. Let us discuss the planned strategies in more detail.

4.2.1. First to Fifth Five Year Plans: Welfare Approach

- The approach of the First Five Year Plan (1951-56) was to provide **adequate services to promote the welfare of women** so as to enable them to play their legitimate role in family and community.
- Here, the emphasis was on **welfare** and hence women were treated as mere recipients of incentives, which the state chose to give.
- The plan called for setting up of special organizations both at the central and state levels for promoting the welfare of women.
- The **Central Social Welfare Board** was set up in 1953. It has branches in states. These boards have been supporting and conducting a number of programmes, mainly with a thrust on economic advancement.
- The welfare approach still guided policies and programmes of the Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Five Year Plans, which were launched for women's development.
- Only two special schemes were introduced during this period – **Course of Education and Women and Socio-Economic Programme** introduced during the Second Plan (1956-61) and **Working Girls Hostels and Short Stay Homes** introduced during the Fourth Plan (1969-74).

Towards Equality- A Report, which Actually Set the Government and Voluntary Groups Thinking

The United Nations declared 1975–1985 as the **International Decade of the Woman** and organised the **first UN women's conference** in 1975 (Mexico). The World Plan of Action formulated during the Conference stressed the need for research, documentation and analyses into processes in society that create structures of gender inequalities.

In India, the **Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI)** had been set up to examine the status of women in the country and to investigate into the extent to which the constitutional and legal provisions had impacted on women's status including their employment and education. The Committee was the first major attempt to review and evaluate data on various aspects of women's status. It was also empowered to comment on the directions of change in women's roles, rights and opportunities due to development.

The Committee came out with its findings in the form of a report, popularly known as the **Towards Equality Report (1974)**, which became a major landmark for the women's movement. The beginnings of the women's movement in India, has often been traced back to this report. The report revealed the deplorable condition of women in the country evident from demographic data, an analysis of the socio-cultural conditions prevalent, the legal provisions and safeguards, economic role played by women in all sectors, women's access to education, political participation, the policies and programmes for welfare and development, the impact of mass media, etc.

This Report paved the way for serious thinking on the status of women in different social institutions in India, because it showed that women far behind men in enjoying the equal rights conferred on them by them by the constitution. This Report led to a debate in the parliament and showed the failure of the welfare approach, which treated women as recipients of benefits and not as equal partners in the development efforts.

The report also made several recommendations which included stressing the important role of the State and the community in the achievement of 'gender equality'. It highlighted the need for a concerted effort to eradicate oppressive practices such as dowry, polygamy, bigamy, child marriage, ostentatious expenditure on weddings, and it emphasised the need for a campaign on legal awareness, the provisions of crèches, better working conditions for women including equal remuneration for equal work, the compulsory registration of marriages, law reform on aspects concerning divorce, maintenance, inheritance, adoption, guardianship, maternity benefits, the universalisation of education, etc.

Student Notes:

A new consciousness that emerged after the publication of **Toward Equality** led to the setting up of the **Women's Welfare and Development Bureau** in 1976 under the Ministry of Social Welfare. Four Separate working groups on employment of Women, Adult Education Programmes for Women, Women in Agriculture and Rural Development were also up to work out strategies for action.

4.2.2. Sixth Five Year Plan: Shift from Welfare to Development

From the Sixth Plan (1980-85) onwards, a **marked shift took place from the Welfare to a Development approach**. While the welfare approach treated women as beneficiaries or recipients of benefits, the development approach recognized women as participants in development and not as development targets.

- It marked a landmark in the history of women's development by including a separate chapter and adopting a multi-disciplinary approach with the three-pronged thrust on **health, education and employment**.
- It reviewed the status and situation of women in general and came to the conclusion that inspite of legal and constitutional guarantees, women had lagged behind men in all sectors.
- For the first time, it clearly spelt out that economic independence would accelerate improvement in the status of women and suggested the setting up of cells at the district level for increasing women's participation through self-employment.
- Emphasised need for increasing enrollment of the girls at the elementary level, thus encouraging the promotion of education for women in backward areas.

Towards the end of the Sixth Five Year Plan, in 1985, the **Department of Women and Child Development** was set up as part of the Ministry of Human Resource Development. This Department was created to function as a central agency to formulate and implement plans, policies and programmes for the development of women and children.

4.2.3. Seventh Five Year Plan: Women and Development

The main objective of Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-1990) was to raise women's economic and social status in order to bring them into the mainstream of national development.

- It laid emphasis on generation of employment opportunities for women, both skilled and unskilled employment through proper education and vocational training. Two new schemes – **Support to Training and Employment (STEP)** and **Awareness Generation Programme for Rural and poor Women (AGP)** were introduced.
- The plan emphasized on "**Beneficiary Oriented Schemes**" (BOS) in various development sectors which extended direct benefits to women.
- The plan also recognised the need for organisation of women workers and unionization.

4.2.4. Eighth Five Year Plan: Shift from 'Development' to 'Empowerment' of Women

The Eighth Plan period also saw a revolutionary amendment to the Constitution of India, which provided for the reservation of one-third of the seats in Panchayati Raj Institutions and urban local self-governing bodies such as municipalities and corporations to women. The **73rd and 74th constitutional amendments of 1992**, which made this reservation possible, have gone

down in the history of women's empowerment in India as a 'democratic revolution'. Today, there are more than 40,000 women in local governing bodies across the country, a phenomenon (an occurrence), which would never have been possible, if a provision for reservation of 1/3 seats for women had not been made.

4.2.5. Ninth Five Year Plan: Women Empowerment

It was during the Ninth Five Year plan (1997-2002) that two significant developments took place in the framework for chalking out women's development programmes. Hitherto, women were either being treated as targets for development programmes or as participants. But not much attention was paid for creating an environment that would enable women to exercise their rights or enjoy their freedom.

The Ninth Plan put forth the concept of **Empowerment**, which would **create an enabling environment where women can experience freedom not just in letter, but also in action**. To achieve this goal, a **National Policy for the Empowerment of Women** was accepted by the Government of India in 2001. The second significant development, which took place during the Ninth Plan period was the adoption of a **Women's Component Plan**. This plan directed both the Central and State governments to earmark (set apart) at least 30% of the funds/benefits in all sectors for women's development.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT YEAR, 2001

Government of India declared 2001 as the year of Women's Empowerment. Three primary objectives were set to be achieved during this year. These were:

- Creating and raising large scale awareness of women's issues with active participation and involvement of women and men.
- Initiating and accelerating action for improvement access to and control of resources by women.
- Creating an enabling environment for enhancing self-confidence and autonomy of women.

Two prominent schemes that were launched for women during 2001 were: **Swayamsiddha** and **Swadhar**:

1. **Swayamsiddha** is an integrated programme, which supports the empowerment of women through a network of Self-Help Groups of women. It aimed to bring together all the women related schemes of the central and state governments at the block level.
2. **Swadhar** was launched to prove rehabilitation to women in difficult circumstances such as destitute widows, women prisoners released from jail and without family support, women survivors of natural disaster and victims of sexual crimes.

WHAT IS GENDER BUDGETING?

The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) as the Nodal agency has adopted the mission strategy of 'Budgeting for Gender Equity' to ensure that government budgets are planned according to the differential needs of women and men and accordingly prioritized.

- It is undertaken through several institutional mechanisms such as Gender Budget Statement, Gender Budget Cells, as well as various schemes/programmes for women and girls.
- Gender budgeting was referred for the first time by the then Finance Minister of India in his budget speech in 2001. Department of Expenditure has been issuing a note on Gender Budgeting as a part of budget circular since 2005-06.
- Chief Secretaries of all States/UTs were instructed to set up gender budget cells on the lines of the Charter for Gender Budget cells issued by the Ministry of Finance in 2012. A guideline was also issued to provide a road map towards institutionalising Gender Budgeting at State level in 2013.

4.2.6. Tenth and Eleventh Five Year Plan: Human Development and Inclusive Growth

Student Notes:

A Working Group on Empowerment of Women was constituted to prepare a base paper, to provide guidelines for future programmes for women's empowerment. This paper has made the following recommendations:

- Women must be helped to equip themselves to face the challenges being thrown up by globalization.
- Even though a number of development policies and programmes have been formulated to empower women, not all women could make use of these programmes because of the prevailing social discrimination against them. So, investments on health, education and capacity building must be stepped up in future.
- During the last 10 years there has been a decline in expenditure on health, education and welfare. Since this affects women's development seriously, efforts must be made to increase investments in those sectors, which actually help women's development.

The idea of '**Inclusive Growth**' related to inclusion of various marginalized groups, of which the women category has also been specifically addressed too. The concept of **Gender Budgeting** was also incorporated during this Plan. Alongside **MGNREGA** scheme specially targeting women was also started. Various measures were taken to eradicate atrocities against women and girls—Setting up of women's police station, family court, **Mahila court**, legal aid centre etc.; Conducting awareness programmes of women's rights, legal literacy etc.

