

1. How do instrument of social discrimination lead to poverty? Illustrate with help of suitable examples.

Introduction

Social discrimination is sustained inequality and unfairness present between individuals in the society mainly due to hierarchal social structure. Inequality leads resources stratification in the society which becomes main cause for poverty.

Body

SC/ST, women, elderlies etc are often denied access to market, public places and economic activity. Women are not given right to property. Only 8% women own immovable property. There are stereotyping against women in different sectors. Girls are trained to develop a low profile and learn home based works. Female literacy is 65% as compared to male literacy of 80% (2011 census). Males get more medical care compared to girls. Child marriage is rampant among girls (27% as per UNICEF).

All this has resulted in poor socio-economic conditions and poverty among women –

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

If economy is not engendered, it is endangered. WEF said gender parity can not only fight poverty but boost India's GDP by 27%.

Caste in India has often played lead to poverty as economic activity was inherently link to caste. Dominate caste still holds major stake in regional economy and land. They deny other caste from entering in these avenues. Land owned by SC/STs is still very less so they are reduced to economic labourer. Often they are presumably linked to marginalised work like manual scavenging.

Disabilities have also provided unequal opportunity to them leading to poverty. There is not only denial of physical infrastructure but denial of social respect. Proper transportation, unavailability of ramp in buildings etc often disinterest them to take part in economic activity. They have also no representation in political institution.

Transgender and civil partnership often face worse form of discrimination. They are not accepted as part of society and often denied job opportunity. Even after Supreme court decision to treat transgender as third gender, they face huge discrimination at work places.

Elderly population are often faced discrimination, due to early retirement, decline of health abandonment by their children. They even cannot get new job at this age, leading them to poverty.

Conclusion

Social discrimination have often aroused from socials taboos, religious cults, rites and social beliefs. So they are still strong. It needs good laws, political will, and above all behavioural change to reduce this discrimination. As India cannot become superpower leaving out important section of its society.

2. What do you understand by 'gender budgeting'? Examine its significance in the Indian socio-economic context.

Introduction

Gender budgeting (GB) means preparing budgets or analyzing them from a gender perspective. Gender Budgeting is a powerful tool for achieving gender mainstreaming so as to ensure that benefits of development reach women as much as men. It is not an accounting exercise but an ongoing process of keeping a gender perspective in policy/ programme formulation, its implementation and review.

Body

Since 2005-06, the Expenditure Division of the Ministry of Finance has been issuing a note on Gender Budgeting as a part of the Budget Circular every year. This GB Statement comprises two parts-

- Part A reflects Women Specific Schemes, i.e. those which have 100% allocation for women.
- Part B reflects Pro Women Schemes, i.e. those where at least 30% of the allocation is for women.

Significance in the Indian socio-economic context

- The rationale for gender budgeting arises from recognition of the fact that national budgets impact men and women differently through the pattern of resource allocation. Women, constitute 48% of India's population, but they lag behind men on many social indicators like health, education, economic opportunities, etc. Hence, they warrant special attention due to their vulnerability and lack of access to resources.
- Global Gender Gap report 2018 ranked India 108 in terms of inequality in economy, education, health and political representation.
- Poor socio-economic indicator of women –
 - Literacy - female ~ 65%; male ~ 80% (2011 census)
 - Males get more medical care compared to girls

- Son meta preference (less opportunity to come to the world)
 - Child marriage ~ 27% (UNICEF)
 - 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.
 - female representation in Parliament ~ 99th in the world
 - Lok Sabha ~ 12%; Rajya Sabha ~ 11%.
- All measures across the globe taken towards development, poverty alleviation and improvement of social indicators like health, education and gender equality are worthless unless policies are implemented specifically for women and girls.
 - Women face disparities in access to and control over services and resources.
 - Bulk of the public expenditure and policy concerns is in “gender neutral sectors”.

Challenges involved in Gender Budgeting

- There is limited availability of disaggregated gender-specific data sets for all schemes and programmes.
- The budgeting exercise is linked to schemes instead of outcomes. For example, in the Budgets there are funds allocated for infrastructure maintenance under the ministry of health and family welfare. However, there is very little data available on the impact these funds made in reducing female mortality rates.
- It is important to understand time-bound goals for parameters such as female school enrolment, gender-based violence, health, labour force participation.
- Authority should be created for gender auditing

Conclusion

Gender Budgeting is a powerful tool for achieving gender mainstreaming so as to ensure that benefits of development reach women as much as men. The way Government budgets allocate resources, has the potential to transform these gender inequalities.

3. What are life cycle vulnerabilities and how do they lead to poverty? Explain. In this light, examine the need to have a developmental paradigm that focuses on addressing life cycle vulnerabilities. Elucidate.

Introduction

The World Bank defines poverty as the inability to attain a minimum standard of living where WHO goes on to describe it as the greatest cause of suffering in the world. Around 22% of India’s population lives under the poverty line where life cycle vulnerabilities play a debilitating role to arrest the development of this population.

