

## 1. Do you think patriarchy as a dominant social feature has got diluted in the 21<sup>st</sup> century India? Critically examine.

### Introduction

Patriarchy is a social system in which men hold primary power, predominate in the roles of political leadership, moral authority, special privilege and control of the property. Men are also centre and authoritative figure in the domain of the family. Patriarchy has been one of the dominant features of Indian society.

21<sup>st</sup> century has brought many opportunities among women in social, economic and political domain.

### Body

#### **Patriarchy as a dominant social feature has got diluted in the 21st century India**

- Women movements have earned many rights to women in India. 33% reservation in Panchayat is one example of rising political equality in Indian Society.
- Women's share in non-traditional employment has increased. 11.7% of India's pilots are women (global average ~ 3%).
- Women's recruitment in combat operation in army has now been planned.
- Under MGNREGA women's participation has increased 50%.
- There are many SHGs successfully owned by women.
- Women's movements, like #Metoo movement, have been very successful in recent times. There has been support by media and male members of the society. This signals shift in patriarchal mindset.

#### **Patriarchy as a dominant social feature is still intact in the 21st century India**

A quantitative picture of patriarchy can be gaged by Global Gender Gap Index, in which India ranks 108<sup>th</sup>/149 in 2018.

#### **A quantitative and qualitative picture of patriarchy in India**

- **Social**
  - Literacy - female ~ 65%; male ~ 80% (2011 census)
  - Males get more medical care compared to girls
- **Cultural**
  - Son meta preference (less opportunity to come to the world)
  - Child marriage ~ 27% (UNICEF)
  - More women divorced and separated – This tells a story about India's gender biases and how patriarchy operates.

**▪ Economic**

- Female labour force participation rate ~ 26% (Niti Aayog)
- Gender pay gap ~ 34% (ILO)
- Glass ceiling
- Feminization of informal sector and de-feminization of formal sector.

**▪ Political**

- female representation in Parliament ~ 99th in the world
- Lok Sabha ~ 12%; Rajya Sabha ~ 11%.

**Conclusion**

Women are the largest untapped reservoir of talent in the world – Hillary Clinton. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had said progress of community must be measured “degree of the progress of women”. Patriarchy is hindrance for overall development of India.

**2. Examine the factors that can be attributed to the rising divorce rates in India.****Introduction**

The number of divorcees has doubled over the past two decades, as per a report of United Nations titled "Progress of the World's Women 2019-2020: Families in a Changing World".

As per the census, 1.36 million people in India are divorced. That is equivalent to 0.24% of the married population, and 0.11% of the total population. More strikingly, the number of people separated is almost thrice the number of people divorced - 0.61% of the married population and 0.29% of the total population.

**Body**

**Rising divorce rates in India can be seen through various lenses. One is increasing empowerment in women.**

- The landmark Hindu Code Bill passed in the parliament in the mid-1950s gave women property rights, outlawed polygamy and allowed partners to file for divorce. The laws were further tweaked in 1976 to allow divorce by mutual consent.
- Over time, the traditional joint family has given way to nuclear families in cities and towns; and more and more women are going to work or setting up their own businesses. Many urban women no longer have to depend on their

spouses for financial security, men are sharing household chores; and gender equations are slowly changing.

- United Nations report titled "Progress of the World's Women 2019-2020: Families in a Changing World" point out that the age of marriage has increased in all regions, while birth rates have declined, and women have increased economic autonomy;

#### **Other perspective of looking at it is violence against women.**

- Millions of women and girls live in countries where rape within marriage is not explicitly criminalized.
- With socio-economic-politico empowerment of women, and voice through movement like #MeToo movement, women are more confident to unshackle themselves from marriages that put them to violent subjugation.

#### **Other reasons –**

- Also given that rates of living together before marriage are extremely low in India and marriage is universal, it wouldn't be surprising that for some members of the younger people, first marriages can end up in divorce.
- Adultery and incompatibility are the two common reasons that are cited for the breakup
- More women divorced and separated - is even more striking, and tells a story about India's gender biases and how patriarchy operates.

#### **Different pattern of divorce throughout India**

- Divorce and separation rates in the north-eastern states - where tribal laws allow for informal relations and women sometimes enjoy a relatively higher status because of a matrilineal system - are relatively higher than elsewhere in India.
- Northern states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana and Rajasthan which are known to be deeply patriarchal have much lower divorce and separation rates.

#### **Conclusion**

India's divorce rate stood at 1% in 2017, according to a report from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. While the absolute number of divorces has gone up from 1 in 1,000 to 13 in 1,000 over the last decade or so, India still remains at the top of the list of countries with the lowest divorce rates.

### 3. How do the aspirations of a 21st century Indian middle class differ from its 20th century counterpart? Discuss. What are the drivers of this change? Examine.

