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SYNOPSIS: INSIGHTS SECURE Q & A

General Studies Paper I

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Topic: Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present-significant events, personalities, issues

Q) How did national leaders, especially Bal Gangadhar Tilak react to the Age of Consent Bill 1891? Should the government have anything to do with regulating our social customs or ways of living? Critically comment. (200 Words)

The Hindu

The Age of Consent Act, 1891 was a legislation enacted by British Indian Government which raised the age of consent for physical relationship for all girls from 10 to 12 years in all jurisdictions.

B.G. Tilak opposed the Age of Consent Bill, 1891. According to him, Government should not do anything with regulating Indian social customs or ways of living. Tilak was always in favour of social reforms but he wanted that these reforms should be brought by the Indian society not by the will of the then British government.

Should govt. have anything to do with regulating our social customs:

Yes:

1. There were many social evils prevailing in our society in past. If govt. didn't act then may be these social evils could not be erased from the society till now. E.g. Child marriage, sati practice, etc.
2. There are many social customs which are not beneficial for modern society and needs to be regulated from time to time but due to some orthodox religious leaders still persists. Here govt. can act as a voice of society and regulate them. E.g. Triple talaq in Muslin religion.
3. In India government is elected by the people. Therefore people give the right and mandate to the government to change in social rituals or customs if these customs acting as a barrier in providing social and gender justice to all people.

No:

1. Interference in religious matters is against the article 25 which provides the freedom to practice any religion.
2. In India, social customs are directly or indirectly related to religious matters. Therefore regulating any social customs can create a sense of resentment in any particular religion which is against the secularism in Indian democracy.
3. Indian Constitution doesn't provide any provision to govt to change in ways of living of society.

Conclusion: Indian society is a very complex one with all colours of society and every religion has equal status. Therefore any change in social customs can be given communal colour as given recently in case of cow slaughter issue. But in my opinion Government should interfere whenever it is necessary to safeguard the social and gender equality and social and national interest in long run.

Q) In the light of recent vilification of Tipu Sultan by certain groups, critically examine how his personality and contribution has been documented by various people since his death. (200 Words)

The Hindu

Background:

Tipu Sultan has been portrayed over the time differently by different sections like the Indian Left historians, Indian Right Historians, the British and the literary figures.

A critical examination of their perception about him is:

The Leftist Historians:

- **Profounder of knowledge:** rich range of his intellectual interests were astronomy, law, mathematics, among others.
- **Right to follow religion:** He didn't believe in domination of any one particular religion. As can be seen from the fact that the administrative transactions within Mysore were done in Persian, Kannada and Marathi. All of his key ministers were upper-caste Brahmins.
- **Secular:** He made generous donations to Hindu temples. The 10-day grand Dasara celebrations continued with a member of the Wodeyar royal family presiding over the festivities. Also, There were no forcible religious conversions recorded anywhere during his time.
- **Science and technology**-His up gradation of military equipment describe him as a ruler who gave technology a priority.
- **Administration**-Tipu fine-tuned his revenue collection networks and tried to create a centralized bureaucracy.

The Rightist historians:

- The allegations that he killed thousands of Kodavas in Coorg and forcibly converted Catholic Christians of Mangalore into Muslims are the reasons which project him as Muslim bigot.
- Criticize over projection of Tipu Sultan as he did not win a single war against the British on his own.
- They cast him as communal on ground of his actions against Hindu temples and promotion of Islam.

Literary Figures:

- Plays from 19th and 20th century, history textbooks and popular literature, like the Amar Chitra Katha comics and "Bharata Bharati" series depicted him as a brave martyr who fought against British.
- Heroic Identity-Tipu Sultan, the ruler of Mysore (1782-1799), appeared as everyone's icon. He was the Tiger of Mysore. Several Kannada folk songs lamenting his death were in circulation in the 19th century. This is special since no other king had had such folk songs sung after him.

British:

- Colonial historian depicted him as a religious fanatic because he was the strongest enemy of British east India Company.
- Even though the tax taken from the farmer was high but still British absorbed that the farmers are better off in Tipu's era in compare to east India company jurisdictional area.

Conclusion:

- Any heroic figure casts a long-lasting impression on society as it depicts the old-cultural and religious traditions of India.
- Singling out few fighters and leaving the rest will lay a huge negative impact which must be avoided.
- Before projecting any allegations against any personality, a reality check should be done.

Q) In your opinion, how would have Jawaharlal Nehru dealt with today's most pressing national and international issues? Critically comment. (200 Words)

The Indian Express

Background:

- Jawaharlal Nehru was a great diplomat, strong leader and an ideologue who believed in addressing issues based on an ideological principles.
- He was a firm believer in constitutional values. He would have been certainly guided by the similar principles and ideology while addressing the present issues.

Some of the prominent ones are:

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES:

- **Socialism vs. Capitalism:** Although he was a socialist in his ideology, by adopting the approach of mixed economy, he did not wish away the fruits of capitalism. Even today, in the growing LPG era, his focus would have development through mixed economy only.
- **Developing vs. Developed World:** He would have taken his idea of NAM on a broader scale to provide leadership and platform for developing world to tackle inequality among countries and "take for granted" attitude by the developed nations.
- **Economic policy:** Being a socialist he would have not favored the current pattern of withdrawal of state from economic activities therefore though he might have addressed the issue of inequality but the growth might still be crippling.
- **Middle East Crisis:** As seen around the world as a champion diplomat, He would have interfered to resolve the ongoing crisis in middle east with a humanitarian, tolerant approach of taking everyone on board and would have opposed any military intervention.
- **Terrorism:** Much of Terrorism today is due to political backing by foreign States. This would have been effectively opposed by Nehru through diplomacy, formation of regional and international Blocs etc.
- **Racial and Religious Vilification:** The world can mitigate this rising concern by following Nehruvian policy of Secularism and fraternity which was evident by his emphasis on application of these preambular ideas.
- **Climate change:** Interest of India would have come first for him. Although, he would have supported Paris deal, he would have being vocal on developed nations to provide technological and financial help to developing nations.

