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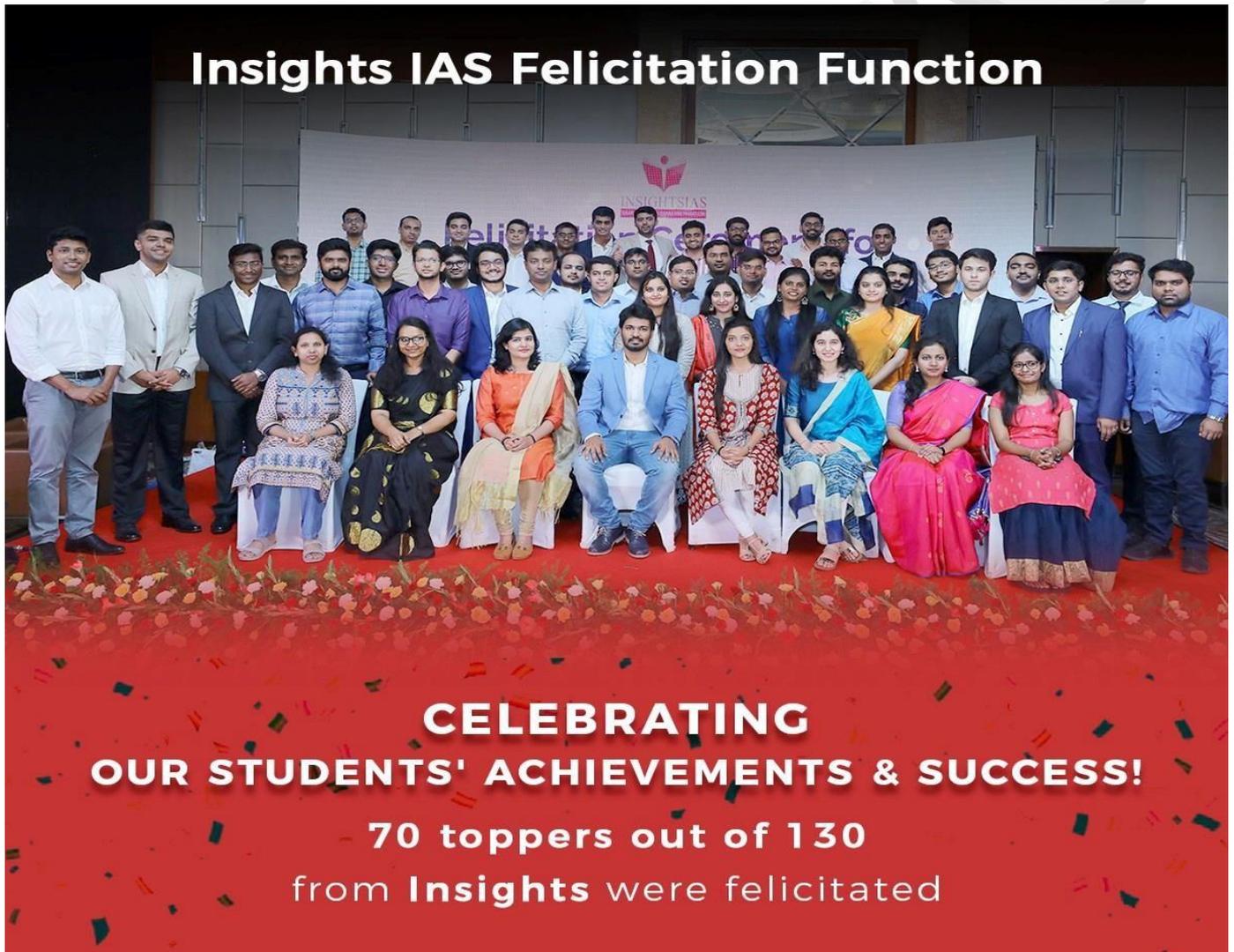
DECEMBER 2019



NOTE: Please remember that following 'answers' are NOT 'model answers'. They are NOT synopsis too if we go by definition of the term. What we are providing is content that both meets demand of the question and at the same time gives you extra points in the form of background information.



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Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

The outcomes of Mughal administration enrich the diversity of the country in various ways. Elucidate with illustrations. (250 words).

Indianexpress

Why this question:

The article highlights the works of Dara Shukoh who worked with Sanskrit scholars to translate the Upanishads to Persian — an example of the closely intertwined histories of Sanskrit, Persian, Urdu.

Key demand of the question:

One must discuss the significant role that Mughal administration played in enriching the diversity of the country.

Directive:

Elucidate – Give a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

In brief discuss the cultural aspects, socio-religious aspects that prevailed in the Mughal administration.

Body:

Talk about the diversity in terms of trade, religion, art and architecture, literature etc. Highlight the ways and means in which the Mughal administration enriched the culture in multiple ways.

Conclusion:

Conclude with essence of the diversity that the Mughal empire brought to the country.

Introduction:

The Mughal Emperors attained great power in India from 1526 to 1757. They lived surrounded by incredible opulence, created magnificent Architecture and developed Arts and Culture. The Mughals came to India as conquerors but lived in the subcontinent as Indians, not colonisers. They merged their identity as well as that of their group with India and the two became inseparable, giving rise to an enduring culture and history.

Body:

Mughals' contribution to the diversity of the country:

Religious Tolerance:

- The Mughal rulers also adopted the policy of religious toleration to consolidate the Mughal rule in India. Only Aurangzeb reversed the policy.
- Akbar had introduced an excellent system of administration to strengthen the nascent Mughal empire for which he has rightly been called as the true founder of Mughal rule in India.

Art and Literature:

- Prior to the advent of Turks, painting had made remarkable progress in India. But during the pre-Mughal period, the Turk and Afghan rulers discouraged it.



- Again the Mughals revived the art of painting and under their patronage it reached the stage of perfection.
- The Mughal painting represents a happy blending of Persian and Indian elements.
- Akbar had a great liking for painting. He set up a separate department of painting and the head of the department was Khwaja Abdus Samed.
- The emperor extended his patronage to Hindu and Muslim painters, personally examined their work every week and gave them rewards according to their progress.
- According to Abul Fazl, there were 100 good painters at the court of Akbar.
- The eminent Muslim painters were Min Sayyad Ali, Abdus Samed and Farrukh Beg. The eminent Hindu painters were Daswant, Basawan, Sanwal Das, Taraihand, Keshva and Jagannath.
- Dara Shukoh worked with Sanskrit scholars to translate the Upanishads to Persian — an example of the closely intertwined histories of Sanskrit, Persian, Urdu.
- Dara Shukoh's Upanishad translation was a monumental project with lasting significance for both Hindus and Muslims.
- During the Mughal rule, the Rajput princes did not neglect the art of painting. The Rajput school of painting grew up. Religion is closely associated with art in this school. The Rajput paintings depict the life of the innocent villager, his religion, his pursuits and pastimes.
- The 16th and 17th centuries marked the growth of **Hindi literature**.
- The first notable Hindi writer was Malik Mohammad Jayasi, who wrote the famous Philosophic epic Padmavat.
- The history of Hindi literature entered upon a new epoch with the accession of Akbar. He was deeply interested in Hindi poetry and Song.

Music:

- The art of music was also patronized by the Mughal rulers. Babur was fond of music.
- Humayun also loved the company of musicians and used to listen music three times in a week.
- Akbar was a great patron of music. According to Abul Fazl, Akbar paid much attention to music and was the patron of all who practiced this enchanting art.
- There are numerous musicians at the court—Hindus, Iranis, Turanis, Kashmiris, both men and women.
- Due to the joint efforts of both the Hindus and Muslims, Hindustani music made a great advance. New varieties of Ragas were introduced by the noted musicians.

Architecture:

- The Mughal emperors were interested in fine arts and they were great builders. Architecture made tremendous progress under the patronage of the Mughal emperors.



- According to Fergusson, the Mughal style of architecture was foreign in origin. But this view has been criticised by Havell.
- Sir John Marshall has opined that India is a vast country with manifold diversities so it cannot be said that architecture ever conformed to a single universal type.
- It was defended upon the personal tastes of the emperor.
- The Mughal architecture is a mixture of Persian and Hindu architecture.
- Akbar took great interest in the construction of buildings. According to Abul Fazl, Akbar kept control over the price of building materials and fixed the wages of the crafts men.
- The first building during Akbar's reign is the Tomb of Humayun at Delhi and it was constructed by Humayun's widow, Haji Begum.
- It clearly exhibits the influence of Persian style. Akbar's tomb at Sikandara is another building of the same class. Its style resembles a Hindu temple or Buddhist Vihara.
- Akbar had constructed excellent forts at Agra, Allahabad, Ajmer and Lahore.

Conclusion:

The Mughal contributed to the complementary culture of India in a diverse way. This is evident till date in the everyday lives of individuals.

While discussing the salient features of the Bhakti movement in the medieval period, elucidate on its role in the growth of regional languages in India. (250 Words).

Ancient India Old NCERT History by R S Sharma class XI.

Why this question:

The question is from the static portions of GS paper I and aims to examine the salient features of the popular Bhakti movement of the medieval period and its impact on the growth of regional languages in India.

Key demand of the question:

One must in detail explain the salient features of the Bhakti movement in the medieval period and discuss its role in the growth of regional languages in India.

Directive:

Elucidate – Give a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.

Structure of the answer:**Introduction:**

Give a brief introduction of the Bhakti movement.

Body:

Mention the salient features of the movement; explain the underlying philosophy, methods of propagation, role played by the various gurus etc.

Discuss its role in the growth of regional languages in India; The Bhakti movement promoted the growth of vernacular languages and literature in different Parts of the country. Quote examples to substantiate better.

Conclusion:

Conclude that Bhakti movement represented a break from the earlier devotional literature, which was mostly written in Sanskrit and Bhakti literature in regional languages played a crucial role in the popularization of the Bhakti movement and espoused spirituality among the common people.

Introduction:



Bhakti was accepted as a means to **attain moksha along with jnana and karma**. The Bhakti Movement originated in the seventh-century in Tamil, South India (now parts of Tamil Nadu and Kerala), and spread northwards. It swept over east and north India from the 15th century onwards, reached its peak between the 15th and 17th century CE. The Bhakti Saints moved against the austerities propagated by the Buddhist and Jain schools and professed that ultimate devotion to god was the means to salvation.

Body:

Salient features of the Bhakti movement:

- The Bhakti movement in many ways broke barriers of gender, class and caste.
- At the same time, it shattered stereotypes associated with the perception of spiritualism; denounced orthodoxy and the rigid ritualistic practices of worship, and established a more personal and informal connection between the devotee and the divine.
- During the Bhakti movement, the lower classes rose to a position of great importance.
- The Bhakti movement gave equal importance to men and women which gave way to the importance of women in society.
- The **Alvars and Nayanars** initiated a movement of protest against the caste system and the dominance of Brahmanas or at least attempted to reform the system. This is supported by the fact that bhaktas or disciples hailed from diverse social backgrounds ranging from Brahmanas to artisans and cultivators and even from castes considered “untouchable”
- **Ramananda** opposed the caste system and chose his disciples from all sections of society irrespective of caste. His disciples included **Kabir**, a weaver; **Ravidasa**, he was a cobbler; **Sena**, he was a barber; thus, emphasizing the equality among people of all occupations and caste.
- **Sant Kabir** aided the common people to shed age-old superstitions and attain salvation through Bhakti or pure devotion. He criticized all forms of worship of idols.
- **Guru Nanak** condemned caste difference and rituals like bathing in holy rivers. His idea of religion was highly practical and strictly moral.
- **Nathpanthis, Siddhars and Yogis** condemned the ritual and other aspects of orthodox religion and the social order, using simple, logical arguments. These groups became particularly popular among “low” castes.

Impetus for growth of vernacular literature:

- The Bhakti reformers adopted the common language of the people and preached in it instead of preaching either in Sanskrit or in Persian. In this way a great impetus was given to the development of the vernaculars.
- **Tamil:**
 - the poetry of the Bhakti movement some of the first being the Nalayira Divya Prabandham (4,000 songs) of the Alvars (Vaishnavite) and the Twelve Thirumurais (comprising 18,426 songs) of the Saivite saints have as their main theme religion and god.



- **Kannada:**
 - Veerashaivism greatly contributed to the Bhakti cult in Karnataka region.
 - **Basavanna and Akka Mahadevi** wrote several Vachanas in Kannada language.
 - The Vira-Saivas contributed the most for the development of Kannada literature.
 - Showing a predominant preference for the prose medium, this sect had over two hundred writers.
- **Telugu:**
 - Vaishnavism and Shaivism were the major movements in Telugu literature from the 12th to 15th century.
 - **Mallikajurna Pandit's** Siva-Tattva-Saram is an important exposition of this faith.
 - Similarly, Pallukari Somantha wrote important Saiva texts such as the Panditaradhyacharita and Dvipada Basava Purana.
- **Marathi:**
 - **Gnaneshwar** who wrote "Gnaneshwari", a book on Marathi grammar. Jnanadeva's literary skills and philosophical depth are aptly reflected in his Bhavartha-Dipika, popularly known as Jnaneshvari, and the Amritanubhava.
 - The poetic compositions of other saints **Eknath and Tukarama** reached to common people in their own language and left deep imprint onto their thoughts and minds.
- **Assamese and Bengali:**
 - Amongst the eastern group of languages. Bengali was used by **Chaitanya** and by the poet **Chandidas**, who wrote extensively on the theme of the love of Radha and Krishna.
 - Ballads on events of contemporary interest composed by wandering ministers were equally popular.
 - The whole of Assam passed under the sway of the strong Vaishnava movement during the fifteenth and sixteenth century **D. Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva** were the key architects of the Assamese Vaishnava movement.
 - They made rich contributions to the development of the Assamese literature.
 - The **Kirtana-Ghosha of Sankaradeva** is known as the Bible of the Assamese Vaishnava literature.
- **Hindi:**
 - The phase (1318-1643), namely the **Bhaktikala**, witnessed wholesome composition of Hindi verses on religious, moral and mystical themes on the lines of two dominant schools of Bhakti saints, viz., the **Nirguna and Saguna schools**.
 - The Hindi literature during the Bhakti Kala had saint poets of both Nirguna and Saguna schools and Sufi mystics. They composed their verses on religious, mystical and social



themes. Kabir composed a number of songs and Verses (Sakhis), which are noted for their literary excellence.

- **Tulsidasa's** Ramacharita Manasa is an epitome of the medieval Hindu culture. Of the Krishna worshipping Saguna group, **Surdasa** was the most prominent saint poet, whose Sura-Sagra is one of the masterpieces of medieval Hindi literature.
- Vidyapati, Nandadasa, Hita Harivansa, Mirabai and Rasakhana etc., were some of the other prominent saint poets of this school, whose poetic compositions also made rich contributions to the contemporary Hindi literature.

Conclusion:

Bhakti cult was out-of-the-box thoughts on religion. It was mainly against the common religious views, and most importantly, it was strongly against the caste system.

“Most of the art and architectural remains that have survived the ancient and medieval Indian times have been religious in nature”, Discuss with suitable examples. (250 words)

Reference: Class XI NCERT – Medieval India by R S Sharma

Why this question:

The question is from the static portions of GS paper I. It aims to analyse the impact of religious nature of different kingdoms and dynasties and their impact upon the art and architecture of the times.

Key demand of the question:

One must explain with suitable examples the impact of religion over the art and architecture of ancient and medieval Indian times.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Start with a generic appreciation of art and architecture and its relevance in past times of ancient and Medieval India.

Body:

Explain the following viewpoints with relevant examples wherever necessary:

With changing times, better articulation of religious and socio-cultural beliefs develops which reflect in the contemporaneous art forms. Thus, the prehistoric art forms are confined to secular paintings like that of Bhimbetka rock shelters.

Later, the animistic religious belief of Harappa Civilisation gets reflected in the terracotta figurines of mother goddess. With the further passage of time and emergence of Brahmanism, Buddhism, Jainism etc. more religious art forms in terms of Ajanta caves and paintings, Dashavatara temple (Deogarh) etc. surfaced.

Later, in medieval India, under the patronage of Delhi Sultans, tombs and mosques emerged. Nevertheless, it must also be noted that non-religious or secular art forms were also getting importance. For example, the seals, terracotta toys, granary from Harappan Civilisation and palaces, gardens from medieval India.

Similarly, the patronage provided by the rulers or the society also defines the type of art that gets developed. The Ashokan edicts, whose form and content was largely non-religious, incorporated principles of social conduct. During the Sultanate period emerged the Indo-Islamic form of architecture like tombs and mosques.

