**SOCIAL ISSUES………………………………………………………………………**

**GENDER PAY GAPS**

*Recently, the International Labour Organization (ILO) published its annual Global Wage Report 2018/19 with the theme “What lies behind gender pay gaps”. It is the sixth report in the series.*

**Key findings: Global wage growth**

* **Global wage growth in 2017 fell to its lowest rate since 2008,** far below levels before the global financial crisis.
* In real terms (adjusted for price inflation) global wage growth declined to 1.8 per cent in 2017 from 2.4 per cent in 2016. The findings are based on data from 136 countries.
* **In advanced G20 countries,** real wage growth declined from 0.9 per cent in 2016 to 0.4 per cent in 2017. By contrast, **in emerging and developing G20 countries,** real wage growth fluctuated between 4.9 per cent in 2016 and 4.3 per cent in 2017.

**Key findings: Gender Pay Gaps**

* Globally women continue to be paid approximately **20 % less than men.**
* In high-income countries, it is at the high end of the pay scale that the gender pay gap is wider, while in low- and middle-income countries the gender pay gap is wider amongst the lower paid workers.
* **Traditional explanations,** such as differences in the levels of education between men and women who work in paid employment, **play a limited role in explaining gender pay gaps.**
* **Mothers tend to have lower wages compared to non-mothers** due to labour market interruptions, reductions in working time, employment in more family-friendly jobs with lower wages, or stereotypical promotion decisions at the enterprise level.

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| **GENDER GAP IN STEM FIELDS****Context:*** American mathematician Karen Uhlenbeck won the Abel Prize, one of the top international honours in the subject. It is important not only as recognition of her work but also as a statement in a field traditionally been associated with men.

**A low number of women achievers:*** History has several examples of outstanding women mathematicians. Yet the number of women achievers compares poorly with those for men.
* Before Uhlenbeck, 16 male mathematicians had won the annual Abel Prize. The Fields Medal awarded once every four years, has had 60 recipients since 1936, and only one of these mathematicians has been a woman.
* Women have had low representation in the science Nobel Prizes too. Of the 607 Nobel Prizes awarded to 604 Laureates in Physics, Chemistry and Medicine, 20 have been won by 19 women. The double Laureate is Marie Curie.

**Analysis by UNESCO:*** **Present scenario:** According to an analysis by UNESCO, women remain considerably under-represented across STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) studies and careers.
* **Supporting statistics:** According to the UNESCO, globally 29% of those in science research and development are women, with a low 19% in south and west Asia and a high 48% in central Asia.
* **Reasons:** Most young women do not identify with STEM and assume these subjects won’t align with their desire to be creative and make an impact in the world.
* **Impact:** This would further widen the gender gap in the technology world. Women will also miss contributing to the next generation of technologies and innovations.
* **Recommendations:** Teachers and technologists have a responsibility in building a passion for STEM subjects among women students by designing computer science curricula around societal challenges and giving young women more exposure to female role models.

**STEM and Gender Advancement (SAGA):*** **Bodies involved:** SAGA is a global UNESCO project supported by the Government of Sweden through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).
* **Timeline:** It was launched in 2015.
* **Key Objective:** To offer governments and policymakers a variety of tools to help reduce the current global gender gap in Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) fields existing at all levels of education and research.
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**Objectification of women**

The market has introduced the idea that each and everything, from human being to emotions and relations, can be purchased and sold off. This has induced the idea of the commodification of everything, including human beings. And the worst affected are women. This objectification of woman can be regularly seen on various TV advertisement and product endorsements. (can be cited to substantiate this fact)Increasing misuse of internet and other technologies for online stalking and voyeurism, including pornographic websites, are a blatant attack in the dignity of women. Such crimes are not only derogatory to women but also affect public morality. These crimes not only harm the public image but also put psychological pressure on a victim.

**Factors responsible for the objectification of women:**

* Market: Market defines, appropriates, and redefines the concept of ‘beautiful women’. It leads to their commodification. E.g. notion like ‘fair is lovely’.
* Media: Due to the patriarchal nature of our society, women are commodified to promote goods and services.
* Social Norms: Social Norms treat female as an ‘objectified being’ to satisfy man’s needs.
* Other factors for this process are related to socialisation processes, more focus on the reproductive roles of the women, and so on.

**Initiatives are taken to create gender, just society:**

* The Government enacted the **“Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act (IRWA), 1986**” to prohibit indecent representation of women through advertisements, publications, writings, paintings, figures or in any other manner, against the derogatory depiction of women in India.
* Gender sensitisation workshops, in collaboration with NGOs, to make people aware of the negative consequences of the process of the objectification of women.
* Awareness through formal education.
* Empowerment of women in all spheres of our society to change people’s mindset.

 Therefore, the problem of the objectification of women should be dealt with by the government in collaboration with the civil society in multiple directions to remove the causes of it. However, some believe that the idea of the ‘self-objectification’ of women provides them with the power to deal with the inherent misogyny of our society.

**WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS**

In the Global Women Entrepreneurs Leader Report, India is ranked 29 out of 31 countries surveyed on ease of doing business for women. Women constitute only 14 % of all business owners in India. This is in the larger backdrop of only 27% of the women receiving secondary education, and only 12.2% of parliament seats are held by women. India happens to be the third largest startup hub in the world, but only 9% of startup founders are women.

In rural India, traditionally, a lot of women primary producers can be classified as entrepreneurs. For instance, a dairy farmer who supplies milk to a nearby dairy or household is an entrepreneur, but such “micro enterprises” rarely achieve scale and serve only to barely sustain the women entrepreneurs and their families.

**Global scenario**

* Globally too, there is a gender bias in the entrepreneurship domain as Only 3% of venture capital funding in 2016 went to startups founded by women.
* There are only seven countries (Panama, Thailand, Ghana, Ecuador, Nigeria, Mexico and Uganda) in the world where men and women own businesses at an equal rate.
* Even in countries where women own a substantial portion of firms, they tend to perform at a lower level than businesses owned by men. E.g. In the United States, for example, women own about 30 percent of the businesses currently operating, but only employ around 6 percent of the workforce.

**Benefits of women becoming entrepreneurs**

* A study by McKinsey Global Institute stated that India’s GDP could increase anywhere between 16% to 60% by 2025 if more women participated in the workforce.
* Women entrepreneurs will also bring new ideas into the market which may solve some of the women-specific problems, E.g.  Aditi Gupta founded Menstrupedia to raise awareness about Menstrual hygiene through a Hindi comic book illustrating and educating girls about menstruation.
* Women entrepreneurs will become role models for other women to participate in the socio-politico-economic milieu of the nation. Entrepreneurship can act as a facilitator for women empowerment.
* Financially independent women will ensure good nutrition and healthcare for her children and family in general, thus leading to better public health outcomes.

**Problems faced by Women Entrepreneurs**

1. **Socio-cultural:** Culturally entrenched gender bias in the startup ecosystem. Stereotyped roles and typecasting of responsibilities of women within the house as a mother, daughter and wife.
2. **The gender gap in education:** While women are making major strides in educational attainment at primary and secondary levels, they often lack the combination of education, vocational and technical skills, and work experience needed to support the development of highly productive businesses.
3. **Access to Funding:** Women entrepreneurs face bias in accessing funding for their startups. E.g. YourStory Research stated that only 2% of all equity funding raised this year in India went to women-led startups.
4. **Legal Issues:** In some Patriarchal Societies, there are unequal inheritance laws and work limitations that restrict women from accessing startup capital. Some countries do not allow women to work without the permission of their husband/fathers.
5. **Human Capital related issues:** Lack of quality education and awareness among women regarding their potential and opportunities.
6. **Safety Issues:** Sexual harassment and safety issues for women at the workplace.

**Way Ahead**

* Educate and empower women to become entrepreneurs.
* Ensure adequate financial resources to support their entrepreneurial ventures.
* Provide mentoring to promote success in entrepreneurship. E.g. In the US, there is a non-profit organisation called Service Core of Retired Executives (SCORE) that provides free mentoring services to business owners. India could establish a programme similar to SCORE dedicated to women entrepreneurs.
* The Digital Age provides a level playing field all and transgresses the limitations of the manufacturing sector. Digital Literacy must be spread, especially among women.
* Last and most importantly, build an environment where women are confident of their abilities and are sure that enough support will be available to them in case their entrepreneurial venture does not work out.

**FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION**

According to The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2018 released by United Nations, the number of hungry people in the world is growing, reaching 821 million in 2017 or one in every nine people. The report summarizes the recent trends in food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms. It was published through a partnership of UN agencies including FAO, UNICEF, WHO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

**Key statistics:**

* **Global Hunger:** The absolute **number of undernourished people**, i.e. those facing chronic food deprivation, has increased to nearly 821 million in 2017, from around 804 million in 2016. Food insecurity contributes to overweight and obesity, as well as undernutrition.
* **Food crisis:** In 2017, almost 124 million people across 51 countries and territories faced “crisis” levels of acute food insecurity, requiring immediate emergency action.
* **Stunting (low height-for-age):** The number of stunted children has decreased from 165.2 million in 2012 to 150.8 million in 2017, a 9 % decline. Yet, the number is still unacceptably high.
* **Wasting (low weight-for-height):** In 2017, 7.5 % of children under five (i.e. 50.5 million) were affected by wasting, consequently putting them at a higher risk of mortality.
* **Adult obesity:** Adult obesity is worsening, and more than one in eight adults in the world – or more than 672 million – are obese.

**The multiple burdens of malnutrition:**

* Undernutrition and overweight & obesity coexist in many countries, which is commonly referred to as the **“double burden” of malnutrition.**
* A large proportion of the world population is also affected by micronutrient (vitamin and mineral) deficiencies, often called **“hidden hunger”** because there may be no visible signs. *Iron deficiency anaemia in women of reproductive age is one form of micronutrient deficiency.*

**Impact of Climate on Food Security & Nutrition:**

Climate variability and extremes (esp. Drought) are undermining all dimensions of food security:

* **Food availability** (with losses in productivity that undermine food production and increase food imports);
* **food access** (causing spikes in food prices and volatility, especially following climate extremes, income loss for those who depend on agriculture);
* **food utilization and food safety** (worsened or reduced dietary consumption, reduced quality and safety of food because of crop contamination, outbreaks of pests and diseases because of rainfall intensity or changes in temperature).

**Way ahead: Climate Resilience**

* Addressing the impact of climate variability on food security requires a focus on resilience.
* Implementation of climate resilience policies involves:
	+ risk monitoring and early warning systems,
	+ enhanced risk management capacities,
	+ multi-year, predictable large-scale funding of disaster risk reduction and
	+ strong risk governance structures in the environment-food-health system nexus.

**CYBER VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (VAW)**

Union ministry of women and child development informed parliament that since 2016 it had received over 100 complaints relating to online trolling/harassment.

The online harassment of women, sometimes called Cyber-Sexism or cyber-Misogyny, is gendered abuse targeted at women and girls online.

**Tactics:**

Online abuse includes a diversity of tactics.

* **Non-consensual Photography or “Revenge Porn”:** The distribution of sexually graphic images without the consent of the subject of the images. The abuser obtains images or videos in the course of a prior relationship or hacks into the victim’s computer, social media accounts or phone. There are also a growing number of websites dedicated to sharing revenge porn. DPS MMS Scandal pf 2004 was the first heavily publicized infamous case of non-consensual photography in India.
* **Live streaming of Rape Videos:** Videos of rapes in progress that are subsequently used to shame or extort, or are sold as non-consensual porn. In 2017, rape of victim in the U.S. was streamed online using the ‘Facebook live’ function.
* **Electronically enabled financial abuse:** Ex-partner denying access to online accounts or manipulating credit information.
* **Doxing:** The unauthorized retrieving and publishing, often by hacking, of a person’s personal information (addresses, phone numbers, financial details, etc.) to cause fear, stress and panic. ‘Dox’ is a slang version of “documents” or .doc.
* **Mob Attacks/Cyber-Mobs:** Hostile cyber mobs include hundreds, sometimes thousands of people, systematically harassing a target by posting defamatory posts.
* **Spying and Sexual Surveillance:** Women are frequently illegally surveilled in their apartments; in changing rooms; supermarket bathrooms etc.
* **Trafficking:** Social media is used by traffickers to sell people whose photographs they share.
* **Threats:** Rape and death threats frequently coincide with sexist, racist commentary.

**Present status:**

* As per the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, a total number of 816 cases in 2015 were registered under publishing/ transmitting of obscene/sexually explicit content (Section 67- 67 C of Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000) in electronic form which shows a mixed trend.
* Young women aged 18-24 are more prone to cyber harassment.

**Reasons:**

* Cyber VAW is a continuum of ‘real world’ offline violence, which is due to an underlying attitude of patriarchy and misogyny.
* The increasing reach of mobile phones, internet esp. social media, which offers anonymity has led to the emergence of cyber VAW as a growing global problem.
* Perpetrators of VAW are rarely held accountable in part due to the relatively low capacity to prosecute offenders and limitations of legal recourse. This further contributes to VAW.

**Consequences:**

1. Threats of rape, death, and stalking affects the victims emotional and mental health thereby driving them to suicide.
2. The victim’s current or future employment status is compromised by information released online.
3. It also has an adverse impact on the exercise of and advocacy for free speech and other human rights.
4. Cyber-violence also has the potential to manifest psychically, i.e. leading to **“In Real Life (IRL) Attacks”.**

**Steps by the government:**

In this background, the government has taken the following steps

* **Information Technology Act, 2000:**
	+ Section 67, 67 A & 67B of the Act provides for punishment for transmitting obscene material related to women and children.
	+ This Act also requires social media sites to disable or remove any unlawful material.
* **Dedicated cell:** Government has set up a Cell with a dedicated email id, i.e. complaint-mwcd@gov.in to report complaints relating to online trolling/harassment with effect from July 2016. As of July 2017, 97 complaints have been received through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.

**Way ahead:**

**In 2015, the** United Nations (UN) Broadband Commission published a report on cyber violence against women, which proposed a global framework based around three ‘S’s – Sensitization, Safeguards and Sanctions.

* **Sensitization –** Preventing cyber VAW through training, learning, campaigning and community development to promote changes in social attitudes and behaviour.
* **Safeguards –** Implementing oversight and maintaining a responsible internet infrastructure through technical solutions and more informed customer care practices.
* **Sanctions –** Develop and uphold laws, regulations and governance mechanisms to deter perpetrators from committing these acts. E.g. in 2016, France adopted the ‘Digital Republic Law,’ which entails a harsher sanctioning of those found guilty of revenge porn.

**FEMINIZATION OF INDIAN AGRICULTURE**

Feminization of Agriculture refers to **increased participation of women** in the agriculture sector. ***Post-liberalization, Feminization of Indian agriculture is increasing.***

It is estimated that about **33% of cultivators** and about **47% percent of agricultural labourers** in India are women.

 In rural India, 84% of women depend on agriculture for their livelihood. According to the 2011 census, there **is a 24 per cent increase** in the number of women agriculture labourers compared to previous 2001 census which shows “**increased feminization of agriculture”.** India’s agricultural industry, which **employs 80 to 100 million** women mostly in the form of the agricultural labourer and their work is limited to labour- intensive, unskilled jobs like Sowing, transplanting, weeding and harvesting etc.

An **average Indian woman** spends nearly **3,300 hours** in the field in a crop season as compared to 1**,860 hours** by a man.

**REASONS:**

* **Low literacy level:** Lack of basic education and lower literacy level prevents women from participating in more skilled labour sectors and in the formal sector of the economy. Consequently, they have no choice but to work as agricultural labourers.
* **Gender wage gap:** Wage rate for women varies from **50-75 % of men** in the agricultural sector. Landlords hire more and more women as agricultural labourers because they have to pay less as compared to their male labourers.
* **Migration of men to cities:** Post economic liberalization of 1990’s **men agricultural workers** migrate to urban areas for better livelihood prospects. **This rural-urban migration** results into a dearth of agricultural labourers in rural areas, and consequently more women are joining as agricultural labourers.
* **Mixed farming:** In traditional rural household‘s women generally takes care of domesticated animals like- Goat, Cattle and poultry etc. Agricultural being seasonal activity women, tends to **work simultaneously in agricultural fields and rearing domesticated animals for extra income**. In the village agricultural fields, these domesticated animals also get fodder in the form of grass, crop residue etc.

**SIGNIFICANCE:**

* **The FAO of the United Nations estimates that if women farmers had the same resources as men, it would have led to 150 million fewer hungry people**.
* Feminization of agriculture can solve the **problem of global hunger and malnutrition** with increased empowerment of women. It will also improve the Human Development Index of the whole society.
* **Women** in the agriculture sector can play a vital role to raise the **farmer’s income to double by2022.** Without the active participation of women in the agricultural sector, many of the **Sustainable Development goals** can’t be achieved.