NATIONAL ISSUES:

- **Corruption:** Transparency and socio-economic equality were his ideals. He would have taken hard stand on it.
- **Employment growth:**
- Nehru ji was supporter of industrialization as evident from it's emphasis on 2nd and 3rd FYP. He would have worked on increase in investment in this sector, though support to private sector is doubted.
- He would also further the new innovations and technology with a positive impact and co relation on the society's need by involving world renowned scientists and sociologists together, what he did actually in CDP, 1952
- **Kashmir Issue:** Although he is held responsible for the continuance of the unresolved issue of Kashmir, Nehru always upheld the ideal of free speech and dissent for the people even in this challenging scenario and succeeded in averting any civil rebellion in Kashmir. The situation in Kashmir today needs to be seen with his prism of tolerance, free will and cooperation rather than subjugation.
- **Political Criminalization:** He was the strong believer in politics being the medium of change. He would have impeded criminalization of politics and would have worked to reduce the trust deficit in politicians by inculcating a culture of value oriented politics

Conclusion:

- Although some of his policies like that on China backfired and also the circumstances are a lot different from what they were half a century ago, much of what India is today is a product of Nehru ji's imagination and ideology
- The world too needs to follow many of his policies to bring about global peace and all round development.

Q) Why didn't India's political and military leadership to use its offensive air power assets to stop the advance of the Chinese People's Liberation Army in NEFA and Ladakh in 1962? Critically examine. (200 Words)**The Hindu**

In the recent 84th anniversary of Indian Air Force (IAF) India commemorated the heroic actions of IAF in the wars against Pakistan in 1947-48, 1965, and 1971. The only regret that India has is of not using IAF's services during Sino-Indian war which could have changed the outcome of the war. Only the helicopter and transport crew were used to serve in NEFA and Ladakh.

Why was such a reluctance present?

- 1) Had India attacked, PLAAF could have countered with attacking Indian cities like Calcutta, oilfields and the industrial complexes in the region.
- 2) PLAAF aircrafts could have only attacked if they had reached high altitudes from Tibet while IAF could have easily attacked from the fields of Assam and Punjab, loading full weapons. This matter was never given a thought.
- 3) The intelligence about the Chinese having active air bases at Rudok, Gartok and Tashigong further added to the confusion. There are no such bases even today.
- 4) The positions were so interlocked that air strikes would have endangered the safety of India's own troops.
- 5) Doubts about terrain in NEFA and the limitations of IAF projected that intervention of IAF could have had lesser effect.
- 6) Lack of co-ordination among the IAF officers and IB had also played a role in this.

How could have IAF helped?

- > The Chinese were known to have only Mig-15, Mig-17, IL-28 bombers and a few Mig-19. **India had technologically advance aircraft** comprising Toofanis, Mysteres, Gnats, Hunters and the Canberras.
- > Most airfields in Tibet are at high altitude and **had inadequate infrastructure** to take on offensive fighter operations.
- > **The Soviets had pulled out of China** in August; 1960. Their aeronautical industry was in tatters.
- > Their **serviceability was low** due to non-availability of spares and so also was perhaps their morale.
- > **Discord with Taiwan** was also keeping the Chinese engaged on the eastern board. Large contingent of army and air force were deployed there

With inherent flexibility that the air power has, it would have not taken much time for the IAF to reinforce the sector with requisite assets. It was the fear of the unknown that created a sort of paranoia

amongst the higher hierarchy in the govt which totally froze and took decisions and actions that did not bring much honour to the nation.

Q) “There’s a new turn in Dalit politics that entails taking charge of affairs in their own hands, and a widening of the terrain of struggle rather than restricting it to political power or religious conversion.” Discuss. (200 Words)

The Hindu

With the technological advancement and increasingly proactive society, the mode of struggle, the kind of alliance and the norms and concepts of Dalit are changing. The movements are increasingly demanding right based approach with the slogans such as ‘choice of food’, ‘right of land’, ‘Swabhiman’ and ‘Atmabhiman’ (self-respect), ‘Azadi’ (freedom) and ‘dignity’. The following are the reasons sowing the increasing assertion of Dalits:

- 1. Change in the way of struggle:** Caste based movements have been abandoned and the upliftment of all Dalits have been focused.
- 2. Effect of land reforms and agrarian reforms:** reinforced the hold of landed classes while alienating Dalits further to margins.
- 3. Prevailing social conditions:** The social conditions of Dalits has forced them to not only struggle against the external factors such as capitalism, caste or power but also against the denial of their right to humanity.
- 4. Hindutva Agenda:** has further alienated the Dalits even more and reinforces the ‘The fatal accident of birth’ ideology. Ex. A minor was killed in Dadri by local Hindu mob in the charge of storing beef in the house.
- 5. Form of struggle:** has widened to include struggle against human degradation and enslavements.

However some positive gains are seen through the struggles:

- 1. Social media and mass communication:** have increased the participation of dalits on much wider scale as was seen in solidarity movement with the death of Rohith Vemula across the country, ‘Azadi Koon’ (March for Freedom) and Udupi chalo march
- 2. Equality in gender participation:** women are participating shoulder to shoulder to men counterparts in the movements.

Focus of struggle, increasingly, becoming on the human dignity and social upliftment of Dalit, Muslims, women and lower strata. Dalit and minorities are uniting to remove the sense of unfair inclusion rather than leaving their fate on the political parties which don’t inclusively presents their aspirations.

Q) Critically evaluate how did Indira Gandhi’s tenure as the Prime Minister of India affect some of India’s socio-political institutions and governance. (200 Words)

The Indian Express

Indira Gandhi redefined democratic politics in India. Here are some political, social and governance changes during her regime which continues till date.

Political :

- Centralisation of power and Split of congress : Departure from the pluralist model led to division of the congress party
- Emergency and constitutional Amendment : 42nd Amendment of Indian constitution during emergency led to significant changes in the Constitution of India - including reduction in powers for Supreme Court and High Court. (Some of them were restored by subsequent amendments)
- First ever non-congress government : led to the first ever non-congress government after 30 years of Independence.

Governance:

- Emergence of Populist policies : Nationalization of banks, insurance and many private sector companies
- India became a Socialist republic : She enriched our preamble by explicitly stating the terms and India officially became a Socialist Republic (42nd Amendment)
- More social welfare schemes in five year plans for poor, unemployed and promotion of self-employment
- Proximity to Soviet Union: India moved closer to Soviet Union with Friendship Treaty between the (1971) and more alienation from west.
- Birth of Bangladesh : War with Pakistan in 1971 boosted her image in India, but ignoring the nuclear threat from US, further increased the tensions between India and US.