Conclusion:



Conclude that the art and architectural forms of ancient and medieval India never confined themselves only to the making of mammoth buildings of religious places, though it contributed the most.

Introduction:

Indian art and architecture is inspired by religion and centre around sacred themes. However, there is nothing ascetic or self-denying about it. The eternal diversity of life and nature and the human element are all reflected in Indian art forms. The art of architecture and sculpture was well developed during the Indus valley period.

From at least 3000 B.C. to the present day, many civilizations have flourished on the subcontinent of India (which includes today's countries of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh). Each has made valuable contributions to India's rich artistic heritage.

Several of the world's major religions (including Buddhism and Jainism, Hinduism, and Islam) either began in India or flourished there. India has also been home to small communities of Jews, Christians, and Parsis. (Parsis are Iranian fire-worshippers who moved to India in the early A.D. 700's). Much Indian art, therefore, has a religious content.

Body:**Indus valley Sculpture:**

- The earliest examples of Indian art come from the Indus Valley, an area in present-day Pakistan. The Indus Valley, or Harappan, civilization flourished from about 3200 to 2000 B.C.
- Many small sculptures of metal and clay survive from this period.
- They usually represent human or animal figures.
- Other objects include soapstone seals engraved with writing and animal forms.
- The seals may have been used to stamp trade goods or as a means of personal identification.
- Four larger bronze statues of a buffalo, rhinoceros, elephant, and bull with chariot driver have also been found near Bombay. They are thought to date from about 1300 B.C.

Buddhist Sculpture:

- Indian sculpture flourished during the Mauryan dynasty (about 321-184 B.C.). Much of the surviving art of this age is Buddhist.
- Among the most important monuments of the Mauryan period are large stone pillars that stood at crossroads and important sites.
- A pillar often had a lotus-shaped top bearing the figure of a lion. The lion was a symbol of imperial rule borrowed from Iranian art. Many pillars also featured important Indian symbols. These included the elephant, the bull, and the lotus itself.
- Asoka (Ashoka) was the most famous Mauryan ruler. He made Buddhism the state religion. But he tolerated the worship of such traditional village gods as yakshas and yakshis.



- These were male and female nature spirits. Many larger-than-life stone images of these spirits were made during Asoka's reign. Smaller versions began to be placed on Buddhist monuments.

Hindu Sculpture:

- Small images of Hindu gods were also carved of stone. Although made in human form, the images were also meant to show the many different forms taken by Hindu gods. Some gods were given many arms or heads. They were always shown carrying certain emblems.
- In northern India during the Gupta dynasty, images of Hindu gods were carved into the rock in man-made caves or housed in temples. Such temples appeared across India after A.D. 400. Elaborate relief carvings were made on the temple walls. These represented a variety of gods and their attendants.
- In southern India after 800, bronze figures of Hindu gods were made. It was believed that the spirit of a temple god could be transferred to the statue. The statue was then carried in a religious procession. Outstanding bronzes were made in the Chola period (800-1200).
- During the period from 900 to 1500, Hindu sculpture in the north tended to emphasize rich decoration. Much of this sculpture was used to ornament religious buildings. Sculpture of figures decreased after 1200 when northern India was ruled by Islamic leaders. Islam forbade the use of human images for worship. Figural sculpture was produced for Hindu rulers, however.
- Traditional sculpture continues to be made in modern India, mainly for an international tourist market. Other sculptors have experimented with modern styles and techniques

Cave Architecture:

- The design of Buddhist cave-halls carved into the mountainsides near Bombay was based on the free-standing structures built in towns.
- Cave architecture continued at least into the 800's at such sites as Ajanta and Ellora. They were created by Hindus and Jains as well as Buddhists.
- In some cases, whole temples were carved out of the rock. The most famous rock-cut temple at Ellora is called the Kailasa temple. It was named after the mountain on which the Hindu god Shiva was said to have his palace.

Temples:

- Large free-standing temples were built in India from the 500's onward, mainly by Hindus and Jains. In the north, these temples had curving towers.
- The architecture of the temple was used to symbolize many things. These included an altar, a residence for a god, or a shelter for the worshiper seeking enlightenment.
- Many such temples were built in northern India. Outstanding examples are also found at Khajuraho in central India, Bhubaneswar on the eastern coast, and Somnath in the west.
- In southern India, temples were more like palaces. Great walls with tall gateways were built to include much of the surrounding city within the temple grounds.

Islamic Architecture



- Islamic rulers gained political control over northern India in the 1190's. Long before this period, Islamic merchants along the coasts of India had hired local craftsmen to build structures for their use.
- One common type of Islamic building is the mosque. A mosque is where the faithful gather for prayer. Most mosques have an open courtyard surrounded by a covered hallway and are oriented toward the sacred city of Mecca. (In India, this would be to the west-southwest.)
- Under the patronage of sultans and emperors, a variety of Indo-Islamic architectural styles developed. Some were based on local styles.
- Others borrowed from Islamic traditions. Mosques, tombs, and palaces all survive from this era, known as the Sultanate period. They also survive from the period of Mogul rule that followed it.

Conclusion:

Temple architecture evolved over the centuries and despite some regional variation it arrived at a standard arrangement which involved a huge walled complex with massive decorative gateways giving entrance to a sacred space of lesser shrines dominated by the main temple and its monumental series of towers.

Art of Gandhara echoed largely Buddhist patronage, although other deities and themes were not ignored. Explain. (250 words)

Reference: Art and culture by Nitin Singhania

Why this question:

The question is based on the principle art of Gandhara and the contributions of Buddhist patronage it received during the period.

Key demand of the question:

Explain the coming of Gandhara art, key features and the influence of Buddhism through the route of patrons upon the art.

Directive:

Explain – Clarify the topic by giving a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Start by defining what constitutes Gandhara art and its evolution.

Body:

Gandhara art is a style of Buddhist visual art that developed in northwestern Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan between the 1st century BCE and the 7th century CE.

Discuss the features that assert the influence of Buddhist culture on the Gandhara art form.

List down features that assert Buddhist influence such as –

Buddha, who was hitherto designated only by a symbol, was conceived in human form.

His person was given some of the 32 suspicious bodily signs associated with the Mahapurushalakshana, such as the protuberance of the skull, the hair-knot, bindi between the eyebrows and elongated ears.

Buddhist practice incorporated some aspects of popular religion, evident from Stupas and female figures at Stupas.

Conclusion:

Conclude with significance and that though the art was largely influenced by Buddhism other cultures of Gods and goddesses were not totally ignored.

**Introduction:**

Gandhara art, style of Buddhist visual art that developed in what is now northwestern Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan between the 1st century BCE and the 7th century CE. The style, of Greco-Roman origin, seems to have flourished largely during the Kushana dynasty and was contemporaneous with an important but dissimilar school of Kushana art at Mathura.

Body:**Gandhara art and Buddhism:**

- The Gandharan craftsmen made a lasting contribution to Buddhist art in their composition of the events of the Buddha's life into set scenes.
- In its interpretation of Buddhist legends, the Gandhara school incorporated many motifs and techniques from Classical Roman art, including vine scrolls, cherubs bearing garlands, tritons, and centaurs. The basic iconography, however, remained Indian.
- The materials used for Gandhara sculpture were **green phyllite and gray-blue mica schist** which in general, belong to an earlier phase, and stucco, which was used increasingly after the 3rd century CE. The sculptures were originally painted and gilded.
- The Hellenistic influence was nowhere more dramatic than in Gandhara, a term now used to describe the school of semi-classical sculptures of Pakistan and Afghanistan in the early centuries of our era.
- In contrast with Mathura School, the Gandhara School images are known for their anatomical accuracy, spatial depth, and foreshortening.
- The Gandhara school drew upon the anthropomorphic traditions of Roman religion and represented the Buddha with a youthful Apollo-like face, dressed in garments resembling those seen on Roman imperial statues.
- This style of art was closely associated with Mahayana Buddhism and hence the main theme of this art was Lord Buddha and Bodhisattvas.
- All early Bodhisattvas are shown in wearing turbans, jewelry, and muslin skirts, a costume that was an adaptation of the actual dress of Kushan and Indian nobles.
- Thus, it can be conjectured that in idea and conception this style was Indian and in execution it was foreign. One example of the Gandhara style of art is the Bamiyan Buddha statues.
- The Gandhara depiction of the seated Buddha was less successful.

Gandhara art and other religions:

- Although it was dominated by the themes of Lord Buddha, however, there were images on other subjects also made such as the images of the Greek God Apollo and certain kings as well.
- Although Buddhist imagery dominates the art of Gandhara, some Hindu deities such as Skanda, the god of war, were also common.



- Early art from Gandhara often features motifs from Greco-Roman mythology and imperial representations, as well as western architectural elements such as Corinthian capitals and friezes of garland-bearing, cupid-like erotes.
- These characteristics make Gandharan works truly distinctive in the history of art.
- This river god is inspired by Roman prototypes, both in the rendering of the figure and in its depiction as a male. Personifications of rivers in Indian culture are always female.

Conclusion:

The schools of Gandhara and Mathura influenced each other, and the general trend was away from a naturalistic conception and toward a more idealized, abstract image. Gandhara School of Art can be said as an influence and culmination of both the Indian as well as foreign traditions due to its strategic location.

Trace the rise of Bhakti Movement. Discuss its nature with reference to Dvaita and Advaita Vada. (250 words)

Medieval history class XI by R S Sharma

Why this question:

The question is straight forward and is based in the topic of Bhakti movement and its connection with the philosophies of Dvaita and Advaita Vada.

Key demand of the question:

One must explain the rise of Bhakti movement and influence of Dvaita and Advaita Vada upon it.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Trace the evolution of Bhakti movement.

Body:

Bhakti movement preached using the local languages so that the message reached the masses. The movement was inspired by many poet-saints, who championed a wide range of philosophical positions ranging from theistic dualism of Dvaita to absolute monism of Advaita Vedanta.

Explain in detail the concept of the two philosophies and in what way it influenced Bhakti movement.

Conclusion:

Conclude with its significance.

Introduction:

The word 'Bhakti' means devotion to God. Bhakti was accepted as a means to **attain moksha along with jnana and karma**. The Bhakti movement empowered those on the lowest rungs of Indian society and provided impetus for the growth of vernacular literature. Bhakti poets emphasized surrender to god. Equally, many of the Bhakti saints were rebels who chose to defy the currents of their time through their writings. The Bhakti Saints moved against the austerities propagated by the Buddhist and Jain schools and professed that ultimate devotion to god was the means to salvation. The Bhakti tradition continues in a modified version even in the present day.

Body:

Rise of Bhakti movement:



- The movement probably began in the Tamil region around the 6th and 7th century AD and achieved a great deal of popularity through the poems of the **Alvars and Nayanars, the Vaishnavite and Shaivite poets.**
- In the eighth century A.D. **Shankaracharya** is said to have been the first and principal exponent of the reform movement.
- After that **Ramanuja and Namadeva** gave their sermons to people. Gradually this movement also spread to the north. **Ramanuja, Vallabhacharya, Kabir, Srichaitanya and Guru Nanak** led this movement.
- Hailing from both high and low castes, these poets created a formidable body of literature that firmly established itself in the popular canon.
- In the Kannada region, the movement begun by **Basavanna** (1105-68) in the 12th century for a time threatened the caste hierarchy and stretched the fabric of local society.
- Vachana sahitya composed by Basava himself as well as his disciples **Akkamahadevi, Allama Prabhu, Devara Dasimayya** and others consisted of pithy aphorisms conveyed in unambiguous terms certain astute observations on spiritual and social matters.
- In neighbouring **Maharashtra**, the Bhakti movement began in the late 13th century. Its proponents were known as the **Varkaris**. Among its most popular figures were **Jnanadev (1275- 96), Namdev (1270-50) and Tukaram (1608-50)**, who have left behind many verses that embody the essence of Bhakti.
- In northern India, from the **13th to the 17th centuries**, a large number of poets flourished who were all Bhakti figures of considerable importance.
- Kabir, the renowned saint of northern India, falls squarely in this tradition of singer-songwriter-critic.
- Another singer-songwriter was **Guru Nanak** (1469-1539), an iconoclast and, yes, critic of the dominant societal values of his time. Nanak was of a syncretic mindset and attempted to fuse the tenets of Hinduism and Islam to serve as a guide for all humanity.
- A near-contemporary of Nanak was **Ravi Dass** (1450-1520), who was born into a family of leather workers (chamars) in Varanasi. Like Nanak, Ravi Dass too spoke of the need for a casteless society, though, unlike Nanak, he had suffered its slings and arrows as he belonged to an untouchable caste.
- In 19th century Karnataka, **Shishunala Sharif (1819-89)** was an influential figure. A Muslim by birth, Sharif also accepted the tenets of Hinduism and often sang of communal harmony.
- During the freedom struggle, the **poet-revolutionary Ram Prasad "Bismil" (1897-1927)** composed the songs Sarfaroshi ki tamanna ab hamare dil mein hai and Rang de basanti chola that were sung by many revolutionaries.

Dvaita philosophy:

- **Madhvacharya** propounded this philosophy.
- According to dvaita, the **world is real.**
- God, the creator of this world, is also real.



- There is a natural difference between the ordinary, ignorant soul who experiences sorrow in this world and the God who knows all and is omnipotent.
- This is the essence of dvaita siddhanta.
- The very thought helps in **preventing escapism and motivates one to perform duties sincerely.**
- It also establishes the Supremacy of God and indicates the path to devotion.
- It cautions us about His omnipresence thus stressing the importance of righteousness.

Advaita philosophy:

- **Adi Shankaracharya** is considered the propagator of this philosophy.
- Advaita propounds that the **world is an illusion.**
- All actions and emotions including sorrow are just false impressions.
- Ignorance of the reality is what causes suffering, and liberation can be obtained only by true knowledge of Brahman.
- Fundamentally, the soul and God are one; when the soul releases itself from this illusion; it merges with Brahman, the Universal Consciousness.
- The quintessence of Shankara's philosophy is "Brahma satya jagat mithya, jivo Brahmaiva na aparah". meaning Brahman (the absolute) alone is real; this world is unreal, and the jiva or the individual soul is non-different from Brahman.

Conclusion:

The only similarity between advaita and dvaita philosophies is that of bhakti or devotion, which is very essential. Bhakti cult was out-of-the-box thoughts on religion. It was mainly against the common religious views, and most importantly, it was strongly against the caste system.

What is the philosophy of Dvaita? Evaluate the contribution of the school of Dvaita Vedanta in the development of Hindu philosophy.(250 words)

Times Of India

Why this question:

Vishweshwara Tirtha Swami, the 88-year-old pontiff of Pejawar Mutt, passed away in Udupi on Sunday.

The question in this context is to assess the contributions of Dvaita philosophy to Hinduism.

Key demand of the question:

Discuss in detail the philosophy of Dvaita and its contributions to Hinduism.

Directive:

Evaluate – When you are asked to evaluate, you have to pass a sound judgment about the truth of the given statement in the question or the topic based on evidences. You have to appraise the worth of the statement in question. There is scope for forming a personal opinion here.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Discuss the structure of eight schools of philosophy of Hinduism in general.

Body:

Explain what you understand by Dvaita and Advaita philosophy.

Highlight the concept of Dvaita Philosophy.



The Dvaita Vedanta school believes that God (Vishnu, supreme soul) and the individual souls (jīvātman) exist as independent realities, and these are distinct.

The Dvaita school contrasts with the other two major sub-schools of Vedanta, the Advaita Vedanta of Adi Shankara which posits nondualism – that ultimate reality (Brahman) and human soul are identical and all reality is interconnected oneness, and Vishishtadvaita of Ramanuja which posits qualified nondualism – that ultimate reality (Brahman) and human soul are different but with the potential to be identical.

Discuss few proprietors of the school.

Conclusion:

Conclude by highlighting the contributions it made to Hinduism.

Introduction:

Dvaita is a dualist school of Vedanta Hindu philosophy. The Sanskrit word dvaita means “dualism”. This school was established as a new development in the Vedanta exegetical tradition in the thirteenth century C.E. with the south Indian Vaishnava theologian Madhva, who wrote commentaries on a number of Hindu scriptures. The word ‘Bhakti’ means devotion to God. Bhakti was accepted as a means to **attain moksha along with jnana and karma.**

Body:

Dvaita philosophy:

- **Madhvacharya** propounded this philosophy.
- According to dvaita, the **world is real.**
- God, the creator of this world, is also real.
- There is a natural difference between the ordinary, ignorant soul who experiences sorrow in this world and the God who knows all and is omnipotent.
- This is the essence of dvaita siddhanta.
- The very thought helps in **preventing escapism and motivates one to perform duties sincerely.**
- It also establishes the Supremacy of God and indicates the path to devotion.
- It cautions us about His omnipresence thus stressing the importance of righteousness.
- Unlike other systems of Hinduism, Madhva taught that souls achieve different levels of liberation, and one category of souls is destined for eternal damnation.

