

**1. What do you understand by the term 'vulnerability'? How does one section of population become vulnerable? Explain with the help of suitable examples.**

**Introduction**

Vulnerability refers to a situation of an individual or a group to be in a weak position or diminished capacity. It is a state of being highly exposed to the possibility of physical or emotional harm caused due to various reasons.

**Body**

**A section of population becoming vulnerable:**

- Physical vulnerability:
  - Children: due to the age factor and dependency being vulnerable to issues like child trafficking, child labour etc.,
  - due to birth defects, handicaps or with a feature than normal creating a section of person with disabilities/special abilities requiring special treatment. E.g. Blind, Polio affected children, children born with Dyslexia and so on.
- Economic vulnerability: due to lack of poverty, low income which creates a vicious cycle exonerating a section of people from opportunities in education and employment making them vulnerable. E.g. Farmers with small returns, informal workers, daily wage labourers etc.,
- Social vulnerability: is causes vulnerable sections like
  - LGBT community: due to inadequate understanding or the orthodox mindset against accepting the change. E.g. LGBT community.
  - patriarchal mindset with gender stereotyping, narrow thinking making the women vulnerable to exploitation, harassment and taking away of life opportunities.
  - Exploitation and ostracization based on caste leading to socially vulnerable sections like Dalits.
- Political vulnerability: sections of society becomes vulnerable due to political crisis like civil war, extremism etc., E.g. Illegal migrants entering Europe, Naxal affected population.
- Numerical factor: section with distinctive religion or race or language become vulnerable when there is a imposition by majority or inadequate protection by government. E.g. minority population suffering from majority like Tamils in Srilanka, Rohingyas in Myanmar.
- Environment vulnerability: due to disaster prone geography E.g. people living in coastal regions, earthquake prone regions etc., The on-set of disaster also created a section of climate refugees as well.
- Inadequate implementation of laws which results in exploitation/ vulnerable treatment creating a separate vulnerable section. E.g. Safai kamacharis in spite of ban, child labour etc.,

- Development vulnerability: the displacement of a section of people from their habitats due to developmental activities like mining, infrastructure development, dam construction etc., E.g. villagers near forests or river (Narmada bachao andolan).
- Inadequate knowledge and isolation: due to lack of integration with the mainstream society, some of the sections like tribal population becomes vulnerable to exploitation. Also, inadequate knowledge in health makes tribal population to morality and malnutrition.

### Conclusion

Thus, most of the vulnerable sections are man-made and hence it is vital for taking proactive steps to address the issue. Development schemes for poverty alleviation, upliftment of vulnerable section economically, socially and politically is being implemented. Yet, transformatory measures are needed.

## 2. What are the life cycle vulnerabilities of rural women? Discuss the government initiatives launched to address those vulnerabilities.

### Introduction

One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. This is the opening line of Book II of de Beauvoir's. This implies that weak position of women in society is construct of civilization, a reflection not of "essential" differences in men and women but of differences in their situation. This also implicitly highlights the life cycle vulnerabilities women have to go through.

Life cycle vulnerabilities refers to vulnerabilities a women has to go through at different stages of life from "womb to tomb". Rural women are specifically more vulnerable due to higher life cycle vulnerabilities.

### Body

#### Life cycle vulnerabilities of rural women

- **Girl child in Womb**
  - Son meta preference (less opportunity to come to the world)
  - easy availability of Preconception sex selection facilities may be a catalyst in the declining child sex ratio
- **Infant**
  - In a study conducted by the Centre for Social Research, Haryana, fear of violence against women is a major cause of female foeticide.
  - Neglect of health care need of girl child.
- **Adolescent**
  - Disparity in education - female literacy ~ 65%; male literacy ~ 80% (2011 census)

- Educational opportunity is further restricted for girl child due to problems of transportation, patriarchy etc
- Child marriage ~ 27% (UNICEF)
- Males get more medical care compared to girls
- 2% of the female population is absolute anaemic.

- **Adult –**

Huge economic opportunity gap

- 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 backwardness

- female representation in Parliament ~ 99th in the world
- Lok Sabha ~ 12%; Rajya Sabha ~ 11%.
- Practice of “Sarpanch Pati” in village panchayats.

Socially – triple burden comes on rural women – homemaking + agriculture (due to male migration) and child upbringing.

- **Married**

- Exorbitant dowry demand
- 12% of the female population of the country suffers from repeated pregnancy (80% of their productive life is spent in pregnancy) & lack of nutrition.
- Maternal Mortality Rate in India has dropped from 167 to 130.