Social:

- She couldn't materialize her populist slogan 'Garibi Hatao' (Eradicate Poverty)
- She gave importance to environment protection - establishment of Project Tiger (1973), Wildlife Protection Act (1972) which further led to the establishment of more National Parks.
- Pokhran-1 (1974) – India's conducted her first successful nuclear bomb test during Indira Gandhi's regime

She changed the face of India in almost every aspect. Indian politics saw a shift since then and while her social welfare visions/intentions were good, her economic policies did not allow her visions to come true.

Topic: Salient features of Indian society; Secularism; Communalism

Q) What do you understand by 'positive' secularism and 'negative' secularism? Do you think it's time for India to remove the word 'secular' from preamble to India's constitution? Critically comment. (200 Words)

The Hindu

Positive Secularism is a state where the government rather than moving away from any religion it makes provision in such a way that all religions or sections live in harmony.

Negative secularism is a state where the government is completely away from religion and does not involve in providing any help even to the religious minorities.

The way in which Indian society has evolved is very complex with various religion and castes. With such plurality during framing of constitution, the framers implicitly considered secularity by providing fundamental rights in religious minorities. It was explicitly enshrined in 42nd Amendment.

Positives of having secular in constitution:

It provided India an opportunity to look at grievances of religious minorities.

It provides it way for preserving the culture heritage of tribal and various other aspects. Government rather than making policy for appeasing certain section have to work on development of all.

Negatives of having secular:

It may move providing from opportunity to minorities.

It cannot protect minority from oppression which majorities may impose on minorities.

Though India has taken several steps to improve socio economic condition of weaker section and minorities still the caste status and socio economic condition of social strata doesn't cross over therefore removing this in such a situation may lead to misery of minorities hence it may not be proper to remove secular in current situation

Q) In recent years, Indian society is experiencing polarisation and expression of anger against minorities and lower caste people is taking bold shapes. Critically examine the causes and consequences of this disturbing trend. (200 Words)

The Hindu

Of late the tolerance level with regards to minorities and lower castes is reducing alarmingly and some of the causes and consequences of the same can be examined as under:

→ Causes:

This is indeed a rage that is fueled by resistance to accept progress made by the lower caste people who climb up the economic ladder utilizing the reservation policy of the Indian State. This being the underlying reason, to polarise people in large numbers the religious sentiments and caste dignity are played on with. The recent demand to do away with the Prevention of Atrocities against Dalits Act in Maharashtra and reservation demands by Jats, Patidars in Gujarat are two instances of manifestation of such anger. Thus the causes are in themselves complex and intertwined with regards to cultural, economic, political and social aspects making the problem multidimensional.

→ Consequence:

1) The minorities and low castes were given safeguards that they deserved by the forefathers to achieve the constitutional ideal of social justice and equality. The anger that rages on basis of sporadic incidents overlooks the holistic picture and this ignorance will hinder the realisation of India which the forefathers dreamt of.

2) There will be ethnic conflicts and the state will have to expend lot of productive time in resolving such unproductive fissiparous struggles.

3) There will be race to bottom to show who is more oppressed and as the people so the nation thereby making nation regress.

The people must be sensitised on the past and the present changed scenario must be elucidated well in their minds as well as the same must be reflected in new GoI schemes and policies. Arrangements so made must dissatisfy all almost to same extent and this will ensure harmony and progress.

Q) How the Indian middle class has evolved since Independence? Critically analyse its changing role in today's Indian society and polity. (200 Words)

The Hindu

India middle class has been a crucial segment since independence. The emergence of middle class witnessed during 1857 revolt, they remained loyal to the colonial British from the revolt to the formation of Indian national congress. When they realised the real motive of British, its first rise was seen in Swadeshi movement of 1905 and they spearheaded the freedom movement. Since then, the Indian middle class transformed into various forms and made their impact in society, politics, culture, economy.

Role in Society

Education has been a key factor for Indian middle class, formed core intelligentsia during freedom struggle and it got inherited in late centuries. Teachers, scientists, doctors, lawyers, engineers are primarily supplied from this class to the Indian society. The expansion of middle class can be clearly witnessed during IT revolution.

But they failed to build the dream India; their skills were mainly focussed on individual ambitions rather than the wishes of a nation. They started flying abroad in huge number to pursue higher goals. Brain drain, which happened, left India less skilled.

Role in politics

During independence, though they were minority, they formed a dynamic minority, they had common framework of ideas and values, which had driven the freedom struggle.

After independence, their role in politics has mixed aspects. In one side, their political participation is immense. They are integral members in CSOs, NGOs and pressure groups. Their immense participation in 2011 Anti-corruption by Anna Hazare and in Nirbhaya case, Dec 2012 had huge political impacts. On the other side, their voting percentage has been decreasing; they show less in politics especially urban middle class. They lack vision on Indian political nature and they no longer interested to represent masses.

Middle class form a mainstay of democracy, their part in politics and society make a huge impact in the nation. They should act responsible citizens, expressing the masses.

Topic: Poverty and developmental issues

Q) In your opinion, which plays greater role in poverty alleviation in India – urbanisation or agriculture? Substantiate. (200 Words)

The Indian Express

Ending poverty figures as the top goal among the 17 SDGs. Since the advent of globalisation poverty has an impeding effect on the growth of all economies developed or developing.

India has been working hard to reduce poverty levels since independence as witnessed in the subsequent 5 yr plans and its various welfare programmes. And agriculture and urbanisation both play a pivotal role in this fight against poverty.

Role of Agriculture : still 60% population depends directly or indirectly on agriculture. It has DIRECT consequences on the farmers and the landless labourers employed who often belong to the poorest sections. The dependency on factors like monsoon, problems of seasonal and disguised employment

,issues with MSP ,seed procurement and selling of the produce curtail the true potential of agriculture. Tackling poverty through agriculture requires a bottom up approach wherein programmes like MNREGA that tackle disguised employment ,PMGSY that helps to cut transportation costs ,PMAY promising housing for rural poor and NAM National agriculture market that helps in better price realisation are a stepping the right direction.