Contribution of Dvaita philosophy to Hinduism:

- Madhva’s dualism is based on the authority of the Vedas, which he regards as authorless. God, rather than being the author of the Veda, is the great teacher (mahopadhyaya) who reveals the truth expressed in the Veda.
- Madhva wrote thirty-seven works, including a commentary on the Brahma Sutras called Madhva-bhasya.



- In addition to his writings, Madhva founded the Madhva sampradaya (community) in Udupi, where it is said he discovered an idol of Krishna encased in mud. He placed this statue in the Udupi temple.
- He also ordained eight monks in eight different monasteries (astamathas) who propagated his teachings both during his life and afterward.
- The main purpose of the mathas is to propagate bhakti, dharma and philosophical truths, along with the duty of performing aradhana and puja of Udupi Sri Krishna.
- His eight original monasteries of Udupi have continued under an uninterrupted series of abbots and are still in existence today; the main icon of Krishna, which he allegedly recovered from the mud still stands in the temple there.
- The spiritual hierarchy of Dvaita is distinct from that of other Hindu movements.
- It also establishes the Supremacy of God and indicates the path to devotion; it cautions us about His omnipresence thus stressing the importance of righteousness.
- The very thought helps in preventing escapism and motivates one to perform duties sincerely.
- Madhva is considered to be a very influential Hindu theologian due to his revitalization of monotheism in the face of the powerful doctrines of monism and polytheism introduced by foreign invaders.
- His influence was particularly evident in Karnataka, where great leaders of the Vaishnava Bhakti movement such as Purandara Dasa and Kanaka Dasa adhered to the Dvaita traditions.
- Madhvacharya's theology influenced those of later scholars such as Nimbarka, Vallabha, and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Conclusion:

Dvaita is one of the three most influential branches in the orthodox Hindu philosophical system of Vedanta, along with the schools of Advaita (non-dualism) and Visistadvaita (qualified non-dualism). The concept of dvaita is relevant even in today's world.

How far the recent discoveries are capable in changing the older perspective of Indus Valley Civilisation? Discuss. (250 Words)

Businessline

Why this question:

The question aims to discuss the impact of recent discoveries with respect to the Indus valley civilisation and vis-à-vis the changing perspectives.

Key demand of the question:

One must discuss the changing perspectives owing to the discoveries related to the past IVC.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

In brief discuss the significance of the IVC.

Body:



One must highlight the fact that history is all about building perspectives and the perspectives are always based upon evidences and thus the changing opinions about a place.

Highlight the recent excavations, evidences that have been revealed.

Discuss in what way they have led to changed and better understanding of the IVC.

Also highlight the specific challenges that are faced in materializing such findings.

Conclusion:

Conclude on a positive note that history at times needs to be put to multiple trials to understand the real truth.

Introduction:

As the ongoing Rann Festival puts the international spotlight on Gujarat's Thar Desert & Kutch area, researchers from IIT Kharagpur and other institutes have come up with a big archaeological find and analysis that establishes possible human settlement in the area, dating back to 3,000 years in history.

Body:



Significance of Indus Valley Civilization:

- The Indus Valley Civilization (IVC) was a Bronze Age civilization (3300-1300 BCE; mature period 2600-1900 BCE) extending from what today is northeast Afghanistan to Pakistan and northwest India.



- Along with Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia it was one of three early civilizations of the Old World, and of the three the most widespread. It flourished in the basins of the Indus River, one of the major rivers of Asia, and the Ghaggar-Hakra River, which once coursed through northwest India and eastern Pakistan.
- At its peak, the Indus Civilization may have had a population of over five million. Inhabitants of the ancient Indus river valley developed new techniques in handicraft (carnelian products, seal carving) and metallurgy (copper, bronze, lead, and tin).
- The Indus cities are noted for their urban planning, baked brick houses, elaborate drainage systems, water supply systems, and clusters of large non-residential buildings.
- The Indus Valley Civilization is also known as the Harappan Civilization, after Harappa, the first of its sites to be excavated in the 1920s, in what was then the Punjab province of British India, and now is Pakistan.
- There were earlier and later cultures, often called Early Harappan and Late Harappan, in the same area of the Harappan Civilization. The Harappan civilization is sometimes called the Mature Harappan culture to distinguish it from these cultures.
- Until 1999, over 1,056 cities and settlements had been found, of which 96 have been excavated, mainly in the general region of the Indus and Ghaggar-Hakra Rivers and their tributaries. Among the settlements were the major urban centres of Harappa, Mohenjo-daro (UNESCO World Heritage Site), Dholavira, Ganeriwala in Cholistan and Rakhigarhi.
- The Harappan language is not directly attested and its affiliation is uncertain since the Indus script is still undeciphered. A relationship with the Dravidian or Elamo-Dravidian language family is favored by a section of scholars.

Highlights of the recent excavations:

- The new evidence points to locales of human habitation that sprang up after the decline of the Indus Valley Civilization, due to climate change and water deprivation.
- According to researchers from IITK, the Harappan remains found in the Kutch region were limited on rocky islands. The Rann and the Thar, till now, were considered to have been devoid of any sign of continued human settlement.
- Explorations in the coastal settlement of the Karim Shahi region of the Rann, south of the desert, has unearthed pottery and charcoal, which when dated by means of optically stimulated luminescence and radiocarbon methods, has revealed active human habitation from the Early Iron Age to Early Historic (3100–2300 years) times.
- Apart from artefacts such as pitchers, jars and bull figurines, numerous animal remains including bones and teeth have also been recovered, which has helped in reconstructing the social subsistence pattern.
- The study involved the analysis of sediments, pollen and oxygen isotopes in fossil molluscan shells, indicating the presence of an active river system and some rainfall that probably sustained human habitation from the Early Iron Age to medieval times.
- “Both Karim Shahi and Vigakot probably acted as trade centres during this time. In fact, at Vigakot we found a 1,100-year-old Chinese Qingbai porcelain, probably manufactured in Guangdong province of south China, and Sgraffiato pottery of 10th century Persia, suggesting it to be a part of a long-distance trade route between West Asia and China.
- The researchers also referred to the historical travelogue of Al Beruni of 1030 AD, which has mentioned the presence of rivers in Kutch.
- The Study suggests that the Rann of Kutch and part of Thar Desert were still a hospitable terrain for the sustenance of human settlements from the Early Iron Age till at least medieval times which led to the survival of the civilization under such climate threat situation following the Harappan decline.

Conclusion:



Prof. M.G. Thakkar from Kutch University emphasized the fact that the multidisciplinary study has proven the near-cultural continuity after the Harappans which the experts till now only hypothesized. He also harped on the point that this finding is going to bring Kutch under international limelight.

Antiquities and Art Treasures Act must be revised so as to make trading in Indian art more institutionalized. Do you agree? Comment.(250 words)

Art and Culture by Nitin Singhania

Why this question:

The question is based upon the importance of Antiquities and Art Treasures Act in preserving the art and culture of the country.

Key demand of the question:

One must discuss the need for ensuring an institutionalized framework for the protection of the art and culture of the country.

Directive:

Comment– here we have to express our knowledge and understanding of the issue and form an overall opinion thereupon.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Explain what are antiquities and art treasures.

Body:

An art treasure is a human work of art, other than an antiquity, declared to be a treasure by the Centre for its artistic value after the artist's death.

According to the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972, an "antiquity" is an article or object that is at least 100 years old. These illustrate the science, art, crafts or customs or religion or literature of a bygone age, or anything of historical interest.

Discuss the key features of the Act.

Explain the lacunas in the present form of the Act.

Highlight the Proposed Amendment to Antiquities Act, 1972.

Conclusion:

Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

According to the Global Financial Integrity (GFI) Report, the Illegal trade of artifacts and antiquities is one of the world's most Profitable Criminal Enterprises worth 6 billion dollars. The Indian artifacts contribute more than 30% of this illegal trade. The various recovery of antiques from a house in Chennai by the Idol Wing of CID Tamil Nadu highlights the issue of illegal possession and trade of antiques and art treasures in India.

Body:

The huge loss of antiquities and cultural heritage presents itself as a double jeopardy as most of the money earned from art smuggling goes into the hands of terrorists or money launderers which undermines the security and economic integrity of the country.

Need for revision of the act:

- The **Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972** has long outlived the purpose for which it was drafted.



- A promised amendment has been floated on the website of the Union Ministry of Culture, but its status is still largely unknown.
- Importance is ascribed by virtue of religious sentiment, age or provenance to every significant and insignificant work of art.
- But this hampers purposes of scholarship or understanding of what constitutes a beautiful work of art or a national treasure.
- The view that once-sacred objects today only belong to temples is a myopic view and stems from a lack of understanding of –
 - the role and purpose of these objects
 - the temple economy that maintained them
 - the constant process of renewal that occurred within historic sites
- It thus denies the process of regeneration of these living cultural sites.
- Every object in a private collection is now seen as the result of temple desecration and robbery.
- The laws that govern the ownership of historical objects, their purchase and sale have been a disincentive for the average collector.
- Registering antiquities with the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is a cumbersome and difficult procedure for most collectors.
- Cultural vigilantism, the presumption of guilt without trial, public shaming and the resultant media trial have led to a dangerous state of affairs.
- Vigilante movements neither follow the rule of law nor do they respect the ASI's time-honored process of registration of such artefacts.
- It is casting a long shadow on the production of knowledge of the country's past.
- The rule is that every object over a 100 years is an antique.
- With every passing year, the number of objects that shift from 99th year to a 100-year status will increase.
- This would soon result in the transfer of vast numbers of objects to a status of national antiquity.
- But is the state geared to handle and maintain this vast emerging enterprise remains uncertain.
- The state is also not equipped to handle the needs of a growing populace of collectors.

Way forward:

- It is well within the rights of every citizen to acquire and collect objects of their past.
- Nevertheless, this acquisition should definitely be governed by a legal process of buying.
- With changing ideas, the role of private connoisseurship, individual collectors, trusts and foundations should also be considered.



- Their proactive agency has safeguarded the ancient Indian art from being channeled abroad or being destroyed.
- An urgent amendment to existing laws is essential to save the material culture from being examined purely from the prism of religious sentiment.
- It should foster the creation of secular spaces where everyone can enjoy and appreciate the past.

The Freedom Struggle – its various stages and important contributors /contributions from different parts of the country.

What was the Nehru-Liaquat Agreement of 1950 that was recently referred to in the debates for Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB), 2019? Discuss its salient features (250 Words).

Indian Express

Why this question:

Amit Shah referred to the Nehru-Liaquat pact on a few occasions in Parliament to justify the Citizenship Bill.

Key demand of the question:

Discuss in detail the salient features of Nehru-Liaquat Agreement of 1950.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Start by stating that It was an agreement between the Governments of India and Pakistan regarding Security and Rights of Minorities that was signed in Delhi in 1950 between the Prime ministers of India and Pakistan, Jawaharlal Nehru and Liaquat Ali Khan.

Body:

Discuss why the pact came into existence –

The need for such a pact was felt by minorities in both countries following the partition, which was accompanied by massive communal rioting.

In 1950, as per some estimates, over a million Hindus and Muslims migrated from and to East Pakistan (present-day Bangladesh), amid communal tension and riots such as the 1950 East Pakistan riots and the Noakhali riots.

Explain the salient features of the pact and associated nuances.

Under the Nehru-Liaquat pact –

Refugees were allowed to return unmolested to dispose of their property.

Abducted women and looted property were to be returned.

Forced conversions were unrecognized.

Minority rights were confirmed.

Conclusion:

Conclude with relevance of it as of today.

Introduction:

Delhi Pact, also called **Nehru-Liaquat Pact**, was made on April 8, 1950, following the escalation of tension between India and Pakistan in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) after economic relations between the two countries had been severed in December 1949. An estimated one million people—Hindus from East Pakistan and Muslims from West Bengal—crossed the borders during 1950. Union



Home minister referred to the Nehru-Liaquat pact on a few occasions in Parliament to justify the Citizenship Bill

Body:

Salient features of Nehru-Liaquat Pact:

- At the time the pact, officially the Agreement Between the Governments of India and Pakistan Regarding Security and Rights of Minorities, Jawaharlal Nehru and Liaquat Ali Khan were the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan.
- It was a **bilateral agreement signed between India and Pakistan** in order to provide a framework for the treatment of minorities in the two countries.
- The need for such a pact was felt by minorities in both countries following Partition, which was accompanied by massive communal rioting.
- In 1950, as per some estimates, over a million Hindus and Muslims migrated from and to East Pakistan (present day Bangladesh), amid communal tension and riots such as the 1950 East Pakistan riots and the Noakhali riots.
- The Governments of India and Pakistan solemnly agree that each shall ensure, to the minorities throughout its territory, complete equality of citizenship, irrespective of religion, a full sense of security in respect of life, culture, property and personal honour, freedom of movement within each country and freedom of occupation, speech and worship, subject to law and morality.
- Members of the minorities shall have **equal opportunity** with members of the majority community to participate in the public life of their country, to hold political or other office, and to serve in their country's civil and armed forces.
- Both Governments declare these rights to be fundamental and undertake to enforce them effectively.
- It was agreed that both governments would ensure complete and equal right of citizenship and security of life and properties to their minorities.
- Ensuring full fundamental human rights which included the rights of freedom of movement, freedom of thoughts and expression and the right of religion, was part of the deal.
- A minorities commission was to be set up to make sure that they would be represented.
- They vowed to not violate the rules of the pact and to make all efforts to reinforce it.
- If the minorities faced any problem, it would be the duty of both the governments to redress their problems without delay.

Defending the Citizenship Amendment Bill, Union Home minister reiterated that both Pakistan and Bangladesh failed to protect religious minorities after Partition and claimed that the Narendra Modi government was correcting the historical wrong by offering citizenship to the religious minority refugees from these countries.

Conclusion:



In spite of the opposition of his colleague Vallabhbhai Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru, prime minister of India, concluded a pact with Liaquat Ali Khan, prime minister of Pakistan, whereby refugees were allowed to return unmolested to dispose of their property, abducted women and looted property were to be returned, forced conversions were unrecognized, and minority rights were confirmed. Minority commissions were established to implement these terms, and confidence was in fact restored for a time; however, in the months following the pact, more than a million additional refugees migrated to West Bengal. The continuing struggle over Kashmir also strained relations between the two countries.

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2014	2015	2016	2017	2018					
 Nitish K AIR 8, CSE 2014	 Neha Kumari AIR 26, CSE 2014	 Arbka Shukla AIR 4, CSE 2015	 Kirti Chekuri AIR 14, CSE 2015	 Nandini K R AIR 1, CSE 2016	 Dhyanachandra H M AIR 47, CSE 2016	 Anudeep AIR 1, CSE 2017	 Anu Kumari AIR 2, CSE 2017	 Shrushti Deshmukh AIR 5, CSE 2018	 Rahul Sharanappa Sankanur AIR 17, CSE 2018
 Balaji D K AIR 36, CSE 2014	 Satish Reddy Pingile AIR 97, CSE 2014	 Chandra Mohan Gang AIR 25, CSE 2015	 Kumar Ashirvad AIR 35, CSE 2015	 Shivam Pratap Singh AIR 52, CSE 2016	 Santosh B M AIR 307, CSE 2016	 Sachin Gupta AIR 3, CSE 2017	 Saumya Sharma AIR 9, CSE 2017	 Sreelakshmi R AIR 29, CSE 2018	 Lakshmi N AIR 45, CSE 2018
BANGALORE			DELHI		HYDERABAD				
INSIGHTSIAS, NANDA ASHIRWAD COMPLEX, 3rd floor, Above Village Hyper Market, Chandralayout Main Road, Attiguppe, Bangalore – 560072 Ph. No: 7483163074			INSIGHTSIAS, 57/12, 3rd floor, Above kumar Book Centre, Old rajinder Nagar, New Delhi - 60 Ph No: 7303318519		INSIGHTSIAS (Initiative of INSIGHTSONINDIA) #1-1-379/212 . Indira park Main Road, Beside Balaji Darshan, Opposite to victoria cafe, near Ashoka Nagar Signal, Ashok Nagar, Hyderabad, Telangana-500020 8688512637				



Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India.