**CHALLENGES:**

* **Lack of skill:** Due to low skill availability and lack of technical knowledge in the agricultural sector, women’s role is largely confined to labourers. It affects overall agricultural productivity.
* **Patriarchal Society:** In a male-dominated society, women constantly face discrimination in terms of inheritance of land rights, agricultural wage, agricultural credit etc. E.G. In India, close to 13 % of rural women has operational land ownership. Similarly, the gender wage gap is highest in the agricultural sector with Men earning 162 times higher than women for similar kind of job.
* **Dual role:** Traditionally, women are responsible for the well-being of the household as they care for their children, provide nutrition and do chores around the house. This **additional work burden is unpaid** and limits women’s capacity to engage in income-earning agricultural activities.
* **Access to Resources:** Lack of land ownership and recognition as **farme**r poses many limitations to women farmers for **access to government schemes and subsidies**.
* **Drought & seasonal vagaries:** In case of severe water crisis women agricultural labourers tend **to migrate towards construction site** and **brick kiln industries** for alternate livelihood arrangements. In these industries, work is available throughout the year, and the wage rate is higher as compared to the agricultural sector.

**SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE CONDITION OF WOMEN IN AGRICULTURAL SECTOR-**

* **Capacity building:** Women’s knowledge and capacity building are essential for sustainable and climate resilient agriculture practices. It will ensure food security for its citizens and boost women’s rights. It will also promote **Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved by 2030.**
* **Modification of land leasing laws:** Securing women’s land ownership right through modification of various tenancy laws will enhance **agricultural productivity and dignity of women**. It will improve household food security and nutrition with higher income for the women member**. NITI AAYOG’S model land leasing** law can help in this direction to promote women’s right.
* **Self Help Group (SHG) Promotion:** It will **enhance social capital** among members of such a group with **increased opportunity for credit and financial resources** through cooperatives. SHG promotion will be helpful for both farming activities and women themselves.
* **Grievance Redressal mechanism:** A single window grievance redressal mechanism should be put in place for issues related to women agricultural farmers. It will give information related to modern agricultural techniques to the women farmers.

**Women prisoners in India**

TheMinistry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) has come up with its report titled ‘Women in Prisons’ which aims to build an understanding of the various entitlements of women in prisons, the various issues faced by them and possible methods for resolution of the same. Various changes in the National Model Prison Manual 2016 have also been suggested to bring it in line with international standards and norms.

**Challenges faced by women in prisons:**

* Women in prisons face *greater hardships than their male counterparts* due to many factors such as social stigma, financial dependence on their families or husbands etc. These difficulties are further exacerbated when the woman has children.
* Women have to face numerous problems in prisons owing to the *inadequacy of female staff,* which often translates to the reality that male staff becomes responsible for female inmates, which is undesirable.
* Women are not provided with *nutritious meals* and according to their bodily requirements.
* Women are at a most disadvantageous position when it comes to *their reintegration in society after release*. Many are abandoned or harassed post-release, mainly due to the stigma attached to incarceration, which is even more pronounced in cases of women.
* Women also tend to *lose ties with their children* over the years due to inadequate child custody procedures. Also, a robust grievance redressal mechanism was required to tackle cases of sexual harassment, violence and abuse against women in jails.

**Suggestions:**

Women- elderly, disabled, pregnant, mothers who have recently given birth but whose children are not with them in prison, those who have miscarried, or those who have recently undergone an abortion have been identified as the vulnerable sections among women prisoners.

* **Women with care-giving responsibilities** must be allowed to make arrangements for their children prior to their imprisonment. If there is no family or friends to look after the child (above 6 years of age), then he must be placed in a Child Care Institution.
* **Amendment in Section 436A of the CrPC** for granting bail to those under-trial women who have spent one-third of their maximum possible sentence in detention.
* **Separate accommodation for mothers in the post-natal stage** to maintain hygiene and protect the infant from infection for at least a year after childbirth.
* Special provisions for women who have recently given birth outside the prison, or who have undergone abortion or miscarriage. It also suggests that pregnant women must be given information and access to abortion during imprisonment.
* **Legal consultations** must be conducted in confidentiality and without censorship.
* **Reintegration programmes for released women**, covering employment, financial support, regaining of child custody, continuity of health care services etc.
* Prison authorities should coordinate with local police to ensure released prisoners are not harassed by them due to the attached stigma.
* **Robust grievance redressal system** for women to tackle cases of sexual harassment, violence and abuse against women in jails.
* Apart from the prisoner herself, her legal adviser or family members should be allowed to make complaints regarding her stay in prison.
* Inmates should have **access to female counsellors or psychologists,** at least on a weekly basis or as frequently as needed by them.

**Way Forward**

* Proper implementation of the Swadhar-Greh scheme for rehabilitation of women victims of difficult circumstances. Among other beneficiaries, the scheme also includes women prisoners released from jail and are without family, social and economic support
* NCW Chairperson Rekha Sharma proposed the introduction of a system like regularly uploading the data of inmates on the WCD website.
* NHRC and SHRCs need to play a proactive role through regular visits and inspections of women prisons to monitor the progress in the condition of women in prisons.

**Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace act 2013 and Female LFPR**

**Sexual harassment** is unwelcome behaviour, which could be expected to make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. It can be physical, verbal or written. It is not consensual interaction, flirtation or friendship. Sexual harassment is not behaviour that is mutually agreed upon.

**Impact on Female Labour Force Participation**

* The fear of harassment may lead women to make relatively poorer economic choices. The trade-off between safety, the financial security that women face explains the low female workforce participation rate.
* Sexual harassment can decrease the performance of the female employee at the workplace, and it might lead to the withdrawal of female employee from the workplace.
* Family members may not allow women to work in the public sphere to maintain the pride and honour of their family.

Indian government enacted the “**Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013”** after the issuance of the Visakha Guidelines by the Supreme Court.

I cover sexual harassment at - a) work, b) work-related events or where people are carrying out work-related functions, and c) between people sharing the same workplace.

A single incident is enough to constitute sexual harassment – it doesn’t have to be repeated. Men too experience sexual harassment, but it is seen overwhelmingly high against women, especially in the workplace.

**Why is the Act not Sufficient?**

* Due to the patriarchal social structure, many women are not able to gather the courage to report against sexual harassment at the workplace. The idea of shame and honour, in the process, forced them to leave the job than to fight the case. It was noted that over 68% of victims simply do not report their harassments due to the fear of consequences at workplaces(Indian National Bar Association Survey 2018).
* In many cases, even if women filed complaints against the sexual harassment, people working at the higher echelons try to come to an agreement and not follow the due process of law.
* The delay in the judicial system, also, disincentivize people to take legal recourse.
* The patriarchal norms give more importance to the reproductive role of the women, and any problem at the workplace is seen as the result of the digression of women from traditional roles.

**Way Forward:**

The government needs to make the process of filing complains simple and create a better infrastructure to safeguard the anonymity of the women. Further, there needs to be reform in the criminal justice system to have speedy justice, improved investigation, and so on. Gender sensitization of people during their initial years of schooling can have wider results.

**#MeToo Movement**

#MeToo is a global campaign originating on social media against sexual harassment and assault where women from all over the world open up and share their stories throwing light on sexual abuse prevalent in our society.

India is experiencing its wave of the #Metoo movement in which women, some of the public figures, have levelled sexual harassment charges against certain men, many of whom occupy powerful positions.

The #MeToo movement has brought the pervasiveness of the issue of sexual harassment into the mainstream. It has also highlighted the inadequacy of the social and legal institutions to deal with sexual violence against women.

But the question is, who is ‘me’ in the #MeToo movement? ​ The women who have come out with their stories mostly belong from urban areas and higher socio-economic locations. The movement does not include in its discourse the voices of downtrodden women of the Indian society and seems exclusionary in nature.

**Exclusion of the Marginalised:**

* Women from ​**conflict-ridden areas**​like parts of Kashmir, LWE affected areas are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, and their narrative is largely missing from the #Metoo movement. The perspectives by Kashmiri women and women from the North East highlight the challenges of coming out with experiences of sexual harassment and asking for justice from the state.
* The voice of ​persons with disabilities​is also largely missing from the #MeToo movement despite the continued abuse, torture, rape, and human rights violations they face in institutions, schools, public spaces, and their homes. Women with disabilities are often seen as being asexual or sexually less desirable, and hence, their harassment often goes unacknowledged.
* There have been no stories from people in the ​**unorganised sector**​, the largest population of labour, in the #MeToo movement either. This could be because of the lack of access to technology or the instability of the nature of employment. For instance, in the absence of an official contract of transactions, everything from one’s job to wages or allocation of duties depends upon the supervisor. Under such circumstances, the supervisor can use their power to sexually exploit the worker, and there is no redressal mechanism to turn to.
* The ​**urban poor and rural women**​ have no voice in the #MeToo movement till now. Being in an already vulnerable socio-economic situation, they are the ones to bear the worst brunt of patriarchy and the sexual violence it ensues.
* Even after being declared as the third gender and given civil rights by the SC in the NALSA Judgement, the issue of sexual harassment of ​transgender​s is still not talked about in the larger society. Transgenders are out of the purview of #MeToo movement in India right now.
* After the SC has read down section 377, thus decriminalising homosexuality, now the time has come to talk about the sexual harassment faced by the ​**homosexual women** ​in our society. The socio-economic position of the woman/victim of sexual violence determines the support she gets from society under Metoo movement. Here, it is seen that the downtrodden women are the ones with least support from the movement.
* If the perpetrator of their sexual harassment comes from a higher socio-economic position, even if they gather the courage to speak about the violence, they are not believed and often shamed. This has been seen in cases like those of Bhanwari Devi in Rajasthan.
* And when these downtrodden women mostly from Dalit, OBC, or Adivasi communities come forward to share her experience of harassment within the community itself, they often asked by members of her own community to not take the complaint forward or face backlash. Given that the power structure already villainises men from marginal communities, their first instinct is to protect the men who have been systematically marginalised, even if they are aggressors.