Role of urbanisation : with the industrial and services sector growing swiftly over the years society has witnessed a push towards urbanisation .With this rapid growth of industrial towns there has been a rise in formal and informal employment. Growth of new businesses on account of cheap labour has had an important effect on reducing levels of poverty. But the residual effects migration of agriculture labourers ,coming up of slums ,congestion and pollution have somewhat acted as roadblocks. Tackling poverty through urbanisation requires better infrastructure planning ,providing affordable basic amenities like water ,food and shelter. Govt initiatives like Swachh Bharat ,AMRUT ,Smart city ,Pradhan Mantri Awas yojana promising affordable housing for all, have helped reduce poverty levels.

Since a substantial population among the poor are inter-dependent on both agriculture and urbanisation,both must be given equal importance in reducing poverty levels.

Q) Why the idea of a unconditional basic income (UBI) has resurfaced, gathering impressive support? Do you think UBI can be implemented by taxing the rich? Critically comment. (200 Words)

Livemint

The Unconditional Basic Income refers to a situation when each and every citizen of a country is provided with a certain sum of money by government periodically for his basic needs without any eligibility criteria.

With the idea to unfold the poor from the entanglement of deprivation, the discussion on Universal Basic Income (UBI), which is unconditional and universal, has re-emerged.

Reasons for its re-appearance

- 1) Jobless Growth – Less growth in manufacturing sector particularly in employment elasticity sectors like textile, construction to absorb large number of manual unskilled and less skilled employees
- 2) Less improvement in skill development – With the advancement of technology and penetration of computers in every sector, basic skills on information and technology should have been made. Though it has started, the progress is slow, leaving behind many unskilled jobless
- 3) Advent of Robotics, more automation and high tech machines – Invention of advanced technology developments make manual labour less attractive to profit making private sector

With all these reasons, UBI has become an easy alternative to alleviate poverty. Though it has advantages, the **main problem would be funding**. Taxing rich to pay poor would further deepen the divide between the rich and the poor and it also legitimises the rich. So instead following could be done

- 1) Part of regressive subsidies (fuel, power) that are provided to the better-off could be sources
- 2) UBI could also acts as a substituting existing subsidies
- 3) It could also be funded from a percentage of capital shares from every Initial Public offering
- 4) Could be funded by trimming the existing welfare schemes without hurting the poor- feasibility should be checked

But, challenges such as better use of technology, expansion of banking, institutional mechanism should be developed before implementing UBI. However, it could only be used a short term measure, underlying problems – education, health, job creation, dignified life for poor and overall upliftment of poor would not be solved if UBI continues.

Q) It is often said that poverty and declining economic conditions lead to frustration among the poor and revolt against the political elites. Is it true today? In your opinion, which factors increase individual's support for polity and confidence in government? Analyse. (200 Words)

The Hindu

Background:

- People's participation, fairness, accountability, good governance, secure society etc are some of the pillars of a true democracy.
- Any pitfall against any of the above specially relating to the poor causes frustration and builds ground for a revolt against the political elites.

This scenario is true even today as:

- No real decline in poverty: The poverty levels declined from 37pc from 2004-05 to 22 pc in 2012-13, but the relative decline in worsening economic conditions is not felt by people.
- Non -affordability of basic services – Quality Education, health, housing facilities and nutritious food necessitates money power
- Lack of jobs- Inadequate jobs for both skilled and unskilled manual labourers and also low growth in agriculture leaves many in vexation
- Agitations for reservation among upper and influential castes on ground of poor economic conditions: Ex- Jat, Patidar agitations against the State and national politic
- Rise of Naxalism

But many a times these agitations are due to other factors as well:

- The Jat and Patidar agitations were also due to the fact that OBCs were getting reservations and getting jobs at their cost.
- People are not able to get basic services also due to corruption, bad governance practices etc.

Factors which increase individual's support for polity and confidence in government:

- **Infrastructural**
- Strengthen remote areas connectivity by provide all-weather roads to explore educational and job opportunities- recent CAG audit report has criticised the scheme for fund wastage, misplaced construction.
- Provision of public utilities like electricity, LPG access, basic internet services should be improved. For example, PAHAL yojana has been doing great in reaching people, but support after initial subsidy is yet to be addressed
- **Health:** Universal Health Insurance, Subsidised education up to higher education- create productive human capital
- **Improve transparency and accountability** in the governance system by digitization, local participation.
- **Inclusive Development** – To reduce poverty and include people in mass decision making.
- **Policy Making:-**
- For people of different classes as their set of problems are different. So people specific policies should be formulated.
- Rationalizing our reservation system, by revamping reservation criteria, removing free riders.
- **Efficient Judicial Mechanism:** So that the grievances are addressed and solved faster.

Conclusion:

Thus along with economic aspect of growth, social and political aspects are to be addressed. The feeling on everyone being equally important is what will help gain the support of the people in the democratic institutions.

Q) Agriculture is blamed for pollution in Delhi. What agricultural solutions should state and union governments explore and implement to address this issue? Discuss. (200 Words)**The Hindu****Background:**

- Every year in the winter, Delhi is choked with high level of air pollution, particularly PM 2.5.
- Among other factors, agriculture is blamed the most for this as Paddy and straw residue burning in nearby states creates pollutant particulate matter which then travel to the land locked areas of Delhi.
- It is an anthropogenic factor and hence can be controlled through effective steps taken at Central level, State level, and by both:

Measures:

- **Technology advancement and mechanization:** Providing access to suitable machinery, which can be used for collection, chopping and incorporation of straw into the soil to increase its fertility.
- **Alternative methods of straw management:**
 - Promoting biomass energy production and vermicomposting where the main ingredient is straw which will help in increasing the economic value of straw
 - Promoting the use of paddy straw for other industrial purposes such as paper mills, packing industry. This will help in preventing wastage of straw.
 - Bio char like charcoal is produced through burning rice straw with no or extremely low levels of oxygen which helps the soil retain nutrients and water which prevents leaching and also creates no ash.
 - In most cases it would not be cost-effective for the straw to be transported too far away from the paddy farm. So the plants for producing energy from straw should be near the farms
- **Crop Diversification:**
 - Intercropping should be promoted with incentives and subsidies. Intercropping will prevent extra stress provided to the land and help in increasing the productivity
 - Other crops like pulses etc. can also be produced instead of focusing only on paddy crops.
- **Schemes:**
 - National mission on Sustainable Agriculture;
 - MNREGA for incentivizing very small farm holders for indulging in other activities.
 - Subsidy and crop insurance for non-cereals and shift to millets, pulses
- **Penalty for eco degradation.**

Conclusion:

Both center and states need to come together to reform, develop and innovate mechanisms and infrastructure of agricultural methods to check the rising level of pollution due to it.