The status of elderly in India has transformed a lot from the era gone by, in part because the society is in the throes of turbulent change. Examine in the light of Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens (Amendment) Bill, 2019 cleared by the cabinet recently. (250 Words)

The Indian Express

Why this question:

The article talks about the status of elderly people in India, the factors which have led to the change in the status of elderly, the issues plaguing them and the efforts made by the government in addressing their challenges. UPSC in the past has asked about the effect of globalisation on elderly people in India, and thus preparing this topic would bode well for mains.

Key demand of the question

The question expects us to first discuss the status of elderly people in India. Thereafter, we need to examine how the changes in society has affected their status. Next, we need to highlight the issues faced by them, followed by the effort taken by the government through the mentioned Act in improving their status. Finally, way forward has to be mentioned.

Directive word

Examine – The status quo of the elderly, and the reasons for that status quo need to be discussed in this part.

Structure of the answer

Introduction – Highlight the status quo of the elderly. Mention that the share of the elderly in India living alone or only with a spouse increased from 9 per cent in 1992 to 19 per cent in 2006. Both the share and size of elderly population is increasing over time.

Body

Highlight the issues plaguing them and the changes that have taken place in society which is responsible for their current status. Discuss factors that have affected them like lack of infrastructure, changing family structure (mention that Since 1991, the number of households has grown faster than the population. Nuclear families now constitute 70 per cent of all households), lack of social support, social inequality, Availability, Accessibility and Affordability of Healthcare, economic dependency. Discuss how the government through Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act made an attempt to ensure that the elderly in India do not suffer. Thereafter mention that the act made it a legal obligation for children to provide maintenance to parents in the form of a monthly allowance. In 2018, the revised Act seeks to increase the jail term for negligent children, broaden responsibility beyond biological children and grandchildren and expand the definition of maintenance to include safety and security.

Highlight the limitations of the Act and discuss way forward

Conclusion – *Mention that the share of elderly in population is set to increase and its imperative that we act to protect their interest.*

Introduction:

In 2009, there were 88 million elderly people in India. By 2050, this figure is expected to soar over 320 million. Between 2000 and 2050 the overall population of the country is anticipated to grow by 60 per cent whereas population of people of age 60 years and above would shoot by 360 per cent. The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens (Amendment) Bill, 2019 was cleared by the Cabinet recently

Body:

The key features of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007, as per a summary published by PRS Legislative Research, are:



- Children and heirs were legally obligated to provide maintenance to senior citizens.
- State governments were permitted to establish old age homes in every district.
- Senior citizens who are unable to maintain themselves, were given the right to apply to a maintenance tribunal seeking a monthly allowance from their children or heirs.
- State governments were to set up maintenance tribunals in every subdivision to decide the level of maintenance. Appellate tribunals were to be established at the district level.
- State governments were to set the ceiling for the maximum monthly maintenance allowance. The Bill capped the maximum monthly allowance at Rs 10,000 per month.
- Punishment for not paying the required monthly allowance was fixed at Rs 5,000, or up to three months in prison, or both.

Concerns with 2007 act:

- Despite this act however, it is a fact that most people in India would rather suffer than have the family name sullied by taking their own children to court for not providing for them.
- This need to maintain a facade is combined with a lack of knowledge of rights, the inherent inability of the elderly to approach a tribunal for recourse under the law, and poor implementation of the Act by various State governments.

The “major salient features” of the proposed Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Amendment Bill 2019 are:

- Definition of “children” has been expanded to include daughter-in-law and son-in-law. Even daughter-in-law and son-in-law of senior citizens would be responsible to take care of them.
- Seeks to increase the jail term for negligent children, broaden responsibility beyond biological children and grandchildren and expand the definition of maintenance to include safety and security. This law will ultimately safeguard the rights of those elderly who have seen abuse and help them pursue legal action.
- The government has expanded the ambit of social security for the elderly by making distant relatives responsible for their upkeep, increased fine and imprisonment for abandoning parents and done away with the financial cap of Rs 10,000 for maintenance of parents.
- Government has introduced new clauses that would make it mandatory for the government to set standards for senior citizens’ care centres and multi-service day care centres.
- The government, through agencies like Quality Control of India, would also have star ratings for centres so that an elderly person knows the standard of care to expect from a centre.
- To protect the senior citizens from being conned into gifting their property, the government has introduced an amendment which bars a relative or a child from further selling the property of a parent without their consent.
- The legislation has done away with the financial cap on maintenance that a person has to pay. Earlier, the limit under 2007 Act was Rs 10,000. However, it was felt that while this adequate in rural areas or smaller towns, it was quite meagre in bigger cities.



- The government has also laid down very stringent conditions for non-payment of maintenance to parents. If a person refuses to pay maintenance despite being ordered by a tribunal, he can be imprisoned till the amount due is paid. Punishment for abandonment of a parent which attracted an imprisonment of up to three months has been made harsher.
- It brings a much needed change to give senior citizens a life of dignity and respect by treating it as their right.

Lacunae in the proposed bill:

- **Isolation and loneliness among the elderly is rising.**
 - Nearly half the elderly felt sad and neglected, 36 per cent felt they were a burden to the family.
- **Rise in age-related chronic illness:**
 - Heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and other chronic diseases will cause more death and illness worldwide than infectious or parasitic diseases over the next few years.
 - In developed nations, this shift has already happened. Dementia and Alzheimer's disease are expected to almost double every 20 years, as life expectancy increases.
- **Special challenges for less developed nations:**
 - Poorer countries will carry the double burden of caring for older people with chronic diseases, as well as dealing with continued high rates of infectious diseases.
- **Increasing need for long-term care:**
 - The number of sick and frail elderly needing affordable nursing homes or assisted living centers will likely increase.
- **Rise in the Health care costs:**
 - As older people stop working and their health care needs increase, governments could be overwhelmed by unprecedented costs.
 - While there may be cause for optimism about population aging in some countries, the Pew survey reveals that residents of countries such as Japan, Italy, and Russia are the least confident about achieving an adequate standard of living in old age.
- **Elderly women issues:**
 - They face life time of gender-based discrimination. The gendered nature of ageing is such that universally, women tend to live longer than men.
 - In the advanced age of 80 years and above, widowhood dominates the status of women with 71 per cent of women and only 29 per cent of men having lost their spouse.
 - Social mores inhibit women from re-marrying, resulting in an increased likelihood of women ending up alone.
 - The life of a widow is riddled with stringent moral codes, with integral rights relinquished and liberties circumvented.



- Social bias often results in unjust allocation of resources, neglect, abuse, exploitation, gender-based violence, lack of access to basic services and prevention of ownership of assets.
- Ageing women are more likely to get excluded from social security schemes due to lower literacy and awareness levels.
- Ageing individual is expected to need health care for a longer period of time than previous generations but elderly care for a shorter period of time

Conclusion:

The elderly are the fastest growing, underutilized resource that humanity has to address many other problems. Re-integration of the elderly into communities may save humanity from mindlessly changing into a technology driven 'Industry 4.0' which futurists are projecting: an economy of robots producing things for each other. Healthy elderly citizens can share their wealth of knowledge with younger generations, help with child care, and volunteer or hold jobs in their communities.

Way forward:

- As a signatory to **Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA)**, India has the responsibility to formulate and implement public policy on population ageing.
- Issues of poverty, migration, urbanisation, ruralisation and feminisation compound the complexity of this emerging phenomenon. Public policy must respond to this burgeoning need and mainstream action into developmental planning.
- Gender and social concerns of elderly, particularly elderly women, must be integrated at the policy level.
- The elderly, especially women, should be represented in decision making.
- Increasing social/widow pension and its universalisation is critical for expanding the extent and reach of benefits.
- Renewed efforts should be made for raising widespread awareness and access to social security schemes such as National Old Age Pension and Widow Pension Scheme. Provisions in terms of special incentives for elderly women, disabled, widowed should also be considered.

India is unique in its religious, ethnic, linguistic and caste diversity; models of governance, applicable to homogenous societies, simply do not work here. Analyse. (250 words).

Indian Express

Why this question:

The nation's socio-political fabric comes under tremendous strain in the aftermath of the passage of the Citizens' Amendment Bill, as well as the impending creation of a National Register of Citizens.

Key demand of the question:

The question wants us to discuss the significance of India's diversity and the perils of painting it in monochrome.

Directive:

Analyse – When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary.



Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Start by explaining in brief the diversity of India. Also throw light on the protests against the CAA Bill and NRC.

Body:

Discuss the significance of diversity to India.

Historically, the prime causes for India succumbing to foreign invaders have been lack of visionary leadership and absence of internal cohesion.

If history has a lesson for us, it is that divisive bigotry and religious hysteria can destroy nations while social cohesion and nationalism hold them together.

Further go on to define how these lead to tolerance and acceptance

Discuss the challenges in today's India:

continuing agrarian distress — varying only in degree from state to state — and a slowdown in manufacturing, jobs have been scarce for a long time.

As schools and colleges continue to churn out young and hopeful job-seekers, frustration levels amongst the youth are rising.

The “demographic dividend” that India had once dreamt would help it overtake an “ageing China” is turning into a nightmare.

Placed 102 out of 117 countries in the 2019 Global Hunger Index, India remains home to a third of the world's poor.

Our filthy cities, teeming with slums, have seen India placed at 129 out of 189 in the 2019 UN Human Development Index.

Provide measures to safeguard the diversity of India.

With the common man still in the quest for roti, kapda, makan, one had expected that utmost priority would be accorded by our elected representatives to addressing unemployment, hunger, healthcare and education.

Conclusion:

Conclude with balanced way forward.

Introduction:

Plurality and multiplicity characterize Indian society and culture. India has accommodated and assimilated various outside elements into its growing culture. However, it has never been a ‘melting pot’ in which all differences got dissolved and a uniform identity was created. India is a shining example of a ‘salad bowl’ in which different elements retain their individual identities and yet, together, they form a distinct recipe. However, the nation’s socio-political fabric comes under tremendous strain in the aftermath of the passage of the Citizens’ Amendment Bill, as well as the impending creation of a National Register of Citizens.

Body:

Religious diversity:

Indian society is multi-religious. While the state is secular, the people of India belong to different 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; in fact, Jainism, Sikhism, and Buddhism are all offshoots of the same root. Hinduism is also said to have incorporated many practices and beliefs of the local communities.



Articles 25 to 28 of the Constitution state that every citizen has the right to practice and promote their religions peacefully. And yet, we have witnessed religious riots in the country on several occasions.

Linguistic diversity:

India is rightly described as a **polyglot country** – a country of many languages. Linguistic research suggests that when means of transportation were less developed, there was little mobility of people. Therefore, communities confined to small areas spoke their own dialects. And these were spoken in a radius of 7-8 kms. That is why even today there are 1,572 languages and dialects that are each spoken by less than 1,00,000 speakers, besides the 18 Scheduled languages. Until recently, the Census of India collected only mother tongue statistics, which gave the wrong impression about the actual number of speakers of any language.

Religious and linguistic diversity are integral to the growth and development of our society:

- In India, everyone is a minority depending upon the context. Hindus are the minority in Kashmir, Brahmins in Tamil Nadu, non-Christians in Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya and of course, Muslims, Christians and Parsis in the whole of India.
- If we look beyond India, in South Asia, Muslims are a minority in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bhutan, but they are majority in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Maldives.
- Likewise, Buddhists are minority in all South Asian countries but are a majority in Sri Lanka.
- If we take other signifiers such as language and ethnicity, there will be a different majority-minority dichotomy.

Homogeneity of model of governance doesn't suit India:

- Placed 102 out of 117 countries in the 2019 Global Hunger Index, India remains home to a third of the world's poor.
- Our filthy cities, teeming with slums, have seen India placed at 129 out of 189 in the 2019 UN Human Development Index.
- religion cannot provide the glue to hold together two distinct ethnic entities, and East Pakistan freed itself to become Bangladesh.
- India's security, well-being and international image will be enhanced or undermined by pursuing majoritarianism of any kind by engendering insecurity in any segment of our heterogeneous society and alienating a major section of our citizens through intimidatory or discriminatory legislation

Conclusion:

Divisive bigotry and religious hysteria can destroy nations while social cohesion and nationalism hold them together. India has served as an exemplar of multicultural democracy. It is in that sense that India is a unity in diversity, guided by the principle of tolerance (Sahishnuta) and mutual respect. Hence, majoritarianism should be replaced by pluralism which promotes peaceful coexistence of diversities through the spirit of accommodation as well as solidarity.



Role of women and women's organization

Stringent laws and death penalty alone cannot reduce the violence against women. In the light of this, critically analyse the role men must play in addressing the problem of sexual violence against women.

The Hindu

The Hindu

Why this question:

The recent incident of woman veterinarian, who was raped and killed on November 27 has again raised the debate of death penalty for the rapists and women's safety is once again in the news and back in the public consciousness.

Key demand of the question:

Directive:

Critically analyze – When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgment.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Briefly talk about the Alarming Figures of violence against women.

Body:

Explain what is violence against women

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women issued by the UN General Assembly in 1993, defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."

Explain how there has been a huge hue and cry about more stringent laws, death penalty for rapists. Discuss the associated concerns of poor implementation of law, lack of sensitivity and awareness to the female gender, strong patriarchy etc. still prevalent in the society.

Suggest other measures of sensitizing the male members, how community i.e. We the people—men as much as women—need to feel equally responsible.

Conclusion:

Conclude with what should be the way ahead.

Introduction:

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women defines "violence against women" as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life." People taking to streets over gangrape and murder of Hyderabad veterinarian are demanding death for rapists.

Violence against women:

- The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) suggests that 30 percent women in India in the age group of 15-49 have experienced physical violence since the age of 15.
- The report further reveals that 6 percent women in the same age group have experienced sexual violence at least once in their lifetime.
- About 31 percent of married women have experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence by their spouses.



- India's average rate of reported rape cases is about 6.3 per 100,000 of the population. However, this differs in places like Sikkim and Delhi, which have rates of 30.3 and 22.5, respectively, while Tamil Nadu has a rate of less than one.

Hue and cry about more stringent laws, death penalty for rapists:

- While protests are being held to demand death for Hyderabad rapists, a girl was raped, shot dead and burnt in Bihar; another was raped and strangled to death in Karnataka and yet another was raped and killed in Rajasthan.
- All this happened while the voices demanding death for rapists raised by protesters and lawmakers were going viral on social media and being published in newspapers.
- The perpetrators were in the reach of the voices demanding death for rapists. But this did not deter them from pouncing upon the unsuspecting victims.
- With people taking to streets demanding death for rapists, some Members of Parliament too were seen fanning the same sentiment.

Efficiency of death penalty:

- A study by the Centre of Death Penalty – at the National Law University Delhi (NLUD) — in 2015 analyzed data of 15 years to conclude that less than 5 per cent death penalties awarded by trial courts were confirmed by the time the cases passed the tests in high courts and the Supreme Court.
- Another NLU Delhi study found that 162 death sentences were awarded across the country in 2018. Only 23 were confirmed by the high courts.
- The Supreme Court heard 12 death penalty cases in 2018 but confirmed death penalty in only one case – of Nirbhaya gangrape and murder.
- The Justice JS Verma committee, appointed after the Nirbhaya case, too had examined the efficiency of death penalty for rape. In its report, Justice Verma did not prescribe death penalty for rape for the lack of correlation in preventing the crime of rape or gangrape.

Causes of men's intimate partner violence against women

Gender roles and relations

- Men's agreement with sexist, patriarchal, and sexually hostile attitudes
- Violence-supportive social norms regarding gender and sexuality
- Male-dominated power relations in relationships and families
- Sexist and violence-supportive contexts and cultures

Social norms and practices related to violence

- Lack of domestic violence resources
- Violence in the community
- Childhood experience of intimate partner violence (especially among boys)

Access to resources and systems of support



- Low socioeconomic status, poverty, and unemployment
- Lack of social connections and social capital
- Personality characteristics
- Alcohol and substance abuse
- Separation and other situational factors

Role men for problem of sexual violence against women:

Promoting gender equality is a critical part of violence prevention.

The relationship between gender and violence is complex. Evidence suggests, however, that gender inequalities increase the risk of violence by men against women and inhibit the ability of those affected to seek protection. There are many forms of violence against women; this briefing focuses on violence by intimate partners, the most common form. Though further research is needed, evidence shows that school, community and media interventions can promote gender equality and prevent violence against women by challenging stereotypes that give men power over women.

School initiatives are well placed to prevent violence against women.

School-based programmes can address gender norms and attitudes before they become deeply ingrained in children and youth. Such initiatives address gender norms, dating violence and sexual abuse among teenagers and young adults. Positive results have been reported for the Safe Dates programme in the United States of America and the Youth Relationship Project in Canada.

Community interventions can empower women and engage with men.