While the movement has started the conversation about the menace of sexual harassment, it runs the risk of becoming elitist and a movement from above. True change is brought by a movement when it is wide-ranging and includes people from the whole socio-economic spectrum of society.

The Metoocampaign must address sexual abuse in the informal sector, where abuse and labour violations are rife. The campaign must create resources and support for Dalit and Adivasi women who have very poor access to justice. It should include the voices of trans-women, homosexual women and non-binary people as well.

 The #Metoo movement can make a good case for revamping the sexual harassment and rape laws, which are completely pro-heterosexual in nature. There must be a way to widen the platform of Metoo movement to include the most vulnerable sections, for this movement to bring any lasting positive change in our society.

***SOCIAL JUSTICE***

**Supreme court judgement on section 377**

The Supreme Court, in the recent case of *Navtej Singh Johar vs. Union of India* decriminalised same-sex marriages by striking down Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), a Victorian law imposing morality of the majority against the individual rights. The provision above was against the principle of human dignity and a democratic right of an individual to live a free life in their private sphere.

**Exclusion of the marginalized**

* Various forms of discriminations became the norm for the people belonging to the LGBTQ community, e.g. stereotyping and ridiculing.
* They were excluded from the society, harming their equal rights, e.g. exclusion from social institutions like family, marriage etc.
* It increased their plight when the law and order system started exploiting them through extortion of money, illegal harassment etc.

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**Supreme Court Judgement 2018**

* The Supreme Court, in the recent judgement, accepted the severe violation of fundamental rights of the individual by the Section 377 of the IPC and the marginalization of the people of the LGBTQ community.
* The court also addressed the notion of ‘normal’ sexual preference and said that the normal could not be defined by the majoritarian choices. It provides for the removal of the stigmas attached with the homosexuals.
* The judgement opened the door for the state to provide social justice to the people of the community through social welfare programs and policies.

However, a change in the law does not mean a change in the mindset of society. The exclusion of the LGBTQ community and the prejudiced views of society need to be addressed to accept them as the normal members of society. The government needs to bring social legislation and policies to make people aware of the different forms of sexuality and provide them with more educational and employment opportunities.

**Reservation for The Economically Weaker Sections**

Parliament recently passed the 124th Constitutional amendment bill to provide 10 per cent reservation in government jobs and educational institutions to “the economically weaker sections in the general category who are not covered by any of the existing schemes of reservation”. Before this Act, the reservation was available to SC, ST communities and OBC populace of the country in government jobs and in admission to public and aided private institutes of the country.

**The Notion of “Historical Injustice” as a criterion to be called ‘marginalised.’**

Indian society, based on caste norms, perpetuated a system of division of labourers laden with hierarchical inequality from ancient times reproduced to the next generations. The notion of historical injustice applied to certain communities situated outside the varna system was applied to provide them reservations in the legislature for their representation in the Government of India Act 1935. The basis for the reservation does not lie in this history rather in the contemporary manifestations of the historical injustice, which can be seen in the representation of these groups in various domains of our societal institutions.

Therefore, it cannot be said that the precondition for the reservation lies in the notion of historical injustice rather in the perpetuation of social closure for some groups in contemporary times.

**Reservation Based on Economic Criteria**

After seven decades of independence and subsequent changes in the economic and social structure, the idea of marginalisation and discrimination also changed and one of the manifestations of it can be seen in the acceptance of Mandal Commission recommendations in 1994 to provide reservations to Other Backward Classes(OBCs) in government Jobs and the passage of a Constitutional Amendment in 2005 to provide them reservation in educational institutes. One of the new concepts of marginalisation emerged in the contemporary times is the idea of relative deprivation or relative inequality, which has both psychological impacts and material impacts on the social mobility of an individual in a society.

**Positives of the 124th Constitutional Amendment**

* It will provide equality of outcomes to those sections of our society, who do not have enough resources to be a part of class education and compete with people belonging to higher echelons of our society.
* The probability of the social mobility of poor people from general caste will increase.
* This amendment is not impacting the seats reserved for other marginalised groups, and it will provide benefits to people belonging to different minority communities, which so far cannot avail the benefits of the social security net.
* It can have the potential to eradicate the notion of social stigma attached to the term reservation as the members of every group can be the beneficiaries.

**Negatives**

* Economic marginalisation cannot and should not be equated with social marginalisation based on caste norms and laws. Reservation is not a welfare promise, so it should be limited to social marginalisation.
* The solution for poverty is job creation in society. However, the number of government jobs are decreasing due to wide-scale privatisation of various government-run sectors. Therefore, the way forward should be better employment opportunities in the public and private sectors.
* Before the introduction of this Bill, the government did not present empirical evidence to show lack of representation of economically weaker section in government jobs. Further, NSSO data shows that 95% of the population has a household income of less than eight lakhs so that the present amendment will have very less impact on the social mobility of poor people.
* The philosophical basis behind the idea of the reservation is the eradication of caste monopoly on societal resources. Reservation on the basis of economic criteria can make some poor, non-poor, but it will delay the long-drawn process of social engineering to remove people out of untouchability and marginalisation.

**Way Forward**

The state should focus on creating more jobs in public and private sectors and expand the process of universalisation of education to higher levels. The marginalisation due to skewed gender norms, caste rules and economic inequalities should be seen holistically to fulfil the constitutional dream of equality.

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| **Extra Information**Negatives:**RESERVATION IS FOR REPRESENTATION AND NOT A WELFARE BENEFIT**. In the background of why reservation exists, we understand that it cannot be equated to being a welfare benefit since it is intended to be something incomparably larger — the promise of full citizenship, the promise of inclusion to the historically oppressed and socially excluded caste-based communities.**RESERVATION FOR CLASSES, NOT INDIVIDUALS** It is argued is that it is not the `upper' castes groups, but the poor individuals in the groups who should be entitled to reservation. But, the reservation has been provided in the Constitution for `classes', not individuals. The existing reservation in state employment under Article 16(4) is in favour of such backward classes, which, in the opinion of the state, are "not adequately represented" in the services. It is clear from this provision that it is to give the "classes" adequate representation in state administration that reservation has been made.**ECONOMIC BACKWARDNESS RUNS THROUGH ALL THE SOCIAL GROUPS. IT IS NOT A BACKWARD CLASS OF ITS OWN**. The present system of reservation is in favour of `classes' and not individuals. And so that the individuals may qualify for them, they must belong to those classes. EWS itself is not a class. However, There is no one or particular `class' which is economically backward. All classes and social groups have economically backward individuals. But on that account alone, a group does not qualify to be called a backward class.**RIGHT TO EQUALITY**. If the individuals have to be provided with a reservation on the economic criterion, then those satisfying the said criterion and belonging to any caste and social group, irrespective of any distinction will be entitled to it, including the individuals belonging to the backward classes and the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. For, such reservation will fall in the general category, and all will be entitled to it whether there is reservation on other grounds or not. A backward class person may choose to apply for reservation on economic criterion, instead of the reservation made for his class, or if he does not get a seat on the basis of class reservation, he may claim a seat on economic grounds and if he is qualified for it, he cannot be denied the same. Since economic criteria, whatever these may be, will run common through all the social groups, it will be contrary to the right to equality (if poor of general category gets the reservation, why not poor of OBC or SC/ST) and therefore unconstitutional to keep them confined to any particular social group or groups.**INDRA SAWHNEY CASE 1992- 3 things**● The constitution bench of the Supreme Court had interpreted the expression `backward classes' in Article 16 (4) to mean the "socially and educationally" backward. It also emphatically rejected "economic backwardness" as the only or the primary criterion for reservation under article 16 (4) and observed that economic backwardness has to be on account of social and educational backwardness.● The bench in its judgement declared 50% quota as the rule unless extraordinary situations “inherent in the great diversity of this country and the people” happen. Even then, the court stated that extreme caution is to be exercised, and a special case should be made out.● Also, SC said that according to article 16(4), the state has to prove first that this economically backward class is not adequately represented in the services under it. Only then, the state can provide for its reservation.**HAPHAZARD IMPLEMENTATION**● Similarly, an objection is raised about the procedure that the government adopted in order to fix the criteria for educational and economic backwardness.● There is a lack of clarity as to how the government has arrived at the figure of 10%, without any proper and thorough documentation by a duly constituted commission.**HIGH-INCOME LIMIT**. Until now, those with an annual household income of up to ₹3 lakh were generally considered part of the economically weaker section (EWS), particularly for welfare schemes, such as housing in urban areas under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. The expansion of the definition of EWS, by increasing the income cap by 2.6 times, could bring about 90 per cent of income-tax payers into its fold, if the return filers data are used as the base.**Positives:**● If the Court assents to the legislation, and it is implemented by the government, it is expected to help the needy among the higher castes.● Reduces social friction- Reservation divides the society which culminates into discrimination. Inclusion of General category will reduce discrimination as they will be on equal footing with SC/ST/OBC beneficiaries.● Inclusive move- General category EWS includes Christian, Muslims and Sikhs, which surely are in need of some kind of positive discrimination to improve their socio-economic indicators.● It is also expected to eliminate the desperation of those who, in the past, would resort to obtaining fake Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) certificates that were used to seek entry into professional courses.● SC in Jat Reservation case said that while “caste may be a prominent and distinguishing factor for easy determination of backwardness of a social group”, such determination must not be made “solely on the basis of caste”, and that identifying the “most deserving” groups “must necessarily be a matter of continuous evolution,” requiring the state to look beyond caste● Poverty is a secular criterion cutting across communities and religions. Poverty as a criterion for a carve-out does not in any way contravene the basic structure of the Constitution. A modern society needs to move ahead with secular parameters for proving positive discrimination.● The preamble of the Constitution expressed the intent of its framers when it mentioned equality of opportunity and justice for all whether political, social or economic was to be ensured by the State. Social justice is not possible if we exclude the economically backward sections of our society.There are both positives and negatives of this 10% reservation for the EWS in the general category. The intent of the government is of welfare. But the various Constitutional questions arising from the move need to be deliberated and sorted out. Only good intentions cannot be the rationale for such a move by the government in a Constitutional polity. The logic should be sound and in coherence with the principles of the Constitution of India. Another thing to keep in mind is that though affirmative action is needed to uplift the marginal communities, it is not enough on its own.We need to question the equation of reservation with the redressal of inequality not because the reservation is no longer needed but because it is no longer enough. So, the government needs to find other ways along with this step of providing Reservation to the EWS to ensure true justice for the marginal population of India. |