- **Old age**

- Desertion of old women is very high.
- Health care needs of old ladies are neglected.
- Violence against old women.

**Government initiatives launched to address these vulnerabilities Panchayat**

- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP), a comprehensive programme is being implemented to address the declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR) and related issues of empowerment of women over a life-cycle continuum.
- Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), {erstwhile Maternity Benefit Programme} has been contributing towards better enabling environment by providing cash incentives for improved health and nutrition to pregnant and nursing mothers.
- Scheme for Adolescent Girls aims at girls in the age group 11-18, to empower and improve their social status through nutrition, life skills, home skills and vocational training.

- Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra scheme, promote community participation through involvement of Student Volunteers for empowerment of rural women.
- National Creche Scheme to provide day care facilities to children of age group of 6 months to 6 years of working women who are employed.
- Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) to provide micro-credit to poor women for various livelihood support and income generating activities at concessional terms in a client-friendly procedure to bring about their socio-economic development.
- Swadhar Greh to provide relief and rehabilitation to destitute women and women in distress.
- Ujjawala, a Comprehensive Scheme for prevention of trafficking and for rescue, rehabilitation, re-integration and repatriation of victims of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.
- Working Women Hostels for ensuring safe accommodation for women working away from their place of residence. Under this scheme, 2 new proposals have been received and 2 sanctioned in Himachal Pradesh during last three years.
- Schemes of One Stop Centre (OSC) and Women Helpline (WH) are being implemented to facilitate access to an integrated range of services including medical aid, police assistance, legal aid/ case management, psychosocial counseling and temporary support services to women affected by violence.
- Gender Budgeting Scheme is being implemented as a tool for mainstreaming gender perspective at various stages of planning, budgeting, implementation, impact assessment and revisiting of policy/programme objectives and allocations. The Scheme helps in strengthening of institutional mechanisms and training of various stakeholders so as to mainstream gender concerns in Central and State Governments.
- Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme is being implemented through States/UTs with the aim of holistic development of children upto 6 years of age and to meet nutritional needs of pregnant women and lactating mothers.
- Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) (now Child protection Services) is being implemented through the State Government/UT Administrations to create a safe and secure environment for overall development of children in need of care and protection in urban and semi-urban areas.
- National Nutrition Mission (NNM): The Government of India has approved setting up of National Nutrition Mission (NNM) commencing from 2017-18. The NNM, as an apex body, will monitor, supervise, fix targets and guide the nutrition related interventions across the Ministries. The programme through the targets will strive to reduce the level of stunting, under-nutrition, anaemia and low birth weight babies.

### Conclusion

To awaken the people, it is the women who must be awakened. Once she is on the move, the family moves, the village moves, the nation moves. – Pandit Jawaharlal

Nehru. Thus awakening of nation cannot happen without removing cycle vulnerabilities of rural women.

**3. Addressing homelessness is a big challenge for policy makers. Do you agree? What measures have been taken by the government to address homelessness? Comment upon their effectiveness.**

**Introduction**

The Census of India defines 'houseless population' as persons who are not living in 'census houses'. A 'census house' is a 'structure with roof'. Census enumerators are instructed 'to take note of the possible places where houseless populations are likely to live such as 'on the roadside, pavements, in hume pipes, under staircases or in the open, temples, mandaps, platforms and the like'. Urban homeless persons in India to be at least around three million.

Supreme Court has held that the right to "dignified shelters" was a component of the Right to Life.

**Body**

Homeless people live a life of destitution, combined with hunger, intense social devaluation and extreme vulnerability. Addressing these problems is a big policy challenge.

**Addressing homelessness is a big challenge for policy makers**

- a) They usually lack even the elementary markers of citizenship (of poor people) in India like ration cards and voters' identity cards.
- b) Although there was a provision for night shelters in earlier plans of the Government of India, even this provision has lapsed due to lack of initiative by state and local governments.
- c) Various stereotypes are associated with the urban homeless all over the world- including labelling the homeless as criminals, beggars, immoral, parasitic and so on.
- d) All self-help efforts for shelter and livelihoods by urban poor residents are stifled.
- e) The courage, fortitude and sheer enterprise that allows them to survive on the streets is not recognized or channelized.
- f) Strong coordination is required among central, state and local governments.

**Steps taken by the government**

- National Programme for the Urban Homeless – to create a network of composite shelters in the urban local bodies, with adequate provisions for housing and food for the destitute.
- In October 2002, the scheme was renamed 'Night Shelter for Urban Shelterless' and was limited to the construction of composite night shelters with toilets and baths for the urban shelterless. These shelters were in the

nature of dormitories/halls with plain floors used for sleeping at night. During the daytime, these halls were available for other social purposes such as health care centres, training centers for self-employment, adult education etc. This scheme was finally withdrawn in 2005 because most State Governments did not utilize the funds allotted to them properly.