Community interventions can address gender norms and attitudes through, for example, the combination of microfinance schemes for women and methods that empower men as partners against gender-based violence. The strongest evidence is for the IMAGE microfinance and gender equity initiative in South Africa and the Stepping Stones programme in Africa and Asia. Community programmes with male peer groups show promise in changing attitudes towards traditional gender norms and violent behaviour, but they require more rigorous evaluations. Well-trained facilitators and community ownership appear to boost the effectiveness of these interventions.

Media interventions can alter gender norms and promote women's rights.

Public awareness campaigns and other interventions delivered via television, radio, newspapers and other mass media can be effective for altering attitudes towards gender norms. The most successful are those that seek to understand their target audience and engage with its members to develop content. We do not yet know, however, whether they actually reduce violence.

Programmes must engage males and females.

There is some evidence that microfinance schemes that empower women (without engaging with men) may actually cause friction and conflict between partners, especially in societies with rigid gender roles. Further research is needed to explore how such possible negative effects might be overcome.

Way forward:



- Addressing the deeply entrenched patriarchal attitudes of the police, lawyer and other judicial officers that continues to contribute to low reporting and conviction rates.
- Bridging the gap between GBV laws and its correlated areas such as legal rights to property, land, inheritance, employment and income that allows a woman to walk out of an abusive relationship and specific emphasis on political and economic participation of women.
- Systematic intervention for multisectoral linkages between Health sector (medical and psychosocial support), Social Welfare sector (Shelters, counselling and economic support/skill), Legal (legal aid)
- Not just engage with “men and boys” as change agents but also acknowledge the expectations linked to masculinity, their position as victim of violence especially for young boys to address the perpetuation of cycle of GBV.
- Recognize sexual and reproductive health and rights by promotion and protection of women’s right to have control and decide freely over matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, family-planning choices and access to comprehensive sexuality education.
- Reclaiming the spaces for women to increase their presence in visibility through political and economic participation and diversifying their engagement in nontraditional sectors.
- Use of technology and emerging concepts such as Smart City in urban policy for ensuring safer and gender friendly infrastructures and spaces that prevents GBV.

Women may struggle to close the gender pay gap as technology reshapes the global economy, with women’s jobs more likely to be replaced by robots while men dominate emerging sectors. Examine. (250 words).

Deccan Herald

Live Mint

Why this question:

India has been ranked 112th in the World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Index 2020, out of the 153 countries across the world. Overall gender equality is improving but the number of women entering work is “stalling” and financial disparities are widening, found the World Economic Forum’s annual index tracking gender divides in health, education, economy and politics.

Key demand of the question:

The question wants us to analyse how the increase in the penetration of technology will lead to increase in the gender pay gap due to lack of reskilling and upskilling. Further, you must provide the solutions to tackle the same.

Directive:

Examine – When asked to ‘Examine’, we have to look into the topic (content words) in detail, inspect it, investigate it and establish the key facts and issues related to the topic in question. While doing so we should explain why these facts and issues are important and their implications.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Start by explaining the gender gap in India based on the findings of the report.

Social observers often contend that considerable progress has been made on some fronts.

But the arc of progress is not straightforward, and even though gender parity is an official policy in various corporate and other settings, the outcomes remain extremely poor in comparison with other countries.

Body:



Discuss about the challenges posed to gender pay gap by digitization and technology:

One of the biggest challenges to achieving equal pay – with women currently earning about half as much as men – is getting more women into jobs in emerging digital industries as business and trade go online.

As technology creates new jobs AI, engineering and cloud computing and renders others, like retail, obsolete, women risk losing out as they are less likely to have “disruptive” skills for careers with high job growth and salaries.

bad share of female voices in our legislative bodies have done little for overall women’s welfare

Now talk about the implications of such challenges to women

Overall, women must wait 99.5 years to see parity with men on average across health, education, economy and politics, said the authors, a slight improvement from 108 years in 2018.

This means ensuring women have access to the most in-demand skills but also that companies adopt diverse hiring practices and more inclusive workplace cultures.

Discuss the measures needed to reduce this gender pay gap.

Unless India undergoes a social revolution that puts the idea of equity at its forefront, gender gaps would get harder to close.

Conclusion:

Conclude with balanced way forward.

Introduction:

India’s rank, at 112th out of 153 countries, on a chart drawn from the World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Index 2020 is no shocker. The country has been backsliding on this for years. India was ranked No 98 in 2006, when the WEF’s first gender gap report was published, and other countries have performed better in the years since.

The Report aims to serve “as a compass to track progress on relative gaps between women and men on health, education, economy and politics”. Through this annual yardstick, the Report says, “stakeholders within each country are able to set priorities relevant in each specific economic, political and cultural context”.

Body:

Key findings:

- Iceland, Norway, and Finland occupy the top three spots.
- Globally, the average (population-weighted) distance completed to gender parity is at 68.6%, which is an improvement since last edition.
- The largest gender disparity is in political empowerment. Only 25% of the 35,127 seats in parliaments around the world are occupied by women, and only 21% of the 3,343 ministers are women.
- Projecting current trends into the future, the overall global gender gap will close in 99.5 years, on average, across the 107 countries covered continuously since the first edition of the Report.

India’s position:

- India has been ranked 112th among 153 countries this year. In 2018, it ranked 108.



- India has closed two-thirds of its overall gender gap (score of 66.8%). However, the condition of women in large fringes of India's society is precarious.
- It has lost four positions since the previous edition, despite a small score improvement, as some countries ranked lower than India have improved more.
- The economic gender gap runs particularly deep in India. Only one-third of the gap has been bridged. Since 2006, the gap has gotten significantly wider. Among the 153 countries studied, India is the only country where the economic gender gap is larger than the political gender gap.

Reasons for the Gender Wage Disparity:

Patriarchal Mindset:

- Preference for male employees over female employees
- Preference for promoting male employees to higher positions
- In rural areas, women are given lighter work deliberately in agriculture or other sectors thus making them eligible for low payments.

Lack of Transparency:

- Due to lack of transparency in salaries in private sector, many women are unaware of salaries which they should actually get. In Government sector jobs, this disparity is much less because people working on same posts are entitled for same compensation.

Socio-Cultural Reasons:

- Career breaks taken by women due to socio-cultural issues, marriage or pregnancy and parenthood duties.
- Higher Education levels of women also allow them to pursue leisure and other non-work activities, all of which reduce female labour force participation.
- Insufficient availability of the type of jobs that women say they would like to do, such as regular part-time jobs that provide steady income and allow women to reconcile household duties with work.
- Concerns about safety and Harassment at work site, both explicit and implicit.
- The cultural baggage about women working outside the home is so strong that in most traditional Indian families, quitting work is a necessary precondition to the wedding itself.
- When increases in family incomes are there, due to the cultural factors, women leave the work to take care of the family and avoid the stigma of working outside.

Challenges posed to gender pay gap by digitization and technology:

- Women may struggle to close the gender pay gap as technology reshapes the global economy.
- Women's jobs more likely to be replaced by robots while men dominate emerging sectors, according to a leading global think-tank.



- As technology creates new jobs AI, engineering and cloud computing, women risk losing out as they are less likely to have “disruptive” skills for careers with high job growth and salaries.
- The changes also present an opportunity for women if they train in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) roles.

Challenges:

- One of the biggest challenges to achieving equal pay is getting more women into jobs in emerging digital industries.
- Though gender parity is an official policy in various corporate and other settings, the outcomes remain extremely poor in comparison with other countries.
- Economic Survey 2018 stressed on the need to increase women participation in labour force. It said that lower women engagement adversely affects the growth potential of the economy.
- The pay gap increases with age, work experience, and rise in occupational hierarchy – thus disincentivising the women to stay on.

Way Forward:

- Women need the 3C's Confidence, Capabilities, access to Capital. Men need to understand that women are their equals.
- One of the best ways to close the gender gap is to focus on the skills of tomorrow.
- This means ensuring women have access to the most in-demand skills.
- Companies must adopt diverse hiring practices and more inclusive workplace cultures.
- Companies need to take bold steps to make sure their hiring processes are fair and inclusive and provide women with the training and sponsorship that they need to advance.
- Countries could add trillions of dollars to their economies by increasing women's participation in workforces and ensuring they earn as much as men.
- Social stigma against women in the workforce and the general environment of social injustice against women must be tackled.

Conclusion:

India needs is a paradigm shift. Unless India undergoes a social revolution that puts the idea of equity at its forefront, gender gaps would get harder to close.

Equality at the workplace is a distant dream for women, with World Economic Forum (WEF) report saying that the gender gap will be closed only by 2276; do you agree that Structural discrimination has held women back in India? Analyse. (250 words)

[Hindustan Times](#)

[Why this question:](#)

The question is in the backdrop of India's ailing rank in terms of gender equality.

[Key demand of the question:](#)

One must discuss in detail the issues and the causative factors with special focus on the structural discrimination aspects that have held women back in the country.



Directive:

Analyze – When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

In short highlight the facts of the report and comment on the status of women.

Body:

Discuss first the issues that are of primary concern such as – Women are not given equal opportunities in education; they are often the primary caregivers for children and the elderly at home; they have far less mobility than men; and there is a serious issue of safety in public places. Then explain what the structural restraints are.

Discuss that while demands for equality at the workplace have become more vocal, the gap is actually growing despite women doing well in politics, health and education.

Provide for a comparison with other countries.

Conclusion:

Conclude with what needs to be done and how these challenges can be addressed.

Introduction:

India has made significant economic progress in recent decades. Such economic growth has not been matched by progress towards women's equal economic participation. India has a gender wage gap, despite the existence of India's Equal Remuneration Act 1976 which mandates equal pay for equal work. India is the only country in the WEF list to exhibit a wider economic gap than its political one. India's rank, at 112th out of 153 countries, in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index

Body:

Current scenario in India:

- Overall gender equality is improving but the number of women entering work is “stalling” and financial disparities are widening, found the World Economic Forum's (WEF) annual index.
- India is the only country in the WEF list to exhibit a wider economic gap than its political one
- IT services showed a sharp pay gap in favour of men.
- Across the unorganized sector and especially in areas like agriculture, women are routinely paid significantly less than men, citing differences in capability.
- The growth in formal sector jobs has not kept pace with the supply of educated women, which may have led to “crowding out of females” from the workforce.
- Women constitute a very high proportion among the low skilled informal worker category, and are engaged in low-productivity and low paying work.

Reasons for the Gender Wage Disparity:

- **Patriarchal Mindset:**
 - Preference for male employees over female employees
 - Preference for promoting male employees to higher positions



- In rural areas, women are given lighter work deliberately in agriculture or other sectors thus making them eligible for low payments.
- **Lack of Transparency:**
 - Due to lack of transparency in salaries in private sector, many women are unaware of salaries which they should actually get. In Government sector jobs, this disparity is much less because people working on same posts are entitled for same compensation.
- **Socio-Cultural Reasons:**
 - Career breaks taken by women due to socio-cultural issues, marriage or pregnancy and parenthood duties.
 - **Higher Education levels of women** also allow them to pursue leisure and other non-work activities, all of which reduce female labour force participation.
 - **Insufficient availability of the type of jobs** that women say they would like to do, such as regular part-time jobs that provide steady income and allow women to reconcile household duties with work.
 - **Concerns about safety and Harassment at work site**, both explicit and implicit.
 - The **cultural baggage about women working outside the home** is so strong that in most traditional Indian families, quitting work is a necessary precondition to the wedding itself.
 - When **increases in family incomes** are there, due to the cultural factors, women leave the work to take care of the family and avoid the stigma of working outside.

Solutions:

- Private companies and corporate sector must have salary audits.
- Enforcement of Equal Wages Act should be done in letter and spirit.
- Adequate intervention from Government to ensure equality of pay to both men and women for the same work. Strong labour market institutions and policies such as collective bargaining and minimum wages lowered the pay gap.
- Digital fluency and a planned career strategy might help women to close the pay gap.
- **Non-farm job creation for women:** there is a need to generate **education-based jobs in rural areas** in the industrial and services sectors
- The **state governments** should make **policies for the participation of rural women in permanent salaried jobs**.
- The governments should also **generate awareness to espouse a positive attitude towards women** among the public since it is one of the most important impediments in women's participation in economic activities.
- Local bodies, with aid from state governments, should open more crèches in towns and cities so that women with children can step out and work. The crèches will open employment opportunities for women.



- **Supply side reforms** to improve infrastructure and address other constraints to job creation could enable more women to enter the labour force.
- **Higher social spending**, including in education, can lead to higher female labour force participation by boosting female stocks of human capital.
- **Skilling the women:**
 - Initiatives such as **Skill India, Make in India, and new gender-based quotas from corporate boards to the police force** can spur a positive change. But we need to **invest in skill training and job support**.
 - The private sector could also take active part in training women entrepreneurs. For example: Unilever's Shakti program, which has trained more than 70,000 rural women in India as micro-entrepreneurs to sell personal-care products as a way of making its brands available in rural India
- **Equal pay:** The principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value that is protected by Indian law must be put to actual practice. Improved wage-transparency and gender neutral job evaluation is required to achieve this end.
- **Assuring safe access to work:** It is important to improve existing transport and communication networks and provide safe accommodation for women who travel to or has migrated for work.
- A useful and easily implementable idea would be to give **income tax benefits to women**. It would be a bold and effective step to increasing India's female workforce participation.
- For political empowerment of women, their **representation in Parliament and in decision making roles in public sphere** is one of the key indicators of empowerment.
- **Gig Economy** provides women flexible work options to pursue their career while not missing important milestones in their family lives.
- Drawing more women into the labour force, supplemented by structural reforms that could help create more jobs would be a source of future growth for India. Only then would India be able to reap the benefits of "demographic dividend" from its large and youthful labour force.

Conclusion:

Unlocking the potential of women definitely requires an increase and shift in the composition of overall employment opportunities as well as questioning of societal strictures. As the country commends itself on world-leading economic growth and aspires towards a \$20 trillion economy, it becomes necessary to take women along to make this goal a reality. Societal change will be the largest needle mover, but a constant push through the government, organizations and individuals is critical to bend societal norms for the better.

The empowerment of religion via 'Indian secularism' and a caste-laden political discourse has served to keep out a public discussion of the 'women's question' in India", Do you agree? Critically analyse.(250 words)

The Hindu

Why this question:



The article discusses the lack of vision in the Indian society to foresee the role women play in its growth and development.

Key demand of the question:

One must provide for a critical analysis of how and in what different ways caste-laden political discourse has served to keep out a public discussion of the 'women's question' in India. And suggest solutions to overcome such a problem.

Directive:

Critically analyze – When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgment.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

In first explain briefly the status of women in the Indian society.

Body:

One has to discuss strongly means and methods of disrupting the gender-blind political discourse in India.

Explain what the issues with Women participation in India are, what are the hurdles and challenges to it.

Deliberate upon the fact that India is a country forging ahead economically while upholding freedoms for its people. Recent reports of gruesome assaults on women, involving rape and ending with murder, have jolted this narrative.

Explain that When a society adopts democracy as its form of governance, it presumes the beginning of a social transformation.

Emphasize on the need and urgency of this social transformation.

Suggest what needs to be done.

Conclusion:

Conclude by recommending solutions to address these key challenges and help ensure women are centric to the growth and development of the country.

Introduction:

India slipped to the 112th rank from its 108th position in the 2018 in the recently released Global Gender Gap Index report 2020. An **Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UN Women report — Women in Politics 2017**, revealed that **16th Lok Sabha had 65 (12 percent of 545 MPs) and Rajya Sabha 27 (11 per cent of 245 MPs)** women MPs. 22 years since the initial proposal, the Women's Reservation Bill remains out of reach.

Body:

Present situation of women's political representation in India:

- India ranks **153 out of 190 nations** in the percentage of women in the lower house of world parliaments.
- The Economic Survey 2018 said there are **developing countries like Rwanda** which has more than 60 per cent women representatives in Parliament in 2017.
- In India, between 2010 and 2017 **women's share rose 1 percentage point** in its **Lower House** (Lok Sabha).
- As on October 2016, out of the **total 4,118 MLAs** across the country, **only 9 per cent** were women.



- The highest percentage of women legislators come from Bihar, Haryana and Rajasthan (14%), followed by Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal (13%) and Punjab (12%).
- The factors such as **domestic responsibilities, prevailing cultural attitudes regarding roles of women in society and lack of support from family** were among main reasons that prevented them from entering politics.
- The introduction of **the Women's Reservation Bill in 1996** that would reserve 33 percent of seats in Lok Sabha and the state legislative assemblies for women on a rotational basis, lapsed in 2014 with the dissolution of the 15th Lok Sabha.
- The constitution allocates total seats to states by population, the resultant women's representation at 12% is far below the actual population of women. So, on grounds of fairness, this is an anomaly.