***Others***

**Dalit Movement**

Dalit is an acquired political identity and an umbrella term to bring all the marginalised caste groups, given ritually impure social status, to eliminate the caste hierarchy among them. Dalit movement refers to the struggle of a community to reassert its identity and lay claim to the rights that were denied to them for centuries.

The origin of the modern Dalit movement can be traced back to the 19th century when Dalits began making efforts to change their lives, as a result of which, their concerns and aspirations began to be taken seriously.

Factors responsible for the rise of the modern Dalit movement are as follows: 1. Military Service 2. Dalit Reform Movements 3. Dalit Education 4. Conversions 5. Missionary Activity 6. Islamic Revivalism 7. Hindu Reformers.

**Evolution of Dalit Movements in Independent India**

* **Ambedkar Era:** Dr B.R. Ambedkar emerged as a major leader of Depressed Classes by late 1920s. He formed All Indian Scheduled Caste Federation in 1942. He called for democratic politics for the emancipation of Dalits in independent India and established the Republican Party of India.
	+ In 1956, Ambedkar reverted to his position of “conversion being necessary” after experiencing the failures of constitutional guarantees and led around 6 million Dalits to become Buddhists (reservation was not denied to Buddhists as it was to Christians and Muslims), thus giving rise to a Dalit Buddhist movement (also known as Neo-Buddhist movement). It radically re-interpreted Buddhism and created a new school of Buddhism called Navayana-it rejected Hinduism, its caste system as well as traditional Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana sects of Buddhism. After his death in 1956, the movement saw many clashes and splits, and mostly merged with the Indian National Congress.
* **Post-Ambedkar Movements:** In the initial Phase, these movements also tried for “democratisation of democracy” by the inclusion of Dalit representatives in the legislature.
* In 1972**, Dalit Panthers** emerged in Maharashtra. It mixed the ideology of Marx and Buddhism, being militant and radical in its outlook. It leaned ideologically on Ambedkar’s thought (destroy the caste system), and its support base comprised mainly youth and students in urban centres.
* Dalit Panthers led a renaissance in Marathi literature, art and politics. This movement popularised the use of the term as a political identity, and transformed the word ‘Dalit’ to “sense of pride” contrary to its literal meaning of “being oppressed”. Their demands included effective implementation of reservation, the abolition of untouchability etc. Due to their sustained efforts, Govt enacted the **“Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989**. By the 1980s, clashes started emerging, and most factions joined Congress over time.
* In the 1980s, the BahujanSamaj Party emerged in North India under the leadership of Kansiram. He understood Dalit as a community which is racially subjugated, economically exploited, culturally marginalised and politically untouchable in the realms of power. Therefore, his strategy was to capture power from elites to emancipate Dalits.
* Though in theory, “Bahujan” identity encompasses all the SCs, STs, BCs, OBCs and religious minorities other than ‘Dalit’, in practice it has become a Dalit-based party. It declared electoral power as its basic aim and strategy, with an often-abusive stance towards upper castes in general. It has sufficient electoral base among SCs in UP, Punjab, MP. However, it could not provide a social milieu for Dalits.
* Mayawati created a new imaginative community of “Sarvajan”, where antagonistic castes came under one umbrella and in 2007, it came to power in UP on its own without support from other parties, making it the first-ever achievement of its kind, with Mayawati taking oath as CM.
* **Creation of a Counterculture:** During the decades of the 1970s and 1980s, Dalit movement tried to reassert their identity through Dalit literature. Through these literary works, they wanted to define authentic “Dalit Consciousness” and the aspirations and deprivations of the community. Its main regions of development are Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, e.g. *Joothan* by Om Prakash Valmiki and the foundational Work *Poisoned Bread*.
* **Contemporary Development:** Bhim Army in Uttar Pradesh is working for the emancipation of Dalits through education. It runs around three hundred fifty schools in the state and organises protests against the atrocities on Dalit community. The development of “Dalit Capitalism” is another trend, e.g. Dalit Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DICCI).

Organised political mobilisation in the form of BSP has given a sense of self-confidence to the Dalit community. However, that empowerment needs to find expression in a new manifesto extending beyond reservations and quotas, to make Dalits equal partners in India’s development story. In the light of deepening caste fissures in the country and continued exploitation of the Dalits, the government needs to bring forward policies and laws for their upliftment and protection, only then can true empowerment of this historically excluded social group can happen.

**Manual Scavenging**

The problem of manual scavenging and improving the conditions of those employed in the sanitation ecosystem has been an issue the government has been trying to tackle since the country’s independence. There have been legal remedies in the form of two exclusive legislation -**“Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993**and **“Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013”** and efforts to involve various technological solutions to ensure minimum safety standards for the sanitary workers. As per the amendment to **“Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989**”, employing a person as a manual scavenger is also considered as an atrocity as per the act.

 In spite of the efforts, the condition of the manual scavengers has hardly an improvement. The SafaiKaramchariAndolan, a movement that aims to end manual scavenging, estimated the death toll of about 221 workers while manually cleaning sewers and septic tanks in the last two years.

 **Reasons for abject conditions of sanitary workers:**

* **Issues in eradication –**
	+ Manual scavenging has been a caste-based occupation that predominantly involves forced labour. More than an occupation, it has been a custom or practice that has continued uninterrupted despite all the available technology and alternatives. Although the law banned manual scavenging, the government only recognises latrine cleaners, railway cleaners, sewer cleaners and faecal sludge handlers as manual scavengers. Further, the Act does not recognise people as manual scavenger if he/she the with protective gears.
	+ The data with the government is very poor and grossly underrepresented.
	+ Lack of awareness of the legal provisions, especially with respect to safety standards is among one of the reasons for fatal incidents. For example, section 7 of the 2013 Act prohibits engagement/employment of people for hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks. But the hardly anyone is aware of such provisions.
	+ Sanitation being a state subject, there is a lack of a coherent and holistic approach to eradicate the problems related to manual scavenging.
* **Issues in compensation and amelioration –**
	+ As the work of sewage cleaning is usually complaint-based, seasonal, and occasionally for preventive maintenance, the workers are mainly hired on a contractual basis. Such practice denies them much needed social security and rehabilitation benefits.
	+ Conservancy workers are exposed to raw garbage due to the inadequacy of safety gears and proper equipment. The equipment or tools provided to the workers are outdated, damaged, inadequate, or ineffective for performing their designated tasks.
* **Technology and Related Problems –**
	+ New innovations like Bandicoot and Sewer Croc Robot for cleaning sewer line are promising. But the problem is that the sewer lines have different shape and size; some are canonical, cylindrical and square and so on.
	+ Private sectors are not interested in waste because it is treated as ritually impure. The example of Japan and China, where faeces and urine are harvested for their value as fertiliser, can be used.