Topic: Role of women; Social empowerment

Q) Why does domestic violence against women continue despite stringent laws? Why do women continue in abusive relationships in India? Critically examine. (200 Words)**Livemint**

Despite the landmark domestic violence prevention Act passed ten years ago, the violence against women continues unabated as confirmed by the huge number of cases registered.

The stringent laws do not act as a deterrent due to the following :

1. Weak enforcement - Delays in hearings, difficulty in proving charges and inability to implement court

orders means that the law continues to be toothless.

2. Lack of awareness - Lack of education, scant information regarding such law and little idea regarding how to proceed with their case/complaints often leaves unable to make use of strict laws.
3. Scant state support - Protection officers mandated to ensure efficient implementation of Act are underpaid and overworked. Budgetary allocations to ensure proper implementation of the law are not forthcoming.

Women continue to remain in abusive relationships due to following:

1. Lack of education, financial independence and awareness means women are unable to seek justice.
2. Social Factors - Patriarchal society, which considers that women should be obedient, dutiful and submissive cause the women to silently suffer. Further factors include, lack of support from her own family members and prioritising of raising children above her personal well-being.
3. Lack of support - A women who leaves her husbands home is looked down upon. shelter/protection homes meant to house women in distress continue to be in pathetic conditions, leaving most women with little choice other than to put up with their husband's behaviour.

The need of the hour is to raise awareness regarding prevailing legislations, establishing evening courts to render speedy justice and scaling up the infrastructural/financial support to women in distress. A nation that aspires to be a superpower cannot afford to deny its women self-respect and dignity.

Q) According to latest data, economic development seems to have accentuated India's patriarchal vices and might worsen the gender imbalance in population. How bad is the gender-bias in India's child birth within India between states and also compared to other countries? How can government address this problem? Examine. (200 Words)

Livemint

According to the Sample Registration Survey data, Sex Ratio at Birth(SRB) is deteriorating in India after 2010-11 compared to the rise in the previous decade. Experts are concerned that economic development might have led to educated people preferring male child to avoid safety, dowry concerns. How bad is India's gender-bias?

According to the WHO, and SRB of 1.05 is acceptable, owing to higher mortality of males in accidents, wars etc.

- India has an SRB of 1.11 and is worse off than countries like South Africa but is better than neighbouring China which is among the worst performers in this aspect.

- Internally, the states of Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh fare far worse than India's average SRB, may be due to traditional preference to male child or issue like dowry, safety etc. On the other hand, states like Kerala, Karnataka, Chattisgarh are better than India's average and also meet the WHO's SRB standards.

How can the government address this problem?

- Legal: Data suggests that SRB of second child when first child is a girl is far worse than that when first child is a boy. This shows that families are illegally using the banned pre-natal sex determination techniques. This calls for a better implementation of PCPNDT(Prohibition) Act. Apart from that, the government must ensure safe environment for girls by preventing rapes, reducing economic burden on parents of girl child by strictly prohibiting dowry, economic security of girl child through Sukanya

Samridhi Yojana etc..

- Social: Government must spread awareness, even among the educated about gender equality and the ill effects of skewed sex ratio. Consequences of skewed sex ratio can be seen in China right now.
- Women empowerment: Better political and economic opportunities for women, pay parity, education, reducing MMR, etc. can improve India's sex ratio.

The economic development of India must promote inclusive growth by empowering women and ensuring better living condition for them. This combined with strict implementation of legal provisions can make India a safe and happy place for women.

Q) The declining female labour force participation in India alongside high economic growth is puzzling. Critically analyse the causes. (200 Words)

EPW

Background:

- Labor force participation is one of the deciding factor on which growth rests.
- Despite it, the latest NSSO report have shown decline in the female labor force participation with growing economy.

Critical Analysis of the issue:

- Unequal access of job: Jobs getting created in highly skilled sectors like services where a few women make it to the top (cascading effect caused by low literacy rate among women) compared to men.
- Domestic activities not included- There is a flaw which is considered in NSSO's definition of employment which doesn't consider domestic activities wherein the women are full time participants.
- Declining employment opportunities Due to advancement in Technology and automation, overall job prospects have lowered and it affects womenfolk the most as they are already suffering from depressed participation rate.
- Declining agricultural activities- Lesser contribution of agriculture in GDP is a fact that agriculture generates lesser jobs. Female labour force are the important part of agrarian economy and hence with decline in agricultural activities, women are stepping back.
- Quality of employment- home based work, domestic work, street vending , waste picking are kinds of jobs where quality is not maintained. Women are preferring not to engage in such jobs.
- Male workers have replaced female workers in undesirable informal sector occupations.
- Lack of job security and higher incidence of sexual harassment also contribute to this factor.

Conclusion:

- Thus not only economic but also social and political reasons defy the situation of lower female labour workforce participation rate.
- schemes like Stand Up India, MUDRA, SHG initiative etc. should focus more on women.
- Also health and safety of women needs to be emphasized in its policymaking.

Q) It is often experienced in India that the women "rescued" from the sex trade riot against their rescuers. Sex workers in Hyderabad often experience rescue as a form of humanitarian violence befitting the United Nation's definition of trafficking. Critically examine why. (200 Words)

EPW

Background:

- Women Trafficking has been big menace to our society.
- Government in collaboration with UN, has taken many steps to counter Sex Trade like Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956.

- But these mechanisms have only been about rescue procedures and, not about rehabilitation programs and responsibilities of rescuers.

Critical Analysis of its causes:

- Poor Infrastructure:
 - scarcity of space, lack of cleanliness
 - no enough healthy food
 - lack of adequate medical and counseling facilities
 - poor clothing
- Violation of Fundamental Rights
- In shelter homes victim women are not given freedom to self-determination, movement and choose their vocational courses. This is directly a violation of article 19 and article 21.
- Children are not allowed to play which is against child's rights.
- Physical Violence: Many times shelter home staff and police has been accused by women for physical which causes them to abscond.
- Poor Vocational training: Rehabilitation program train them in tailoring, book binding, basket making etc. which will not bring them adequate earning in future.
- Threat to Privacy: Victim women have threat to their privacy as their past usually revealed by staff member to their families and relatives.