Reasons for poor representation:

- Political parties in India tend not to follow provisions in their constitutions reserving seats for women in different committees.
- The Women's Reservation Bill is pending since a decade in the Parliament.
- The second barrier is the lack of education and leadership training
- Additionally, since women are not integrated in any local political process initially, and, unlike men, are not part of the relevant social and power networks, women leaders are prone to inefficiencies.
- **Lack of confidence and finance** were the other major deterring factors that prevented women from entering politics.
- Ahead of any election campaign in the country, **sexist and derogatory remarks** start doing the rounds against women contestants, in some cases forcing them to withdraw their nomination.

Enhancing women participation in parliament would ensure the upliftment of status of women:

- In 1994, India ratified the 73rd and the 74th amendments to the Indian Constitution, granting women 1/3 reservation in rural and urban democratic bodies.
- There are 13.72 lakh elected women representatives (EWRs) in PRIs (Panchayati Raj Institutions) which constitute 44.2 per cent of total elected representatives (ERs) as on December, 2017.
- Women sarpanchs accounted for 43 per cent of total gram panchayats (GPs) across the country, exhibiting active leadership of women in local government.
- There is documented evidence both at the **international level and at the gram panchayat (village)** level to suggest that a greater representation of women in elected office balances the process and prioritizations that elected bodies focus on.
- In terms of **policy styles**, for instance, the inclusion of women adds behind the scenes discussion rather than direct confrontation on the floor of the House.
- In terms of **agenda** (as measured in Rwanda), a wider range of family issues get tackled.



- Esther Duflo and Raghavendra Chattopadhyay (**NBER Working Paper 8615**) showed that in a randomised trial in West Bengal, **women pradhans** (heads of village panchayats) focus on infrastructure that is **relevant to the needs of rural women**, suggesting that at least at the local level **outcomes** can be different.
- The role model effect also erases the gender disparity in educational attainment of young girls.
- A study by IndiaSpend reported **women panchayat leaders** in Tamil Nadu **invested 48 percent more** money than their male counterparts in building roads and improving access.
- Another study by **the United Nations** found that **women-led panchayats delivered 62 percent higher drinking water projects** than those led by men.

Way forward:

- India should have an **Election Commission-led effort** to push for reservation for women in political parties.
- **Reservation for women in political parties** – a more viable option.
- Quotas for women in Parliament as envisaged in the **Women's Reservation Bill**.
- **Awareness, education and role modelling** that encourage women towards politics and wipe out **Gender stereotypes** which perceive women as weak representatives.
- Inclusive economic institutions and growth—both necessary for and dependent on social empowerment—require inclusive political institutions.
- **Women's leadership and communication skills** need to be enhanced by increasing female literacy especially in rural areas. They should be empowered in order to break socio-cultural barriers and improve their status in the society.

Conclusion:

B.R. Ambedkar once said that “**political power is the key to all social progress**”. Ensuring proportional representation to women in parliament is seen by policy makers as a **panacea to the issues surrounding women empowerment**. Recognizing the significance of roles of women in decision making process in the society is **critical to strengthen women's agencies for building a progressive society with equality of opportunities among all citizens**. Male politicians must take a lead role in challenging traditions which foster inequality and also unequivocally condemn the misogynistic language that their counterparts use when it comes to women.

To drive gender balance for economic progress, it is important that our ‘engines of growth’; our cities, become safer, more secure and comfortable for women. Explain. (250 words)

Indian Express

Why this question:

Thousands of women across cities and villages in Kerala took to the streets to drive home the importance of making public places safer for women. Thus the question aims to analyse the role of planning and policy making in ensuring secure cities for women in the country.

Key demand of the question:



Discuss in detail the importance of an inclusive city planning and development to ensure safer cities for women in the country.

Directive:

Explain – Clarify the topic by giving a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

One in three women has experienced some kind of physical or sexual violence, according to the World Health Organization. Considering the high rate of incidents globally, it is only natural for women to have suppressed and internalized deep emotional and psychological trauma.

Body:

Explain first the issue in detail.

Discuss the causes of concern, as to why places are still unsafe for women in the country.

Highlight how city planners can help address the situation.

In India, urban planning – a design and infrastructure prerogative – has traditionally never been associated with ‘safety’, which is largely a law-and-order issue. Yet, city planners play an important role in creating safer cities by incorporating and advocating safe designs.

Conclusion:

Conclude by highlighting the need for a gendered approach to public spaces to ensure they are safe for everyone.

Introduction:

Cities offer more diverse employment opportunities to increase financial independence; greater ease in accessing education at different levels, better access to healthcare; more opportunities to socialize outside the home; more prospects to take up community or political leadership roles and, most notably, more possibilities to redefine the traditional roles of men and women. However, in this process of fast urbanization, the failure to fully mainstream gender equality into urban planning, legislation and economic development is hindering the inclusiveness of cities and preventing the full integration of women and girls in the economic, social, political and cultural life of cities and therefore the realization of the just city.

Body:

Last June, The World’s Most Dangerous Countries for Women – 2018 – an annual survey by Thomson Reuters Foundation named India the most dangerous country in the world for sexual violence against women.

Challenges faced by women in urban spaces:

- In the informal settlements, urban women face the most serious urban challenges: poverty; overcrowding, sexual harassment and assault and lack of access to security of tenure, water and sanitation, transport and sexual and reproductive health services.
- Lack of secure tenure over housing and land affects millions of people across the world, but women face harsher deprivations.
- Accessing, owning and controlling land and housing empowers women to take control of their lives and to drive sustainable development and disaster resilience in their communities.



- Lack of safety and mobility is a serious obstacle to achieving gender equality in the city, as it limits the right of people to participate fully and freely as citizens in their communities.
- Poor urban design choices, such as poor street lighting and secluded underground walkways can make women more at risk of violence and sexual attacks in public spaces.
- Women's safety involves strategies, practices and policies which aim to reduce gender-based violence, including women's vulnerability to crime.
- Women continue to earn less than men for their labor. This is due to their concentration in lower-paid jobs, as well as, cultural and traditional patterns that result in their labor being valued less than that of men.
- Women living in poverty face immense challenges in accessing credit and financing for themselves and their organizations.
- Lack of access to clean water, sanitation and other basic services poses risks to health.

Measures to make cities safer:

- Identification of sensitive hot spots in each city.
- Installation of CCTV surveillance covering the entire hot spot.
- Automated number plate reading machines to be deployed in extremely sensitive areas.
- Intensive patrolling in vulnerable areas beyond the identified hot spots.
- Improving street lighting and public toilet facilities for women.
- Others like setting up women help desks in police stations, augmentation of women support centres
- The urban development ministry has issued fresh guidelines to all states to install preventive security apparatus in all modes of public transport -- buses, taxis and auto rickshaws -- for safe travel of women and children.
- Public transport safety must be guaranteed during the whole length of the trip: on vehicles, during the waiting time, and on the routes of access to stations and stops.
- Lighting, good design, visibility at stops and stations are an essential component in creating feelings of security.

Conclusion:

The need of the hour is a paradigm shift – from a male-centric urban development model to a gender inclusive one – wherein planners are involved in the process of designing an inclusive and safe city for all.



Population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues.

“For India to realize its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and economic aspirations, population stabilization should be a national priority”. Elucidate. (250 Words)

PIB

Why this question:

The NITI Aayog is to draft a roadmap for achieving population stabilization in collaboration with the Population Foundation of India (PFI).

Key demand of the question:

One must bring out the importance of population stabilization for the country and the need to make it a national priority.

Directive:

Elucidate – Give a detailed account as to how and why it occurred, or what is the particular context. You must be defining key terms where ever appropriate, and substantiate with relevant associated facts.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Present in brief an introduction about India’s population and its growth.

Body:

Have the following dimensions covered in your answer:

Present relevant facts and findings of the report.

Write about the problems of having huge Population in achieving SDGs.

Explain the India’s aspirations in achieving \$ 5 trillion economy.

Mention about the role of population in achieving the economic goals.

Suggest measures to be taken in this regard.

Conclusion: Conclude by directing towards a futuristic way forward for the same.

Introduction:

India projected to become the most populous country in the world by 2027 (currently at 1.37 billion). In 2050, India’s population is projected to be 1.69 billion, which will be higher than that of China. Undoubtedly, India has a population problem, but any strategy to change fertility rates should be carefully thought out. India’s population concern is largely restricted to Bihar, UP, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and MP.

Body:

The problems faced due to burgeoning growth of population:

- It is indeed a fact that population of India is growing and will continue to grow for the next couple of decades.
- This is because, as compared to the past, there are a higher proportion of people in the marriageable age group who will produce children, and people are now living longer.
- In India, the global demand for water in 2050 is projected to be more than 50 per cent of what it was in 2000.
- The demand for food will double in the year 2050 and even if India manages to feed its expanding population, its growth may not be ecologically sustainable.
- Women empowerment as people will not favour for sons because of cap of 2 child policy



- Though China's one-child policy has been criticized as against human dignity and rights, it has improved and controlled the nation's population by a possible 400 million people as per the report of East India Forum.
- If Population control won't happen, there will be no resources left, and the growing population's demand will increase to the next level, resulting in increasing death rates increasing in the country.

Thus, due to the burgeoning growth of Population it can lead to failure of realization of our Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) namely the zero hunger, eradicating poverty etc. and economic aspirations.

Measures needed for population stabilization:

- Increasing the basket of contraceptive choices, with greater focus on spacing methods and helping women make informed choices about delaying pregnancy and spacing between children.
- Addressing social determinants of health such as age at marriage and sex-selective practices.
- Strengthening quality of care, including counselling services, managing side effects and family planning support.
- Increasing budgetary allocations for family planning, to align with the unmet needs of India's young people who constitute nearly 30 per cent of our population.
- Addressing existing socio-cultural barriers towards contraception by investing extensively in innovative behaviour-change communication strategies.
- Treating population stabilisation and family planning as a national priority, fostering inter-departmental convergence and ensuring multi-sectoral participation and integration.

Conclusion:

Thus, the need of the hour is **better education and awareness rather than an iron hand policy to control the population**. Government should improve the **implementation of poverty alleviation measures** which can also help control population.

Urbanization, their problems and their remedies.

Formal recognition of land rights allows for cleaner cities and better living conditions for slum dwellers. Examine. (250 Words)

Indian Express

Why this question:

Slums are an omnipresent reality for most of the major cities of India and various efforts have been made by the government to address the issue. In this context it is essential to understand the relationship of India's slums with its political and economic structure and discuss why the slum development and relocation strategies have not borne the results.

However, Odisha's slum rehabilitation project is transforming lives. The World Habitat Mission recognised the state government's Jaga Mission that used drones to survey slums. It is the world's largest slum land title project. It involves the government surveying and awarding slum dwellers a legal land title.

Key demand of the question:



One must discuss the importance of how the formal recognition of land rights to the slum dwellers can help in improving the living conditions of slum and in turn lead to sustainable urbanization.

Directive:

Examine – When asked to ‘Examine’, we have to look into the topic (content words) in detail, inspect it, investigate it and establish the key facts and issues related to the topic in question. While doing so we should explain why these facts and issues are important and their implications.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

write a few introductory lines about the growth of urbanization in India and the problems this has led to.

Body:

Discuss the importance of slums from the point of workforce

One cannot just remove them. (If we do that) there will be no one (left) to work as domestic staff or in garbage disposal and road constructions — their most common occupations that also happen to be the lifeline of the city. Slums are the pillars of the urban (city) economy. Especially in India, the formal economy runs on the engine of the informal economy.

Discuss about the various challenges faced by the slum dwellers due to lack of recognition of land title and reasons why most slum development strategies have failed in India.

g. There are many hurdles, both major and minor. The lack of adequate data and land titles in slums meant expensive, time-consuming delays were common. Failure to take slum dweller representatives on board meant that the informal economic networks underlying the slum economy would be disrupted by the redevelopment. So would the community networks that fill the gaps left by missing social safety nets. Lack of common standards meant that the housing built for slum dwellers was often of execrable quality. As for the problem of slum dwellers selling or leasing the houses and returning to their previous housing, poor quality, unaffordable maintenance costs and disrupted networks often had a role to play here etc.

Using the Odisha’s Jaga mission as an example, substantiate as to how the formal recognition of land title can lead to betterment of living conditions.

What other measures needed to tackle it?

E.g.: After LRC distribution, the focus must shift to individual and public toilets, household tap water supply, LED street lighting, and skill improvement etc.

Conclusion:

Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

Slums are an omnipresent reality for most of the major cities of India and various efforts have been made by the government to address the issue. However, Odisha’s slum rehabilitation project is transforming lives. The World Habitat Mission recognised the state government’s Jaga Mission that used drones to survey slums. It is the world’s largest slum land title project. It involves the government surveying and awarding slum dwellers a legal land title.

Body:

Slums scenario in India:

- Out of 4,041 Statutory Towns in Census 2011 Slums reported from 2,543 Towns (63%)
- Largest number of slums reported from Maharashtra (21,359)
- People who are living in slums increased from 52 million in 2001 to 65.5 million 2011



Urban Transformation In 2018

UNNATI for Urban Transformation

- 11,731 projects approved with investment of ₹437 Cr
- 4,000 projects completed

JAGA for Transforming Lives of Slum Dwellers

- 3,000 slums to be made liveable habitats
- 13,000 Land Right Certificates already distributed

Enhanced Urban Water Supply

- 70,000 connections achieved through Jal Jogan Melas in last 6 months
- More than ₹360 Cr savings for the public through exemptions of road cutting charges

Energy Efficient SMART LED Street Lights

- 71,545 lights installed
- ₹640 Cr investment made for Smart LED Lights in urban areas

AAHAAR

- 118 AAHAAR Centers operational
- Night meal in 56 AAHAAR Centres near hospitals
- More than 100000 meals to be served daily from January 2019

#Odishain2018

f CMIO, Odisha t @CMIO, Odisha

Importance of recognition of land rights of slum-dwellers:

- More often than not, slums are seen as encroachments and slum dwellers, even if they stay in slums for decades, are not provided with any legal rights over the land.
- This illegality further condemns slums — which are an urban reality in Indian cities — to unsanitary conditions.
- Formal recognition of land rights allows for cleaner cities and better living conditions for slum dwellers.
- slums should be developed because developing slums also trigger local economic development, improve urban mobility and connectivity, and integrate the slums, which are enormous economically productive spheres, into the physical and socioeconomic fabric of the wider city.

Challenges in recognition of land rights:

- **Questions over slum-land ownership:** In the absence of systematic land records, non-transparent deals and ownership conflicts between land-owning departments, assessing land ownership is difficult. This in turn delays and hinders implementation of slum rehabilitation schemes.
- **Inadequate formal housing:** PMAY aims at housing for all by 2022 mission, but the rate at which informal housing is being destroyed far exceeds the rate at which formal housing is being constructed.
- **Illegal subletting:** At many instances, after slum dwellers are provided with free housing and full ownership rights, the free redeveloped units are illegally subleased. In the long run, this is counterproductive to the goal of creating slum free cities.



- **Lack of coherent policy:** India lacks a comprehensive policy which define slums or define the desired end-state of slums or what encompasses “slum-free” city.
- **Environmental sustainability:** There are concerns about adding additional housing on an already over-constrained municipal system. Without investing in adding capacity to existing civic infrastructure for the city, such policies could put undue burden on the city’s civic amenities such as water and electricity.

Measures needed:

- Provision of clear, free title to the residents, so that they enjoy the privileges of using property as a tangible asset
- Instead of forced evictions, authorities should plan an in-situ upgrading approach.
- Easy financing and loaning options at affordable interest rates for upgrading, building and extension of the existing shelter should be made available.
- Management of urban environment through redevelopment of slums should take an integrated, inclusive, and participatory approach that primarily needs understanding of capabilities, choices, and willingness of slum dwellers along with strong commitment of governance to create and maintain conducive environment.
- Management approach must consider location specific all the possible and innovative alternatives for slums redevelopment and future development.
- To upgrade the infrastructure and services providing water, power, and sewage connections to individual homes, the collection of solid waste, street lighting and neighbourhood security and police support
- The creation of high-density, low income zoning that allows individual property owners to upgrade their homes without risk, rent out their properties to formal commercial establishments
- For effective urban planning, housing and population policies based on housing rights and the right to a clean environment must be established at all levels. These policies should be directed at inclusive cities and poverty alleviation

Conclusion:

After land title rights distribution, the focus should be shifted to individual and public toilets, household tap water supply, LED street lighting, and skill improvement. Steps should be taken such that a higher and more stable income be made accessible to slum dwellers through their employment in productive jobs. This is because employment opportunities in urban centres that pay well has the potential to generate a healthy and sustainable lifestyle in the slums.

Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism & secularism.

The long separation of young children from their parents will have devastating effects on the former. Critically analyse with respect to vulnerable children of various sections like illegal immigrants, distress migrants and refugees.

[The Indian Express](#)

Why this question:

Telegram: <https://t.me/insightsIAStips>

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpoccbCX9GEIwaile4HLjwA>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/insightsonindia>



The question of the long separation of the children from the mother came up in the Karnataka High Court last month. For over a year now, two girls aged eight and nine, the daughters of a woman accused of being an illegal immigrant, have been living in a children's home in Bengaluru, while their mother is imprisoned in the Parappana Agrahara central jail.

Key demand of the question:

One has to analyse the impacts of separation of young children from their parents during their childhood stage. The impact on their psyche, physical health, education and their overall development. On the other hand, how illegal immigrants pose a threat to national security should also be highlighted.

Directive:

Critically analyse – When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgment.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Introduce the situation of children itself as vulnerable section of society. Further, describe how a few sections like children of migrants, refugees, illegal immigrants are more vulnerable.

Body:

Discuss the various threats that these children face like

Lack of basic rights –right to life, education, nutrition

physical abuse – molestation, rape, organ trafficking, prostitution

Mental trauma

And other vulnerabilities.

How this can further lead to a vicious cycle

On the other hand, talk about threat posed to national security by illegal immigrants

Provide the measures needed to safeguard these children and provide their due rights.

Conclusion:

Conclude with what should be the way ahead.

Introduction:

The number of asylum seekers, refugees and internally displaced people worldwide has increased dramatically over the past 5 years. Many countries are continuing to resort to detaining asylum seekers and other migrants, despite concerns that this may be harmful. In 2016, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees estimated that 50 million children had migrated across country borders or were forcibly displaced.

Body:

Various threats and problems that these children face like

- **Lack of health facilities:**
 - Lack of health care coverage is more common among children in each of these groups than for non-immigrant children.
 - Children of immigrants are nearly twice as likely to be uninsured (15%) as are children of non-immigrant families (8%).



- Many of the immigrant children who are uninsured are eligible for Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) but are not enrolled.
- **Poverty:**
 - Poverty is a strong determinant of child well-being and is very common among immigrant children.
 - Poverty is closely linked to negative physical, developmental, and mental health-related outcomes.
 - A family's socioeconomic status has a direct effect on its ability to access high-quality health care services and to achieve good health, social, and emotional outcomes.
- **Fear and Discrimination:**
 - Immigrant children and families may face discrimination and be fearful of attitudes and behaviours of the people they interact with outside their communities, including health care providers, which can reduce access to health care and lead to negative child health outcomes.
 - Families may face anti-immigrant sentiment. Fear and discrimination can exacerbate a feeling of isolation and contribute to mental health problems, such as child and family depression, leaving these populations vulnerable.
- **Family Separation:**
 - Immigrant children may have 1 or more undocumented family members. An undocumented immigrant lacks the proper records and identification to live in the United States.
 - Immigration enforcement and related policies can lead to the sudden removal of an undocumented parent or other key family member without notice or preparation.
 - Children whose parents are taken into custody and/or deported have been shown to experience mental and emotional health problems, including sleeping and eating disturbances, anxiety, depression, poor school performance, and other types of distress.
- **Sexual and gender-based violence before migrants leave:**
 - Many children who migrate report experiencing sexual and gender-based violence in their countries of origin and cite such abuse and violence as a reason for leaving.
 - A recent study of 100 case files of separated children now living in Ireland found that 45 per cent of them had been survivors of violence, with 32 per cent reporting being victims of sexual assault. Almost 60 per cent of girls reported sexual or other forms of violence.
 - Sexual violence within the family is also a push factor for children to leave. In another study, interviews with 100 migrant children who travelled alone to the United Kingdom revealed that more than one-third of them reported experiencing sexual violence at home, before they took flight.
- **Sexual and gender-based violence along migration paths:**



- Some routes are more perilous than others for all migrants and irregular paths tend to pose graver risks.
- Regardless of the path taken, it is clear from published reports that when children resort to unsafe routes, and are traveling without the protection of caring adults, they are at significantly increased risk of suffering sexual and gender-based violence by ill-intentioned smugglers and other unscrupulous actors, being sold into labour or sex exploitation by traffickers or forced into “survival sex” to gain passage, shelter, sustenance or money for onward journeys
- Studies show that sexual and gender-based violence is experienced by both migrating boys and girls, but at different levels, in different contexts and in varying forms.
- In 2010, Amnesty International found that an astonishing six out of ten Central American migrant women and girls were raped while on the move in Mexico
- Child migrants, including those traveling alone, are also being detained in many countries, often in inhumane conditions, solely based on their immigration status
- A 2017 study on unaccompanied and separated girls who recently arrived in Italy underscores that girls are suffering sexual exploitation, sexual assault, trafficking and survival sex throughout their entire journey
- **Unaware of the risks and unable to defend themselves:**
 - Information about sexual and gender-based violence prevention and response services that are available can be transformative for migrant children. However, this precious information is also incredibly rare.
 - One recent study estimated that only 20 per cent of migrating children knew what exploitation was, and that less than half of this group felt that they were adequately informed about the dangers and risks of migration, including trafficking and sexual violence. Fewer than four in ten of the children surveyed felt they were prepared to protect themselves from these dangers.
 - Another issue is that information on safe migration is rarely made available in child-friendly forms, and children are seldom given meaningful opportunities to help design such information.

Way forward:

- The health, well-being, and safety of children should be prioritized in all immigration proceedings. Whenever possible, the separation of a child from his or her family and home environment should be prevented, and family reunions should be expedited.
- In no circumstances should a child have to represent himself or herself in an immigration proceeding.
- Health care facilities should be safe settings for immigrant children and families to access health care. Medical records and health care facilities should not be used in any immigration enforcement action.



- Implement relevant policy and legal frameworks that protect migrant children and ensure safe access to essential services, and reduce the risk of child migrants being separated from their families.
- Establish protection and assistance services for children, focusing on the hardest to reach places where there are the highest needs.
- Invest in quality protection and assistance services for migrant children, particularly focusing on unaccompanied and separated children.
- Provide clear information about available services and legal rights for all migrants, with particular information for children, in a manner that they can access.
- Ensure there is clear information about available services and legal rights for all migrants, with particular information for children, in a manner that they can access. Invest in innovative practices and extend good practices that exist.
- Eliminate detention of children solely for reasons related to their migration status and the separation of migrant parents and children.

Conclusion:

Separation of vulnerable immigrant children from their parents on the background of chronic and acute adversity creates a perfect storm for attachment damage, toxic stress and trauma. Children in immigration detention remain at significantly increased risk of physical, mental, emotional and relational disorders in the short and long term. Hostility towards immigrants raises further barriers to health service engagement and risks increasing the health disparities and number of children living with unmet health needs. We must urge our leaders to end detention in our homelands, promote justice and enjoyment of child rights for all children.

The protests erupting across India since the passage of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) are a testament to the centrality of secularism as the foundational principle that binds the country together and holds the key to India's survival as a nation. Analyse (250 words)

[Hindustan Times](#)

[The Hindu](#)

Why this question:

The recent protests across India provides the lessons that When secularism is threatened, multiple identities are threatened. The deathly blow that the CAA and its companion, the National Register of Citizens (NRC), have delivered to secularism threatens the foundations of India's plural social fabric. When secularism is threatened, India is weakened.

Key demand of the question:

One must explain the concept of Secularism, its significance in protection of the social fabric of India from the past till the present. The challenges posed and its implications and the way forward.

Directive:

Analyse – When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

In brief define the concept of Indian Secularism. Explain in brief how the CAA, NRC have led to protests across the country and North-East states in particular.

**Body:**

Explain about Indian Secularism in detail and its significance

• *India's unique model of secularism has so far been a successful model which is evident from the sustained harmonious coexistence of almost all religions of the world in the country for centuries.*

• *It is the principle of secularism that has bound these multiple identities and sought forms of peaceful coexistence and tolerance.*

• *it is the constitutional ethos of secularism that provided the framework for these multiple identity claims to be articulated and negotiated in the political sphere, in the first place.*

• *Secularism allowed India to both celebrate its many identities and defend them, when threatened.*

• *Secularism offered a pathway to peace.*

• *And so on.*

Discuss about the challenges posed by the recent CAA and NRC to secularism in India

• *The amendment upends the constitutional promise of a universal, religion-neutral idea of citizenship.*

• *India belonged to all, irrespective of religion. It was this conception of citizenship that formed the foundation of our secular promise.*

• *You can also mention about the other challenges to principles of secularism*

• *And so on.*

Provide measures to safeguard the secular fabric in India.

Conclusion:

Conclude with way forward.

Introduction:

The protests erupting across India since the passage of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) are a testament to the centrality of secularism as the foundational principle that binds the country together and holds the key to India's survival as a nation. The deathly blow that the CAA and its companion, the National Register of Citizens (NRC), have delivered to secularism threatens the foundations of India's plural social fabric. When secularism is threatened, India is weakened. This is the lesson from the passage of the CAA, and the unrest it has unleashed.

Body:**India's unique model of secularism:**

- Secularism in India refers to the equal status and treatment of all religions.
- Secularism in India is a positive, revolutionary and comprehensive concept which takes within its sweep all the communities in India following several religions.
- Indian secularism recognizes the importance of religion in human life.
- Diversity can only be effective with secularism as a foundational value.
- India's survival as a multi-religious, multilingual, multiracial, multicultural society will depend on how successful it is in working its secularism
- Indian Secularism equally opposed oppression of dalits and women within Hinduism. It also opposes the discrimination against women within Indian Islam or Christianity and the possible threats that a majority community might pose to the rights of the minority religious communities.



- Indian Secularism has made room for and is compatible with the idea of state- supported religious reform. For example- Indian constitution bans untouchability under Article 17. There is also abolition of child marriage and lifting the taboo on inter-caste marriage sanctioned by Hinduism.
- Indian Secularism deals not only with religious freedom of individuals but also with religious freedom of minority communities i.e. individual has the right to profess religion of his /her choice. Likewise, religious minority also have a right to exist and to maintain their own culture and educational institutions.

Challenges posed by the recent CAA and NRC to secularism in India:

- The first is that the Citizenship (Amendment) Act is against the letter and spirit of our Constitution. Articles 5 to 11 of the Constitution deal with citizenship, and the Citizenship Act, 1955, lays down criteria for citizenship based on birth, descent, registration, naturalisation, and citizenship by incorporation of territory.
- By setting new criteria, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act goes against the premise of common citizenship regardless of differences of caste, creed, gender, ethnicity and culture.
- Further, Article 14 of the Constitution lays down that the “State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India”.
- The Citizenship (Amendment) Act is divisive, deeply discriminatory and violative of human rights.
- Our national unity was won through struggle; the Citizenship (Amendment) Act is one of the many threats to its survival. Our hard-won Constitution recognizes individual and social differences, and that we must weave the cord of unity by creating a sense of belonging and inclusiveness for all.
- The Citizenship (Amendment) Act attempts to create and deepen communal division and social polarization in the country.
- The Act gives eligibility for citizenship to Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan who entered India on or before December 31, 2014, and specifically excludes Muslims from that list.
- In granting citizenship on the basis of religion, it discriminates against Muslims and rejects the basic concept of secularism.
- That the Citizenship (Amendment) Act is discriminatory and violative of human rights has been recognized by those who have come out on the streets in many States, in opposition to the Act.
- The agenda of Hindutva and its ultimate goal of establishing a “Hindu Nation” underlie the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, is well established both by past experience and the present actions of the BJP-Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.
- In the days since the passage of the CAA, multiple protests across north and Northeast India last week. Ironically, these protests are themselves expressions of India’s overlapping multi-religious, multi-ethnic character that the CAA seeks to undermine.



- The mobilisations in the Northeast are about anxieties of ethnicity, culture and language as much as religion while the protests in Delhi, Aligarh and Lucknow are chiefly about religious identity and discriminatory exclusion of Muslims from the CAA.

Measures to safeguard the secular fabric in India:

- Since secularism has been declared as a part of the basic structure of the Constitution, governments must be made accountable for implementing it.
- Define the word “minority”. The concept of secularism is based on recognition and protection of minorities. The two cannot be separated.
- Setting up of a commission on secularism for ensuring adherence to the constitutional mandate on secularism.
- Separation of religion from politics. It is of such urgency that no time should be wasted in bringing this about.
- It is the duty of the secular and democratic forces to rally behind those political forces that really profess and practice secularism.
- In a secular state, religion is expected to be a purely personal and private matter and is not supposed to have anything to do with the governance of the country.

Conclusion:

The real challenge that protests and resistance to the CAA and NRC face today is that they are bereft of a vocabulary to defend secularism’s cause even though it is the threat to secularism that sparked these protests. India urgently needs to wrest and reclaim secularism, anchoring it in a new vocabulary that redeems its credibility. Our collective ability to do so will determine whether India will reclaim itself or stay firm on its current path toward a re-imagining of its foundations.

Modern sensibilities cannot take root in a nation that allows regressive beliefs to thrive.
Comment. (250 words)

[Telegraphindia](https://www.telegraphindia.com)

Why this question:

Nearly 107 people have been killed in witch-hunting incidents in Assam since 2011, parliamentary affairs Chandra Mohan Patowary told the Assembly during a discussion on various issues related to the home department. Such killings are not uncommon in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and some other states. The truth is that the markers of modernity — literacy, equality and rights — are not universal.

Key demand of the question:

The question wants us to express our knowledge and understanding about the RTI act. The recent proposed changes in the RTI act and how it could lead to subversion of the objectives of right to information.

Directive:

Comment – When asked to comment, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Define the practice of witch hunting. Give the background of continued witch hunting cases in India. Witch hunting involves the branding of victims, especially women as witches, where they are accused of possessing supernatural powers to harm others.



The victim is subjected to numerous forms of torture, beatings, burns, paraded naked through the village, forced to eat human excrement and sometimes even raped.

In some cases, their hair is cut off and the victim and their children are socially excluded and even put to death.

Body:

Discuss the reasons for such victimization.

Discuss the problems faced and implications on women due to discriminatory acts like witch hunting.

Women are being killed and specially targeted by being branded as witches.

Anything that happens abruptly, which does not favour a person or the family, is attached to the cause that the woman (daughter-in-law/wife) is the witch.

She is the unlucky one, responsible for all the mishaps.

Discuss the failure to prohibit such practices despite presence of laws in states.

Provide measures to tackle the issue of witch hunting.

Conclusion:

Based on your discussion, form a fair and a balanced conclusion on the given issue.

Introduction:

The concept of witch hunting has its traces in past, may it be primitive age, medieval age, modern age and now industrial age, the concept of witchcraft and the incidence of witch-hunting has been witnessed. Witch hunting is considered as an infectious disease which is slowly spreading to newer areas.

Modern sensibilities cannot take root in a nation that allows regressive beliefs to thrive. More important, such an environment allows those with vested interests to take advantage of the ignorance and superstitious fears of ordinary people to further their own ends. Women, especially, become victims of targeted violence under the guise of 'witch hunts'.

Body:

Witch hunting in India:

- India is a land where the women are treated as symbol or are considered as a token of their community, family, caste and all other diverse divisions. Where people on one hand worship them in name of Goddesses on the other hand kill them considering them witch.
- This practice of killing is not new for Indian society rather it has its deep roots in history.
- Initially when the concept of witch was discussed people thought of ugly women with a broom who can fly, who can disappear.
- Now the concept has changed a bit, which now denotes women who acquire supernatural powers and are indulged in evil practices which are omen.
- It is believed that they are associated to negative energy and for their betterment and for enhancing their power they kill innocent members of society.
- Witch hunting is stigmatization of specific groups of people, which mostly contains widowed women, women who are childless, old couples, women of lower caste.
- It has been witnessed in tribal and rural areas that if wild spread diseases occur or famine occurs which causes death of animals as well as human the allegation develops on the most vulnerable people of the society for witch craft and then violence.