MGNREGA and Women

- MGNREGA provides a legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work-related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage.
- Act covers the entire country except for districts which have 100% urban population.
- More than 65% of the works taken up under the programme are linked to agriculture and allied activities.
- More than half the jobs going to women workers and almost a third to members of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.
- 57% of all workers are women, more than the statutory requirement of 33% and the highest in three years.
- It gave a large number of women their first opportunity to earn income in cash, reduced reliance on moneylenders
- It has led to a substantial increase in women's control over resources, including cash in hand and the likelihood of having a bank account, and improvement in women's ability to make independent decisions about their health.

4.2.7. Twelfth Five Year Plan: Gender Equity

The 12th Five Year Plan Working Group (WG) on '**Women's Agency and Empowerment**' builds on the view that development is a process of expanding freedoms equally for all individuals, and considers gender equality as a core development goal in itself. The major goals of the 12th Five Year Plan are:

- To create greater 'freedom' and 'choice' for women by generating awareness and creating institutional mechanisms to help women question prevalent "patriarchal" beliefs that are detrimental to their empowerment.
- To improve health and education indicators for women like maternal mortality, infant mortality, nutrition levels, enrolment and retention in primary, secondary and higher education.
- To reduce the incidence of violence against women and providing quality care services to the victims.
- To improve employability of women, work participation rates especially in the organised sector and increased ownership of assets and control over resources.

- To Increase women's access to public services and programmes through establishing and strengthening convergence mechanisms at multiple levels, creation of physical infrastructure for women and improving the capacity of women's organizations and collectives.
- To ensure that the specific concerns of single and disadvantaged women are addressed.

Student Notes:

The Plan advocates a shift from mere 'income' poverty of women to the adoption of a '**multi-dimensional approach to poverty**' and wellbeing. The Plan has also to take up various provisions which include the – All India Mahila Bank and the Nirbhaya Fund.

5. Laws and Policies for Women in India

The Constitution of independent India followed the basic principle of women's equality as accepted in the Fundamental Rights Resolution of the Karachi Congress.

5.1. Constitutional Provisions for Women in India

The Constitution of India not only grants equality to women but also empowers the state to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women to neutralize the socio-economic, political and educational disadvantages faced by them.

Fundamental Rights

Fundamental Rights ensure equality before law, and equal protection of law, prohibits discrimination against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste or place of birth. They also guarantee equality of opportunity to all citizens in matters related to employment.

- 1) **Article 14** - Men and women to have equal rights and opportunities in the political, economic and social spheres.
- 2) **Article 15(1)** - Prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex etc.
- 3) **Article 15(3)**- Special provision enabling the State to make affirmative discriminations in favor of women.
- 4) **Article 16**- Equality of opportunities in matter of public appointments for all citizens.
- 5) **Article 23**- Bans trafficking in human and forced labor

Directive Principles of State Policy

- 1) **Article 39(a)**- State shall direct its policy towards securing all citizens men and women, equally, the right to means of livelihood.
- 2) **Article 39(d)**- Equal pay for equal work for both men and women.
- 3) **Article 42**- The State to make provision for ensuring just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.

Fundamental Duties

Article 51 (A)(e)- To renounce the practices derogatory to the dignity of women

Other Provisions

- 1) **Article 300 (A)**- Right of property to women.
- 2) **73rd & 74th Amendment Act 1992**- Reservation of 1/3rd of seats in local bodies of panchayats and municipalities for women. (The day on which 73rd amendment became operational i.e April 24th is also declared as **Women's Empowerment Day**.)

5.2. Legislations for Safeguarding Women in India

Parliament from time to time has passed several legislations to empower women & to provide them a legal basis in their fight for equality & justice. Some of them are:

- 1) **Sati (Prevention) Act 1987** – The practice of Sati which was first abolished in 1829, was revised and made illegal in 1887. It provided for a more effective prevention of the commission of sati and its glorification and for matters connected therewith.
- 2) **Amendment to Criminal Act 1983** – It made domestic violence as an offence; rape has also been made a punishable offence.
- 3) **Special Marriage Act 1954** – It has been amended to fix the minimum age of marriage at 21 years for males & 18 years for females.
- 4) **Hindu Succession Act 1956** – Equal share to daughter from property of father, while a widow has the right to inherit husband's property. An amendment in this Act in 2005 enabled daughters to have equal share in ancestral properties.
- 5) **Immoral Traffic Prevention Act (ITPA), 1986** – Suppression of Immoral Trafficking in women and girls Act (SITA) 1956 was amended in 1986 & renamed ITPA. It was enacted to prohibit or abolish traffic in women and girls for purposes of prostitution. It was amended to cover both the sexes & provided enhanced penalties for offenses involving minors.
- 6) **Dowry Prohibition Act 1961** – It prohibits the giving or taking of dowry at or before or any time after the marriage from women. Court is empowered to act in his own knowledge or on a complaint by any recognized welfare organization on dowry murder. Indian Evidence Act has also been amended to shift the burden of proof to husband & his family where bride dies within 7 years of marriage.
- 7) **Maternity benefit Act 1961** – An Act to regulate the employment of women for certain period before and after childbirth and to provide for maternity benefits like paid leaves for 6 months.
- 8) **Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act 1971** – Legalize abortion in case if fetus is suffering from physical or mental abnormality, in case of rape & unwanted pregnancy within 12 weeks of gestation period, and between 12th to 20th week if the pregnancy is harmful for the mother or the child born would be severely deformed.
- 9) **Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986** – Act prohibits indecent representation of women through advertisements or in publications, writings, paintings, and figures or in any other manner and for matters connected therewith.
- 10) **Domestic Violence Act 2005** – It seeks to determine domestic violence in all forms against women & make it a punishable offence.
- 11) **Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2013** – In the backdrop of Delhi 2012 gang rape, this Act was passed amending the CrPC. The new law has provisions for increased sentence for rape convicts, including life-term and death sentence, besides providing for stringent punishment for offences such as acid attacks, stalking and voyeurism. Through the revised Bill, the government has amended various sections of the Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Indian Evidence Act and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act.
- 12) **Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (Amended in 2017)** – It regulates the employment of women in certain establishments for certain period before and after child-birth and provides for maternity and certain other benefits.
- 13) **Equal Remuneration Act, 1976** – It provides for payment of equal remuneration to both men and women workers for same work or work of a similar nature. It also prevents discrimination on the ground of sex, against women in recruitment and service conditions.
- 14) **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013** – The Act provides protection to women from sexual harassment at all workplaces both in public and private sector, whether organised or unorganized.
- 15) **Pre-conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act, 1994** – The Act prohibits sex selection before or after conception and prevents the misuse of prenatal diagnostic techniques for sex determination leading to female foeticide.

Domestic Violence

Recently, the UN Secretary-General appealed to governments to pay attention to and prevent a “horrifying global surge in domestic violence” over the last few weeks amid lockdown measures imposed by several countries to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic. Fueled by mandatory stay-at-home rules, social distancing, economic uncertainties and anxieties caused by the coronavirus pandemic, Domestic Violence has increased globally.

Domestic violence is one of the most common forms of gender-based violence experienced by women across the world. Domestic violence results into violation of human rights and economic costs. It leads to both short term and long-term detrimental effects on the health and welfare of women and their children. Living with constant threat of domestic violence is, as considered by experts, acts as a source of disempowerment of women.

Causes of Domestic Violence

- **Patriarchy:** Some people with very traditional beliefs may think they have the right to control their partner, and that women aren't equal to men. According to NFHS data 42% of the surveyed men think there is at least one valid reason for wife-beating.
- **Societal influence:** Some abusers learn violent behavior from their family, people in their community and other cultural influences as they grow up. Boys who learn that women are not to be valued or respected and who see violence directed against women are more likely to abuse women when they grow up. Girls who witness domestic violence in their families of origin are more likely to be victimized by their own husbands.
- **Economic causes:** Unemployment, alcohol and drugs may also contribute to violent behavior.
- **Socio-Cultural:** Dowry related deaths and honour killings is also a reality that testifies domestic violence.
- **Individual factor:** Some abusers may feel this need to control their partner because of low self-esteem, extreme jealousy, difficulties in regulating anger and other strong emotions, or when they feel inferior to the other partner in education and socioeconomic background.

Criticism of the Domestic Violence Act:

- Gender biased- There are increasing number of false cases
- Verbal abuse and mental harassment are open to subjective interpretation- this is being misused
- Lack of awareness, especially in rural areas
- Insensitivity of male police officers, judicial magistrates during hearing
- Absence of economic, psychological and support system for victim women
- Excludes marital rape
- Insufficient budgetary allocation to states: states could not assign 'Protection officers'

Way forward:

- Media can sensitize the public against gender-based violence, publicise resources and services available and encourage the equitable sharing of domestic tasks at home.
- Increase resourcing for NGOs that respond to domestic violence and aid — including shelter, counselling, and legal aid — to survivors, and promote those that remain open.
- Ensure women's timely access to necessary and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services during the crisis, such as maternal health services, safe abortion etc.
- Finally, the perpetrators of domestic violence must be brought to trial and repeated offenders must be dealt with strictly as per the provisions of law.