 The challenge of rehabilitation of the workers is urgent and requires a comprehensive approach that moves beyond expanding the capacity, income generation, social security and skills impartation of the community. There is an urgent need for technological solutions, political will and social pressure to ensure the human dignity and safety of the sanitary workers.

**FOREST RIGHTS ACT**

Enactment of FRA in 2006 stands out as a milestone political intervention of the Centre to correct the injustice done to millions of forest-dwelling communities, creating hope among them for the establishment of democratic order in the forests. The scheduled tribes and other traditional forest dwellers communities were habitant of forest land and were using forest produce since ages but had no land tenure security.

The Forests Rights Act (FRA) empowered the tribal and other traditional forest-dwellers by recognising the individual as well as community ownership right over of land or traditional resources. While the individual land right under the Act is limited to 4 hectares of self-cultivated land, community rights may extend to entire forests.

Recently, several thousand tribal farmers marched from remote tribal areas of Thane districts to Mumbai mainly to demand land titles under the Forest Rights Act. The march highlighted the failure of The Forests Rights Act (FRA) to deliver the intended benefits to tribal and other traditional forest dwellers communities. The National Forest Rights Act Committee and Xaxa Committee have in the past highlighted the same. As per government report, for the whole country (excluding the five north-eastern states and J&K), only 3 per cent of the minimum potential of Community Forest Rights has been achieved as of 2016.

**Reasons for ineffective implementation of Forest Rights Act:**

* More than a decade after the FRA, the process of settlement of rights is still incomplete. Land survey, demarcation of boundary and settlement of land rights either for revenue or forest land gets perpetually delayed.
* Its implementation has been obstructed by state forest departments that are unwilling to cede control over forest resources, a major source of revenue for the departments.
* The ambiguities in the rules of the Act are also one of the reasons for its ineffective implementation.
* The statutory State Level Monitoring Committees (SLMCs) for FRA is non-functional in most states. In no state do SLMCs meet quarterly as required by the law?
* Joint Forest Management also undermines the democratic governance of forests and legal rights of tribal and forest dwellers.
* Over-riding or bypassing of Gram Sabha and Forest Right committee by government officials or political parties
* Inadequate awareness of the process given to the Gram Sabha and Forest Right committee.
* Lack of convergence with the Wildlife Protection Act, Compensatory afforestation fund (CAF) Act, forest act, and so on.
* There are no national-level data on the status of FRA implementation, specifically with regard to Nomads and pastoralist.

The full potential of FRA can be achieved only by its implementation in a mission mode matched with actual support and guidance to Gram Sabha and implementing agencies at all levels, and holding such agencies accountable for implementation

**CHILD PORNOGRAPHY**

Child pornography is any kind of representation of obscene/sexually explicit images of a minor. It may use a variety of media, including writings, photos, video etc.

*The Centre informed the Supreme Court about the several steps taken by it to curb online Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM).*

**REASONS**

1. **Paedophilia:** Primary reason is the existence of paedophilia (a psychiatric disorder in which an adult experiences sexual attraction to prepubescent children). This leads them to commit child sexual abuse and get involved in making video/taking pictures of this heinous act.
2. **Porn-industry:** it is a multi-million-dollar industry which runs in a highly organized manner. Children’s due to their young minds, developing hormones, high curiosity and urge to earn money are lured by them.
3. **Revenge porn:** Young children also get involved in sexting (i.e. transferring one’s sexual images/videos on a mobile phone). This material is then uploaded on social media by an enraged (ex-) boyfriend or girlfriend to take revenge their counterpart.
4. **Adult chatrooms/video-chats:** Due to easy access to the internet and growing age, children enter into the adult chat rooms and connect with the person on the other side of the chat room whom they hardly know.

**CONSEQUENCES:**

* Child pornography objectifies and degrades children.
* It leads to constant victimization as the images placed on the internet can never be fully erased. They continue to be passed from person to person indefinitely.
* All this impairs the moral and ethical development of the victims.
* On some occasions, the Victims commit suicide. Some of the victims get trapped in the dirty world of child traffickers, drug peddlers and other sorts of organized crimes.

**STEPS BEING TAKEN TO CHECK IT AND WAY AHEAD:**

* Government of India is directing Internet Service Providers in India to remove access to sites which is on the list of **Internet Watch Foundation (IWF).**
* Criminalize specific acts relating to the sale of child pornography. **The Indian Penal Code, 1860 (Section 293) and Information Technology Act, 2008 (Section 67B) criminalises the distribution of obscene material related to minors.**
* Protect child victims in criminal justice processes.
* Recognize the right of victims to seek compensation.
* Strengthening international cooperation and aim for adoption of extra-territorial legislation.

Parents, teachers and the media should spread awareness so that children remain careful against sexual abuse and CSAM

**ONLINE GAMING ADDICTION**

Parents have expressed concern that children’s are addicted to online games such as PUBG, and are neglecting their studies.WHO has defined Gaming disorder as a pattern of gaming behaviour (“digital-gaming” or “video-gaming”) characterized by increasing priority given to gaming over other daily activities, and continuation of gaming despite the occurrence of negative consequences.

**Cause for addiction:**

* The **widespread use of smartphones, affordable data packages and particularly free-to-play online games** have played a key role in boosting the popularity of online video games.
* **Video game designers, who are trying to make a profit**, are always looking for ways to get more people playing their games. They accomplish this by making a game just challenging enough to keep you coming back for more but not so hard that the player eventually gives up.
* Some of it may be other mental health issues like Video games **acting as the only affordable release at the end of a long workday or for depression. Other mental health problems, like anxiety,** could play a role too.
* It also could be genetic. Some people just experience **fewer temptations or have more willpower than others.**
* **A person’s environment** could play a role too. Perhaps someone will be forced to move to a place where she doesn’t have friends, family, or previous hobbies, so games will quickly become the only thing that gives him/her joy.

**Effect:**

* Studies suggest that gaming disorder **affects only a small proportion of people** who engage in digital- or video-gaming activities.
* However, for people indulging in gaming addiction can result in **significant impairment in personal, family, social, educational or occupational areas.**
* Gaming disorder can lead to disturbed sleep patterns, diet problems and deficiency in physical activities.
* These games can also be very time-consuming, leaving addicted gamers with less time to focus on their education or career.

**Solution:**

* People who partake in gaming should be alert to the amount of time they spend on gaming activities, particularly when it is to the exclusion of other daily activities.
* **Steps were taken @ Global Level:** To bring the attention of health professionals to its risks.
	+ WHO included Gaming disorder in the 11th revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) in June 2018 and
	+ American Psychiatric Association (APA) has added “internet gaming disorder” in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5).
* **Steps were taken @ Government Level:**
	+ In 2011, the South Korean government implemented the **Cinderella Law**, which prohibits children under the age of 16 from playing online video games between the hours of 12 am to 6 am. However, the law was later amended.
	+ Gujarat state government has initiated steps to educate young students on the bad effects of playing PUBG and sought the Centre’s permission to ban it altogether.

**UNIFORM CIVIL CODE (UCC)**

It means having the same set of **secular** civil laws which will govern all people instead of being governed by their laws based on their religion or caste or tribe.

The **common areas** covered by a civil code include laws related to personal matters like marriage, divorce, maintenance, adoption and inheritance. The recent campaigning during Lok Sabha elections 2019 reignited the debate on Uniform Civil Code.

**PRESENT STATUS IN INDIA:**

* At present India has a uniform and complete criminal code operating throughout the country which is contained in the Indian Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code
* To have a UCC, Article 44 was incorporated, which states that **“The State shall endeavour to secure for all citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India.”**
* **However, still, we don’t have a UCC.**
* Thus different religious communities are governed by a different set of personal laws.
	+ Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists are governed by the Hindu code of laws.
	+ Muslim are governed by their own personal laws based on the Sharia.
	+ Christians are governed by their Christian laws based on specific statutes.
* **Goa is the only state in India which has a uniform civil code.** The Goa Family Law is the set of civil laws; originally, the Portuguese Civil Code continued to be implemented after its annexation in 1961.