#### Introduction

India's middle class is not a homogenous group. It can include a farmer in rural India, a taxi driver in Mumbai or any middle income family. Many reports define India's middle class as households with annual disposable incomes between 200,000 and 1 million rupees, which have seen multiple changes since the past century.

#### Body

- Since the early 1990s, India has been viewed globally as the next China, poised to emerge as a massive market for just about everything money can buy. The most fabled part of this emergence story has been the country's middle class, a group raring to lead lives of comfort denied in past decades by a mix of socialist policies and cultural austerity.
- In the early 20th century, a few exceptions notwithstanding, the middle class almost always hailed from upper-caste groups; they would have typically received at least a smattering of Western education. 21st Century middle class contains a heterogenous identity in terms of caste, religion, language, etc.
- Historically, many among middle classes liked to imagine themselves as the mirror image of Victorian middle-class professionals. Whereas, the 21st century has a rise of aping of American lifestyle by middle class.
- Post 1947, many among the middle class lost their connection with land and became exclusively dependent upon professional income. But what continued to unite the middle class was their predominantly upper-caste status and a shared disdain for manual labour, which is prevalent till present day.
- Till Independence, the size of the Indian middle class remained relatively small with an additional six million added in the next two decades, with a count of 11.2 million in 1971, according to the government statistics.
- The 1970s and 1980s saw a move toward a mixed economy, with the private sector adding a significant number of jobs as well. The "colonial" middle class from the days of British rule prior to 1947 was slowly transformed into a "new" middle class, who increasingly began being defined in terms of consumption behavior, with the country moving gradually toward a market-led capitalist economy.
- During the eight-year period between 2004 and 2012, the middle class doubled in size from 300 million to 600 million. By 2015, the size of the middle class in India was between 300 and 600 million, according to Deutsche Bank Research.
- Present day middle class is generally divided into upper and lower middle classes. The upper middle class has been educated in English. It spoke the

language well, read English-language newspapers and used Western cultural reference points. The lower middle class usually did not speak English that well but recognised that it was the only language that matters in the workplace.

- When it came to politics, however, 20th century counterparts of present day middle class were more liberal and secular with present day middle class tending towards communal outlook as is evident from online trolling prevalent.
- The Indian middle class continues to play a significant role, not only in their home country, but also in other parts of the world. The rapid growth of the global software industry, where Indians excel and continue to be in demand, is creating a new, modern, mobile middle class. This has been a departure from their 20th century counterparts.
- The expansion of the middle class in India will not only enhance domestic consumption but also continue to grow the country's outbound tourism. The number of households in India with disposable incomes of more than US \$10,000 has risen twentyfold in twenty-five years which has given them political and economic weight.

### Conclusion

A healthy middle class is necessary to have a healthy political democracy. A society made up of rich and poor has no mediating group either politically or economically. This clearly demonstrates the importance of middle class and changes in their aspirations affecting society on a large scale which is evident from the general elections in 2014.

**4. What are the most dominant unifying factors that have knit India together despite her tremendous social diversity? Examine.**

### Introduction

*In diversity there is beauty and there is strength – Maya Angelou*

India is a land of "Unity in diversity". The high mountain ranges, vast seas, large river-irrigated lands, countless rivers and streams, dark forests, sandy deserts, all these have adorned India with an exceptional diversity. Among the people there are numerous races, castes, creeds, religions and languages. But with all these diversities we live together as there is a fundamental unity among us.

### Body

There are many factors that are contributing for the unification of India, but the most dominant are

**1. Geographical factor:** India has its own fixed natural boundary, At broadest level, the country can be divided into several regions viz. Himalaya, northern plains, plateau

of central India and Deccan, Western & Eastern Ghats, Thar Desert etc. Despite of this diversity, India has been defined as a distinct geographical unit since ages. A sloka in Vishnu Purana defines Bharata as the land which is south of snowy mountains and north of ocean.

**2. Religious factor:** There has been an under-current of religious unity among the various religious sects in the country. India has multitude of religions including majority Hinduism and minority Islam, Sikhism, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Bahá'í Faith and so on. All these religions have some common principles like principles of benevolence, honesty, faith in an invisible power, value of life etc. The concept of 'One in Many' and of universal morality as essence of religion has provided the essence of religious unity.

**3. Cultural factor:** The Cultural unity in diversity of India is generally denoted with the phrase "Ganga-Jamuni Tahjeeb" or India's composite culture. Despite of diversity, there are numerous cultural elements and factors that have shaped India's composite culture. There has been a basic unity of literary ideas, philosophy, conventions and outlook of the people throughout the country. there has been close socio-cultural cooperation among the followers of different creeds and communities. The composite culture of India is a living example of her fundamental cultural unity.

**4. Linguistic factor:** Side by side with this linguistic variety operates the unifying influence of Sanskrit, the mother of most of the Indian Languages. Sanskrit has been acknowledged as the one sacred language by all sections of the people irrespective of their race, rank or creed. Most of the Indian Languages have been influenced by Sanskrit, which may be regarded as a 'Mother Language' of India. English emerged as lingua franca of the country and serves as medium of communication between two people who have different mother tongue.