5.3. National Policy for Women

5.3.1. National Policy for Empowerment of Women, 2001

Goal and Objectives

The goal of this Policy is to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women. The Policy will be widely disseminated so as to encourage active participation of all stakeholders for achieving its goals. Specifically, the objectives of this Policy include:

- a. Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential.
- b. De-jure and de-facto enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom by women on equal basis with men in all spheres – political, economic, social, cultural and civil.
- c. Equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation.
- d. Equal access to women to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office etc.
- e. Strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.
- f. Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women.
- g. Mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development process.
- h. Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child.
- i. Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women's organizations

Student Notes:

National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW)

It was launched by the Government of India in 2010. The main aim is to strengthen overall processes that promote all-round development of women. Key strategies included:

- inter-sector convergence of schemes for women to facilitate the process of coordinating all the women's welfare and socio-economic development programmes across ministries and departments
- Strengthening institutional framework for greater efficiency in support to women

5.3.2. Draft National Policy for Women 2016

There is need to formulate a new policy that can guide the transformative shift required for making gender rights a reality, addressing women's issues in all its facets, capturing emerging challenges and ultimately positioning women as equal partners of sustained development progress that India is experiencing presently.

VISION: A society in which, women attain their full potential and are able to participate as equal partners in all spheres of life and influence the process of social change.

MISSION: To create an effective framework to enable the process of developing policies, programmes and practices which will ensure equal rights and opportunities for women in the family, community, workplace and in governance.

PRIORITY AREAS:

A. Health including food security and nutrition:

- Bring down the high rates of MMR and IMR
- Focus on recognizing women's reproductive rights, shifting family planning focus also to males
- Address health care challenges related to nutrition/sexual and reproductive health/ hygiene of adolescents
- Expansion of health insurance schemes
- Nutritious and safe food through PDS for households especially the unreachd women and children with high nutritional vulnerabilities.

A. Education:

- Improve access to pre-primary and primary education
- Improve enrolment and retention of adolescent girls
- Encouraging the enrolment of women in professional/scientific courses, by provision of financial assistance, coaching, hostels, child care etc.

B. Economy:

- Increasing the participation of women in the workforce
- Addressing gender wage gap across rural and urban, agricultural and non-agricultural jobs, regular and casual employment
- Universalisation of financial inclusion of women
- Recognizing women's unpaid work in terms of economic and societal value
- Addressing new challenges such as inter-state migration, changing labour markets, meeting aspirations of the growing literate women workforce, and rapidly changing technology for women in labour force
- Prioritize women in government land redistribution, incentivising women farmers' collective farming enterprises
- Skill development and training for women, entrepreneurial development, review of labour laws and policies
- Equal employment opportunities with appropriate benefits related to maternity and child care services, address technological needs of women
- Mechanism for monitoring the compliance of mandatory laws like Maternity Benefit Act and Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place Act.

C. Governance and Decision Making:

- Increasing women's participation in all the three branches of the government, administration, civil services, trade unions, political parties, interest groups, professional associations, and businesses/private sector.

D. Violence against Women:

- Address all forms of violence against women through a life cycle approach, starting from sex selective termination of pregnancy, denial of education, child marriage to violence faced by women in private sphere of home, public spaces and at workplace
- Improve Child Sex Ratio (CSR) through effective implementation of PCPNDT Act, 1994, and advocacy through awareness and sensitisation
- Prevention of trafficking at source, transit and destination areas
- Strict monitoring of response of enforcement agencies to violence against women.

E. Enabling Environment:

- Gender perspective in housing and include safe and gender sensitive infrastructure and facilities
- Adequate and affordable housing and accommodation to women
- Ensure safe drinking water and sanitation, increase the running water facilities in schools to improve menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls
- Gender parity in the mass media and sports, gender sensitisation and non-discrimination in portrayal of women, gender parity in induction of sportswomen and trainers
- Efforts towards strengthening social security and support services for all women especially the vulnerable, marginalized, migrant and single women.

F. Environment and Climate Change:

- Address gender concerns during distress migration and displacement in times of natural calamities due to climate change and environmental degradation
- Promotion of environment-friendly, renewable, non-conventional energy, green energy sources for women in rural households.

5.4. International Initiatives for Women

India is also a signatory to a number of UN Conventions, primarily **Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**, **Beijing Platform for Action** and **Convention on Rights of the Child** where the commitment of the nation to protect and empower its women and girls is quite pronounced. The recent endorsement by India, of the ambitious **2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** will further change the course of

development by addressing the key challenges such as poverty, inequality, and violence against women, which is critical for the global success of the goals as well.

Student Notes:

2020 marks the commemoration of landmark international agreements: 40+ years of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979), 25+ years since the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD, 1994) and the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration (1995). These agreements strongly underscore that women's rights are essential to the full realisation of human rights and sustainable development.

6. An Analysis of Women's Current Situation in India

6.1. Women's Issues: A Manifestation

Nearly a decade and half has passed since the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women (NPEW), 2001 was formulated, which laid down a comprehensive progressive policy for the advancement, development and empowerment of women. Changes in global technology and information systems have brought forth fresh opportunities and possibilities for women's empowerment while at the same time presenting new and emerging challenges which along with persisting socio-economic problems continue to hinder gender equality and holistic empowerment of women. Further, the deep-rooted patriarchal social constructs position women in disempowered social and economic hierarchies that impede in realization of their rights.

Several **paradoxical trends** have been observed in the past few years:

- growing acknowledgement of gender rights and equality is juxtaposed against increase in reporting of various forms of violence against women such as rape, trafficking, dowry etc.;
- expansion of new work opportunities for women alongside continued weak bargaining power in the labour market;
- increasing number of educated, aspiring career women entering the work place, while large sections of women are still in the low paid informal sector;
- feminisation of agriculture and growing number of women farmers raises the larger issue of gender entitlements to land and assets ownership;
- high Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR), Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), malnutrition and anaemia and lack of geriatric care and support;
- growing urbanisation and resultant migration of women in relation to the availability of safe spaces and social security net for vulnerable women;
- women have been sidelined in debates about managing climate change and environmental resources;
- misuse of rapid advances in Information Technology (IT) and telephony has resulted in new and varied forms of sexual abuse such as cybercrimes and harassment of women through mobiles and internet.

Issues and Problems faced by Women in India

There are various issues and problems which women generally face in the society in India. Some of the problems are mentioned and described below:

- **Selective abortion and female infanticide:** The most common practice for years in India in which abortion of female fetus is performed in the womb of mother after the fetal sex determination and sex selective abortion by the medical professionals.
- **Sexual harassment:** It is the form of sexual exploitation of a girl child at home, streets, public places, transports, offices, etc. by the family members, neighbors, friends or relatives.
- **Dowry and Bride burning:** It is another problem generally faced by women of low- or middle-class family during or after the marriage. Indian National Crime Bureau reports the number of cases filed under the Dowry Prohibition Act witnessed a rise from 690 in 2018 to 739 in 2019. The number had stood at 727 in 2017. The number of dowry deaths saw a jump from 48 in 2018 to 52 in 2019.

- **Disparity in education:** The level of women education is less than men still in the modern age. Female illiteracy is higher in the rural areas where over 63% or more women remain unlettered.
- **Domestic violence:** It is like endemic and widespread disease affects almost 70% of Indian women according to the women and child development official. It is performed by the husband, relative or other family member.
- **Child Marriages:** Early marriage of the girls by their parents in order to be escaped from dowry. It is highly practiced in the rural India.
- **Inadequate Nutrition:** Inadequate nutrition in the childhood affects women in their later life especially women belonging to the lower middle class and poor families.
- **Low status in the family:** It is the abuse or violence against women whereby women are considered as inferior to men.
- **Status of widows:** Widows are considered as worthless in the Indian society. They are treated poorly and forced to wear white clothes.

Student Notes:

Older Women Issues

By 2050, women over 60 years would exceed the number of elderly men by 18.4 million, which would result in a unique characteristic of '**feminisation of the elderly population**' in India. Ageing women are more likely to get excluded from social security schemes due to lower literacy and awareness levels. Challenges of health security get aggravated by the fact that elderly women often tend to underplay their ailments. Pre-occupation with nursing an ailing spouse, lack of awareness, nutritional deficiencies or simply neglect are some of the reasons that often take an adverse toll on their health. The reach of old-age pension schemes and widow pension schemes is very limited even among BPL families and widowed women who have no other source of income.

6.2.1. Economic Empowerment of Women

In 1990, India's FLFP was 30.3%. By 2019, it had declined to 20.5%, according to the World Bank. While the men's labor force participation rate slightly decreased over time, too, it is four times that of women at 76.08% in 2019.