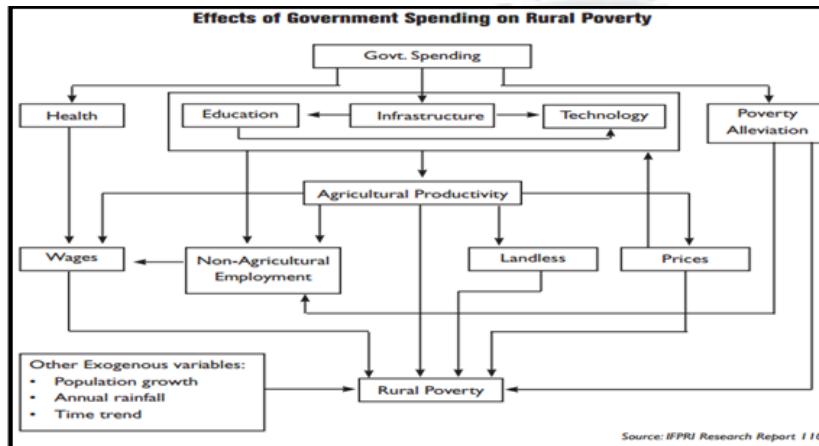
Body

- Life cycle vulnerabilities refers to the risks associated with a series of stages through which an individual passes during his/her lifetime like childhood, puberty, adolescence, adulthood, old-age, etc.



- Housing is usually the principal economic asset of poor households. Damage or loss to housing places enormous strain on household economies, given the high monetary cost of replacing lost assets, relative to low and irregular incomes, and the absence of insurance or safety nets.
- Urban poverty is now understood to have many additional dimensions - including 'voicelessness' and 'powerlessness', and inadequate provision of infrastructure and basic services. Most of the immediate causes of the deprivations associated with urban poverty are vulnerability related.
- Key factors in underprivileged areas include low-quality and insecure housing, which in turn limits access to basic services such as health care, public transport, communications, and infrastructure such as water, sanitation, drainage and roads.
- Poor rural livelihoods are highly exposed and vulnerable to weather-related risks and have a low resilience to loss because they have little or no surplus capacity to absorb crop or livestock income losses and to recover. Research suggests that vulnerabilities cause impoverishment, which can lead to a cycle of losses, poverty traps and a slowing of efforts to reduce poverty.
- Further, Life cycle vulnerabilities which can cause poverty can be seen from the following points in brief:

- INADEQUATE ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD
- LITTLE OR NO ACCESS TO LIVELIHOODS OR JOBS
- POOR EDUCATION AND INEQUALITY
- CONFLICT AND CLIMATE CHANGE
- LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESERVES



The above factors necessitate a development paradigm to address the issues of poor who are the most vulnerable. This need is due to the following factors:

1. Pro-poor(broad-based or balanced) growth-led development - Growth matters for development only if associated with an equitable distribution of income, to be achieved through the promotion of activities generating a broad-based primary income distribution and institutional mechanisms.
2. Constitutional ideals - Constitution provide peaceful, democratic means to bring about social transformation where every individual is empowered in political, social and economic terms.
3. Manpower utilisation - Developmental paradigm with a focus on human development would lead to effective utilisation of the available human resource which will help in overall growth and prosperity.

Conclusion

Principles of Amartya Sen offer useful alternative to tackle poverty where his Capability approach to understanding poverty goes beyond income and stresses the whole range of means available to achieve human capabilities such as literacy, longevity and access to income. From this viewpoint, tackling life cycle vulnerabilities would become essential towards well being of the most marginalized sections of the population and help in achieving the ideals of ‘New India’.

4. What do you understand by ‘social capital’? Examine its significance for a diverse country like India. Isn’t social capital imperative for development? Examine.

Introduction

The term social capital was popularized by Robert Putnam and can be defined as networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups (as per OECD).

Body

Types of social capital:

- Bonds– Links to people based on a sense of common identity (“people like us”) – such as family, close friends and people who share our culture or ethnicity (homogenous groups).
- Bridges: Links that stretch beyond a shared sense of identity, for example to distant friends, colleagues and associates (heterogeneous groups).
- Linkages: Links to people or groups further up or lower down the social ladder.

Significance and Importance of social capital:

Social capital has been described as both a glue and lubricant – a glue that holds societies together without which collaboration and cooperation would not be possible; and a lubricant that facilitates getting things done.

- Civil society– A proactive civil society can take up the cause of common people and work towards their welfare, for example HelpAge India NGO working for disadvantaged elderly of India.
- Women’s organisations– Organisations like Bhartiya Grameen Mahila Sangh, Nirbhaya centres etc, are helping in socio-economic empowerment of women.
- Self-help groups– Plays an important role in mobilizing the distressed rural populace through entrepreneurship development, promotion of thrift savings etc.
- Education– Quality of education can be improved by active work of population as social capital, eg. social audit of schools.
- Health– A good social capital leads to reduced isolation due to urban lifestyle, improved health service delivery among people and helps improve the average mortality rates.
- Crime prevention– Social capital can act as a security system. It is evident in traditional societies where gram sabha would serve as the judicial authority to take concrete actions like social boycott against criminals or evildoers.
- Environment– Community based organization preserve the environment and sustain resources. Sacred groves are an excellent example of role of social capital in preservation of environment.

