

General Studies-1; Women related Issues

Gender Gap in India

Introduction

- The gender gap is the difference between women and men as reflected in social, political, intellectual, cultural, or economic attainments or attitudes.

Female Labour Force Participation

- The under-representation of women in the workforce is both a social and economic loss.
- Globally, female participation in the labour force is about two-thirds that of men.
- Covid-19 has been a gender-regressive shock. Women's jobs and livelihoods have been more vulnerable to the pandemic.
- Globally, the covid-related job loss rate for women is about 1.8 times higher than that of men.

Gender Inequality

- India scores quite low in when it comes to gender inequality, according to UNDP Human development report, India is ranked 125 of 159 countries in the Gender Inequality Index (GII).
- Research shows, in India women are paid 34% less than men for performing the same job with the same qualifications.
- Women are underrepresented in senior managerial position and overrepresented in low paying jobs. Oxford Survey shows that globally only 19% firms have a female senior manager.
- A 2017 NITI Aayog report shows that just 20% of the research and administrative staff in a select group of institutions, including the IITs, IISERs and NITs, are women.
- It is harder for women to access funds and capital for farming, starting a business or for other developmental works.
- Secondary Education for women is lower than man in majority of countries while this stands at less than 80% in India.
- Classifying men as "bread winners" and women pursuing jobs as "career women" was reported by Oxford University Survey. It also highlighted that most of the unpaid work is seen as a women's job.
- There are still unwritten rules that a woman of today is expected to not overstep in any circumstances which are guided by 'soft patriarchy'.
- Women also lack equal inheritance rights leading to Feminization of poverty.

key factors that have limited the role of women in the Indian economy

- The role of entrenched gender norms in our society.
- The rising incomes of men (which raises family income and makes it easier for women to quit working)
- Lack of quality jobs for women.

Achieving Gender Parity

- Achieving gender parity is not about organizing awareness programmes and pasting a few posters in offices.
- It is all about fundamentally altering beliefs upheld by the two strongest institutions of any society: the family and religion.
- To bridge the power gaps between men and women SDG Goal 5 i.e. eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women in the public and private spheres and to undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources and access to ownership of property, must become a priority.

Way Forward

- As the experience with rural self-help groups shows, women are remarkably prompt at repaying loans and the government should step up the amounts and ease loan disbursement for women.
- Policy measures could include addressing or reducing the amount of unpaid work and rebalancing it between men and women, supporting employer or state-funded provision of childcare, and interventions to address digital and financial inclusion.
- The family needs to adjust to the changing role of women and volunteer to share household work.
- Introducing part-time and flexi-time work facilities to avoid their burnout.
- Online restaurant guide and food ordering platform Zomato said it is introducing up to ten days of 'period leaves' for all women employees to build a more inclusive work culture in the organisation.
- Results suggest that men's wages will also increase as a result of greater inclusion of women in the labour force since productivity will increase.
- Menstruation Benefits Bill was tabled as a private member bill in the Parliament in 2018. It is imperative to look at the significance of the provisions, for a gender sensitive labour policy.
- To improve working conditions of the 10% women who are in the formal workforce, we must not forget about the remaining 90% women workers who are in the informal sector.