WOMEN AND POVERTY ERADICATION:

In India, the poverty rate for women aged 25 to 34 is estimated to be 12% in 2020, equivalent to around 13.4 million women aged 25 to 34 living in extreme poverty. By 2021, the poverty rate of women aged 25-34 is expected to increase to 14% bringing the total count to 15.2 million. Poverty Eradication: Since women comprise the majority of the population below the poverty line and are very often in situations of extreme poverty, given the harsh realities of intra-household and social discrimination, macro-economic policies and poverty eradication programmes will specifically address the needs and problems of such women.

WOMEN AND AGRICULTURE:

According to the Economic Survey 2017-18, a rise in migration of men from rural to urban areas has resulted in feminization of agriculture. Agriculture, contributing around 16% of the GDP, is increasingly becoming a female activity. As per the 10th Agriculture Census (2015-16), the percentage of female operational holdings in the country have increased from about 13% percent during 2010-11 to around 14% during 2015-16. Agriculture sector employs 80% of all economically active women; they comprise 33% of the agricultural labour force and 48% of self-employed farmers. About 18% of the farm families in India, according to NSSO Reports are headed by women.

Gender equity is an important concern for sustainable agricultural development. With increasing **feminization of agriculture** and the critical role of women in the agriculture and allied sectors, as producers, concentrated efforts will be made to ensure that benefits of training, extension and various programmes will reach them in proportion to their numbers. The programmes for training women in soil conservation, social forestry, dairy development and other occupations allied to agriculture like horticulture, livestock including small animal husbandry, poultry, fisheries etc. will be expanded to benefit women workers in the agriculture sector.

The important role played by women in electronics, information technology and food processing and agro industry and textiles has been crucial to the development of these sectors. They would be given comprehensive support in terms of labour legislation, social security and other support services to participate in various industrial sectors.

Support Services: The provision of support services for women, like child care facilities, including crèches at work places and educational institutions, homes for the aged and the disabled will be expanded and improved to create an enabling environment and to ensure their full cooperation in social, political and economic life. Women-friendly personnel policies will also be drawn up to encourage women to participate effectively in the developmental process.

6.2.2. Social Empowerment of Women

WOMEN AND EDUCATION ATTAINMENT:

1. Among females, the median number of years of schooling increased from 1.9 years in NHFS-3 (2005-06) to 4.4 years in NHFS-4 (2015-16). Over the same period, the percentage of females with no schooling decreased from 42% to 31%. There is almost no difference in school attendance by males and females at age 6-14, but males are more likely than females to attend school at age 15-17 (67% versus 60%).
2. **Gender Parity Index (GPI)** for the **Net Attendance Ratio** is 0.98 at the primary school level and 0.96 at the secondary school level. This indicates that there is relatively little difference in overall school attendance by school-age girls and boys at either the primary or secondary school level.

Equal access to education for women and girls should be ensured. Special measures will be taken to eliminate discrimination, universalize education, eradicate illiteracy, create a gender-sensitive educational system, increase enrolment and retention rates of girls and improve the quality of education to facilitate life-long learning. Promotion of skill development, vocational training and life skills as a part of the secondary school education curriculum for adolescent girls and young women should also be given importance.

WOMEN AND HEALTH:

1. According to NFHS-IV, female sterilization is still the most popular contraceptive method, used by 36% of currently married women.
2. The sex ratio improved from 914 to 919 at the national level over the last decade, with the top three states being Kerala (1,047), Meghalaya (1,009) and Chhattisgarh (977).
3. Female child mortality (neo-natal, infant, under-5) is lower than male child.
4. About two-thirds (67%) of women report at least one problem for themselves in obtaining medical care – money, distance to health facility, transport.
5. The proportion of women (aged 15-49) who received antenatal care rose from 80% in 2005-06 to 84% in 2015-16. Deliveries at health facilities has increased from 39% to 79%.
6. The total fertility rates range from 1.2 in Sikkim to 3.4 in Bihar. All states except Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Meghalaya have either achieved or maintained replacement level of fertility.
7. Though anaemia has declined, it still remains widespread. The prevalence of anaemia among women aged 15 to 49 years is 53% and among adolescent girls aged 15-19 years is 54%.
8. Women are at high risk for nutritional deficiencies in all the stages of their life cycle.
9. Over two-thirds of households in every State/UT have access to an improved source of drinking water.
10. More than 50% of households have access to improved sanitation facilities in all states/UTs except Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.

A holistic approach to women's health which includes both nutrition and health services should be adopted and special attention will be given to the needs of women and the girl at all stages of the life cycle. The reduction of infant mortality and maternal mortality, which are sensitive indicators of human development, is a priority concern. Measures should be adopted that take into account the reproductive rights of women to enable them to exercise informed choices, their vulnerability to sexual and health problems.

- A gender transformative health strategy which recognises women's reproductive rights with shifts such as family planning focus from female sterilisation to male sterilisation should be developed and implemented.
- In view of the high risk of malnutrition and disease that women face at all the three critical stages viz., infancy and childhood, adolescent and reproductive phase, focused attention would be paid to meeting the nutritional needs of women at all stages of the life cycle.
- Special attention will be given to the needs of women in the provision of safe drinking water, sewage disposal, toilet facilities and sanitation within accessible reach of households, especially in rural areas and urban slums.

WOMEN AND VIOLENCE:

The National Family Health Survey-4 (2015-16) (NFHS-4) suggests that 30% women in India in the age group of 15-49 have experienced physical violence.

- The report suggested that among married women experiencing physical, sexual or emotional violence, an alarming 83% claimed that their husbands were the main perpetrators of such forms of abuse, followed by abuse from the mothers, fathers and siblings of the husbands.
- The major crimes reported by women in India are — cruelty by husband or relatives, assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty — kidnapping and abductions and rape.

All forms of violence against women, physical and mental, whether at domestic or societal levels, including those arising from customs, traditions or accepted practices shall be dealt with effectively with a view to eliminate its incidence. Institutions and mechanisms/schemes for assistance will be created and strengthened for prevention of such violence, including sexual harassment at work place and customs like dowry; for the rehabilitation of the victims of violence and for taking effective action against the perpetrators of such violence. A special emphasis will also be laid on programmes and measures to deal with trafficking in women and girls.

WOMEN AND ENVIRONMENT:

As women are highly affected by climate change, environmental degradation, distress migration and displacement in times of natural calamities, policies and programmes for environment, conservation and restoration will compulsorily incorporate gender concerns. An integral part of this discourse will be to enable equitable ownership control and use of natural resources and secure the asset base of marginalised poor women to counter poverty and climate shocks.

The current status of women with respect to human development parameters, legal rights for women to life and freedom from violence, economic and social discrimination and their rights to equality and equity shows that a lot still remains to be done. It is necessary therefore, to reinforce the rights-based approach for creating an enabling environment in which women can enjoy their rights.

Marital Rape Debate

Autonomy of women in control over decision making freedom in sexual relations, freedom of movement and women's attitude towards wife-beating are considered as indicators of women empowerment by the experts. Autonomy of women in refusing sexual intercourse with their husbands is a very forceful expression of women's control over their sexuality and control over one's sexual life is integral to women's well-being and autonomy.

Why marital rape must be a crime?

Justice JS Verma committee, which recommended sweeping changes in the law relating to offences against women, called for marital rape to be made an offence.

- Arguments against making it a crime: There is too little education and too many customs and beliefs in the Indian society
- The present Indian law exempts non-consensual sex between a husband and wife, not being less than 15 years of age, from being charged with rape. However, by another provision it makes rape of a wife who is living separately a criminal offence.
- The age limit of 15 years above which marital rape is not an offence is inherently problematic, as normally sex with a girl up to the age of 18 is an offence regardless of consent.
- The exemption given to marital rape, as Justice Verma noted, "stems from a long out-dated notion of marriage which regarded wives as no more than the property of their husbands". Marital rape ought to be a crime and not a concept.
- There will be objections such as a perceived threat to the integrity of the marital union and the possibility of misuse of the penal provisions. It is not really true that the private or domestic domain has always been outside the purview of law. The law against domestic violence already covers both physical and sexual abuse as grounds for the legal system to intervene.
- It is difficult to argue that a complaint of marital rape will ruin a marriage, while a complaint of domestic violence against a spouse will not. It has long been time to jettison the notion of 'implied consent' in marriage. The law must uphold the bodily autonomy of all women, irrespective of their marital status.

Student Notes:

7. Government Response

7.1. Institutional Mechanisms:

- 1) **Central Social Welfare Board** - It was established in 1953 to carry out welfare activities for promoting voluntarism, providing technical and financial assistance to voluntary organisations for the general welfare of family, women and children. The objective of setting up Central Social Welfare Board was to work as a link between the government and the people. The Central Social Welfare Board obtained its legal status in 1969. It was registered under section 25 of the Indian Companies Act, 1956.