- The Government of India has formed new policies for affordable housing and shelters in urban areas in the past few decades.
- To improve infrastructures in slums, the Supreme court mandated a new mission known as the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission.
- The Public Distribution System (PDS) is one of the major services offered by the government to people living below the poverty line (BPL) in India.

#### **Effectiveness of the steps taken by the government**

- Quality audit and social audit of each shelter is missing.
- Shelters are not promoted as an 'entitlement' of the homeless. Without such entitlement guarantees and accountability mechanisms, the initiation and implementation of the scheme was left to the state and municipal bodies or agencies designated by state governments, which tended not to give priority to such a programme.
- Shelters are constructed using soft loans, which was not a viable design, because a programme for the most marginalised cannot be expected to raise resources internally to enable repayment.
- The shelters do not have strong programme linkages with other elements – the services in the shelters, food and other entitlements.
- Extremely marginal allocations – both by central and state governments.

#### **Conclusion**

District Planning Committees must be encouraged to consider proposals from city level committees for developing these sites and services through various sources like Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS), Members of Legislative Assembly (MLA) and local development funds, Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM) and Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY).

In placing homeless persons outside the society of 'legitimate urban residents', we are in effect disenfranchising a large, powerless population. Therefore, both at the level of social attitudes and at the level of development policy, changes are urgently needed.

**4. Educated unemployed youth is one of the most vulnerable sections of the population. Do you agree? Substantiate. What measures should the government adopt immediately to address this challenge? Suggest..**

#### **Introduction**

India's rate of unemployment has doubled in the past two years, according to the State of India's Environment (SoE) figures, 2019. This has particularly affected young people where the unemployment rate among the educated is worse. The rate

among people with at least a graduate degree was 13.17 per cent in September-December 2018, up from 10.39 per cent in May-August 2017.

### Body

- Young Indians (aged 15-24 years) constitute nearly a fifth of India's total population, according to the country's 2011 Census. By 2020, they are predicted to make up a third of the country's population. It is noted that the youth (between 20-24 years), who constitute around 40 per cent of India's labour force, have an unemployment rate of 32 per cent.
- The Periodic Labour Force Survey for 2017-18 released by National Sample Survey Office too shows that unemployment rate increased with education level.
- The rate of unemployment in urban India is lower than that of the rural across at higher levels of educational categories (secondary and above) and also for all the study periods. However, it is higher in the case of urban India than rural at lower levels of educational categories (less than secondary).
- The unemployment rate among educated is lower in the developed nations as compared to developing nations at the international level, it is evident that the developed states within India account for higher rates of educated unemployment than the developing and underdeveloped states. This may be due to the fact that the developed states account for higher number of educated people than the developing and underdeveloped regions
- In India, not only is the rate of unemployment higher with an increase in levels of education, but also, when it comes to the issue of gender bias, it becomes obvious that women face much higher rates of unemployment as against their male counterparts across all the educational categories.
- The probability of finding jobs increases as age increases but, after a certain age, the probability decreases irrespective of the levels of development across states. This may be mainly due to the presence of age restrictions in the formal job market and a decrease in productivity with an increase in age.
- Their mental makeup, their behaviour and their actions in their period of waiting are influenced by a varied set of factors. For example, it matters how their families treat them – which to some extent may depend on their financial status.
- Many are burdened by student debt, which begins to weigh heavily in the absence of proper employment. Other factors such as the company they keep, the nature of cultural and political discourse and the political and other activities of the major parties and their leaders also matter.
- In India, where the economy is growing but where it is not clear whether employment prospects have improved, young people with higher levels of education are even more likely to feel cheated, frustrated, resentful, or even angry than under conditions of economic stagnation.
- The problem of unemployment for the educated gives rise to the problem of poverty. Young people after a long time of unemployment indulge in illegal and wrong activities for earning money. This also leads to an increase in

crime in the country. Unemployed persons can easily be enticed by antisocial elements. This makes them lose faith in democratic values of the country. It is often seen that unemployed people end up getting addicted to drugs and alcohol or attempts suicide. These factors surely make the educated unemployed one of the most vulnerable.