**5. Political factor:** The rulers of India tried to establish their way over the whole country and fostered its unity. The term 'Ekkrat' is more significant as applying to the "Kins Ruling over the whole country". The geographical conception of the identity and individuality of the country in all its vastness and variety led to the attainment of its political unification under various sovereigns. After independence, India adopted democratic system of politics which demands political unification at all its levels.

**6. Racial factor:** India has a great power of fusion and assimilation. From the earliest time India has invaded by different races such as Aryans, Shaks, Huns etc. But with the passage of time they have merged completely with the local population and culture. Innumerable number of tribes and races coming to India were all absorbed in the broad cultural mainstream of the country. Racial diversity gave a variety to Indian culture, which is its unique feature.

**7. Spirit of Nationalism:** There is an emotional bond of patriotism in India that binds all the members of the nation. The very word Bharat Varsha binds all Indians and emotionally they become closer to one another. They can also sacrifice their lives to protect India from any foreign power.

### Conclusion

“Unity in Diversity” this phrase transcends the notion accommodation without assimilation which has been the key feature of Indian civilization. The diversity in terms of race, religion, Language, caste and culture has made India is a strong nation tied together with integration and unity in both politico-geographic and cultural backgrounds.

### 5. India’s diversity is a huge capital. Do you agree? Substantiate.

#### Introduction

“Diversity may be the hardest thing for a society to live with, but perhaps the most dangerous thing to live without” – MF Hussain.

A diverse ethos like India not only showcases unity in diversity but also the potential to create waves in innovative thinking. The diversity of India is not only its strength in the cultural sphere but also forms a huge capital for the progress of the nation.

#### Body

##### Diversity as a huge capital:

- Geographical diversity: India has almost every possible climate in the world.
  - This makes India robust enough to indulge in all kinds of agricultural and allied sectors. This has led to development in sugar industries, wheat industries, tea industry, fruit industry and industries depending on the cash crops of the subsequent crops. Also, India is leading producer of Milk and milk products, meat industry etc.,
  - Further, it is responsible for huge natural capital (Flora and Fauna). The minor forest produce, forest products generates a huge revenue for the government as well as the tribal people.
  - Furthermore, Water resources: The diversity in availability of water forms capital in terms of activities like fishing as well as in hydroelectric projects etc.,
- Racial diversity: Indian race consists of all major races of the world which forms the human capital especially in mobilization of people across the world (Indian diaspora and ancestral link).
- Linguistic diversity: India has around 20 major languages and more than 200 dialects used in the sub-continent. The literature out of them form a huge capital within and outside the country.

- Tribal diversity: Tribal handicrafts (whether it is Dhokra metal technique of West Bengal or Bidri technique of Karnataka), Tribal dances, etc., forms a huge capital for India.
- Medicinal diversity: The traditional medicinal practices and medicinal plants forms a major capital specially in terms of patents. Also, practices like Yoga, Ayurveda, Homeopathy etc., are gaining importance at the global level (E.g. Yoga is being introduced to fight climate change).
- Diversity for soft power: India with population of major races, religions, languages fares good in soft power which adds up to the diplomatic capital of the country. E.g. Bollywood movies famous in South Asia, Indian food being popular in almost every continent.
- Diversity of culture translates into diversity of ideas and innovations. Diverse problems and society bring in custom made ideas. E.g. the concept of Ice stupa in Ladakh by Sonam Wangchuk, Zero budget natural farming etc.,
- The historical diversity has added to India's rich heritage and culture which is a reflection of diverse historical monuments, architecture forming the cultural capital of the country. For instance, we have centuries old churches as well as millennium old temples and mosques.
- Tourism: diverse cultures in practicing religion, traditions, cuisines, manners and clothing attract all the visitors and tourists from globe to India. Being origin of major religion like Jainism, Buddhism also attracts visitors from countries like ASEAN countries.
- Differential Breed of Profession: Diversity has added to diverse professions ranging from Software engineers as well as literature pandits.
- Social capital: Riding under the principle of 'Unity in Diversity', Indian diversity upholds the principle of secularism, national integration, intermingling of people forming huge social capital. This can be seen in the fact that India is one of the few countries in south and west Asia which hasn't seen toppling of democracy or civil war.

However, there are some challenges posed by diversity which is contrarily hindering the capital formation. The instances of mob lynching, communal riots etc., bring forth the issues of communalism, Sectarianism, Casteism, Linguism, Regionalism etc., which also form the side effects of diversity.

### Conclusion

Thus, the diversity in terms of race, religion, Language, caste and culture has made India is a strong nation tied together with integration and unity in both politico-geographic and cultural backgrounds. India is on its way of growth and development. It is worth mentioning that it has one of the strong and stable economies in the world and Indian diversity is adding up to its goals.