The **scheme of Family Counselling Centre (FCC)** was introduced by the CSWB in 1983. The scheme provides counselling, referral and rehabilitative services to women and children who are the victims of atrocities, family maladjustments and social ostracism and crisis intervention and trauma counselling in case of natural/manmade disasters. Working on the concept of people's participation, FCCs work in close collaboration with the Local Administration, Police, Courts, Free Legal Aid Cells, Medical and Psychiatric Institutions, Vocational Training Centres and Short Stay Homes.

- 2) **National Commission for Women (NCW)** - The National Commission for Women was set up as *statutory body* in 1992 under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990 to:

- Protect and promote the interest and safeguard the right of women.
- Study all matters related to constitutional and legal safeguards provided for women, to review existing legislation and suggest amendments if necessary.
- Look into the complaints and take notice of the cases involving deprivation of women and provide support legal or otherwise to helpless and needy women.
- Recommended the government to play an active role by incorporating a component of organizing in all govt. schemes, project etc. for the poor, to promote organization of women at a broader level.

Major functions of NCW include:

- To investigating and examining all the matters relating to the safeguards which women are provided under the Constitution
- To make recommendations for effective implementation of safeguards to the central as well as state governments

- To review the legislations related to women, and points out the shortcomings
- To enquire into complaints, and can take suo moto action in such cases
- To inspect any jail, remand home, women's institution or other place of custody where women are kept as prisoners
- To work towards women rights and women empowerment

Student Notes:

Powers of NCW:

- It is vested with the power to regulate its own procedure.
- The Commission, while investigating any matter or inquiring into any complaint, has all the powers of a civil court trying a suit and in particular in respect of the following matters:
 - Summoning and enforcing the attendance of any person from any part of India and examining him on oath
 - Requiring the discovery and production of any document
 - Receiving evidence on affidavits
 - Requisitioning any public record from any court or office
 - Issuing a summons for the examination of witnesses and documents; and
 - Any other matter which the President may determine

National Commission for Women: A toothless tiger?

NCW has always made recommendations and acted on various issues that have made an impact on the status of women.

- NCW attaches great efforts which trigger change in societal attitude towards women through a partnership approach.
- It organises training programs on gender issues in order to be more effective in pursuing the goals of gender justice and development of women
- It can take suo moto action against any individual, organization, agency or anybody that indulges in derogatory practices against women.
- It has established different cells for the betterment of women in the society,
- NCW has also been instrumental in introducing fresh ideas, innovative models, training packages and models for speedy justice for women.

But the NCW has not been able to play a very effective role. This can be clearly seen by the slow improvement in the status of women in India, and also the increasing cases of violence against women.

Issues:

- The Commission lacks autonomy and in the performance of its role has been restricted by its institutional design.
- NCW Act makes it mandatory for the governments to involve the Commission in the policymaking process and take action on the recommendations of the Commission. But hardly on any issues is the NCW consulted.
- There is also a problem with the composition of the Commission. Most of the members are either ill-informed or uninformed about the issues concerning women.
- Complaint redressal and counselling work of the Commission has not been much success.
- The Commission has often been alleged of red-tapism, callousness and laidback attitude in case of investigating crimes and atrocities against the rural women.

Some of the reasons for this are:

- The financial assistance provided to the commission is less to cater to its needs, and to fulfill its mandate
- The members are appointed by the government, and this is a major shortcoming, as the commission cannot select its own members
- The recommendations of the commission are not mandatory; therefore, the NCW lacks any concrete legislative power. Recommendations of the commission are not binding on the government

All these reasons have led the commission to be more of a toothless tiger.

3) **National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD)** - It is an autonomous organization under the aegis of Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD). Its objective is to:

- Develop and promote voluntary action in social development through training & capacity building of government and non-government functionaries
- Take a comprehensive view of women and child development & develop and promote programs in pursuance of national policy of children.
- Develop measures for coordination of governmental and voluntary action in social development.

4) **Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK)** - It was established by the Government of India in March, 1993 as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Women & Child Development. It was registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860. The operating model currently followed by RMK is that of a facilitating agency wherein RMK provides loans to NGO-MFIs termed as Intermediary Organizations (IMO) which on-lend to Self Help Groups (SHGs) of women. In addition, RMK also has appointed nodal agencies and franchisees for furthering of its objectives of reaching out to the women beneficiaries with easy access of micro credit for income generating activities.

7.2. Women Empowerment Programs/Schemes by Government of India

To mainstream women and make women active agents of change in the society so as to achieve the Gender equality (SDG-5), the Government of India has initiated several programmes for all-round development of women – economic empowerment, healthcare facilities, safety, education, skilling and training, etc.

7.2.1. Initiatives to Improve Female Work Participation

- **Safety of Women at Workplace:** The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 covers all women, irrespective of their age or employment status and protects them against sexual harassment at all workplaces both in public and private sector, whether organized or unorganized.
- **Working Women Hostel:** To promote availability of safe and conveniently located accommodation for working women, with day care facility for their children, wherever possible, in urban, semi urban, or even rural areas where employment opportunities for women exist.
- **Provision of safe and affordable accommodation:** To provide safe and affordable accommodation to working women, Working Women Hostels have been established
- **Female Entrepreneurship:** To promote female entrepreneurship, the Government has initiated schemes like MUDRA, Stand Up India and Mahila e-Haat.
- **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (MUDRA):** It extends a reduction of 25bps in its interest rates to MFIs / NBFCs, who are providing loans to women entrepreneurs.
- **Stand Up India Scheme:** It aims at promoting entrepreneurship among women and scheduled castes and tribes.
- **Mahila E-Haat:** It's an online marketing platform for women and women SHGs.
- **Rashtriya Mahila Kosh** provides micro-credit at concessional terms to poor women for various livelihood and income generating activities.
- **Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP):** Women entrepreneurs are provided 25% and 35% subsidies for the project set up in urban and rural areas respectively.
- **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana- National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)** seeks to reach out to 8-9 crore rural poor households and organize one-woman member from each household into affinity-based women SHGs and federations at village and at higher levels.

Student Notes:

- NRLM, through **Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP)**, is promoting and facilitating scaling-up successful, small-scale projects that enhance women's participation and productivity in agriculture and allied activities.
- **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana** - At least 30% of the budget allocations need to be earmarked for women beneficiaries/ farmers.
- **Swayatt** is an initiative to promote Start-ups, Women and Youth Advantage through e-transactions on Government e Marketplace (GeM).
- **Stree Swabhiman:** Sanitary napkin micro manufacturing units are being set up at CSCs across India, particularly those operated by women entrepreneurs.
- **Nai Roshni:** Economic empowerment and instilling confidence among minority women.

Student Notes:

7.2.2. Initiatives to Improve Health of Women

- **National Health Mission (NHM):** It focuses on Health System Strengthening, Reproductive Maternal-Neonatal-Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCH+A) and Communicable and Noncommunicable Diseases.
- **Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY):** It is under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) and is a centrally sponsored scheme. It aims at reducing maternal and infant mortality by promoting institutional delivery among pregnant women.
- **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS):** Sub-Schemes under Umbrella ICDS
 - **Anganwadi Services** – It is for holistic development of children under the age of 6 year and pregnant and lactating women.
 - **National Crèche Services** – It aims to provide a safe place for children of working mothers while they are at work thus, empowering them to take up employment.
 - **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana** – Providing partial compensation for the wage loss in terms of cash incentives so that the woman can take adequate rest before and after delivery of the first living child.
 - **Poshan Abhiyan** – To reduce stunting, undernutrition, low birth weight, and anaemia among children and women/adolescent girls.
- **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY):** To provide 8 Crore deposit free LPG connections to women from BPL Households.
- **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP):** Joint Initiative of Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Human Resource Development to prevent gender biased sex selective elimination, ensure survival and protection of the girl child, ensure education and participation of the girl child.

7.2.3. Initiatives for Education, Skilling and Training of Women

- **National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015:** For training and skill upgradation of women in traditional, new and emerging areas to promote women employment in both organized /unorganized sectors.
- **Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana:** To bridge the skill gap that prevents India's rural poor from competing in the modern market. Mandatory coverage of socially disadvantaged groups (SC/ST 50%; Minority 15%; Women 33%).
- **Vigyan Jyoti:** To encourage the women to pursue science and to create a level-playing field for the meritorious girls in high school to pursue Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) in their higher education.
- **Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP)** - MWCD launched this program in the year 1986, for training and employment for women below poverty line in traditional sectors like agriculture, small animal husbandry, dairying, fisheries etc. where women are employed on a large scale. Its basic aim is to upgrade skills of women for self and wage employment.
- **Sukanya Samruddhi Yojana:** To motivate parents to open an account in the name of a girl child to meet the requirement of higher education expense.

- **Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra (PMMSK):** Sub-scheme under the Umbrella Scheme Pradhan Mantri Mahila ShashaktikaranYojana (PMMSY) to provides an interface for rural women to approach the government for availing their entitlements and for empowering them through training and capacity building.
- **Project Cyber Shikshaa:** Microsoft & Data Security Council of India (DSCI) in association with MeitY have launched it for skilling women engineering graduates in the niche field of Cyber Security.
- **NARI portal:** To serve as a single window access to information and services on various women centric schemes/legislation.