In this regard, following can be some of the measures the government may adopt immediately to address this challenge:

1. There are a number of labour intensive manufacturing sectors in India such as food processing, leather and footwear, wood manufacturers and furniture, textiles and apparel and garments. Special packages, individually designed for each industry are needed to create jobs.
2. Public investment in sectors like health, education, police and judiciary can create many government jobs. Along with it, decentralisation of Industrial activities is necessary so that people of every region get employment.
3. Entrepreneurs generate employment to many in a country; therefore, the government needs to encourage entrepreneurship among the youth. Similarly, concrete measures aimed at removing the social barriers for women's entry and their continuous participation in the job market is needed.
4. Government needs to keep a strict watch on the education system and should try to implement new ways to generate skilled labour force. Further, the effective implementation of present programs like Make in India, Skill India, Start up and Stand-Up India is needed.
5. There is a need for National Employment Policy (NEP) that would encompass a set of multidimensional interventions covering a whole range of social and economic issues affecting many policy spheres and not just the areas of labour and employment.

### Conclusion

Putting in place the above given appropriate policy responses to tackle the issue is of utmost priority. As multiple forces ranging from technological advances to climate change to demographic changes transform the world of work, the absence of decisive policy action will disrupt livelihoods and exacerbate problems for the vulnerable and further increase social fault lines.

**5. Structural reforms not doles and subsidies are needed to address the vulnerabilities of distressed farmers. Elucidate.**

### Introduction

A subsidy (also recognized as a subvention) is a system of financial assistance paid to an individual, a business or an economic sector in order to accomplish certain policy objectives.



## Body

An agricultural subsidy is a government incentive paid to agribusiness, agricultural organizations and farms to supplement their income manage the supply of agricultural commodities and influence the cost and supply of such commodities.

Farm subsidies could be –

- Direct farm subsidies rendering cash to the recipient farmers like food subsidy, MSP-based procurement, providing cash directly to the farmers to buy fertilizers etc.
- Indirect farm subsidies are not provided in the form of cash but supporting farmers in an indirect manner. For example- subsidizing fertilizer companies to provide cheap urea to farmers.

To enhance the agricultural production, the Government of India is providing some other subsidies to the farmers, through the Farmers' Co-operative Societies in the form of seeds, development of oil seeds, pulses, cotton, rice, maize, crop insurance schemes and price support schemes.

### Subsidies ultimately hurt the farmers

- Fertilizers subsidy, especially urea when made available cheaply has resulted in overuse, which degraded soil quality, and in return affected the output productivity. Low productivity of Punjab in wheat can be attributed to above cause.
- Most benefits of subsidies are allotted to big farmers while in India, 2/3rd farmers are marginal farmers which can't utilize the benefit of subsidy properly. Thus the value of produce of such farmer's decrease.
- It leads to overproduction of one crop over other like fruit, pulses. Thus sometimes grains are piled up for rotting in warehouse.

### Structural Reforms

- Enhanced Agricultural productivity, competitiveness and rural growth: The contribution of Agri sector in India's GDP (16%) is greater than the world's average (6.4%), thus policy intervention in the right direction can fuel the sector as a key space in the economy.
- Liberalize constraints to marketing, transport, export and processing: Improve access to domestic and international markets.
- Increase investment in research: Cover new seeds, disseminate new farming techniques widely etc.
- Improve water resources and Irrigation/Drainage Management: Piped conveyance, better on-farm management etc. and increasing productivity over land usage.
- Eschew loan waivers: As it only diverts resources from needed investment, focus should be on allocation for capacity building.

- Implement successful policies and rationalize public expenditure with priority to scheme with high returns: Move to a fixed cash subsidy per acre cultivated based on digitizing and identifying plots as demonstrated successfully by Rythu Bandhu Scheme of Govt. of Telangana.
- Employ rural youth and promote entrepreneurship: Successfully demonstrated by the Custom Hiring Centre model implemented by Madhya Pradesh to hasten the pace of farm mechanization.
- Facilitate conversion of agricultural waste: Provides a further fillip to farmers' income.
- Encourage village level procurement systems to create a robust value chain, providing employment to rural youth.
- Convergence of schemes: Integrate MGNREGA with Blue revolution to promote aquaculture, creation of potential clusters etc.
- Agriculture and private sector: Facilitates transition from Agriculture to robust Agri-business systems.
- Skill development: Skill development centers providing essential required skills and techniques and helping in capacity building of the young population preparing them for efficient employment.
- Creation of Agricultural Universities in every state: enhancing the outreach of Agriculture as an important sector, attracting, and retaining youth in this sector.

### Conclusion

According to IMF, India's economy is predicted to be soon the fastest growing economy in the world. Thus, Agriculture sector in India could become a solid foundation for a robust economy and a central pillar of rural development (approx. 67%), if driven with a more productive, internationally competitive, diversified and sustainable agricultural policy and reforms.