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| **HISTORY:*** Personal laws were first framed during the British Raj, mainly for Hindu and Muslim citizens. The British feared opposition from community leaders and refrained from further interfering within this domestic sphere.
* Since the UCC was a politically sensitive issue in the background of independence & partition, it was placed under Article 44 as a directive principle of state policy.
* In 1956, instead of UCC, the Indian Parliament passed the Hindu Code Bill amidst significant opposition. The act was a bit diluted due to opposition from Hindu nationalists.
* Since then from time to time esp. starting Shah Bano case in 1985, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Judiciary have raised the issue of implementation of UCC. This is opposed by minorities with Muslims being the most vocal.
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**CHALLENGES TO UCC:**

* The main controversy revolves around secularism and freedom of religion enumerated in the Indian Constitution with critiques arguing that UCC is in opposition to these ideas.
* Minorities esp. Muslims argue that in the guise of UCC, Hindu communal organizations want to impose their customs on them. This will destroy their cultural identity.
* Muslims further argue that Islamic laws are sacrosanct and thus can’t be changed.
* Then there is Codification challenge. There is a lot of literature churned out on UCC, but there is no model law drafted.

**ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR:**

1. It is not against secularism nor does it violate Article 25 and 26 of the Constitution. In fact, it is necessary **"To constitute India into Socialist Secular Democratic Republic".**
2. It is not the communal agenda of any party. Judiciary in various cases (Shah Bano, SarlaMudgal, Lily Thomas, etc.) have directed the executive to implement the uniform civil code.
3. Islamic laws are also Dynamic (If the Shariat is to be strictly observed, a thief should have his hands cut off). In advanced Muslim countries (Turkey, Egypt, etc.), personal laws are being amended in tune with modern times.
4. **Women empowerment:** Muslim women suffer from polygamy, lack rights to maintenance and have subordinate rights of inheritance. UCC will change it.E.G.Goa's family laws provide for compulsory registration of marriage to avoid multi-marriages, stringent provisions for divorce, equal sharing of property among the husband and the wife.
5. **Misuse of personal laws:** Many Hindu husbands have converted to Islam (which allows polygamy) to get married again without divorcing the first wife.Although in SarlaMudgal case, 1995 SC directed that Non-Muslims can’t convert to Islam merely for a bigamous relationship, but the practice continues.
6. **National integration:** UCC Will help to construct an Indian national identity, over the separate identities of caste, religion and ethnicity. **After GST on the economic front, UCC is the ultimate measure to “unify” Indian society.**
7. If we can have a Uniform Criminal Code, then why not have a Uniform Civil Code?
8. Though the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) are not enforceable by the Court of Law, but that does not reduce the importance of the directive principles.
9. Different personal laws for various communities create an unnecessary burden on the legal system. Bringing a Uniform Civil code would **simplify the Indian legal system.**
10. If all Indians have the same laws governing them, then the politicians will have less chance of indulging in **vote bank politics.**

**WAY AHEAD:**

* Male Chauvinists and opportunistic Politicians (who engage in minority appeasement) will definitely oppose it. But that shouldn’t deter the government.
* In **Lily Thomas etc. v. Union of India**, SC stated that **“**UCC can concretize only when the social climate is properly built up by statesmen among the masses to accept the change.”
* For this, it should be realised that the Hindu code cannot be applied uniformly to all religions. Thus Law Commission of India should study all personal laws in detail to incorporate the most modern aspects in UCC.
* And this should be passed by building consensus among the masses by educating and convincing them

**LEARNING WITHOUT BURDEN**

Various activists have raised concerns about the heavy school burden. Recently, Professor Yash Pal, Indian scientist and educationist died at the age of 90. In this background, it's better to look into the landmark report titled "Learning without Burden" on the school curriculum, which was submitted by professor Yashpal in 1993.

A **curriculum proves heavy** for children due to the following reasons: (1) being too lengthy, (2) difficult Language; Content is not relevant for them, (3) School education starts too early for children’s and (4) Mechanical/rigid way of teaching.

**1. TOO LENGTHY:**

**Manifestation:** Physical load of the school bag has increased over the years which

* is too lengthy to be completed in time by a teacher
* interferes in the child's daily routine thereby requires him/her to attend tuition.

**Reason: Information (acquisition of facts) has been confused with knowledge (understanding)**, due to which more and more things are being added to the syllabus

**Recommendations:**

* Young children shouldn’t be compelled to carry very heavy bags of books every day to schools. Textbooks should be treated as school property and should be daily provided to them when he/she comes to school.
* Abolish home-work at the primary stage; have a separate time-table completion of the assignment given in school hours.
* Each state should set up a project team to decide the minimum number of topics required to be taught and the minimum number of concepts to be introduced within each topic.

**2. DIFFICULT LANGUAGE; CONTENT NOT RELEVANT FOR THEM:**

**Manifestation:**

* The language used in the textbooks is verbose & rhetorical rather than simple & straight forward leading to curriculum load.
* Also, the curriculum is centralised in character, which is not relevant to the local needs of different parts of the country like Tribals.

**Reasons:** Curriculum development is a top-down exercise. Experts commissioned to write textbooks for school students are isolated from classroom realities.

**Recommendations:**

* The language used in textbooks should adequately reflect the spoken idiom. Pedantic language and excessive didacticism ought to be avoided.
* Give adequate representation to stories reflecting the lives of ordinary people in different parts of the country.
* There should be decentralised development of curriculum by involving local teachers in framing curriculum & preparation of textbooks at State/UT level.

**3. EARLY BEGINNING OF SCHOOL EDUCATION:**

**Manifestation:** Admission age to nursery classes has been progressively lowered down to the age of 2 1/2 years at some places which lead to a mismatch between the difficulty level of the concept with the mental level of the pupils.

**Reason:** It is due to **Competition based social ethos** and the growing perception that if a child has to succeed in life, he or she must start education early in life.

**Recommendation:**

* Lay down norms for pre-school to ensure that they avoid formal teaching of Reading, Writing and Numbers.
* Abolish the practice of holding tests and interviews for admission to the nursery class.

**4. JOYLESS LEARNING**

**Manifestation:** Majority of children view learning at school as boring.

**Reasons:**

* Our examination system mainly tests the children's ability to reproduce information and ignores their ability to apply concepts. Thus, both the teachers and the parents empathize on memorising information and exam-oriented preparation.
* Teachers confine their lecture to the **rigid boundary of a textbook instead of** activity-based teaching-learning method.
* Majority of schools lack the minimum essential facilities like pedagogical equipment, playgrounds, libraries, science laboratories etc. which are pre-requisites for effective curriculum transaction.
* Inadequate programme of teacher preparation leads to poor quality.

**Recommendations:**

* Revise the syllabi of natural sciences so that most of the topics included are actively linked to experiments or activities that can be performed by children and teachers.
* Enforce the existing norm for teacher-pupil ratio (i.e. 1:40).
* Raise the level of teachers' competence, motivation and commitment; **setting up education committees at village, block and district level to undertake supervision of schools under their jurisdiction. B.Ed. The programme should also offer specialisation in elementary or nursery education.**
* Provide minimum essential infrastructural facilities to schools

**Sample Q&A**

* + - 1. **Is the changing form of caste relations in India, leading to increased tension in society? Substantiate. (10 Marks, 150 Words)**

**Approach –**

Write about the caste system and changes due to constitutional provisions.

Discuss new forms of caste relations.

Conclude.

**Answer –**

Caste in India has been a system of social stratification that organised society in a heredity-based hierarchical social order. The caste rules decided occupation status, marriage (endogamy), inter-dining etc, leading to reproduction of caste. Thus caste relations in the past have resulted in a social order based on the restriction, segregation and the idea of purity-pollution. The modern ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity, developmental politics, economic system based on industrialization, globalisation and rapid urbanisation has changed the caste relations in contemporary India in the following ways.

**Changing caste relations in India**

* **Increase in the competitiveness between caste groups:** Indian democracy provides various caste groups power to mobilise, protest, and petition for more rights and benefits, which increased competition between different groups e.g., Dalit movements, various caste demanding inclusion in the OBC groups and so on.
* **Political mobilisation for social empowerment:** Various caste groups especially the lower castes are politically mobilised towards following ends
* Share in the political power of the state in order to improve their status in the caste hierarchy
* Assertion of their constitutional rights. E.g.: Dalit movements,
* Reservation politics to improve their access to social assets like education and employment.
* **Fading away of caste rules**: Urbanisation, new forms of employment such as those in the service sector, modern transport, communication technology etc have resulted in fading away of some caste rules especially inter-dining, endogamy etc, evident in inter-caste marriages, fast-food culture, friendship-based household etc.

These new changes are in contradiction to traditional caste norms creating new tensions in the society.

* **Unseeing of Caste: Modern values of constitutionalism, rights-based approach, middle class aspirations of material life, liberal education, globalisation of ideas, communication revolution has resulted in ‘unseeing of caste’ in public sphere.**

Notwithstanding the aforesaid changes in caste relations, caste consciousness is prevalent in contemporary India as evident in the following. The dominance of upper castes in public employment (Brahmins constitutes 37% of higher bureaucracy), the dominance of upper castes in corporate India, upper Caste-Upper Class convergence and the reproduction of occupations as most of the people engaged in manual scavenging are from the Dalit community.