7.2.4. Initiatives for Safety of Women

- **Nirbhaya Fund:** A dedicated non-lapsable corpus fund for implementation of initiatives aimed at enhancing the safety and security of women in the country.
- **Sexual Harassment electronic–Box (SHe-Box):** An online complaint management system for registering complaints related to sexual harassment at the workplace by women, including government and private employees. Once a complaint is submitted to the SHe-Box portal, it directly reaches the concerned authority having jurisdiction to take action in the matter.
- **Swadhar Greh:** This scheme aims to provide basic necessities to marginalised women and girls who are living in difficult circumstances without any economic or social support. Under this scheme women are provided with emotional support and counselling. The target group is mainly women who are victim of violence or survivors of natural disaster, trafficked women, and women without no families.
- **Sakhi One Stop Centre (OSC):** To facilitate access to an integrated range of services including police, medical, legal, psychological support and temporary shelter to women affected by violence.
- **Women Helpline Scheme:** To provide 24-hour emergency and non-emergency response to women affected by violence including sexual offences and harassment both in public and private sphere, including e family, community, workplace, etc.
- **UJJAWALA:** For the prevention of trafficking and providing support for rescue, rehabilitation, reintegration and repatriation of women and child victims of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation in India. The Scheme is being implemented mainly through NGOs to provide direct aid and benefit to the victims of trafficking.
- **Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children (CCPWC):** An online cybercrime reporting portal launched to enable public to report complaints pertaining to child pornography/ child sexual abuse material, rape/gang rape imageries or sexually explicit content.

Investment in basic social infrastructure and services such as education, health, food security and nutrition, social protection, legal empowerment and poverty alleviation programs, will continue to be of paramount importance.

8. Conclusion

Empowerment of women is a socio-political ideal envisioned in relation to the wider framework of women's rights. It is a process that leads women to realise their full potential, their rights to have access to opportunities, resources and choices with the freedom of decision making both within and outside home. Empowerment would be achieved only when advancement in the conditions of women is accompanied by their ability to influence the direction of social change gained through equal opportunities in economic, social and political spheres of life

Looking back at the last four decades we can say with a fair amount of certainty that women's position in Indian society has changed. This change has been to women's advantage. There has no doubt been a wider recognition of women's rights, several steps taken towards equality among genders, a greater sensitivity towards gender discrimination, etc.

The women's movement comprising of autonomous women's organisations, other women's groups, women's studies centres, etc., have played no small role in bringing about this change. Despite the current fragmentation, women's groups have come together with one concerted voice on certain issues such as violence, health, employment conditions including wages, legal rights and law reform. The issues today are sexual harassment at the work place, the violence of development, caste and communal violence, lobbying for increased political participation of women in the highest levels of decision-making, etc. However, this change has been at a gradual pace and has even affected certain sections more than others leaving yet much to be desired.

Women empowerment in India is heavily dependent on many different variables that include geographical location (rural/urban), educational status, social status (caste and class) and age. Policies on women empowerment exist at national, state and local levels in many sectors including health, education, economic opportunities, gender-based violence and political participation. The scope and coverage of the schemes launched has been expanding that include initiatives for economic and social empowerment of women and for securing gender equality.

Way Forward

- An **integrated approach** is needed along with women-centric policy making where women are not treated as passive beneficiaries but are seen as potential contributors to society.
- The political landscape and structures should facilitate women's participation as both voters and representatives.
- Along with legislations like the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, Maternity Benefit Act, **social sensitization** towards the issues of women is important.
- Measures for increasing education levels should be balanced with the creation of jobs, the development of responsible and sensitive workplaces, along with a positive change in the stereotypical gender roles.
- India has shown a dedicated will to bring changes by pledging to achieve the **Sustainable Development Goals** which include ideals of **gender justice** and women empowerment.
- Only with constructive planning and comprehensive changes at various levels of society can the new emerging 'women' be able to realize her complete potential in India.

9. Previous Year UPSC GS Mains Questions

1. "Empowering women is the key to control population growth". Discuss (2019)
2. What are the continued challenges for women in India against time and space? (2019)
3. 'Women's movement in India has not addressed the issues of women of lower social strata. Substantiate your view. (2018)
4. How do you explain the statistics that show that the sex ratio in Tribes in India is more favourable to women than the sex ratio among Scheduled Castes? (2015)
5. How does patriarchy impact the position of a middle-class working woman in India? (2014)
6. Discuss the various economic and socio-cultural forces that are driving increasing feminization of agriculture in India. (2014)
7. Why do some of the most prosperous regions of India have an adverse sex ratio for women? Give your arguments. (2014)
8. Male membership needs to be encouraged in order to make women's organization free from gender bias. Comment. (2013)

Student Notes:

10. Vision IAS GS Mains Test Series Questions

Student Notes:

1. *Gender inequality is not a homogenous phenomenon but a collection of disparate and interlinked problems. Discuss.*

Approach:

- Beginning with a brief introduction of gender inequality the answer should explain the various strands of gender inequality.
- Explore the interconnections between the inequality and its all-pervasive impact including on Men, overall economy and society.
- Conclude by emphasizing on the need of taking a plural view of gender inequality.

Answer:

Gender inequality refers to unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals based on their gender. It can persist in multiple forms and has all pervasive effects.

According to the formulation offered by Amartya Sen:

- The preference for boys over girls is reflective in **Natality inequality** and **Mortality inequality**.
- **Basic facility and Special opportunity inequality** manifests in health, education and professional training.
- **Professional inequality** emerges via differential wages and quality of work.
- The **Ownership inequality** prevails via absence of claims to property by females.
- **Household inequality**, in terms of sharing the burden of housework and child care along with derivative inequalities in employment and recognition outside.

The **Global Gender Gap Index** score published by the World Economic Forum for each nation every year focuses on the relative gap between men and women in four fundamental categories - economic participation, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. Similarly, the Gender Inequality **Index of the UNDP**, which captures the loss of achievement within a country due to gender inequality, uses three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and labor market participation.

The effects of gender inequality, though primarily seen through the prism of discrimination against women, can impoverish the lives of men as well. Gender inequality hurts the interests not only of girls and grown-up women, but also of boys and men, through biological connections. For instance The neglect of the care of girls and of women in general would tend to yield more maternal undernourishment, and through that more foetal deprivation and distress, underweight babies, and child undernourishment. The children start deprived and stay deprived and increases incidences of cardiovascular diseases etc. in adults.

Similarly in the sphere of economy the ill effects percolates throughout. The inherent failure to recognize women as economic agents has economic costs. On the other hand, financial independence allows access to greater decision making power and opportunities According to the IMF India's GDP can expand by 27% through gender parity in workforce.

In the social sphere it hampers socio-economic diversification due to limited participation. While new developments in popular culture are inhibited, cultural stereotypes are sustained. In political sphere gender inequality undermines the promise of democracy and good governance. True liberty and equality cannot be achieved without addressing gender inequality.

As discussed above inequality between women and men can take very many different

forms. Thus the need is to take a plural view of gender inequality in order to address it adequately.

Student Notes:

2. Give an account of the factors which influence gender equality in basic education. What can be done to bridge the existing gender gap in this context?

Approach:

- Give a detailed description of the factors which influence gender equality in basic education.
- Then explain what steps should be taken to bridge the gender gap in basic education.

Answer:

The interplay of socio-economic inequalities and gender relations creates a complex web that impedes girl education.

Several factors are impeding the education of girls.

- **Economic disparities:** Below poverty line households and top quartile households have high gender disparities.
- **Social inequalities:** Girls are doubly affected by the absence of effective early childhood education programmes as they are invariably burdened with the responsibility of caring for younger siblings.
- **Distance norms** go against girls as they are often not allowed to go out of the village for schooling.
- **Cultural beliefs:** Norms like early marriages discourage girl education.
- **Regional characteristics:** Rural – urban differences in enrolment, attendance and completion of female education.
- **Poor infrastructure**, teacher absenteeism and over-crowded classrooms are some other discouraging factors.

Steps to be taken to bridge Gender Gap

- **Access to Education:** Equitable education access to tribals, marginalized, SCs and STs would help improve girl education in these communities.
- Better infrastructure in the schools especially toilets for girls can reduce dropout rates.
- Technology can be used to provide better access to education through several programmes – **GIAN, SWAYAM and National Digital Library**.
- Addressing the issues like working adolescents unable to access basic education through schemes like **SABLA**.
- Improving teacher education programmes and increased presence of women teachers can increase girl education rates.
- Tracking children to understand the factors that lead to increased dropout rates – **Digital Atlas** by UNESCO and Ministry of Women and Child is identifying geographical locations where gender parity index are poor.
- Policy formulation must link the local dynamics of girl child – at home, school and community. Schemes such as “**Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao**” and **Sukanya Samridhi Account** have been launched.

It is necessary to formulate a comprehensive policy for girls' education that goes beyond the school years and shift the focus from mere parity to gender equality.