Scenario:



- **Witch hunting is more prevalent in 12 states** of India which are situated in like Jharkhand, Bihar, Haryana, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Assam, Rajasthan and U.P.
- The governments most recent report indicates that **about 119 people were killed in the year 2012** in name of witch hunting and **around 1,700 women** were murdered for witchcraft during 1991-2010.
- These data show the recorded cases, there are many instances which have never been recorded as due to the fear.
- **Some 123 people were killed by mobs in Jharkhand between May 2016 and 2019.**
- In the eastern state of Odisha, the Maoist-affected areas are severely impacted by witch-hunting, though it happens in relatively prosperous and non-tribal belt.
- According to NCRB, **government of India the instances of witch- hunting has increased when compared to previous years' data.**
- As per Human Right Committee report in last 15 years approximately 2,500 women in were killed in name of witch-hunting.

Why witch hunting is still being continued

- **The question of evidence** – In order to punish one for practicing witch hunting, the court needs proof. In case of witch hunting, it is a crime which is socially manifested hence out of either fear or acceptance of the practice people remain silent, which becomes huddle in collecting evidences. Hence due to lack of evidence proper justice is not achieved.
- **Another reason behind lack of evidence is delay in reporting the incident.** Due to the geographical reason and societal pressure very few incidents are reported and that too after a long gap, hence it makes the witness testimony unreliable, which was a ground for not convicting the accused in **Madhu Munda v. State of Bihar**
- **Absence of National Legislation** – As it has been mentioned earlier India does not have any specific national legislation or laws for preventing witch hunting. It is being covered under the sections of Indian Penal Code and according to it punishment is being granted. Therefore, there is a need of proper legislation to eradicate this heinous practice from the society.
- **Poor implementation of prevalent laws** – as mentioned above few states still does not have a separate law to tackle with the societal wrong of witch-hunting, though the rate of witch-hunting is high there.
- **Due to the quantum of punishment which is granted to the accused is lesser than the gravity of crime they have committed**, as the punishment merely extends upto 1 year with a fine of Rs.1000, which lack to set deterrence in society. Hence, this adds to the poor implementation of the existing laws.

Legislative approach to witch-hunting:

- Bihar though being most backward was the first state in India to pass a law against witch hunting in the year 1999, which was named **“Prevention of Witch (Dayan) Practices Act.”**



- **Jharkhand followed it and established “Anti Witchcraft Act” in 2001** to protect women from inhuman treatment as well to provide victim legal recourse to abuse. Basically Section 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the concerned Act talks about the punishment which will be granted if any one identify someone as witch, tries to cure the witch and any damages caused to them. Whereas Section 7 states the procedure for trial.
- Chhattisgarh government passed a bill in 2005 named **“Chhattisgarh Tonhi Prathama Bill”**, which was established to prevent atrocities on women in name of Tonhi.
- Rajasthan government has also passed a bill **“Rajasthan Women (Prevention and Protection from Atrocities)” 2006**, which makes it illegal as well punishable for calling any woman as **“dayan”** or to accuse a woman for practicing witchcraft, which extends to three years of imprisonment and Rs 5000 fine.
- Till now there is no specific laws enacted in Maharashtra against witch-hunting and the sole reason behind it is opposition from some religious groups who believes that the enacted law might take away their ancient rites Now after the incidents of witch-hunting has increased the state government has planned to pass a bill to eradicate the social ills and human sacrifice.
- Among the states where witch-hunting is prevalent, some areas of West Bengal like Purulia, Bankura and Birbhum comes under the ambit of those states. Still the state government has failed to establish a separate legislation to tackle it. Hence, there is a need of national legislation which will have a binding effect over all the states in prohibiting it.
- Recently President has given his assent to the **Assam Witch Hunting (Prohibition, Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2015** against witch-hunting that the Assam Assembly passed three years ago.

Way forward:

- “Witch-hunting” is just one of the many forms of violence against women. Inequality and gender-based discrimination are issues that need to be addressed at different levels starting from **grassroots’ awareness to better policy-making**.
- Civil society and government should work together at grassroots level in order to change the mindset of the people. This can happen through information, education and communication.
- Media is also a powerful tool. They can build community based organizations for prevention of “witch hunting” and for compensation, rehabilitation and re-integration of the victim and/or families of the victim.
- Needs to create awareness among local people
- A legislative framework is needed to tackle the problem
- The victims must have access to medical intervention
- They must have access to rehabilitation in their communities and support to process their trauma.

Conclusion:



As witch hunting are more prevalent in backward areas to raise awareness witchcraft can be added as a subject in school as it is necessary to change the perspective of society and believe over superstition. However, it is very difficult to eliminate believes prevalent from centuries in the society but we can try to eliminate by taking above mentioned steps.

Pluralism and Secularism are essential for Indian Democracy. Do you agree. Comment. (250 words).

PIB

Why this question:

Pluralism and secularism for their sustenance require a climate of opinion and a state practice that eschews intolerance. With violence raging across the country due to the CAA bill and NRC, there are voices raising to protect secularism and promote plurality which are two of the most defining values of our Indian Constitution.

Key demand of the question:

The question wants us to discuss the significance of pluralism and secularism to our democracy.

Directive:

Comment – When asked to comment, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Start by explaining the concepts of Pluralism and Secularism in Indian context.

Body:

Discuss the significance of Pluralism and Secularism to Indian democracy.

Our democratic polity is pluralist because it recognizes and endorses this plurality in (a) its federal structure, (b) linguistic and religious rights to minorities, and (c) a set of individual rights.

It is this plurality that the Constitution endowed with a democratic polity and a secular state structure. Pluralism as a moral value seeks to ‘transpose social plurality to the level of politics, and to suggest arrangements which articulate plurality with a single political order in which all duly constituted groups and all individuals are actors on an equal footing, reflected in the uniformity of legal capacity.

Pluralism in this modern sense presupposes citizenship.

Secularism has both positive and negative contents.

The positive part of secularism has been entrusted to the State to regulate by law or by an executive order. The State is prohibited to patronise any particular religion as State religion and is enjoined to observe neutrality.

Religious tolerance and fraternity are basic features and postulates of the Constitution as a scheme for national integration and sectional or religious unity.

Further go on to define how these lead to tolerance and acceptance

Discuss the challenges in today’s India to promote plurality and secularism

Conclusion:

Conclude with balanced way forward.

Introduction:

Secularism is the “**indifference to, or rejection or exclusion of, religion and religious considerations.**” Under a brief definition, secularism means that governments should remain neutral on the matter of religion and should not enforce nor prohibit the free exercise of religion, leaving religious choice to the liberty of the people.

Pluralism in theory relates to the Co-Existence of various Religious, Cultural and Diverse Groups of people within a definite territory. Indian pluralism has been a source of inspiration to many



countries, as, besides the social homogeneity witnessed in Indian Society, Pluralism to also protected by the Constitution of India under Democracy and Secularism.

Body:

Importance of Secularism for Indian democracy:

- Secularism has both positive and negative contents.
- The Constitution struck a balance between temporal parts confining it to the person professing a particular religious faith or belief and allows him to practice profess and propagate his religion, subject to public order, morality and health.
- The positive part of secularism has been entrusted to the State to regulate by law or by an executive order.
- The State is prohibited to patronise any particular religion as State religion and is enjoined to observe neutrality.
- The State strikes a balance to ensue an atmosphere of full faith and confidence among its people to realise full growth of personality and to make him a rational being on secular lines, to improve individual excellence, regional growth, progress and national integrity.
- Religious tolerance and fraternity are basic features and postulates of the Constitution as a scheme for national integration and sectional or religious unity.
- Positive secularism negates such a policy and any action in furtherance thereof would be violative of the basic features of the Constitution.

Importance of Pluralism for Indian democracy:

- Ours is a plural society and a culture imbued with considerable doses of syncretism. Our population of 1.3 billion comprises of over 4,635 communities, 78 percent of whom are not only linguistic and cultural but social categories.
- Religious minorities constitute 19.4 percent of the total. The human diversities are both hierarchical and spatial.
- It is this plurality that the Constitution endowed with a democratic polity and a secular state structure.
- Pluralism as a moral value seeks to 'transpose social plurality to the level of politics, and to suggest arrangements which articulate plurality with a single political order in which all duly constituted groups and all individuals are actors on an equal footing, reflected in the uniformity of legal capacity.
- Pluralism in this modern sense presupposes citizenship.
- Our democratic polity is pluralist because it recognizes and endorses this plurality in (a) its federal structure, (b) linguistic and religious rights to minorities, and (c) a set of individual rights.
- The first has sought to contain, with varying degrees of success, regional pressures, the second has ensured space for religious and linguistic minorities, and the third protects freedom of opinion and the right to dissent.



Tolerance alone is not a strong enough foundation for building an inclusive and pluralistic society. It must be coupled with understanding and acceptance. We must, said Swami Vivekananda, 'not only tolerate other religions, but positively embrace them, as truth is the basis of all religions.'

Constraints to pluralism and secularism today:

- **Uniform Civil Code:**
 - No progress has been made in the evolution of a uniform Civil Code.
 - There are deep religious sentiments prevailing among different religious communities.
 - It limits the path to a truly secular society in India
- **Politics and Religion:**
 - The Supreme Court had observed in the **Bommai case** that if religion is not separated from politics, the religion of the ruling party tends to become the state religion.
 - During the time of elections most of the political parties completely forget the noble ideal of secularism and woo the voters on communal or cast lines.
- **Communalism:**
 - Increasing violence between people of different communities or religions.
 - Rise of fringe elements threatens India's history of communal harmony and peace.
 - Instances like demolition of the Babri Masjid, anti-Sikh riots in Delhi and other places in 1984 are on the rise.
- **Rise of fundamentalism and obscurantism:**
 - Religious entities have taken up the radicalisation of youths to promote their religion.
 - This poses grave threat to the harmony and security of the nations.
- **Failure of the Government in Evolving a Just Economic Order:**
 - The failure of the government to evolve a just economic order and eliminate poverty also is a setback to secularism.
- **Cultural Symbols and Secularism:**
 - Many public rituals like bhoomi puja, breaking of coconuts on inaugural occasions, performing of 'aarti' and applying 'tilak' are perceived by Hindus as cultural or nationalistic expressions, but to non-Hindus these are manifestations of Hindu culture.
 - Such rituals are performed even on state functions and therefore, create unnecessary misgivings about the neutrality of the State.



- Schools today have become havens of social isolation where children of similar economic and social backgrounds are unaware of the kind of social diversity that exists outside their little worlds.

Way forward:

- Since secularism has been declared as a part of the basic structure of the Constitution, governments must be made accountable for implementing it.
- Define the word “minority”. The concept of secularism is based on recognition and protection of minorities. The two cannot be separated.
- Setting up of a commission on secularism for ensuring adherence to the constitutional mandate on secularism.
- Separation of religion from politics. It is of such urgency that no time should be wasted in bringing this about.
- It is the duty of the secular and democratic forces to rally behind those political forces that really profess and practice secularism.
- In a secular state, religion is expected to be a purely personal and private matter and is not supposed to have anything to do with the governance of the country.

Geographical features and their location- changes in critical geographical features (including water bodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes.

What do you understand by the term ‘Invasive Alien Species’? Discuss the threats posed by them to the native ecosystems, habitats and native species. (250 words).

The Hindu

CBD

Why this question:

Recently, a study by Biju Kumar and others from the Department of Aquatic Biology and Fisheries, University of Kerala, revealed the role of the 2018 floods in introducing the most dangerous fish species into Kerala’s wetlands. After a while, they slowly begin to wipe out local diversity and the economy by altering the functions of the ecosystem. And yet no State or Union Territory has any strong policy or law on the illegal rearing, breeding and trading of such invasive ornamental and commercially important fish species.

Key demand of the question:

The question is straightforward and aims to throw light on the detrimental effects of Invasive alien species on ecosystems, habitat and native species. Further, one must come up with the measures to curb the impacts.

Directive:

Discuss – this is an all-encompassing directive which mandates us to write in detail about the key demand of the question. We also have to discuss about the related and important aspects of the question in order to bring out a complete picture of the issue in hand.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Start by explaining the term invasive alien species.

●According to Convention on Biological Diversity, Invasive alien species (IAS) are species whose introduction and/or spread outside their natural past or present distribution



threatens biological diversity.

Body:

Provide examples and present the scenario of harm posed by IAS in India.

Explain the various threats posed by them

- *threaten cultivable land and wildlife habitats alike.*
- *may lead to the conversion of marshy wetlands into dry land. E.g.: water hyacinth*
- *spread into the forests through the corridors created by landslides.*
- *affect the soil and destroy the microhabitat of that area*
- *and so on.*

Strengthen your answers by providing the proven case studies.

Discuss the measures and need for a policy to control their explosive spread.

Conclusion:

Conclude with significance of impeachment in a democratic country.

Introduction:

Invasive plant species in Indian protected areas have received relatively little attention until recently. This may partly be due to a historical emphasis on wildlife protection, rather than on a broader science-based approach to conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem functioning.

Invasive alien species (IAS) are species whose introduction and/or spread outside their natural past or present distribution threatens biological diversity. **Examples:** Needle Bush, Goat weed, Prickly Poppy, Black Mimosa.

Body:

Recently, a study from the Department of Aquatic Biology and Fisheries, University of Kerala, revealed the role of the 2018 floods in introducing the most dangerous fish species into Kerala's wetlands. The authors said that exotic fishes such as arapaima and alligator gar were reported or caught by the residents after the floods. These are illegally imported fish that are reared by ornamental and commercial fish traders across India.

Threats posed by Invasive alien species:

Threats to Environment:

Biodiversity is essential for the functioning of the ecosystems that provide vital resources such as food, water, fuel, building material and traditional medicines for millions of people. Invasive species alter and degrade the environment, and have a negative effect on both native species and the people who live and work there. The impacts of invasive species include:

- Reduced biodiversity
- Decreased availability and quality of key natural resources
- Water shortages
- Increased frequency of wildfires and flooding
- Pollution caused by overuse of chemicals to control infestations

Threats to native species:

- India is endowed with 2,319 species of finfish.



- Studies from several parts of the country show that the diversity of freshwater fish is depleting at an alarming pace due to the invasion of commercially important and ornamental exotic fish species
- Many native species, especially Indian major carps in various riverine systems, have been affected because of the invasion of exotic fish species such as Nile tilapia, African catfish, Thai pangus and common carp.
- Apart from commercially important exotic species, ornamental fishes such as guppy, piranha, suckermouth, blue perch, goldfish and platy have been recorded in rivers, lakes, traditional village ponds and other inland freshwater bodies. These also accelerate the extinction of natural varieties from local water bodies.
- The exotic ornamental Amazon sailfin catfish poses a serious threat to the native fish species of Vandiyur Lake, Madurai.
- The biomass of the Amazon sailfin catfish is statistically significant compared to the indigenous varieties. This clearly shows the negative impact of this exotic aquarium fish on inland aquaculture in terms of diminished production/catch of edible fish.
- Thus more than 15 exotic ornamental species have successfully established a reproductive population in our freshwater bodies and still don't know the magnitude of the impact of this species on the native diversity of fish.

Economic threats:

Agriculture, forestry and fishing are of huge importance to the economies of developing countries. Invasive species affect the productivity of these systems, and limit the ability of producers to access export markets. This hinders sustainable economic growth and development. The impacts of invasive species include:

- Value and quality of land degraded
- Lower crop productivity
- High cost of controlling pests, weeds and diseases
- Routes to domestic and global markets blocked
- Livestock forced into marginal, sub-optimal grazing lands

Social threats:

Invasive species are a major threat to the livelihoods of the people who live in the areas they colonize. Through disrupting ecosystems, invasive plants, insects and diseases impair many of the things humans need to sustain a good quality of life – including food and shelter, health, security and social interaction. The impacts of invasive species include:

- Livelihood options narrowed
- Food security decreased
- Recreational and social opportunities limited
- Risks to human and animal health



- Increased social challenges

Way forward:

- The most cost-effective measure to address the impacts from IAS is to prevent their introduction.
- This can be achieved by establishing effective and well-resourced biosecurity measures to manage priority pathways of introduction, supported by early warning systems and rapid eradication capacity.
- Control, containment and – where feasible – eradication, also need to be undertaken to mitigate the impacts from established IAS, including those whose impacts are likely to increase due to climate change.
- It is essential that a cross-sectoral approach is taken in IAS prevention and management measures. This needs to include the environment, human health, agriculture, fisheries, customs and transport government departments, along with key private sector bodies and civil society.
- Governments, donors and agencies that fund and implement projects, including projects supporting the SDGs, must ensure that current and potential impacts of IAS are understood so that relevant prevention and management measures can be incorporated into projects.

Conclusion:

Ecosystems need to be prioritized according to their vulnerability to climate change and IAS, making it possible to establish measures that will prevent IAS introduction. This should include establishing effective biosecurity measures to manage priority pathways of introduction, supported by early warning and rapid eradication to tackle alien species before they become invasive.



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