In conclusion, though caste relations in India have changed in nature, scope and forms, the new caste relations resulting in competition, ‘unseeing of caste’, reproduction of caste in occupations, caste-class convergence etc have led to caste-based tensions in Indian society in recent times evident in the incidents of Dalit lynching, resistance to inter-caste marriages, caste conflicts etc.

1. **Globalisation changed the nature and modes of communal conflicts in contemporary India. Discuss the changes. (10 Marks, 150 Words)**

**Approach:**

Define Globalisation.

Discuss the impacts of it on the nature and modes of communal violence.

Conclusion.

**Answer –**

Globalisation is a phenomenon, which connects one country’s economy with the economies of other countries. It simply called for the free flow of labour and capital. However, it also transferred dominant western ideas to developing countries like India.

When members of one community target members of another community then it is called communal conflicts. It can be in different forms—caste conflicts, religious, violence, ethnic violence and so on.

**Impact of Globalisation on the Nature and Modes of Communal Conflicts**

* + It created various new mediums to connect people, which increased the flow of information—fake news, rumours, propaganda videos. Therefore, it increased the systemic communal tensions in the country, e.g. caste violence, religious riots, the exodus of people of certain areas from some cities.
	+ The organisation of communal association is now on a global level like International Hindu Foundation or caste-based associations.
	+ Globalisation led to the formation of associations based on primitive identities, i.e. based on caste, colour, religion, race, ethnicity, and so on. So, the nature of communal conflicts transformed from local to regional and sometimes to national levels.
	+ Neo-media increased the capacity of the communal groups to radicalise people. Therefore, there is an increase in the radical groups and their operations, SIMI, ISIS recruitment, Kashmir Violence etc.
	+ Also, the funding to communal organisations increased.
	+ Globalisation manifested in the revival of old norms leading to continued communal tension in the country. The communal violence and polarisation of people based on these old norms resulted in communal violence, caste and religion-based voting during elections.
	+ Globalisation allowed the mass to express their views freely with very fewer regulations on social media. Many influential people propagate communal ideas, and the tension is increasing.
	+ Further, the speed of the circulation of fake news and false news increased so much due to digital technology that it led to many lynching, riots, and so on before the authorities could take notice of it.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Pre-globalisation** | **Post-globalisation** |
| Collective punishment (communal riots) | Individualised punishment (Mob Lynching) |
| Scope and intensity: Larger | Scope and intensity: smaller  |
| Mostly started from urban areas | Engulfed rural areas too |
| Causes: economic | Causes: Economic plus cow slaughter, inter-religious marriages, abduction of children, social media |
| Planned and organised | Spontaneous and rampant at small scale |
| Mass violence | Culture of impunity; releasing video of violence |

However, there are also positive impacts of globalisation as it spread the idea of liberalism and progressiveness in the society. Further, globalisation also created institutions and systems, which can effectively check the spread of communal tension in society. But the state should use neo-media and education system to spread awareness about the problem of communalism in the society.

1. **“The disabled are rendered disabled not because they are biologically disabled but because society renders them so”. Elucidate with examples. (10 Marks, 150 Words)**

**Approach:**

Explain disability and other related terms.

Discuss how society renders them disabled.

Examples of disability other than physical disability.

Conclude.

**Answer –**

Disability is, generally, perceived as biologically given in society, but it is manifested in different forms. Whenever a disabled person is confronted with problems, it is taken for granted that the problems originate from her/his impairment. The disabled person is seen as a victim. Disability is supposed to be linked with the disabled individual’s self-perception. The very idea of disability in society suggests that they need help.

In India, labels such as ‘disability’, ‘handicap’, ‘crippled’, ‘blind’ and ‘deaf’ are used synonymously. Often these terms are hurled at people as insults. In a culture that looks up to bodily ‘perfection’, all deviations from the ‘perfect body’ signify abnormality, defect and distortion.

The common perception views disability as retribution for past karma (actions) from which there can be no reprieve. The dominant cultural construction in India, therefore, looks at disability as essentially a characteristic of the individual. The popular images in mythology portray the disabled in an extremely negative fashion.

There is a close relationship between disability and poverty. Malnutrition, mothers weakened by frequent childbirth, inadequate immunisation programmes, accidents in overcrowded homes, all contribute to an incidence of disability among poor people that is higher than amongst people living in easier circumstances. Furthermore, disability creates and exacerbates poverty by increasing isolation and economic strain, not just for the individual but for the family.

Besides physical disability, there are other forms of disability in a society like,

Caste-based disability: people from different caste groups have been historically disabled to access social resources like education, place of worship etc.

1. Gender-based disability: women and the members of LGBTQ groups are not given equal rights in society.
2. Disability based on skill and awareness

Therefore, Social norms create the idea of disability. It is necessary to question the idea of ‘normal’ to eradicate the prejudice about disability. Various government programmes and awareness campaign can help to make society ‘disable’-friendly.

1. **Examine why the problems of child labour in India continues to exist despite many legal actions and policy initiatives. (15 Marks, 250 Words)**

**Approach:**

First, explain constitutional provisions and other legal provisions related to child labour.

Causes of it.

Problems in the legislation.

Way forward.

**Answer –**

The Indian Constitution ensures the right against exploitation under Article 23 and 24. Article 23 specifically talks about the prohibition of child labour. Further, the constitution also provides every child with a right to free and compulsory education (6-14years). According to the 2011 Census, there are more than 10.2 million “economically active” children in the age group of 5 to 14.

**Other Legislations and Policies**

1. Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016.
2. **National Policy on Child Labour (1987)**, which focuses on the rehabilitation of child labours.
3. Juvenile Justice (Care and protection of Children) Act 2015.
4. **National Child Labour Project:** It is a project of the Ministry of Labour with the aim to suitably rehabilitate the children withdrawn from employment.
5. **Ratification of two ILO conventions on Child Labour**
	1. Minimum Age Convention, 1993.
	2. Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention 1999.

**Causes:**

* Socio-economic background: Poverty and illiteracy, coupled with the high rate of unemployment of the parents, are the root causes.
* There is a lack of access to basic and meaningful education facility and skill training to engage them in their childhood for a better economic prospect in the future.
* **Conflicts, natural disaster, family indebtedness, migration are other causes.**

**Problems in the legislation**

* Children under 14 years will be allowed to work in family businesses, outside of school hours and during holidays, and in entertainment and sports. This can be blatantly misused by many and lead to "victimization of children" in their poverty.
* The definition of ‘family’ has not been defined. As UNICEF India has commented, this could lead to more children working in unregulated conditions.
* Even in family enterprises, there is no skilling done. It is mostly against the child’s will and is almost slavery. So, care has to be taken while implementing the law to not go against the spirit of the law.
* Dilution of penalties against parents and guardians who “force” children into child labour can go against the spirit of the law, i.e., to prevent child labour.

**Way Forward**

* The recommendations of the Child Rights and You (CRY) like free and compulsory education up to higher secondary levels, gender equality in the education system, the inclusion of the voices of children in the policy formulation stage should be included.
* Social awareness, political will, and generation of empathy among the people.

Comprehensive policy providing the right ecosystem for the child to grow in the desired field of interest.

1. **What do you mean by patriarchy? How it affects the lives of rural and urban women differently? Explain with examples.**

**(10 marks, 150 words)**

**Approach:** Definition of patriarchy

Comparative assessment of the effects of patriarchy on Rural and Urban Women

Conclusion

**Answer:** Patriarchy is an institution within which male members exercise power and authority over female and children members and control moral authority, social privilege and property rights. The effects of patriarchy are different in some of the contexts and similar in other contexts in the rural and urban areas. These are the following differences: -

* In rural India, women are predominantly engaged in unpaid labour especially in the household works and agricultural activities. While, in Urban India, women are working in all sectors of the paid employment.
* In rural India, women are part of mainly joint families. Therefore, they are under multiple structures of dominations. In urban India, women are part of nuclear families, so they experience less domination as compared to rural India.
* Rural India experiences large waves of migration of the male population and it changes the roles and responsibilities of women viz. agricultural activities.
* Many traditional norms like dowry, preference for male child, child marriage etc. are still dominant in rural society. These norms are not so dominant in Urban India.
* In rural India, Patriarchy works through caste norms and in urban India, patriarchy works through class norms.
* Urban India provides more options of social mobility and more avenues for social empowerment through means of education, autonomy etc. as compared to the rural women.
* In Urban society, there is a trend of feminisation of certain employment especially in the services sector but in rural India, the main source of employment, i.e. agriculture is largely feminised.
* The global feminist movements also affected the women of Urban India. However, it had very less impact on the rural women.

Therefore, Patriarchy has different impacts on the rural and urban women, and it depends upon changing economic activities and import of culture from other places.