3. *The role of women since independence has not been confined to issues of women alone, rather they have played an important role in the issues related to peasants, tribals, farmers, trade unions and environment. Discuss.*

Student Notes:

Approach:

- In a brief introduction, provide a background of women emerging as important actors in their own right through participating in the struggles for issues related to them.
- Following that, enumerate the examples of women's participation in peasant, tribal, trade union and environmental movements in which women and women organizations played a key role.

Answer:

Dramatic changes have taken place in the legal, political, educational and social status of women since independence. This can be largely attributed to the advocacy of women's issues by women's organizations, grass roots movements as well as political parties. Thus, women have been active participants in the movements and organizations advocating causes linked to them.

This has further enabled them to become important participants in issues related to various sections of society:

- Women played major role in diverse issues. In the Tebhaga **peasant movement** in Bengal in 1946–47, women had organized themselves on a separate platform of the Nari Bahini and they ran shelters and maintained lines of communication.
- In another major Communist peasant struggle of that time in the Telangana area of Hyderabad state from 1946 to 1950, women's participation was also quite significant.
- Among the **tribal people** too women played a key role. For instance in the Shahada **tribal** area of Dhulia district in Maharashtra in 1972, the movement for drought relief and land, in which the Bhil tribal women were very prominent culminated in a militant **anti-liquor campaign**.
- Women were active participants in the **anti-price rise movement** of 1973-75 as well as the **Nav Nirman movement** in Gujarat.
- The founding of a women's wing of the Textile Labour Association (TLA), in the form of SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association) in Gujarat, is an important example of women's participation in the **trade unions**. SEWA took up women in the **unorganized sector** who worked as **vendors** and **hawkers** and at home in the putting-out system and organized them into a union which along with collective bargaining provided training, credit and technical help.
- In the field of **environment** the role of women, was key in **Chipko movement** in 1974, named after the actions of women who hugged trees in order to prevent them from being cut down by timber contractors.
- The **Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Udyog Sangathan** played the leading role in the effort to secure justice for the victims of the chemical gas leak in the Union Carbide factory in Bhopal in 1984.
- In **politics** women have emerged as keen voter group and through one-third reservation in panchayats they have been able to exert important influence in **governance at grass roots level**.

4. ***Fertility rates in India are more closely related to education levels and the socio-economic development within a state, than to religious beliefs. Elaborate. Enumerate the steps that can be taken to achieve population stabilisation.***

Student Notes:

Approach:

- Introduce factors that influence fertility rates including religious, social and economic factors
- Highlight why socio-economic realities like education impact fertility rates more
- Highlight efforts undertaken by the government and some steps that can be further taken.

Answer:

India was the first country to start family planning in 1952, however, still it is the second most populous country in the world. To stabilize the population growth, National Population Policy (NPP) 2000 set the target of achieving Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of 2.1 by 2010, the target we missed. Though, TFR declined from 3.6 in 1991 to 2.3 in 2013, India is yet to achieve replacement level of 2.1.

In spite of family planning initiatives, TFR is higher than 3 in some districts of BIMARU states.

Socio-economic Reasons

While many may attribute such high rates of fertility in these states owing to cultural norms and religious factors, but high incidence of birth rates are directly related to socio-economic parameters of a community:

- High TFR rate is accompanied with high incidents of early marriage of women under 18 years of age. For example, UP and Bihar.
- High TFR rate is accompanied with low literacy rates and vice-versa. For example, high TFR in UP and Bihar, while very low in southern states.
- High TFR rate is accompanied with high incidents of poverty, as parents see their children as economic asset. For example, high TFR in BIMARU states.
- TFR rate is lower for women who are part of formal workforce. Even participation of males in formal employment restricts TFR.
- Social status of females and prevalence of dowry affects the TFR. In regions where such trend is present, parents having girl child produce more children in hope of having boy.
- TFR rate is lower in those states where women empowerment index is relatively higher, because it has direct bearing on reproductive decisions and use of contraceptives. For example, lower TFR in Kerala, TN while higher in northern states.

Steps already undertaken

- Scheme for Home delivery of contraceptives by ASHAs at doorstep of beneficiaries.
- Scheme for ASHAs to ensure spacing in births (launched in 2012), under which ASHAs provide family planning counselling to newly married couples.
- Compensation for sterilisation has been enhanced for states with high TFR.
- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme for education, growth and nurture of female child. It would also prevent child marriages.
- Some social welfare schemes provide benefits only to two children of the family.

Way Ahead:

- Increase awareness against child marriages and enhance community participation in preventing it.

- Provide informed reproductive services to women to restore gender balance, by reforming the sterilization programs and giving more choices to women.
- Focus on women's empowerment and women education.
- Focus on right-based approach to reproductive health to address the special and unmet needs of women and adolescent girls.

Student Notes:

5. ***In the Global Wage Report of International Labour Organisation, India has the worst levels of gender wage disparity. Comment. Enumerate briefly the factors that contribute to the existing gender pay gap in India.***

Approach:

- Briefly state some of the findings of Global Wage Report with regard to India.
- On the basis of these facts, decipher the possible reasons which contribute to gender pay gap in India.
- Also suggest some measures, which would help ameliorate the existing gender pay gap.

Answer:

Gender pay gap refers to the difference in earnings between women and men in the paid employment and labor market for the same amount of work. It is generally expressed as a percentage of men's earnings and is often used as a statistical tool to measure the levels of social inclusion in a country.

As per the **Global Wage Report 2016-17**, India has among the worst levels of gender wage disparity with the gap exceeding 30 per cent, which means that women are paid 30 per cent less than men in hourly wages in India in the similar job profiles.

According to the report, women in India make up 60% of the lowest earning paid wage labour but just 15% of the highest paid wage earners. This despite the fact that the 2011 Census showed that among recent graduates in their early 20s, there are now more female doctors and teachers than male, and there are now more female post-graduates in non-technical fields than men.

Gender gap pay is pervasive both at the bottom as well as in the top bracket of wage-earners. Not only women are paid less, there were fewer women in highly paid occupations.

Factors that contribute to such high levels of gender gap in India:

- **Occupational segregation**
 - Rate of female participation in the paid labor market is generally low, and is primarily concentrated in rural areas in the agricultural sector towards less productive economic activities.
- **Cultural and biological barriers**
 - Status and caste based segregation of labour has been a common feature in India, especially in society which scores high on patriarchy.
 - Spatial movement of the women is tied up with the movement of their family members (especially husband), which is not so much pervasive in the case of men.
- **Educational and training**
 - Literacy rate for women in India has been far lower than the literacy rate for men.
 - Investment in education and training has also been strongly in favor of men as they are brought up with the expectation of being bread earners for the whole family.

- **Career choices**
 - Women tend to choose less lucrative subjects, enter lower-paying professions and stay towards the bottom rungs of the career ladder, which negatively affects their earnings.
 - For instance, since the majority of those who studied nursing were women, this profession is over-represented among women.
- **Amount of unpaid/undervalued work**
 - According to a Human Development Report, women spend about two-thirds of their working time on unpaid work, while men spend only one-fourth of their time towards unpaid labor.
 - For instance, Care work is undervalued because it may be seen as a natural female attribute rather than a skill to be acquired.
- **Ineffective implementation of laws**
 - Though Equal Remuneration Act (1976) was passed with the right intent of providing equal remuneration to men and women workers in all matters relating to employment opportunities, but it has failed to change the ground realities even after four decades.

Equity in the gender pay can only be ensured truly by political, social and economic empowerment of women. Various skilling initiatives like STEP (Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women) and entrepreneurial aids such as MUDRA Yojana, Rashtriya Mahila Kosh among others are some of steps in the right direction.

In addition to unequal pay, the unequal representation of women also needs to be addressed since women constitute almost half the Indian population (about 48% of the total), but their representation in the work force amounts to only about one-fourth of the total.

This will cumulatively help realise the ideals contained in **Article 39 of the Constitution** which envisages that 'states should ideally direct their policy towards securing equal pay for equal work for both men and women' in the longer term.

6. *Portrayal of stereotypical sensational images of women not only reduces their identity to a mere object of desire but also reinforces the patriarchal structure of the society. Discuss with examples.*

Approach:

- Introduce by giving the current status of women i.e. how they are portrayed.
- With examples provide the true picture of different sectors which portray women as commodities.
- Discuss how it reinforces patriarchy.
- Conclude by providing a solution to this problem.

Answer:

It is said that there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women but many a times this empowerment gets disguised when women are portrayed on various forums in either of the two characters - as an object of desire or as their all-pervasive stereotypical roles.

Literature and media are two streams which portray women in different yet similar light. Though the recognition of women's identity in literature and media is similar to each other but both claim to redefine the women's position in their own ways.

Literature promises a holistic representation of women's self, lending them an enviable comparable status with men. On the one hand women is portrayed as divine in our

classical literature, on the other hand, poets like Harivanshrai Bachchan and Mirza Ghalib identify the romantic glory associated with women. However, media believes in only exposing their physical domains to make them commercially viable.