- Water use and sanitation– The success of Swachh Bharat abhiyan is attributed to a large extent to Swachhagrahis and active participation of gram sabha.
- Economic development– A good social capital will enhance trade relations among people and nations, thus helping in mutual economic development, for example India's trade with Bangladesh is better as compared to Pakistan due to better social capital in former case.

Limitations of social capital

Decay– Social capital does not stay same and needs constant efforts to be maintained or else it decays over time.

Lack of equity– Not everyone has equal access to the social capital, rich or politically powerful have more influence compared to others.

Lack of individuality– Often group and social norms limit the individual growth and personal creativity is stifled by traditions.

Separatism– When bonding social capital is dominant as compared to bridging, the groups develop a notion where it perceives societal and its own interests as exclusive of each other, for example current situation in Jammu & Kashmir.

Personal political gains– If the political institution and democracy in a specific country is not strong enough and it can be overpowered by the social capital groups, for example Jat and Maratha agitation and subsequent reservation.

Conclusion

Social capital is essential for proper functioning of society, however care must be taken about the capital being present equally in terms of bonding and bridging capital for a harmonious and prosperous society.

5. Does it make more sense for the government to lay more emphasis on women and child development to ensure overall socio-economic transformation. Do you agree? Substantiate.

Introduction

When women move forward, the family moves, the village moves and then ultimately the Nation moves forward. In the same way, as Lal Bahadur Shastri noted, Children are the future of the nation and citizens of tomorrow. Any government would be prudent enough to lay more emphasis on women and child development to ensure socio-economic transformation.

Body

The sorry state of Indian women and child development levels is a more reason making sense of the government's increasing focus on their development. India has high infant mortality rate, 1/3rd of global stunted children, ranks 103 in Global

hunger index, Immunisation level still around 70%, Learning outcome of children is dismal, school dropouts specially after secondary education is still high etc.,

Apart from this, if one looks at women development – Literacy rate is less than men (around 65%), Labour force participation rate is around 25%, High mortality rate, Low -nutrition level(50% women being anemic), increasing crimes against women etc., – all this shows that the potential of women and children are not completely utilized.

Women ensuring socio-economic transformation:

- **Family:** A aware woman would be in a better position to take care of the family. A pilot project in Madhya Pradesh's village showed that women are likely to spend in children education, health etc., if she has the power to decide on expenditure.
- **Health transformation:** Women development also ensures decreased fertility rates and lower infant mortality rates, and lower maternal mortality rates. This in turn also have impact on nutrition of women as well as the children and help increase the productivity and participation in economy and society.
- **Independent decisions:** educated women are better able to make decisions related to health, both for themselves and their children. This increase the quality of life for women which would reduce instances like domestic violence, harassment etc., E.g. A survey in Bangalore showed that the increasing education and employment level is reducing the cases of dowry in Karnataka.
- **Political participation:** Women development (education and credibility) more likely results in civic participation of women. There are several instances in which educated women in the developing world were able to secure benefits for themselves through political movements. E.g. protests against women crimes in Delhi etc.,
- **Socio-Economic transformation:** Women employment not only helps in economic benefits but improves the society as a whole. E.g. The JHarcraft project of Jharkhand (a SHG project) not only provided employment to women, but also have improved the socio-economic indicators like education level, health, less number of loans and so on.
- **Reform in the mindset:** Women development through education and employment is the only way to fight the patriarchal mindset and shatter the glass ceiling imposed upon women.

Christine Lagarde noted that the women participation in economy would boost the economic growth by as much as 35%. Also, as Kofi Annan observed, a society which has developed women would be peaceful, egalitarian and sustainable.

Children development ensuring socio-economic transformation:

- Children Health: Child malnutrition, diseases etc., would not only impact the child development but also adds additional burden on the family as health expenditure. Also, neglect of children health results in underdevelopment of cognitive abilities which impacts education and employment.
- Employment: Children education is vital for reaping demographic dividend. Early childhood education, Skill development programmes etc., is emphasized for the same.
- Instrument of change: Children being the future of the nation, the society as a whole is dependent on the Children development and learning. Morally educated children would mean less crimes in future, healthy family relationships and so on.
- Children are the effective means of bringing changes within the family and bring behavioral changes. E.g. A school in Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka is roping in children to spread awareness on plastic change. Recently, A district administration in Telangana ran a literacy programme for illiterate mothers with their children teaching them.
- Cognitive and holistic development of children also helps the nation through improved innovations, research and inventions. For the same reason, government is taking up schemes like Atal Innovation mission, Yuva Vignan puraskar and so on.
- Empirical evidence from across the globe demonstrates that the foundations for human development are laid down in early childhood.

Conclusion

“Economic growth without investment in human development is unsustainable and unethical” – Amartya Sen.

Women and children in this context are vital human resources. Thus, there is a need which is also recognized by the governments all over the world (In India though schemes like Mission Indradhanush, Samagra Shiksha, PMMVY, BBBP and so on) which would help in women and child empowerment.