Way Ahead:

- Government should formulate guidelines for shelter homes and prescribe responsibilities of rescuer staff, up gradation of shelter homes and vocational courses.
- The authority must keep vigil on the implementation and provide facilities along with alternate livelihood should be the utmost priority for these women.
- The Schemes should also focus on after-rescue efforts of women saved from trafficking.

Q) According to the National Crime Records Bureau reports, incidence of serious crimes against women rose from 237 per day in 2001 to 313 per day in 2015. Why do you think, despite increase in affluence and improvement in sex ratio, crimes against women are increasing? Discuss inter-state variations in crimes against women and measures needed to stop them. (200 Words)

The Hindu

Even in the 21st century, crime rates against women are not reducing not just in India, it is prevalent across globe. In India, recent National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) report portrays a disappointing picture of increased crime rate against India from 2001 to 2015.

Reasons

- 1) Family- Prevalence of patriarchy, cultural genesis of crime against women and no concept of celebrating feminine in family system
- 2) Less Empowerment - Literacy rate and labour participation have improved over the decades, but still less than the counterpart gives them less power to fight back
- 3) Society- Low conviction rate due to social stigma and resistance from family, illegal punishments by Khap panchayats.
- 4) Legal - No proper enforcement of legal instruments – for example, many states have not enforced PWDVA by adequate infra and staff to handle domestic violence
- 5) Religious reasons – Misconception on religious ideas and treating women as inferior gender. For example – temple entry by Hindus and Triple Talaq by Muslims

Interstate variations

- 1) High crime states- States with skewed sex ratio, low women participation in education and labour,

more rural and remote areas- all provide them less awareness on the law, reluctance to fight against family and social stigma and makes them more vulnerable to crimes

2) Less crime states – on the other hand, stated with high sex ratio, more women labour participation, more awareness through mass media, internet on the legal provisions and exit options from marital bond.

Measures to be taken

1) Behavioural change- gender champions in schools and colleges, mass media could play a strong role by having women achievers, programs showing the importance of women in the society and the family

2) Strengthen the existing laws and schemes – PWDVA (for domestic violence), PCPNDTA (to check female foeticide), Sexual harassment at workplace act, Ujjawala (to control trafficking), Swadhar grey schemes (to strengthen rehabilitation) – to be implemented across states and districts

3) Policing and courts – Increase women police stations and booths, fast track courts

Karl Marx rightly said “Social progress can be measured by the social position of the female sex”. In order to achieve the just society for other equal number of women participation and to fulfill right to dignity (article 21) enshrined in the constitution, the crime rates against women should be reduced and eliminated in the long run.

Q) It is argued that there is a real danger that the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act could, in fact, be used against women and minors. In the light of recent observation by the Supreme Court that the Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (PWDVA) is gender neutral, critically comment. (200 Words)

The Hindu

The SC recently deleted the words 'adult male' from section 2(q) of the PWDVA Act, 2005 in order to make it gender-neutral. Thus, even women and minor one can be convicted under this Act.

This is being seen against women's cause due to:

a) **Constitutional**: The judgement violates the following provisions of the Indian Constitution:

1) Art.14: By equating the formal equality with the substantive equality as provided in the Art. Thus, pushing women in more disadvantaged state.

b) Art.15(3) mandates that special provisions can be made for women and children and the Act was made gender-specific keeping this in mind.

b) **Historical**: women have been victims since ancient times but the judgement tried to bring historically disadvantaged women at par with already advantaged men. Thus, there is little or no scope for improvement in their conditions.

c) The Act is to free women from patriarchal mindset but this judgement would push them further into that web.

d) Due to inequitable distribution of resources, female members have less options available, except this Act, to get their grievances redressed. However, this judgement takes away even the last option.

e) The growing **labor force participation** among women makes them more vulnerable to domestic violence by their unemployed male partners or relatives.

However, this judgement has **certain advantages** also:

1. Data shows that about 98% cases are fake against male members. So there is more misuse of this Act as there is no provision for punishment against women,

2. Violence is **gender-neutral** as economical, physical, emotional abuses can be done by women and minor members also.

3) It promotes principles of '**social equality**' as is enshrined in our preamble.

4) Increase trust of male members in the govt and political establishments.

Thus, any law must be based on principle of equality but at the same time care should be taken not to

create disability for any section of society. The judgement should have ensured political participation, social inclusion, countering violence, etc. As Gandhiji has rightly said, "**An unjust law is itself a species of violence. Arrest for its breach is more so**".

Topic: Globalization and its impact on society

Q) Economic integration with the world has led to a domestic fragmentation of societies within nations. Critically discuss varying impact of globalization on societies and politics around the world. (200 Words)

Livemint

Background:

- Globalization has immense effect on polity and society-both positive and negative.
- With globalization, the world has become a global village, thereby economically integrating the world.
- But due this, there has been a rise in individualism, consumerism and multiculturalism and modified role which is reshaping the societies across the world.

Positive Impact on Societies:

- Egalitarianism becoming a prominent value: Relations within the societies are becoming more egalitarian from feudal.
- More awareness and self-dependency: State's role has changed in managing its citizens and they hence have become more aware and self-dependent in this era of market economy.
- Women-led industrialization. Highest absorption of women in workforce has led to cohesion of the labor.
- Economic Growth of the society: Has led to homogenization of society as a consumer.

Negative impact on Societies:

- Rise in Conflicts: Egalitarianism leads to ego clash which reduces compromising tendency in humans.
- Alienation and rise in inequality- Globalization leads to high division of labor thereby alienating individual from the product of his labor.
- Services like education, housing and health have become dependent on market forces.
- Consumerism and Individualism: has led to loss of compassion and bonding in the society.

Positive impact on Politics:

- Democratization of polities- Globalization stresses on democracy as a prominent political arrangement as a result there are nations like Myanmar and Nepal which are becoming democratic.
- Accountability towards the world community- Nations are held accountable for any wrong doings to their people. eg. Sri Lanka being questioned on human rights violation by its army.
- Sharing best practices- Best practices of governance can be shared and inculcated.