Advertisements in particular reinforce this notion. For ex- deodorant ads have explicit sexual suggestions, even ads relating to men undergarments show woman. Another aspect of advertisements is its act of creating a world of perfection where women remain pretty angels sans any blemishes or scars on their body. It casts precarious psychological impact on women not being an “ideal women” created in the ads.

Hindi and particularly regional cinema also reinforces women's traditional role as wife and mother mostly. The women are made to look alluring and appealing to attract sections of the audience. Defining women as sex objects has become the leading representation in the media. Women are presented as sexual objects to be enjoyed by men, which in turn leads to false consciousness.

Such representations reinforce patriarchal structure in a society, in the sense that they are believed to be less competent even after being equal or more qualified and also less paid than their male counterparts.

This representation of women is based on the gender discrimination. Right now dissemination of feminist sensitivity is the only remedy for effecting the desirable change.

However, things are improving a little bit and signs of change are seen in certain recent instances such as women march against President elect Trump for his remarks admitting to sexual misconduct and harassment allegations against him, women in progress ad campaign which shows independent women along with their emotional side, example of Roshni Misbah – “hijabi biker” from delhi. All these shows a ray of hope for a better future for women.

7. *The relegation of women to private sphere of life is the main cause behind gender inequality and exploitation in India. Discuss.*

Approach:

- Give a brief introduction about gender inequality.
- Highlight the discriminatory division of labour in an inherently patriarchal society like India that pushes women into the private spheres of life i.e. domestic/household work.
- Discuss how this relegation leads to gender inequality and exploitation of women.
- Conclude with a brief discussion on the importance of addressing both private and public patriarchy to achieve gender equality.

Answer:

Gender inequality signifies a form of socially constructed and predefined gender roles that defy the notion of equal value of the roles of women and men. It has deep cultural and historical roots in India's socio-cultural fabric. India has historically been a patriarchal society where men dominate and exercise control over women both within and outside the family. It is argued that relegation of women to private spheres of life is the main cause behind gender inequality and discrimination in India.

Women have traditionally been restricted to the private spheres of life through compulsory domesticity. The segregation of roles is biased in favour of men by confining women within the premises of the house. While role of women consist of tending to family needs such as child rearing, men were assigned the task of protecting

the family and providing for their economic needs.

Student Notes:

Depriving women the economic role of earning livelihood leads to loss of personal autonomy for women. This has a cascading effect across various dimensions like access to quality education, skill development, employability, control over one's sexuality, representation across positions of power etc. These socially and culturally created differences shift the balance of power in favour of men.

Gender role stereotyping is still prevalent wherein women are subjected largely to the secondary labour market comprising of low paying jobs. Their growth at workplace is affected by an invisible glass ceiling. Gender wage gap is widely acknowledged reality as is objectification of women and violence against women. All these affect women empowerment adversely and diminish their developmental prospects.

However, private patriarchy in India is declining due to the adoption of liberal values of modernization and globalization, rise in feminist movements, gender progressive policies etc. Consequently, women are being given more rights and their employment rates and public participation is increasing.

The intrinsic values of gender equality are incontestable. There are significant gains to be made if women acquire greater personal agency, assume political power and attain public status. It is hence imperative upon both the government and the civil society to collectively eliminate gender inequality so that this half of our population gets its due.

8. *Discuss why women continue to bear an uneven burden of the terminal methods of family planning in India. What can be done to address this unevenness?*

Approach:

- Discuss the reasons for reluctance of Indian men to undergo sterilisation.
- Suggest strategies to improve the gender balance in the sterilisation process.
- Conclude by citing some current initiatives and the way forward.

Answer:

The latest National Health Mission report has flagged the “uneven burden” women bear in family planning. As per the report, women account for more than 93 per cent of sterilisations in the country, even though male sterilisation is regarded as safer, quicker and easier.

There are **several reasons for** reluctance of Indian men to undergo sterilisation:

- Paucity of knowledge about appropriate and alternate contraceptive methods.
- Myths and misconceptions like sterilisation leading to loss of virility.
- Social taboo and sheer logistical limitations.
- Non availability and untimely access to male sterilisation services.
- Poor access to information and counselling on available methods of contraception and their associated side effects.
- Reluctance of the women health workers at the village level to discuss the socio-culturally sensitive issue of sterilisation with men.

Suggestions

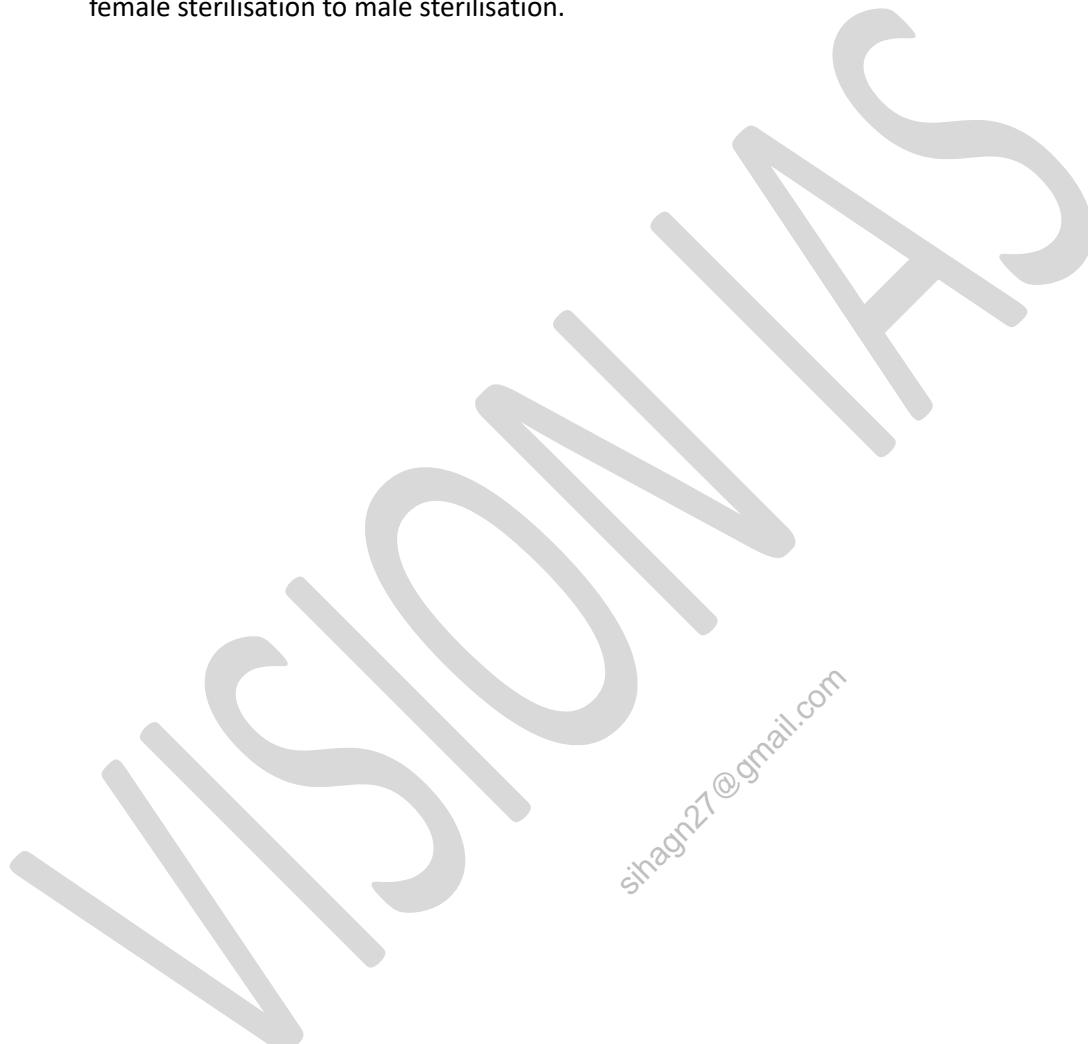
- Countrywide campaign to promote the adoption of vasectomy, break gender stereotypes, dispel myths and position men as responsible partners in family planning.
- Providing incentives for vasectomy.
- Enhanced access to male sterilisation services; promoting “No Scalpel Vasectomy”.

- Ensuring quality care in family planning services through PPP.
- Strengthening community based distribution of contraceptives.
- Mobilizing a cadre of village-level health workers to build awareness and acceptability of family planning as done in Bangladesh.

Student Notes:

Recognizing this trend, the Government has taken initiatives like **Mission Parivar Vikas** to ensure availability of contraceptive products to clients at all levels of health system. Similarly, **Vasectomy Fortnight** initiative is being used to raise awareness about male sterilisation and encourage men to participate in the process of family planning.

There is an urgent need to adopt a gender transformative health strategy which not only recognizes women's reproductive rights but also shifts family planning focus from female sterilisation to male sterilisation.



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