Negative impact on politics:

- Unwanted external interference in domestic politics- Integration makes a polity vulnerable to instability due to external factors. Eg. Arab spring causing political turmoil in West Asia.
- There is a reassertion of national and cultural identities, which has created space for populist movements.

Conclusion:

- Although there is a rise in the economic prosperity of the nations of the world, the societies have faced turbulence due to globalization.
- In one way they have started drifting apart while on the other the threat on their existence have forced them to unite and save their indignity.
- So there needs to be a balance between integrating and divisive impacts of globalization.

Q) “The main lesson for Europe and the world is clear: as a matter of urgency, globalization must be fundamentally re-oriented.” In the light of recent victory of Donald Trump, Critically analyse. (200 Words)

The Guardian

The Indian Express

Trump's victory and Brexit has lot of similarities which can be seen from two view points.

1. Surge of national feelings i.e. Anti- Migrants, Anti- Global and pro-fellow countrymen.
2. Inequality for last several decades not just within country's boundary but even outside where the 'development process' been more driven according to the profitability of market and other vested geo-political motives.

Idea of globalization certainly need to be re-crafted for making it more inclusive, which actually been not seen after having the evidences of:

1. People dying of Hunger in Africa despite food surplus rich developed countries who claims to be the true torch bearer of a globalized world, but fail to deliver food at the need of the day.
2. Dying people in wait of medicines because the poor countries had no resources to develop the cure on their own and the globalized developed world kept itself insular unless they found some market and a threat for themselves.

Restructuring of new globalization should be in the ways of:

1. Providing more power financially to poor and LDC's.
2. Making strict norms of equitable share of resources for resource-deprived areas.
3. By easing the norms of migration.
4. To read globalization more with cooperative nationalism.

This must be seen as the last chance to change the world for a better cause of all rather than just to further the vested interests of rich countries under the name of globalization.

Topic: Urbanization, their problems and their remedies.

Q) Every year, Delhi faces worst pollution during winter months. What needs to be done to reduce pollution in Delhi permanently? Examine. (200 Words)

The Indian Express

System of Air Quality & Weather Forecasting and Research(SAFAR) declared that the air quality in Delhi this winter was “severe” than the past two years.

Major contributors are open burning of solid waste in & around Delhi, vehicular emissions ,dust by the roadside & around construction sites , stubble burning of crop residue in neighbouring states.

Remedies -

- 1) RESEARCH - To conduct studies frequently to see the changes in pollution at various locations vis-à-vis the share of contributing sources at those locations to implement appropriate remedial measures.
 - Research in clean technology & fuels should be enhanced.
- 2) PREVENTIVE MEASURES -
 - Effective enforcement of the ban on stubble burning
 - CPCB should direct local bodies in & around Delhi to check open burning of solid waste & strictly enforce rules related to prevention of gaseous emission from construction activities.
 - Police to streamline movement of traffic at busy intersections, implementing ODD/EVEN rule & entry of trucks during the night hours only
 - increase the use of vehicles powered by various forms of renewable energy.
 - Anti-Pollution cess & congestion tax on diesel-run trucks entering Delhi and discarding vehicles which are more than ten years old.
 - Enforcement of BS-VI standards.

3) BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE -

- Increase levels of awareness, education, and civic sense and highlighting the benefits of "Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan."

India recently ratified Paris climate deal wherein India has already committed to restricting its carbon emissions. Thus, abatement of local air pollution will have a significant effect in fulfilling our "Intended Nationally Determined Contributions" and contribute towards sustainable development "Goal 13" to take urgent action to combat climate change.

Q) Air pollution in Delhi is a result of a complex mix of anthropogenic and natural sources. Identify these sources responsible for pollution and related agencies responsible for fixing these sources. (200 Words)

Down to Earth

Scientists have proposed the new epoch **Anthropocene** since the human impact on climate change and environment has reduced the current epoch Holocene and Air pollution in Delhi is no exception, which has resulted from both from anthropogenic and nature sources with maximum from human impacts.

Air pollution in Delhi is due to

1) Natural factors

- a) Low temperature in winter leads to low wind velocity, which reduces the dust dispersal process
- b) Landlocked cities, no moderate sea effect

2) Anthropogenic factors

- a) Road dust – Dust emanating from unpaved roads and peak construction activities causes silicosis.
- b) Vehicular emissions – Increased number of diesel vehicles, huge commuters, absence of integrated transport public infrastructure adds the problem
- c) Industrial vehicles – Dirty power plants, coal usage in hotels, diesel generators contributes SO₂ and NO_x which can cause major respiratory ailments
- d) Waste burning – Crop residue burning in neighbouring states – Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh transfers pollutants to Delhi
- e) Improper waste management - Burning of waste at landfills and lack of waste segregation at source adds particulate matter into the atmosphere

Agencies for fixing the sources

- 1) State government – Should regulate crop burning, sync it with green fodder demand, green corridors planning through its concerned department. Shall introduce dust dispersal methods, air purifier methods. Construction sector should be monitored for emission, No Pollution certificate should be mandatory.
- 2) Municipal corporations – Should repair unpaved roads and ensure timely sweeping and should proper waste management by enforcing Municipal Solid waste rules stringently
- 3) Union Government – Ministry of Road Transport and Highways should comprehensively plan for integrated transport system; Ministry for Petroleum and Natural Gas should incentivise CNG and electric vehicles
- 4) General Public - Public should take own responsibility on waste segregation at source, public cleanliness

Need of the hour is the comprehensive integrated to tackle air pollution in Delhi to save human capital as it causes more deaths and other health issues.

Q) Why planting more trees in cities is said to be simple yet very effective measure to prevent health crisis in Indian cities? Examine. (200 Words)

Livemint

2015 Indian heat wave, which has caused deaths of minimum of 2,500 people and recent UNICEF which showed that about 300mm children globally breathe toxic air, having substantial proportion of Indian children, aggravated by recent Delhi pollution tells us that these health effects could be minimized substantially by planting trees.

Planting trees could be effective because

- 1) Heat shield – Trees reduces the exposure of harmful UV rays from sun and protects humans from sunburn, skin cancer.
- 2) Pollutant absorber – It absorbs harmful particulate matter, which causes respiratory ailments and toxic gases like SO₂ (hence prevents from acid rain), CO (from cardiovascular diseases)
- 3) Natural coolant – It increases atmospheric moisture through transpiration and reduces the intensity of heat waves
- 4) Combat climate change – sequester CO₂ and reduces the emission of green gas emissions, decreased temperature minimize the exposure to heat sensitive infectious diseases like Malaria, Dengue
- 5) Mental Health – Green corridors acts as a better recreation places and soothes the mental stress
- 6) Indirect benefits – Trees saves water, reduce water pollution and helps in lessening the effects of health problems arise due to water pollution

It is said to be simple because, it does not involve huge cost like air purifiers and by roping in MGNREGA and NGOs, labour could also be provided. Lack of land for large scale of plantations would be a challenge. But strong political will and active support from all stakeholders could make it possible.

Way forward

Government of India has already welcome steps like National Green Highways Mission, Green corridors and many NGOs and volunteered have also been involved in sampling plants. These steps could be made effective by planting medicinal valued trees such as **Neel, Asoka, Babul, Arjun** and as such near schools and hospitals.

Q) Cleaning up India's air pollution problem will require a comprehensive, synergized government approach that is currently lacking. What is this comprehensive and synergized approach that's needed which is different from earlier tactics? Examine. (200 Words)

Livemint

Livemint

According to World Bank's report on adverse effects of air pollution, The economic costs incurred by India is 8.5 % of GDP. The spike in particulate matter PM 2.5 and Pm 10 levels in Delhi post Diwali substantiate the report.

The current problems in our efforts in tackling pollution are

1. multitude of schemes designed unilaterally without taking into account of topographical, social, economic barriers
2. lack of proper waste management mechanism. Mismanagement of agricultural wastes like burning of biomass at a time when demand for fodder is at peak
3. Lack of implementation and monitoring mechanism to check enforcement of initiatives taken to tackle the issue.

4. Lack of innovative practice methods .
5. Lack of synergy between centre ,states,ULB and citizens
6. Environment legislations has been reduced to default,damage and then pay compensation

Way ahead

1. Integrated and holistic approach to tackle the scenario. Lessons can be taken from "eENERGYWENDE" program of germany where research and development policy making, industrial practices and business are alligned to promote renewable energy. Such successful integration along with reducing bureaucratic delay can help us implement Bharat 6 faster.
2. Legislative action should not be stopped at mere prohibition of paddy straw. Integrate innovative methods like better utilisation of biomass to produce fuel as done in Rajasthan,mechanised biogas production units of ICAR.
3. OHSAS and ISO 14001 audit should be strictly adhered by industries.
4. Promoting sustainable practices like use of public transport and pooled systems. Initiatives like Greenco by CII should be taken up by industries to promote green business management.
5. Strengthening the ambit of NGT and institutional capacities of central and state pollution board in carrying decisions .
6. The gap between a innovative idea and reality is successful implementation. Hence concepts of co-operative and competitive federalism should be ensured to involve citizens,bureaucrats,academicians and policymakers to be a part of this synthesised change

The report also states that death rate from air pollution in India will outpace china as we are lackadaisical about environmental rules as India ramping up coal production while china aims to cut coal by 500 million tonnes.

Q) Why is it said that the recent Delhi smog is a call to address India's farm crisis? Examine. (200 Words)

Livemint

"Living in Delhi is like living gas chamber" is the statement by Delhi high court, this year the chamber is about to explode. The situation certainly calls to address the farm crisis but it also calls to address other crisis also, that we are ignoring.

Reasons for farm crisis are as follows

1. Financial condition of farmers: with diminishing returns in agriculture sector farmers can't afford costly labor or machines for removing stubble.
2. Ill-managed agriculture policy: low minimum support prices, high input cost, high post harvest losses, poor storage infrastructure and archaic Mandi system all are hurting agricultural sector.
3. Capital productivity is giving negative returns even after mechanisation inputs.

To fight Delhi smog, we need to tackle other crisis like dust from construction and transportation, use of coal for commercial purposes, use of crackers and etc. Delhi smog is cumulative result of year round activities not result of farmer's stubble burning or use of crackers.

Thus, along with tackling farm crisis by providing technological inputs, sustainable agricultural policy and better infrastructure, other crisis also need to be tackled like monitoring of construction activities, shift towards green energy, restrictions on crackers and etc. Beijing has not only improved its air

quality but also improved the agriculture sector as a whole. If India wants become a agricultural super power and UNSC permanent member, she has to make holistic efforts, only then she can achieve SDG goals and other aspirations

Q) India's carbon emissions from burning fossil fuels increased by 5.2% while China's decreased by 0.7% in 2015. Examine why emissions is increasing in India whereas it's decreasing in China. Also discuss what India can learn from China is reducing emissions. (200 Words)

The Hindu
Livemint

2016 is the third consecutive year which has seen almost no growth in carbon emission despite the strong economic growth. Before 2014, the carbon emission was growing at the growth rate of 2.3% per year for a decade. At the same time there was increase in the carbon emission in India with 5.2% whereas decline in emission was seen in China (29% carbon emission contribution worldwide) and USA (15% of carbon emission contribution worldwide) which are major carbon emission contributors. The following are the reasons for the reduced emission:

1. **Decrease in the use of coal in China and U.S.** whereas 70% of energy generation in India is through thermal power plants which uses large amount of coal.
2. **Increase in the use of environment friendly energy production** such as wind power, solar power, tidal power generation, etc
3. **Greater allocation** in the research and innovating ways to reduce the emission.
4. **Stringent rules to scrap out old vehicles and promoting of environment friendly transportation.**

India can learn the following form China in reducing the carbon emission.

1. **Integrated urban planning with environment conservation efforts**
2. **Expansion of inland waterway network for transportation of goods and people.** China has more than 110,000 km of navigable inland waterways but India has just 5,200 km of navigable waterways.
3. **Ubiquitous expansion of public transportation** such as railways, metros in urban areas etc.
4. **Much required regulations on industries which are emitting carbon at unsustainable level**

Though there is a decreasing trend in the rise of emission due to pledges of the nations to decrease the emission by 2030, it falls short to limit the climate change well below 2 degree Celsius. At the same time, the concentration of CO₂ in atmosphere is record high in 2015 which is expected to rise in 2016 due to weak carbon sinks. Therefore, there is need to increase the efforts to increase the carbon sinks through afforestation, developing sustainable agriculture practices, carbon capture and storage in crust as rocks, using the captured CO₂ in oil drilling, etc.

